

## GREY SHRIKE-THRUSH



- *Grey Shrike-Thrush on nest in a burnt stump.*

Photo: N. Chaffer

## Grey Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*

### Sexing and Ageing

This guide is based on this species taking three years to obtain adult plumage. First year and adult birds are easily distinguished but second year birds may sometimes be difficult to separate. While plumage phases given here are definite the time intervals between them may vary due to delayed moult.

### JUVENILE

*Both sexes:* Similar, body feathers soft and loose textured, quickly moulting into first year plumage.

*Under parts:* Whitish; feathers loose and fluffy with broad dark brown centre streaks.

*Face:* Broad rufous superciliary eye stripe above and behind eye.

*Eye ring feathers:* Rufous.

*Wing:* Coverts and secondaries edged rufous; sometimes slight rufous edging to primaries and pale rufous tinge on inner edges of the underwing feathers.

*Tail:* Grey; ends pointed (cf. Regent Bowerbird).

### FIRST YEAR

#### Both Sexes

*Face:* The juvenile rufous superciliary eye stripe may be partly or fully replaced by feathers similar to the crown feathers.

*Eye ring feathers:* Usually still rufous.

#### Wing

*Primary coverts:* Rufous; still juvenile (unmoulted).

*Secondary coverts:* Being replaced, the innermost may be new and the outer still juvenile (shorter and rufous).

*Primaries and secondaries:* Still juvenile (unmoulted) but with rufous edging mostly lost due to wear.

*Tail:* Still juvenile with pointed ends to the feathers.

### Male

*Bill:* Generally black, but sometimes upper mandible dark blackish grey and lower grey as in the female.

*Iris:* Chocolate brown.

*Lores:* Grey.

*Chin, throat and upper breast:* Greyish white with very narrow dark grey centre shaft streaks.

*Lower breast and flanks:* Buffy grey without centre shaft streaks.

### Female

*Bill:* Upper mandible usually dark grey-brown and lower grey, but sometimes the bill may be black as in the male.

*Iris:* Dark grey-brown.

*Lores:* Grey.

*Chin, throat and upper breast:* Greyish white with well marked dark centre streaks, obviously broader than the centre shaft.

*Lower breast and flanks:* Greyish buff with streaks similar to the upper breast.

### SECOND YEAR

The sexes can be clearly distinguished.

### Male

*Bill:* Black.

*Iris:* Red brown.

*Lores:* White.

*Eye ring feathers:* Dark grey, forming a dark ring around the eye.

*Chin and throat:* Greyish white with very faint streaks.

*Upper breast:* Grey with faint centre streaks.

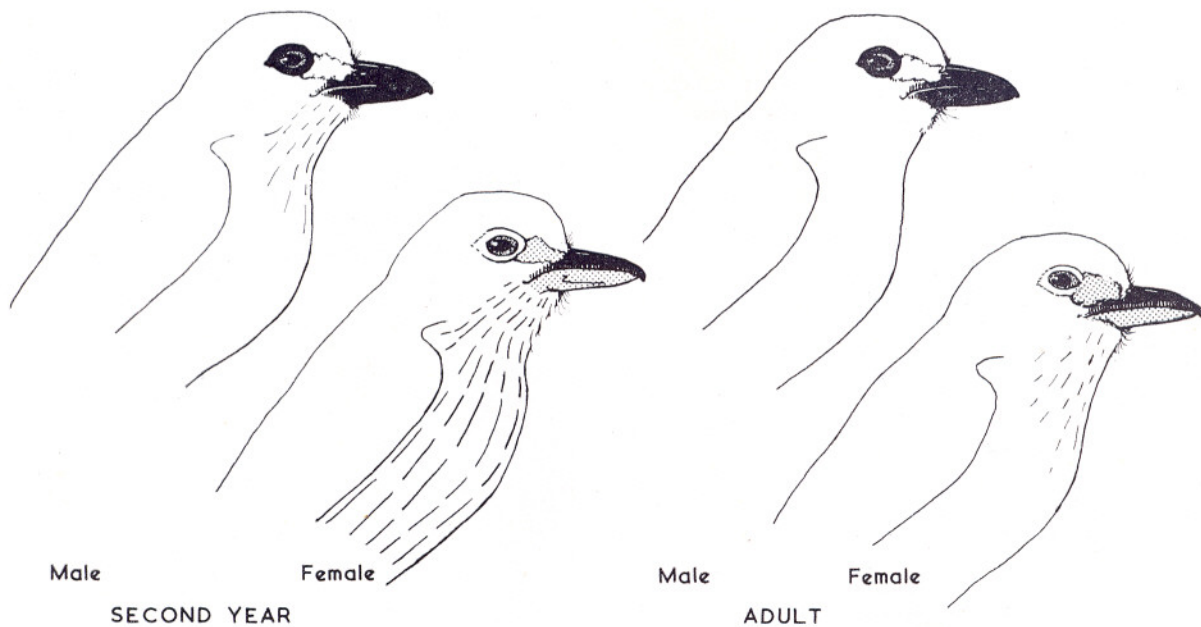
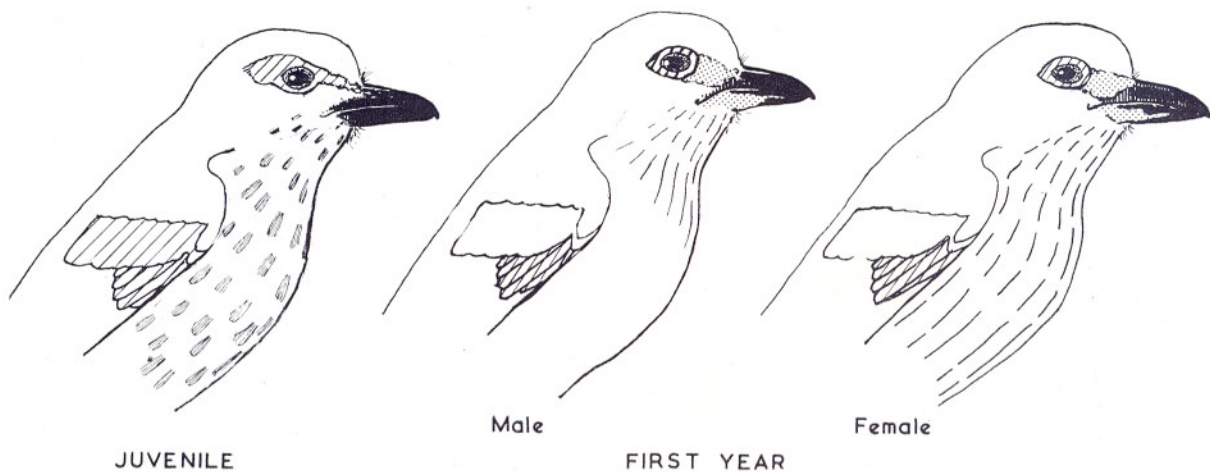
*Lower breast and flanks:* Grey to buff grey, without streaks.

*Tail:* Ends squarish, not pointed.

### Female

*Bill:* Upper mandible, dark grey to blackish brown; lower mandible grey.

*Iris:* Red brown.



*Lores:* Grey with dark centre streaks to the feathers.

*Eye ring feathers:* White, forming a white ring around the eye.

*Chin and throat:* Greyish white with well marked dark centre streaks.

*Upper and lower breast, flanks:* Similar to chin and throat with well marked centre streaks.

*Tail:* Ends squarish, not pointed.

**ADULT** (third year and older)

**Male**

*Bill:* Black.

*Iris:* Dark red-brown.

*Lores:* White.

*Eye ring feathers:* Dark grey giving the effect of a black eye ring.

*Chin and throat:* Buffy white, not streaked.

*Upper breast:* Pale grey, not streaked.

*Lower breast and flanks:* Buffy grey.

## Female

*Bill:* Upper mandible, dark grey, lower mandible, grey.

*Iris:* Red brown.

*Lores:* Greyish white, not obvious as in the male.

*Eye ring feathers:* White.

*Chin and throat:* Whitish grey with distinct centre streaks.

*Upper breast:* Grey with slight but distinct centre streaks.

*Lower breast and flanks:* Buffy grey (no streaks).

## DIAGNOSTIC CHARACTERS

### JUVENILE

Soft plumage.

### FIRST YEAR

Unmoulted juvenile rufous primary coverts retained.

*Male:* Slight streaking restricted to upper breast.

*Female:* Heavy streaking on chin, all of breast and flanks.

### SECOND YEAR

*Male:* Lores white; black or dark eye ring; faint streaking on upper breast.

*Female:* Lores grey with dark centre streaks; white eye ring; well marked streaks from chin to breast and flanks.

### ADULT

*Male:* Lores white; dark eye ring; no streaks on underparts.

*Female:* Lores grey; white eye ring; slight streaks from chin to upper breast. Distinguished from second year males by white eye ring, and from first year males by absence of juvenile rufous primary coverts.

*NOTE:* The summary of diagnostic features proposed by P. N. Reilly (1966) is basically correct, except that the superciliary eye stripe is a juvenile character, which is completely or partially lost in the first year. Also, adult females may have black palates. The bird described by S. and D. Wilson (1965) was probably a first or first/second year male rather than an immature female.

## References

- Reilly, P. N. (1966), 'Juvenile Plumage in the Grey Shrike-Thrush', *Aust. Bird Bander* 4:75.  
Wilson, S. and D. (1965), 'Juvenile Plumage in the Grey Shrike-Thrush', *Aust. Bird Bander* 3:70.

Drawings by C. Tanner



• Juvenile (fledgling) Grey Shrike-Thrushes.



• Nest and eggs of Grey Shrike-Thrush.

Photos: A. J. Elliott