

## Calling all Flame Robin observers!

Flame Robins are conspicuous birds that are relatively easy to identify. They have complex seasonal movements so to assess their population we would like your help to find out where they are at different times of the year.

To understand the abundance and movements of Flame Robins, we would like to gather data on numbers of adult male and brown-plumaged birds and whether they occur singly, in pairs or in groups and flocks. We would also like to know if both sexes occur in a group, or if males and female-plumaged birds occur in separate groups. Please record your observations on the data sheet provided. Not all columns need to be completed, but please record as much information as possible.



Adult male **Flame Robins** have sooty-grey upperparts and chin, a small white patch on the forehead, white wing-bars; and flame-orange underparts from throat to belly.



Female and immature **Flame Robins** have a pale brown upperbody and buff-white wingbar; pale grey-brown underbody; and white outer-tail feathers.



Adult male **Scarlet Robins** have a black head, throat and upperbody; a large white patch on forehead and white wing-bars; scarlet breast; whitish belly; black tail with white edges.



The female **Scarlet Robin** is recognised from all other female Tasmanian robins by its orange-red breast.

**Habitat** during the non-breeding season in autumn-winter Flame Robins mainly inhabit coastal regions and open lowland dry eucalypt forest, but they also occur in pastures and crops, vineyards, native grasslands, and regenerating cleared land. They temporarily occupy recently burnt native vegetation.

**Song:** Flame Robins sing a high-pitched rolling melody.

**Mobility and behaviour:** Flame Robins occur as singles, pairs and small groups. They perch on branches, posts, fences, stumps and tops of herbs, bushes and boulders; and they have a habit of flicking their wings. They mainly forage by pouncing from a perch to snatch insects on the ground.

In Tasmania during the non-breeding season, the Flame Robin may be sedentary with some local movement. Some populations that breed at higher elevations migrate to lower altitudes and some individuals may migrate across Bass Strait in autumn-winter and return in late winter-early spring.

**Breeding:** The Flame Robin breeds in both lowland and upland areas and is monogamous and territorial when breeding. The female builds a cup-shaped nest in tree-forks, rock ledges, the cavities of dead and live trees, fallen trees and stream-banks, and they also nest in buildings. The nest is made of grass, bark, spider web and lichen lined with feathers, hair and fur. The female alone incubates the eggs and broods the young but both sexes feed the young. The male feeds the female during the incubation and nestling period. A pair of two brown robins—an immature male and a female—can attend a nest and successfully raise offspring.

Breeding during spring and summer can be determined by carefully watching bird behaviour. If you see a female robin carrying nest material, or birds of either sex carrying food in the bill, it is a sure sign that the birds are breeding.

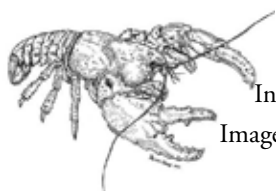
Nest-predation is high amongst Australian songbirds, so if you hear robins uttering alarm calls or giving distraction displays, it's a sure sign that robins are responding to a nest-predator, or the presence of humans.



Adult male and female **Dusky Robins** look the same. They are plain brown birds with a dark line through the eye. They have a plaintive two or three note song.



Female **Flame Robin** with a bill full of food for nestlings.



This project is supported by the Central North Field Naturalists (CNFN)  
Information sheet compiled by Dr Richard Donaghey, Hazel Britton and Sarah Lloyd  
Images by Barry Baker (BB), Sarah Lloyd (SL), Bronwyn Silver (BS) and Trevor Waite (TW)

For more information please contact Hazel Britton [hazpet@bigpond.com](mailto:hazpet@bigpond.com) or Sarah Lloyd [black-sugarloaf@gmail.com](mailto:black-sugarloaf@gmail.com)  
<https://www.disjunctnaturalists.com/robins/index.htm>