

Superb Fairy-wren *Malurus cyaneus* Species No.: see below Band size: 01 AY

Sheet 1 of 2 – Tasmania and Bass Strait island subspecies

Status: Six subspecies are recognised by the Census of Australian Vertebrate Species (CAVS) and all have been allocated subspecies codes which should be used for ABBBS records. Sheet 1 deals with the three subspecies from Tasmania and Bass Straight Islands. Sheet 2 covers the three mainland and Kangaroo Island subspecies. Subspecies distribution and CAVS numbers are shown in **Morphometrics** below:



Morphometrics:

M.c. cyaneus
Tasmania (CAVS 8133)

	Adult Male	Adult Female
Wing:	52 - 56 mm	48 - 56 mm
Tail:	56 - 72 mm	60 - 76 mm
Bill:	11.1 – 13.4 mm	10.2 – 13.6 mm
Tarsus:	22.5 – 24.4 mm	23.0 – 25.6 mm
Weight:	9.0 – 12.5 g	9.0 – 15.0 g

M.c. samueli

Furneaux island group (CAVS 8134)

M.c. elizabethae

Flinders Is. (CAVS 8135)

	Adult Male	Adult Female	Adult Male	Adult Female
Wing:	51 – 57 mm	51 – 54 mm	53 – 56 mm	53 – 55 mm
Tail:	57 – 67 mm	56 – 67 mm	61 – 69 mm	62 – 65 mm
Bill:	11.7 – 13.9 mm	10.9 – 13.2 mm	11.7 – 13.7 mm	11.5 – 13.9 mm
Tarsus:	22.5 – 25.6 mm	22.4 – 24.9 mm	22.8 – 25.3 mm	23.0 – 24.7 mm
Weight:	10.0 – 13.0 g	9.6 – 14.0 g	10.5 – 12.0 g	10.5 – 12.5 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:

Post-juvenile moult results in identifiable male and female immatures based on bill colour – males grey/black and females orange/rufous;
 Males attain black bill, lores and eye-ring within about six months of fledging;
 Female alone incubates, so females with an active brood patch will be (2+).

Superb Fairy-wren *Malurus cyaneus* **Species No.:** see below **Band size:** 01 AY

Sheet 2 of 2 – Qld, NSW, Vic, SA and Kangaroo Island subspecies



Morphometrics:

ssp. *M.c. cyanochlamys*
Qld, NSW & e. Vic (use CAVS No. 8136)

	Adult Male	Adult Female
Wing:	46 – 55 mm	45 – 52 mm
Tail:	52 – 67 mm	54 – 65 mm
THL:	26.7 – 30.2 mm	26.5 – 29.9 mm
Bill:	9.7 – 12.5 mm	10.1 – 13.0 mm
Tarsus:	20.5 – 24.7 mm	20.4 – 23.3 mm
Weight:	7.0 – 12.0 g	6.4 – 11.1 g

ssp. *M.c. leggei*
w. Vic. & SA (use CAVS No. 8137)

	Adult Male	Adult Female
Wing:	50.0 – 54.0 mm	45 – 52 mm
Tail:	54 – 65 mm	57 – 65 mm
Bill:	10.4 – 13.2 mm	10.4 – 12.7 mm
Tarsus:	21.2 – 13.2 mm	20.5 – 23.4 mm
Weight:	7.0 – 12.2 g	9.0 – 10.5 g

ssp. *M.c. ashbyi*
Kangaroo Is. (use CAVS No. 8138)

	Adult Male	Adult Female
Wing:	51 – 56 mm	51 – 52 mm
Tail:	57 – 66 mm	58 – 67 mm
Bill:	10.7 – 13.7 mm	11.8 – 12.4 mm
Tarsus:	21.5 – 24.7 mm	22.6 – 23.5 mm
Weight:	9.5 – 12.0 g	9.4 – 9.5 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:

Post-juvenile moult results in identifiable male and female immatures based on bill colour – males grey/black; and females orange/rufous;
Males attain black bill, lores and eye-ring within about six months of fledging;
Female alone incubates, so females with an active brood patch will be (2+).

Similar species:

In the overlap range area, “brown” Superb and Variegated Fairy-wrens are readily separated as follows:

	Superb Fairy-wren	Variegated Fairy-wren
Tail length:	≤ 66 mm;	> 66 mm;
Lores & eye-ring:	orange-rufous;	dark red-brown;
Bill width:	3.4 – 3.5 mm	3.8 – 4.1 mm

(Bill width - measured at junction of frontal feathering with the exposed culmen)