

Common Name/Scientific name: Leaden Flycatcher / *Myiagra rubecula*

In northern Australia, some populations of Leaden Flycatchers are resident. On the other hand, populations which breed in south-eastern Australia are highly migratory, vacating their breeding grounds and flying north to winter in eastern and north-eastern Queensland, with a few birds crossing Torres Strait to winter in southern New Guinea. The extent of these movements is not known as it is often difficult to distinguish different subspecies in the field. Its natural habitat is subtropical or tropical mangrove forests in the northern parts of its range, in the south and inland it is eucalypt woodland.



Description: The Leaden Flycatcher is a small bird, mainly dark blue grey above and white below, with a small crest and a broad black-tipped blue bill surrounded by small bristles. It is sexually dimorphic (two forms), with males having entirely dark blue-grey upperparts, head and chest, while females have a blue-grey head and back with a distinctive reddish/orange chin, throat and breast merging gradually into white lower parts, as well as a pale eye-ring. Young birds are brown-grey above with streaked wings and mottled brown chests with a reddish wash.

Feeding & Behaviour in the gardens: The Leaden Flycatcher feeds on insects caught while on the wing or gleaned from foliage. They feed in the mid-canopy, darting from tree to tree in pairs or alone, perching only briefly on exposed twigs where they call and fan their short crests.

Breeding and Nesting: The Leaden Flycatcher builds a shallow, cup-shaped nest of bark and grass held together by spider web and decorated with pieces of bark and lichen, on an exposed limb about 3m to 25m above the ground. Both sexes build the nest, incubate the eggs and feed the young. Unlike most other flycatchers, both adults may call from the nest.

Similar species seen in the gardens: