The Australian Brush-turkey has a mainly black body plumage, bare red head, yellow throat wattle (pale blue in northern birds) and laterally flattened tail. The Australian Brush-turkey is not easily confused with any other Australian bird. It is the largest of Australia's three megapodes (Family Megapodiidae). The megapodes are a distinct family of the group of fowl-like birds (Order Galliformes), which includes quails, turkeys, peafowl and junglefowl.

The Australian Brush-turkey's range extends along eastern Australia, from Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, south to the northern suburbs of Sydney and the Illawarra region of New South Wales.

Brush-turkeys feed on insects, seeds and fallen fruits, which are exposed by raking the leaf litter or breaking open rotten logs with their large feet. The majority of food is obtained from the ground, with birds occasionally observed feeding on ripening fruits among tree branches.