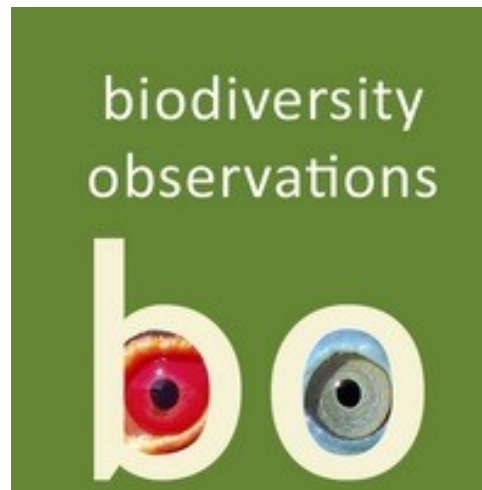


# A Guide to the Common Garden Birds of Cape Town, South Africa.

**Karis Daniel and Megan Loftie-Eaton**



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## Birding

# A Guide to the Common Garden Birds of Cape Town, South Africa

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## Introduction

Imagine that you are given a field guide to the birds of southern Africa. This is a special gift; it's like a telephone book, a "who's who" for the birds who share your part of the world. When you open the guide, however, you are met with a barrage of terminology and taxonomy; where do you begin with so much new information, and nearly one thousand bird species recorded in the region? Thankfully, bird identification does not have to be an intimidating task. In fact, whether or not you have a field guide, your most powerful tools are already in your possession: time, curiosity, and attention (see Box 1 for more).

This annotated picture booklet aims to provide a quick identification guide to the [common birds in Cape Town's urban gardens](#). This guide covers the 32 species you are most likely to encounter; though it is not comprehensive, the species included have been carefully selected to help you make a start.

For each species, there is a page containing one or more photographs with text labelling key identification features, as well as a short

paragraph explaining important characteristics to look for when observing the species.

If you are using an internet enabled device, you can click on the species name or read the QR code at the bottom of each page to be taken to a website containing more detailed information about the species. The website includes photo-illustrated descriptions of habitat and behaviour, as well as a distribution map from the [Southern African Bird Atlas Project](#). Once you have met a bird in your garden or on the street, we hope that the website will help you get to know them better and better.

The photographs featured in this document and on the website are all taken from the [Virtual Museum](#). If you want to take your curiosity to the next level and contribute to scientific research, you can submit your own bird photographs to the BirdPix section of the Virtual Museum. Information on how to create an account and submit photos is available [here](#). We are grateful to the many photographers whose photos have made this project possible.



**Box 1. Where do I start?**

Think of how you get to know a new person. The more time you spend together, the more you begin to know about them. After a few months, you can recognise their voice in a crowded room, or spot the back of their head from far away. You learn where they like to spend time, and maybe their favourite foods. If you meet their family, you might even be able to see a few resemblances: a sharp nose, stocky build, or similar way of speaking

***We can use the exact same approach in getting to know the world around us.*** Though you may not realise it, when you spend time watching and listening to the birds in your garden, your mind is taking in a lot of information! Our brains are pattern-recognition machines; they are experts at learning to identify and “sort” similar shapes, colours, sounds and movements into categories. We interact with other people nearly every day, which keeps our human identification skills in great shape, but many of us spend only a few minutes each day interacting with the rest of nature.

The only difference between hearing “some birds” and hearing a Bokmakierie, Cape Bulbul, and Olive Thrush is time. Like any skill, getting to know birds takes practice, and the best practice is to simply pay attention. ***Ask yourself questions as you watch:*** how big is that bird? What shape is its beak? What is doing? How is it moving?

As you think about these types of questions, you are training your mind to notice details that will help you to “sort” new species later on. For instance, birds in the same families tend to move in similar ways, and small birds with long, curved beaks often eat similar foods. A field guide can also be a great resource: try the Roberts Bird Guide or Faansie’s Bird Book for extra insights.

With time and practice, your bird recognition skills, just like your people recognition skills, will become second nature.

Enough reading—it’s time to go outside and meet your non-human neighbours!

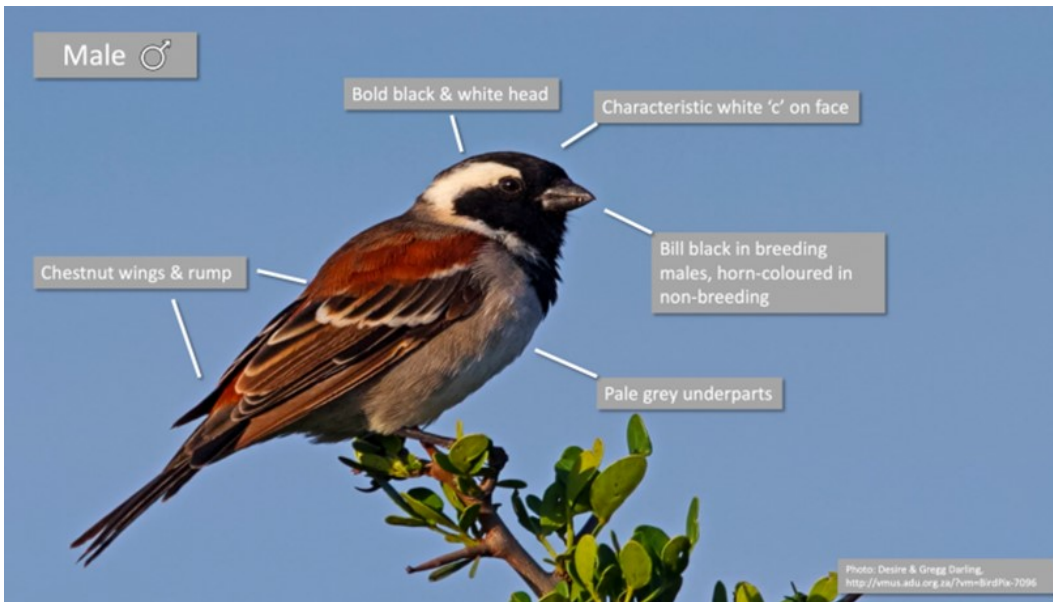
Happy exploring!

Karis Daniel



# Cape Sparrow *Passer melanurus*

Gewone Mossie (Afrikaans) - Ingqabe (Xhosa)



Cape Sparrows are small, boldly patterned birds that are *sexually dimorphic*; in other words, males and females look different to one another. The key differences are in their heads: males have black heads with a broad white 'c' shape running from the eyes to the throat (top photo), and in females, the head is grey, and the white 'c' less distinct (bottom photo).

Though facial colouration and pattern separate the two, both male and female sparrows have pale grey bellies, dark blackish bills, and a rich chestnut-brown rump and wings.

Here is the link to more information about the [Cape Sparrow](#)





# Cape Canary *Serinus canicollis*

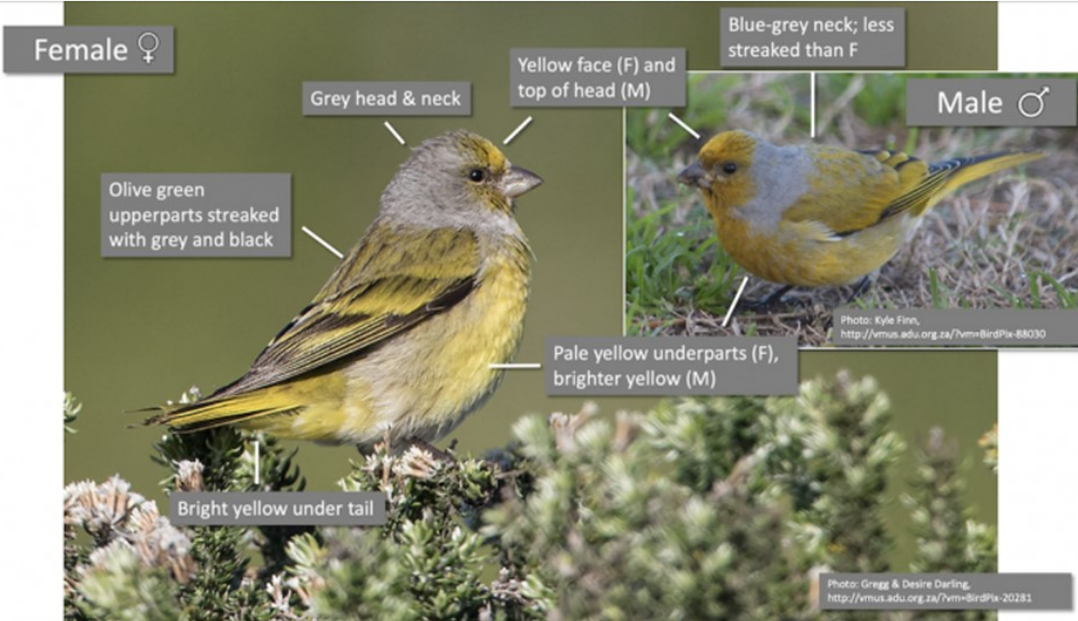
Kaapse Kanarie (Afrikaans) - Umlonji (Xhosa)



Cape Canaries are small, brightly-coloured birds. Males and females can be difficult to tell apart; you must look closely! Both sexes have yellow faces, but in males, the yellow runs all the way to the top of the head, forming a cap. In females, the top of the head is grey. There are a few other subtle differences to note: females have more dark streaks on their backs than males, and tend to be a paler yellow underneath.

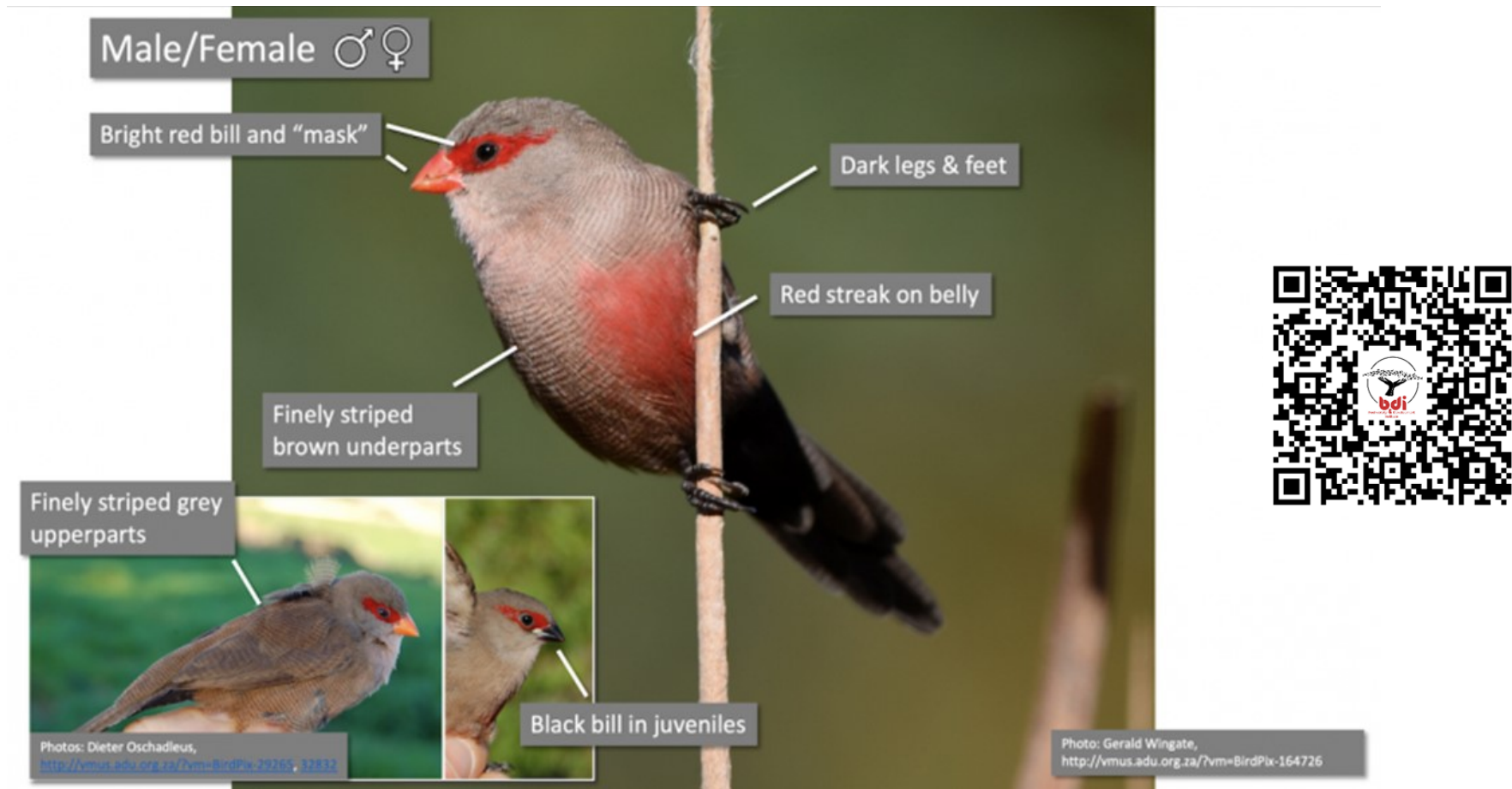
Juvenile Cape Canaries look quite different to adults; they are a dull, pale yellowish colour, and have heavy streaks all over their heads and bodies.

Here is the link to more information about the [Cape canary](#)



## Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*

Rooibeksysie (Afrikaans) - Intshiyane (Xhosa)



Common Waxbills are small greyish-brown birds. This species is not sexually dimorphic; males and females look the same. Overall, the Common Waxbill is greyish-brown and covered in thin, dark bars. In addition to barring, many birds also have a reddish streak running from their chest to their belly. Though these are all important clues, the easiest way to identify a common waxbill is by its bright red bill and the characteristic "mask" across its eyes. Young birds look very much like adults with two exceptions: the bill is blackish rather than red, and their overall colouration is duller with less distinct barring.

Here is the link to more information about the [Common Waxbill](#)

# Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*

Koningrooibekkie (Afrikaans) - Uhlakhwe (Xhosa)



The Pin-tailed Whydah is a small sexually dimorphic species. Males and females differ dramatically when breeding, and appear similar outside of the breeding season. We can divide identification into a few different categories: breeding male and female, non-breeding male and female, and juvenile.

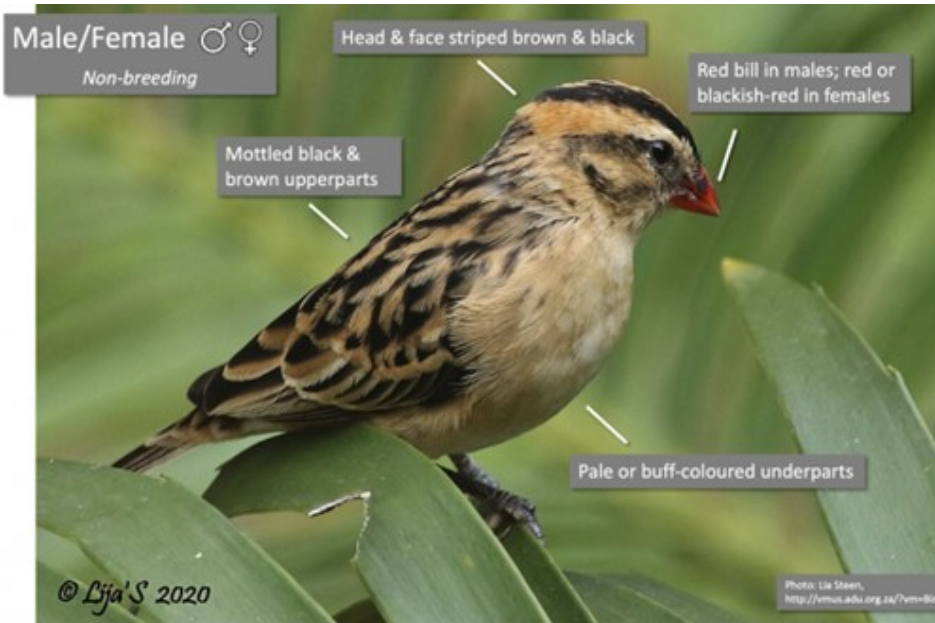
Let's start with the breeding male. In full breeding plumage, the male Pin-tailed Whydah is difficult to miss. He is white with a black cap on his head, a bright reddish-orange bill, black legs, and a distinct long, flowing black tail.

By contrast, breeding females make a much less flashy counterpart. A key feature to look for in Whydahs is a striped head. The female Pin-tailed Whydah has a brownish head and face with bold black stripes. She is a pale buff or whitish colour underneath, has black legs, and her back is a mottled mix of brown and black. When breeding, her bill is usually black.

Though it might be hard to imagine, outside of breeding season, males and females look very much alike and can be difficult or impossible to tell apart! Overall, they more closely resemble a breeding female. The head and face are brownish with bold black stripes, the underparts are a pale buff colour, and the back is mottled brown and black. The bill is always red in males, but non-breeding females may have a red or blackish-red bill, making it hard to know for certain which is which.

This becomes a bit easier to untangle when males begin moult; let's have a look at a male in transitional plumage. This bird is in the process of changing its non-breeding feathers to its bold black-and-white breeding colours. If you see a group of Pin-tailed Whydahs, keep an eye out for males in various stages of transition. You might notice black feathers starting to grow on the back and wings, the

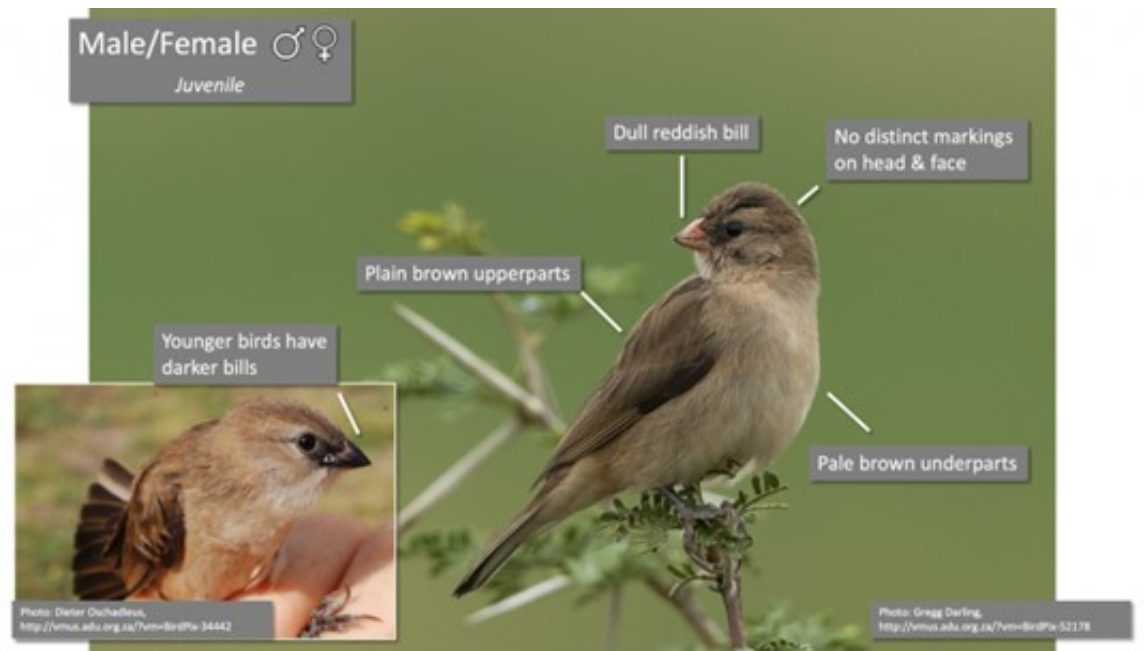




beginnings of a black cap on the head, or, often most conspicuously, a half-grown black tail.

What about birds that are too young to breed? The juvenile Pin-tailed Whydah looks quite different to adult birds; it can be tempting to see a juvenile and think it is a different species! There are no distinct stripes on the head and face, and the entire body is a plain brownish colour. The bill is usually a dull pinkish-red, but very young birds have blackish bills.

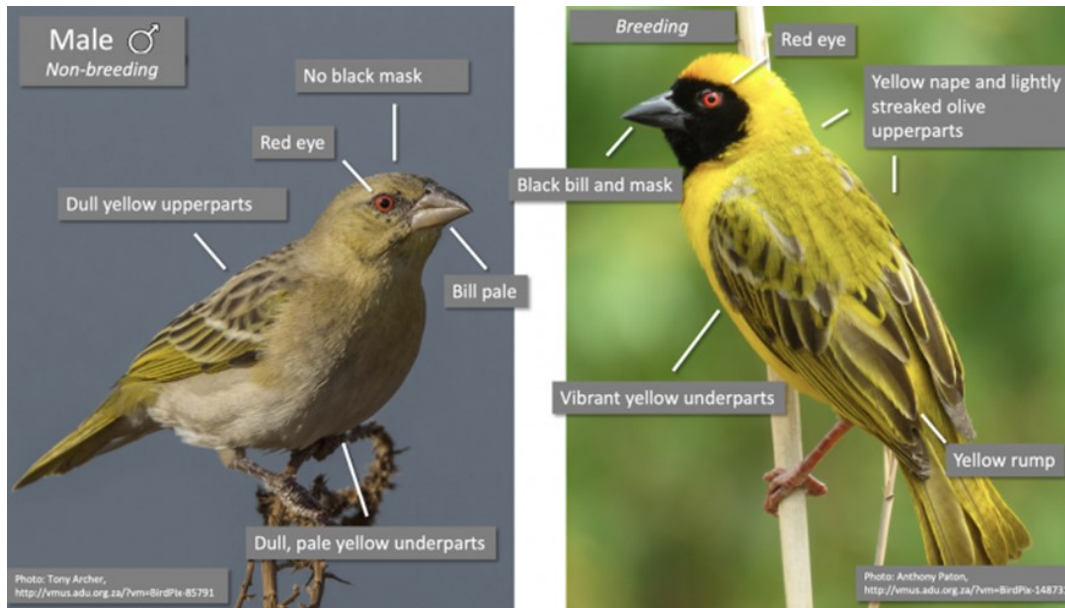
Here is the link to more information about the [Pin-tailed Whydah](#)





## Southern Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus*

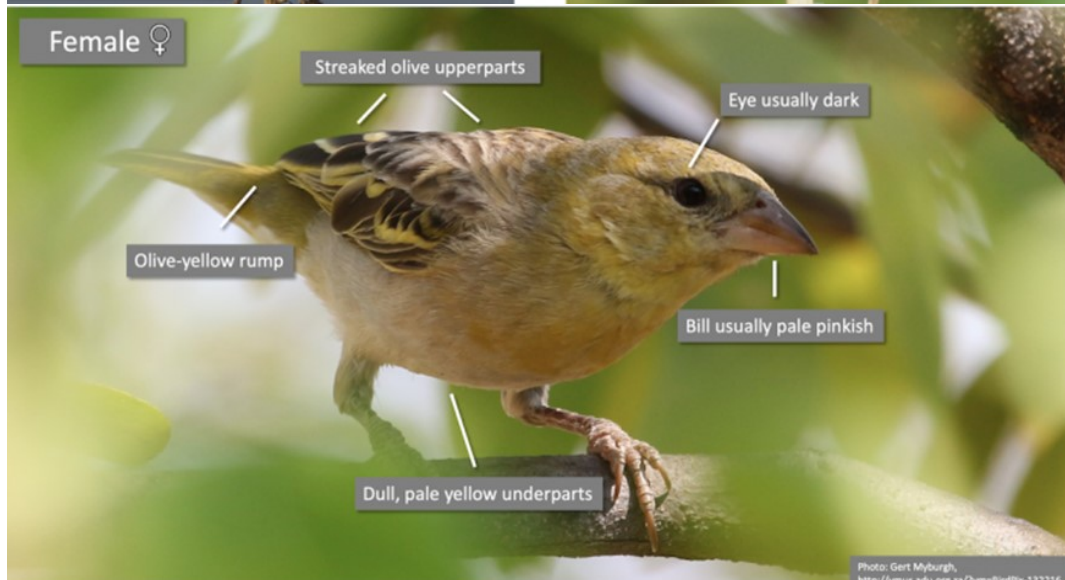
Swartkeelgeelvink (Afrikaans) - Ihobo-hobo (Xhosa)



The Southern Masked Weaver is a medium-sized, brightly coloured bird. Males and females look similar outside of the breeding season but are easily distinguishable in breeding plumage.

Breeding males have olive green upperparts streaked with grey and brown. The eyes are deep red and the bill is black. The underparts are vibrant yellow, and the trademark of a breeding male is its black face mask, running from the forehead all the way down to the throat.

Non-breeding adult males also have reddish eyes, but the red is duller than in breeding males. The bill becomes a pale brownish colour, and the mask disappears. Non-breeding males are also duller yellow overall with paler yellow underparts.

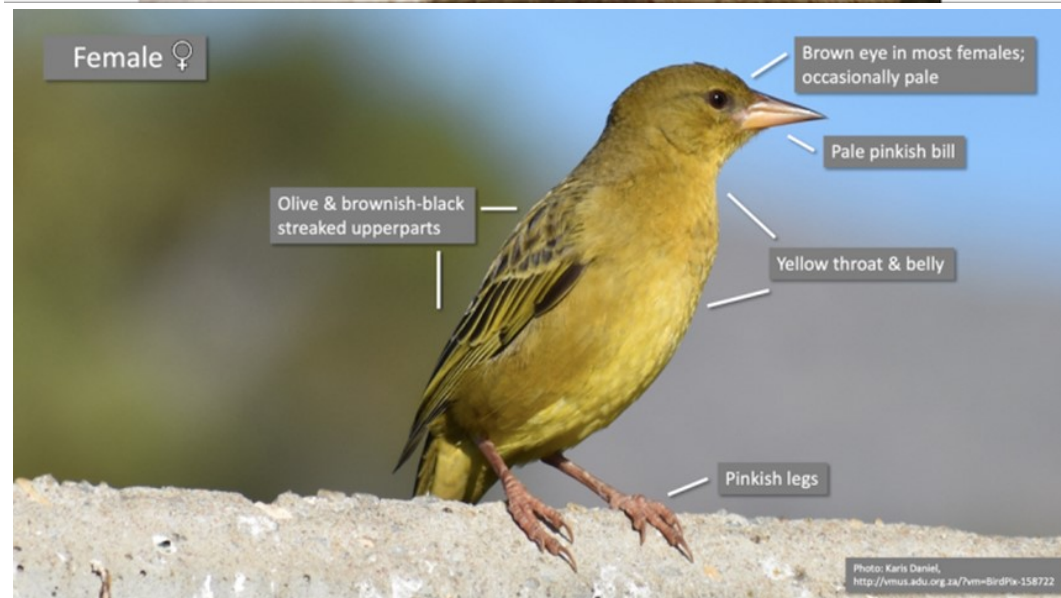
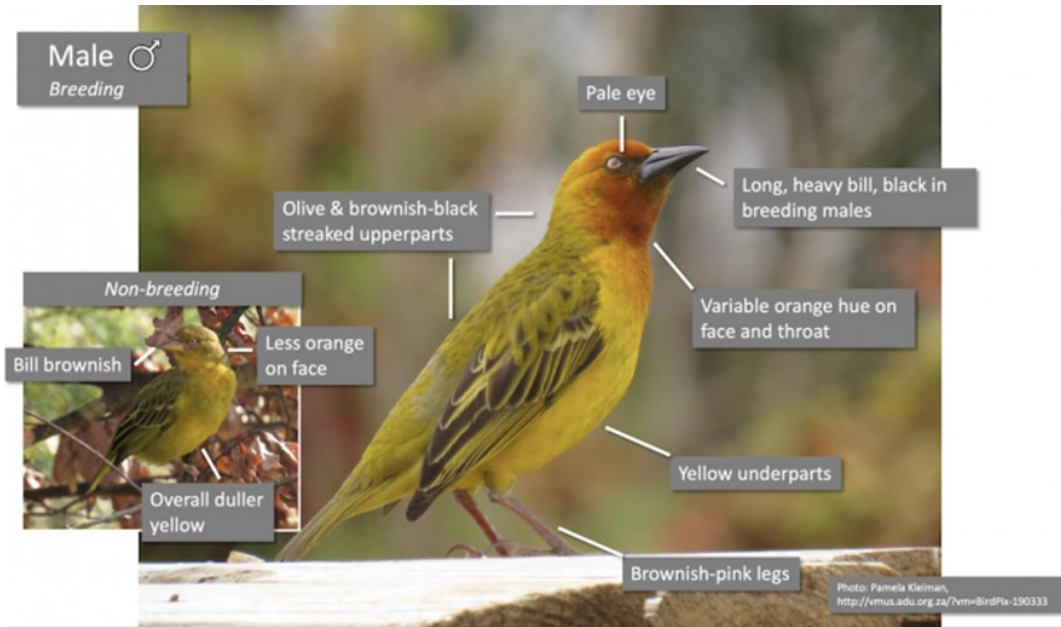


Adult females closely resemble non-breeding males; the upperparts are dull yellowish-green streaked with dark brown, and the underparts are pale yellow. During the breeding season, the throat and breast are bright yellow; outside of the breeding season, they are paler in colour. Females have pinkish-brown bills and dark brownish eyes. Juvenile Southern Masked Weavers are almost identical to non-breeding females—it can be difficult to tell them apart! Here is the link to more information about the [Southern Masked Weaver](#).



# Cape Weaver *Ploceus capensis*

Kaapse Wewer (Afrikaans) - Ihobo-hobo (Xhosa)



The Cape Weaver is a medium-sized, brightly coloured bird. Males and females look similar but are not quite alike. Males also differ slightly in and out of the breeding season.

Breeding males have olive green upperparts streaked with dark brown. The eyes are a pale whiteish colour and the long, thick bill is black. The underparts are brilliant yellow, and many males have a patch of deep orange around their face and throats. Outside of the breeding season, adult males keep the pale eyes, but lose the bright colours. Non-breeding males are duller yellow overall, and the dramatic black breeding bill becomes a brownish colour.

Adult females almost resemble non-breeding males; the upperparts are dull yellowish-green streaked with dark brown, and the underparts are yellow. Females have pinkish-brown bills, and though most have dark brown eyes, around 20% may also have pale eyes! This can make it difficult to tell males and females apart on sight. Juvenile Cape Weavers closely resemble females.

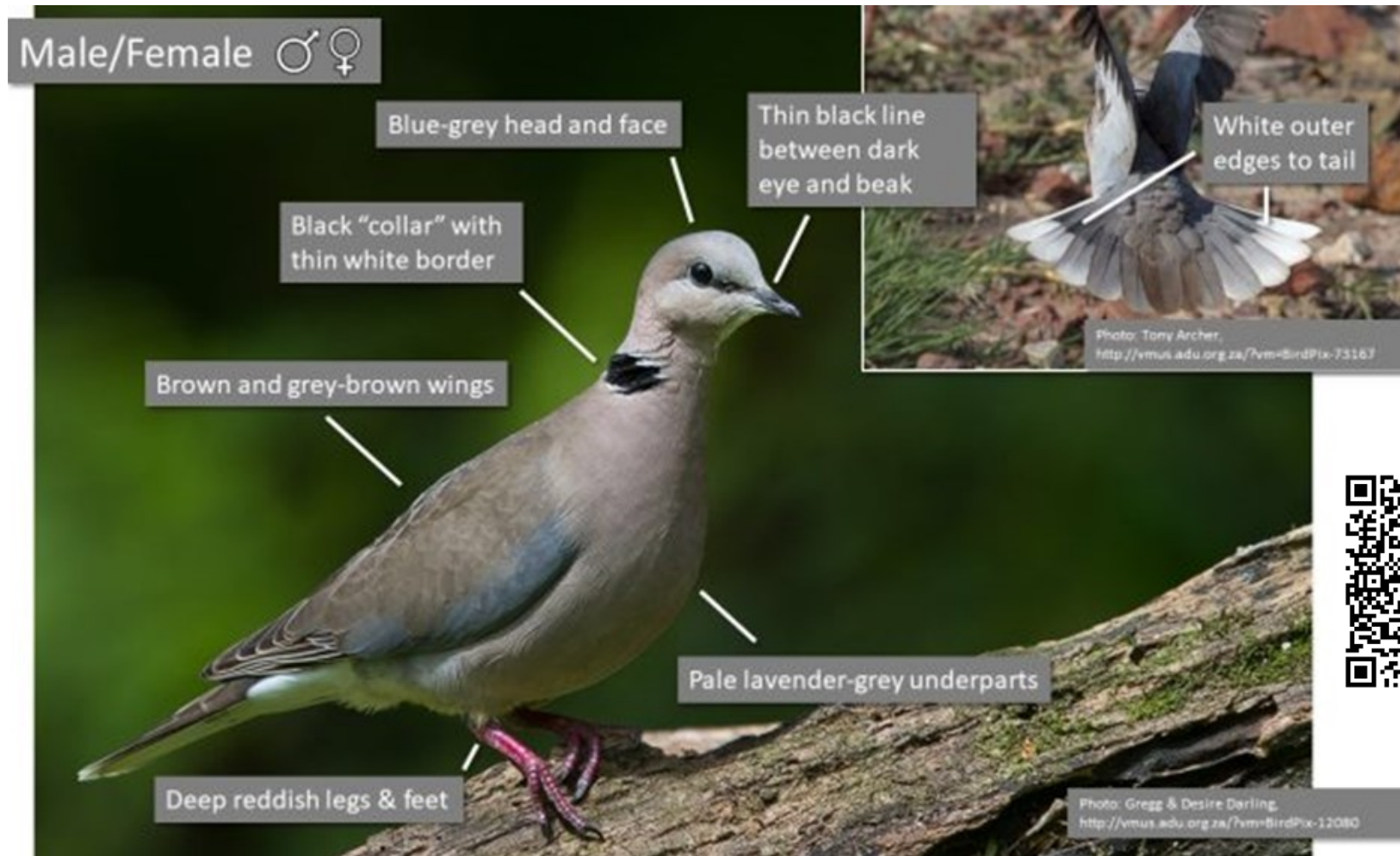
Here is the link to more information about the [Cape Weaver](#).





# Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola*

Gewone Tortelduif (Afrikaans) - Untamnyama (Xhosa)



The Ring-necked Dove is most easily identified by the combination of brownish-grey wings, lavender-grey underparts, a black half-collar on the back of the neck, and dark eyes with a thin dark line leading to the bill. In flight, the Ring-necked Dove's white outer tail feathers are also an easy identifier. Males and females look alike.

Here is the link to more information about the [Ring-necked Dove](#).



# Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*

Grootringduif (Afrikaans) - Umakhulu (Xhosa)



The Red-eyed Dove is a large, stocky bird with a greyish-brown back, wings and tail. In flight one can observe a dark band with a pale edge on the tail feathers. The head and underparts are greyish pink, shading to pale grey on the face. Like the Ring-necked Dove, the Red-eyed Dove has a black collar around the back of the neck. There is a distinct reddish patch of bare skin around the eye, and the legs are also red.

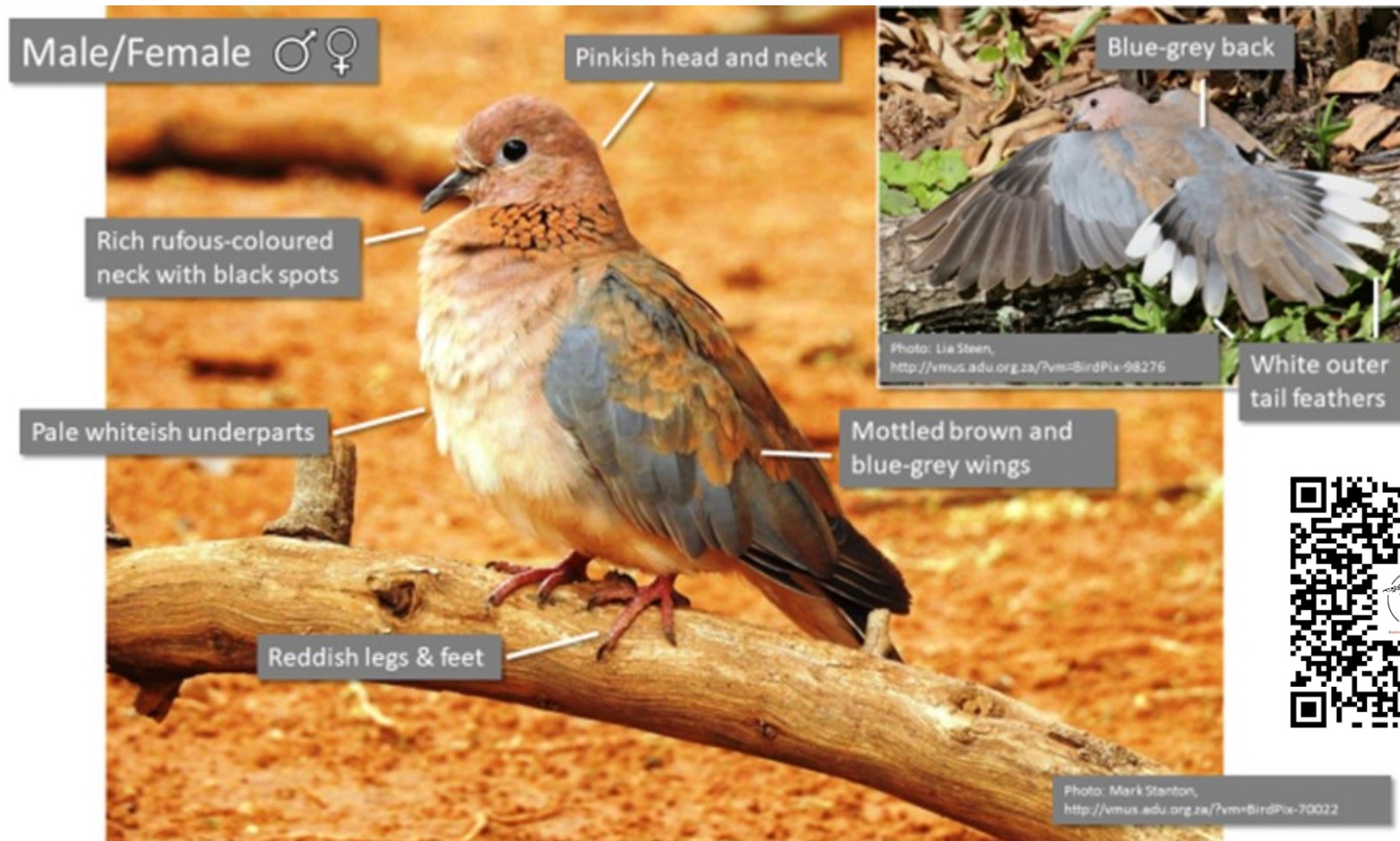
Sexes are similar, but juveniles are duller than adults, and have scalloping on the body feathers.

Here is the link to more information about the [Red-eyed Dove](#).



# Laughing Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*

Rooiborsduifie (Afrikaans) - Icelekwane (Xhosa)



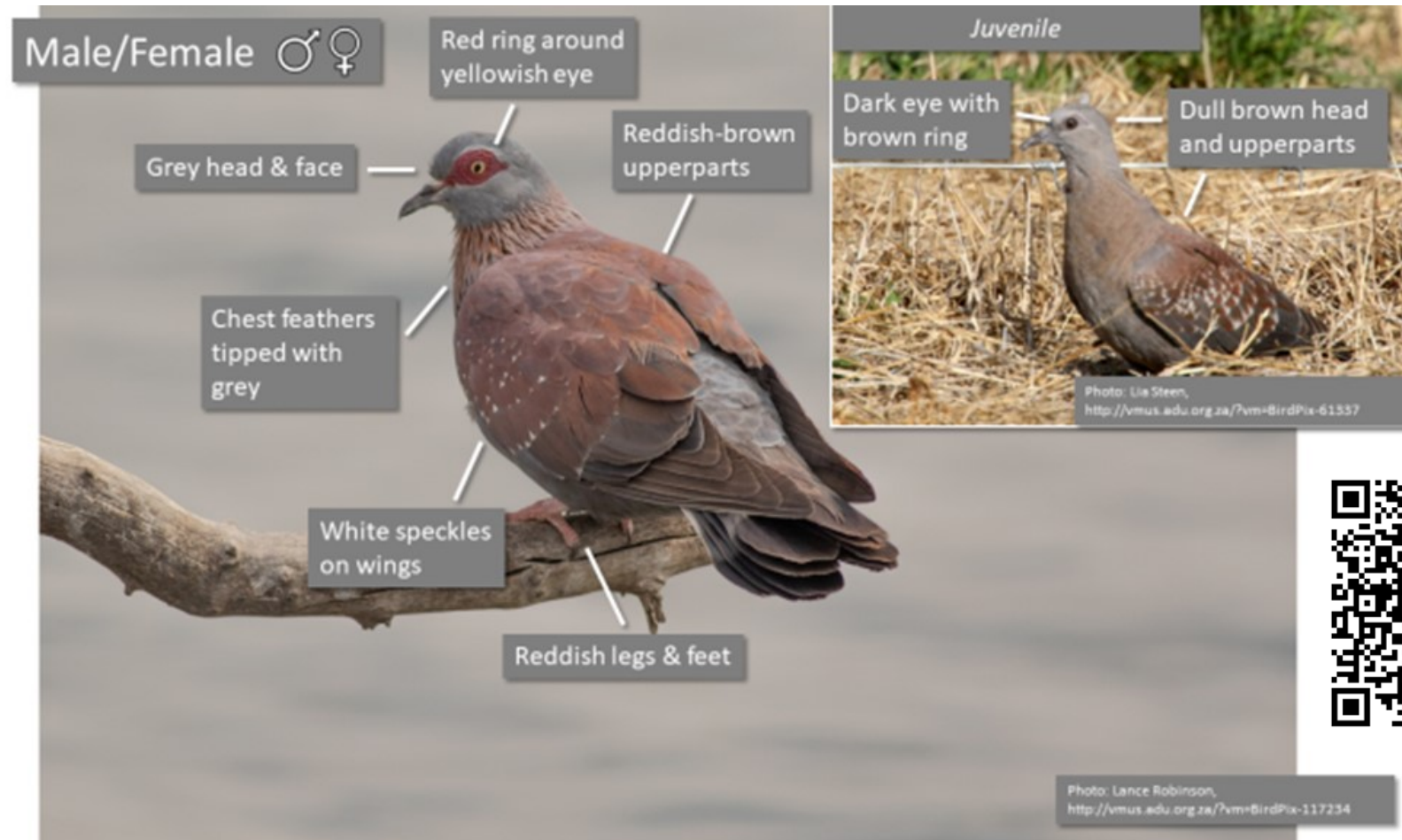
The Laughing Dove is a long-tailed, smallish dove. These birds have buffy white underparts and a lilac or pinkish tinge to the head and neck. The back of the neck is a rich rufous colour with black spots, and the upperparts are a mixture of browns, blues, and greys. Like Ring-necked Doves, Laughing Doves have white outer tail feathers visible in flight. Their legs and feet are reddish.

Here is the link to more information about the [Laughing Dove](#)



# Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*

Kraansduif (Afrikaans) - Ivukuthu (Xhosa)



The Speckled Pigeon is a large bird with a reddish-brown back and wings. The wings are heavily speckled with white spots. Aside from the wings, upperparts and underparts are blue-grey, and the head is grey with prominent red patches around a yellowish eye. The neck is brown streaked with white, and the legs are red. Sexes are similar, but juvenile birds are browner than adults and lack the distinctive red eye patch.

Here is the link to more information about the [Speckled Pigeon](#).



# Cape Robin-Chat *Cossypha caffra*

Gewone Janfrederik (Afrikaans) - Ugaga (Xhosa)



The Cape Robin-Chat is easily identified by a dark brownish-grey back, orange throat, white "eyebrows," and bright orange rump and tail feathers. These birds have pale grey underparts and dark legs and feet. Males and females are alike.

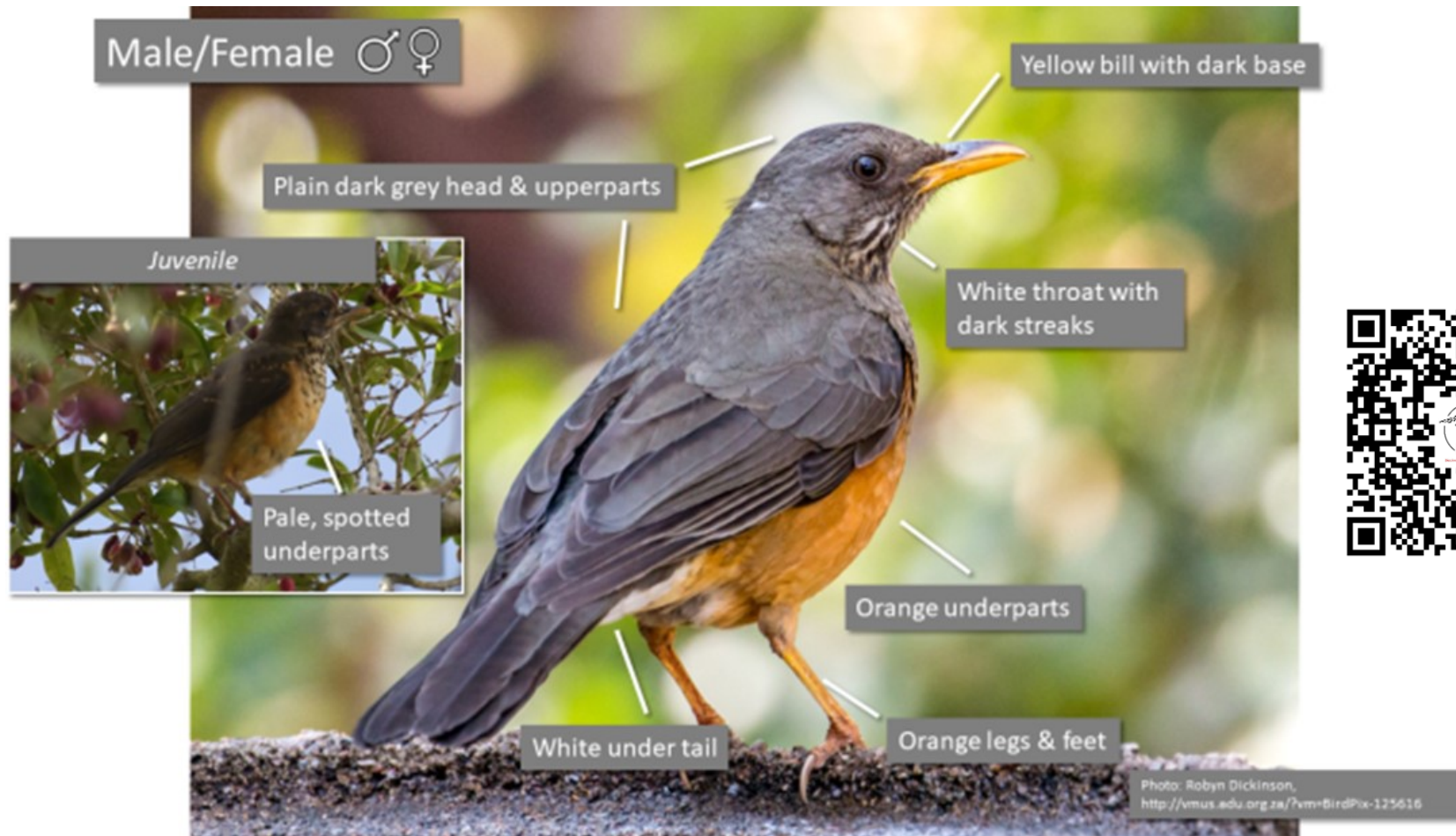
Juvenile birds are browner with buff spotting and no distinct facial markings. They have dull buffy brown underparts with mottling on the chest. Their tails are rufous with grey feathers down the centre.

Here is the link to more information about the [Cape Robin-Chat](#).



# Olive Thrush *Turdus olivaceus*

Olyflyster (Afrikaans) - Umswi (Xhosa)



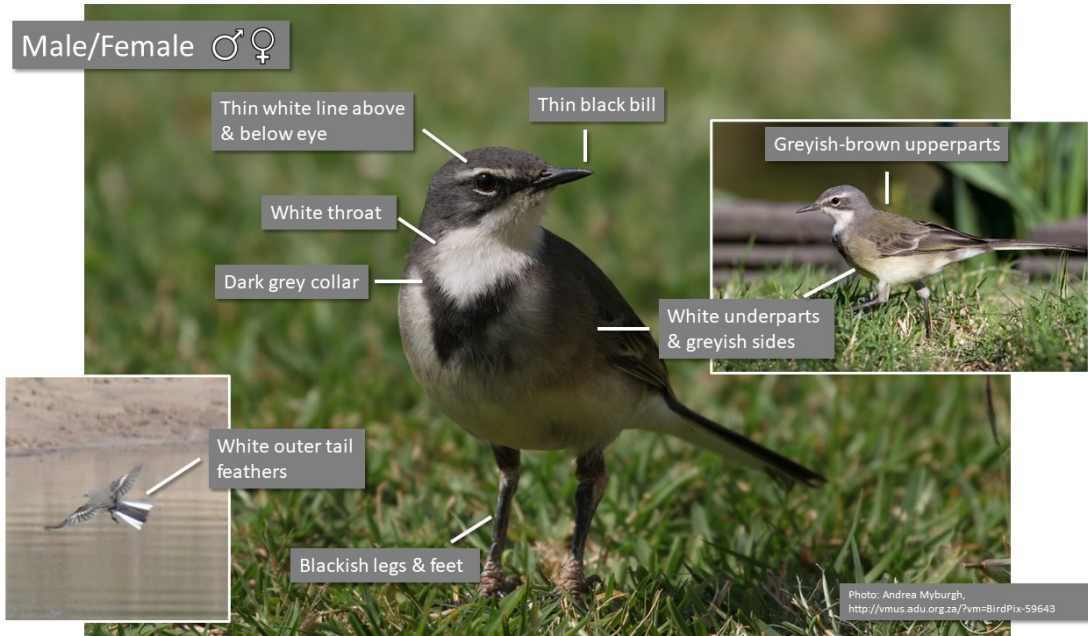
The Olive Thrush is a medium-sized bird with a dark grey head, back and tail. Their orange bellies are distinctive; also look out for a yellowish-orange bill with a dark base, a white throat with dark streaks, and a pale vent (area underneath the tail). These birds have orange feet and legs, and males and females look alike. Juvenile birds resemble adults, but are quite spotty and are paler in colour overall.

Here is the link to more information about the [Olive Thrush](#).



# Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis*

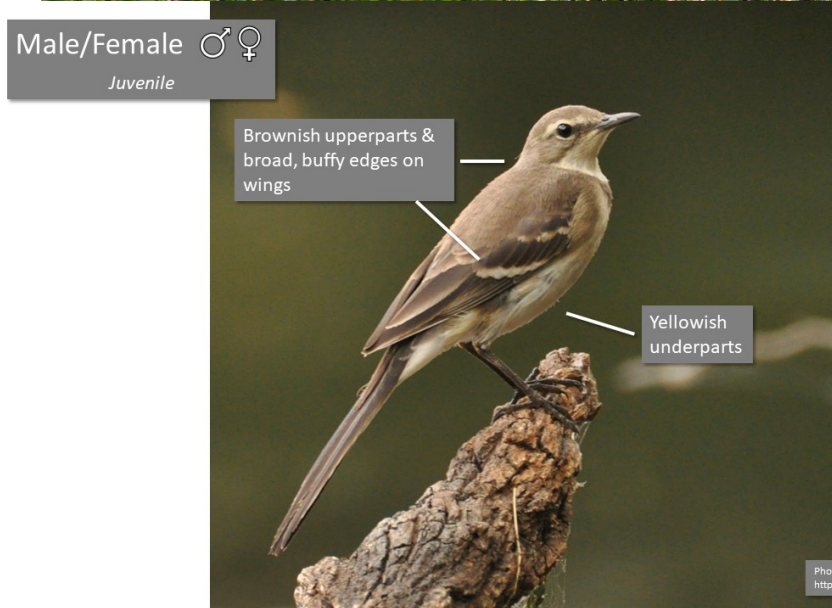
Gewone Kwikkie (Afrikaans) - Umcelu (Xhosa)



Cape Wagtails are medium-sized, greyish-brown birds with long tails and a distinct dark grey collar on their chests (the exact shape of the collar can vary quite a bit between individual birds). Other distinguishing features include a thin white line above and below the eye, a whitish throat, a thin, black bill, and bright white outer tail feathers, often seen in flight. The legs and feet are blackish, and males and females look alike.

Though juvenile Cape Wagtails closely resemble adult birds, there are a few differences to note: juveniles tend to be more brown overall than gray, and the feathers on their wings often have broad, buffy edges. Many juveniles also have a distinct yellowish tinge to their underparts.

Here is the link to more information about the [Cape Wagtail](#).

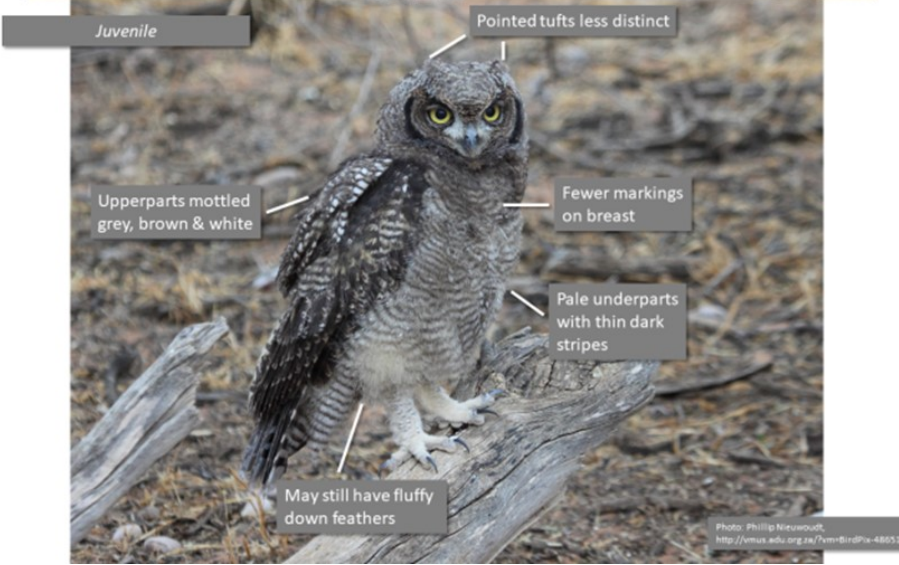
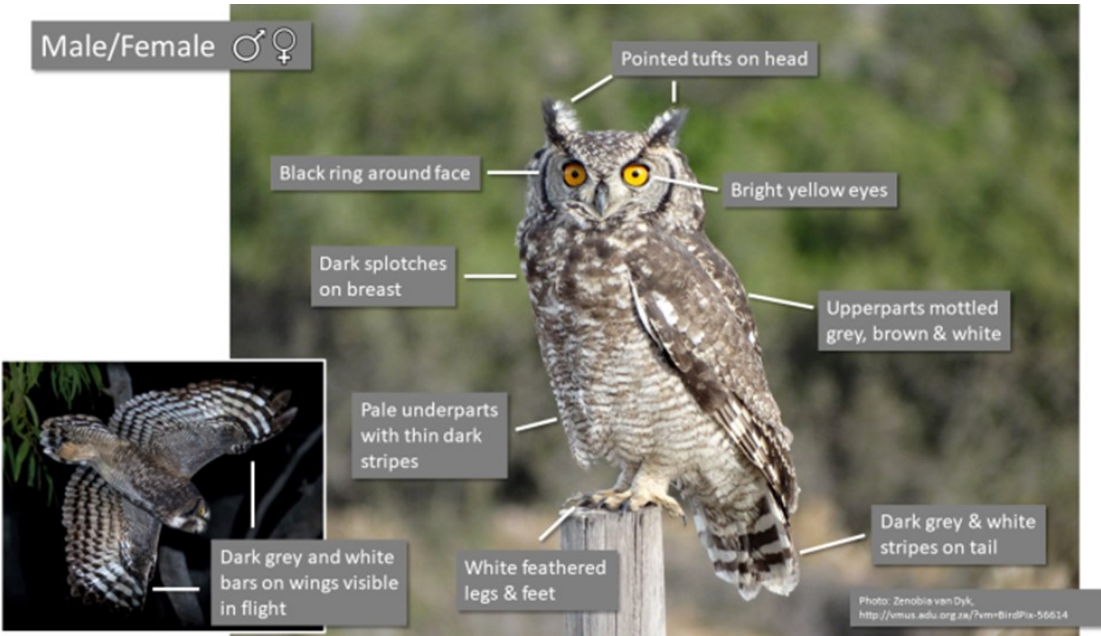




# Spotted Eagle-Owl *Bubo africanus*

Gevlekte Ooruil (Afrikaans) - Isihulu-hulu (Xhosa)

Male/Female ♂ ♀



The Spotted Eagle-Owl is a medium-sized, grey-brown owl with conspicuous ear-tufts and beautiful yellow eyes. The face is off white to pale ochre in colour with a black outer edge. The upper body is dusky brown in colour with dark splotches on the breast while the lower parts are off-white with brown barring. Females and males are alike in colouration, but if you see a pair of owls together, look closely at their sizes: females are often slightly larger than males.

Juvenile birds resemble the adults, but their ear tufts are less distinct and they often still have some visible fluffy down feathers.

Here is the link to more information about the [Spotted Eagle-Owl](#)



## Cape Bulbul *Pycnonotus capensis*

Kaapse Tiptol (Afrikaans) - Bulbul du Cap (French)



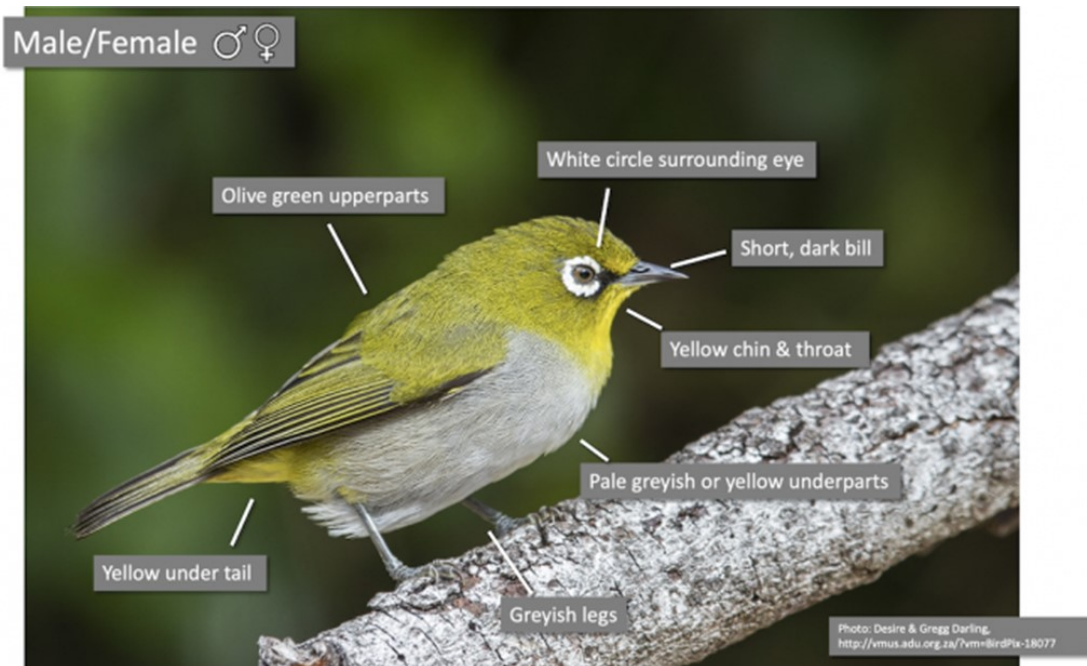
The Cape Bulbul is most easily identified by the distinctive combination of a white eye-ring, a small crest on the head, and bright yellow feathers under the tail. These medium-sized birds are a dull brownish colour overall, with slightly paler underparts and a black bill. These birds have black legs and feet, and males and females look alike.

Here is the link to more information about the [Cape Bulbul](#).



## Cape White-eye *Zosterops virens*

Kaapse Glasogie (Afrikaans) - Intukwane (Xhosa)



The Cape White-eye is a very small, fast-moving bird. Males and females look alike but show geographic variation; this means that one species can look different in different parts of its range. The Cape White-eyes you are likely to see in Cape Town have olive green upperparts, grey or yellowish bellies, and bright yellow patches on their throats and under their tails. They have short, black bills and a characteristic circle of small white feathers around their eyes—this is where the name “white-eye” comes from!

Further north, the same species looks quite different. For instance, in Limpopo province, Cape White-eyes tend to be much more yellow overall with less of a contrast between their upperparts and underparts. Young birds anywhere in southern Africa are a duller greyish colour. Have a look at these two photos below from Polokwane, Limpopo: both were taken on the same day in the same place, and believe it or not, they are the same species! The duller-coloured bird on the left is young and still growing its adult feathers, whilst the brighter yellow bird on the right is a mature adult.

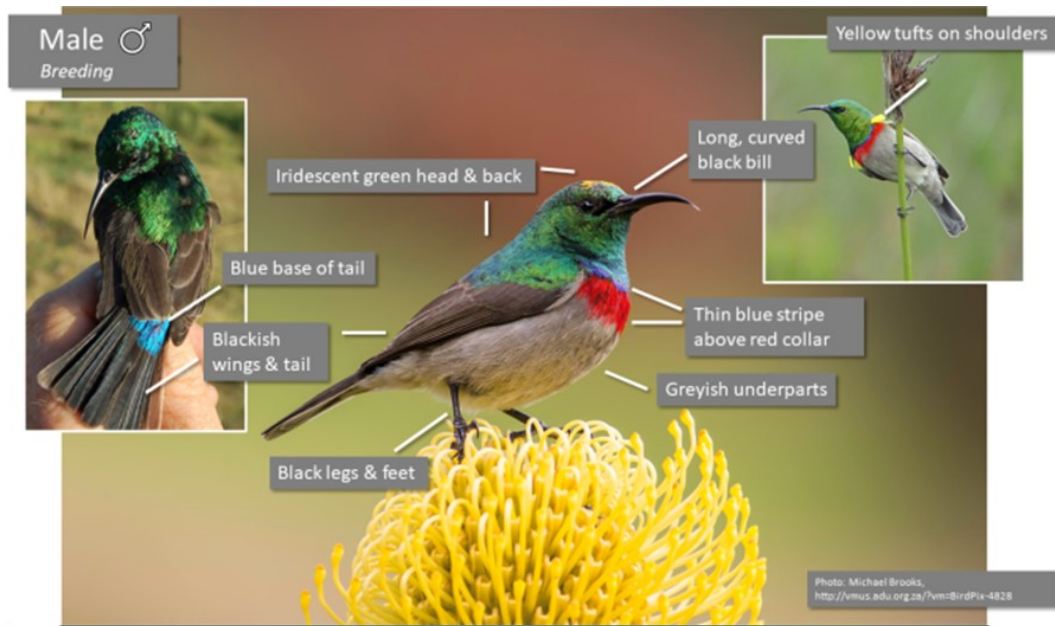
Here is the link to more information about the [Cape White-eye](#).





# Southern Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris chalebeus*

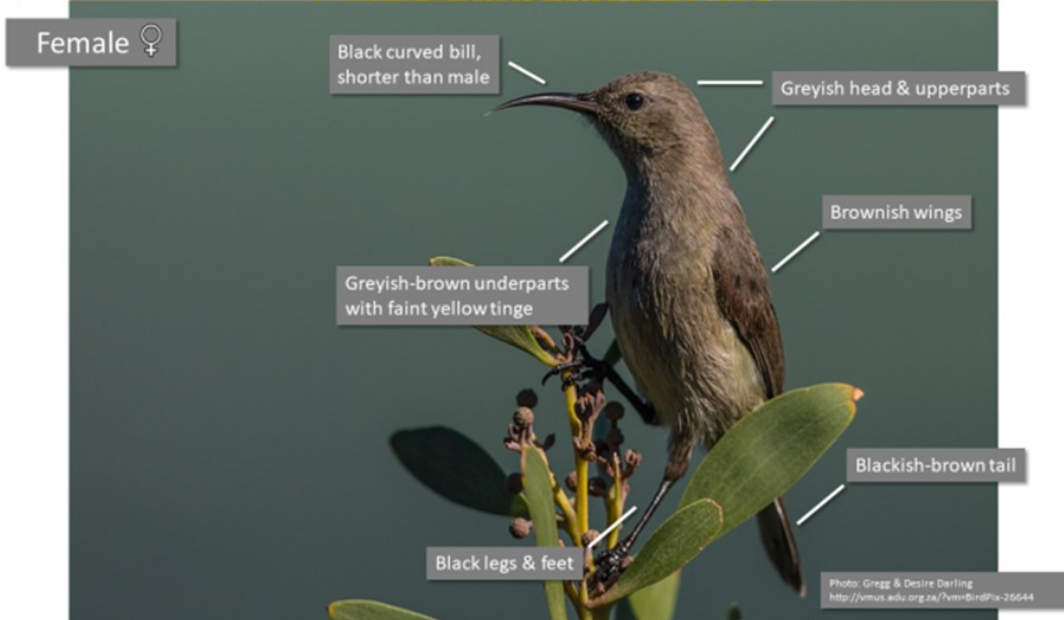
Klein-rooibandsuikerbekkie (Afrikaans) - Ingcungcu (Xhosa)



The Southern Double-collared Sunbird is a small, fast-moving and sexually dimorphic species. Breeding males are best identified by their glossy bluish-green backs and a bright red band across the chest. If you look carefully, you'll also notice a thin stripe of blue above the red band. Males have greyish underparts, a glossy blue base to the tail, black legs and feet, and a black bill. When breeding, males also display bright yellow "tufts" on their shoulders.

The female is not quite as flashy as her male counterpart, and sports brownish upperparts and yellowish-grey underparts. Juveniles closely resemble females, and it can be tricky to tell them apart.

Here is the link to more information about the [Southern Double-collared Sunbird](#).



# Southern Fiscal *Lanius collaris*

Fiskaallaksman (Afrikaans) - Inxanxadi (Xhosa)



The Southern Fiscal is a medium-sized bird, best identified by distinct black and white colouration and a strongly hook-shaped bill. These birds have a black bill, face, and legs. The upperparts are largely black and are marked with a characteristic white "V." The tail is black and relatively long, with white outer tail feathers that often "flash" in flight. The underparts are white. Adult males and females are very similar in appearance, but females have a chestnut-coloured patch of feathers on their sides. The northwestern subspecies of the Southern Fiscal has a distinct white eyebrow.

Juveniles have pale brown upperparts and creamy underparts, often with thin, dark barring.

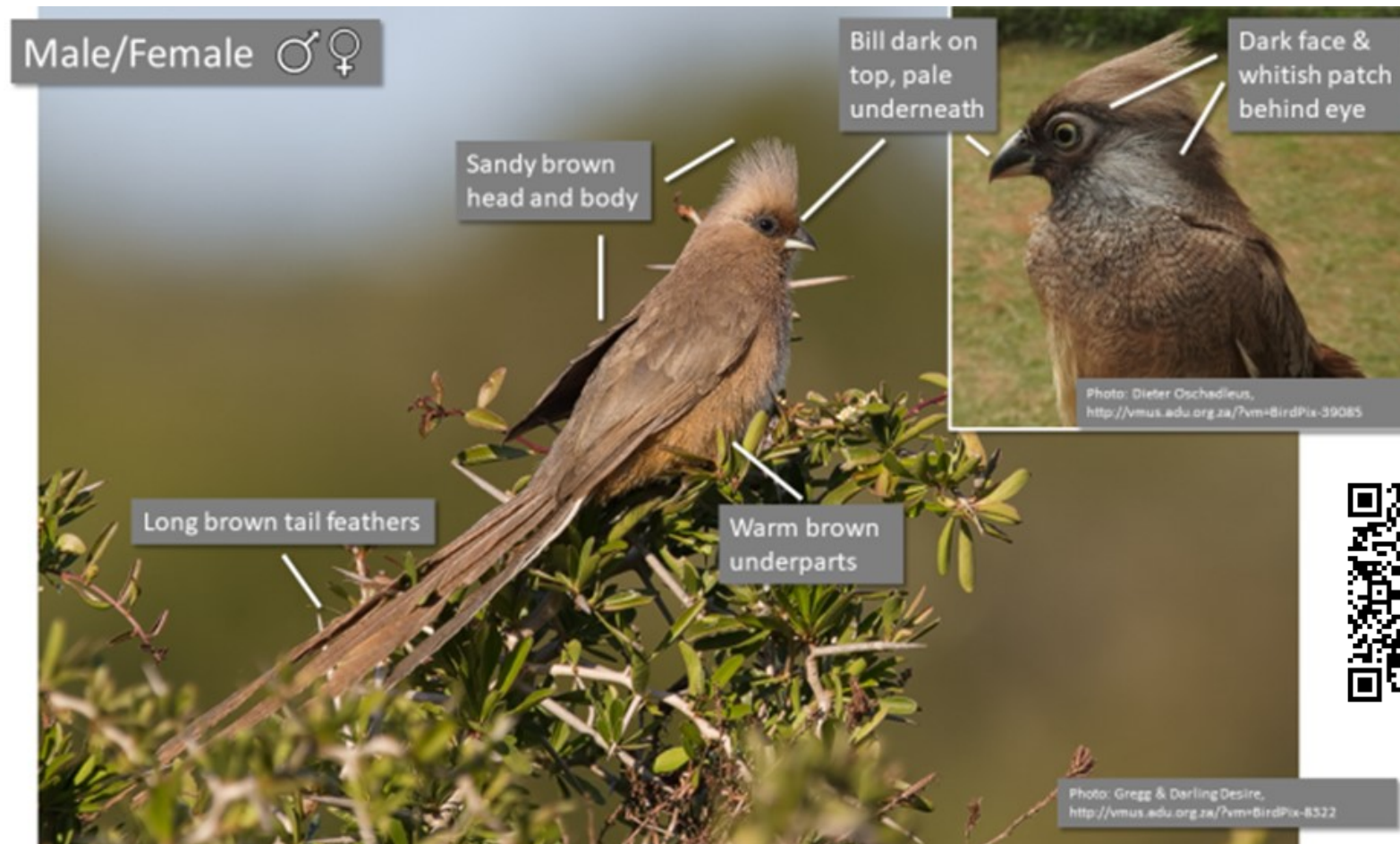
Here is the link to more information about the [Southern Fiscal](#).





# Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*

Gevlekte Muisvoël (Afrikaans) - Indlazi (Xhosa)



The Speckled Mousebird is a medium-sized bird with sandy brown upperparts and warmer brown underparts. Two key features to look for in mousebirds are a long tail and a crest on the head--Speckled Mousebirds have long, brownish tail feathers and a sandy brown crest. These birds have dark eyes, brownish legs and feet, and a distinctive two-toned bill: black on top and whitish underneath. Males and females look alike.

Here is the link to more information about the [Speckled Mousebird](#).



# White-backed Mousebird *Colius colius*

Witkruismuisvoël (Afrikaans) - Letsôrô (Tswana)

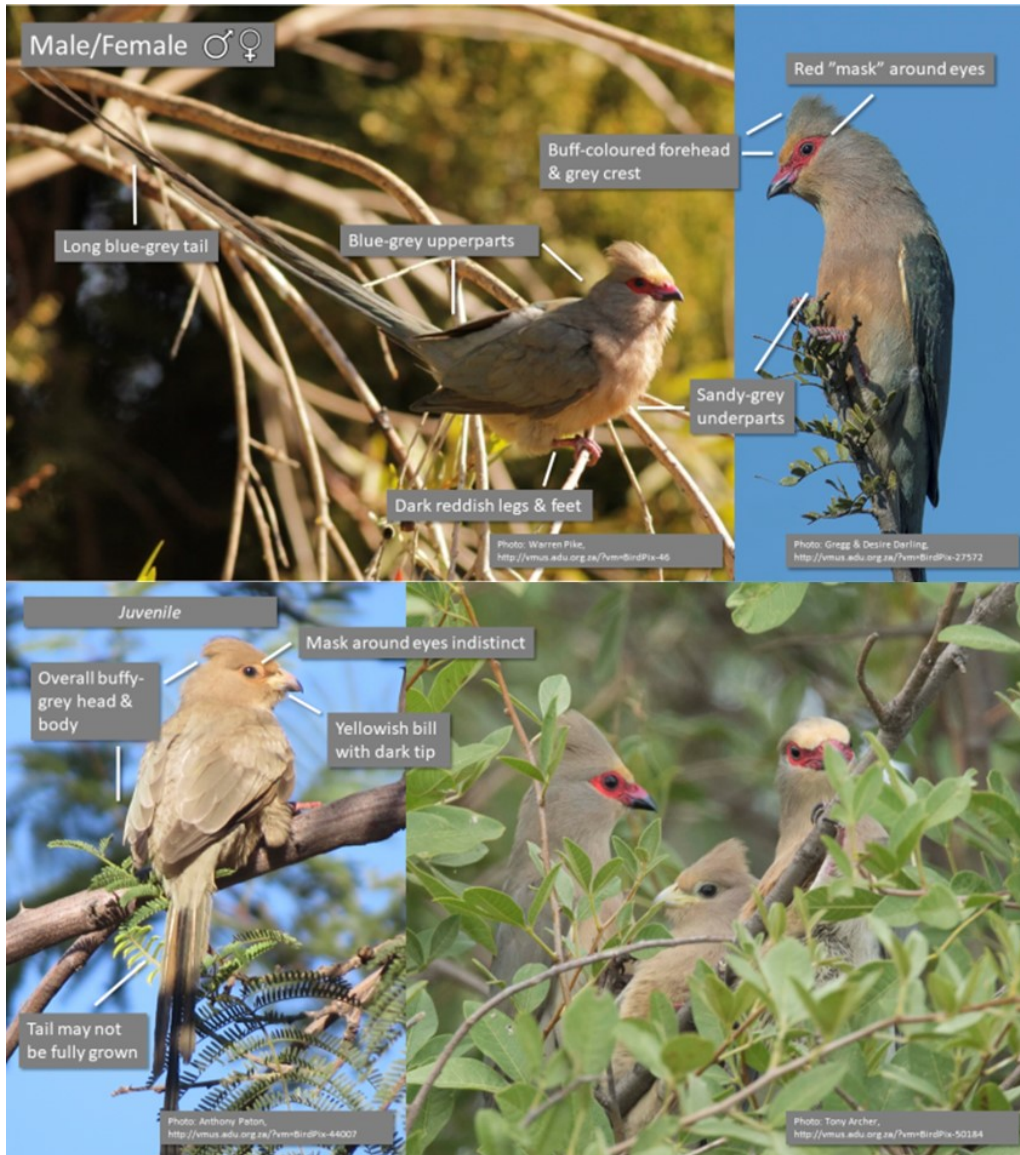


White-backed Mousebirds are medium-sized birds with an overall greyish colouration. Though they may appear grey at first glance, a White-backed Mousebird in flight reveals a striking black patch on the back with a white blaze down the middle, and a deep maroon band at the base of the tail. Though the white stripe gives these birds their name, it is only visible when the wings are at least partially open! Like other mousebirds, White-backed Mousebirds have a distinct crest on the head. Other distinguishing features include bright pinkish legs and feet and a whiteish bill with a black tip. Males and females look alike.

Here is the link to more information about the [White-backed Mousebird](#).

# Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus*

Rooiwangmuisvoël (Afrikaans) - Intshili (Xhosa)



The Red-faced Mousebird is a medium-sized bird with a slaty grey head and crest and a pale, cinnamon-coloured forehead. As the name suggests, these birds have a distinctive red "mask" running along their faces, from the eyes to the base of the bill. The upperparts and long tail are bluish-grey. Males and females are similar, but juveniles lack a distinct crest and have a paler mask.

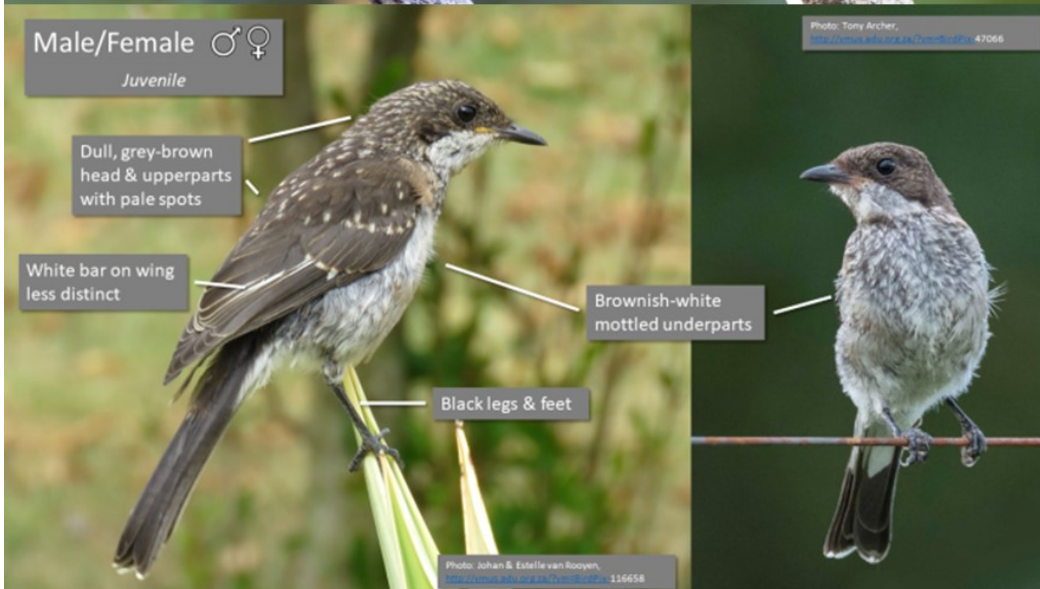
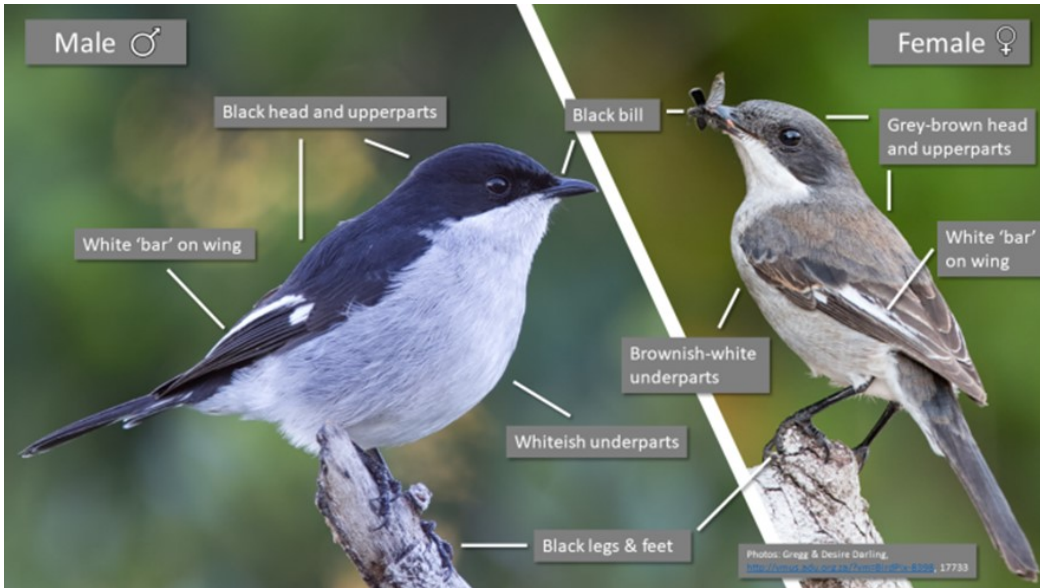
Here is the link to more information about the [Red-faced Mousebird](#).





# Fiscal Flycatcher *Melaenornis silens*

Fiskaalvlieëvanger (Afrikaans) - Icola (Xhosa)



The Fiscal Flycatcher is a medium-sized bird with distinct black and white colouration. Though it may be tempting to confuse these birds with another black and white species, the Southern Fiscal, closer examination reveals their differences. Fiscal Flycatchers are smaller than Southern Fiscals, have a thin black bill (unlike the Fiscal's thick, hook-shaped bill), and have a thin white bar on the wing (Fiscals have a thick white "V" shape).

Males and females look a bit different to each other; males have a black head and back with white underparts, whilst females have a greyish brown head and upperparts and brownish white underparts. Both males and females have black eyes, feet, and legs.

Juveniles resemble females, but are duller and more mottled overall.

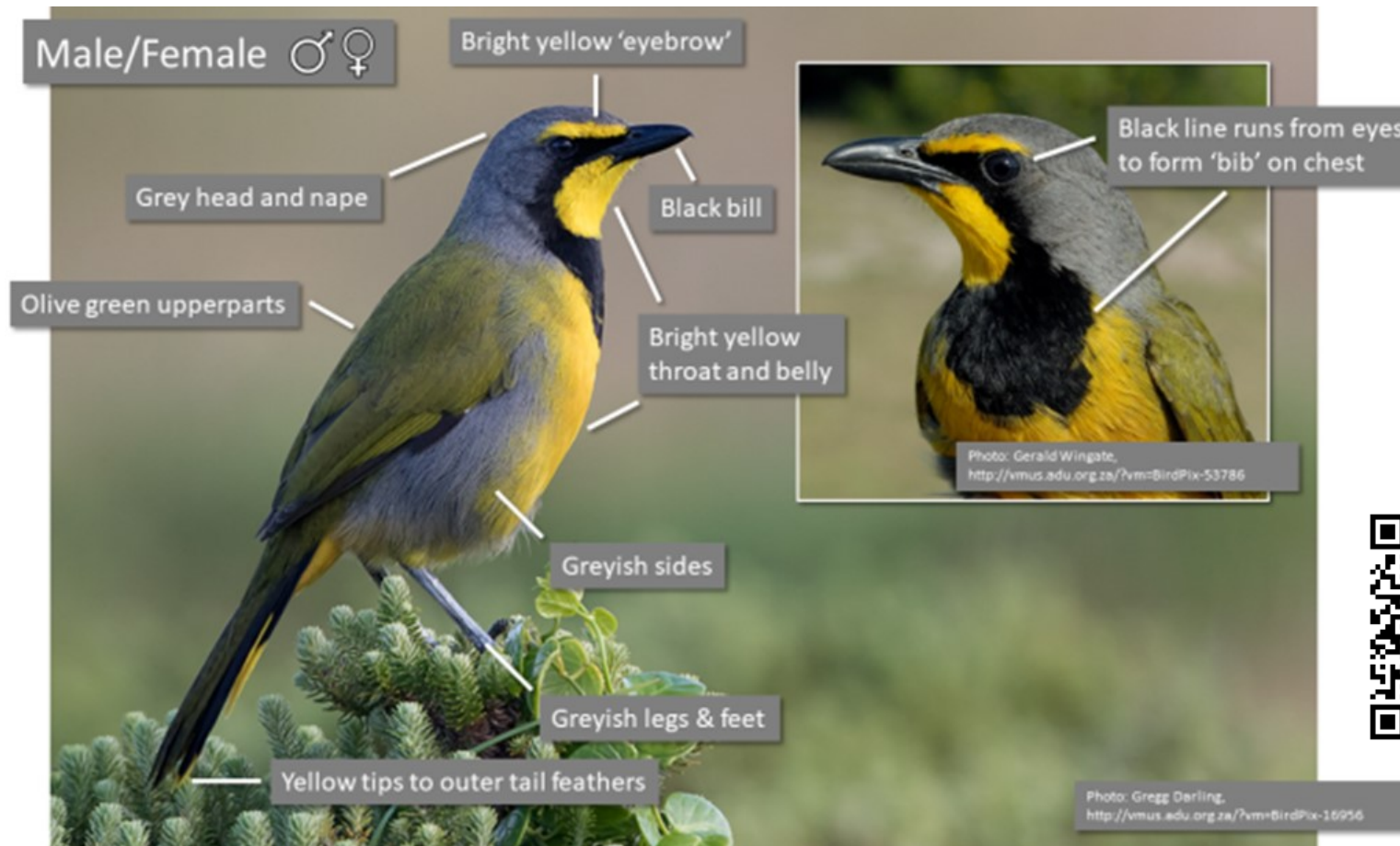
Here is the link to more information about the [Fiscal Flycatcher](#).





# Bokmakerie *Telophorus zeylonus*

Bokmakerie (Afrikaans) - Ingqwangi (Xhosa)



The Bokmakerie is a large, colourful bird with a distinct bright yellow throat and underparts and a thick black "bib" on the chest. The bill is heavy and black, and the head and back of the neck are ashy grey. The upperparts are a dull olive green, and the tail is tipped with distinct yellow feathers. The legs and feet are greyish. Males and females look alike, but juveniles are a dull olive green overall with no yellow or black on the throat and chest. If in doubt, check the tail--juvenile Bokmakeries maintain the same yellow-tipped feathers as their adult counterparts.

Here is the link to more information about the [Bokmakerie](#).

# Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio*

Rooivlerkspreeu (Afrikaans) - Isomi (Xhosa)



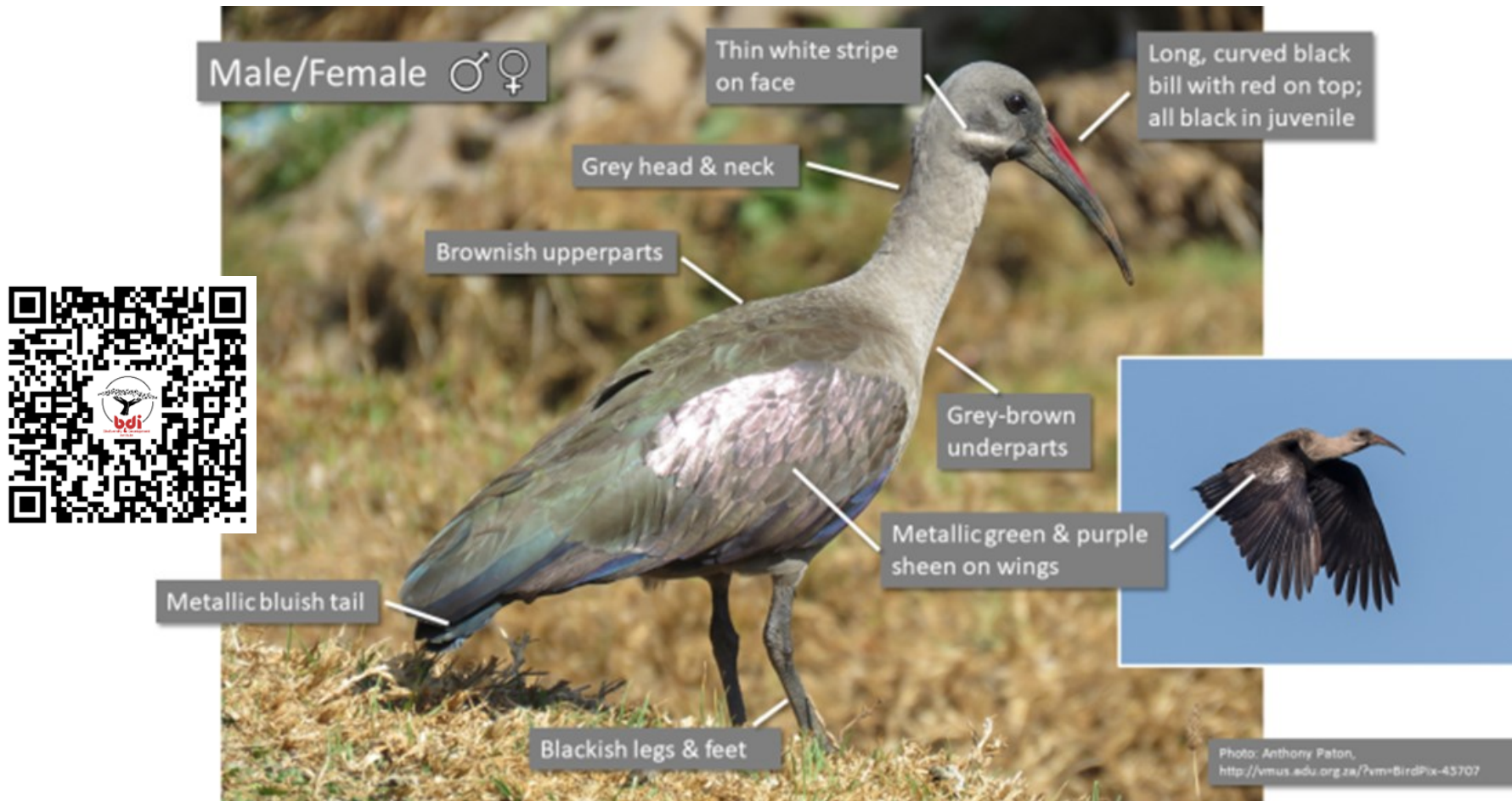
The Red-winged Starling is a large, black bird with striking reddish wing feathers. Males and females look similar but can be told apart: the male has an all-black head, whilst the female's head is grey. Both males and females have glossy blueish-black bodies and long tails. Their beaks, legs and feet are also black. When perched, a narrow strip of reddish-orange is just visible on the wing; however this patch of colour becomes much more obvious when the bird is in flight.

This colourful part of the wing contains the primary feathers; the long, strong outer feathers on a bird's wing. Most species have 9 or 10 primaries. Primaries, together with secondaries, which are the rest of the long feathers between the primaries and the bird's body, make up the flight feathers. This group of feathers plays an important role in supporting a bird in flight. Beyond keeping them in the air, the Red-winged Starling's spectacular rust-coloured primaries are a distinctive characteristic, allowing for easy identification when seen swooping overhead.

Here is the link to more information about the [Red-winged Starling](#)

# Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*

Hadeda (Afrikaans) - Ing'ang'ane (Xhosa)



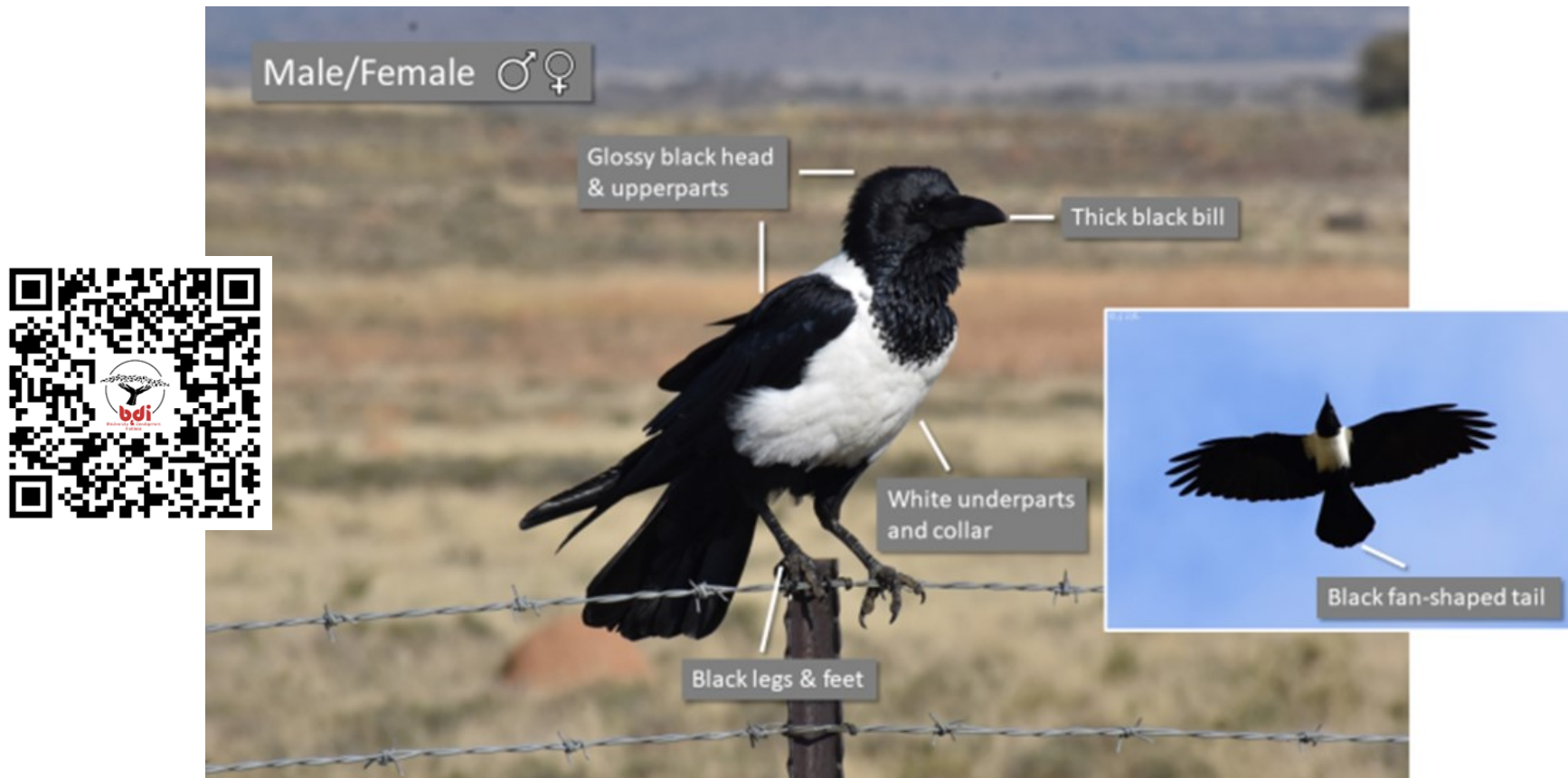
The Hadada Ibis (or Hadada) is a large greyish-brown bird. Males and females are alike in colouration, with a grey head and neck, brownish upperparts, glossy green and purple wings, and a glossy bluish tail. Closer inspection reveals a narrow white stripe across the cheek, and a long, curved black bill with a red top. Juvenile Hadadas closely resemble adults, but are duller and darker overall with an all-black bill.

Here is the link to more information about the [Hadada Ibis](#).



## Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

Witborskraai (Afrikaans) - Igwangwa (Xhosa)

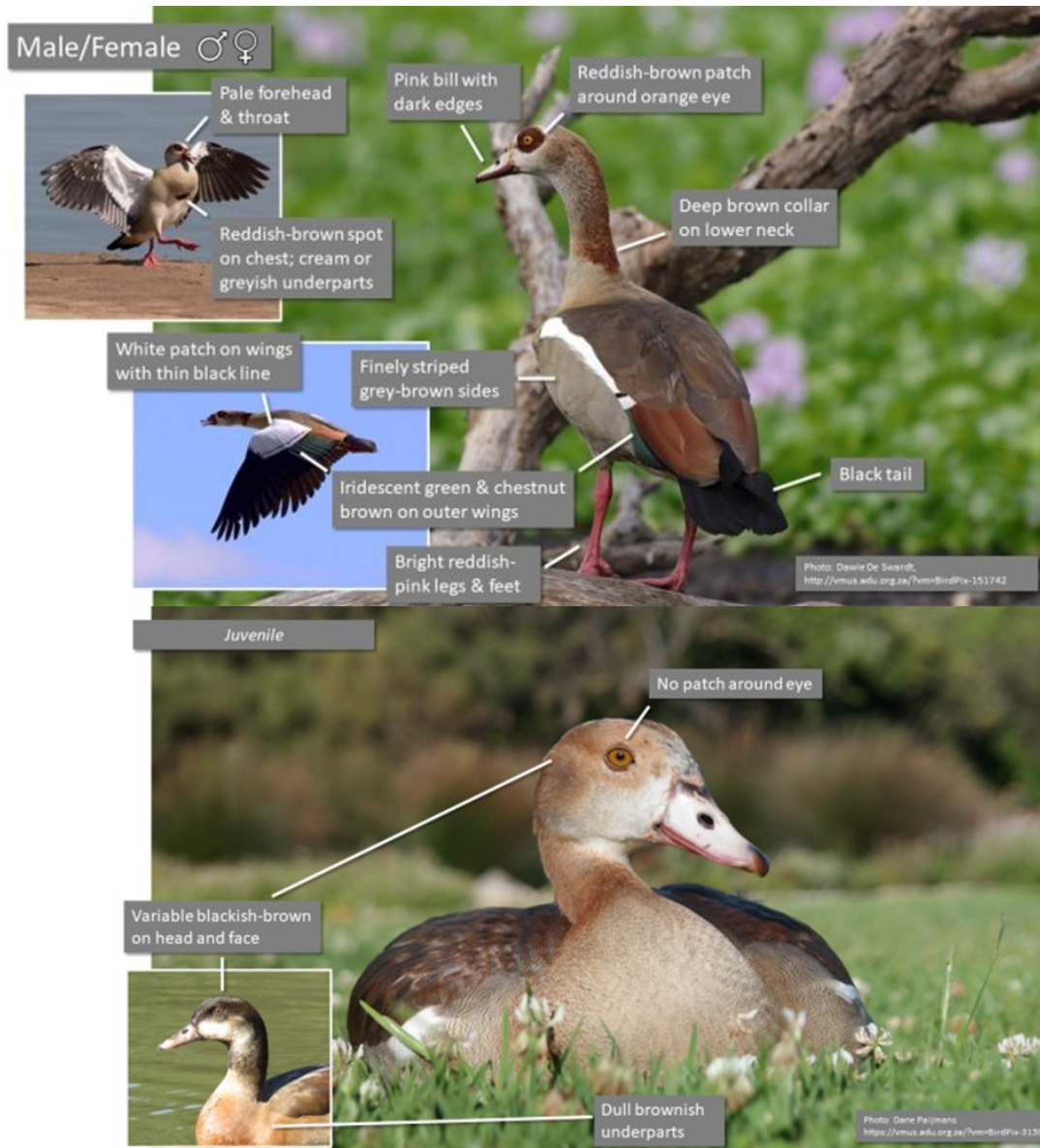


The Pied Crow is an unmistakable, large, and conspicuous species. Pied Crows get their name from their colouration; "pied" means having two or more colours (in this case, black and white). As the name implies, these birds are bi-coloured; a glossy black head and neck contrast sharply with a bright white "vest" running from the shoulders down to lower chest. Pied Crows have dark brown eyes and black legs, feet, and bills. The bill is long, thick, and slightly hooked at the tip. Males and females look alike. Juveniles resemble adults, but are less glossy overall and have greyish edges to their white feathers.

Here is the link to more information about the [Pied Crow](#).

# Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Kolgans (Afrikaans) - Ilowe (Xhosa)



The Egyptian Goose is a large brown or tan-coloured bird, easily distinguished from other geese and ducks by distinct reddish-brown patches surrounding the eye and a reddish-brown spot in the middle of its tan-coloured chest (hence the Afrikaans name "kolgans," meaning "dot goose"). Males and females both have a deep brown collar on the lower neck, finely-striped greyish sides, a dark brownish back, and a black tail. In flight, Egyptian Geese are easily identified by broad white patches on the wings, as well as iridescent green and chestnut coloured feathers on the outer wings.

The bill is a pale pink with dark edges, the eye is deep orange, and the legs and feet are bright reddish-pink.

Juvenile Egyptian Geese can vary considerably in colouration while developing their adult feathers, but overall, they have dull, brownish underparts and dark brown faces with no reddish eye patch.

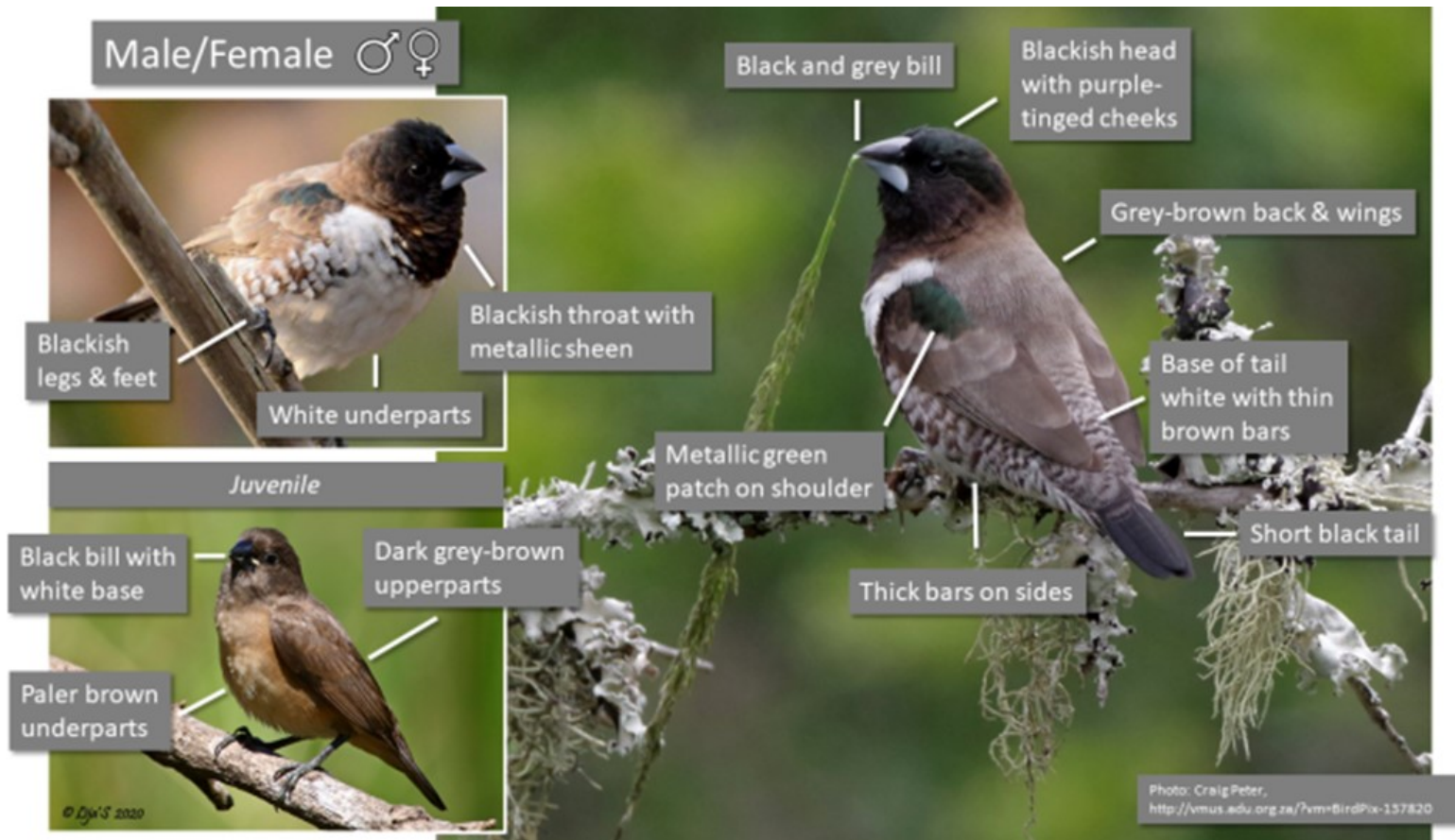
Here is the link to more information about the [Egyptian Goose](#).





# Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata*

Gewone Fret (Afrikaans) - Ingxenge (Xhosa)

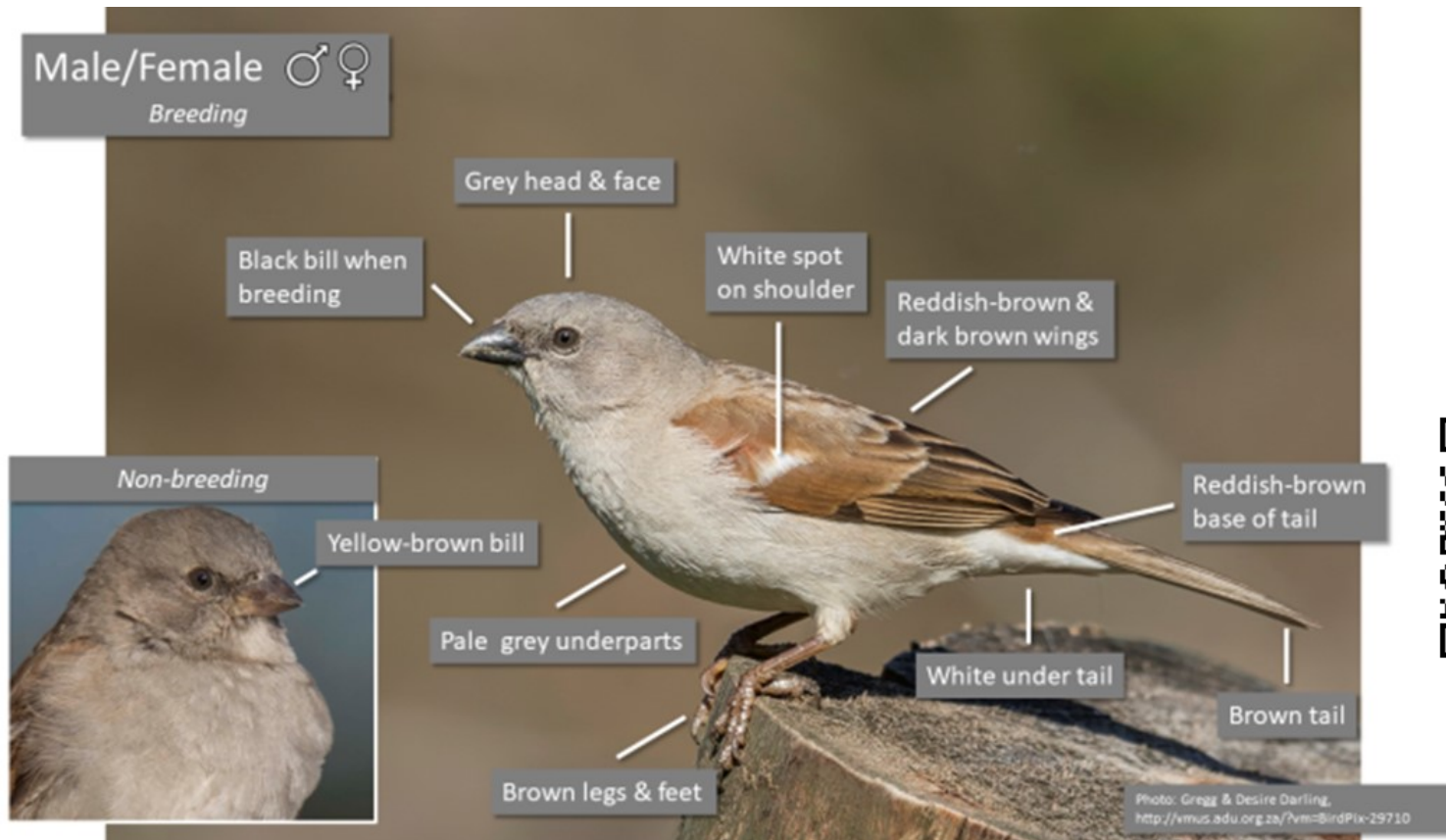


The Bronze Mannikin is a small, darkly coloured bird. The bill is two-toned, with black on top and grey on the bottom. Bronze Mannikins have blackish heads and throats and grey-brown upperparts, with a distinctive metallic green patch on the shoulder. The underparts are white, with thick barring on the lower sides and a short black tail. The legs and feet are black. Though males and females are alike in appearance, juveniles look quite different. Juvenile Bronze Mannikins are dark greyish-brown overall with slightly paler underparts. The bill is all black with a distinct white base.

Here is the link to more information about the [Bronze Mannikin](#).

# Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer diffusus*

Gryskopmossie (Afrikaans) - Enzunge (Kwangali)



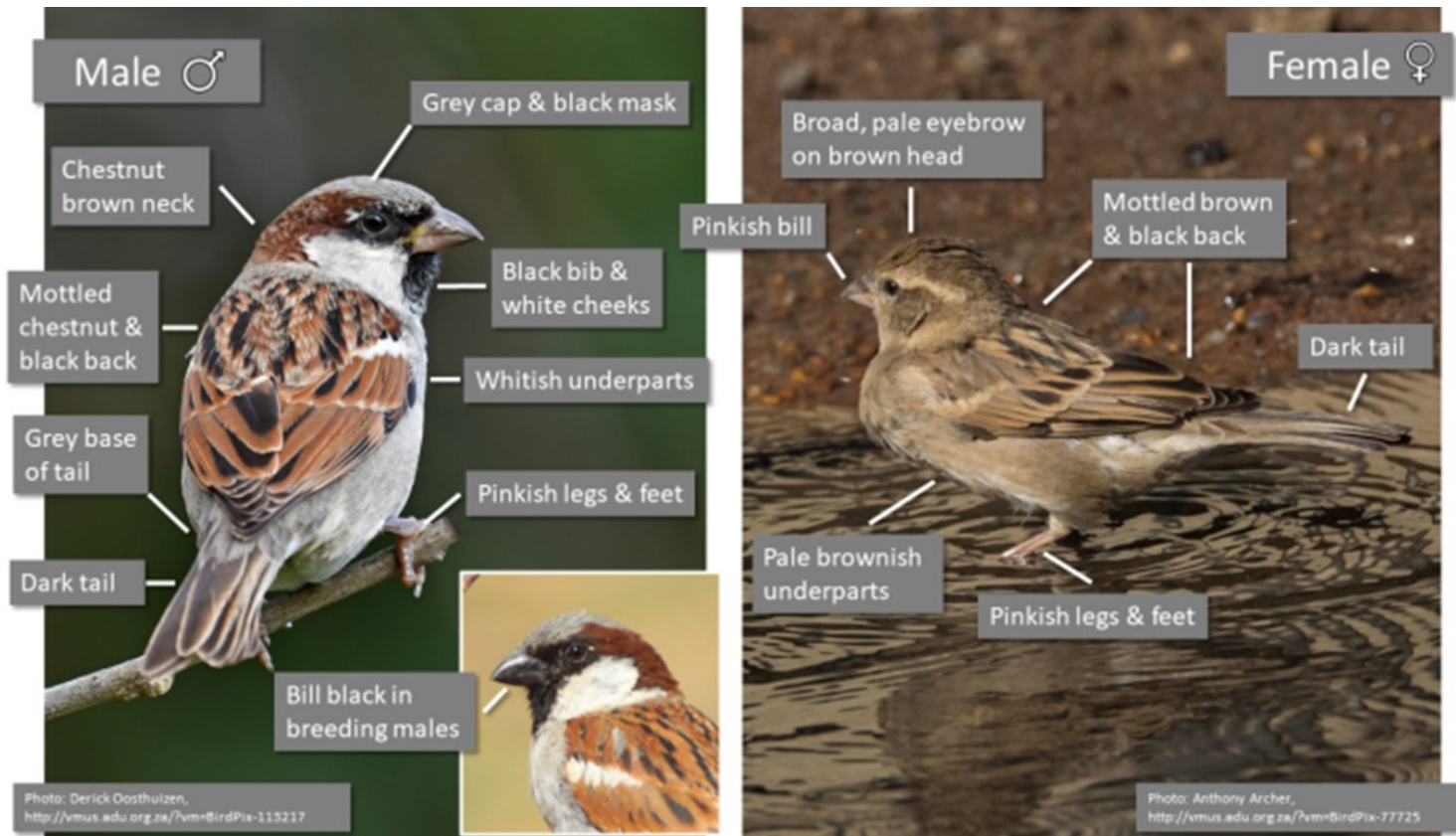
The Southern Grey-headed Sparrow is a small, dull-coloured species. As the name implies, these birds have an all-grey head and face, and pale grey underparts with white feathers under the tail. The wings are reddish-brown and become darker brown towards the wing tips. Southern Grey-headed Sparrows have a distinctive white spot on their shoulders. The legs and feet are brownish. When breeding, the bill is black, but it fades to a yellow-brown colour in non-breeding birds. Males and females are alike. Juvenile birds resemble adults, but are duller overall with a browner head; sometimes the upperparts appear mottled.

Here is the link to more information about the [Southern Grey-headed Sparrow](#).



# House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Huismossie (Afrikaans) - Serobele (South Sotho)

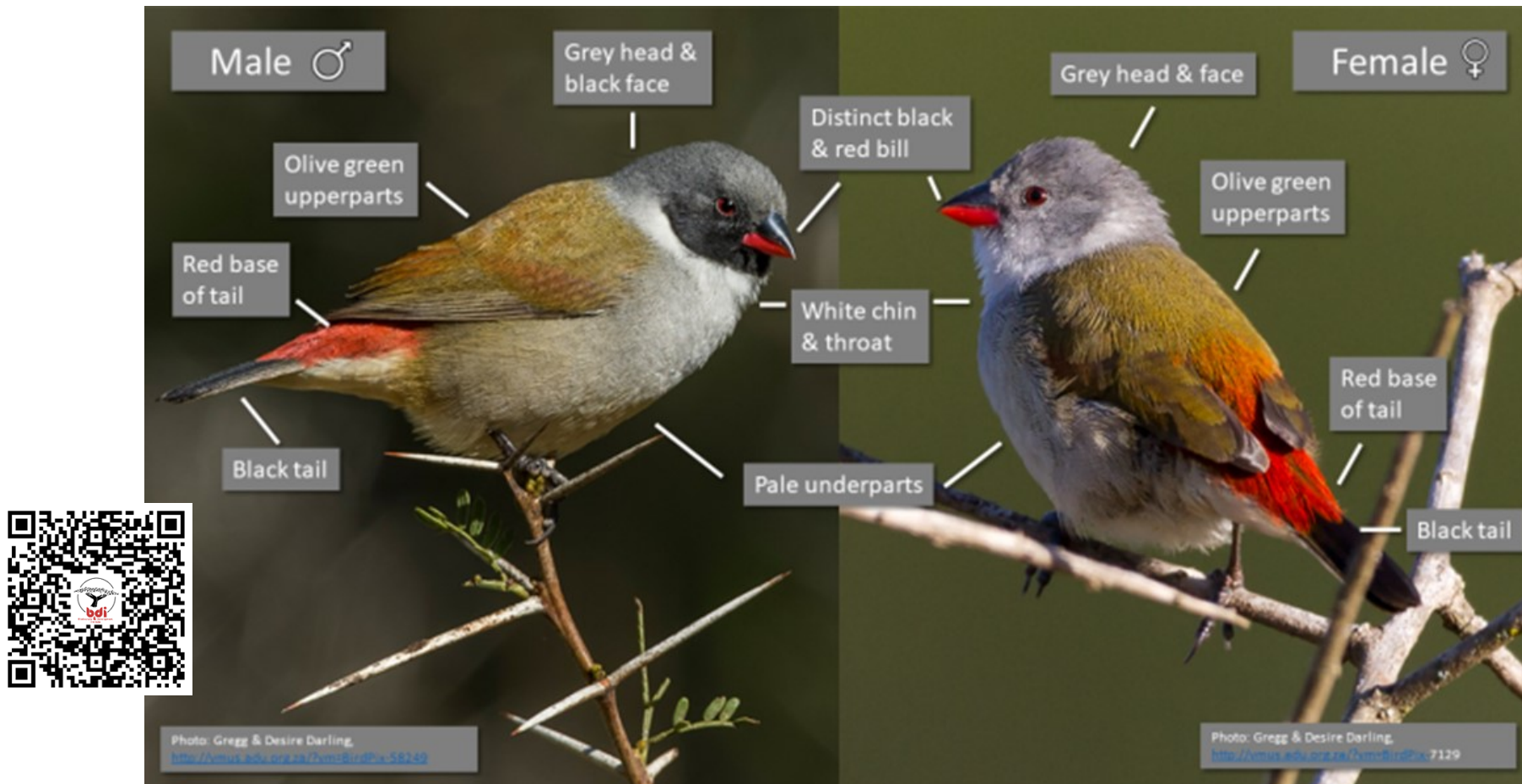


The House Sparrow is a small, boldly-patterned and sexually dimorphic species. Males display a characteristic combination of a grey cap, a black mask across the eyes, a black "bib" on the throat, white cheeks, and a chestnut brown neck. The back is mottled chestnut and black, and the tail is blackish with a grey base. Males have whitish underparts. The bill is black when breeding, and turns a dull yellowish-brown in non-breeding birds. By contrast, female House Sparrows are rather uniform, with an overall sandy brown colouration. Key features to look for include a broad, creamy eyebrow, a pinkish bill, and a mottled brown and black back. Females have pale brownish underparts, a dark tail, and pink legs and feet. Juvenile House Sparrows closely resemble females, but are slightly paler and duller overall.

Here is the link to more information about the [House Sparrow](#).

## Swee Waxbill *Coccygia melanotis*

Suidelike Swie (Afrikaans) - ubuSukuswane (Zulu)




The Swee Waxbill is a small, brightly-coloured species; black and red are the key colours to look for. This species is sexually dimorphic; males and females both have grey heads, olive green upperparts, white throats, and distinct red and black tails and bills, but males have a black face whilst females have a grey face. Both males and females have blackish legs and feet and red eyes. Juveniles more closely resemble females, but are duller in colouration with an orange-coloured base to the tail. The bill is all black.

Here is the link to more information about the [Swee Waxbill](#)



## Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the wonderful Citizen Scientists that contribute images to the BirdPix section of the [Virtual Museum](#). This booklet is part of a [bird feeder project](#) sponsored by [WESSA](#). However, we hope the value of this document will extend beyond the bird feeder project, serving as a practical resource and enriching lives by connecting people with the non-human natural world. It is a magical experience to be able to look at a bird and say, I know you; we hope this document enables you to experience that magic, too.



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