

Red Wattlebird (*Anthochaera carunculata*)



(Photo copyright A. G. Wells)

In Perth, the Red Wattlebird is one of the most common honeyeaters and is often seen probing flowering street trees for insects and nectar and its raucous notes are considered a feature of King's Park which overlooks the city. The bird is also found through the south-west of the state, as far east as Eucla and north to the mulga-eucalypt line. However, in the outer parts of its range the bird seems to be only a winter visitor, withdrawing to Perth and the south-western corner in the summer after breeding.

This migratory passage can be clearly observed in Perth as from about April to June small flocks of up to 15, or sometimes 30, may be seen working their way north. The birds usually start returning south between August and November.

The Red Wattlebird builds a saucer-shaped nest of twigs in trees anywhere between two and twenty metres above the ground. A typical nest measures about 150-200mm in diameter and the clutch consists of two to three pinkish-buff coloured eggs, spotted with reddish-brown or purple, particularly at the larger end.

Adult birds are between 320 and 350mm in length. Their upper parts are dark brown, boldly streaked with white. Its bill is black, its legs are pink-brown and it has a small red fleshy wattle or pendant behind the eye.

The Red Wattlebird breeds between July and December but there is probably some nesting in May.