



Where good things just come naturally...



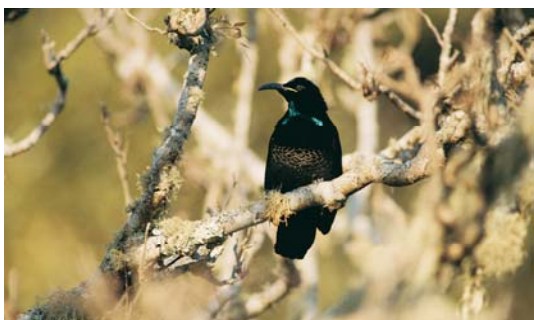
Recent Bird Sightings - as at March 7th, 2005

For all those that wait with baited breath for our next bird update, I apologise for having no reports through the summer months while I was on extended leave. Here's our first report of 2005:

Typically the forest starts getting a little quiet in autumn, although there are always plenty of birds about if you're patient and diligent. Each year our Autumn Birding programme (this year March 13 – 18) records up to 170 species, and our slightly earlier start date in 2005 should allow us a greater number of migrants to boost our tally. The days are beginning to cool off on the mountain now after a fairly steamy summer, so birding conditions are very pleasant.

Here's a brief summary of recent sightings:

Albert's Lyrebird – reports coming in regularly, with Tim and Josh Bechley recently reporting a total of five on their hike around the Albert River Circuit. Their relative silence this time of year can make them tricky to locate however, and persistence may be needed. On our most recent Birding Break in February we finally had a female 50 metres along the Border Track, about five minutes before the end of the three-day programme! Python Rock as always is another good track to try. Lyrebirds will become more vocal over the coming months as temperatures drop.



Paradise Riflebird

Paradise Riflebird – Riflebirds become tricky from now through the winter as they call only sporadically, which, being almost strictly a bird of the canopy, can make them difficult to locate. Look for the falling debris as they feed in epiphytes and rotting limbs. Tim and Josh Bechley saw two males on the Python Rock track on March 4, and they can turn up on any rainforest track all through the year.

Noisy Pitta – Also a difficult bird to find once they've finished breeding and stopped calling, although still a better chance now than in the winter when a degree of altitudinal migration is assumed. O'Reilly's guide Fran has spotted one on the road around the Pyramid Rock lookout (about 10 km along the road from the guesthouse) twice in the last week, so that area would be worth a look early morning.

Rufous Scrub-bird – Haven't heard of any reported sightings (or attempts) recently, although one bird was spotted a few times around Mt Bithongabel late last year.

Regent and Satin Bowerbirds – these abundant birds of the spring become a bit scarce in autumn, especially the male Regents. There are reasonable numbers of Satins around, and most males look resplendent again after coming through moult. Regents typically come through moult a little later but should be coming good now also. There are several females around, some still feeding young, and perseverance should produce a male; one was feeding in a tree outside my office window this afternoon!

Rose Robin – still calling occasionally near the guesthouse but will soon begin to move into more open country and the valleys, where they are relatively silent and inconspicuous (often giving their softer, single-note call) but at least easier to have a good view of than when in the rainforest canopy.

Topknot Pigeon – small flocks flying over the guesthouse periodically.

White-headed Pigeon – several sightings recently on the Border Track and Booyong Walk. Listen for their deep, booming calls.



Rose Robin

Grey Goshawk – still appearing on occasion along the Red Road and from Luke's Bluff.

Australian Owlet-nightjar – the most regular roosting sight is still the large hole at the top of the left fork of a split tree almost at the junction of the botanic gardens track and the Tree-top Walk boardwalk.

Glossy Black-Cockatoo – sighted during our recent Birding Break in the vicinity of Terry's Box Tree on the Duck Creek Road. The Forest Oaks are covered in new fruit at present, so we may expect good numbers of Glossies in the coming weeks. If you don't catch them during the day, it's always worth waiting in the late afternoon near pools in Duck Creek just beyond the first crossing, as they'll often be moving to roost and/or coming in to drink there.

Spotted Quail-thrush – seen fairly regularly around the Kurrajong Lookout turnoff on the Duck Creek Road and also in the Kerry Lookout area.