

THE BOWER BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA

Family Ptilonorhynchidae

Continued from the July edition

#3 SPOTTED BOWERBIRD

Chlamydera maculata

Spotted Bowerbirds are found in all but far west and southwest of the interior of Queensland; the interior of central and western New South Wales, but not in the far western border country; they extend a short way into the north-western corner of Victoria. In South Australia they occur along the extreme eastern section of the Murray River system.



Photo: Tom Tarrant

These Bowerbirds are found in semiarid regions of open eucalyptus and acacia woodlands. They prefer riverine woodlands. Their diet consists of fruits, flowers, seeds, leaves, and arthropods. Nestlings are reportedly fed on insects, with grasshoppers being a staple.



MALE AT BOWER
Western N.S.W.

The avenue bowers of this species are built beneath low bushes or shrubs. The bower walls are about 20 to 50cm high (7.8 to 19.7 inches). A large number of berries, seedpods, pebbles and stones, bones, snail shells, and glass are scattered through the bower. Males spend much time tending to their bower and make loud, harsh “churrings” and other sounds, including mimicry of other birds, to attract the females.

Spotted Bowerbirds are polygamous. The breeding season is from July to March, with September to February being the peak. An open cup-like nest is constructed in trees and bushes, between 3 to 12m (10 to 40 feet) above the ground. The loose bulky foundation of the nest consists of dead twigs and sticks, with finer twigs and dried grass stalks making the lining. Two to three eggs are laid.

The species has declined in some areas due to the predation by introduced vermin such as cats and foxes. The widespread clearing of habitat has also restricted their range.

Series to be continued

Reference: animals.jrank.org/.../Bowerbirds