

Common Name/Scientific name: Brown Goshawk / *Accipiter fasciatus*

With a flight characterised by frantic flapping interspersed with short glides, Brown Goshawks can be seen over most of Australia. They mostly hunt birds, but also take small mammals, reptiles and insects. Among various hunting methods, their preferred method is to suddenly burst from a concealed perch, surprising unsuspecting prey.



Description: Brown Goshawks are medium-sized raptors (birds of prey). They have a brown head, slate-grey to brown upperparts with a red-brown collar across the upper nape of the neck, and finely barred underparts of red-brown with white. The rounded wings are dark brown to grey above and buff to reddish brown below with darker wingtips, and the long rounded tail is grey with dark bars. The long legs are yellow, with reddish brown feathering about the thighs. The eye is bright yellow. Males are smaller than females. Young birds have grey-brown eyes, with brown, streaky plumage. The Brown Goshawk is widespread but secretive.

Feeding & Behaviour in the gardens: Brown Goshawks feed on small mammals, as well as birds, reptiles and insects and sometimes, carrion (dead animals). They hunt stealthily from a low, concealed perch, using sudden, short bursts of speed to pounce onto prey and use their long legs and clawed toes to reach out and strike it. They will occasionally stalk or run along the ground after insects. Prey items are taken back to a perch to be partially plucked (mammals, birds) and then eaten.

Breeding and Nesting: The Brown Goshawk builds its large stick nest on a horizontal limb of the tallest tree available, often near a waterway or at the edge of a forest. It may sometimes re-use an old raptor's nest. The nest is kept lined with fresh eucalypt leaves. Both parents defend the nest and surrounding territory aggressively. Established pairs will reuse the same area year after year, and often use the same nest. The female incubates the eggs, with the male helping when she needs to leave the nest to feed. The male does the bulk of the hunting to feed the young, which remain dependent on their parents for up to three weeks after fledging. Young birds disperse widely, with distances of up to 900 km not uncommon, to find and establish their own breeding territories.

Similar Species in the gardens: The Brown Goshawk is very similar in plumage to the related raptor (bird of prey) species, the Collared Sparrowhawk, *Accipiter cirrhocephalus*, which has a notched or square-tipped tail rather than rounded, and has thinner legs and toes and lacks the Brown Goshawk's heavy brow.