

BIRDS IN OUR AREA - GREY SHRIKE-THRUSH AND BASSIAN THRUSH

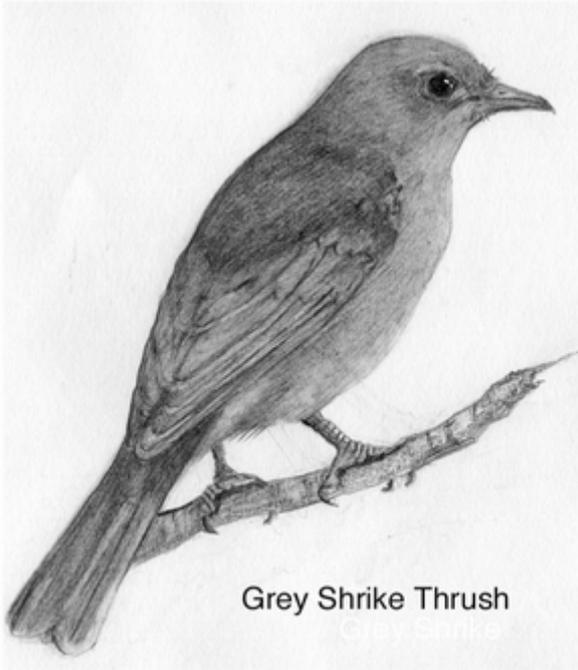
... *Mike and Kaye Traynor; drawings by Kaye Traynor*

Grey Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*

Other names: Harmonious Shrike-Thrush, Brown Thrush, Pale-headed, Duke Wellington

Size range: 22cm to 25cm.

The Grey Shrike-thrush is a well-known bird, which has uniformly grey plumage, with an olive-grey back, and pale grey-white cheeks and underparts.



Grey Shrike Thrush

It is found in all but the most arid regions of the country, as well as the larger off-shore islands in southern New Guinea, inhabits forests and woodlands, and is a common and familiar bird.

The Grey Shrike-thrush searches for food on the ground, generally around fallen logs, and on the limbs and trunks of trees. Its diet is varied consisting of insects, spiders, small mammals, frogs and lizards, and birds eggs, and young birds, and birds have even been observed feeding on carrion. Fruits and seeds are also a part of their diet.

The voice is varied, rich and melodious. The call varies throughout its range, and between individuals. It has a distinctive sound in the Spring, and a quite different voice in the Autumn.

Pairs generally remain together for life, and inhabit the same areas throughout this time. A breeding territory of up to ten hectares is maintained. The nest is a cup-shaped structure of dried leaves and bark, and is placed in a fork or a tangle of vegetation in a crevice, or on a stump within 6 m of the ground. The female lays 2-4, white or cream white eggs, blotched and spotted with grey and olive brown. Incubation is 17 - 18 days. Both birds share the nest-building and incubation duties, and both care for the young birds.

Bassian Thrush *Zoothera lunulata*

Other names - White's Thrush, Ground Thrush, Scaly Thrush, Mountain Thrush

Size: 27cm to 29 cm

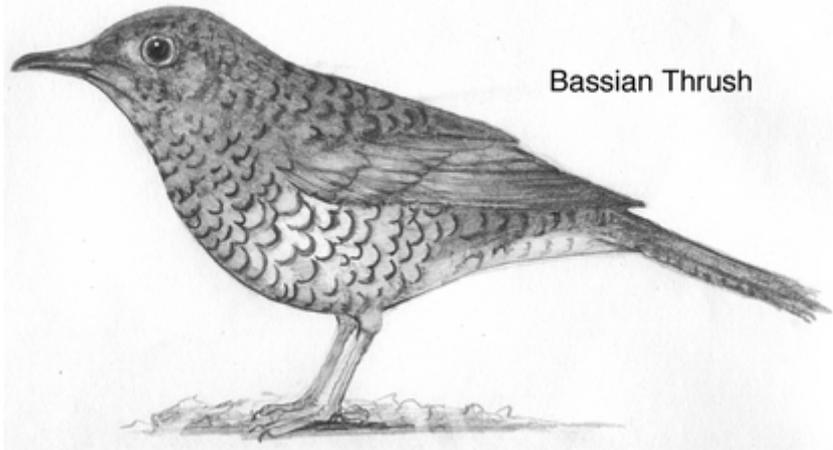
The Bassian Thrush is a secretive bird. Its plumage is mottled brown to olive-brown, heavily scalloped with black crescent-shaped bars on the back, rump and head. The paler underparts all have brown-black scalloping. It has a white eye-ring. In flight, it shows a broad dark diagonal bar across the white underside of the wing. Often bush walkers catch a glimpse of the bird, as it runs ahead on a quiet forest track.

It inhabits densely forested areas and gullies, usually with a thick canopy overhead, and leaf-litter below, feeds on the ground, scratching under the leaf-litter for small invertebrates.

The Bassian Thrush can be heard mainly at dawn, or in dull weather, its song being three notes - the first steady, the second rising briefly, and the third steady.

The nest is large, deep, cup-shaped in a major tree fork or in a depression on top of a stump. It can be quite low, or up to about 15 m above the ground. Both parents care for the young. The clutch size is 2-3, dull, bluish grey, greyish green or pale red-grey eggs with reddish mottling mainly at larger end. Incubation takes 14 days.

Reference: Boles, Walter E. 1988, *The Robins & Flycatchers of Australia*, Angus & Robertson [and] the National Photographic Index of Australian Wildlife



Bassian Thrush

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