

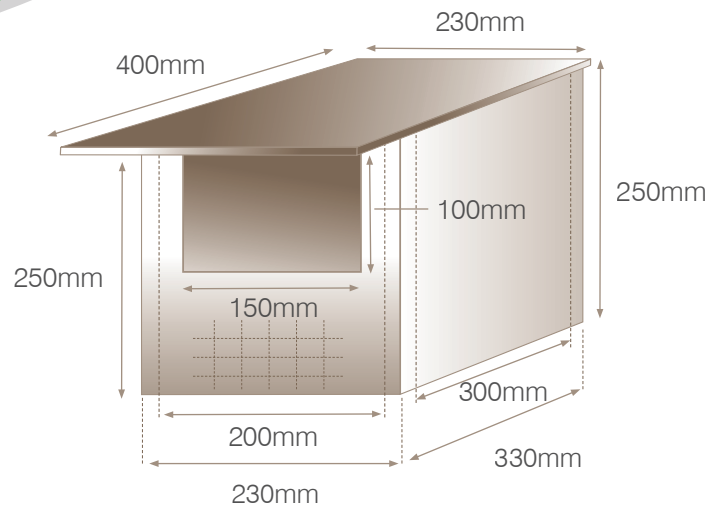
Nest box for the Grey Shrike-thrush

The Grey Shrike-thrush is a drab coloured bird, being mostly grey in the east of its range with an olive-grey back and pale grey-white cheeks and underparts. In the north, the plumage is predominantly brown, and western birds are grey with buff underparts. Grey Shrike-thrush pairs generally mate for life and live in the same areas. Both birds share the nest-building and incubation duties as well as the care of the young birds. Between 3 and 4 eggs are laid and the incubation period is 18 days.



Habitat Information

The Grey Shrike-thrush is found in forests and woodlands. It is a common and familiar bird, but will be more likely to be in areas near bushland remnants or farmland. It is important to remember that installing a nest box will be most successful if you provide habitat in your own garden that is suitable for the bird. Grey Shrike-thrushes search for food on the ground, generally around fallen logs and on the limbs and trunks of trees. It's diet consists of insects, spiders, small mammals, frogs and lizards, and birds' eggs and young. To encourage Grey Shrike-thrush to inhabit your garden and use your nest box, leave fallen logs and leaf litter and retain any trees you have. Try to plant some insect-attracting plants and plant densely to encourage small mammals and lizards to take shelter there.

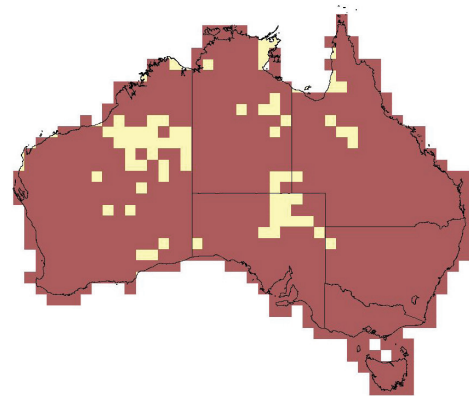


Shapes needed (based on 15mm thick timber)

- Top: rectangle 230mm x 400mm
- Sides: 2 x rectangles 300mm x 250mm
- Front and Back: 2 x rectangles 230mm x 250mm
- Base: rectangle 200mm x 300mm

Special Notes

Ensure the box is well hidden in a dark place that is safe from predators (like under an awning or in a secluded part of the garden with lots of dense vegetation). Unless you see an introduced bird moving into the nest box, resist the urge to lift the lid and look inside. If you disturb the birds then they may abandon their nest. Only open the lid to remove unwanted invaders.



Distribution of the Grey Shrike-thrush

Materials Needed

- Timber at least 15mm thick (for adequate insulation). If you use thicker timber, please adjust the dimensions of the nest box appropriately. It is best to use untreated recycled wood, such as off-cuts or plywood, or plantation-grown wood, rather than using unsustainably harvested timber. Never take hollow limbs or branches from the wild. (Note: if using plywood, use glue and nails to assemble your box)
- Wood glue (something odourless)
- Non-toxic paint or sealant
- Linseed oil
- Wire mesh
- Screws
- Stainless steel hinge (either one long one or two smaller ones)
- Hook latch and eye
- Metal staples
- For mounting strip attachment (method 2): A piece of timber 530mm long and 90mm wide (the mounting strip), plus another piece of timber (the spacer) between the mounting strip and the nest box (slightly smaller than the height of the nest box) + 100mm galvanised screws

Tools Needed

- Drill
- Saw + coping saw
- Hammer
- Screwdriver
- Stapler
- Safety glasses and dust mask
- Coarse sandpaper (or a rasp)
- Ladder

Construction

1. Cut out shapes

- Wearing safety glasses and a dust mask, use the saw to cut out all of the required shapes for the box.
- Label each panel with pencil (on the inside) so that you can keep track of each part.
- Paint the outside and edges of each panel with non-toxic paint or sealant. Leave the inside face of each panel raw.

2. Add features to the panels

- Front panel: use the coping saw to cut out a rectangular entrance 150mm wide by 100mm high in the front. The entrance should be in the middle of the panel, a couple of cm from the top.
- Front panel: staple a ladder made of wire mesh to the inside of the panel. This will allow the young birds to climb out of the box. Ensure there are no sharp edges.
- Back panel (for attachment method 1 only): drill 2 small holes evenly spaced and approximately 1/3rd of the distance from the top of the panel. Feed the wire or vinyl covered clothesline through both holes from the inside of the back panel.
- Back panel (for attachment method 2 only): Place the spacer along the middle of the back panel (running top to bottom). Secure to the box with wood glue and screws from the inside. Attach the mounting strip to the spacer using the same method. Pre-drill a hole at the top and bottom of the mounting strip.
- Bottom panel: drill 5 small holes into the bottom panel for drainage.

3. Put the box together

- Glue the side panels to the outside edges of the bottom panel and secure with screws. Use at least 3 screws per panel face for the entire box. Repeat for the front and back panels.
- Use the hinges to attach the top panel to the back panel (fit one on either side of the backing. This will allow you to lift the lid to inspect the nest box.

- Fit a hook latch and eye to stop the lid from blowing open in a strong wind.

4. Final touches

- Ensure there are no protruding screws or staples.
- Use coarse sandpaper or a rasp to rough up the front panel of the box so that the birds can grip.
- Treat the outside of the box with linseed oil to help it last.

Installation

Ideally boxes should be installed on large, mature trees, close to or on the main trunk or a thick horizontal limb. Install the box as high as possible to prevent predation but low enough to be safely accessible for monitoring and maintenance.

For this species the ideal height for the box is 2-5 metres. Obviously many people will not possess the equipment necessary to be able to safely access these heights, and so we recommend that you place the box at the highest point you can comfortably access.

Choose a position for the nest box that:

- Faces north or north-east and away from prevailing winds and night time lights
- Has a large, thick (> 700mm circumference) and horizontal limb (for limb attachment method).
- Ensure that you use appropriate safety measures when installing the box. Never use a ladder alone and use a pulley system to raise the box to the installation location
- To limit cat and rat predation, try placing a smooth collar of metal or plastic around the base of the tree.

Attachment method 1 (limb attachment):

- Use the galvanized 100mm screws to secure the box to the tree through the predrilled holes at the front and back of the mounting strip.
- Ensure the box does not move too much in windy weather.
- If you remove the nest box, be sure to also remove the screws

Attachment method 2 (trunk attachment):

- Use the galvanized 100mm screws to secure the box to the tree through the predrilled holes at the top and bottom of the mounting strip.
- Ensure the box does not move too much in windy weather.
- If you remove the nest box, be sure to also remove the screws.

Maintenance

Regularly check your box to make sure that the intended species has not been driven from their nest by introduced birds, and always contact an apiarist if honeybees take over the nest. If introduced birds (like Common Mynas or Starlings) move in, remove their nesting material and any eggs. You may need to repeat this more than once. If they are persistent, cover the hole for a while.

After the chicks have fledged and the adults have left the box, clean it out to prepare it for next year. Remember that trees grow in girth as well as height, and be sure to check the fixings on the box every year or two to adjust for growth.