

BIRD IN THE HAND

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Regent Bower-bird *Sericulus chrysocephalus*

Sexing and Ageing "Brown" Birds

This is a guide to distinguishing between male and female "brown" birds and some indication of age is given. So far no definite plumage differences have been observed but females are larger than males and the sex can be determined by measurements.

Usually a single measurement such as weight, tail length, wing span etc. is sufficient to determine the sex, but there is a slight overlap. When this occurs, comparison of other measurements including the bill, will usually provide the answer.

Both male and female "brown" birds may have a yellow or part yellow iris or some yellow feathers on the crown or nape.

Ageing

JUVENILE

The juvenile plumage is retained briefly. The body feathers are soft and loose textured and are quickly moulted into the first year plumage.

FIRST YEAR BIRDS

The obvious juvenile body plumage is replaced with the new "brown" plumage but the juvenile wing (flight) and tail feathers are retained.

Iris: Very dark brown.

Bill: Blackish.

Tail feathers: Pointed.

SECOND YEAR BIRDS

Similar to first year birds but

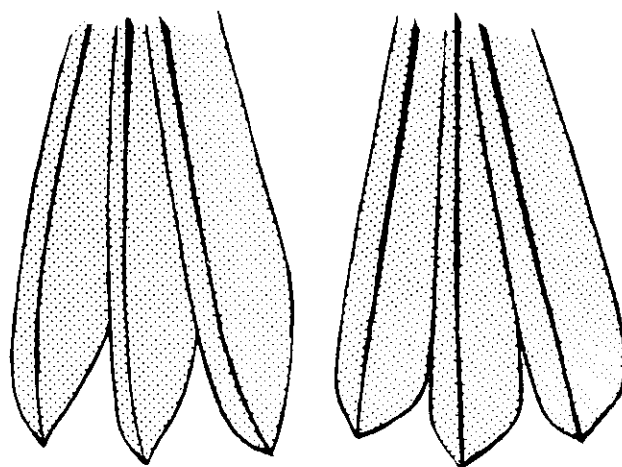
Tail feathers: Squarish.

OLDER BIRDS

Similar to second year birds until the iris and bill commence to turn yellow. The iris change occurs with both sexes but probably at different ages.

NOTE: Further information and discussion is given in "Moult, Plumage and Banding of the Regent Bower-bird" on pages 11-13.

TAIL FEATHERS

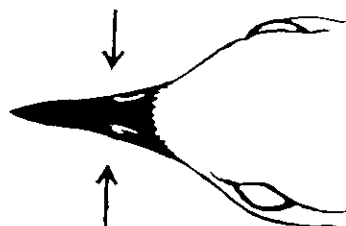
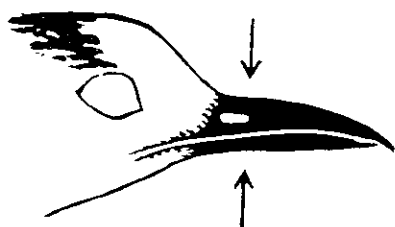


• First year.

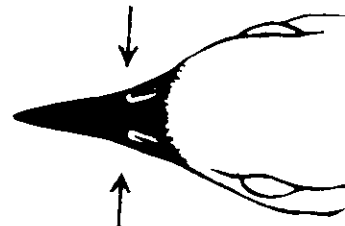
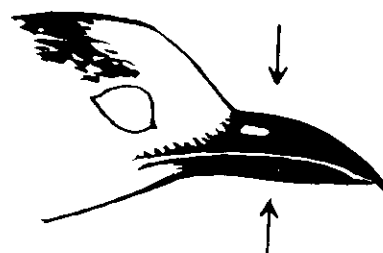
• Second year and older.

Sexing

| | MALE | | FEMALE | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Weight (all taken during Sept. to Dec.) | 84-96 gm | 14 weighed. | 95-134 gm | 18 weighed. |
| Wing Span (stretched) | 410-425 mm | 13 measured. | 417-445 mm | 18 measured; all below 425 mm had very worn primaries. |
| Wing (straightened) | 124-137 mm | 16 measured; usually 131-132 mm. | 129-139 mm | 22 measured; usually 134-135 mm |
| Tail | 95-103 mm | 16 measured. | 103-110 mm | 22 measured; usually 104-108 mm |
| Bill | | | | |
| Length | 23-25 mm | 16 measured; usually 24 mm or less. | 23-29 mm | 22 measured; usually over 24 mm. |
| Depth | 6.3-7.5 mm | usually 6.8-7.2 mm. | 7.3-8.5 mm | rarely below 7.5 mm; usually 7.8-8.2 mm |
| Width | 5.0-6.4 mm | rarely over 6.0 mm. | 6.1-7.5 mm | usually over 6.5 mm |
| Shape | Rather narrow and thin; culmen flattish. | | Rather thick and broad with a well pronounced down-curved culmen of the upper mandible. | |



MALE



FEMALE

(The arrows indicate where the depth and width measurements of the bill were taken).

Bill Measurements (taken with calipers)

Length: Measured from edge of feathers at the top of the culmen to the tip.

Depth: Measured from the front of the nostrils on the upper mandible to the tip of the angle underneath the lower mandible.

Width: Measured across the bill in the same place as the "Depth" measurement.