

BIRD IN THE HAND

by H. J. de S. Disney, drawings by Celia Tanner, The Australian Museum.

The Black-headed and Striped-crowned Pardalotes

This "Bird in the Hand" gives the distinguishing features of the three striped-crowned pardalotes and the Black-headed Pardalote. Nest site observations and banding have provided evidence of interbreeding between the Striated and the Eastern Striated Pardalotes; the Striated and Black-headed Pardalotes have not been recorded actually nesting together, but specimens have been obtained in Southern Queensland and Northern New South Wales showing characters of both species.

There are some indications that the sexes and ages of the striped-crowned pardalotes can be determined in the hand, but further material is required before a definite method can be given.

To conform with previous writers, e.g. Hindwood and Mayr (1946, *Emu* 46:49-66) and Salomonsen (1961, *Am. Mus. Novit.* 2068), the primaries are numbered from the outside inwards, although the accepted numbering method for moult records etc. is the reverse. Wing lengths are measured with the wing pressed flat. The feathers of some pardalotes become very worn, so that wing measurements may be much shorter than normal; those given should only be taken as the usually recorded lengths.

All four species have a fine white edge to the outer (no. 1) primary but this is often lost due to wear.

• Yellow-tipped Pardalote (*Pardalotus striatus*)

Crown: Black with white centre streaks to the feathers.

Eyestripe: From the bill to above the eye pale yellow, then changing to white.

Face: A dark black line through the eye with some white streaking or mottling.

Wing:

Primaries: No. 3 white on the outer edge forming a narrow white line on the closed wing.

Primary coverts: Tipped yellow, forming a yellow wing spot.

Secondaries: Rufous brown on the lower outer

webs, forming a well marked rufous patch on the closed wing (the patch is reduced by wear).

Wing length: Juveniles 64 mm (1 measured).
First year and adults 64-68 mm (17 measured).

• Striated Pardalote (*Pardalotus substriatus*)

Crown: As for Yellow-tipped Pardalote—black with white centre streaks to the feathers.

Eyestripe: Deep yellow to the eye, then white.

Face: Black from the bill to the eye, mottled black and white behind the eye.

Wing:

Primaries: Nos. 3-7 and often 8 with white edges, forming a well marked white patch.

Primary coverts: Tipped bright red or orange-red, forming a red or orange wing spot.

Secondaries: Distinct rufous-brown edging to the lower outer webs.

Wing length:

Juveniles 60-64 mm (7 measured).
First year and adults 63-67 mm (38 measured).

• Eastern Striated Pardalote (*Pardalotus ornatus*)

Crown: As for the Striated Pardalote.

Eyestripe: As for the Striated Pardalote.

Face: As for the Striated Pardalote.

Wing:

Primaries: No. 3 with a white edge and No. 4 with often part white or a very narrow white edge, forming a narrow white line on the closed wing, and not an obvious patch.

Primary coverts: As for the Striated Pardalote.

Secondaries: Rufous-brown edging to the secondaries similar to the Striated Pardalote.

Wing length:

Juveniles 62-63 mm (4 measured).
First year and adult 63-69 mm (47 measured).

• Black-headed Pardalote (*Pardalotus melanocephalus*)

Crown: Black; no white streaks.

Eyestripe: From the bill to above the eye orange, then white.

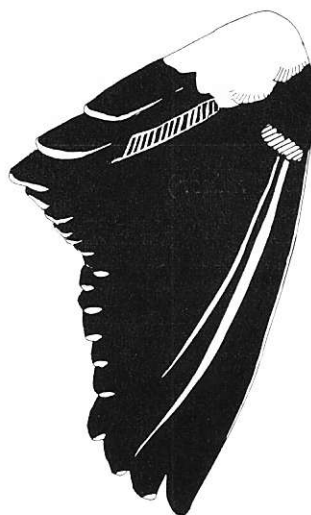
Face: A broad black line from the bill through the eye to the nape without streaks or mottling. The black is clearly defined by the eyestripe above and the white side of the throat below.



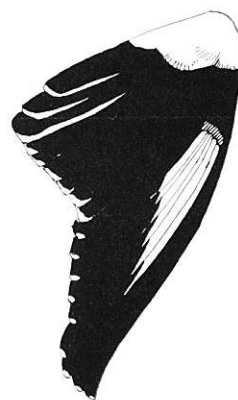
• Yellow-tipped
Pardalote



• Striated
Pardalote



• Eastern Striated
Pardalote



• Black-headed
Pardalote

Wing:

Primaries: Similar to the Striated Pardalote, nos. 3-7 and sometimes 8 edged white, forming a well marked white patch.

Primary coverts: Tipped deep red, forming a red spot.

Secondaries: No rufous-brown edges to the basal outer webs, except that sometimes nos. 5 & 6 may show a slight deep buff tinge on fresh feathers.

Wing length:

Juveniles 57-61 mm (5 measured).

First year and adults 59-61 mm (9 measured).

This species is separated from the striped-crowned forms by the absence of rufous-brown on the secondaries, by its smaller size and by the lack of white streaks on the crown.

• Hybrid Striated x Black-headed Pardalote (*P. substriatus* x *P. melanocephalus*)

These hybrids frequently occur in the overlap area of Southern Queensland and Northern New South Wales.

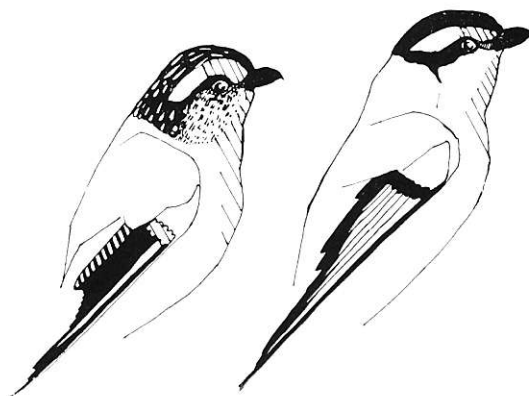
Crown: Mainly black with a few narrow white streaks towards the nape; sometimes these streaks may be hidden by overlapping black feathers. (Care must be taken not to mistake worn crown feathers of the Striated Pardalote which give a similar effect).

Eyestripe: Orange or yellow.

Face: A full black line or various degrees of mottling similar to the Striated Pardalote.

Wing:

Primaries: Similar to the Striated Pardalote.



• Yellow-tipped
Pardalote

• Black-headed
Pardalote

Primary coverts: Usually tipped deep red, forming a deep red spot.

Secondaries: Nos. 5 & 6 (sometimes more) with definite rufous-brown edges. This indicates that the bird is not a true Black-headed Pardalote but probably a hybrid.

Wing length: Usually longer than the Black-headed Pardalote.

• Hybrid Striated x Eastern Striated Pardalote (*P. substriatus* x *P. ornatus*)

Probable hybrids between these two species are determined by the white edgings to primaries nos. 5 & 6.