

Woodland Birds

and what you can do for them

*Birdlife Australia
&
Greening Australia*



Temperate woodlands = dry open forests



birds are in our nature

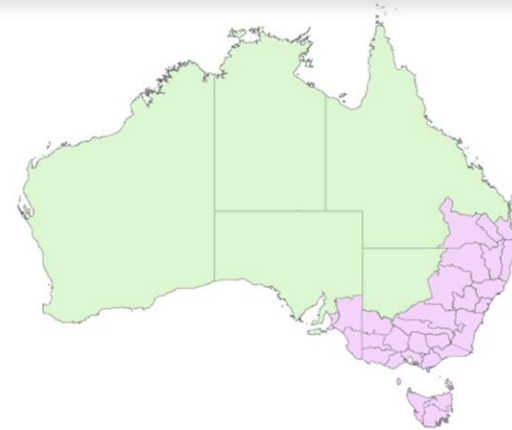
These woodlands are remarkably diverse

- ~ 250-300 species of birds use the temperate woodlands
- Many only use them (“obligate” woodland birds)
- Are one of the most diverse habitats in southern Australia



But....

- Once, temperate SE Australia was an almost continuous woodland
- Most of these woodlands have gone, especially those on fertile lowlands, and much of what remains is highly modified
- 80-85% has been cleared
- Temperate woodlands are now among the most threatened ecosystems in Australia



Birds of temperate woodlands

- At least 1 in 5 woodland birds are listed as threatened or shown to be declining
- Some birds we used to take for granted appear to be in decline

Key message:

Temperate woodlands are both biodiverse and highly threatened



birds are in our nature



Woodland habitat for birds

Structure refers to the physical form of the habitat

- Woodlands provide a number of critical structural resources for birds, more so than other habitat types, for example:
 - Diverse foraging substrates (canopy, limbs, trunks, logs)
 - Large spreading tree crowns
 - Numerous tree-hollows of a range of sizes and shapes
 - Greater frequency and amount of tree flowering
 - Ground litter accumulation



Birds of temperate woodlands

Prominent guilds of birds in woodlands

Nectar-feeders (~20% of the woodland bird fauna)

- Over 30 species of 'honeyeaters', including wattlebirds and friarbirds
- Five species of nectar-feeding parrots (lorikeets and the Swift Parrot)



Birds of temperate woodlands

Hollow-dependant species

- Form around 15% of the woodland bird fauna
- Hollow-bearing trees play an important role in providing habitat in woodlands
- Tiny holes and crevices used by small species such as Striated Pardalote and Owlet Nightjar, and large hollows are important for birds such as owls.



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Birds of temperate woodlands

Ground-foragers and ground-nesters

- Form around half of the woodland bird fauna
- Dependant on features of the ground-layer such as sparse grass cover, patchy understorey, woody / leafy debris
- Many of the most iconic woodland birds are ground-foragers



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Birds of temperate woodlands

Insectivorous foliage-gleaners

- Represent a significant proportion of the woodland bird fauna
- Species include whistlers, cuckoo-shrikes, cuckoos, gerygones, pardalotes, thornbills
- These birds are specially adapted to forage on eucalypt and acacia foliage in search of small invertebrates
- Often assemble in mixed-species foraging flocks



Birds of temperate woodlands

Spring-summer migrants

- Arrive around September-October, depart around March-April
- Typically from warmer northern regions
- Most are breeding migrants (e.g. Pallid Cuckoo, White-browed Woodswallow, Rufous Whistler, Sacred Kingfisher)



Birds of temperate woodlands

Autumn-winter migrants

- Arrive March-April and depart around October.
- Typically from cooler climates (altitudinal migrants, e.g. Flame Robin)
- Migratory nectar-feeders are a distinctive component of this group, attracted by flowering eucalypts (e.g. Swift Parrot)



The most threatened 'woodland birds' are....



Regent Honeyeater

Swift Parrot



...and these are what BirdLife works most closely on

Woodland Birds for Biodiversity Project

KEY CURRENT PROJECTS

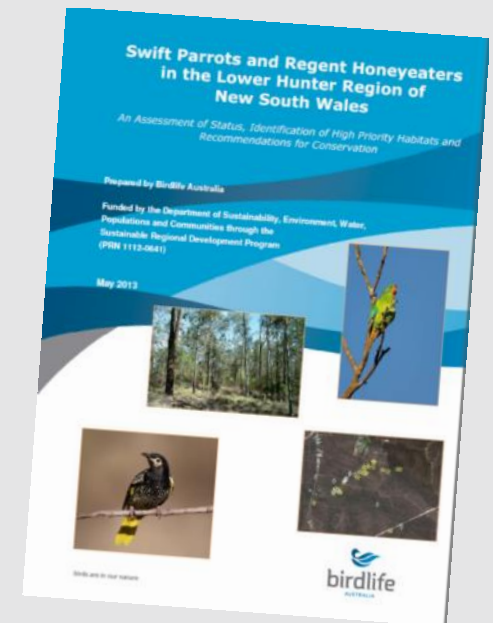
- Regent Honeyeater Recovery Coordinator (Dean Ingwersen)
 - Implementing priority actions in the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Plan
- 'Saving Our Species' program, Regent Honeyeater (NSW)
 - monitoring
 - banding
 - range-wide surveys / search coordination
 - sightings database
 - private land conservation (covenanting)
 - Noisy Miner research / control
 - captive population / release



Woodland Birds for Biodiversity Project

OTHER CURRENT PROJECTS

- Maintains the sightings database for Swift Parrots (mainland only)
- Assistance with ANU Swift Parrot 'Saving Our Species' project
- Strategic planning, impact assessment
- Advocacy
- Bird surveys
- Awareness-raising, education, training, talks, media



Woodland Birds -

what can you do for them?

Swift Parrot (& Regent Honeyeater) survey weekends

National RH /SP survey / search weekends

Always the 3rd weekend in May and 1st weekend in August

Surveys can be done a week either side of the weekend



*But ...just as
important
are records at
any time*

Habitat restoration

Does it work for birds?



Birdwatch

Surveys of birds in revegetation

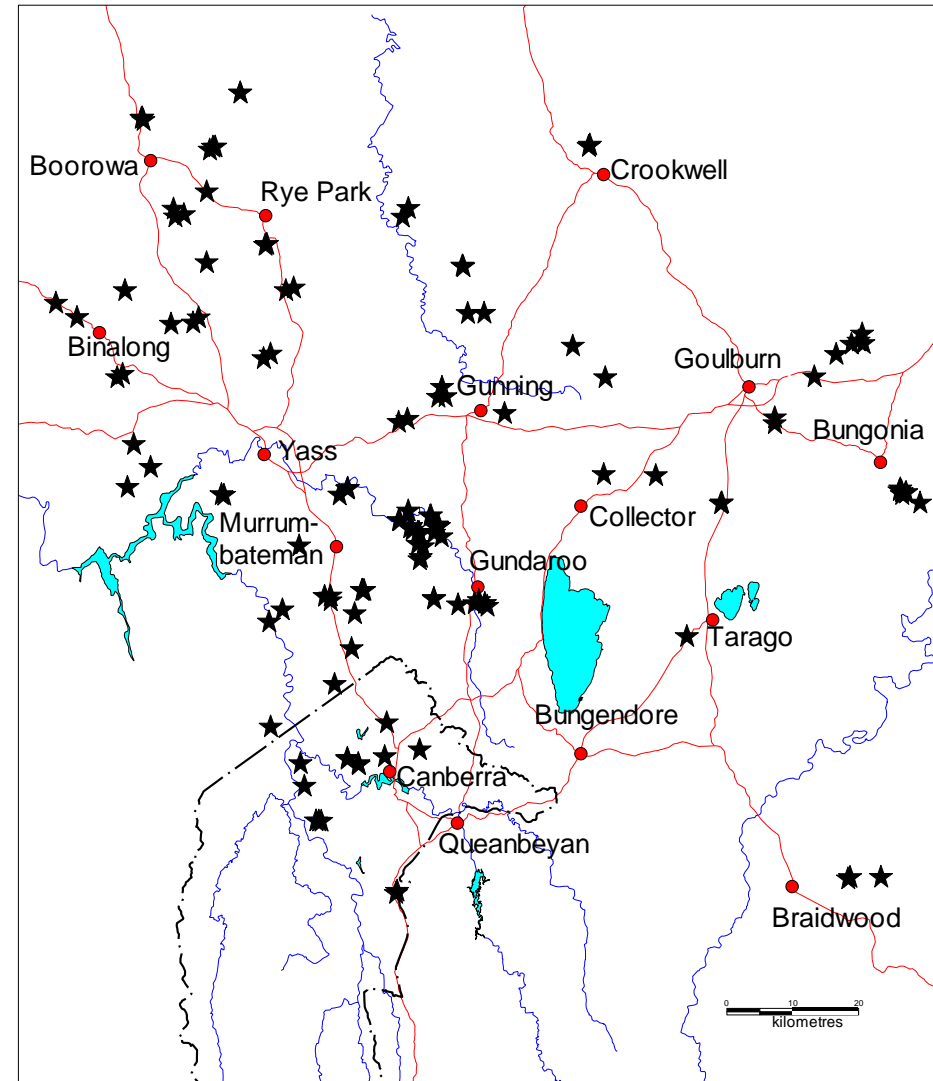
Started 2000 ... ongoing

Community effort –
Canberra Ornithologists Group



Birdwatch sites

- 133 sites
- 95 revegetation
- 28 remnant woodlands
- 10 paddock control
- Standard BLA methods 2ha/20 min survey
- Spring and Autumn surveys



The Top 20

Birdwatch - 110 species recorded in revegetation



	Reporting rate%
1 Superb Fairy-wren	74
2 Yellow-rumped Thornbill	48
3 Crimson Rosella	41
4 Grey Fantail	39
5 Australian Magpie	34
6 Brown Thornbill	31
7 Yellow Thornbill	27
8 Rufous Whistler	24
9 Willie Wagtail	24
10 White-plumed Honeyeater	22
11 Grey Shrike-thrush	21
12 Eastern Rosella	19
13 Striated Pardalote	17
14 Silvereye	14
15 Yellow-faced Honeyeater	13
16 White-eared Honeyeater	13
17 Striated Thornbill	13
18 Buff-rumped Thornbill	12
19 Common Bronzewing	11
20 White-browed Scrubwren	11

Habitat effects

Habitat analysis

More bird species with:

- Larger sites
- Greater width
- Older sites
- More complex structure
- Closer to large remnants

Some species only found in remnants,
some preferred revegetation.



Breeding

Breeding study 2003 - number of records in revegetation



Yellow-rumped Thornbill	17	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	1
Superb Fairy-wren	12	Common Myna	1
Grey Fantail	11	Crested Pigeon	1
Australian Magpie	6	Diamond Dove	1
Yellow Thornbill	6	European Goldfinch	1
Buff-rumped Thornbill	5	Golden-headed Cisticola	1
Common Starling	4	Grey Butcherbird	1
Eastern Rosella	4	Grey Shrike-thrush	1
Crimson Rosella	3	Laughing Kookaburra	1
Brown Thornbill	3	Magpie-lark	1
Diamond Firetail	3	Mistletoebird	1
Dusky Woodswallow	3	Pied Currawong	1
Noisy Friarbird	3	Red Wattlebird	1
White-plumed Honeyeater	3	Rufous Songlark	1
Australian Raven	2	Southern Whiteface	1
Brown-headed Honeyeater	2	Striated Thornbill	1
Double-barred Finch	2	Weebill	1
Pallid Cuckoo	2	Western Gerygone	1
Red-capped Robin	2	White-browed Scrubwren	1
Rufous Whistler	2	White-winged Chough	1
Striated Pardalote	2		
White-eared Honeyeater	2		
White-winged Triller	2		
Willy Wagtail	2		

Threatened and declining

Painted Button-quail

Superb Parrot

Speckled Warbler

Southern Whiteface

Jacky Winter

Red-capped Robin

Hooded Robin

Eastern Yellow Robin

Restless Flycatcher

Diamond Firetail



Varied Sittella

Crested Shrike-tit

Rufous Whistler



Dusky Woodswallow

White-browed Babbler



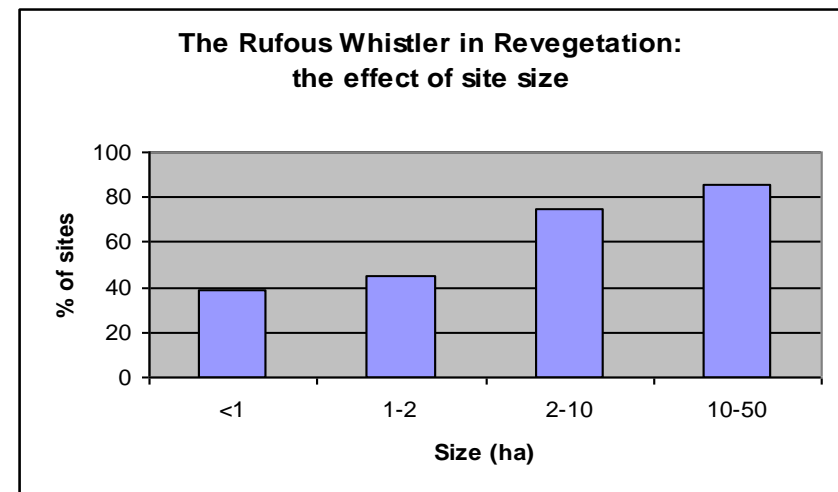
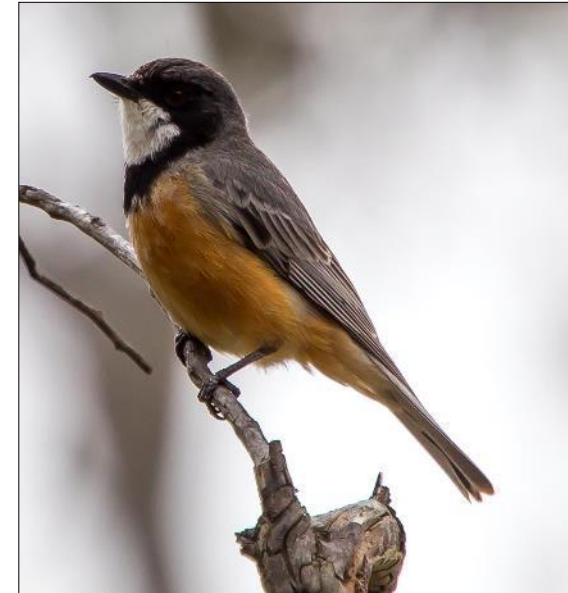
Rufous Whistler

Declining in woodlands

8th most common bird in revegetation

Responds rapidly to the planting of trees and shrubs

Needs shrubs for nesting, food, shelter



Speckled Warbler

Vulnerable in NSW

Found in revegetated sites
after 8 years

Sites mostly larger than 8ha

Feeds and nests on the
ground

Needs variety of ground
cover – tussock grasses,
logs, rocks, litter, bare
ground



Diamond Firetail

Vulnerable in NSW

Found in revegetated sites
after 8 years.

Sites mostly larger than 8ha.

Needs mature trees,
shrub patches,
variety of grasses



Scarlet Robin

Vulnerable in NSW & ACT

Found in revegetated sites
after 5 years.

Small, large, narrow and wide

Feeds on the ground

Needs variety of ground cover
– tussock grasses, logs, rocks,
litter, bare ground

Perching points

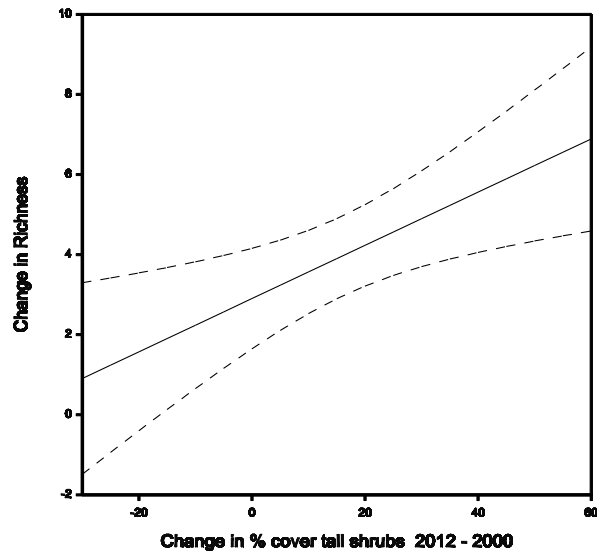


Change over time

Change in the bird community in revegetation – what is the biggest influence?

Vegetation structure and bird data 2000 and 2012

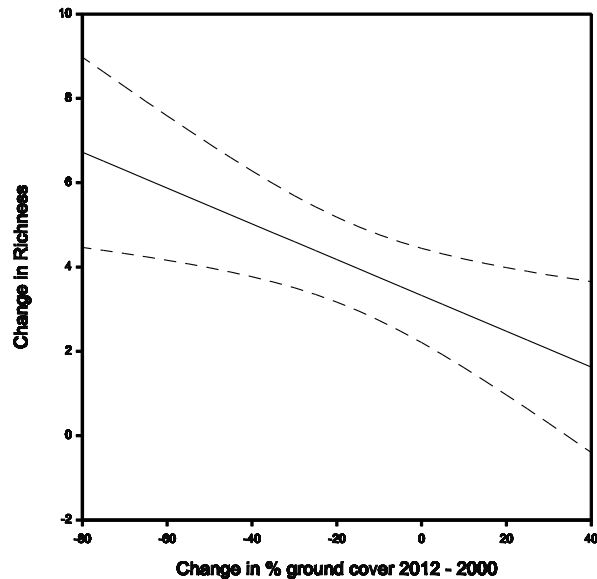
Increase in tall shrubs (2-4m high) = increase in number of bird spp



Change over time

Change in the bird community in revegetation – what is the biggest influence?

Decrease in ground cover = increase in number of bird spp.



Case studies



Ravensworth TSR. (Planted 2000)

2000

Crimson Rosella
Striated Pardalote
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Tree Martin

2008

Crimson Rosella
Noisy Miner
Red-rumped Parrot
Striated Pardalote
Willie Wagtail
Yellow-rumped Thornbill

2012

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Brown Thornbill
Buff-rumped Thornbill
Grey Fantail
Grey Shrike-thrush
Rufous Whistler
Silvereye
Striated Pardalote
Superb-Fairy-wren
Weebill
White-plumed Honeyeater
White-throated Gerygone
Willie Wagtail
Yellow Thornbill
Yellow-rumped Thornbill



Case studies



Hopefield

Yellow Box- Blakely's Redgum remnant, direct-seeded with understorey 2000.

2001

Australian Magpie
Common Starling
Eastern Rosella
Galah
Noisy Miner
Spotted Pardalote
Striated Pardalote
Superb Parrot

2008

Australian Magpie
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Buff-rumped Thornbill
Common Bronzewing
Crested Pigeon
Eastern Rosella
Galah
Golden Whistler
Grey Butcherbird
Grey Fantail
Grey Shrike-thrush
Noisy Friarbird
Noisy Miner
Pied Currawong
Red Wattlebird
Striated Pardalote
Weebill
White-winged Chough
Willie Wagtail
Yellow Thornbill
Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Yellow-rumped Thornbill

2012

Australian Magpie
Buff-rumped Thornbill
Common Bronzewing
Crimson Rosella
Eastern Rosella
Golden Whistler
Grey Fantail
Laughing Kookaburra
Mistletoebird
Noisy Friarbird
Red-browed Finch
Scarlet Robin
Silvereye
Spotted Pardalote
Striated Pardalote
Superb-Fairy-wren
Weebill
White-plumed Honeyeater
White-throated Gerygone
White-throated Treecreeper
Willie Wagtail
Yellow Thornbill
Yellow-rumped Thornbill



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- Contact:
- Nicki Taws
ntaws@greeningaustralia.org.au



Contact details – BLA Woodland Birds Team

Mick Roderick (NSW)

0421 761237 / mick.roderick@birdlife.org.au

Dean Ingwersen (Vic)

Freecall 1800 621 056 / dean.ingwersen@birdlife.org.au

Caroline Wilson (Vic)

caroline.wilson@birdlife.org.au

Visit:

<http://www.birdlife.org.au/projects/woodland-birds-for-biodiversity>