

Nest box for the Striated Pardalote

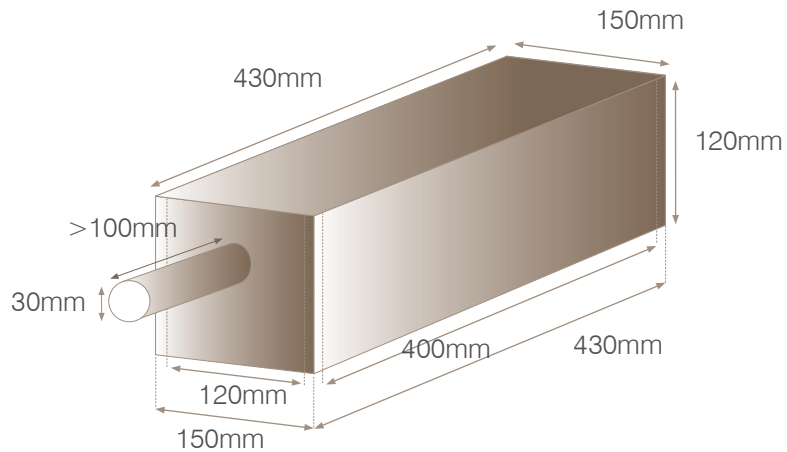
The Striated Pardalote is a very small bird (8-10cm) weighing only 11g. It has a white brow with a yellow spot in front of the eye, olive-grey back and a white stripe in the wing. There is variation in the width of the stripe, the coloured spot at the front end of the strip, and whether or not the black crown has fine white stripes across the range. The breeding season occurs from June to January, when they form pairs or small groups of up to six birds. Both sexes incubate and care for the young, and other members of groups may also help with feeding. 3 – 5 eggs are laid.



Photo by Andrew Silciles

Habitat Information

Striated Pardalotes are found in almost any habitat with trees or shrubs, but prefer eucalypt forests and woodlands. They forage on the foliage of trees for insects, particularly psyllids, but can occasionally be found close to the ground feeding in low shrubs. Pardalotes like to be high in the canopy, therefore if you have tall trees in your garden it is best to take good care of them to provide good habitat for pardalotes. Try planting some native insect-attracting shrubs to provide food for them.

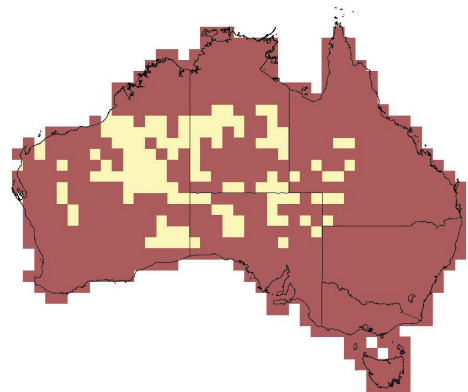


Shapes needed (based on 15mm thick timber)

- Top: rectangle 150 x 430mm
- Sides and Base: 2 x rectangles 120mm x 400mm
- Front and Back: 2 x rectangles 150mm x 120mm
- Extra: 1 tube plastic piping approx. 30mm diameter x 100mm length

Special Notes

Striated Pardalotes require a tunnel-shaped entrance which can be fashioned from PVC piping. 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 the nest box. Only open the lid to remove unwanted invaders.



Distribution of the Striated Pardalote

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)
- Plastic piping (e.g. PVC) 30mm diameter, 100mm long
- Wood glue (something odourless)
- Non-toxic paint or sealant
- Linseed oil
- Screws
- Stainless steel hinge (either one long one or two smaller ones)
- Hook latch and eye
- For mounting strip attachment: A piece of timber 630mm by 90mm or 320mm by 90mm depending on whether you are attaching it to a limb or the trunk respectively) plus 100mm galvanised screws (for mounting the strip to the tree)

Tools Needed

- Drill
- Hole drill bit (for 30mm hole)
- 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 your hole drill bit to cut a hole 30mm in diameter (or the same width as your piping). The hole should be in the middle of the front panel, a couple of cm from the top. You may need to use sandpaper or a rasp to file the hole a touch larger so the tubing fits snugly in to place. Cut the plastic tubing to a length of 100mm, and use the wood glue to fit one end into the hole. This makes a tunnel entrance for the birds.
- Side panel (for tree limb attachment only): select the side that will attach to the tree limb. Run the mounting strip horizontally along the length of the nest box (with excess timber at either end) and secure with small screws from the inside of the panel. Pre-drill 2 holes in the mounting strip, one at each end. Alternatively you can run 2 mounting strips vertically at each end of the box.
- Side panel (for trunk attachment only): select the side that will attach to the tree trunk. Run the mounting strip vertically down the middle of the nest box and secure with small screws from the inside of the panel. Pre-drill 2 holes in the mounting strip, one at the top and one at the bottom.
- Bottom panel: drill at least 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 hinge to attach the top panel to the back panel. 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.
- 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 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 100 mm screws to secure the box to the tree through the predrilled holes at the front and back of the mounting strip. Make sure the box is horizontal (or with a very slight forward slope).
- 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 100 mm 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, and always contact an apiarist if honeybees take over the nest. Introduced birds (like Common Mynas or Starlings) are unlikely to move into these boxes because the opening is too small, but always keep an eye on it.

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.