

Birds of the Brukunga mine

Since the native vegetation on the tailings dam has begun to establish, there has been increased bird activity in the area. Birds come to the site to feed on insects, native flowers and to breed.



Phylidonyris novaehollandiae - New Holland Honeyeater

Diversity

The diversity of birds at the mine gives an indication of the status of the vegetation. There needs to be a good mixture of trees and shrubs to make a suitable habitat for different types of birds. This ensures there are a combination of ground foraging birds, understorey birds and upper storey birds. A Birds Australia study indicated that bird diversity increases with the proportion of native vegetation (Gosper 2001).



Malurus cyaneus - Superb Fairy-Wren

A healthy understorey of native shrubs and/or grasses is one of the most important factors in maintaining bird diversity. Native shrubs provide nesting habitat for small birds, and a range of food such as nectar, seed, insects and fruit that are not always available from eucalypts (Ford 1989, Gosper 2001). At Brukunga we have many native shrubs and trees available for birds to call home.

Habitat

At Brukunga fallen trees are left in place to provide valuable habitat for birds and other wildlife. Fallen branches decompose to provide nutrients to vegetation. Bark and ground foraging birds are also more abundant in areas with many fallen trees or branches (Gosper 2001).



Pardalotus striatus - Striated Pardalote

Pests

Birds also play an important role in pest control. A healthy bird community removes between 50 and 70% of the leaf-eating insects from patches of farm trees (Gosper 2001).

A range of birds have been observed at the rehabilitated tailings dam on two visits, 17/10/03 and 07/01/04. These observations were conducted both in the



early morning and late afternoon, during peak activity periods. However to gather data on migrating species, such as Robins, more observations need to be made during autumn and winter. A regular program of bird observation has been instigated to monitor these trends and to gather data. Table 1 shows the species identified at the site to date.

Observers: Ian Hopton and Jayne Randall – PIRSA Environmental Officers



Platycecus elegans - Crimson Rosella



Vegetation and fallen leaves over the baron tailings surface.

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Accipiter fasciatus</i>	Brown Goshawk
<i>Vanellus miles</i>	Masked Lapwing
<i>Phaps calcoptera</i>	Common Bronzewing
<i>Cacatua galerita</i>	Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo
<i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i>	Galah
<i>Cacatua sanguinea</i>	Little Corella
<i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>	Musk Lorikeet
<i>Glossopsitta porphyrocephala</i>	Purple-Crowned Lorikeet
<i>Platycecus elegans</i>	Crimson Rosella
<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>	Rainbow Lorikeet
<i>Cormobates leucophaeus</i>	White-Throated Tree-Creeper
<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	Superb Fairy-Wren
<i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>	Spotted Pardalote
<i>Pardalotus striatus</i>	Striated Pardalote
<i>Acanthiza chrysorrha</i>	Yellow Rumped Thornbill
<i>Acanthiza lineata</i>	Striated Thornbill
<i>Acanthiza reguloides</i>	Buff-Rumped Thornbill
<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	Brown Thornbill
<i>Smicromnis brevirostris</i>	Weebill
<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>	Red Wattlebird
<i>Phydonryis novaehollandiae</i>	New Holland Honeyeater
<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>	Grey Shrike-Thrush
<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	Rufous Whistler
<i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i>	Magpie-Lark
<i>Rhipidura albiscapa</i>	Grey Fantail
<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	Willie Wagtail
<i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	Australian Magpie
<i>Corvus mellori</i>	Little Raven
* <i>Turdus merula</i>	Blackbird
<i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	Silvereye
* <i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow
<i>Neochmia temporalis</i>	Red-Browed Finch
* <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	European Goldfinch
Other sightings as indicated by staff at Brukunga include:	
<i>Aquila audax</i>	Wedge-tailed eagle
<i>Elanus axillaris</i>	Black-Shouldered Kite
<i>Calyptorhynchus funereus</i>	Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoo

* Introduced birds are indicated with an asterisk.

References:

*These photos have been reproduced with permission from Fotohead at <http://www.birdphotos.com.au>

Ford, H.A. (1989) *Ecology of birds – an Australian perspective*. Surrey Beattie, Sydney.

Gosper, C. (2001) *Creating habitat for birds*, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Australia.