



SCARLET ROBIN

Scarlet Robins inhabit open, dry forests and woodlands. Although widespread in south-eastern Australia, their numbers are declining as a result of the loss and deterioration of suitable habitat through land clearing. Fortunately, Scarlet Robins respond well to established plantations.



Male Scarlet Robin
© Chris Tzaros



Female Scarlet Robin
© Dean Ingwersen

HOW TO IDENTIFY A SCARLET ROBIN

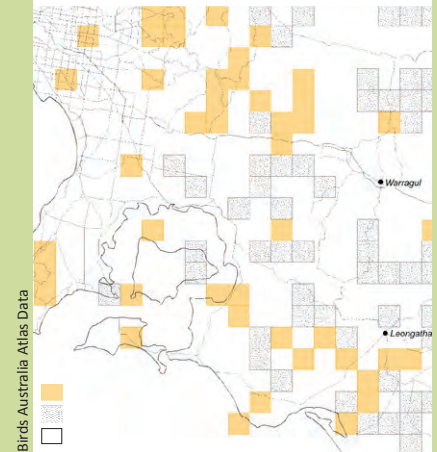
Male and female Scarlet Robins (*Petroica multicolor*) are strikingly different. The male Scarlet Robin has a brilliant scarlet breast with a black throat and back. It has a large, white patch on its forehead that helps to differentiate it from other similar looking 'red robins'. The female has a pale-orange breast, a white forehead and a grey-brown neck and back. Scarlet Robins have a distinctive foraging behaviour, perching on low branches or stumps before pouncing down on insect prey. Their call is a descending 'seer-seer-seer' or 'wee-cheedalee-dalee'. They occur singly or in pairs.

Similar species: Flame Robin; Red-capped Robin

ANNUAL LIFE CYCLE OF A SCARLET ROBIN

| JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH | APRIL | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER |
|---|----------|--|-------|-----|------|---|--------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|
| End of breeding season; young disperse to open woodland habitats. | | Some birds migrate from higher elevations to spend winter in open areas at lower altitudes. Well-connected habitat assists safe movement during migration. | | | | Breeding season: Some adults return to higher elevations to breed. Females incubate up to 4 eggs and both parents feed the nestlings for 16–18 days before they fledge. | | | | | |

Distribution in Western Port Catchment Area and Surroundings



WHAT MAKES GOOD SCARLET ROBIN HABITAT?



Scarlet Robins inhabit dry eucalypt forests and woodlands, farmland and parks in urban areas. Heathy patches of native vegetation that include Manna Gum, Brown Stringy Bark, Messmate and Golden Wattle provide ample food and habitat for Scarlet Robins in the Western Port region, particularly areas with open understorey and a sparse layer of saplings. Scarlet Robins feed on insects on the ground or taken from the bark and foliage of trees, mostly within 4 m of the ground. They build cup-shaped nests in vertical forks or horizontal boughs of trees, usually below 5 m.

ENCOURAGING SCARLET ROBINS ONTO YOUR FARM

Scarlet Robins are more likely to occur in plantations and open woodland areas than any other type of vegetation on a farm. Shrubs within plantations provide valuable nesting sites and open ground in woodlands provide valuable feeding sites.

ESTABLISH TREES ON YOUR FARM

- Plant native trees (particularly *Acacia* and *Eucalyptus* species), shrubs and groundcover to maximise soil protection and suppress weeds.
- Mixed plantations of native species establish better and allow wind to pass through, reducing wind turbulence.
- Larger plantations support more wildlife than smaller ones and can suppress weed growth: aim for two hectares or more.
- Plantations should be at least 20 m wide to provide protected areas away from the edges.
- Keep livestock excluded from revegetated areas to promote growth and natural regeneration of the understorey.
- Increase the area of your plantations by including a clear buffer area around the edge. This can help with access for weed control and also provide feeding areas for Scarlet Robins.

LINK EXISTING REMNANT PATCHES

- Plantations established adjacent to patches of remnant native vegetation or paddock trees will promote a network of habitats and facilitate movement between habitat patches.
- Extend patches of remnant native vegetation by linking them with planted vegetation strips at least 20 m wide.



Plantations create important habitat for birds © Glenn Ehmke

DID YOU KNOW?

- Block plantations support more species of birds than strip plantations.
- Trees protect surrounding pastures and reduce stock stress, improving production.
- The number of ground-foraging birds is lower in areas where fertiliser has been used in the last 5 years.



Plantations strips create corridors for bird movement © Glenn Ehmke



Department of Sustainability
& Environment
Department of Primary
Industries



FACT SHEETS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR:

- GOLDEN WHISTLER
- STRIATED PARDALOTE
- CRESTED SHRIKE-TIT
- JACKY WINTER

For more information and assistance contact:

Birds Australia

t: (03) 9347 0757

e: bof@birdsaustralia.com.au w: birdsaustralia.com.au

Bass Coast Landcare

t: (03) 5678 2335

Western Port Catchment Landcare

t: (03) 5941 8446

South Gippsland Landcare

t: (03) 5662 5759



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.