

## BLUSHING FIGBIRDS

*Text and images by Ian and Jill Brown*

*The colour of the bare facial skin of male Australasian Figbirds (*Sphecotheres viridis*) varies between a dull beige-pink, and bright red, characteristic of the breeding season. Several books note that the colour changes with the level of excitement of the bird.*

*This male bird, photographed at Gold Creek in early October, was sitting in a fig tree, inside*



*the canopy, gorging on ripe figs. His facial skin was so pale that, in the dull light inside the foliage, he could have been mistaken for a Common Myna*



*Suddenly, he saw the camera. Immediately, his facial skin changed to red – not the deep red often seen in breeding males, but a much deeper shade than when he was eating.*

*He turned again, still red-faced, showing the clear change which had occurred almost instantaneously. Perhaps the sight of the*

*camera was enough to startle him slightly, but not to achieve the glowing red of this young male when in the company of ladies!*



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