

Birds



What will be covered in the presentation

- Some of the common birds
- Their habits and requirements
- What birds need to survive
- How to make your garden bird friendly
- Bird books
- Handouts: bird lists, nest box plans and more

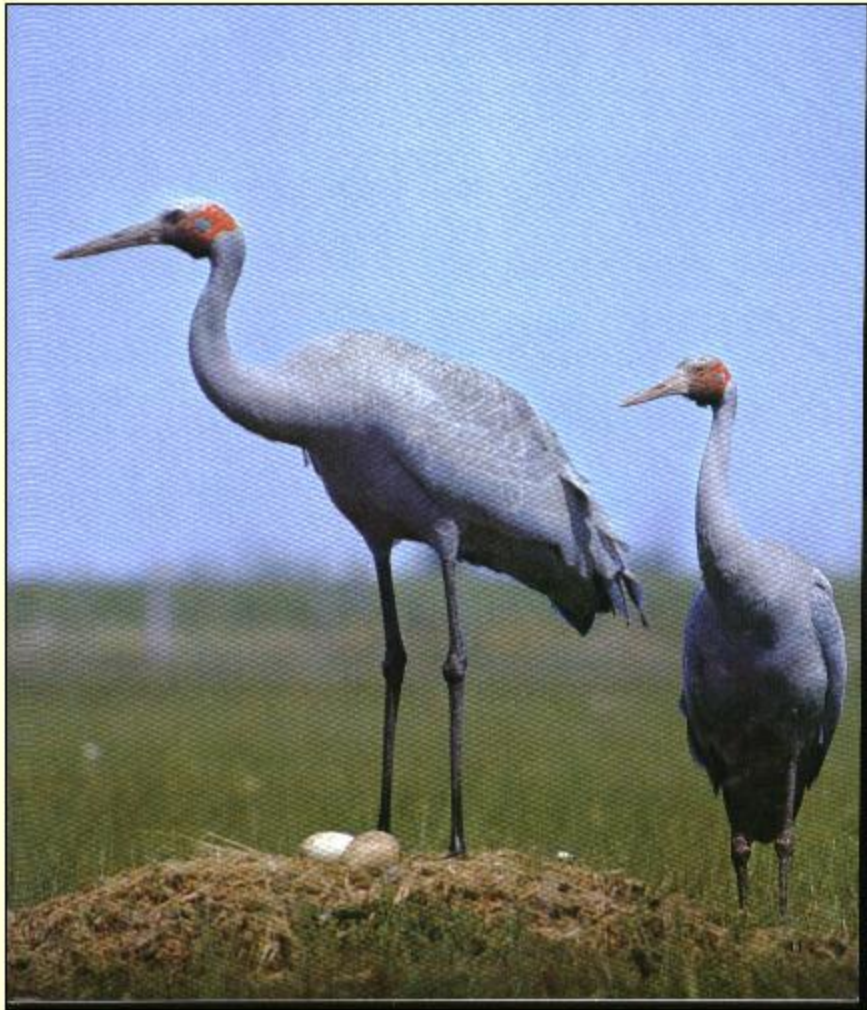
Acknowledgements

- Most of the photos have come from an old *Women's Weekly* magazine called *Beautiful Birds*
- Line drawings are from “Caring for Australian Native Birds – Heather Parsons



White-faced Heron

- Often occurs singly mostly late autumn and to early spring
- Breeds in colonies
- Builds nests of sticks in trees
- Eats vegetable matter, yabbies and other water life
- Used to be called blue crane



Brolgas

- Our only native crane
- Pair for life
- Nests can be on dry ground or on water
- Flocking and dancing



Grainivores – eat grains and seeds

Doves, pigeons, finches, parrots, cockatoos



- Large white bird with erect yellow crest
- Very loud screech
- Favors tall trees and grassland
- Eats seeds of grasses and weeds also insects and grubs
- Uses a hole usually high up in a eucalypt with ready access to water

**Sulphur-crested
Cockatoo**

Galahs



- A small cockatoo
- Seen in grassland areas
- Eats seeds and bulbs
- Nests in a hole in a tree trunk or limb lined with green leaves



Crimson
Rosella

- Immature are very different in color mainly green
- Mixed forest
- Often seen on the ground
- Eats plant seeds fruits and blossoms
- Nests in tree hollows laid on natural litter



Carnivores – eat whole prey



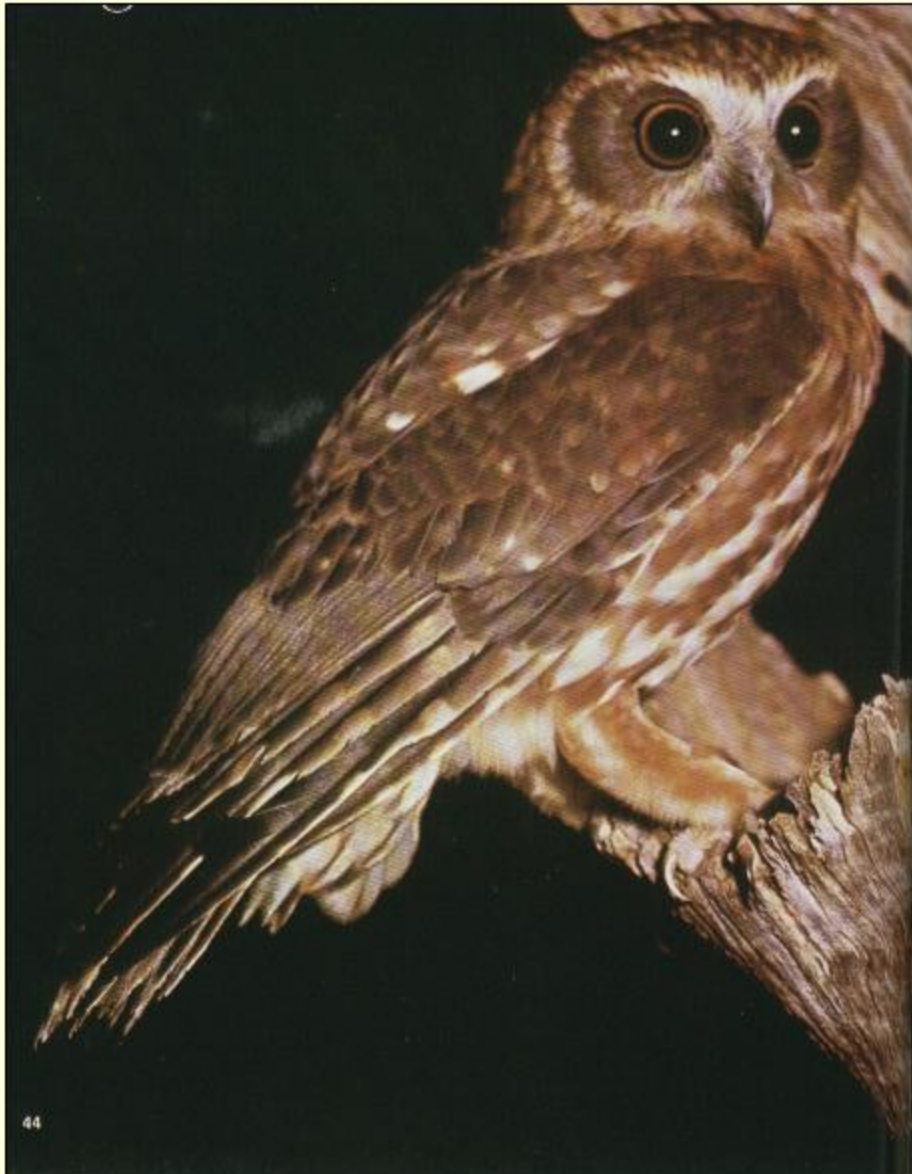
Powerful Owl

Eats ringtail possums and birds



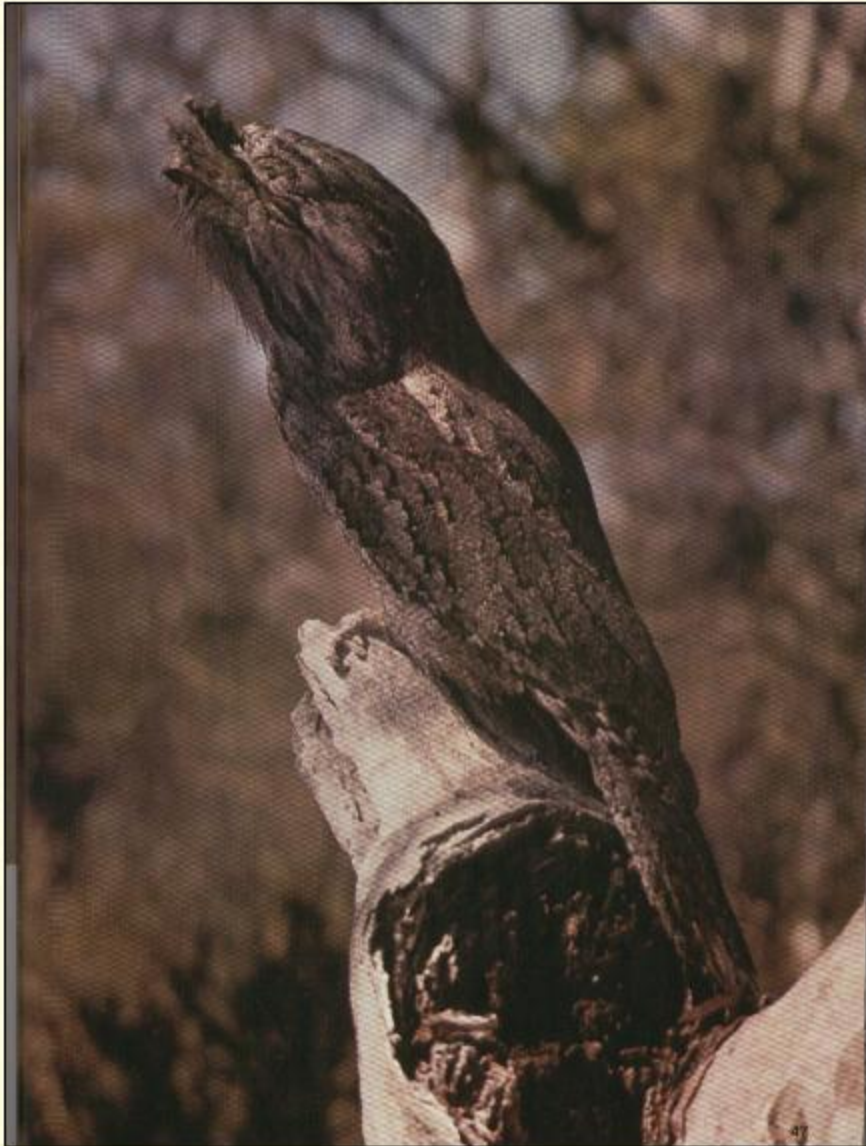
Pellets – regurgitated by some birds like owls
Made of bits they can't digest

Southern Boobook

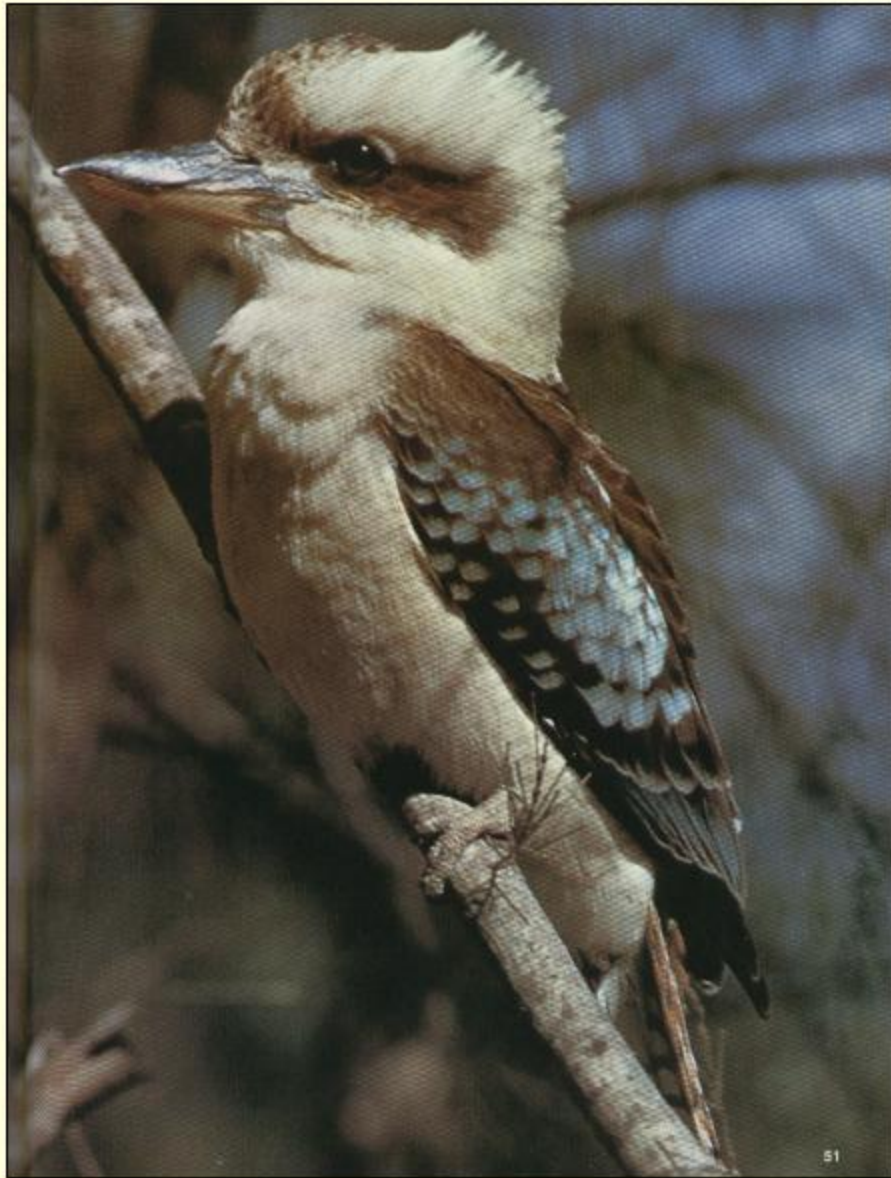


- also called Mopoke after its call
- Often roosts on its own but sometime in a family group
- Roosts during the day and flying at night
- Insects like moths, small birds, mice small reptiles
- Nest in a tree cavity
- Smallest Australian owl

Tawny Frogmouth



- Feeds mostly from the ground on large insects, small reptiles small animals like mice
- Builds a flat stick nest with leaf lining usually on a horizontal tree fork
- It likes to take insects from lighted areas and are often killed taking insects from near car headlights



Kookaburra

- Insects, worms, reptiles mice, frogs
- Prey usually taken from the ground in a sudden swoop
- Nests in large flat bottomed hole
- Numbers reducing as large trees disappear from urban fringe
- Needs about 5 ha and tall trees



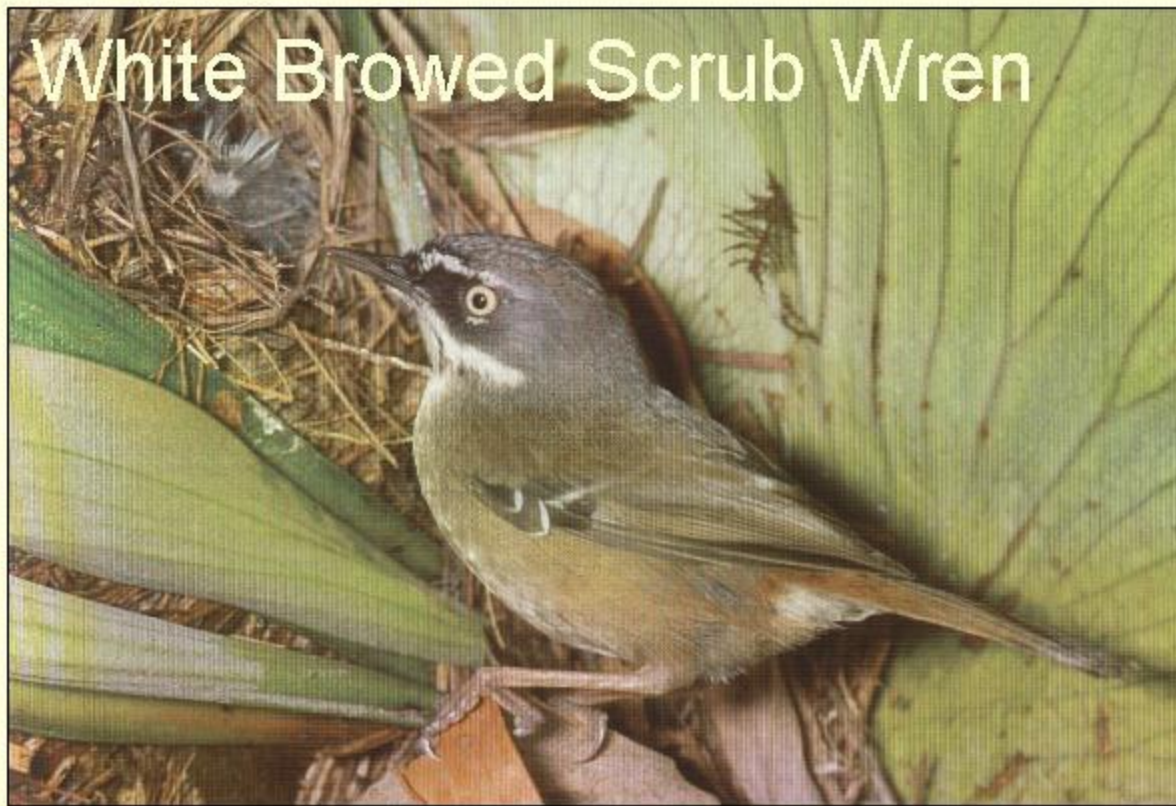
Insectivores – eat insects

Wrens, robins, swallows, tree creepers, thornbills

Superb Fairy Wren



- Usually called blue wren
- Occurs in family groups which contains young of several broods
- Mainly insects taken near ground level
- Poor flyers and hop and flutter in short flight
- Several broods in a season
- Small globular nest bound together with spider web and lined with fine grass and feathers
- Usually sited close to the ground
- Easy prey for cats



- Lives on the ground in ground litter or in the lower branches of dense shrubs
- Insects
- Early breeder
- Nest is grass, bark fibre lined with feathers

Yellow - rumped Thornbill



- Most wide spread of the thornbills
- Feeds in groups
- Bulky nests with a 'false nest'

Eastern Yellow Robin



Becoming increasingly rare as they need a reasonable size remnant to survive

Eastern Yellow Robin

- Eat insects and larvae
- Quite and deliberate mover
- Like to follow you around the garden
- Nest is a cup of bark strips thin twigs and grass bound together with spider web
- May be placed in the fork of a shrub or horizontal limb outside hung with strips of bark for camouflage
- Does the injured bird trick to take you away from its nest



Rose Robin

- Greyest of the robins
- are altitudinal migrants - winter in the lowland areas
- Insects and larvae
- Nest is cup shaped of moss and fibre bound together with spider web

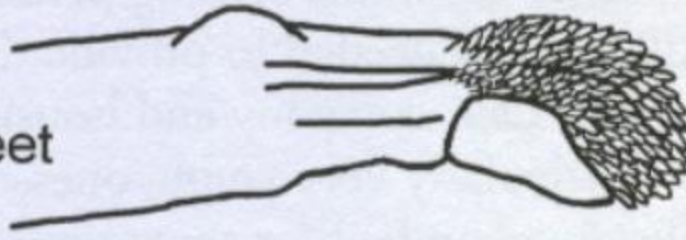
New Holland Honeyeater



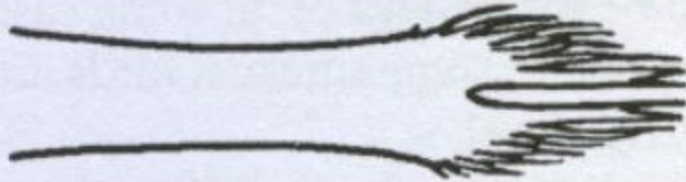
There are 67 species of honey eaters in Australia

- The spiral tongue is like an absorbent paintbrush
- They are plant pollinators
- Nectar is a carbohydrate and birds need protein so they eat insects as well

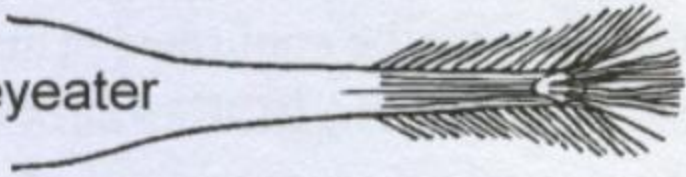
Lorikeet



Chat



Honeyeater



Silvereye



Tongues of
birds that eat
pollen and
nectar



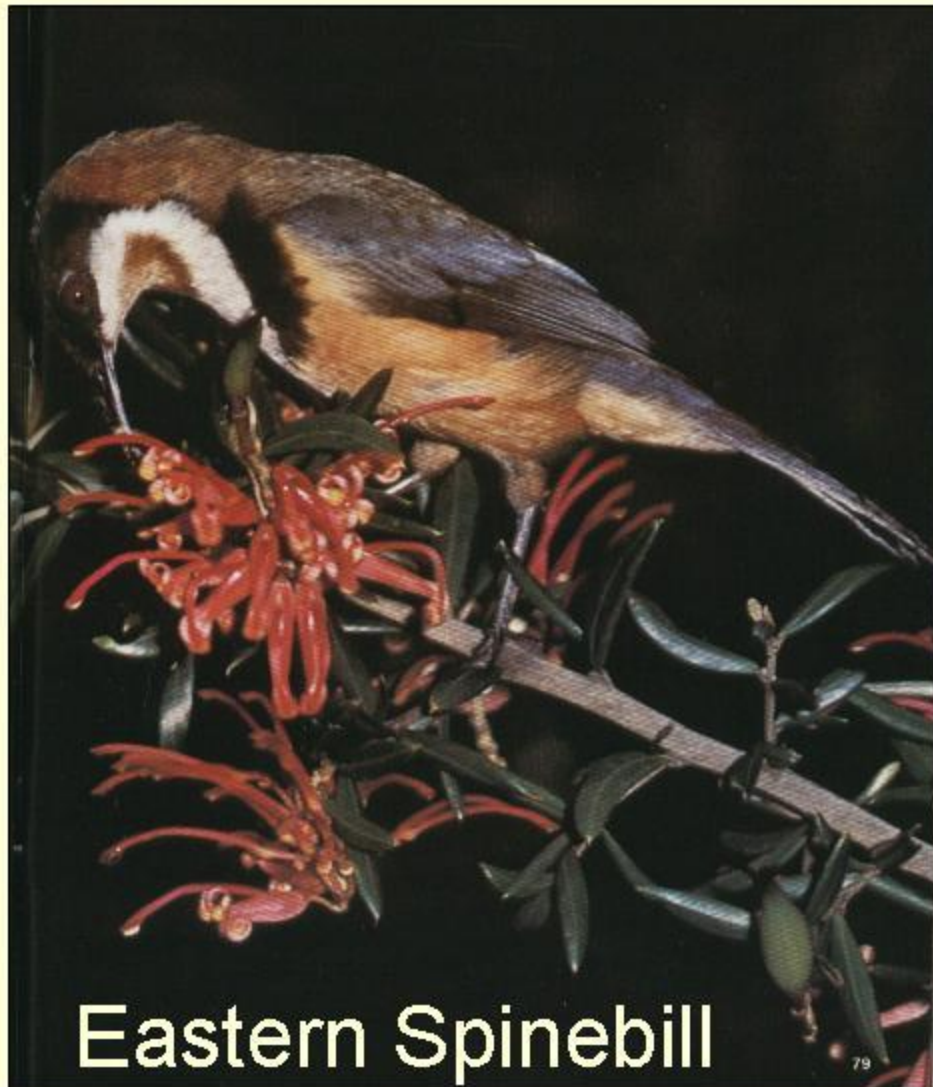
Nectarivores – eat nectar and pollen

Lorikeets, wattlebirds, honeyeaters, silvereyes

White-eared Honeyeater



- Eats nectar and insects
- Nest is deep cup of bark-shreds, grass, spiders web, lined with wool, fur hair
- Nest is found high and low in bracken
- Be careful with the whipper snipper



- Lives singly or small groups
- Eats nectar and insects sometimes take them in flight
- Takes food while hovering
- Often seen on fuchsias, grevilleas and banksias correas
- Very active, restless and inquisitive
- neat cup shaped

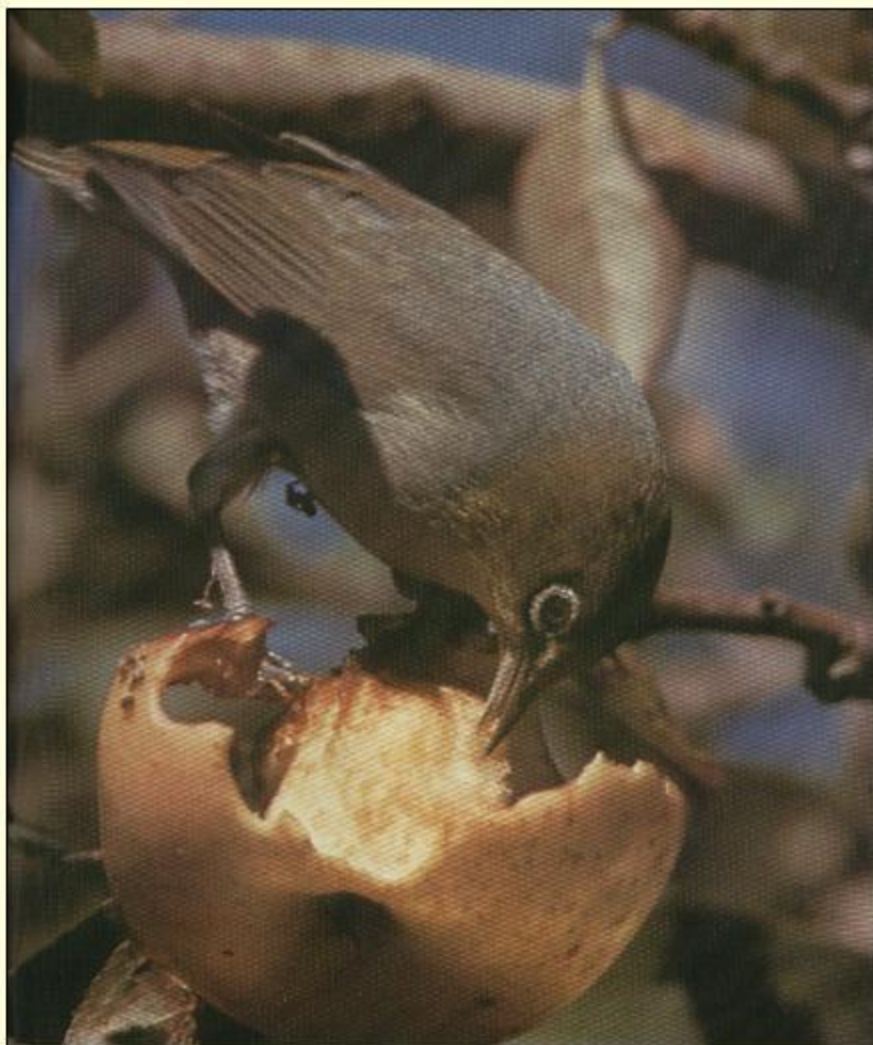
Red Wattle Bird



- Very distinctive call throaty harsh rasping
- Usually in pairs but flocks in autumn

Red Wattle Bird

- Takes a variety on insects and spiders from leaves bark and air nectar from flowers
- Wattle is the skin that hangs down
- Very active an pugnacious drives away competitors
- Cup shape nest
- one of the largest mainland honey eaters



Silvereye

- Eats fruits seeds nectar insects taken from small trees and shrubs
- Disappear to Tasmania to breed

Spotted Pardalote



Eucalypt forest
found mainly in
the canopy

- Usually nest in tunnels which they dig out of a bank of earth
- Globe shaped nest at the end of the tunnel lined with grass
- Eats mainly lerps insects small moths caterpillars beetles



Lerps – a sugary secretion built over the top of a psyllid



Magpie

- Forages on the ground worms insects seeds
- Early nester begins in July
- Can become aggressive when breeding
- Territorial
- Adapted to urban fringe living



Ravens, magpies and Willie wag tails, cockatoos and crested pigeons have increased as a result of tree clearing



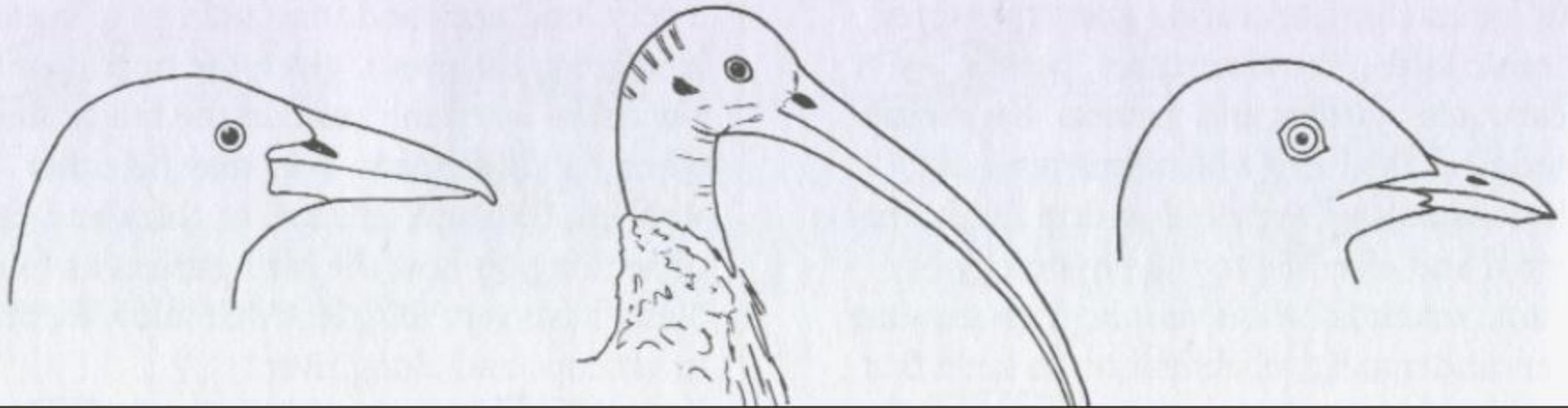
Reed Warbler

- Found around reeds and other water vegetation
- Deep cup woven from reeds and other water plants
- Insects



Mistletoe Bird

- Nomadic
appearing wherever
mistletoe has fruit
- Eats mainly
mistletoe fruit but
also insects



Omnivores – eat plant and animal material

Crows, ravens, white ibis



Australian Raven

- Do not breed until they are about 3 years old
- Long lived and mates for life
- Eats insects, skinks seeds, eggs, ,baby birds, and scavengers

Australian Raven

- Usually called crows but they are really ravens
- The little raven is slightly smaller and doesn't have hackles
- They nest on a shallow platform of sticks
- There are sedentary pairs and small nomadic non breeding flocks
- They are bold and wary
- They have a territory of about 150 hectares



Pied Currawong

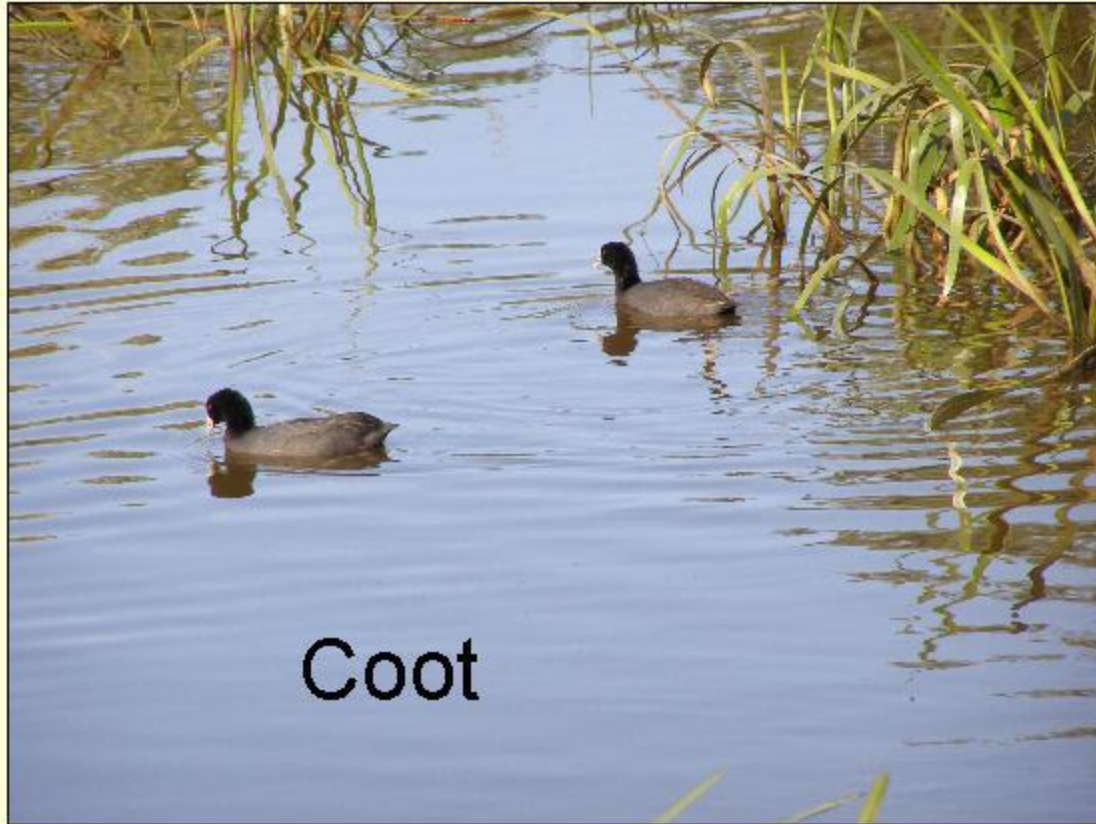
- Ranges through forests
- Migrates
- Large insects
grubs nestlings
prises off bark
- Large stick nest
in tall forest

Mud Lark or Peewee



- Loud strident penetrating call
- Occurs where ever there is ground water
- Mostly seen on the ground
- Forages on the ground for insects worms and water life

- Nest is a thick walled bowl of fibrous material heavily plastered with mud
- In the fly catcher group



- White face shield
- Strong swimmer and diver
- Mostly vegetarian

Purple Swamp Hen



- Common
- Wary and shy
- Flick their tail as a warning
- Not keen swimmers
- Feeble flyers
- Eat frogs, snails, shoots fleshy roots

Pacific Black Duck



- Eats vegetable matter from the water's edge
- Feeds while swimming
- Breeds in down lined hollow or builds a down-lined grass nest in grass



Looking into a nesting hollow of a wood duck, lined with down



Mallard

- Orange legs and the male has a yellow bill
- Breed with other ducks



- Nomadic
- Eats water plants and graze pasture
- Nest is a big mound of vegetation

Masked Lapwing



- Loud strident staccato succession of short notes
- Seen on the ground in well watered areas often heard at night
- Eats vegetable matter, earthworms, insects and larvae
- Wary and easily startled
- nests on the ground in a depression lined with grass
- Very aggressive in defense of its eggs and young

Introduced birds

- A feral bird doesn't know it shouldn't be here
- We have introduced them and they have done very well
- **Starling** highly adaptable, opportunistic, social breeders, use tree hollows, buildings, cliffs,
 - exclude native birds from hollows
 - consume and contaminate stock feed huge flocks
 - often associated with mites
- **House sparrow** well adapted, nest in crevices buildings

- **European Goldfinch**, red mask gold-winged eats seeds
- **European Greenfinch** often associated with conifers
- **Black bird**, 1930's mostly eat worms and insects and berry fruits occupy the ground layer and displaces Bassian thrush
- **Skylark**
- **Indian Myna**
 - Compete with native birds
 - Nest sites food some behave aggressively

Most bird habitat needs to be layered



Trees

Shrubs

Understorey

Leave litter and branches



plantings enlarge available habitat and enable movement of small birds and other animals between patches of bush

If we are too tidy we discourage birds

- We remove the twigs or clumps of grass that birds need to attach their nests
- Open up the shrubbery so cats and currawongs can get in
- If we prune before flowering we reduce the food source

Life in a Tree



Owls sleep in the tree hollows during the day, but at night come out to prey on rats, mice, frogs and other small animals.



Possums eat the flowers, fruit and leaves of many trees and shrubs, and nest in tree hollows caused by decay. Decay can be formed by bacteria, termites, fire damage or branches breaking off.

Koalas have hard cushions instead of tails, so they can sit comfortably in the fork of a tree. Koalas will only chew on the leaves of gum trees.



Termites chew on the dead, inner wood of the tree, creating hollows for birds and mammals to nest in.



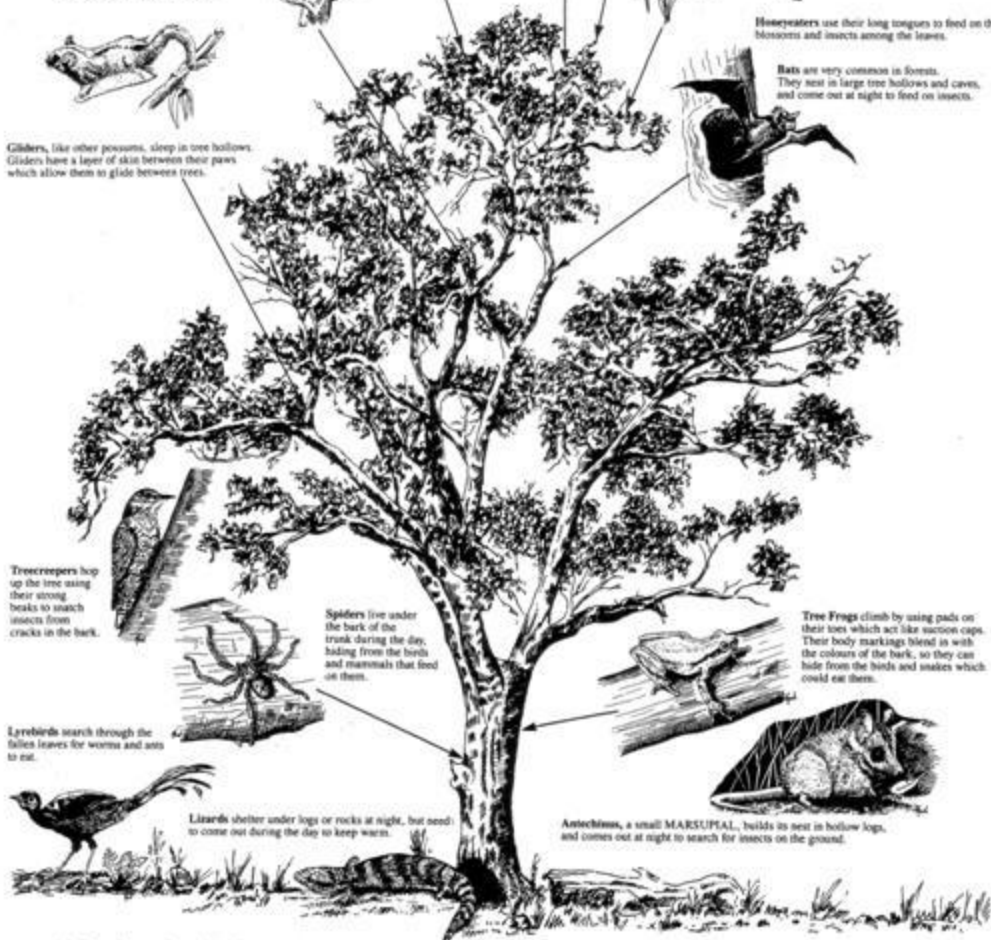
Honeyeaters use their long tongues to feed on the blossoms and insects among the leaves.



Glidors, like other possums, sleep in tree hollows. Gliders have a layer of skin between their paws which allow them to glide between trees.



Bats are very common in forests. They nest in large tree hollows and caves, and come out at night to feed on insects.



Treecreepers hop up the tree using their strong beaks to search insects from cracks in the bark.



Spiders live under the bark of the trunk during the day, hiding from the birds and mammals that feed on them.



Tree Frogs climb by using pads on their toes which act like suction caps. Their body markings blend in with the colours of the bark, so they can hide from the birds and snakes which could eat them.



Lyrebirds search through the fallen leaves for worms and ants to eat.



Lizards shelter under logs or rocks at night, but need to come out during the day to keep warm.



Antechinus, a small MARSUPIAL, builds its nest in hollow logs, and comes out at night to search for insects on the ground.



At first glance, there doesn't seem to be much life going on around a tree. If you look closely though, you will start to see how many different animals make use of it. The picture shows a few of the animals that depend on a tree everyday in some way. Some animals use the leaves and branches at the top

while others seek out a tree trunk or the ground below a tree. Whichever way you look at it, trees are essential to wildlife.



- Some birds eat caterpillars
- avoid pesticides, they remove a food source
- and birds can't excrete chemicals



Being untidy in the garden is very important .

Birds need bark for:

- Nesting material
- Finding food under
- shelter



Leaf litter raked
up for removal for
fire prevention

Logs and leaf litter
are vital for many
bird species – its
their supermarket



Wood removed
from the bush for
fire wood



Lizards form an important part of some birds' diets

We need to provide the right conditions for them to breed



Birds need old trees left in the paddock

- Nesting
- Food
- shelter



natural hollows & dead trees to nest in



fallen timber and logs for their food to breed

Nesting materials





Nest boxes





Nest box
made
using a
chainsaw



Perspex sheet under a removable wooden side to allow viewing inside box



**Consider providing more habitat
around farm dams**



birds need fresh,
clean water

Have different
depths

Check bowls daily





Replace
weeds
with
indigenous
plants





Cats

- Are very efficient killing machines
- Keep cats locked up at night
- If possible have an enclosed cat run
- Have a collar with 2 open swinging bells

Artificial feeding

- Breeding is determined by the food supply
- May stop bird migration
- Encourages feral birds
- Spreads disease
- Wrong food fed to nestlings
- Causes an imbalance of species
 - Increased pressure for nest sites, food

Answer – plant the right species



Providing the right habitat ensures we can enjoy birds in our gardens and not just see them stuffed in an exhibit



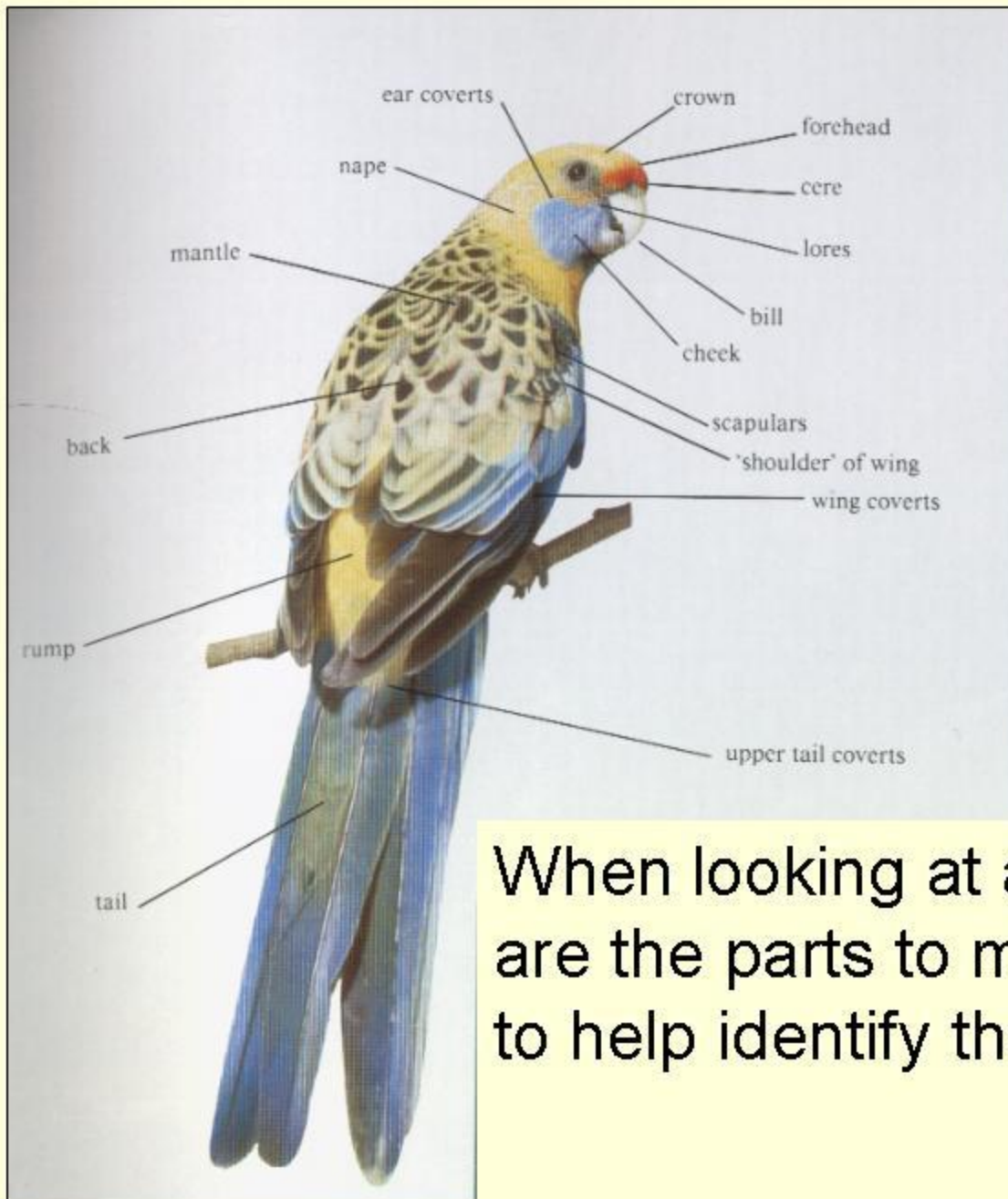
Celebrating 26 years of voluntary wildlife conservation



Land for Wildlife notes are available from:

www.dse.vic.gov.au/landforwildlife

or phone 136186



When looking at a bird these are the parts to make a note of to help identify them

- What books to buy
- What binoculars to choose