

**Order Passeriformes, Family Meliphagidae, Genus  
Anthochaera.**

*Anthochaera chrysoptera intermedia* (Brush Wattle Bird).

Description.—Male primaries, greater part of basic end of the inner webs, rufous; outer webs and remaining half of inner webs, dark brown, tipped with white; upper surface, blackish brown, each feather having a thin line of white down the centre; tail and wing coverts, blackish brown, tipped with white; tail, dark brown, tipped with white; all the feathers of the throat and chest, very dark brown, almost black, and terminating in hair-like tips which are white; under surface, blackish brown, each feather having a broad white line down the centre; iris, brown; feet and legs, reddish brown; bill, black.

Measurements.—Total length of dry skin, 270 m.m.; wing, 140 m.m.; bill, 25 m.m.; tarsus, 30 m.m.

The only difference between the sexes may be the slightly smaller size of the female.

The young take the adult plumage from the nest.

Distribution.—Found over South Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, Kangaroo Island.

The birds found in Queensland and New South Wales, those from Tasmania, and those found on Kangaroo Island, have been separated into three sub-specific forms, while those found in Victoria and South Australia (to which the above description pertains) forms the fourth sub-species. This may or may not be correct, there being little variation between them. The West Australian bird *A. c. lamulata* being very distinct.

Habits.—Noisy, conspicuous birds, which often visit the gardens in the suburbs. They are as a rule found in the bush or scrub, and seldom seen in thinly timbered country. Occasionally they are to be found in situations where heath and low *Banksia* grow. Common birds in many parts of the Mount Lofty Ranges, and once found in numbers upon the Adelaide Plains, in the days when thick scrub including *Banksia* covered a great deal of that country. Within the last few years a pair or two have visited the Reedbeds and nested there. When nesting time approaches they become very pugnacious, driving away all birds, large or small, from their nesting site, or feeding trees. They are restless birds, always on the move, flying from tree to tree, hanging in all attitudes as they search the blossoms for nectar and insects. They shift considerably according to food supply, for in some districts when *Eucalypts* and *Banksias* are in blossom these birds become very plentiful, but as soon as the trees cease flowering the birds will move to another district. They nest early and late; it is not uncommon to see young about in August, and as late as February.

Flight.—Strong, undulating, but erratic at times.

Food.—Consists of nectar, also insects, for which they diligently search the foliage, limbs, and trunks of trees; sometimes catching them on the wing.

Note.—Harsh and varied; when feeding, a sharp short call like "clock" repeated at intervals of two or three minutes. At nesting time the male bird will perch in an exposed position and utter a series of remarkable notes, lifting his head until his bill is straight up, the throat swelled out, and tail raised. Most of the notes are harsh and guttural, but at times sharp and resembling the words "Keckwick, keckwick" repeated several times in quick succession.

The young will follow the parent birds round all day long till fully fledged, uttering a monotonous and incessant call of "quock, quock", only pausing when food is thrust into their mouths by the parent birds.

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Nest.—Invariably placed in an upright fork, and is open. The nest is small in comparison to the bird, and generally consists of twigs, lined with rootlets. The female sits very closely on the nest, and the male bird brings her most of her food.

Eggs.—Clutch two or three, generally the former, but not infrequently only one is laid. The ground colour varies from white faintly tinged with yellowish pink, to light reddish brown. The spots, which are chiefly grouped about the larger end, are generally rounded in shape, but occasional irregular blotches occur, they vary in colour from very dark reddish brown to bright reddish brown. Average measurement of 7 eggs—2.81 c.m. x 2.05 c.m. Largest egg, 2.90 c.m. x 2.15 c.m.; smallest egg, 2.70 c.m. x 2.00 c.m.

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