Tribe **MACROPYGIINI** Bonaparte

A long, strongly graduated tail is the most conspicuous morphological feature of the mid-sized to fairly large pigeons belonging to this tribe. Brown, grey, black and white predominate in the simple plumage patterns, and iridescence sometimes is present on the neck. Schodde (1997) points out that the three genera are centred in the Malesian–Melanesian archipelagos, with one genus reaching Australia.

Genus *Macropygia* Swainson

Macropygia Swainson, *Classif. Bds,* **2**, 1837, p. 348. Type, by subsequent designation, *Columba phasianella* Temminck, 1824, pl. col. 100 (not *Columba phasianella* Temminck 1821) = *Macropygia tenuirostris* Bonaparte (Salvadori, *Orn. Pap. e Mol.,* **3**, 1882, p. 132).

Because of their proportionately long, broad tails and a predominantly barred plumage in most species, the predominantly brown, mid-sized to fairly large pigeons belonging to this well-defined genus are known as cuckoo-doves. Three species groupings are characterised by differences in size, plumage colouration and vocalisation, and the sole species occurring in Australia is a member of the more polytypic *amboinensis* superspecies, all members of which are closely related and allopatric (see Gibbs *et al.* 2001). Sexual dichromatism is present, and juveniles resemble the adult female.

Mayr (1944) suggested that, because the population in south-eastern Australia is more similar to western forms of *Macropygia* than to Papuan populations, it is reasonable to assume that the species reached Australia via Timor. Conversely, Schodde (1989) points out that, in northern Australia, Brown Cuckoo-Doves occur only in north Queensland and the population on Cape York Peninsula forms a link with New Guinea forms, so colonisation of eastern Australia occurred from New Guinea.

The genus is widely distributed from the Himalayan region, north India and southern China, including Taiwan, through South-East Asia and Wallacea to New Guinea, eastern Australia, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.