

Common Name/*Scientific name*

**Australasian Figbird/*Sphecotheres vieilloti***

**Description:** Males have bare, red skin around the eye, contrasting against a black crown and grey neck and throat. The remainder of the body is olive-green, except for a white under-tail area. Females have grey skin around the eye and lack distinctive head markings. They are brown-green above and dull-white below, streaked with brown. Both sexes have a blackish bill.

**Behaviour in the gardens:** Figbirds usually forage high in the canopy, sometimes in the company of Olive-backed Orioles. Large flocks may congregate noisily at prolifically fruiting trees, and remain until the supply of fruit is exhausted.

**Where seen in the gardens:** In the areas of riparian (creekside) rainforests and wet sclerophyll forests that abound in the gardens bushland, although we have few fig trees. Try spotting them along the Creek Walk, Upland Bushwalk or Ephemeral Wetlands.

**Feeding:** A wide variety of fruits other than figs are eaten. The seeds of the fruits often pass undigested through the gut of figbirds, so they are able to germinate, though in some cases they provide pigeons with a convenient source of food.

**Nesting:** The gregarious behaviour of Figbirds is maintained in the breeding season, with small groups of birds nesting semi-colonally in adjoining canopy trees. The nest is cup-shaped and built of vine tendrils and twigs. It is supported by its rim from the horizontal fork of an outer branch of the canopy, up to 20 m above the ground. Both males and females incubate the eggs and feed the young.

**Similar Species** Figbirds have a blackish bill, which easily distinguishes the species from the similar Olive-backed Oriole, which has a reddish bill.

