

# Birds as Indicators Case Study

# Bird Data



Each school was allocated an icon bird (indicator species) to monitor more closely over time as part of their School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP).

During 2008 nine schools conducted 66 surveys and recorded 29 bird species in their school grounds between April and November 2008 as part of the pilot project for 'Answering the Call'. Each school's data was divided into two graphs of "urban lovers" and "urban haters" to articulate the key urban bird conservation message: to address small bird decline in urban areas connection of habitat and provision of dense habitat and structural diversity was encouraged. Each school was allocated an icon bird (indicator species) to monitor more closely over time as part of their School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP). For example one school recorded Superb Fairy-wrens in their school. This is the "bird to watch" as there are threats to this species from habitat loss and feral predators. If the school can monitor this species over time and manage the school grounds to protect this species they will be contributing greatly to biodiversity conservation in the region.



## Species with Habitat Preferences

### Urban lovers

Maggie Lark  
Spotted Fantail  
White Wagtail  
Rainbow Lorikeet  
Galah  
Red Wattlebird  
Welcome Swallow  
Common Starling  
Common Myra  
Noddy Miner  
House Sparrow  
Common Blackbird  
White-plumaged Honeyeater  
Rock Dove  
Australian Magpie  
Crested Pigeon  
Red-rumped Parrot  
Starling  
Eastern Rosella  
Superb-crowned Cuckoo  
Toucan  
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike  
Grey Butcherbird  
Brown Honeyeater  
Little Wattlebird

European Goldfinch  
Little Plover  
Singing Honeyeater  
Masked Lorikeet  
Golden-headed Cuckoo  
Cassowary Reed Warbler  
Laughing Turtie-Dove  
European Tree Sparrow  
Little Frigatebird  
Australian Hobby  
Song Thrush  
European Greenfinch  
Scary-breasted Lorikeet  
Sacred Kingfisher  
Yellow-rumped Thornbill  
Common Kestrel  
Blue-faced Honeyeater  
Red-wattled Tullia  
Brush Cuckoo  
Nankeen Kestrel  
Little Grassbird  
Little Lorikeet  
Purple-crowned Lorikeet  
Noddy Miner  
Butcherbird

### Urban haters

Golden Whistler  
Grey Strike-Hawk  
Grey Fantail  
Eastern Whipbird  
White-browed Scrubwren  
Eastern Yellow Robin  
Brown Thornbill  
Scarlet Robin  
Yellow-faced Honeyeater  
Red-browed Finch  
White-throated Tree-skipper  
Lewin's Honeyeater  
Common Rosella  
Superb Lyrebird  
Fan-tailed Cuckoo  
White-naped Honeyeater  
Australian King-Parrot  
Striated Thornbill  
Yellow-killed Honeyeater  
Wedge-tailed Eagle  
Satin Bowerbird  
Brown-Cuckoo-Dove  
Yellow-billed Black-Cockatoo  
White-eared Honeyeater  
Rufous Whistler

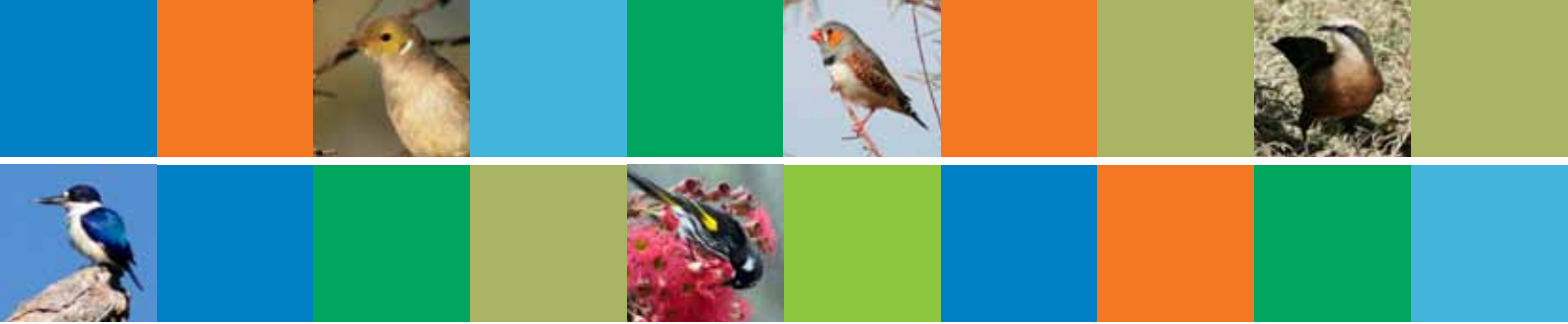
Shaded Fantail  
Superb Fairy-wren  
White-breasted Noddy  
Western Sparrow  
Spangled Fairy-wren  
Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo  
Western Rosella  
Hairy Thornbill  
Dusky Woodswallow  
Fuscous Honeyeater  
Buff-rumped Thornbill  
Brown-headed Honeyeater  
Crescent Honeyeater  
Australian Brush-sparrow  
White-headed Pigeon  
Brown Gerygone  
Grey Curlew  
Scarlet Honeyeater  
Weebill  
Rufous Fantail  
Bon-bon-bon-bon Dove  
Spotted Pardalote  
Eastern Spinebill  
Laughing Kookaburra  
Red-winged Fairy-wren

Western Yellow Robin  
Western Thornbill  
Rufous Treecreeper  
White-winged Tiller  
White-tailed Black-Cockatoo  
Red-capped Parrot  
Satin Finlayson  
Pallid Cuckoo  
White-winged Gough  
Flame Robin  
Olive Whistler  
Topknot Pigeon  
Red-browed Tree-skipper  
Sassaparilla Thrush  
Rose Robin  
Large-billed Scrubwren  
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo  
Tree Martin  
Wings Pigeon  
Duckbill  
Common Bronzewing  
Mistletoebird  
Variegated Fairy-wren  
Spangled Drongo  
Red Curlew

## How Are Birds Indicators of Sustainability?

- Biodiversity / Species Richness
- Fragmentation / Presence Absence
- Imbalance / Invasive Species
- Climate Change / Seasonal Movements
- Chemicals / Food Chain Bioaccumulation
- Habitat Quality / Waste / Water Management Behaviour
- Development / Historical Records
- Culture / Arts and Music



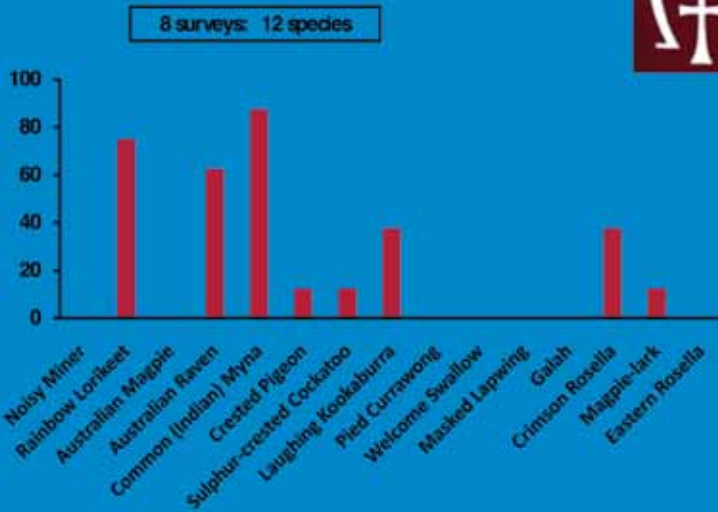


In addition some schools had low bird diversity so instead examined bird behaviour as an indicator of the health of their school environment. Two schools observed Australian Ravens foraging on rubbish in the playground. They took action and established recycling programs, composting and worm farming and engaged other students in the school with a “compost rap”.

As a result of interpreting their observations the students at all nine schools: installed nest boxes and bird baths; implemented no mow zones to encourage native grasses; planted 3000 native plants; and reformed the schools' waste management practices.

Thanks to Contributors: Text Aimee Freimanis Photos: Frank Spolz

## Marian College



If the school can monitor this species over time and manage the school grounds to protect this species they will be contributing greatly to biodiversity conservation in the region.

## Marian Fairy-wrens

