

Birds can range across different habitats. Some, such as Willie Wagtail, Crested Pigeon, and Magpie-lark, are found in all habitats. Our groupings are intended to make identification easier but are not absolute.



02. **Little Corella. Warrandhu.** 35-39cm. White cockatoo with white crest on male. Blue-grey eye-ring. Pink stain between bill and eye. Feeds on ground. Seen in large flocks with high pitched chatter.



03. **Galah. Kilarngila.** 34-38cm. Pink and grey coloured cockatoo. Makes high pitched 'chet-chet' call. Male has brown eyes, female red eyes. Social and playful birds which feed on the ground.



04. **Crested Pigeon. Murlambada.** 30-34cm. Usually seen in flocks. Red eye-ring. Has a habit of raising and lowering tail when landing. Wings make a noisy whirring sound when taking off.



05. **Common Bronzewing. Marnbi.** 32-36cm. Large plump pigeon with striking green-bronze iridescent coloration in wings. Usually in pairs. Call slow, repetitive and far carrying 'hoo-hoo'. Head bobs when walking. Flies with a wing-whistling sound.



06. **Diamond Dove. Kurukuku.** 19-21cm. Smallest Australian dove. Note red eye-ring. Makes a mournful high and low drawn out 'coo-co-coo' sound. Takes off with a whistling 'frrrr' of wings when disturbed.

Front cover: 01. **Zebra Finch. Idhi.** 10-11cm. Colourful seed eating finch, often seen in large flocks. Breeds all year round.

Vagrant birds recorded  
**House Sparrow**  
**European Starling**

Note: Nocturnal birds are not featured.



Binoculars are useful for identifying birds. See back page for more birdwatching hints.

## Friends of Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park Inc.

[friendsofgammons.org.au](http://friendsofgammons.org.au)



We are a group of volunteers whose aim is to support the management of the park and its intrinsic biodiversity, values, and diverse cultural heritage. We are affiliated with Friends of Parks and Nature Inc.

We promote scientific studies, revegetation, and restoration of old-new infrastructure within Vulkathunha. This brochure is also available from our website along with details of how to join the Friends Group.

[Find us on Facebook.](#)

The birds featured in this brochure are of cultural significance to the Adnyamathanha First Nations people, Traditional Owners of the Flinders Ranges. We recognize and respect their knowledge and their deep feelings of attachment and relationship to Country. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

Adnyamathanha names supplied by Rosalie Richards, Leigh Creek Area School. *Adnyamathanha names are given in italics.*

### Hints for birdwatching

- Birds are most active early morning and late afternoon
- Look at the habitats in the brochure for places to go.
- Look for water; creeks, waterholes, dams, watering points, tanks.
- Listen for bird calls. Approach quietly and sit or stand still.
- Never approach a nest as the adults might abandon their chicks or eggs.

### When trying to identify a bird:

- Where did you see the bird?
- Bird size is important. Bird length is measured from tip of bill to tip of tail. Feather colour, shape of bill, behaviour observed, flight pattern are all factors which will help you.

Tick-boxes included to record your sightings.

Photographers:

Chris Kirby, Jan Hutchinson, Garry Trethewey, Georgia Darter.

Sightings verified from eBird for Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary and Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park.

Design: Janet Stone.

# Birds

## of Arkaroola and the Northern Flinders Ranges



01. Zebra Finch. *Idhi.*

Your Guide to identifying the birds that you might see in the area.



Compiled by Chris Kirby for the Friends of Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park

Issue 2 - December 2023

Supported by

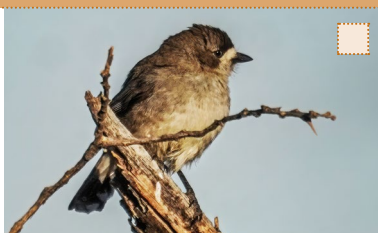




Birds found on the PLAINS which include dry grasslands, areas of low woody shrubs, open river courses, and dunes. Also, low rocky slopes and spinifex (*Triodia*) grasslands. These birds mostly feed on insects and grass seeds.



**07. Peaceful Dove. *Kayandaka*.**  
*19-22cm.* Small dove, with scalloping on upper breast. Blue-grey eye-ring. Like other doves they feed on the ground. Variety of calls including repetitive 'coo-wi-ook.'



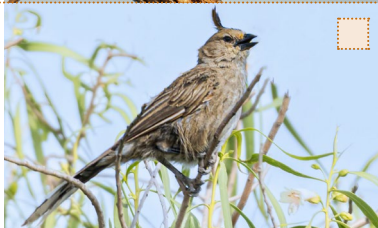
**13. Southern Whiteface. *10-12cm.***  
A little brown bush bird with distinctive white band above the beak. Usually seen in open low scrubland, on dead branches and twigs, fence posts and stumps.



**19. White-browed Babbler. *Yunyurla*.**  
*18-22cm.* Distinct white brow. Long downwards curved beak. Gregarious, found in family groups hopping along on the ground and in low bushes with constant babbles.



**08. Red-capped Robin. *Mali irta nha*.**  
*11-12cm.* Male is brightly coloured and easy to spot. Female is much duller with just a pale dull red cap. Snaps flying insects.



**14. Chirruping Wedgebill. *Warlpundyririka*.**  
*19-21cm.* Black eye and beak, black streak behind eye. Prominent crest. Sits on top of shrubs calling 'sitzi-cherri.'



**20. Inland Thornbill. *9-11cm.***  
Thin pointed bill, red eye. Often holds its tail upright like that of a wren. Rufous rump. Forages in dense understorey and in foliage of trees.



**09. Hooded Robin. *14-17cm.***  
Unlike the male (pictured) the female is light grey-brown. Robins can be seen sitting on dead branches watching for insects. Flies with catch to the ground.



**15. Redthroat. *11-12cm.***  
Little brown bush bird, male has distinctive red patch on throat. Female similar but without red throat. Can mimic calls of other birds.



**21. Chestnut-rumped Thornbill. *10-12cm.***  
Strong chestnut rump with pale tail tips. Pale eye. There are three species found in the park including the *Yellow-rumped Thornbill* (not featured).



**10. Jacky Winter. *12-14cm.***  
Small grey-brown robin. Slight white eyebrow. Black streak through eye. Look for white outer tail feathers when flying. Swoops on insects. Small hooked beak. Wags tail when sitting. Lives in most habitats.



**16. Budgerigar. *Ulyidi*.**  
*17-20cm.* Budgies are highly nomadic. They follow the rains that produce their preferred seeds. They breed prolifically after big rains. Budgies in the wild are always yellow and green. Their cheerful chatter is well known.



**22. Weebill. *8-9cm.***  
Australia's smallest bird, often heard before it is seen. Named for its short, stubby bill. Eye is pale cream with a pale line above the eye. Calls four whistling trills including 'weebi-weebie.'



**11. Australian Pipit. *Yaliwarruna*.**  
*16-19cm.* Also called Ground Lark. Buff streak above eye and fine black streak down the side of face. Runs easily along the ground, perches on stumps. Longish tail wags up and down.



**17. Crimson Chat. *10-12cm.***  
Male is brightly coloured in breeding season. Female and immature are dull brown with patchy red on breast and rump. Walks instead of hops. Nomadic, follows rain events. Flies in big flocks.



**23. Rufous Songlark. *Urtilyaru*.**  
*16-19cm.* Another little brown bush bird. Black streak through eye. Strong song 'a-witchy-weedle.' Migratory but stays inland over winter.



**12. White-winged Fairywren. *Yudu yudulya*.**  
*11-13cm.* As with all fairywrens, females are brown, this one has a dull blue tail. Tails held upright. Very shy, found in low and often tangled bushes. Lives in family groups. Young males shed their bright breeding colours in winter months. This is called eclipse plumage. Locally nomadic.



**18. Purple-backed Fairywren. *Yudu yudulya*.**  
*11-14cm.* Male brightly coloured with purple patch on upper back. Chatters and hops in and out of low shrubs in family groups. Male eclipse plumage similar to dull brown females. Renamed from Variegated Fairywren.



**24. Emu. *Warraty*.**  
*1-2m.* Australia's largest native bird. Male sits on eggs and looks after the chicks until they are quite large. Chicks have striped feathers. Makes deep 'boom-boom' noise in throat. Can run very fast.



Birds found in trees near CREEKS, open woodlands, rocky slopes and in gorges. Mixed food feeders of insects and seeds. Some nest in acacias and chenopod shrubs and some in tree hollows in taller trees such as river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*). Includes flycatchers, those birds that catch insects on the wing.



**25. Australian Ringneck Parrot.** *Warturli.* 32-36cm. Large parrot. Distinctive yellow ring on neck. Vivid blue-green back. Races include Port Lincoln and Twenty-eight parrots, Mallee and Cloncurry Ringnecks. Sedentary, rain-induced movements.



**26. Mulga Parrot.** *Vardlaru.* 25-31cm. Male is brilliant emerald-green. Yellow band above beak and on shoulder. Orange belly. Females and juveniles dull and motley colours. Bright splash of colour when male flies.



**27. Elegant Parrot.** *Vardlaru.* 21-24cm. Golden-olive. Very short beak. Blue band across forehead. Tips of wings have blue feathers. Usually in flocks. Female duller. 'Zit-zit' call. Nomadic.



**28. Cockatiel.** *Wirupa.* 30-33cm. Orange ear spot and fine pointed crest, often erect. Feeds on the ground and settles in high dead trees. Highly nomadic following the rain. Call 'queel-queel'. Habitat is near water, open woodlands, plains and scrubland.



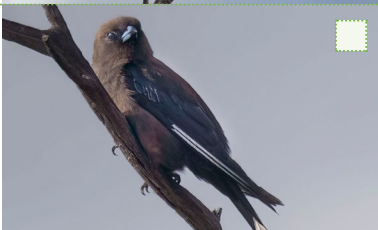
**29. Striated Pardalote.** *Warldanggarti.* 9-11cm. Brightly coloured with stubby blunt beak and a very short tail. Forages for lerp and other small insects in trees. Nests in tree hollows. Call 'cheep-cheep, chew-chew.'



**30. Tree Martin.** *Wida yuldityi yuldityi.* 12-14cm. Small, dark, swallow-like bird. Blue-black head and nape. Makes pleasant twittering sound while catching insects in the air. Flies in flocks alighting in open or dead trees. Migrates north in February-May, returning south for the winter months.



**31. Grey Fantail.** 14-17cm. Flycatcher, spreads tail, loops, dives after flying insects with a high pitched chatter. Distinctive white brow line and streak behind eye. Migratory, breeding inland and south but stays inland over winter months.



**32. Dusky Woodswallow.** *Valypulya.* 17-20cm. Distinctive blue bill with smoke-brown and dark grey plumage. It is the only woodswallow with a white streak on wing edges. Often seen huddled together along a branch.



**33. Black-faced Woodswallow.** *Valypulya.* 17-20cm. Grey-blue with black around eyes and bill. Habitat includes plains, gibber, spinifex, sandhills as well as woodland and wetlands. Nomadic. Breeds after rain.



**34. Magpie-lark.** *Mardi marlpai.* 26-30cm. Also known as Murray Magpie, Mudlark or Peewee. A large flycatcher, not a magpie but name came from shared black and white colours. Noisy, loud metallic calls.

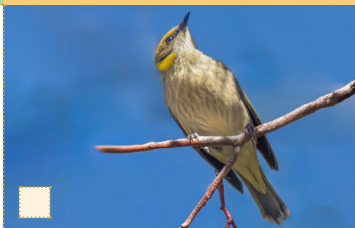


**35. Willie Wagtail.** *Indhirrindhirri.* 19-22cm. Wags fanned tail. Bold for its size as it chases away much larger birds and comes close to humans and large animals waiting to pick up disturbed insects. Lives in most habitats.



**36. Rufous Whistler.** *Awi irtanha.* 16-17cm. Male has a splendid rufous coloured chest but the female is dull brown. Juveniles heavily streaked underparts. Seldom seen on the ground. Song is composed of a loud series of notes and interrupted by whip-cracks. Migratory, but stays inland over winter months.

HONEYEATERS feed in blossoms and flowering plants. They have curved beaks and a sticky tongue to extract nectar. Most take insects too. Look in Curly Mallee trees (*Eucalyptus gillii*).



**52. Grey-fronted Honeyeater.** 13-16cm. Yellow neck plume black edged. Small black mask. Nomadic.



**53. White-plumed Honeyeater.** 15-17cm. White neck plume, black eye. Calls 'due-wheat'.



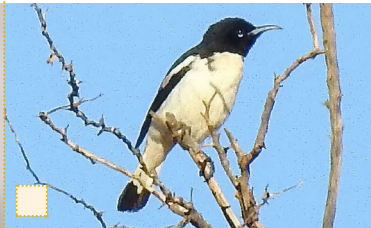
**54. Singing Honeyeater.** *Arndarnda.* 18-22cm. Black mask runs down neck. Black beak. Scratchy and melodious call.



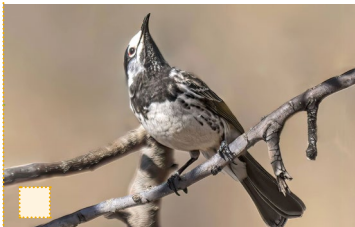
**55. Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater.** *Tyurrana.* 22-26cm. Deep pink bill, spiny cheek feathers. A range of calls and chortles.



**56. Yellow-throated Miner.** *Wilypu.* 25-27cm. Playful and noisy group behaviour. Move about in their local area.



**57. Pied Honeyeater.** 15-18cm. Male arched blue-grey beak and wattle under eye. Female grey-brown above. Highly nomadic.



**58. White-fronted Honeyeater.** 16-18cm. White mask from forehead to eye. Small red spot behind eye. Nomadic, follows blossom.



**59. Mistletoebird.** *Awi irtanha.* 9-11cm. Not a honeyeater but a flowerpecker that disperses mistletoe seeds onto branches to grow new mistletoes. Nomadic. Arrives when local mistletoes fruit.



Birds which HUNT, SCAVENGE, and PREY on other wildlife. Most of these birds have hooked beaks for tearing flesh. The larger birds are called RAPTORS and can fly long distances. Raptors are often seen hovering at a height, in dead trees on the roadside or feeding on roadside kills.

Note: A female bird of prey is usually significantly larger than the male bird. Wingspan is given for the largest birds.



**37. Nankeen Kestrel. Ngalyuka.** 30-35cm, wingspan to 80cm. Small falcon with rufous upper parts. Pale underparts. Hovers with tail fanned. Hangs motionless in the air. Single black teardrop down through eye.



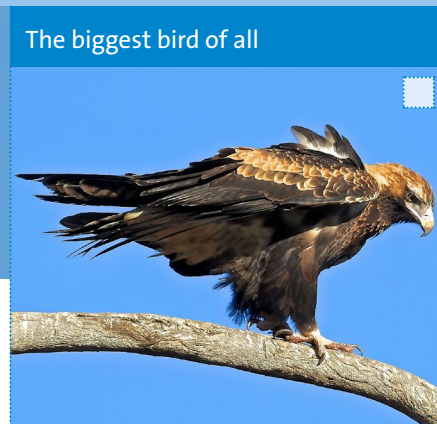
**38. Brown Falcon. Adlanha.** 45-50cm, wingspan to 1.2m. Noisy screeches and cackling. Pale cheek patch enclosed by double black teardrop. Breeds up after rains.



**43. Peregrine Falcon. Marnga.** 36-47cm, wingspan to 95cm. White Bib. Yellow eye-ring. Dark barring on breast to under tail. Occurs world-wide. When it swoops on prey it is the fastest creature on earth!



**44. Australian Hobby. Marnga.** 30-35cm, wingspan to 90cm. Small swift falcon. Similar to Peregrine Falcon but has a longer tail and the body is much smaller. Blue eye-ring.

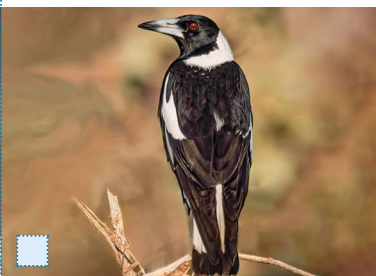


### The biggest bird of all

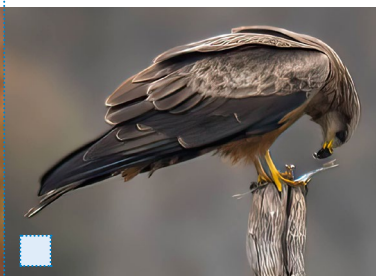
**49. Wedge-tailed Eagle. Wildu.** 90cm, wingspan to 2.8m. The largest bird of prey in Australia and one of the largest eagles in the world. Often seen soaring very high up or often feeding on roadkill. They hunt rabbits, kangaroos, goanna and larger birds.



**39. Grey Butcherbird. Aurdipi.** 24-30cm. Finely hooked grey-blue beak. Butcherbirds hang food in branches. Loud melodious repertoire of sounds. Can come close to humans.



**40. Australian Magpie. Urrakurli.** 34-44cm. Black-backed and White-backed occur. Aggressive to humans near nest. Repertoire of musical warbling calls. Can imitate calls and sounds.



**45. Black Kite. Mawarla.** 48-55cm, wingspan to 1.2m. Not black, darker shades of brown. Look for forked tail and widely fingered dark wingtips. Dark eye mark. Calls with trills and whinnies.



**46. Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike. Virlikuta.** 30-36cm. Not a cuckoo nor a shrike. Adults have black mask extending down throat. Hovers over trees and grass and has a distinctive undulating flight.

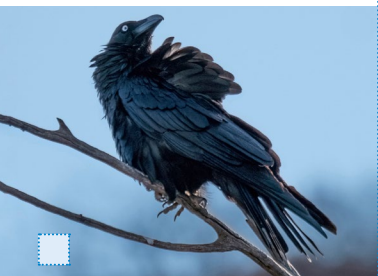


### Smaller hunting birds

**50. Grey Shrike-thrush. Arndarnda.** 22-26cm. Cheerful drab coloured bird with a great song repertoire. Eats small mammals, frogs, bird eggs. Small hook at end of beak.



**51. Red-backed Kingfisher. Yurlu.** 20-24cm. Distinctive red rump. Kills prey by beating it on the ground or a stump. Sharp mournful call 'Peer-peer.' Nomadic.



**41. Australian Raven. Wakarla.** 48-52cm. There are three species of Raven and two Crows in Australia, all look very similar. The Australian Raven is the one that you are most likely to see here.



**42. Little Eagle. Vardnamutu.** 45-55cm, wingspan to 1.3m. Very small eagle that occurs in two colour forms, pale (pictured) and dark brown forms. Rusty red head and leg feathers. Soars and glides on flat wings. When flying wing tips upturned and tail fanned.



**47. Collared Sparrowhawk. Muda.** 30-40cm, wingspan to 76cm. Yellow legs. Very staring yellow eyes. Russet collar. Long middle toe. Calls with mews and squeals. Call 'kikikikiki'. Main prey is small to medium-sized birds.



**48. Brown Goshawk. Muda.** 40-50cm, wingspan to 1m. Adult form looks like a Collared Sparrowhawk and is often confused, but generally a bulkier bird with powerful looking legs and a wide-eyed glare rather than a stare.

### Understanding the seasonal factors and role of rainfall in the Northern Flinders Ranges.

Some birds are resident throughout the year, but many others are nomadic, following the seasons. Influenced by rainfall, different birds are seen at various times during the year.

After the big rains of 2021-2022 rarely seen bird species arrived. Some only stayed for a short time before leaving when creeks and waterholes dried up. More information about these rare sightings is available on our website.

During these rainfall events, populations of birds and their food sources, including plants, insects, small mammals and reptiles, build up. This results in a boom and then bust situation when the rains stop and drought returns. Most birds breed in the Spring, when conditions are favourable, but some breed in the cooler, drier Winter months.