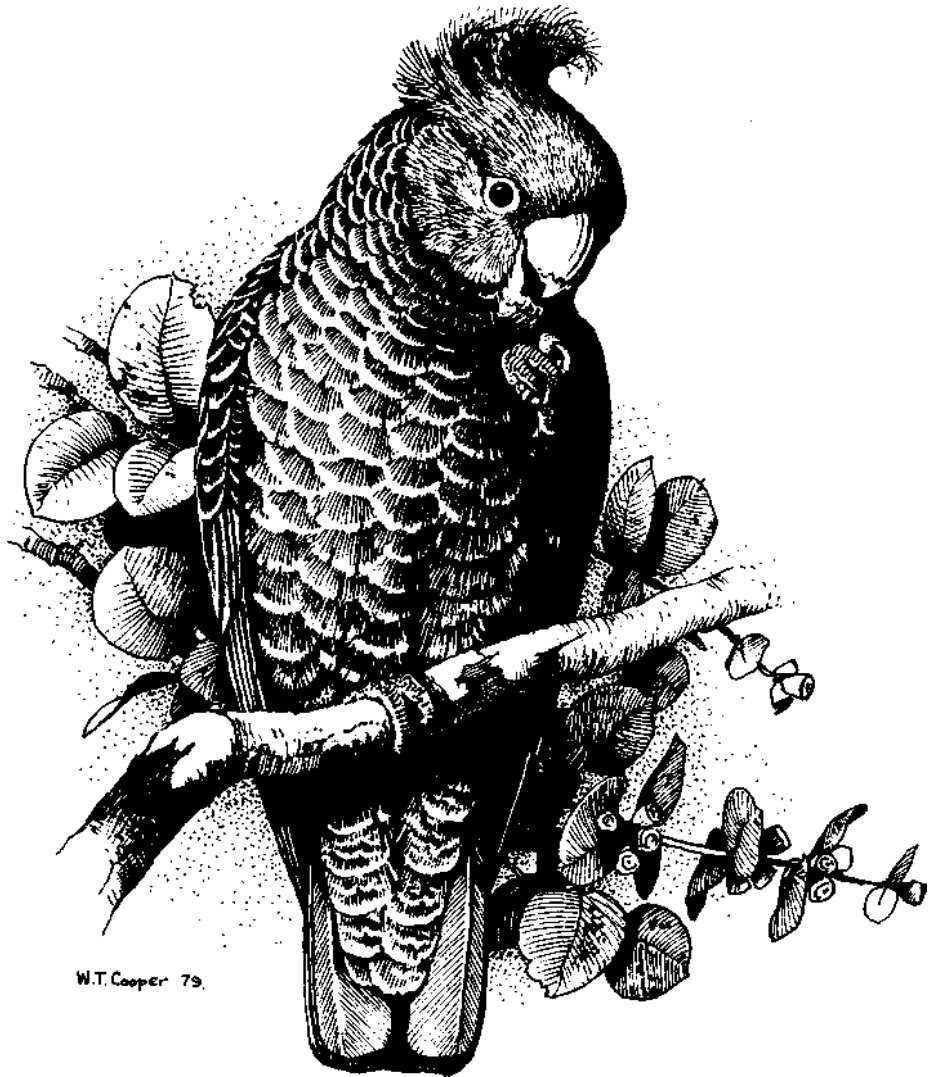


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(Continued inside back cover)

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BIRDS OF THE CANBERRA REGION - PART V

Brendan J. Lepschi

Introduction

This bibliography supplements parts one to four (Prendergast 1984, 1987, Lepschi 1988, 1989). Methods and abbreviations used here are the same as those in the previous parts.

With regard to the adoption in 1990 of a modified "COG Area of Concern" (Canberra Ornithologists Group 1992), it should be noted that the area covered by these bibliographies is somewhat different. When the first bibliography was published, no agreed definition of the "Canberra Region" existed, so an ad hoc circumscription was drawn up, namely: "...north to near Goulburn, Gunning, Yass and Burrinjuck Dam, west towards Tumut, south towards Cooma and eastwards to Braidwood, ... The Kosciusko region has also been included..." (Prendergast 1984). For consistency, it is this definition that is followed for the bibliographies.

CORRIGENDUM FOR PART IV: - The dates of publication for the references by Clark, G.S and Hatton, T.J. are both incorrect - they should read "1989" not "1980".

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Acknowledgements

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ODD OB

A LARGE GATHERING OF WEDGE-TAILED EAGLES

Isobel Crawford

Thirteen Wedge-tailed Eagles *Aquila audax*, were seen from the Monaro Highway at Gungoandra Gap, 6 km north of Bredbo, on "Scottsdale" at midday on 23 May 1988. Some of them were feeding on a carcass west of the road. Other observers present were Nic Day and Tony Howard. This area is favoured by Wedge-tailed Eagles and one or two are often visible. A similar concentration of Wedge-tailed Eagles was seen in November 1982 by Alan Morris in the Gammon Ranges National Park (1983, *Canberra Bird Notes* 8: 115).

Isobel Crawford, PO Box 31, O'CONNOR ACT 2601

RED-WHISKERED BULBUL - A NEW SPECIES FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

S.J. Wilson

On 16 May 1993, whilst in my front garden, I heard a bird calling from behind the house. I immediately recognised the call as being that of a Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pyconotus jocosus* - a species I have seen and heard frequently in Sydney. I went in quest of the source of the call and found the bird sitting by itself, calling, on the powerlines above the back fence. The bird was readily identified by its call and its rather erect posture, prominent crest, and relatively long tail. The crown was black with a permanently erect black crest. Its lores and throat were white with a black tapered line on the side of the throat. The breast was fawn (Simpson and Day (1993) have the colour closer than Slater et al. (1986) though the pose is better in the latter), the back plain brown, and the tail dark grey with white terminal spots.

No native bird has the crest and posture. The bird most likely to resemble a Red-whiskered Bulbul may be an adult male Rufous Whistler, but its perching stance is not as vertical, and the breast is a deeper rufous shade. It also does not have the crest and therefore there is really little similarity except vaguely in colour.

Together with my wife, I observed the bird for about eight minutes, with both the naked eye and binoculars (5x10), until it flew off in a southerly direction.

Details of the sighting were submitted to the Rarities Panel and have been endorsed by them. (See Rarities Panel News in this issue, eds.)

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THE USE BY COMMON MYNAS OF A NESTING HOLLOW POSSIBLY USED ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS BY GALAHS

Bruce Lindenmayer

The recent article by Frank and Audrey Peters on Common Mynas *Acridotheres tristis* (1993. *Canberra Bird Notes* 18: 5), and the 1993 enquiry by a committee of the ACT Legislative Assembly into weed plants and feral animals in the ACT, has sparked me into recording one of my own observations on the species.

My wife and I are fortunate in having a large Red Box *Eucalyptus polyanthemos* in our front garden at Chapman. The tree has well developed hollows and therefore is probably more than 150 years old (D. Lindenmayer pers. comm.). One such hollow about 6 m above ground (a spout where a large, mainly horizontal branch has broken off) has been partly covered by a sheet of galvanised steel which was probably put there at the time the suburb was developed in the early 1970s. The steel sheet protects the entrance from the prevailing westerly and north-westerly winds but allows the entry of birds up to the size of a Galah *Cacatua roseicapilla*.

What I assume to be the same pair of Galahs has been in almost permanent residence in the tree since I first observed them in June 1992. My wife, who has lived in the house since 1980, believes the same pair has occupied the tree since at least that time. It is not known if they actually nested in the hollow. I have observed the Galahs mutual preening on many occasions and assume by this and differences in the colour of their eyes that they are a male (brown iris) and female (red iris).

In the spring and summer of 1992-93 I observed the Galahs entering the hollow. During this time I saw and heard them noisily chasing Crimson Rosellas *Platycercus elegans*, and on one occasion Eastern Rosellas *P. eximus*, which were inspecting the hollow. Common Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* and Common Mynas (both of which are prevalent in the area) were also seen to inspect the hollow, although I did not see the Galahs attempt to chase either of these species. In the end, only the Common Mynas nested successfully in the nesting hollow raising two fledglings in January 1993, one of which survived. The Galahs were present during this period, but did not attempt to enter the hollow.

I have subsequently observed the Galahs in the tree on almost every day up until the time of writing (mid-August 1993). In July and August I saw them on several occasions inspecting and entering the hollow.

Bruce Lindenmayer, 17 Monkman Street, CHAPMAN ACT 2611

A FEEDING FLOCK WITH A DIFFERENCE

Bruce Lindenmayer

Like many bird watchers. I have always been intrigued by the tendency at times for birds to forage in flocks of mixed species. As stated by Hugh Possingham (1989, *Canberra Bird Notes* 14:94-96), some of these flocks are relatively stable, while others join together opportunely to exploit a superabundant food source. I have only once (in the Warrumbungles National Park at Easter 1991) observed a feeding flock of size and variety comparable to the one which visited my garden in Chapman between 10.30 a.m. and noon on 1 July 1993.

My attention was attracted initially by two green-coloured Satin Bowerbirds *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* in a large Red Box *Eucalyptus polyanthemos* which was just starting to come into flower. On closer examination I discovered the tree had a large number of birds foraging in the foliage. Over the next 90 minutes I observed seven species of honeyeaters in the Red Box and adjacent Argyle Apple *E. cinerea*. These were: 2 Red Wattlebirds *Anthochaera carunculata*, 2 Yellow-faced Honeyeaters *Lichenostomus chrysops*, 1 White-eared Honeyeater *L. leucotis*, 3 Fuscous Honeyeaters *L. fuscus*, 2 White-naped Honeyeaters *Melithreptus lunatus*, 1 Crescent Honeyeater *Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera*, and 2 Eastern Spinebills *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*. The trees were also visited by 6 Weebills *Smicromis brevirostris*, 1 Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus*, 2 Red-browed Firetails *Emblema temporalis*, 2 Galahs *Cacatua roseicapilla* (which during June had spent most of the daylight hours in the Red Box), 1 Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans*, 1 Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, and 1 Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*.

For good measure, 2 Superb Fairy-wrens *Malurus cyaneus*, 2 Brown Thornbills *Acanthiza pusilla*, c. 10 Silvereyes *Zosterops lateralis*, 1 Australian King-Parrot *Alisterus scapularis*, and 2 Pied Currawongs *Strepera graculina* were observed in adjacent parts of the garden during the same 90 minutes.

The feeding flock had dispersed by early afternoon.

I had not previously seen Fuscous Honeyeaters or Red-browed Firetails in the garden. Many of the other species are regular visitors. Small numbers of Crescent Honeyeaters and White-eared Honeyeaters have been present during the colder months in 1992 and 1993.

Bruce Lindenmayer, 17 Monkman Street, CHAPMAN ACT 2611

OUT AND ABOUT

G. Tibicen

The views expressed in "Out and About" do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

In March 1991, I wrote about the discovery of a mummified Night Parrot *Geopsittacus occidentalis* in Queensland. More information has come to light and has been reported in the June issue of *Wingspan* (the newsletter of the RAOU). Apparently there was an unconfirmed sighting of two Night Parrots on the road to Duchess in the west of Queensland on the night of 15 June 1992. This was the same road as the previous sighting. The birds were reported as sitting under a spinifex bush in the full glare of headlights from passing vehicles. Although more searches were made, there were no further sightings. However, some pig shooters produced a feather from a type of bird that they claim to have seen often. DNA analysis by the Queensland Museum has confirmed the feather came from a Night Parrot.

The Bird Observers Club of Australia is carrying out a "Birds and Wattles" survey with the intention of identifying as many as possible of the bird species which use wattles as food and to generally increase our knowledge of the ways in which Australian birds utilise wattles. The survey will continue into 1994. It is simple to undertake and only requires observers to fill in a straightforward form listing which birds are seen on wattles. It is an excellent way that even the beginning birdwatcher can help increase our knowledge of Australian birds. If you would like to help, please contact Ellen McCulloch at PO Box 185, Nunawading, Vic 3131. Tel. (03) 877 5342, Fax. (03) 894 4048, during business hours.

The RAOU has recently published a conservation statement on managing native grasslands to conserve the Plains Wanderer *Pedionomus torquatus*. One of the recommendations is that stock routes should be used only for travelling stock and not for agistment by local stock dealers. It is good to see at long last the importance of remnant vegetation in places such as road and railway reserves, travelling stock routes, and old school and church yards is being recognised.

In a similar vein I was in Forbes recently and visited Gum Swamp, a wildlife sanctuary jointly sponsored by the local community and shire council. Cooperation in this vein can only help our flora and fauna to survive. If you are out that way, give Gum Swamp a visit to see what cooperation, not confrontation, can do. Is there a lesson

here that COG can learn? To be proactive in creating reserves rather than reactive when areas are threatened? Perhaps COG (through the Conservation Subcommittee?) could prepare a bird list for Roses Lagoon in conjunction with the local shire council?

The following request from Nicolette Hooper is taken verbatim from the March 1993 issue of the *Bird Observer*. Perhaps somebody can help?

"Should you visit Kingfisher Park, Julatten, North Queensland, please look out for this bird, robin in size and behaviour, answering to the following description: Bills and legs yellow; forehead and lores white. Large dark eye. very thin pinkish eye-ring surrounded by a white one; a small squarish white patch immediately above and behind the eye. Darker on top of head (possibly grey); breast yellow. back and primaries olive with slightly yellow wash; yellow mark on front edge of folded wing and a pale tip to the tail. This "unknown" bird has been seen by two persons at Kingfisher Park and three, including myself. on a track up Mt Lewis, the adjacent mountain."

Recently the Australasian Wader Studies Group have been leg-flagging waders in Australia whilst others have been similarly marked in New Zealand and Indonesia. A flag is a small piece of coloured material attached to the leg of a bird. They are easier for observers to see than conventional colour bands. The reason for placing flags on waders is to enable researchers to identify the feeding areas they use while travelling between their wintering and breeding areas. About 15,000 waders of twenty species have now been marked in this fashion.

So far birds leg-flagged in Victoria have been seen in New Zealand, Japan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Brunei and Taiwan, as well as elsewhere in Australia. There was an interesting record of a Grey-tailed Tattler which was flagged at Broome, WA and shortly afterwards sighted in Moreton Bay. Qld - showing an east-west movement!

Could observers please have a good look at all waders they see and if any have leg-flags note the following details: species; colour of flag; place and date of sighting; and approximate numbers and species of other waders present. These details should be sent to one of the following: Mark Barter, 21 Chivalry Avenue, Glen Waverley, Vic 3150 (Tel. (03) 803 3330. Fax (03) 288 0205); Australian Bird Banding Scheme, GPO Box 8, Canberra, ACT 2601 (Tel. (06) 250 0321, Fax (06) 250 0399); or the COG Records Officer (Malcolm Fyfe (06) 254 3310).

This is a way in which single observations can be gathered by bird watchers to assist in developing a total picture of bird migration - a picture that is essential to the conservation, on an international level. of this group of birds. It is also, in my opinion, a valid reason for capturing and marking birds.

REVIEW

Beyond Birding: Field Projects for Inquisitive Birders by Thomas C. Grubb (1986).
Published by The Boxwood Press: Pacific Grove, CA, USA (\$19.00 from Andrew Isles
Bookshop, Prahran. Vic.)

For many of us, the attraction of birding lies in being in the outdoors and enjoying the sights and sounds of our native birds. Others move beyond this and engage in bird surveys, thereby making valuable contributions to understanding the distribution and abundance of birds. Still others make detailed records of sightings, such as plumage oddities or food preferences, and write up such observations for ornithological journals and newsletters. The accumulation of these types of observations can lead to the development of generalisations about bird behaviour and the generation of hypotheses which, if found to be true, would help explain the behaviour observed.

This is descriptive ornithology, as explained by Grubb, *Beyond Birding*, however, takes us beyond descriptive ornithology into analytic ornithology, referred to by the author as a process which "provides a method for concluding when [an ornithological] hypothesis is wrong, when an explanation of cause and effect is a mistake" (p. vi). This is the so-called "scientific method", the dominant research paradigm (sadly not criticised enough) in which we start with the assumption that we can never be sure that something is "true", but we have (research) tools available to "prove" that a hypothesis is false.

The book comprises a preface, 23 short chapters and three appendices. The table of contents refers to an index but my copy does not have one. Chapter 1, "Ornithology as a Science", discusses in four pages the concepts of descriptive and analytic ornithology and presents the traditional scientific method referred to above, emphasising hypothesis generation and testing as the core of the approach.

Chapter 2 is called simply "Analytical Ornithology". In eight pages it introduces the concept of using both descriptive and analytical statistics as tools for hypothesis testing. This is done briefly, but systematically, using illustrations from the everyday experience of birders.

Then we enter the body of the book: 20 chapters, averaging 7.5 pages in length, each focusing on a particular analytic ornithology project. The format is consistent throughout. Each project's chapter opens with a scene-setting and interest-gathering statement about what some would call the research problem, ie., the issues to be addressed. For example, Chapter 21 asks "Does woodlot size determine species abundance in winter?". We are then given a precise description of the equipment needed for the project and how to make anything not readily available (e.g., special feeders or measuring tools), along with step-by-step information on the data gathering techniques to be employed.

Grubb takes his task seriously: this is real ornithological research, albeit research which is within the capacity of the amateur. The evidence for this is that the next section of each chapter describes precisely how to record the observations, giving tables with the cells for data empty, ready for real data to be entered. The beauty of this is that the data tables are set up in the manner needed for the statistical analysis, an outstanding feature of Grubb's approach. The statistical techniques needed to test the hypothesis established at the chapter's beginning are clearly specified, and advice is given in interpreting the results. These steps are illustrated throughout with made-up data,

"I couldn't do that because I don't know statistics", you may be thinking. No problem! Grubb has anticipated this. Statistical appendices are included, containing beautifully written, fully worked examples. (If only I had had statistics lecturers able to present the material as clearly as Grubb does!) The chi-square test, median test and Spearman's rank correlation test are covered and tables for significance testing are provided where appropriate,

The downside of the book for Australian readers is that it is totally focused on North American birds and North American environments, e.g., the impact of very cold winters. This means that few of the projects could be carried out in Australia exactly as described. For example, the project "Where do White-breasted Nuthatches cache their supplies" is far from Australian conditions. On the other hand, some of the projects are, in fact, directly transferable to Australia, such as "Why do Cattle Egrets associate with cattle?" Others pose questions that could be asked of Australian species, such as "How does a robin look for worms?", "Do male and female White-breasted Nuthatches look for food in different places?", "If you help a robin feed his nestlings, does he defend a bigger territory?",

I have a second concern about this book, namely the problem of reinventing the wheel. Now it is clear that I would benefit, as would those bird observers who collaborated with me, from carrying out any of Grubb's projects or other studies using the same approach. The problem, however, is that the approach illustrated in this book is based on hypotheses generated from amateur ornithologists' more-or-less systematic field observations and creative thinking. But what of the ornithological literature? For the professional researcher, usually the first task is to review what is known on a topic and then to generate hypotheses which, when tested, will produce new knowledge. The source of the hypotheses is, first, the existing knowledge and, only secondly, the researcher's inquiring mind. The two interact as part of the research process,

The reader of Grubb's book is not guided to review the literature on the topic of interest. This means that she or he could well embark on an intensive study which produces information identical to that found in the "introduction to ornithology" textbooks studied by beginning biology students, but not by Grubb's readers. How can we, the amateurs, access the ornithological literature data bases? And would we be able to find and comprehend the literature if we did obtain lists of references? Indeed, should we amateurs bother or is it better to leap into testing the hypotheses we dream

up from our field observations and creative thinking? Grubb gives us no guidance in this area.

Despite these reservations, this book is excellent and highly recommended for birders keen to take on a project that is "beyond birding" but nevertheless within the capacity of the keen amateur. Reading it should generate many ideas for projects that would admirably fit into the Canberra Ornithologists Group's bird of the year program.

David McDonald.

RARITIES PANEL NEWS

This list contains a first for the ACT - the sighting of a Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pyconotus jocosus* in Kambah. (See also the article in this issue by S.J. Wilson. eds.) Whether the bird got to the ACT under its own steam or whether it was assisted and then accidentally or deliberately released is immaterial. The question now is whether any more are around and if so will they become established?

The list is smaller than previous ones because it reflects the changes made to the category 3 list. In particular this is highlighted by the smaller numbers mentioned of waterbirds and raptors.

This winter has brought further records of Glossy Black-Cockatoos *Calyptorhynchus lathami* and dark morph White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes *Coracina papuensis*. The movements of these birds are a bit of a mystery. Where do they come from? And why the high percentage of dark morph cuckoo-shrikes when they are supposed to be uncommon?

The Lewin's Honeyeater *Meliphaga lewinii* sightings are also forming a pattern of sightings at two places, Gungahlin Hill and the Australian National Botanic Gardens, two quite different habitats and with the majority of sightings in autumn/winter, is this an indication of regular movement?

Two further species which are appearing more regularly in these lists are the Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii* and the Chestnut-rumped Hylacola *Sericornis pyrrhopygius*. In the case of the robin it appears at present to be establishing itself in certain areas. Will it survive in these areas? In the case of the hylacola, the Mundoonen Range record repeats a sighting of some years ago, whereas the Mt Jerrabomberra sighting, taken together with the two sightings in the last Endorsed List (Mt Rob Roy and Mt Majura) may indicate the bird is re-establishing itself in areas around Canberra (as a result of less grazing pressure perhaps?).

Finally, there are still no recent records for any corella species. Could observers please keep a look-out for them and submit details of any which are seen on a Bird Report form.

RARITIES PANEL ENDORSED LIST NO 37

Freckled Duck

5; 26 Jul 92; I. McMahon; Kellys Swamp.

Grey Goshawk

1; 3 Jun 93; D. Johnson; Southwells Crossing, Stromlo Forest.

1; 9 Jun 93; F. Schlager. Intersection Cotter Road and Streeton Drive.

Brown Quail

8; 23 May 93; R. McLachlan; Mundoonen Range.

Latham's Snipe

1; 14 Mar 93; M. Dow; Near Waterhole Hut. Grassy Creek.

Glossy Black-Cockatoo

4; 14 May 93; A. Cliff; N side of Red Hill.

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike (dark morph)

2; 2 Jun 93; K. Mallett; W side of Mt Rogers.

Red-whiskered Bulbul

1; 16 May 93; S.J. Wilson; Harrington Circuit. Kambah.

Red-capped Robin

1; 24 Mar 91; H. van Gelder, Malcolmvale Hs.

2; 3 Jun 93; D. Johnson; Southwells Crossing. Stromlo Forest.

2; 27 Jun 93; J. Avery; Deeks Drive. Stromlo Forest.

Chestnut-rumped Hylacola

1; 8 Apr 93; S. Hamonet; Mundoonen Range.

2; 24 Jun 93; N. Taws; Mt Jerrabomberra.

Lewin's Honeyeater

2; 21 Aug 90; J. Gleeson; Gungahlin Hill Nature Reserve.

1; 17 Feb 93; J. Gleeson; Rainforest Gully, Australian National Botanic Gardens.

1; 27 Jun 93; J. Nicholls; Rainforest Gully. Australian National Botanic Gardens.

Escapees

Rainbow Lorikeet

1; 7 & 9 Aug 93; R. McLachlan; Chewings Street. Scullin.

Scaly-breasted Lorikeet

2; 7 Jun 93; S.J. Wilson; Harrington Circuit. Kambah

Lovebird (*Agapornis* sp.)

1; 1 May 93; B.J. Lepschi; Fullwood Street. Weston.

(Continued from inside front cover)

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Canberra Bird Notes is published quarterly by the Canberra Ornithologists Group. Contributions are welcome. These should fit into one of the following categories: major articles (up to about 3000 words); short notes and "Odd Obs" (up to about 300 words); reviews of books and articles (up to about 500 words); and where to watch birds (up to about 800 words). The articles and notes should cover matters of the distribution, identification, and behaviour of birds occurring in the Australian Capital Territory and surrounding area (i.e. New South Wales coast north to Jervis Bay, and west to the Riverina). Contributions can be sent to the editors c/o David Purchase, 5 Orchard Place, Melba, ACT 2615 (Tel 258 2252).

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