

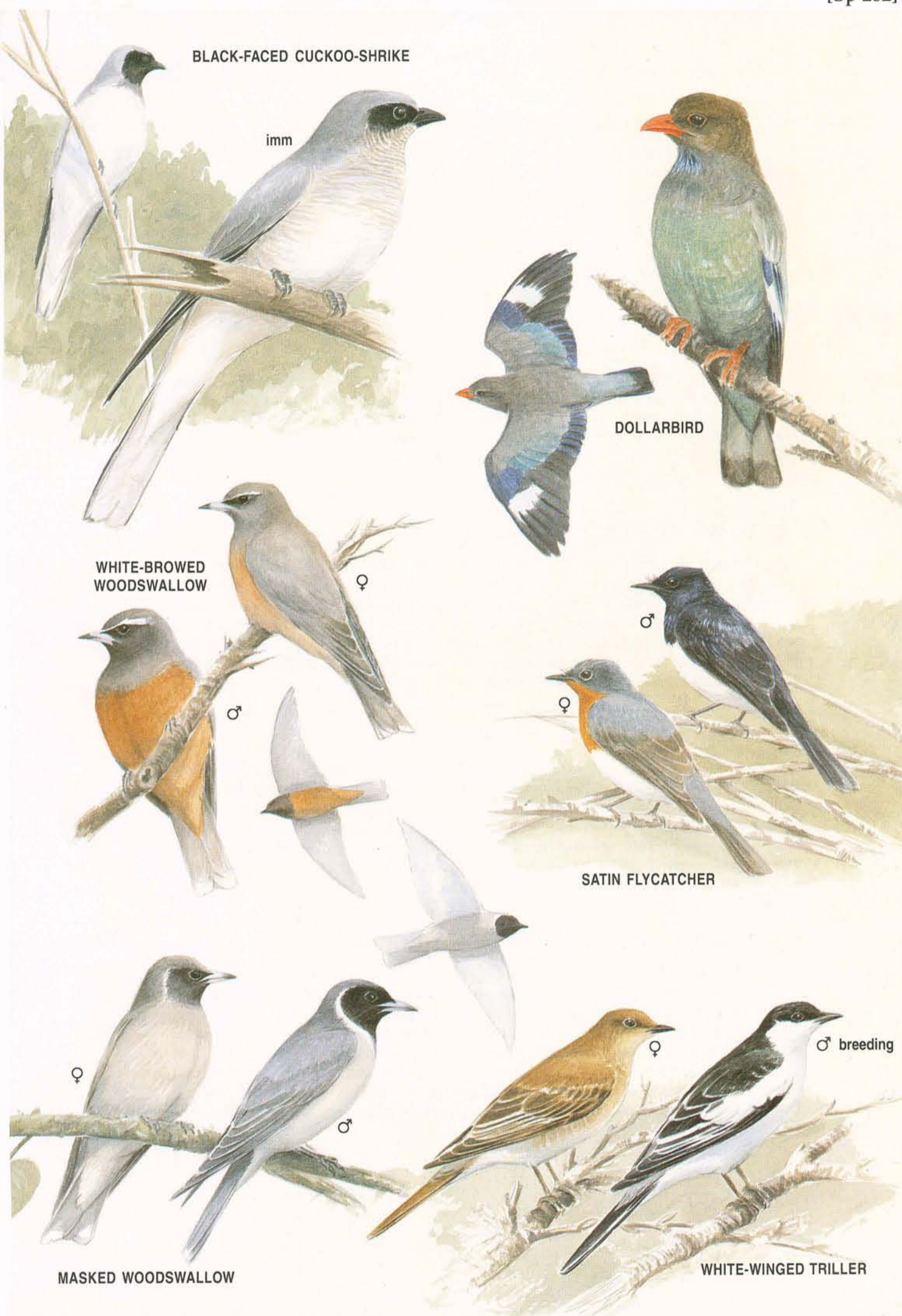
Passerines are the largest group of birds. They are small to medium sized land birds found worldwide, except on Antarctica. All species have four toes, three pointing forward and one back, well-adapted for perching. Most species are song-birds, with complex musical calls, but there are exceptions (e.g. crows). They show great diversity of form, behaviour and breeding biology.

DOLLARBIRD *Eurystomus orientalis*

Rare Australian straggler

29 cm. Stout short-tailed greenish bird with a large brownish head and glossy blue throat. Short broad red bill; red legs. In flight, prominent pale 'silver dollar' patches on wings. Immature has brown-grey body, dark bill and brown legs. Sexes alike. Perches high on dead branches, in an upright posture, before swooping out to catch large insects. Call a loud raspy cackle. **Habitat:** Lightly forested open country. Breeds Australia. Winters Asia. Most NZ records are of adults in Nov–Dec, and immatures in Mar–May.

[Sp 282]



ROLLERS

Coraciidae

16 species worldwide; 1 reaches New Zealand.

branches, making harsh noises. They feed mainly early morning or late afternoon, diving from their perch to take large insects on the wing, often with aerobatic twisting and turning, and then circling back to their perch with an upward swoop.

Rollers are colourful birds with a large head, plump body, short neck and legs, long wings and a wide, short, slightly hooked bill. They spend a lot of time perched high on bare tree

282. DOLLARBIRD *Eurystomus orientalis*

Plate 65

Other name: Eastern Broad-billed Roller

Size: 29 cm, 130 g

Geographical variation: About a dozen subspecies, of which *pacificus* breeds in northern and eastern Australia and then migrates to winter in Indonesia and New Guinea.

Distribution: Asia and Australasia. Dollarbirds arrive in Australia from late September to November, and the adults leave in February–April, soon after the young have

fledged, and the young follow about a month later. A few Dollarbirds reach New Zealand in most years. Some sightings are of adults in October–December, but most are of young birds caught up by adverse winds when on northward passage in March–May. There are many records of single birds or small groups, mostly from the western coasts of both main islands from Northland to Southland.