

GOLDEN WHISTLER

Golden Whistlers inhabit wooded areas, including streamside woodlands and forests. Extensive land clearing in south-eastern Australia has resulted in the loss and destruction of valuable habitat for Golden Whistlers. They readily colonise good-quality plantations of native vegetation.



Male Golden Whistler
© Chris Tzaros



Female Golden Whistler
© Dean Ingwersen

HOW TO IDENTIFY A GOLDEN WHISTLER

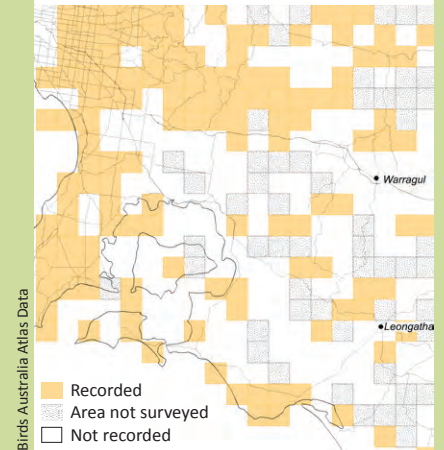
The Golden Whistler (*Pachycephala pectoralis*) is a medium-sized bird (17 cm long) that shows remarkable differences between the sexes. Males have a black head, a contrasting white throat bordered by a black collar, and a yellow breast and underparts. Females lack the bright plumage and are grey-brown above with slightly paler grey underparts. Young birds resemble females but have rufous edges on some of their wing feathers. They have a rich melodious call, often with a mild whip-like ending ‘wi-wi-wi-wi’ and a soft plaintive ‘seeep’. They usually occur singly.

Similar species: Crested Shrike-tit

ANNUAL LIFE CYCLE OF A GOLDEN WHISTLER

| JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH | APRIL | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER |
|---|----------|--|-------|-----|------|------|---|-----------|---------|----------|----------|
| Young disperse from breeding areas into other patches of native vegetation. | | Some populations move from high elevations to lower altitudes for winter and they require well-connected habitat to make this regular migration. | | | | | Breeding season: some adults return to higher elevations to breed, others will breed at lower elevations. Both sexes incubate 2–3 eggs and feed nestlings for 10–12 days. | | | | |

Distribution in Western Port Catchment Area and Surroundings



WHAT MAKES GOOD GOLDEN WHISTLER HABITAT?



Golden Whistlers inhabit most wooded areas, from rainforest to mallee, where they prefer a dense understorey provided by healthy patches of native vegetation. In the Western Port region they usually forage for insects among the foliage and branches of trees that include Silver Wattle, Golden Wattle and Prickly Teatree. During the breeding season, they build a shallow cup-shaped nest among dense foliage in a fork of a shrub or tree, up to 6 m above the ground. They prefer well-connected woodland habitats and are reluctant to cross large gaps (>200 m) of open habitat between patches of vegetation. Because Golden Whistlers inhabit healthy revegetated areas, their continued presence can reflect the health and connectivity of native vegetation patches.

ENCOURAGING GOLDEN WHISTLERS ONTO YOUR FARM

By preserving patches of remnant native vegetation and adding well-planned plantations to link these remnant patches, you will create good habitat for Golden Whistlers.

PROTECT REMNANT PATCHES


- Fence off patches of remnant bushland and allow to regenerate naturally by excluding livestock and removing weeds and exotic plants, rabbits, cats and foxes. If eucalypt saplings fail to regenerate naturally, supplementary plantings using tube-stock or direct seedings may be required.
- Maintain a range of trees of different ages within remnant native patches – even dead trees provide valuable habitat.
- Protect paddock trees by fencing out to the drip line and planting understorey species beneath the trees. Circular, stand-alone fencing has been designed just for this purpose.
- Leave fallen trees, branches, leaves and flowers to break down naturally. This encourages natural regeneration, provides insect habitat and improves soil health.
- When establishing a new stock shed, it should be sited as far away as possible from remnant native vegetation, to avoid weed spread, invasion of pest birds and to reduce the risk of fire spreading from one site to the other.


LINK REMNANT PATCHES WITH PLANTATIONS


- Increase the connectivity of remnant native patches by linking them with strips of planted vegetation that are at least 20 m wide and with catchment corridors established by your local Landcare Group.
- When planting new vegetation, plant trees, shrubs and groundcover that occur naturally (indigenous) in your local area.
- Plant out at least 30 m on either side of gullies, creeks and rivers, connecting remnant patches along watersways where possible.
- Fence off new plantations from livestock to limit the amount of grazing and promote growth of the understorey.



DID YOU KNOW?

 Paddock trees provide stepping stones for birds to move between remnant vegetation patches.

 Woodland bird species are 8% more diverse on farms with at least two different types of tree species.

 Landcare and various government agencies run incentive schemes to fund revegetation, protection and management of remnant patches. Contact your local Landcare Group or Network for more information.



Department of Sustainability
& Environment
Department of Primary
Industries



This fact sheet has been produced by Birds Australia for the Western Port Land Stewardship Project 2010-2011 and was funded by the Victorian Government's Natural Resources Investment Program through the Port Phillip and Western Port CMA.

FACT SHEETS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR:

- CRESTED SHRIKE-TIT
- STRIATED PARDALOTE
- SCARLET ROBIN
- JACKY WINTER

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