

Order Passeriformes, Family Prionopidae,  
Genus Colluricincla.

*Colluricincla harmonica*.—The grey shrike thrush.

Description. Adult male.—Upper surface.—Forehead, crown, and back of the neck, dark grey, the feathers of the forehead and crown with a dark line down the centre; back and shoulders, olive brown; upper tail coverts and tail, grey; lores, white.

Under Surface.—Throat, greyish white; breast, light grey, gradually fading to greyish white on the abdomen and under tail coverts; thighs, grey.

Wing.—Upper wing coverts, grey; primaries, dark brown, the outer webs fringed with grey, and the basal portions of the inner webs broadly fringed with white.

Bill.—Black.

Legs and Feet.—Black.

Iris.—Dark Brown.

Adult Female.—Differs from the male in having the throat striped longitudinally, in the absence of the white lores, and in having an ill-defined, whitish, superciliary stripe.

Bill.—Upper mandible very dark brown; lower mandible, horn colour.

Young.—Resembles the female, but the whole of the under surface is striped, the superciliary stripe is more defined, and of a light buff colour—there is a ring of white feathers surrounding the eye, and the upper wing coverts and secondaries are fringed with olive brown on their outer webs.

Total length (of skin), 230 m.m.; bill, 22 m.m.; wing 123 m.m.; tail, 97 m.m.; tarsus, 31 m.m.

In Mr. Ashby's collection is a female in male plumage, and a male in female plumage, both from the Black Spur, Victoria. The male is probably an immature bird. The female may be one of those exceptional cases in which the male plumage has been assumed, or it may be the rule for very old females to assume it. Unfortunately, as is so often the case with common birds, there is not enough material available in Adelaide to settle the point.

Distribution.—This bird, or one of its sub-species, inhabits the whole of the eastern portion of Australia, including Tasmania and Kangaroo Island; the bird inhabiting South Australia being known as *Colluricincla harmonica victoriae*. West of Spencer's Gulf its place is taken by an allied species *Colluricincla rufiventris*. The range of the present bird extends to the northern extremity of the Flinders' Range.

Habits.—They are found in pairs in fairly thick scrub country or forest land; in the interior they live mostly in the gum creeks or rocky gullies of the ranges. About Adelaide they are still common in the public parks and gardens, and in many private gardens if there be cover for them. They do not migrate, and a pair will remain and nest for years

about the same spot. They are quiet and retiring in their habits, and were it not for their pretty whistle, they would often be missed.

Flight.—Undulating and not very swift—they seldom do more than fly from tree to tree, or from tree to ground.

Song.—A melodious whistle, very clear and loud. It can hardly be called a song, as it consists generally of only six or seven notes. A common sequence is three notes whistled slowly, then two lower pitched uttered quickly, ending with a final high pitched note. The young for some time after leaving the nest utter a single mournful “squark.”

Food.—Entirely animal, consisting of insects of all orders, spiders, and worms. Much of the food is taken upon the ground, where they can often be seen quietly scratching amongst the dead leaves and fallen bark, etc.

Nest.—The nest is built in a variety of situations, such as the top of an old stump, the bole of a mistletoe, a thick clump of leaves, on the top of an old babbler's (*Pomatostomus*) nest, niches in cliffs, and nests have been found near houses on a window sill, and in an old billycan in a shed. The nest is generally not more than ten feet from the ground, often within reach of the hand, but they occasionally build much higher—a pair is at present building in a pine tree in the park lands at a height of 30 feet. The building material is generally strips of bark throughout, the lining strips being finer and nicely smoothed down. Sometimes grass is used for a lining; when near habitation, pieces of waste paper, rags, and string are largely used. They are very particular about the nest being touched or even looked at. It is often deserted and sometimes pulled to pieces after such an occurrence. The breeding season extends from the middle of August to the end of November, two broods being reared in the season. Young have been known to be hatched as early as June.

Eggs.—Usually three in number, occasionally four, and rarely only two. The ground colour of the eggs is white, sometimes with a faint tinge of cream, the spots are of a very dark brown to purplish black colour; they are large and sparsely distributed, sometimes forming an irregular zone at the larger end; they are irregular in shape, but in some eggs have a tendency to become longitudinally streaks, and occasionally zig-zag lines are seen.

Average measurement of 14 eggs, 2.92 c.m. x 2.06 c.m.; largest egg, 2.90 c.m. x 2.20 c.m.; smallest egg, 2.80 c.m. x 2.15 c.m.

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