

# Small Woodland Birds

These are the birds we hope to attract to Reach 4

Further details follow, from [birdsinyourbackyards.net](http://birdsinyourbackyards.net), a database of [BirdLife Australia](http://birdlifeaustralia.org.au)

**Brown Thornbill**



**Eastern Spinebill**



**Golden Whistler**



**Grey Fantail**



**Mistletoe Bird**



**New Holland Honeyeater**



**Red-browed Finch**



**Scarlet Robin**



**Silvereye**



**Spotted Pardalote**



**Striated Pardalote**



**Superb Fairy-wren**



**White Plumed Honeyeater**



**White-browed Scrubwren**



**Willy Wagtail**



**Yellow-rumped Thornbill**



## **Brown** **Thornbill**

**Scientific name:** *Acanthiza pusilla*



### **What does it look like?**

The Brown Thornbill is a small bird but is one of the medium-sized and more common of the thornbills. It has olive-brown to grey upperparts, with a warm reddish-brown forehead scalloped with paler markings. The rump has a reddish-brown patch, the tail is grey brown with a black band and a pale tip, and the underparts are off-white, streaked blackish on the chin, throat and chest. The eye is dark red. The sexes are similar and young birds are only slightly different to adults, with a duller eye.

### **Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** The Brown Thornbill is found only in eastern and south-eastern Australia and is widespread in its range from south-eastern Queensland to the Mt Lofty Ranges, South Australia, and throughout Tasmania, excepting the south-west.

**Habitat:** The Brown Thornbill is found in dense shrubby habitats including wet and dry forests, woodlands, shrublands, heathlands and rainforests, as well as along watercourses, mainly in the temperate and sub-tropical zones. They are found from the coast up to 1200 m. They are found regularly in parks and gardens, especially close to large patches of remnant vegetation and along nature strips in towns and suburbs.

**Seasonal movements:** Sedentary

### **What does it do?**

**Feeding:** The Brown Thornbill feeds mainly on insects, but may sometimes eat seeds, nectar or fruit. They feed, mainly in pairs, at all levels from the ground up, but mostly in understorey shrubs and low trees. Will feed in mixed flocks with other thornbills out of breeding season.

**Breeding:** Breeding pairs of Brown Thornbills hold territories all year round for feeding and breeding purposes, and the bonds between pairs are long-lasting. Females build a small oval, domed nest with a partially hooded entrance near the top out of grasses, bark and other materials, lining it with feathers, fur or soft plant down. The nest is usually low down, in low, prickly bushes, grass clumps, or ferns. The female incubates the eggs and both parents feed the young, who stay with the parents until early autumn, before being driven out of the parental territory.

### **Living with us?**

For many people in eastern and south-eastern Australia, they are a familiar and friendly face in the garden or the bush alike.

## Eastern spinebill

**Scientific name:**  
*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*



### **What does it look like?**

The Eastern Spinebill is most easily recognised by its very long, fine, down-curved beak and energetic flight, during which its white outer tail feathers are prominent. Males have a grey-black crown which extends in a black line on either side of the breast. The breast and throat are white, with a rufous patch in the centre of the throat. The wings and lower back are dark grey and the underparts and upper back are buff. Females are similar to males but have less distinct markings.

### **Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** The Eastern Spinebill's range is generally east of the Great Dividing Range from Cooktown in Queensland to the Flinders Ranges in South Australia

**Habitat:** The Eastern Spinebill prefers heath, forest and woodland.

**Seasonal movements:** Largely sedentary, but undergoes some local movements, especially away from higher elevations in autumn/winter.

### **What does it do?**

**Feeding:** The Eastern Spinebill feeds on insects and nectar while perched or while hovering. Nectar is obtained from a wide array of flowers, including grevilleas, but its beak is particularly well-suited to extracting nectar from tubular flowers such as epacrids.

**Breeding:** The Eastern Spinebill's nest is a small cup of twigs, grass and bark, combined with hair and spider's web, built in a tree fork, generally between 1 and 5 metres from the ground. Only the female builds the nest and incubates the eggs, but both parents feed the young when they hatch.

### **Living with us?**

The Eastern Spinebill sometimes visits urban gardens that are well-vegetated, and will feed from both native and exotic flowers, including fuchsias.



## Golden Whistler

**Scientific name:**  
*Pachycephala pectoralis*



### **What does it look like?**

The adult male Golden Whistler is bright yellow on the underside, olive-green on the back and wings, and black on the head with a bright yellow collar. The throat is white, separated from the yellow chest by a broad black band. The bill and legs are black. Females lack bright plumage. They are generally grey above, with a pale olive tinge, and paler grey below, with a buff wash. The bill is dark brown and the legs grey-brown. The eye is red-brown in adults of both sexes. Young Golden Whistlers are rufous. As they mature, the plumage comes to resemble that of the female other than rufous edges to some wing feathers. These are later replaced as the bird matures.

### **Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** The Golden Whistler is found from northern Queensland, around coastal eastern and southern Australia, including Tasmania, to the middle of Western Australia. The Golden Whistler is also found in Indonesia, Fiji, New Guinea and the Solomons.

**Habitat:** The Golden Whistler can be found in almost any wooded habitat, from rainforest to mallee, but prefers the denser areas. Occasionally it visits parks and orchards.

**Seasonal movements:** Sedentary; some altitudinal migration to lower areas in winter.

### **What does it do?**

**Feeding:** Golden Whistlers feed on insects, spiders and other small arthropods. Berries are also eaten. Feeding is usually done alone and most food is obtained from the lower or middle tree level, where it is picked from leaves and bark.

**Breeding:** Male and female Golden Whistlers share the nest building duties. The nest is a shallow bowl, made of twigs, grass and bark, bound together with spider web and lined with finer grass. The nest is placed in a fork in a bush or tree up to 6 m above the ground. Only one brood is raised in a season and both sexes share the incubation of the eggs, and care of the young.

## Grey Fantail

**Scientific Name:**  
*Rhipidura albiscapa*



### **What does it look like?**

The Grey Fantail is most easily recognised by its constantly fanned tail and agile aerial twists and turns. Both sexes are similar in appearance: grey above, with white eyebrow, throat and tail edges. This species is quite inquisitive and will closely approach an observer.

### **Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** The Grey Fantail is found throughout Australia.

**Habitat:** The Grey Fantail is found in most treed habitats.

**Seasonal movements:** Appears to undergo a partial northern migration during winter.

### **What does it do?**

**Feeding:** The Grey Fantail feeds on flying insects, which it catches by chasing them from the edge of foliage at all levels in the canopy.

**Breeding:** The Grey Fantail builds its nest in a thin tree-fork, unusually between 2 and 5 metres from the ground. It is made of fine grass bound together with large amounts of spider web. The bottom of the nest is drawn out into a long stem, resembling that of a wine-glass. Both parents share nest-building, incubation of the eggs and feeding of the young when they hatch.

### **Living with us?**

The Grey Fantail occasionally visits densely planted urban gardens, particularly during the winter migration. Often makes use of eucalypt trees.

## Mistletoe bird

**Scientific name:** *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*



### **What does it look like?**

The small Mistletoebird is the only Australian representative of the flowerpecker family, Dicaeidae, and is also known as the Australian Flowerpecker. Males have a glossy blue-black head, wings and upperparts, a bright red throat and chest, a white belly with a central dark streak and a bright red undertail. Females are grey above, white below, with a grey streak on the belly, and a paler red undertail. Young birds resemble females but are paler and have an orange, rather than dark, bill. These birds are swift and erratic fliers, moving singly or in pairs, usually high in or above the canopy.

### **Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** The Mistletoebird is found throughout mainland Australia. It is also found in Papua New Guinea and eastern Indonesia.

**Habitat:** The Mistletoebird is found wherever mistletoe grows and is important in the dispersal of this plant species.

**Seasonal movements:** Nomadic out of breeding season.

### **What does it do?**

**Feeding:** The Mistletoebird is highly adapted to its diet of mistletoe berries. It lacks the muscular gizzard (food-grinding organ) of other birds, instead having a simple digestive system through which the berries pass quickly, digesting the fleshy outer parts and excreting the sticky seeds onto branches. The seed can then germinate quickly into a new plant. In this way, the Mistletoebird ensures a constant supply of its main food. It will also catch insects, mainly to provide food for its young.

**Breeding:** The Mistletoebird builds a silky, pear-shaped nest with a slit-like entrance, made from matted plant down and spider web, which is suspended from a twig in the outer foliage of a tree. The female alone builds the nest and incubates the eggs, while both sexes feed the young.

## New Holland Honeyeater

**Scientific name:**

*Phylidonyris*  
*novaehollandiae*



**What does it look like?**

The New Holland Honeyeater is mostly black and white, with a large yellow wing patch and yellow sides on the tail. It has a small white ear patch, a thin white whisker at the base of the bill and a white eye. This honeyeater is an active bird, and rarely sits still long enough to give an extended view. Sexes are similar in looks, but females are slightly smaller in size. Young birds are browner and have a grey eye.

**Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** The New Holland Honeyeater's range extends throughout southern Australia, from about Brisbane, Queensland, to just north of Perth, Western Australia.

**Habitat:** The New Holland Honeyeater is common in heath, forests, woodland and gardens, mainly where grevilleas and banksias are found. It is inquisitive and approaches humans. It also mixes with other types of honeyeaters.

**What does it do?**

**Feeding:** New Holland Honeyeaters are active feeders. They mostly eat the nectar of flowers, and busily dart from flower to flower in search of this high-energy food. Other food items include fruit, insects and spiders. Birds may feed alone, but normally gather in quite large groups. Most feeding takes place in lower areas of bushes and thickets.

**Breeding:** The New Holland Honeyeater's cup-shaped nest is made of bark and grasses, bound together with spider web. It is lined with soft material and is placed in a bush or tree, anywhere from ground level up to 6 m. Both sexes feed the chicks. A pair of adults may raise two or three broods in a year.



## Red-browed finch

**Scientific name:** *Neochmia temporalis*



### **What does it look like?**

The Red-browed Finch is most easily recognised by its bright red eyebrow, rump and beak, on an otherwise green and grey bird. Upperparts are olive green with grey underneath. Both sexes are similar in appearance. Often observed in small flocks, which feed on the grass. They will fly into dense undergrowth when disturbed by a passer-by. Red-browed Finches may also be called Red-browed Firetails.

### **Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** The Red-browed Finch occurs mostly east of the Great Dividing Range, between Cape York in Queensland and the Mount Lofty Ranges in South Australia

**Habitat:** The Red-browed Finch is found in grassy areas interspersed with dense understorey vegetation, often along creek lines.

**Seasonal movements:** Largely sedentary.

### **What does it do?**

**Feeding:** The Red-browed Finch feeds on seeds and insects on the ground, but sometimes perches on seeding grass heads.

**Breeding:** The nest of the Red-browed Finch is large and domed, with a side tunnel for an entrance. It is a rough construction of twigs and grass stems built in a dense shrub between 1 and 2 metres from the ground. Both parents share nest-building, incubation of the eggs and feeding of the young when they hatch.

### **Living with us?**

Its preference for open grassy areas surrounded by dense shrubbery enables the Red-browed Finch to survive well in weedy areas along railway tracks and creek lines, where seeding grasses escape the lawnmower. It may also benefit from bird feeders, provided the seeds are small and larger competitors are excluded.



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| <p><b><u>Scarlet Robin</u></b></p> <p><b>Scientific name:</b> <i>Petroica multicolor</i></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><b>What does it look like?</b></p>                                                        | <p>The Scarlet Robin is a medium-sized robin, with a plump and compact appearance. Males have a black head, neck and upperparts with a conspicuous white patch above the bill (frontal patch). The breast is scarlet red and the lower underparts are white. The wings are barred white and the outer tail is also white. Females differ markedly from males, being brown above with a whitish frontal patch and an orange-red breast, brown wings and white underparts. Young birds resemble females but are streaked white above, tinged buff on the wings and are mottled dark-brown on the breast and sides of the body.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Where does it live?</b></p>                                                            | <p><b>Distribution:</b> The Scarlet Robin is found in south-eastern and south-western Australia, as well as on Norfolk Island. It is found from south-eastern Queensland along the coast of New South Wales (and inland to western slopes of Great Dividing Range) to Victoria and Tasmania, and west to Eyre Peninsula, South Australia; it is also found in south-west Western Australia.</p> <p><b>Habitat:</b> The Scarlet Robin lives in open forests and woodlands in Australia, while it prefers rainforest habitats on Norfolk Island. During winter, it will visit more open habitats such as grasslands and will be seen in farmland and urban parks and gardens at this time.</p> <p><b>Seasonal movements:</b> Some local movements during winter; altitudinal migrant.</p>                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>What does it do?</b></p>                                                               | <p><b>Feeding:</b> The Scarlet Robin feeds mainly on insects and forages on or near the ground. It will sit on a perch and fly down to catch prey.</p> <p><b>Breeding:</b> Scarlet Robins form permanent monogamous pairs that maintain territories year-round. Males advertise and defend territory by singing from high, prominent perches. During the breeding season, the female selects a suitable, well-hidden nest site in a tree fork and builds a compact open cup nest (individuals of this species have also been reported making a nest on part of a building, such as a gutter). Nest materials include bark, grass, twigs and other plant materials; the nest is bound with spider web, lined with animal fibres or plant-down and camouflaged with moss or lichen. The female incubates the eggs while the male feeds her. Both sexes feed the nestlings and will continue to feed the young for some time once fledged.</p> |
| <p><b>Living with us?</b></p>                                                                | <p>Scarlet Robins can be quite tame around human habitation. Their habit of foraging on the ground for food makes them vulnerable to cats, and young birds that roost close to the ground may be taken by rats. Scarlet Robin populations have declined in South Australia and Western Australia as a result of land-clearing practices. They are particularly affected by the removal of understorey.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## Silvereye

**Scientific name:** *Zosterops lateralis*



### **What does it look like?**

The Silvereye is a small bird with a conspicuous ring of white feathers around the eye and belongs to a group of birds known as white-eyes. The Silvereye shows interesting plumage variations across its range. The grey back and olive-green head and wings are found in birds through the east, while western birds have a uniformly olive-green back. Breeding birds of the east coast have yellow throats, pale buff flanks (side of the belly) and white on the undertail. Tasmanian birds have grey throats, chestnut flanks and yellow on the undertail. To complicate this, the birds in the east have regular migrations within Australia and may replace each other in their different areas for parts of the year. Birds in Western Australia have yellowish olive, rather than grey, backs.

### **Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** Silvereyes are more common in the south-east of Australia, but their range extends from Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, through the south and south-west to about Shark Bay, Western Australia. They are also found in Tasmania.

**Habitat:** Silvereyes may occur in almost any wooded habitat, especially commercial orchards and urban parks and gardens.

**Seasonal movements:** Birds in the east have regular migrations within Australia and may replace each other in their different areas for parts of the year. Silvereyes can fly extremely long distances when they migrate at the end of summer. Some travel all the way from Tasmania right up to southern Queensland, over 1,600 km. When it starts to get a little chilly in autumn, Silvereyes form large flocks and fly to warmer areas for the winter.

### **What does it do?**

**Feeding:** Silvereyes feed on insect prey and large amounts of fruit and nectar, making them occasional pests of commercial orchards. Birds are seen alone, in pairs or small flocks during the breeding season, but form large flocks in the winter months.

**Breeding:** Silvereye pairs actively defend a small territory. The nest is a small, neatly woven cup of grasses, hair, and other fine vegetation, bound with spider web. It is placed in a horizontal tree fork up to 5m above the ground. The nest is constructed by both sexes, who both also incubate the bluish-green eggs. If conditions are suitable two to three clutches will be raised in a season.

### **Living with us?**

Silvereyes eat fruit growing in orchards and yards, but they are most likely to feed at the edges of an orchard that they can see from their native habitat

## Spotted Pardalote

**Scientific name:**  
*Pardalotus punctatus*



### **What does it look like?**

The Spotted Pardalote is a tiny bird that is most often high in a eucalypt canopy, so it is more often detected by its characteristic call. The wings, tail and head of the male are black and covered with small, distinct white spots. Males have a pale eyebrow, a yellow throat and a red rump. Females are similar but have less-distinct markings.

### **Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** The Spotted Pardalote is found in eastern and southern Australia from Cooktown in Queensland through to Perth in Western Australia. It occurs in coastal areas, extending to the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range in the east.

**Habitat:** The Spotted Pardalote is mostly found in eucalypt forests and woodlands but occurs in parks and gardens with well-established eucalypt canopy.

**Seasonal movements:** Largely sedentary but may undergo local seasonal movements away from higher elevations in autumn/winter.

### **What does it do?**

**Feeding:** The Spotted Pardalote forages on the foliage of trees for insects, especially psyllids, and sugary exudates from leaves and psyllids.

**Breeding:** The Spotted Pardalote's nest is an enlarged, lined chamber at the end of narrow tunnel, excavated in an earth bank. Sometimes they nest in tree hollows and occasionally in artificial structures. Both parents share nest-building, incubation of the eggs and feeding of the young when they hatch.

### **Living with us?**

The Spotted Pardalote remains relatively common in urban areas that have a high density of eucalypts. Nests have sometimes been found in carpet rolls and garage roll-a-doors.



## Striated Pardalote

Scientific name:  
*Pardalotus striatus*



### What does it look like?

The Striated Pardalote is more common than people usually think, with its call the first indication of the presence of this brightly coloured little bird. There is considerable variation in plumage characteristics across the range of this species. All birds have white eyebrows with a yellow spot in front of the eye, olive-grey backs and a white stripe in the wing. In different parts of the country, the wing stripe may be narrow or wide, the coloured spot at the front end of this stripe may be red or yellow, and the black crown may have or lack fine white stripes. Both male and female are similar in plumage. Young birds also resemble the adults, but are notably paler, particularly on the crown and face.

### Where does it live?

**Distribution:** The Striated Pardalote is found throughout most of Australia, being absent only from the most arid areas. Like other species of pardalotes, it is found only in Australia.

**Habitat:** Striated Pardalotes are found in almost any habitat with trees or shrubs, but favour eucalypt forests and woodlands.

### What does it do?

**Feeding:** Striated Pardalotes feed in the foliage in the tops of trees, although occasionally coming close to the ground in low shrubs. They eat a wide variety of insects and their larvae, which are usually captured by picking them from the surfaces of leaves. Feeding takes place in small groups and birds maintain contact with soft trills.

**Breeding:** During breeding season, Striated Pardalotes form pairs or small groups of up to six birds. The nest is constructed close to the ground, usually in a tree hollow or tunnel, excavated in an earthen bank; small openings in human-made objects are frequently used. The birds display regularly at the entrance to the nesting chamber, and vigorously guard the vicinity against other pardalotes. Both sexes incubate and care for the young birds. Other members of the group may also help with the feeding of the young.

## Superb Fairy-wren

**Scientific name:** *Malurus cyaneus*



### **What does it look like?**

Adult male Superb Fairy-wrens are among the most brightly coloured of the species, especially during the breeding season. They have rich blue and black plumage above and on the throat. The belly is grey-white, and the bill is black. Females and young birds are mostly brown above with a dull red-orange area around the eye and a brown bill. Females have a pale greenish gloss, absent in young birds, on the otherwise brown tail. The legs are brown in both sexes. Males from further inland and in the south-west of the range have more blue on the back and underparts.

### **Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** Superb Fairy-wrens are found south of the Tropic of Capricorn through eastern Australia and Tasmania to the south-eastern corner of South Australia.

**Habitat:** Seen in most habitat types where suitable dense cover and low shrubs occur. They are common in urban parks and gardens and can be seen in small social groups. These groups normally consist of one dominant male and several females and young birds.

### **What does it do?**

**Feeding:** Superb Fairy-wrens feed on insects and other small arthropods. These are caught mostly on the ground, but may also be taken from low bushes. Feeding takes place in small social groups.

**Breeding:** The nest is a dome-shaped structure of grasses and other fine material. It is usually placed in a low bush and is constructed by the female. The female incubates the eggs alone, but both sexes feed the young. Other members of the group will also help with the feeding of the young.

## White-plumed Honeyeater

Scientific name:

*Lichenostomus penicillatus*



**What does it look like?**

The White-plumed Honeyeater is a medium-sized honeyeater with a slightly down-curved bill. It is yellowish-olive to grey above, pale brown-grey below, with a yellowish head and a distinctive white neck-plume, giving the bird its name. The males are slightly larger, but the sexes are otherwise similar. Young are duller, with much less distinct plumes and a paler bill. Usually gregarious and seen constantly moving from tree to tree with rapid darting movements.

**Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** Endemic to mainland Australia, the White-plumed Honeyeater is found everywhere except in the tropical north, Cape York Peninsula and the most arid areas. Originally a 'straggler' to Sydney until the 1940s, it is now very common and well-established, and has also expanded its range into the upper Hunter Valley all the way to Newcastle, New South Wales. It may also be extending its range into south-western Western Australia, but this is yet to be confirmed.

**Habitat:** The White-plumed Honeyeater is found in open forests and woodlands, often near water and wetlands. It is scarce or absent in arid regions unless water artificially supplied (e.g. water troughs for stock). Its overall distribution is linked to River Red Gums. It is also found in remnant bushland in urban areas, as well as parks and gardens.

**Seasonal movements:** Seasonal migration from ranges to lower areas in winter.

**What does it do?**

**Feeding:** The White-plumed Honeyeater feeds very actively from leaves and flowers in the crowns of trees and in shrubs between 5 m and 13 m from the ground. Its main foods are nectar, insects (and their products such as lerps and honeydew), manna and fruit, with some seeds. Very strongly associated with River Red Gums. They sometimes also feed in the air or forage upon the ground.

**Breeding:** During the breeding season, male White-plumed Honeyeaters make several 'Song Flights' throughout the day above the treetops (10 m – 20 m above ground) while singing a special song, before diving steeply into nearby tree. Females build a small cup-shaped nest in the crown of a tree from 1 m to 20 m off the ground. It is woven from grass and spider web and lined with wool, hair or feathers. Females incubate the eggs but both parents feed the young, sometimes with the assistance of helpers. Two to three clutches are laid each year.



## **White-browed Scrubwren**

**Scientific name:** *Sericornis frontalis*



### **What does it look like?**

White-browed Scrubwrens are mostly dark olive-brown above, while the throat is buff grey and the flanks, belly and rump are dull rufous. They have a white line above the eye and another below the eye. The area around the eye between the lines is black, becoming greyer near the ear. The eye is light cream. Males and females are similar, but the females are slightly duller, particularly on the face. Subtropical and tropical populations are more yellow underneath, males having an almost black facial mask. Other populations along the southern coastline have dark streaking on the throat. Young White-browed Scrubwrens are similar to the adults, but are generally duller, with more chocolate-brown backs and duskier faces.

### **Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** The White-browed Scrubwren is the most common and widespread of Australia's five species of scrubwren. Its range extends from northern Queensland, in a broad coastal band through South Australia to the mid-Western Australian coast, and Tasmania.

**Habitat:** The White-browed Scrubwren lives in rainforest, open forest, woodland and heaths. It is usually seen in pairs, low down in the thick vegetation.

### **What does it do?**

**Feeding:** White-browed Scrubwrens feed mostly on insects and other small arthropods. Occasionally, they eat some seeds. Birds feed in pairs among the thick vegetation of the forest floor.

**Breeding:** The nest of the White-browed Scrubwren consists of a large ball of grasses and other plant material, a side entrance tunnel leading to a cup lined with feathers. This is normally located on or near to the ground, in thick vegetation, but may be in a tree fork a few metres high. The eggs are pale blue to pale purple and are spotted with brown at the base.

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| <p><b><u>Willy Wagtail</u></b></p> <p>Scientific name: <i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>What does it look like?</b></p>                                                  | <p>The Willie Wagtail is the largest, and most well-known, of the Australian fantails. The plumage is black above with a white belly. The Willie Wagtail can be distinguished from other similar-sized black and white birds by its black throat and white eyebrows and whisker marks. The name wagtail stems from the constant sideways wagging of the tail. Young birds resemble the adults, but have paler, slightly rusty edges to the feathers of the wings.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>Where does it live?</b></p>                                                      | <p><b>Distribution:</b> Found throughout mainland Australia but is absent from Tasmania. It is also found in New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the Bismarck Archipelago and the Moluccas.</p> <p><b>Habitat:</b> Willie Wagtails are found in most open habitats, especially open forests and woodlands, tending to be absent from wet sclerophyll forests and rainforests. They are often associated with watercourses and wetlands and are common around human habitation.</p> <p><b>Seasonal movements:</b> Although usually seen singly or in pairs, it may form winter flocks, often mixed with other species.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>What does it do?</b></p>                                                         | <p><b>Feeding:</b> Willie Wagtails are active feeders. Birds can be seen darting around lawns as they hunt for insects on the ground. As they do so, the tail is wagged from side to side. Insects are also captured in the air, in active chases.</p> <p><b>Breeding:</b> The nest is a neatly woven cup of grasses, covered with spider's web on the outside and lined internally with soft grasses, hair or fur. The soft lining of the nest, if not readily available, is often taken directly from an animal. The nest of the Willie Wagtail may be re-used in successive years, or an old nest is often destroyed, and the materials used in the construction of a new nest. Nests are normally placed on a horizontal branch of a tree, or other similar structure. The cream-coloured eggs, speckled with grey and brown are incubated by both sexes. The young birds stay with the parents until the eggs from the next clutch start to hatch. At this point they are driven away. If conditions are favourable, the couple may raise up to four successive clutches in a single season.</p> |
| <p><b>Living with us?</b></p>                                                          | <p>Although it is active in defending its territory, the Willie Wagtail is very tolerant and tame around humans, often feeding and nesting close to houses and human activity.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

## Yellow-rumped Thornbill

**Scientific name:** *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*



### **What does it look like?**

The Yellow-rumped Thornbill is the largest and probably the best-known thornbill, with a striking yellow rump. It is mainly grey-olive to grey-brown above to cream below, with a white-spotted black crown and a dark eye stripe. The tail is black, with white tips. The sexes are similar. Young birds have softer, fluffier plumage on the body, but are otherwise similar. Often seen in small flocks feeding on the ground, often with other thornbills and ground-feeding birds.

### **Where does it live?**

**Distribution:** The Yellow-rumped Thornbill is found throughout eastern and south-eastern Australia, including Tasmania, as well in southern parts of the Northern Territory and on the Nullarbor Plain in Western Australia.

**Habitat:** The Yellow-rumped Thornbill is found on the ground in open habitats, such as woodlands, forests, shrublands and grasslands with some trees. It is also common in agricultural lands, along watercourses, beside roads and in parks and gardens. It is found in most climatic zones, but only sparse in tropics, arid zone and east of the Great Dividing Range.

**Seasonal movements:** Sedentary.

### **What does it do?**

**Feeding:** The Yellow-rumped Thornbill feeds mainly on insects, but may sometimes eat seeds. It is primarily a ground-feeding bird, more so than most other thornbills, but stays near tree cover and will sometimes feed in shrubs or trees. Often seen in mixed flocks with other thornbills and birds such as Speckled Warblers and Weebills.

**Breeding:** Yellow-rumped Thornbills sometimes breed co-operatively, with a pair being assisted by one or two auxiliaries (helpers), which help to build the nest and feed the young. The nest is a large and untidy structure of grass and bark with two parts: an upper 'false' cup-shaped nest and a lower, domed, nest-chamber with a hooded entrance. The function of the false nest is not clearly understood, with many theories being put forward, such as: deterring predators or parasitic cuckoos, a roosting place for male or fledglings, a 'practice' nest for the helpers or as a 'displacement' activity for males. The nest is usually in the dense foliage of trees, near the end of branches or in vines or mistletoe. The female incubates the eggs alone but is assisted by the male and any helpers with feeding and protecting the young.

### **Living with us?**

Urban development around large cities have caused Yellow-rumped Thornbill populations to decline. However, it has adapted well to urban and agricultural habitats, where native vegetation remains, except in Western Australia where extensive clearing has occurred. Eaten by cats and sometimes hit by cars on roads.