

# Nature Notes



## RAINBOW BEE-EATERS

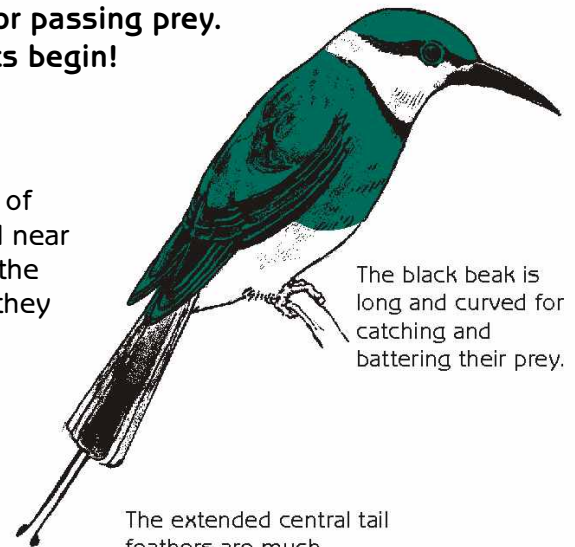
The migratory Rainbow Bee-eater, *Merops ornatus* is one of Australia's most colourful birds. They are graceful fliers, twisting and turning in the air to catch insects in flight. You can often spot groups of them perched in a prominent spot on the lookout for passing prey.

When they see something, the acrobatics begin!

### ARRIVAL AND SURVIVAL

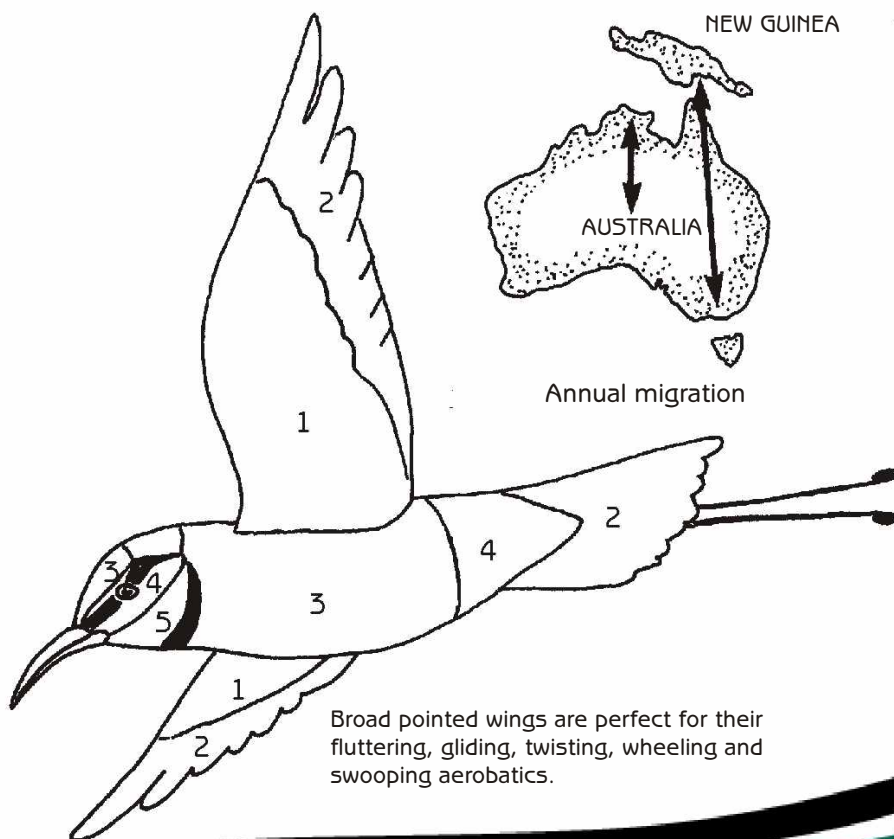
The arrival of Bee-eaters in Central Australia in late August is a sign of Spring. They are common during the summer along creek beds and near waterholes. In April they fly north again to spend the dry season in the Top End. You are more likely to hear them before you see them as they are noisy, talking to one another with a high-pitched *chitter-chitter* while in flight.

Rainbow Bee-eaters from southeastern Australia migrate all the way to New Guinea to escape the southern winter. By September they are back from the north.



The black beak is long and curved for catching and battering their prey.

The extended central tail feathers are much longer in males.



Broad pointed wings are perfect for their fluttering, gliding, twisting, wheeling and swooping aerobatics.

Use the numbers below to colour the beautiful rainbow colours of this elegant bird.

- 1 = orange
- 2 = black
- 3 = green
- 4 = blue
- 5 = yellow

