

MIMICRY BY MISTLETOEBIRD. The following is a case of mimicry of six species of bird by a Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*. While walking past a False Acacia *Robinia pseudoacacia* among buildings of Flinders University, South Australia, on 27 February 1990, I heard coming from the tree a subdued song, which within one minute included notes of the Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*, Grey Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa*, Weebill *Smicrornis brevirostris*, Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus*, Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*, New Holland Honeyeater *Phalidonryis novaehollandiae*, and Mistletoebird. I then found the source of the song, an adult male Mistletoebird,

at a height of about four metres in the tree, and watched it while it uttered notes of Weebill and New Holland Honeyeater. Then it flew away, leaving no other bird in the tree. The song which it had given was quieter, and more varied and protracted, than the calls normally given by this species; and can presumably be characterised as a whisper-song.

The only published reference to this phenomenon of which I know is Pizzey (1980, **A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia**, Collins: Melbourne), who wrote that the Mistletoebird gives a "soft warbling song that includes mimicry". *David H. Close, 30 Diosma Drive, Coromandel Valley, South Australia 5051.*

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