
BIRD IN THE HAND

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GREY FANTAIL *Rhipidura fuliginosa*

ABBS No. 361; Band Size 01

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AGEING

Juvenile: The combination of rufous breast and covert tips identifies the juvenile. Fluffiness of the plumage is a useful corroboration. Simpson and Day (1993, p. 193) illustrate this plumage.

Mantle: grey, mottled with rufous.

Breast: grey, washed with rufous.

Wing coverts: tipped with buff-rufous.

1st Year/Immature: The tipping of the wing coverts separates 1st year/immatures from adults.

Mantle: grey.

Breast: grey.

Wing coverts: tipped with buff or buff-rufous.

Adult:

Mantle: grey.

Breast: grey.

Wing coverts: tipped white.

Rogers *et al.* (1986) suggest that tail length can be used as a sexing criterion, allowing identification of about 30 per cent of individuals. Ford's (1981) data from larger samples of sexed museum specimens do not show this separation.

COMMENTS

There is considerable variation in this species, which is useful in determining the origin of captured birds. The most distinctive forms, however, exhibit limited little movement or little overlap with others. The migratory populations of Tasmania and the south-east are similar and not readily separable.

REFERENCES

- Ford, J. R. (1981). Evolution, distribution and stage of speciation in the *Rhipidura fuliginosa* complex in Australia. *Emu* 81: 128-144.
- Rogers, K., Rogers, A., Rogers, D., Lane, B. and Male, B. (1986). 'Bander's Aid. A Guide to Ageing and Sexing Bush Birds.' (Published by the authors: St Andrews, Vic.)
- Simpson, K. and Day, S. (1993). 'Field Guide to the Birds of Australia.' 4th ed. (Viking O'Neil: Ringwood, Vic.)

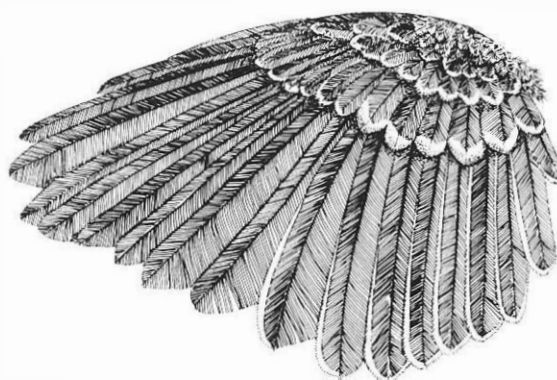


Figure 1. Wing of immature Grey Fantail showing buff-tipped wing coverts. Illustrated by Marion Westmacott.