



Bowerbirds (Australian Natural History)

Peter Rowland

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* Includes more than fifty illustrations, including color pictures of each Australian species, their bowers, displays and distributional maps

The bowerbirds (family Ptilonorhynchidae) are famed for their unique bower-building behavior. In some species, the bower can be a complex construction of sticks and other vegetable matter that can grow to two meters in diameter and one-and-a-half meters high. Many species are also accomplished mimics, and are able to copy the calls of other bird species, other natural and mechanical sounds and even human speech.

The bowerbirds are confined to Australia and New Guinea and, due to the difficulty in accessing certain areas of their distribution, the study of their habits has been challenging. The twenty existing species are almost equally divided between the two regions, with eight species endemic to Australia, ten to New Guinea and two species occurring in both.

Bowerbirds condenses the published knowledge acquired by ornithologists that have studied the bowerbirds since their discovery, in a format that will suit natural history enthusiasts at any level. While the emphasis of the book is on Australian members of the family, with detailed accounts on each of the ten species, the New Guinea representatives are discussed in general chapters and are included in a supplemental section that covers key areas such as breeding, identification and distribution.

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