

THE SILVEREYE

Zosterops lateralis

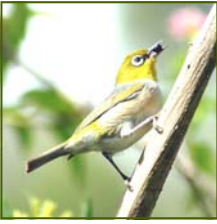


Photo: Brett Donald

The Silvereye is a small passerine bird native to Australia, New Zealand and a number of south-west Pacific islands. It is common throughout the relatively fertile south-west and south-east parts of Australia, including Tasmania and the islands of Bass Strait, and through the well-watered coastal zone of tropical Queensland, including the Cape York Peninsula. However, it has largely disappeared from many urban areas. In Australia and New Zealand it is sometimes referred to as “White-eye”, but this name is more commonly used for all members of the genus *Zosterops*, or the entire family *Zosteropidae*.



FEEDING YOUNG

Photo: “Adammarklenny”

Silvereyes breed in spring and early summer, making a tiny cupped nest of grass, moss, hair, spider-web, and plant down, suspended in a small tree or shrub. They lay two to four pale blue eggs; and two broods may be raised during the breeding season. Once the young have fledged, Silvereyes gather in flocks and many migrate northwards in late summer, making their way along the coast and ranges. They forage busily throughout the day while calling and quickly moving through the shrubbery, then flying long distances at night.



HEN ON NEST

Photo: “benjamint444”

Silvereyes are catholic in their tastes, but have a particular liking for fruit. In captivity they will thrive, and breed, on a diet of fruit, Kay and Doug Baileys’ Insectivorous Cake Mix, and some live-food. The latter being particularly important when rearing young.

The Silvereye was first recorded in New Zealand in 1832 (their Māori name, “Tauhou”, means little stranger). In 1856 it arrived in greater numbers, probably a migrating flock swept eastwards by a storm, and as there is no evidence it was purposely introduced to New Zealand, it is classified as a native species, and is therefore protected.

R.V.C. with help from Wikipedia