

TIME PARTITIONING AND SUBSTRATE USE OF RED-BACKED FAIRY-WRENS *Malurus melanocephalus*

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Red-backed Fairy-wrens *Malurus melanocephalus* are small insectivorous birds that inhabit Australia's tropical and subtropical savannas. We studied a colour-banded population in the Kimberley, Western Australia, to describe how they partition their time among the main habitat elements within their savanna environment. Eighty-nine focal watches on 29 individuals showed that Red-backed Fairy-wrens spend most of the cooler parts of their day foraging (60%), then preening/loafing (17%), then being vigilant (14%). Behaviours were not randomly undertaken across substrates, with foraging most common in grass, vigilance most common in *Acacia* spp. and preening/loafing most common in the thorny shrub, *Carissa lanceolata*. There was no significant relationship between sex and substrate or activity, suggesting that during the dry season males and females have similar time budgets.