

# Western grasswren

*Amytornis textilis textilis*

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**Description:** Earthy brown plumage marked with fine white streaks camouflage the western grasswren in its shrubby habitat. Females have a rufous patch on their flanks. This grasswren was previously known as the thick-billed grasswren for its beak, which is heavier than that of other grasswren species. It has a squeaky, reeling song and resembles a musical note itself. This species is often seen bouncing about jauntily with its long tail held high between shrubs.

**Diet and Habitat:** Its usual habitat is open saltbush and bluebush shrublands. In Shark Bay it prefers open shrubland typical of the country along the road to Monkey Mia. This grasswren is usually shy of humans. Your best chance of seeing one is very early in the morning when they hop about the ground feeding, often in pairs or family groups. Although they will perch briefly on exposed branches, they dart under cover at the first sign of danger.

**Breeding:** Western grasswrens usually breed from July to September, but may also nest from January to April when good summer rain produces an abundance of insects. Females select sites in thick scrub near the ground and build cup-shaped nests with dry grass, twigs and bark. Nests are sometimes hooded depending on the thickness of the vegetation above the nest.

**Distribution:** Once widespread from coastal Western Australia to central South Australia, this grasswren has declined dramatically over the last century. Today just two subspecies remain, each confined to small discrete areas.

The Shark Bay area is important habitat for the subspecies *A. textilis textilis* and it is proposed for reintroduction to Dirk Hartog Island National Park as part of the *Return to 1616* Ecological Restoration Project.

## Quick facts

Head-tail: 150 - 200mm

Average weight: 20 - 25g

Number of eggs: 2 - 3

Incubation: 15 - 17 days

## Conservation Status

Feral cats and habitat degradation caused by goats and sheep are believed to have contributed to their decline. The western grasswren has recovered in Francois Peron National Park since removal of sheep and many goats and cats from Peron Peninsula.



Current distribution  
(approximate)



## DID YOU KNOW?

They have short, rounded wings so they mostly hop and bounce between bushes and grass tufts.