

THE BOWER BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA

Family Ptilonorhynchidae

Continued from the January edition

#9 GOLDEN BOWERBIRD



Illustration: Richard Bowdler Sharpe

The Golden Bowerbird, *Prionodura newtoniana* is found above 700m in the Atherton rainforests of Queensland. The male has a brown head and wings which are bright yellow-gold underneath, as are the tail, crest and nape. The female is a dull greyish-brown above with lighter underparts.

Various fruits are the mainstay of their diet, although they also eat flowers and some insects, particularly beetles.

During the mating season, the polygamous male tries to fertilise as many females as possible.

The females assess a male's vocal, plumage, display and bower building prowess before selecting a mate. The breeding season is from late September to early February. The female raises one or two young in a small cup nest in a tree crevice approximately two metres above ground.

Although the Golden Bowerbird is evaluated as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species at present, there is evidence that global warming is affecting the species. A climate change conference in the United Kingdom was recently told it is amongst a diverse range of species, ranging from frogs to leopards, living in vulnerable areas and with nowhere else to go if their habitat is altered by higher temperatures.

Rachel Warren from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change told the meeting that even a one degree temperature rise will put the Australian Golden Bowerbird under pressure.

R.V.C. with help from Wikipedia



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