

**TWO BIRDS IN OUR AREA ... Mike & Kaye Traynor ... Drawings by Kaye Traynor**

**Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike** *Coracina novaehollandiae* Length, bill-tip to tail tip: 30–36 cm  
Other names: Summerbird, Blue or Grey Jay, Cherry Hawk, Shufflewing

The Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike is neither a cuckoo nor a shrike, although there are some superficial resemblances.

The species is widely distributed, and can be found in wooded areas, parks and gardens, as well as remote arid regions. During spring and summer, adult birds live in pairs, and return to the same breeding territory year after year.

Both male and female share the task of nest-building, which is usually placed on a horizontal fork, near the end of a branch, 8–10 m above ground. They take care to position their nest to ensure it is well shaded, and out of the reach of predators. They lay 2–3 eggs. Both sexes incubate the young, and defend the nest. The nest is so small that the nestlings, when feathered, sit on the nest rather than in it.

The Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike has a characteristic undulating flight, with alternate flapping and gliding. They are primarily insect eaters, but also eat berries and fruit. They may also take nestlings.

Description: The sexes are similar. General plumage is light grey. The forehead, face and throat are black. The breast is grey, the belly white, flight feathers are black, edged with pale grey, and the tail is black with a white tip. The eye is dark brown, the bill and feet are black. Immature birds differ, in that they don't have as much black on the face.



Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike

**White-winged Triller** *Lalage sueurii* Length, bill-tip to tail tip: 16–18.5 cm  
Other names: Caterpillar-eater, Triller, Peewee-lark



White-winged Triller

The White-winged Triller arrives from northern Australia in spring, and returns north in Autumn. Birds sometimes form small colonies, with several pairs nesting in close proximity.

During breeding season, the male triller spends much of its time singing loudly from the top of a tree in its territory. It also sings in flight, as well as on the nest. The female, by comparison, is quiet, and less conspicuous.

White-winged Trillers feed mostly on the ground among fallen logs, leaf litter and rocks, where they take spiders, insects and insect larvae.

Both sexes share the nest-building, incubation and rearing young. Fledglings resemble the female, with a brownish colour and streaked underparts.

In breeding plumage, the males have a black crown, nape and back, with a grey rump, and all white underparts. The wings are black, with a large white patch, the tail is black with white tip. They have dark brown eyes, and black bill and legs. In non-breeding plumage, dull brown replaces the black.

The females' upper parts, including the wings and tail, are brown. The eyebrows are dull white, with dark markings in front of, and behind, the eyes. The breast is dark brown, the underparts white, the eyes dark brown, as are the bill, legs and feet.

The species breeds from September to February. The nest is a small, shallow saucer, made from fine rootlets and grass, bound with spiderweb, located in a thin fork on a horizontal branch, 1–10 m above the ground. They lay 2 or 3 eggs.

References:

*Reader's Digest - Complete Book of Australian Birds*, 2nd edn rev. 2003, Published by Reader's Digest, Sydney.  
Pizzey, Graham & Knight, Frank; updated and edited by Pizzey, Sarah 2012, *The Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*, Harper Collins Publishers, Sydney, NSW.

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