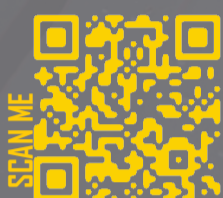


A GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED REGENT HONEYEATER

REPORT ALL SIGHTINGS

birdlife.org.au/what-to-do-if-you-see-a-regent-honeyeater

OR email: woodlandbirds@birdlife.org.au



For more information on the Regent Honeyeater or if you would like to help support our programs visit:

www.birdlife.org.au



INTRODUCTION

The Regent Honeyeater is a medium-sized bird living in woodland and forest in south-east mainland Australia. They are known as a 'rich patch nomad', moving around the landscape to follow flowering (more accurately the nectar flows) of their favoured tree species. This nectar-sipper is a flagship threatened woodland bird whose conservation will benefit a large suite of other threatened and declining woodland fauna, and their habitats.

Scientific title

ANTHOCHAERA PHRYGIA

Size

20-24 CM

Lifespan

10 YEARS

Population

300-500

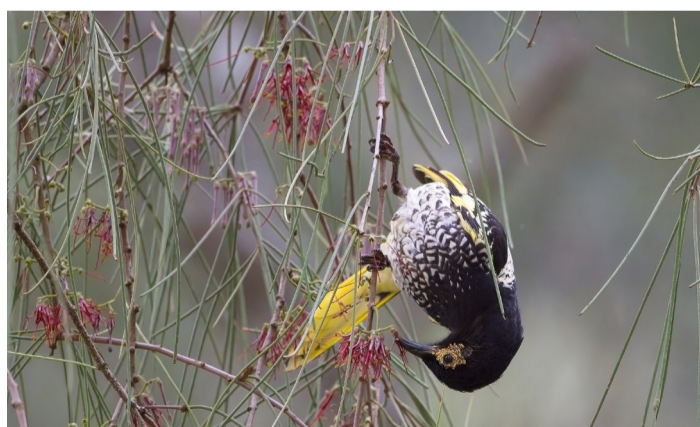
Status

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

Threats

HABITAT LOSS
& COMPETITION

HABITAT



Regent Honeyeaters tend to favour certain types of trees, particularly those which are large and old in good soil.

The species favoured include:

- White Box (*Eucalyptus albens*)
- Yellow Box (*E. melliodora*)
- Mugga Ironbark (*E. sideroxylon*)
- Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*)
- Swamp Mahogany (*E. robusta*)
- River Sheoak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana*)

Along with these trees they also seek out flowering mistletoe, in particular Box Mistletoe (*Amyema miquelli*) in box and ironbark woodlands and Long-flowered Mistletoe (*Dendrophthoe vitellina*) in dry forests, and Needle-leaf Mistletoe (*Amyema cambagei*, pictured) in River Sheoak. Regents will also take advantage of planted gum trees and native shrubs in parks and gardens at times.

HOW TO FIND A REGENT



1. Look for flowering gum trees (especially ironbark, box and spotted gum).



2. Check flowering mistletoe in gum trees or river sheoaks.



3. Look for congregations of similar species, such as nectar loving parrots, friarbirds and small honeyeaters.



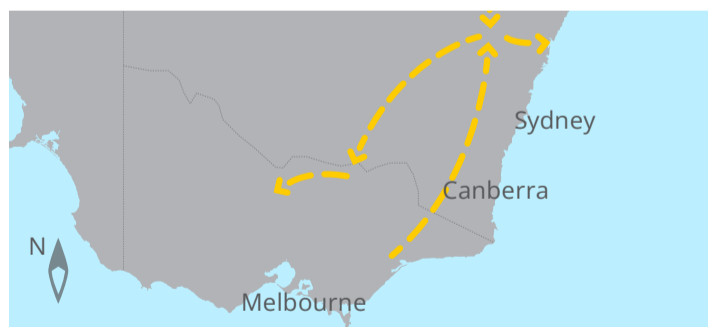
4. Learn the calls - Regent Honeyeaters are quieter than other honeyeaters.

COLOUR BANDING

Colour bands currently in use



Hundreds of Regent Honeyeaters have been banded in the wild or released wearing colour bands. Every banded bird has two bands on each leg - on one there will be a colour band above a metal band, while on the other leg there will be two colour bands. This allows individuals to be traced back to the point of capture (wild birds) or release (captive bred birds). Our longest recorded movement by a Regent Honeyeater is 580km point-to-point.



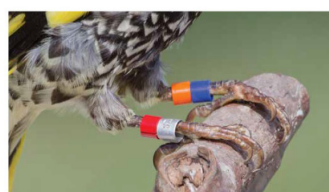
Identifying band colours can be a challenge, and is where good binoculars and taking a photo can help. The challenge lies in remembering the birds lefts and rights, dealing with bad light and birds moving behind foliage or branches. It's not often you get a good view of both legs at the same time. This makes accurate recording of all four bands difficult. Fear not! Any information is worthwhile.

The accepted method for recording a band combination involves 'reading' the bands from top to bottom, i.e. closest to the body recorded first, closest to the foot recorded second.

Example photographs of banded Regents



Left leg - Blue over Red
Right leg - Pink over Metal



Left leg - Orange over Blue
Right leg - Red over Metal

POPULATION DECLINE

In the mid-1800s Regent Honeyeaters were enthusiastically described as occurring in 'thousands' in some locations, and as recently as the early 1900s were at times the most common species in an area. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case with fewer than 500 estimated to still survive in the wild. Now considered extinct in western Victoria and South Australia, the range has contracted and is patchy. The key regions for the species today are west of Armidale and the Capertee and Hunter Valleys in NSW, and north-east Victoria.



WHAT TO RECORD



TAKE A PHOTO, VIDEO OR SOUND RECORDING

This is probably the most valuable piece of information! Even poor quality photos, video or audio can help to confirm a sighting, age and sex the bird, identify habitat and bands!

SPOT A REGENT? TAKE DOWN THESE NOTES

- Date & time
- Location
- Behaviour
- Number of birds
- Leg band colours
- Other species present

REPORT ALL SIGHTINGS:

woodlandbirds@birdlife.org.au OR
birdlife.org.au/what-to-do-if-you-see-a-regent-honeyeater

CONTACT US

Woodland Birds, BirdLife Australia

www.birdlife.org.au
woodlandbirds@birdlife.org.au

REGENT HONEYEATER IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

Broad patch of bare warty skin around the eye, which is smaller in young birds and females. Best seen at close range or with binoculars.

Regent Honeyeaters are 20-24 cm long, with females smaller and having duller plumage than the males.

From below, the tail is a bright yellow. From behind it's black bordered by bright yellow feathers.

Males call prominently, whereas females only occasionally make soft calls.

Plumage around the head and neck is solid black giving a slightly hooded appearance.

Distinctive scalloped (not streaked) breast.

Broad stripes of yellow in the wing when folded, and very prominent in flight.



COMMONLY CONFUSED SPECIES



RED WATTLEBIRD
Anthochaera carunculata

Habitat: Forests, woodlands and gardens, where it aggressively protects food-bearing plants from other honeyeater species.
Notes: It is identified by fleshy reddish wattle on the side of the neck, and prominent white streaks and yellow on the belly. The bird is much larger than the Regent Honeyeater, and will be aggressive to it and other birds in its territory.



NEW HOLLAND HONEYEATER
Phylidonyris novaehollandiae

Habitat: Woodland with heathy understorey, gardens and parklands.
Notes: Often misidentified as a Regent Honeyeater; commonly seen in urban parks and gardens. Distinctive white breast with black streaks, several patches of white around the face, and a white eye ring. Tend to be in small, noisy and aggressive flocks.



WHITE-CHEEKED HONEYEATER
Phylidonyris niger

Habitat: Moist heathlands, wetlands and in forests or woodlands with heath understorey.
Notes: It has a conspicuous white cheek patch on a mainly black head, bright yellow tail and wing panels. It is a gregarious active and noisy bird, with swift, erratic flight. Seen in small groups.



PAINTED HONEYEATER
Grantiella picta

Habitat: Box-Ironbark woodland, particularly with fruiting mistletoe.
Notes: A seasonal migrant, only visiting NSW and Vic in spring and summer. Have a vivid pink bill, almost wholly white underparts, and solid black plumage on the head and back. A mistletoe specialist rarely seen foraging in eucalyptus flowers.



AUSTRALASIAN FIGBIRD
Sphecotheres viridis

Habitat: Lives in rainforests and wet forests, urban parks and gardens-particularly those with figs or other fruit-trees. Found north of Vic border.
Notes: Bare red skin around the eye, black head, grey neck and throat. The body is olive-green and white under-tail area. Often seen in small colonies.



LITTLE WATTLEBIRD
Anthochaera chrysoptera

Habitat: Prefers drier and scrubby habitats, such as banksia heath, forest, woodland and urban park and gardens.
Notes: It is mostly dark grey-brown above. The eye is blue grey, and there are white streaks on it's underparts and around the throat. May be seen as individuals or small to large groups.

SIZE COMPARISON

