

THE BOWER BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA

Family Ptilonorhynchidae

Continued from the November edition

#7 TOOTH-BILLED BOWERBIRD



Illustration:
Richard Bowdler Sharpe

The Tooth-billed Bowerbird, *Scenopoeetes dentirostris*, which is also known as the Stage-maker Bowerbird or Tooth-billed Catbird is a medium-sized, stocky olive-brown Bowerbird approximately 27cm in length. It is brown-streaked buffish-white below, the feet are grey, the iris brown and it has a unique tooth-like bill. Both sexes are similar, however the female is slightly smaller than the male. It is the only member of the genus *Scenopoeetes*.

The Tooth-billed Bowerbird is an Australian endemic, confined to the mountain forests of north-east Queensland. The diet consists of fruits and the young leaves of forest trees.

The male Tooth-billed is polygamous and builds a display-court or "stage-type bower", that he decorates with fresh green leaves laid with the pale underside uppermost. The leaves are collected by the male by chewing through the leaf stalk. Old leaves are fastidiously removed from the display-court. The display-court consists of a cleared area surrounding at least one tree trunk on which the male perches. When a female approaches the male drops to the ground and displays.

A common species in its limited habitat range, the Tooth-billed Bowerbird is evaluated as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.



A TYPICAL TOOTH-BILLED BOWERBIRD
DISPLAY AREA

Photo: "Myobatrachidae"

R.V.C. with help from Wikipedia