

Have you seen this bird?

We need sightings of the Grey Range Thick-billed Grasswren



Stout bill

Long brown tail often held erect and still

Head coarsely streaked white

Fawn brown underparts with fainter streaking on the breast

Dull brown back and wings

Sturdy, dark grey legs

Size comparison

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



Introduction

The Grey Range Thick-billed Grasswren is a subspecies of Thick-billed Grasswren that only occurs in Far Northwest NSW.

Scientific name:

Amytornis modestus obscurior

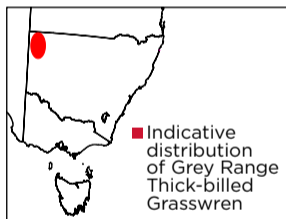
Size: 15 – 20 cm (tip of beak to tip of tail.)

Population: <50

Status: Critically Endangered

Habitat

Grey Range Thick-billed Grasswren live in Black Bluebush *Maireana pyramidata* shrublands preferring areas where the shrubs are tallest and thickest. They may also be found in Cottonbush *Maireana aphylla*.



How to find a Grey Range Thick-billed Grasswren

1. Look for a patch of relatively healthy Black Bluebush shrubland.
2. Watch from 10 to 30m away, observe shrubs and look for bird movement - using binoculars is ideal.
3. Look at the birds' **appearance** and **behaviour** (see below) and compare with similar looking species.
4. Be patient. If you are lucky, the bird might land on a clear perch. However, please don't chase or harass the bird.



When trying to find birds it is important to respect the rights of all landowners and always ask for permission before entering private property.

What to record

1. Take a photo of the habitat and of the bird, if possible, although this is usually very difficult!
2. An accurate location of where you found the bird using a GPS, phone or another device, or even a detailed map that includes proximity to roads and landmarks. This is the most important step!
3. Scribble down some notes on the birds' appearance and behavior and try to write down as much information as possible, including:
 - Date and time
 - Location
 - Number of birds
 - Behaviour
 - Other species present
 - Vegetation - species, condition, density
4. **Report all sightings to BirdLife Australia. You can record sightings in BirdLife Australia's free birddata app: birddata.birdlife.org.au or email at conservation@birdlife.org.au**

Identifying Grey Range Thick-billed Grasswrens

- Secretive birds that are difficult to see.
- Observed running or hopping between shrubs.
- Sometimes perch briefly before diving back into dense cover.
- Flight is less frequent, but when in flight, it is low to the ground, direct and accompanied by rapid wingbeats and their long tail appears heavy.
- Soft, high-pitched call can be difficult to hear.
- Observed in pairs or as single birds but can sometimes be seen in small groups.
- Shorter, thicker bill than Fairy-wren & Fieldwren.

Common misidentifications

White-winged Fairy-wren *Malurus leucopterus*

Grasswrens can easily be confused with uncoloured fairy-wrens (right). These fairy-wrens are smaller and slighter with mouse-brown coloured bodies and a tail with at least some blue colouration.



Rufous Fieldwren *Calamanthus campestris*

Rufous Fieldwren are slightly smaller than a grasswren, have a shorter tail with a pale tip and a pale eyebrow.



Photos kindly provided by Tom Hunt and Luke Ireland.

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