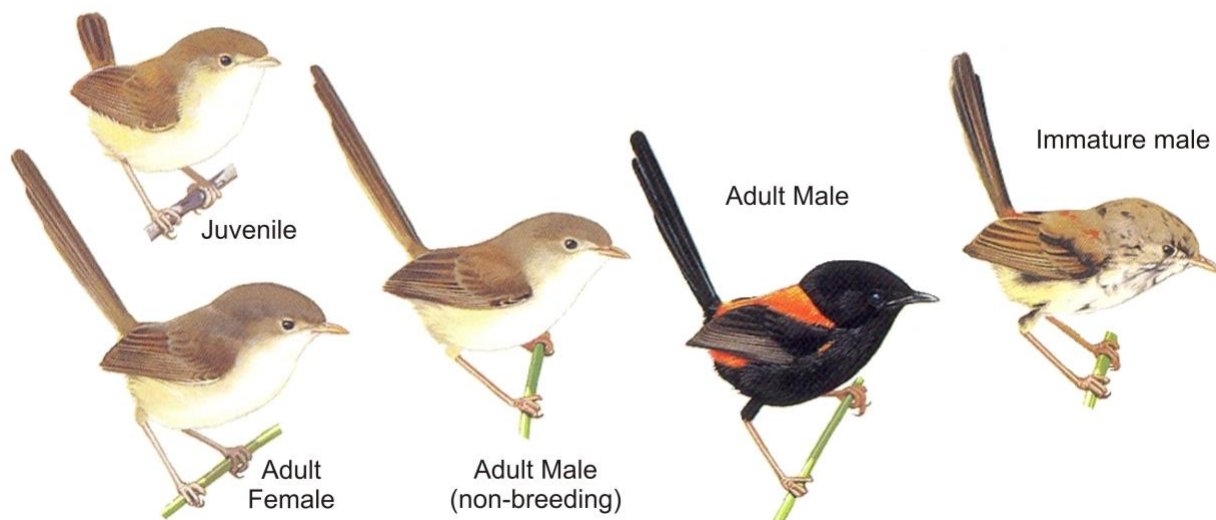


Red-backed Fairy-wren *Malurus melanocephalus* Species No.: 541 (for ABBBS records use the CAVS subspecies codes shown below) Band size: 01 AY



Morphometrics:

Two subspecies recognised with distribution as shown below.. Measurements provided are for the Ssp. *M.m. cruentatus* is marginally smaller. For ABBBS records use species number 541 for both subspecies.

	nominate <i>M.m. melanocephalus</i> (e. coast s. of Townsville - CAVS No. 8144)		ssp. <i>M.m. cruentatus</i> (WA, NT & Qld n. Townsville - CAVS No. 8143)	
	Adult Male	Adult Female	Adult Male	Adult Female
Wing:	41 – 46 mm	41 – 47 mm	39 – 45 mm	38 – 43 mm
Tail:	42 – 59 mm	53 – 65 mm	36 – 61 mm	40 – 64 mm
Bill:	9.8 – 12.6 mm	10.7 – 12.9 mm	10.1 – 12.4 mm	9.4 – 13.2mm
Tarsus:	18.0 – 20.8 mm	17.9 – 20.7 mm	17.6 – 20.3 mm	17.8 – 20.3 mm
Weight:	5.5 – 11.6 g	5.0 – 10.0 g	5.7 – 8.0 g	5.0 – 7.0 mm

Ageing:

- fairy-wrens moult all body feathers twice every year;
- male “breeding” plumage is first attained at approximately one year old, but then males moult back to “brown” plumage for their second Winter, before again moulting to “breeding” plumage;
- males moult through successive breeding plumages from their fourth year;
- males in “brown” plumage in Winter will be either (1) or (3-)
- males in breeding plumage in mid-Winter are thus aged (4+).

Sexing:

- males attain black bill within about six months of fledging, but in the first Winter it returns to a paler colour similar to female;
- immature males and females can be sexed on bill colour – males grey/black and females pink-brown, orange/rufous, or light rufous-brown;
- female alone incubates, so females with an active brood, patch will be (2+).