

# Japanese white eye (*Zosterops japonicus*) by David Burgess

These cheeky little birds are the darlings of the sakura blossom, providing a floral dance through the branches of the blossom trees.

The Japanese white-eye is a small, energetic and acrobatic bird widely distributed throughout much of Eastern Asia and is famed for its beauty. It is commonly depicted in Japanese art and was historically kept as a caged bird. Its back is olive green with pale green on its underside. Its feet, legs, and bill range from black to brown. It has a green forehead and a yellowish throat. The white-eye has rounded wings and a long, slender bill for feeding on the nectar of the plum and cherry blossom. Its wings are dark brown and outlined in green. Like other white-eyes, this species exhibits the distinctive white eye-ring that gives it its Japanese name *mejiro* (目白). Adults range from 10 - 11cm in length and weigh about 10 grams. It is a sociable bird that may form flocks with other species. The birds are often seen in plum and cherry blossom time feeding on the blossoms, which has led to its popularity in Asian art.



White-eye on camellia (Tenno-ji) park, Osaka. (Image from Wikimedia Commons - Photo by Laitche)



Branches Of Plum Tree And Willow With Japanese White-eyes by Kubo Shunman. (Image from Wikimedia Commons - The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Japanese White-eye on Sakura at Ueno park, Tokyo (Image from Wikimedia Commons - Photo by Jason Thompson)