

# REGENT HONEYEATER IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

Broad patch of bare warty skin around the eye, which is smaller in young birds and females. Best seen at close range or with binoculars.

Regent Honeyeaters are 20-24 cm long, with females smaller and having duller plumage than the males.

From below the tail is a bright yellow. From behind it's black bordered by bright yellow feathers.

Males call prominently, whereas females only occasionally make soft calls.

Plumage around the head and neck is solid black giving a slightly hooded appearance.

Distinctive scalloped (not streaked) breast.

Broad stripes of yellow in the wing when folded, and very prominent in flight.



## COMMON MISIDENTIFICATIONS



### YELLOW-TUFTED HONEYEATER

*Lichenostomus melanops*

Habitat: Box-Gum-Ironbark woodlands and forest with a shrubby understorey.

Notes: Common, sedentary bird of temperate woodlands. Has a distinctive yellow crown and ear tuft in a black face, with a bright yellow throat. Underparts are plain dirty yellow, upperparts olive-green.



### NEW HOLLAND HONEYEATER

*Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*

Habitat: Woodland with heathy understorey, gardens and parklands.

Notes: Often misidentified as a Regent Honeyeater; commonly seen in urban parks and gardens. Distinctive white breast with black streaks, several patches of white around the face, and a white eye ring. Tend to be in small, noisy and aggressive flocks.



### WHITE-CHEEKED HONEYEATER

*Phylidonyris niger*

Habitat: Heathlands, parks and gardens, less commonly open woodland.

Notes: Similar to New Holland Honeyeaters, but have a large patch of white feathers in their cheek and a dark eye (no white eye ring). Also have white breast streaked black.



### PAINTED HONEYEATER

*Grantiella picta*

Habitat: Box-Ironbark woodland, particularly with fruiting mistletoe

Notes: A seasonal migrant, only visiting NSW and Vic in spring and summer. Have a vivid pink bill, almost wholly white underparts, and solid black plumage on the head and back. A mistletoe specialist rarely seen foraging in eucalyptus flowers.



### CRESCENT HONEYEATER

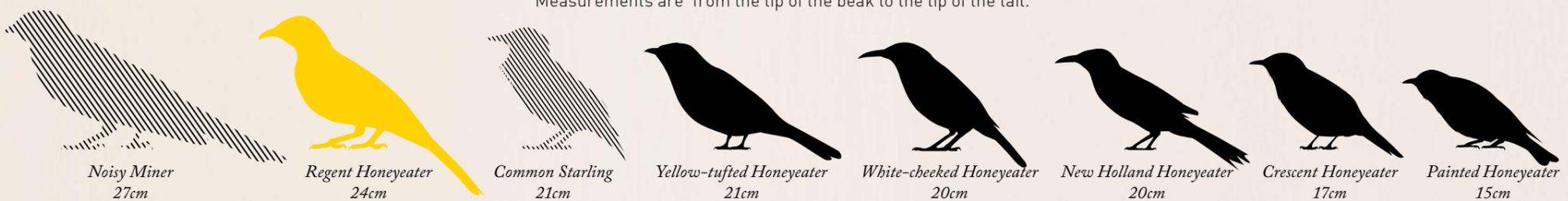
*Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus*

Habitat: Wetter habitats like forest, dense woodland and coastal heathlands.

Notes: Not commonly seen in association with Regents, given their preference for dense, wetter habitats. However found in coastal heaths which Regents sometimes utilise. A distinctive black 'saddle' marking over the shoulder and breast.

## SIZE COMPARISON

Measurements are from the tip of the beak to the tip of the tail.



# A GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED REGENT HONEYEATER



## INTRODUCTION

The Regent Honeyeater is a medium-sized bird living in woodland and forest in south-east Australia. They are known as a 'rich patch nomad', moving around the landscape to follow flowering (more accurately the nectar flows) of their favoured tree species.

Scientific title

**ANTHOCHAERA PHRYGIA**

Size

**20-24 CM**

Lifespan

**10 YEARS**

Population

**<500**

Status

**CRITICALLY ENDANGERED**

Threats

**HABITAT LOSS  
& COMPETITION**

## HABITAT



Regent Honeyeaters tend to favour certain types of trees, particularly those which are large and old in good soil.

The species favoured include:

- White Box (*Eucalyptus albens*)
- Yellow Box (*E. melliodora*) [above]
- Mugga Ironbark (*E. sideroxylon*)
- Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*)
- Swamp Mahogany (*E. robusta*)
- River Sheoak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana*)

Along with these trees they also seek out flowering mistletoe, in particular Box Mistletoe (*Amyema miquellii*) in box and ironbark woodlands, and Needle-leaf Mistletoe (*Amyema cambagei*) in River Sheoak. Regents will also take advantage of planted gum trees and native shrubs in parks and gardens at times.

## HOW TO FIND A REGENT



1. Look for flowering gum trees (especially ironbarks, box and spotted gum).



2. Check flowering mistletoe in gum trees or river sheoaks.



3. Look for congregations of similar species, like friarbirds and other small honeyeaters.



4. Learn the calls – Regent Honeyeaters are quieter than other honeyeaters.

## COLOUR BANDING

Hundreds of Regent Honeyeaters have been banded in the wild or released wearing colour bands. Every banded bird has two bands on each leg - on one there will be a colour band above a metal band, while on the other leg there will be two colour bands. This allows individuals to be traced back to the point of capture (wild birds) or release (captive bred birds). Our longest recorded movement by a bird is 580km point-to-point.



Identifying band colours can be a challenge, and is where good binoculars and taking a photo can help. The challenge lies in remembering the birds lefts and rights, dealing with bad light and birds moving behind foliage or branches. It's not often you get a good view of both legs at the same time. This makes accurate recording of all four bands difficult. Fear not! Any information is worthwhile. The accepted method for recording a band combination involves 'reading' the bands from top to bottom (i.e. closest to the body recorded first, closest to the foot recorded second).

### Colour bands currently in use



### Example photographs of banded Regents



Left leg – Blue over Red  
Right leg – Pink over Metal



Left leg – Orange over Blue  
Right leg – Red over Metal

## POPULATION DECLINE

In the mid-1800's Regent Honeyeaters were enthusiastically described as occurring in 'thousands' in some locations, and as recently as the early 1900's were at times the most common species in an area. Unfortunately this is no longer the case with fewer than 500 estimated to still survive in the wild. Now considered extinct in western Victoria and South Australia, the range has contracted and is patchy. The key regions for them now are west of Armidale and the Capertee and Hunter Valleys in NSW, and north-east Victoria.



## WHAT TO RECORD



### TAKE A PHOTO

This is probably the most valuable piece of information! Even poor quality photos can help to confirm a sighting, age and sex the bird, identify habitat and bands!

### SCRIBBLE NOTES

Try and write down as much information as possible:

- Date & time
- Location
- Amount
- Leg band colours
- Behaviour
- Other species present

### CONTACT US

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