

Common Name/Scientific name: Black-faced Monarch / *Monarcha melanopsis*

A small bird occasionally seen in the Maroochy gardens that inhabits wetter forested areas along the eastern coast of Australia, where it forages slowly for insects in foliage. Black-faced Monarchs often winter in northern Queensland & New Guinea, so are more often seen in the gardens at other times of the year.



Description: The Black-faced Monarch has a distinctive black face that does not extend across the eyes, grey upperparts, wings and upper breast, contrasting with a rufous (red-orange) belly. The dark eye has a thin black eye ring and a lighter area of pale grey around it. The blue-grey bill has a hooked tip. Young birds are similar but lack the black face, have a black bill and tend to have a brownish body and wings. The Black-faced Monarch is one of the monarch flycatchers, a forest and woodland-dwelling group of small insect-eating birds, and is strictly arboreal (found in trees).

Where seen in the gardens: Occasionally in the bushland areas that make up most of the gardens site, both the densely vegetated riparian zones along the creeks, as well as the more open eucalypt forest areas.

Feeding & Behaviour in the gardens: The Black-faced Monarch forages for insects among foliage, or catches flying insects on the wing.

Breeding and Nesting: The Black-faced Monarch builds a deep cup nest of casuarina needles, bark, roots, moss and spider web in the fork of a tree, about 3 m to 6 m above the ground. Only the female builds the nest, but both sexes incubate the eggs and feed the young.

Similar Species in the gardens: The Spectacled Monarch, *M. trivirgatus*, has a black face mask that extends across the eyes, has a white lower belly and has a black tail with white tips and undertail. Spectacled Monarchs are regularly seen in the gardens. See the Birds regularly seen page for more information and photo.