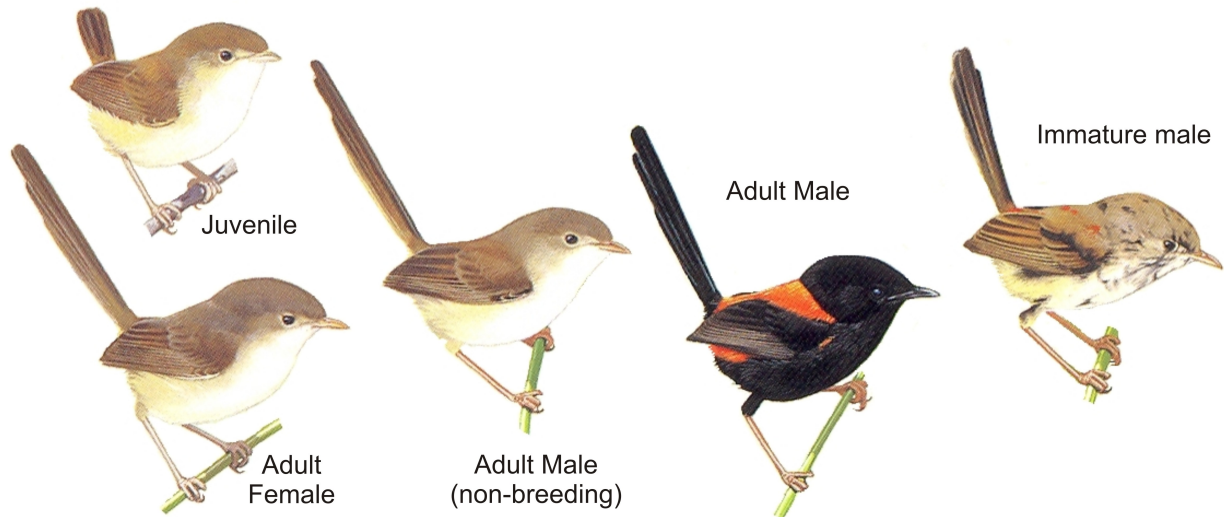


**Red-backed Fairy-wren *Malurus melanocephalus***

**Species No.: 541**

**Band size: 01**



**Morphometrics:**

Two subspecies recognised. Measurements provided are for the nominate *M.m.melanocephalus* (CAVS ssp. No. 8144) from the east coast of Qld s. of Townsville and coastal NSW south to the Hunter River. Ssp. *M.m. cruentatus* (CAVS ssp. No. 8143) from northern Australia is marginally smaller. For ABBBS records use species number 541 for both subspecies.

	Adult Male	Adult Female
Wing:	41 – 46 mm	41 – 47 mm
Tail:	42 – 59 mm	53 – 57 mm
Weight:	5.5 – 11.6 g	5.0 – 10.0 g

**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 third year;
- males in “brown” plumage in Winter will be either (1) or (2-)
- males in breeding plumage in mid-Winter are thus aged (3+).

**Sexing:**

- males attain black bill within about six months of fledging, but it returns to paler colour in first Winter;
- 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+).