

FOREST BIRD COMMUNITIES OF THE RICHMOND RIVER DISTRICT, NEW SOUTH WALES

D. G. GOSPER

15 Arthur Street, Casino, NSW 2470

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Birds in sclerophyll (eucalypt) forests and rainforests in northern NSW were counted monthly over 30 months between 1977 and 1982. The bird communities of two dry sclerophyll forests were similar, a feature of both being the high frequency of lorikeets and honeyeaters (43-55% of all birds). They showed greater similarities to eucalypt woodland communities (elsewhere in NSW) than to moist forest communities. Coastal wet sclerophyll forest shared the same number of species with both dry sclerophyll forests and rainforests, but a greater affinity with the latter was indicated by the dominant species. The species composition of dry and subtropical rainforests were similar, although relative abundance values for many primary rainforest species, particularly the larger frugivores, were lower in dry rainforest. No exotic species were recorded from any site. Seasonal patterns were similar for all sclerophyll forests. Species numbers were generally highest in autumn and/or spring, and lowest in summer. Numbers of individuals were highest in winter and lowest in summer, a pattern that differs from that reported from some eucalypt forest and woodland communities elsewhere in south-eastern Australia. In the rainforests, both the numbers of species and of individuals were highest in summer and lowest in winter, contrasting with the seasonality of the sclerophyll forests.