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Checklist of the Birds of the Shannon



One of the best ways to get to know individual bird species and their typical behaviour patterns is first to identify the broad types of environment — habitats — that they are likely to inhabit. Then you can predict the groups of species that are most likely to be found under a particular set of conditions, and quickly identify individual birds by using either an annotated species list for the region or one of the many field guides to birds available for W.A. and Australia. This checklist provides a framework for bird identification in the Shannon catchment, and includes notes on habitat requirements, distribution and status of individual species. For a more descriptive account of field markings and habits of some common birds of the Shannon, refer to pamphlet 4a — Common Birds of the Shannon.

Using This Pamphlet

This brochure is a checklist of all birds, both native and introduced, that have been recorded in the Shannon River catchment area. As an aid to identification, it includes an indication of the vegetation structure of preferred habitats for each species (Columns 1-5). For a more detailed account of forest ecosystems of the Shannon see pamphlet 2. The column headed "NEEDS" describes a species' special requirements within a particular vegetation structure, and that entitled "STATUS" indicates the present knowledge of the abundance of the species.

It is likely that other species which have not yet been recorded may occur in the Shannon. Should you make any definite observation of species not listed on this checklist, please record their name, numbers and location and leave it with any Forests Department or National Parks Authority Office.

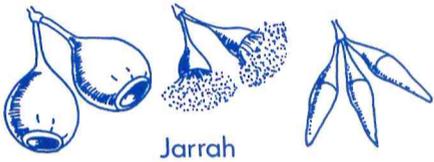


Bird Habitat Definition

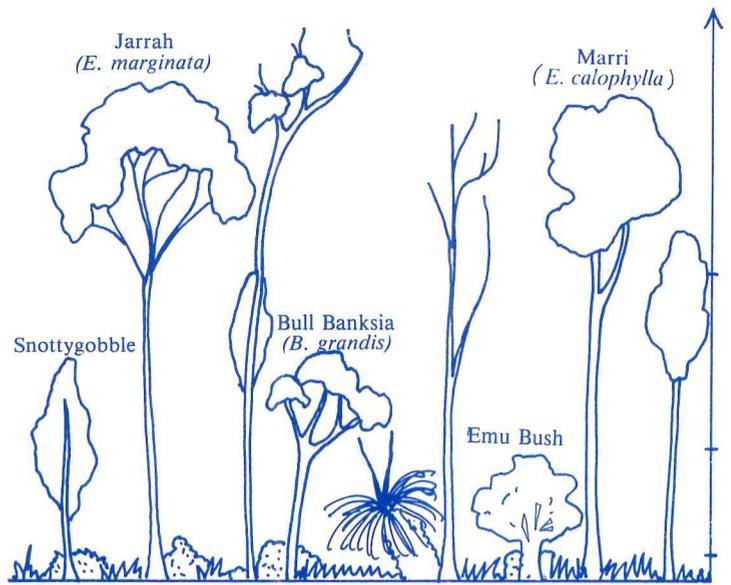
Vital clues in defining bird habitats are: vegetation structure—described according to height, density and form of flora; and vegetation diversity—the variety of component plants of a community. In addition, the distribution and density of birds in a particular locality over the year is related to plant flowering times, although particular plants vary in their importance to individual bird species. So it is these three characteristics of vegetation—structural diversity, floristic diversity and flowering times—that largely prescribe the food sources, foraging conditions and types of nesting sites available to birds, and thus the bird populations to be found in an area.

In the catchments of the Shannon River and Broke Inlet there is a wide variety of vegetation types. For the purposes of bird identification, these may be grouped into five structural types represented in the diagrams and descriptions below: the high open forest (karri forest), the open forest (jarrah forest), low woodland, shrubland/herbland/sedgeland, and waterways and swamps.

It is the open forest and woodland areas of the Shannon that contain the richest variety of birds, due to the range of bird habitats resulting from their diversity in both vegetation composition and structure. Closed scrub communities and sedgelands are amongst those supporting the least variety of birds, apparently for the opposite reason—a lower structural and plant species diversity and/or a more restricted total area of occurrence. The high open forest (karri) is diverse in structure (it is four layered), but relatively more uniform in plant composition than open forest (jarrah). Consequently, although karri forest supports a greater number of individual birds than jarrah forest, its bird community is less diverse. Thus, bird surveys in karri forest of the high open type have recorded approximately 75 species, while about 120 were found in similar surveys in open jarrah forest. In the denser vegetation along watercourses, total bird populations are generally higher. However, unless water is present for much of the year there will be little difference in bird variety from surrounding/adjoining vegetation types.



Jarrah

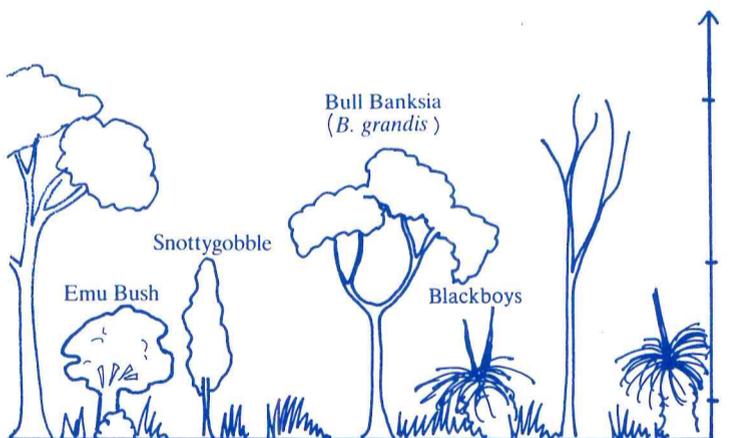


2. Open Forest (e.g. jarrah forest)

Pure jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) forest has a more open, diffuse overstorey and relatively open understorey than karri forest. However, it typically displays a greater plant species variety in the understorey at any one site than karri understorey associations. There is also more variation between particular sites over its range of occurrence. Plant diversity increases as jarrah forms a more woodland (open) appearance on less well-drained or more sandy soils.

Principal understorey trees are bull banksia (*Banksia grandis*), river banksia (*Banksia littoralis*), sheoak (*Casuarina* spp.) and snottygobble (*Persoonia longifolia*). Blackboys (*Xanthorrhoea preissii*), zamia palms (*Macrozamia riedlei*) and emu bush (*Podocarpus drouynianus*) also occur.

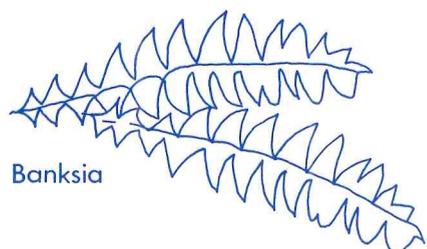
The high number of flowering plants, particularly those that produce nectar such as banksias and bottlebrushes, in the open forest type results in a larger number of bird species in these forests than in the more homogeneous karri forest.



3. Low Woodland

The low woodland type is characterized by scattered small trees associated with a shrub understorey. It is quite variable both with respect to species' composition and the soil types on which it grows.

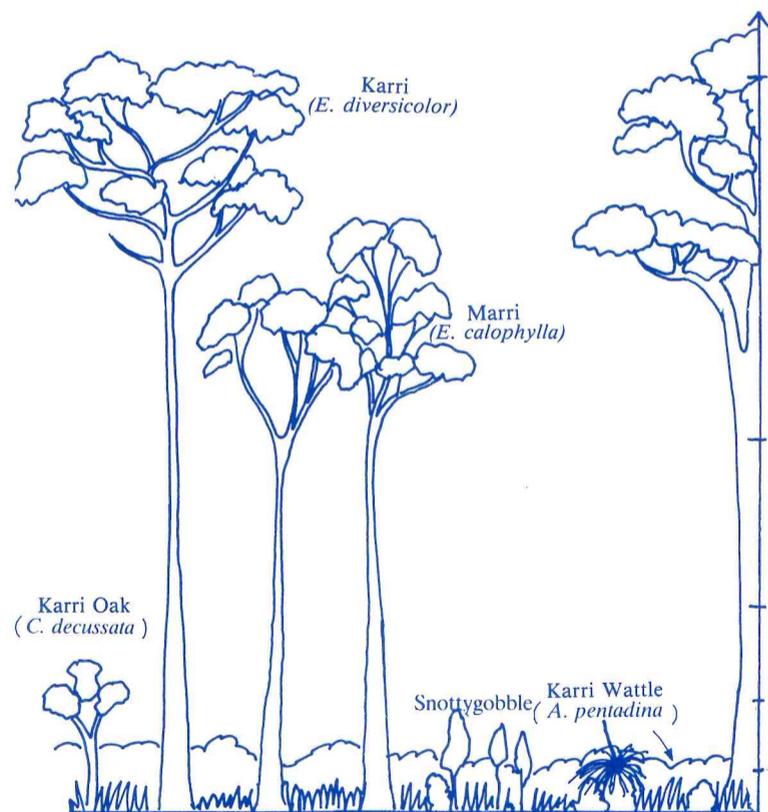
In areas of impeded drainage, stunted jarrah forms low woodland in association with banksias, paperbarks (*Melaleuca* spp.), christmas tree (*Nuytsia floribunda*) and often blackboys (*Xanthorrhoea* spp.), characteristically developing a dense scrub understorey. Low woodlands, composed mainly of banksia species, generally form an intermediate zone between the jarrah forest and the paperbark low woodland of the seasonally flooded sandy flats. Paperbark forms woodland in damp areas in and around the jarrah forest, and is commonly associated with banksias and blackboys. The paperbark understorey is a thick heath, with sedgeland in the wetter parts.

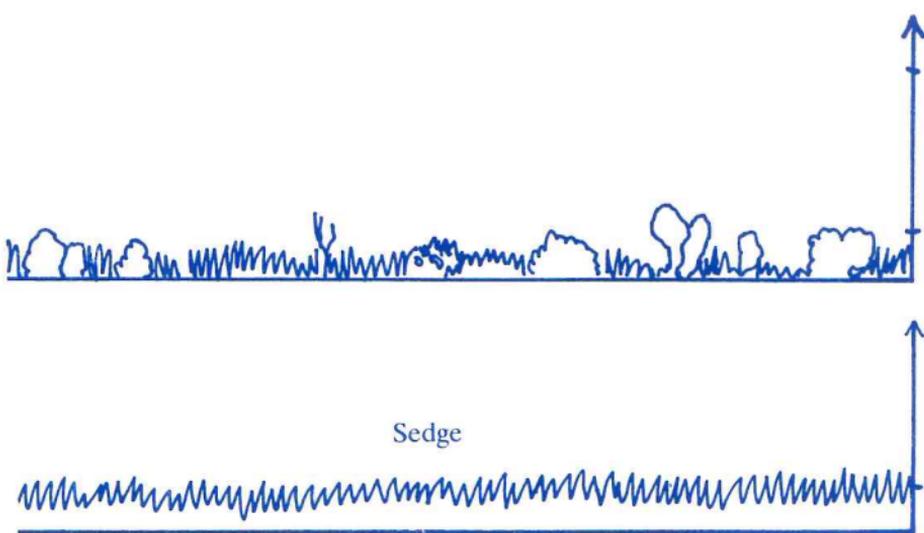


Banksia

1. High Open Forest (e.g. karri and karri-marri forest)

The overstorey of this type is dominated by karri (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*) or karri and marri (*E. calophylla*), with jarrah (*E. marginata*) also appearing on some sites. The main mid-storey tree species are karri oak (*Casuarina decussata*) and W.A. peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa*), with Warren River cedar (*Agonis juniperina*) and river banksia (*Banksia littoralis*) occurring on sandier soils along watercourses. Also characteristic of this type is a dense shrub understorey to a height of five metres. Major shrub species are karri wattle (*Acacia pentadimia*) and hazel (*Trimalium spathulatum*). Depending on the time since the area was last burnt, the understorey and ground layers will be more or less developed in height and density.





4. Shrublands, Herblands, and Sedgelands

In the south of the Shannon catchment are extensive alluvial flats. Towards the coast, these water-deposited soils are replaced by wind-blown sands.

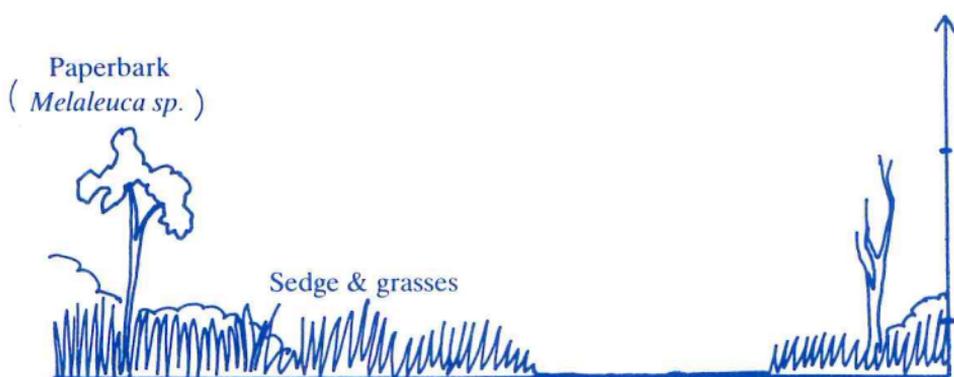
The vegetation of these areas provides a relatively homogeneous bird habitat in terms of structure since, apart from the ground litter layer, only one structural level usually develops. However, according to the site conditions, a more or less varied plant community occurs. Bird numbers and diversity range according to these habitat conditions.

On the black peaty soils of the flats, large areas of sedgelands develop. These may be permanently wet (dominated by the sword sedges, *Lepidosperma* spp.), damp (*Evandra aristata*) or dry (*Anarthria* spp.). In some places sedgelands are clearly defined, while in others they merge with floristically more diverse shrubland, heath and/or wetter areas of low open woodland.

Plants characteristic of the shrublands are peppermints and tea-trees (*Agonis* and *Leptospermum* spp.), *Beaufortia* spp. and banksias.

Coastal sand dunes are covered with open scrub dominated by peppermint which here has a shrublike habit. Blackboys and zamia palms are common in hollows.

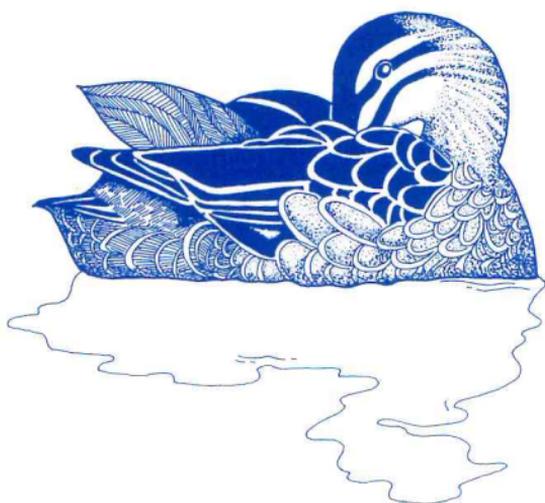
Interspersed between areas of sedgeland and shrubland, where soil and moisture conditions favour their development, low herblands occur. Their composition varies from site to site.



5. Waterways and Swamps

This habitat type includes permanent water in creeks, the Shannon River, dams, swamps and lakes, as well as the large expanse of open salt water of Broke Inlet.

The number and variety of birds in these areas generally increases from the upper catchment in the north to Broke Inlet in the south. In the upper Shannon River a number of ducks visit areas of open water such as river pools and the Shannon Dam. The rivers, swamps and lakes of the southern Shannon support waterhens, coots and crakes, as well as a range of ducks. In the Broke Inlet area, a wide variety of sea birds and waders can be found. These include pelicans, cormorants, grebes, swans, ducks, ibises, herons, gulls and plovers.



CHECKLIST OF BIRDS OF THE SHANNON RIVER AND BROKE INLET CATCHMENT AREA

Forest Type:
 1. High open forest (karri forest).
 2. Open forest (jarrah forest).
 3. Low woodland.
 4. Shrublands/herblands/sedgeland. s.
 5. Waterways and swamps.

Needs:
 U dense undergrowth.
 H holes in trees.
 F tends to follow flowering trees and shrubs.
 OW fairly extensive stretches of open water.
 OL open country or clearings.

Status In This Park:
 G generally distributed.
 L localised distribution.
 vc very common.
 c common.
 u uncommon.
 r rare.

Note:
 Underlined numbers show preferred habitat.
 Numbers in parentheses indicate seldom-occupied habitat.
 Asterisks indicate that a species is likely to be present, but has not been sighted on fauna surveys.

Text prepared by Di Ward.
 Graphics by Kellee Norman.
 Prepared by the Shannon Planning Group for the National Parks Authority and the Forests Department of Western Australia.

NAME FOREST TYPE NEEDS STATUS COMMENTS

1 2 3 4 5

Family Dromaiidae—Emus

Emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) 1 2 OL G vc

Family Podicipedidae—Grebes

*Australasian grebe (*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*) 5 G r Around Broke Inlet.
 *Great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) 5 OW r Broke Inlet.
 Hoary-headed grebe (*Polioccephalus polioccephalus*) 5 L u Broke Inlet.

Family Pelecanidae—Pelicans

Australian pelican (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) 5 OW L c Broke Inlet.

Family Anhingidae

*Darter (*Anhinga melanogaster*) OW G u Broke Inlet.

Family Charadriidae—Plovers and Dotterels

Red-capped Plover (*Charadrius ruficapillus*) 5 L c

Family Recurvirostridae—Stilts and Avocets

Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*) 5 L c

Family Scolopacidae—Sandpipers and Curlews

Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*) 5 G u
 Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) 5 L u
 *Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidrus ferruginea*) 5 L u Migratory from Northern hemisphere in summer.

Family Laridae—Gulls, Terns and Noddies

Silver Gull (*Larus novaehollandiae*) 5 G c Broke Inlet.
 Pacific Gull (*Larus pacificus*) 5 L u Broke Inlet.
 Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*) 5 L u Broke Inlet.
 Crested Tern (*Sterna bergii*) 5 L u Broke Inlet.

Family Columbidae—Pigeons and Doves

*Common Bronzewing (*Phaps chalcoptera*) 1 2 3 4 G c Forest tracks.
 Brush Bronzewing (*Phaps elegans*) 1 2 3 G c Forest tracks.

Family Phalacrocoracidae—Cormorants

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) 5 G c Broke Inlet.
 Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax varius*) 5 OW L c Broke Inlet.
 *Little Black Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) 5 c Broke Inlet.
 Little Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*) 5 G c Broke Inlet; possibly on dams and river pools.

Family Ardeidae—Heron, Egrets and Bitterns

Pacific Heron (White-necked Heron) (*Ardea pacifica*) 5 OL L u Possible visitor to dams and river pools.
 White-faced Heron (*Ardea novaehollandiae*) 5 G vc
 *Great Egret (*Egretta alba*) 5 L uc
 *Rufous Night Heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) 5 L uc
 *Black Bittern (*Dupetor flavicollis*) 5 L u
 *Australasian bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*) 5 L u

Family Plataleidae—Ibises

*Straw-necked ibis (*Threskiornis spinicollis*) 1 2 3 4 5 OL G c
 *Sacred (White) ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*) 5 L u

Family Anatidae—Swans, Geese and Ducks

Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*) 5 OW G vc
 Australian Shelduck (*Tadorna tadornoides*) 5 G vc
 Pacific Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*) 5 G vc
 Grey Teal (*Anas gibberifrons*) 5 G vc
 *Maned Duck (*Chenonetta jubata*) 1 2 5 G c
 Musk Duck (*Biziura lobata*) 5 OW L c Possible dam visitor.

Family Pandionidae—Ospreys

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) 5 L u

Family Accipitridae—Diurnal birds of prey

*Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus notatus*) 5 OL L u
 *Square-tailed Kite (*Lophoictinia isura*) 5 G u
 Whistling Kite (*Haliastur sphenurus*) 1 2 3 G vc One of the most common birds of prey.
 *Brown Goshawk (*Accipiter fasciatus*) 2 3 4 G c One of the most common birds of prey.
 Collared Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter cirrocephalus*) 1 2 3 G c
 White-bellied Sea-Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) 5 L u Broke Inlet.
 Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*) 1 2 3 4 G c
 *Little Eagle (*Hieraetus morphnoides*) 2 G c
 Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) 4 5 L c Marsh and sedgeland.

Family Falconidae—Falcons

*Peregrine Falcon (*Falco perigrinus*) 1 2 4 L r Generally associated with cliffs.
 *Australian Hobby (*Falco longipennis*) 1 2 3 4 G c
 Brown Falcon (*Falco berigora*) 4 G c
 *Australian Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) 2 3 4 OL L u Southern area.

Family Phasianidae—Quails

Stubble Quail (*Coturnix novaehollandiae*) 2 4 L u
 Brown Quail (*Coturnix australis*) 4 G c Heaths.

Family Rallidae—Rails, Crakes and Water Hens

Spotless Crake (*Porzana tabuensis*) 5 U G c In rivers and creeks anywhere.
 Purple Swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) 5 G c Possible visitor to dam.
 Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*) 5 OW L c Possible visitor to dam.
 *Buff-banded Rail (*Rallus philippensis*) 4 5 L u Swampy, reedy places.

Family Cacatuidae—Parrots and Cockatoos

White-tailed Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus baudinii*) 1 2 (3) G vc
 Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus magnificus*) 1 (2) u

NAME

FOREST TYPE NEEDS STATUS COMMENTS

1 2 3 4 5

Family Loriidae—Lorikeets

Purple-crowned Lorikeet (*Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*) 1 2 G vc Seasonal.

Family Platycercidae—Broadtailed Parrots

Red-capped Parrot (*Purpureicephalus spurius*) 1 2 (3) c
 Western Rosella (*Platycercus icterotis*) 1 2 3 G vc In gullies.
 Port Lincoln Ringneck (*Barnardius zonarius*) 1 2 3 G vc
 *Rock Parrot (*Neophema petrophila*) 5 L c In coastal cliffs and rocks.

Family Cuculidae—Cuckoo-like birds

Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*) 1 2 (3) G c Winter visitor.
 Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cuculus pyrrhophanus*) 1 2 3 G c Seasonal; most common cuckoo.
 *Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx basalus*) 2 3 L
 Shining Bronze-Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx lucidus*) 1 2 3 L Seasonal.

Family Strigidae—Hawks and Owls

Southern Boobook (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*) 1 2 3 G c

Family Podargidae—Frogmouths

Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*) 1 2 3 G vc Only rare because difficult to see.

Family Aegothelidae—Owlet-nightjars

Australian Owlet-nightjar (*Aegotheles cristatus*) 1 2 3 H c Common in jarrah.

Family Alcedinidae—Kingfishers

Laughing Kookaburra (*Dacelo novaeguineae*) 1 2 3 G vc Introduced from Eastern States.
 Sacred Kingfisher (*Halcyon sancta*) 1 2 3 H G c

Family Hirundinidae—Swallows and Martins

Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*) 1 2 3 4 r
 Tree Martin (*Cecropis nigricans*) 1 2 G vc Common swallow, swoops over dams and rivers to drink. Flocks. Also found in forest glades.
 Richard's Pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*) 4 OL L vc

Family Campephagidae—Cuckoo-shrikes

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) 1 2 3 G c Seasonal.

Family Muscicapidae—Old World Flycatchers

Scarlet Robin (*Petroica multicolor*) (1) 2 3 U G vc In karri forest glades.
 White-breasted Robin (*Eopsaltria georgiana*) 1 2 (3) G vc In dense gullies of woodlands.
 Western Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria griseogularis*) 1 2 G c
 Crested Shrike-tit (*Falcunculus frontatus*) 1 2 r
 Golden Whistler (*Pachycephala pectoralis*) 1 2 3 G vc
 Grey Shrike-thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*) 1 2 U G c
 Grey Fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*) 1 2 3 G vc

Family Timaliidae—Quail-thrushes and Babblers

White-browed Babbler (*Pomatostomus superciliosus*) 1 (2) L c

Family Maluridae—Australian Warblers

Splendid Fairy Wren (*Malurus splendens*) 1 2 3 U G c
 Red-winged Fairy Wren (*Malurus elegans*) 1 2 U G vc In gullies of jarrah.
 *Southern Emu-wren (*Stipiturus malachurus*) (2) 3 4 U L u

Family Acanthizidae—Scrubwrens, Fairy Warblers, Thornbills and Allies

White-browed Scrubwren (*Sericornis frontalis*) 1 (2) G vc In dense gullies of jarrah.
 *Weebill (*Smicrornis brevirostris*) 1 2 3 G c
 Western Gerygone (*Gerygone fusca*) 1 2 3 G c
 Inland Thornbill (*Acanthiza apicalis*) 1 2 3 G vc
 Western Thornbill (*Acanthiza inornata*) 1 2 3 G c

Family Neosittidae—Nuthatches

Varied Sittella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*) 2 3 H G c

Family Climacteridae—Australian Tree Creepers

Rufous Treecreeper (*Climacteris rufa*) 1 2 H G c

Family Meliphagidae—Honeyeaters

Red Wattlebird (*Anthochaera carunculata*) 1 2 3 G vc
 Little Wattlebird (*Anthochaera chrysoptera*) 1 2 3 G c
 White-naped Honeyeater (*Meliphreptis lunatus*) 1 2 G vc In treetops.
 New Holland Honeyeater (*Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*) 1 2 G vc In dense gullies in jarrah.
 Tawny-crowned Honeyeater (*Phylidonyris melanops*) 1 2 3 4 L c
 Western Spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus superciliosus*) 1 2 3 G c

Family Pardalotidae—Pardalotes

Spotted Pardalote (*Pardalotus punctatus*) 1 2 G c
 Striated Pardalote (*Pardalotus striatus*) 1 2 3 G c

Family Zosteropidae—Silver Eyes

Silver Eye (*Zosterops lateralis*) 1 2 3 4 G vc

Family Ploceidae—Finches

red-eared Firetail (*Emblema oculata*) 1 2 U L u In dense gullies in jarrah.

*Family Grallinidae—Magpie larks

Australian Magpie-lark (*Grallina cyanoleuca*) 1 2 3 5 G c Requires open areas.

Family Artamidae—Woodswallow

Dusky Woodswallow (*Artamus cyanopterus*) 1 2 3 G c Seasonal.

Family Cracticidae—Australian Magpies

Australian Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) 1 2 3 G c In forest glades.
 Grey Currawong (*Srepera versicolor*) 1 2 3 G c

Family Corvidae—Crows and Ravens

Australian Raven (*Corvus coronoides*) 1 2 3 4 G c Breeds in 1 and 2.

