

Eastern Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria australis chrysorrhoa*)

Robyn Howard

An early welcome at the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary is often from an Eastern Yellow Robin along the first section of the track. It may be perched on a sign, or on the side of a tree trunk and flitting down to catch moths and other insects, or piping its repetitious single note song. They seem inquisitive and not as reticent as most birds and happily dart out to pounce on insects disturbed by walkers. Favoured foods include worms, ants, bugs, spiders, moths, grasshoppers, flies and wasps.

Our Australian robins are not closely related to the European robins. The Eastern Yellow Robin has two races, the local one being *chrysorrhoa*, the major differentiating feature being its bright yellow rump and upper tail coverts. It is 15 – 16 cm in length, grey above (excepting the rump area), white under the chin, brilliant yellow underneath with dark legs, eyes, and bill. Fledglings and juveniles are quite different - a rich brown with lighter streaks, and darker wings and tail.

The most common call is the single note piping whistle which can continue for some time, but they also have a longer song, and a grating alarm call. In breeding season, their “chew, chew” or “chop, chop” echoes through their chosen territory.

Nesting takes place from July to January, with August, September and October being the peak period locally. Preferred nest site is a small fork in a tree or sapling, or on a horizontal branch beside a small vertical branch. The nest is constructed from fibrous plant material, bound with spider web, and decorated with lichen or moss for camouflage. Clutch size is usually three.

The Eastern Yellow Robin is found in various habitats including heath, acacia forests, sclerophyll, casuarina forests, gullies, woodlands and rainforests, and generally has a preference for moist areas. It ranges from around Cooktown in the north, right along the coastal regions into the mountains, as far as the southeast corner of South Australia. Birds tend to be sedentary, but lack of food may cause movement, and altitudinal migration has been reported.



Eastern Yellow Robin watching for food



Eastern Yellow Robin incubating



Eastern Yellow Robin in typical pose awaiting food items to pounce upon