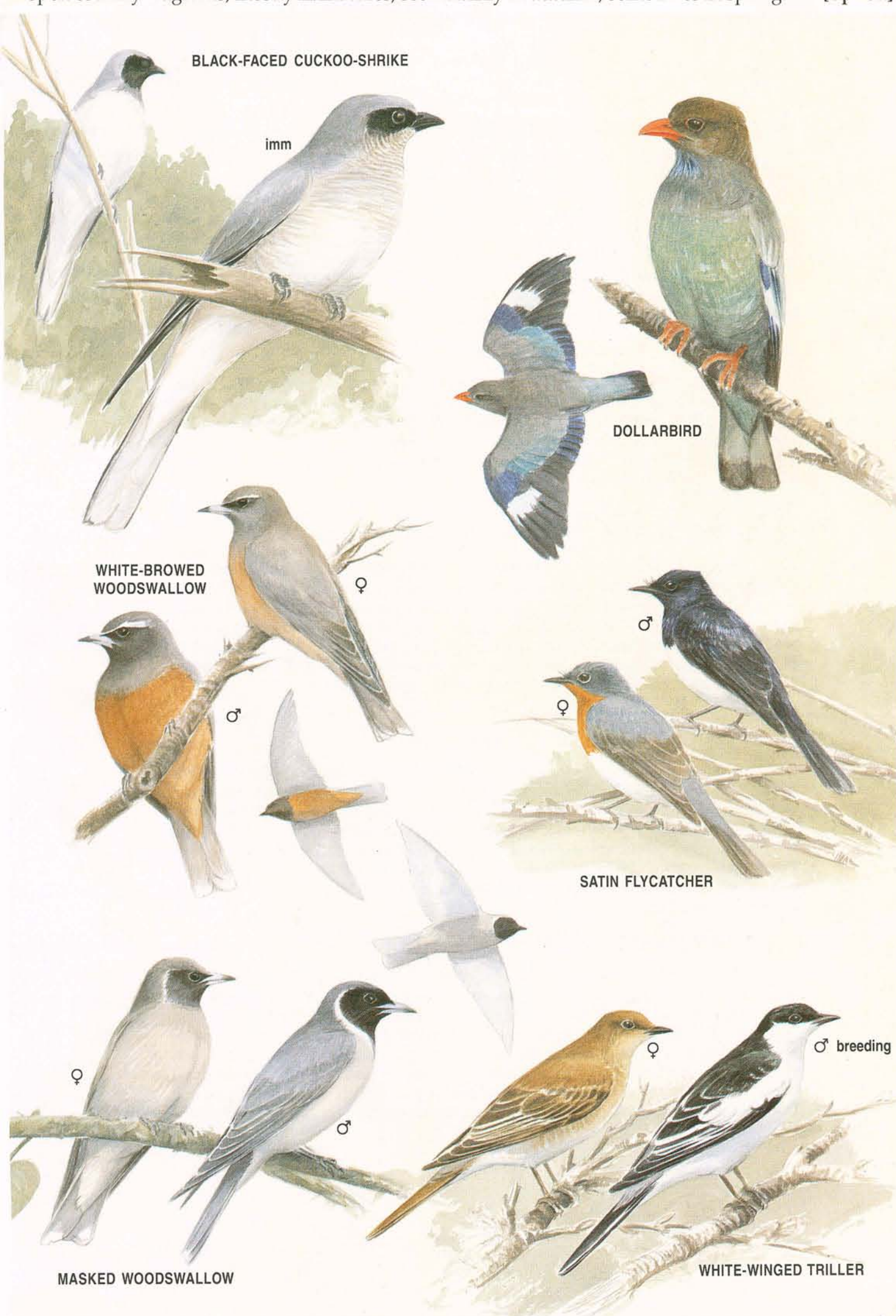


Passerines are the largest group of birds. They are small to medium sized land birds found worldwide, except on Antarctica. All species have four toes, three pointing forward and one back, well-adapted for perching. Most species are song-birds, with complex musical calls, but there are exceptions (e.g.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

BLACK-FACED CUCKOO-SHRIKE *Coracina novaehollandiae*

Rare Australian vagrant

33 cm. Large pale grey bird with a long tail, and habit of folding and refolding its wings on alighting at a perch. Adult has black face and throat. Immature has black patch from bill to ear coverts, and pale faintly barred throat and upper breast. Sexes alike. Flight undulating. Feeds mainly on insects taken in foliage or by swooping to the ground from a perch. Call a short soft croaky 'prurr'. **Habitat:** Lightly forested open country. Vagrants, mostly immatures, seen mainly in autumn, sometimes in spring. [Sp 291]



CUCKOO-SHRIKES and TRILLERS

Campephagidae

72 species in Africa and Asia; 2 vagrants reach New Zealand.

This family superficially resembles cuckoos by plumage colouring and slender silhouette, and shrikes by their bill shape, but they have

no direct connection with either. Their plumage is usually mostly grey and black or, in trillers, black and white. The bill is short, stout and decurved near the tip, and they eat mainly insects. Their flight is undulating like that of a cuckoo.

291. BLACK-FACED CUCKOO-SHRIKE

Coracina novaehollandiae Plate 65

Size: 33 cm

Distribution: Breeds in the Lesser Sunda Islands, New Guinea, Australia and the Solomon Islands. Birds in southern Australia migrate northwards to winter in the tropics, and some juveniles and a few adults get caught up in bad weather and stray to New Zealand, mostly in autumn and spring. About 15 records, mostly sight records on or near western coasts: Motueka (1869), Invercargill (1870 and 1976), Westport (c. 1895 and 1931), Lake Ellesmere (1904), Greymouth (1914), Okato, Taranaki (1914), Poutu, North Kaipara Heads (1953), Himatangi, Manawatu (1955),

Feilding (1965), Okuru, south of Haast (1966), Rotorua (1987), Tarras, Central Otago (1990) and Stewart Island (2001).

Behaviour: They feed on insects and fruit in the outer foliage of trees, dart from a prominent perch to catch flying insects, or take earthworms and insects on the ground. Their flight is strong and undulating, distinctly closing their wings at the top of each wave. They repeatedly shuffle their wings when they land on a perch. The main call is a croaky purr.

Reading: Smith, M.H. 1978. *Notornis* 25: 159–160.