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CANBERRA ORNITHOLOGISTS GROUP INC.

PO Box 301 Civic Square ACT 2608

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(Continued inside back cover)

CRIMSON ROSELLAS AND COMMON STARLINGS COMPETE FOR CONTROL OF A NEST BOX

John A Gleeson
11 Letters Street, Evatt ACT 2617

During September 1996 a pair of young Crimson Rosellas *Platycercus elegans* began to show interest in a small nest box made for pardalotes that I had placed under the eaves of my garage in Evatt. In view of this interest I decided to dust down a larger one I had made for Crimson Rosellas in 1989 and erect it nearby.

On 1 October the rosellas were back and obviously overjoyed with my efforts. The female spent 3 to 5 October re-arranging the rotted wood and shredded bark that I had placed in the box and I was hopeful my efforts would assist in propagating the species. However, on 6 October war was declared when a pair of Common Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* sharpened their yellow beaks and so armed, took possession of the nest box. Feathers, mostly Crimson Rosella, flew as first one species and then the other fought for ascendancy.

By 7 October the rosellas had surrendered and the starlings worked feverishly to fill the box with their own nesting material, including an entire Aluminium Plant *Lamium* sp. that had been growing in a hanging pot nearby. There was no way I was going to permit starlings to use my box, so I closed the opening and for three days watched these two frustrated villains trying to gain readmission.

On 12 October a second pair of Crimson Rosellas appeared and, like the previous pair, tried desperately to enlarge the pardalote-size opening in the small box so they could enter.

As the starlings had lost interest in the large box, I re-opened its entry. I had refurbished the nesting material and, sure enough, the rosellas took an instant 'shine' to the box. This pair, which was even younger (the female was still largely green in colour) went to work. I was interested to note that the male never entered the box although he constantly checked at the opening to see that his partner was making appropriate arrangements within. A genuine foreman of works! Both birds grew accustomed to me walking around and working in the garden nearby, sometimes within 2 or 3 m. As the days went by the female spent longer periods in the box and by 18 October this sometimes extended up to an hour or more. I identified the sexes of the rosellas on the basis that the female was being fed by the male (see Crimson Rosella in Schodde and Tidemann 1986).

On the night of 20 October I checked the box to see if eggs were present, but there was nothing but a neat saucer-shaped depression in the nesting material. My inspection on the following night revealed an egg and by the night of 22 October a second egg had been laid. My hopes were rising. The male during recent days was feeding the female who would either perch in the Tulip Tree *Liriodendron tulipifera* outside her new home or stay within the nest box. Occasionally they would fly off together for a short period before returning. At no time during my nightly inspections was a rosella in the nest box, even when eggs were present. This suggests that incubation had not yet started.

You can imagine my dismay when around noon on 23 October I found both rosella eggs smashed on the concrete path below the box and starlings again on site. How I wished I still had my childhood air-rifle! I watched the fight for possession of the nest continue for much of the afternoon. At one point, as the female rosella attempted to enter the box, a starling landed on her back and savagely pecked at it, pulling out numerous feathers. She was a tough rosella and despite this attack, took possession of the box. Later on, after the rosella left the box, the starling builders were at it again. When she returned and found the vermin with the yellow beaks had entered her nest, she dived straight in and another skirmish ensued, but this time it was the starlings that were vanquished.

When I carried out my nightly inspection on 23 October, rosella egg no. 3 was in the nest which looked in pretty good shape as most of the new starling debris had been dropped out of the entrance. No rosella was present.

Sadly at 07.30 a.m. on 24 October I found the third egg had been ejected and the starlings again in control. The rosellas returned a couple of times during the day but did not attempt to evict the starlings. I then did this for them and closed the entrance to the box.

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John Gleeson is a retired officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Since retirement he has been able to spend more time pursuing the interest in birds which he has had since boyhood. He has been a member of COG for nine years.

OBSERVATIONS OF SUCCESSIVE NESTING BY A PAIR OF CRESTED PIGEONS IN FISHER

*George Davidson
117 Namatjira Drive, Fisher, ACT 2611*

Early in October 1996 a pair of Crested Pigeons *Ocyphaps lophotes* which were nesting in the vicinity of my garden in Fisher began to build a second nest. Although Crested Pigeons are becoming increasingly widespread in Canberra (Taylor and Canberra Ornithologists Group 1992) little has been documented on their breeding in the local area, particularly the rearing of successive broods. Therefore I began to keep a record of events following the start of the second nest. Although the birds were

not individually marked, there was no doubt in my mind that only one pair was involved.

Crested Pigeons are capable of breeding in all months and can rear more than one brood in the year; one pair observed by R.J. Martin at Gerogery, NSW, began six clutches between 11 August and 31 March (Frith 1982). They normally lay two eggs, which have an incubation period of 18 to 20 days, and four chicks in captivity (when disturbance was kept to a minimum) left the

nest between 16 and 25 days after hatching (Frith 1982).

The following observations largely agree with those published by Frith:

1 October. Started second nest 5 m from the ground in a melaleuca 40 m from the first nest which still contained chicks. Most activity was in the early morning. One bird collected material, mainly from under melaleucas, while the other (presumably the female. *see* Crested Pigeon in Higgins and Davies (1996)) built the nest.

4 October. The two chicks that formed the first brood left the nest and during the next three days the adult birds recycled parts of the old nest to the new one. The chicks tended to stay on the ground during the day, feeding and basking in the sun, and roosted low down in a tree during the night. The adults again mated.

6 October. Eggs laid in the new nest. Whilst one adult stayed on the nest the other fed and tended the chicks from the first brood. From the time the eggs were laid, the nest was never left unattended, when one bird came off the other went on.

16 October. From this day the chicks were on their own. During the previous 10 days they increasingly foraged for themselves, flying more strongly each day and roosting higher up the tree. They still foraged on the ground in preference to using the bird feeder.

1 November. The bird on the new nest seems to be sitting higher which suggests that the chicks have hatched. The chicks from the first brood still stay in the garden, and now go to the feeder although they still like to forage on the lawns and vegetable patch. I do not where they are now roosting.

5 November. The adults tried to chase the chicks from the first brood away, but not very effectively. These two chicks feed

and preen together, and also rest together on the electricity wires.

8 November. There are two chicks in the second brood. This is the first time they have been obvious. They are still being brooded continuously.

12 November. The chicks are no longer being continuously brooded, They are now well-feathered, with crests apparent.

14 November. The chicks have moved out of the nest and are perching on nearby branches.

15 November. The chicks are now roosting away from the nest.

16 November. I have not seen a pigeon all day and they appear to have left the area.

17 November. Occasionally I see one of the adults, or one or both the chicks from the first brood. I have not seen any of the chicks from the second brood since 15 November.

I thought this was the end of the story, but on the weekend of 1 December two eggs were laid in the second nest which had been refurbished. Unlike the second nesting, when the eggs were laid in a new nest while chicks were still present in the first, the pair had a two week break before the eggs were laid. The same process then followed with absolute attention to protecting the eggs and the resulting chicks. Some of the young from the previous nestings appeared from time to time, but their visits became less frequent as time passed. It was noted that after hatching both parents shared the brooding of the chicks while they were in the nest. Only in the last days when the chicks were ready to leave the nest did the attending parent stand aside, but always within about 30 cm. The chicks left the nest on 9 January.

With all three nestings the adult birds were never seen to feed the chicks which suggests that such feeding may be infrequent.

However, they were seen to be fed on the ground after leaving the nest.

In mid-May Crested Pigeons were still in the garden with a maximum of five being seen at the one time.

My thanks to Steve Wilson for prompting me to collect these data and for the help which he gave in preparing the article.

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George Davidson is a retired senior Australian Federal Police officer. He is a keen gardener and his interest in birds is largely confined to observing those which visit his garden.

FOUR YEARS OF BIRDING IN CANBERRA

Kenneth B.H. Er

65 Mimosa Crescent, #08-43 Mimosa Park, Singapore 808036

In March 1992 I left Singapore to begin a degree course in forestry at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra. I remember very clearly that the first bird I saw upon touching down at Sydney was the Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*. While this bird was undoubtedly as foreign as I was to the Australian environment, it nevertheless provided a true relief to my eye, for it was something familiar. A complete contrast was to greet me at Canberra on my arrival from Sydney. As I walked out of the Jolimont Centre sounds of incessant chattering from a tree across the street attracted my attention. Struggling with my 20 kg suitcase and a 15 kg backpack, I searched for the birds. Up in the tree were two pairs of Crimson Rosellas *Platycercus elegans* having a good time with the fruits on the Plane Tree *Platanus orientalis*. The brilliant red and blue of the birds struck me

in awe as I studied them for what must have been five minutes. I only stopped when I suddenly realised I was being stared at by half a dozen pairs of eyes. They must have thought I was crazy, but unknown to them, that spelt the beginning of a four year romance with the birds of Canberra.

My first year in Canberra saw me wandering around the ANU campus, the Australian National Botanic Gardens and Lake Burley Griffin in search of birds. The rustling of Yellow-rumped Thornbills *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa* and Buff-rumped Thornbills *A reguloides* were sweet melodies to my ears; the elusive White-browed Scrubwrens *Sericornis frontalis* darting in and out of the grevillea bushes on campus and in the botanic gardens were always a welcoming sight; not to forget the screeching of flocks of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos *Cacatua*

galerita in the early mornings outside of Burton and Garran Hall where I resided.

In my first autumn and winter I stood in awe of hundreds of honeyeaters in transit from the mountains; sighted my first flock of Australian King-Parrots *Alisterus scapularis* near The Gods coffee lounge; and caught a glimpse of a Gang-gang Cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum* near the Zoology Department. To me they were amazing sights and only then did I begin to realise the influence that altitude had on the avifauna in Canberra. The arrival of spring was signalled by the sudden increase of bird activity outside my window. As I studied for my exams I would observe with great interest the fight between a pair of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and a pair of Crimson Rosellas for rights to a hollow in the Southern Blue Gum *Eucalyptus globulus* subsp. *bicostata* near the window. The cockatoos eventually emerged the winners and nested there in spring. Superb Fairy-wrens *Malurus cyaneus*, Crimson Rosellas and Eastern Rosellas *P. eximius*, and even the occasional flock of Red-browed Finches *Neochmia temporalis* foraged incessantly outside my window. There was a particular Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys* which called all night because it nested near a street light. I will never forget its melodious tune as it accompanied me through the night while I studied.

The increased bird activity in spring prompted me to erect a bird feeder outside the window. This required some ingenuity, but was achieved with the help of a close friend. The feeder brought forth some interesting observations in the years to come. Of the many observations, two were strongly impinged in my memory. One afternoon I had just put some sunflower seeds on the feeder and immediately a young Crimson Rosella flew onto the feeder to feed. Less than a minute had passed before

it was chased off the feeder by a pair of Rock Doves *Columba livia*. With a swipe of my hand I chased off the doves and almost instantly the young rosella returned. The doves again attempted to assault the feeder and as they approached I again swiped at them with my hand. The rosella remained where it was while the doves stayed at bay. I was intrigued how the rosella knew it was welcome and that the swipe of the hand was meant to chase the doves off the feeder. The ability of Crimson Rosellas to recognise their benefactors was reinforced by the following incident. Once, while I was studying the rosellas feeding on the feeder, my partner opened the door and came into the room. Obviously used to her presence in the room, they continued feeding. A short while later, when another friend entered the room, they became unsettled and immediately flew off.

In the second year of my stay in Canberra I was fortunate to make the acquaintance of several people who enhanced my interest in the study of birds. Chris Tidemann, a lecturer in wildlife survey at the Forestry Department, introduced me to various techniques of counting birds. On one of the many field outings I spent an afternoon estimating Crimson Rosella numbers at Campbell Park with the use of the transect technique (2.19 ± 1.74 rosellas/ha). This, coupled with many outings later, including one to Tarlo River National Park, convinced me of my interest in the study of birds. In the months to come. Chris became a supervisor, colleague and friend as I undertook a study of the effects of fragmentation on bird species diversity in the Yellow Box *E. melliodora* — Blakely's Red Gum *E. blakelyi* woodland remnants. At the same time I came to know Stuart Pell who was then undertaking a graduate diploma with Chris. It was Stuart who introduced me to the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) and

encouraged me to write a paper for *Canberra Bird Notes* about my observations of the reduced number of rosellas at Stirling Park in the summer of 1993-94 (Er 1994). The publication of this paper resulted in my acquaintance with David Purchase, Chris Davey and David McDonald. They were to become constant partners in the discussion of my research work.

My third and fourth years in Canberra proved to be busy ones. They were also the most interesting because by then I was working intimately with birds in the field as part of my research project¹. Twenty-eight fixed-width transects were set up in ten woodland sites evenly distributed throughout the lowland of the ACT. I spent an average of three mornings a week in the field sampling birds at these sites. There were many memorable moments and definitely many more funny incidents. Some of the more memorable moments must include the time when I sighted a pair of Diamond Firetails *Stagonopleura guttata* at 'Callum Brae' (Er and Wong 1994); a pair of Crested Shriketits *Falcunculus frontatus* at Mount Ainslie; a Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii* at Stirling Park; a Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax* picking up a lamb at Kowen. There was also the time when I was trying to make my way to one of my transects at Bulgar Creek. Owing to the thick winter morning fog I must have wandered into the wrong paddock for right in front of me stood a raging bull. Looking back on the incident. I doubt if I had ever run so fast in my life! As some of my transects were found in horse paddocks, there were several times when I was stopped mid-way through the conduct of my counts because I was being sniffed all over by

¹ Some of the work from this project has since been published or is being published (see Er, Robinson and Tidemann, C.R. (1995); Er 1995b, 1996; Er and Tidemann 1996).

horses. Going back to do those counts was always a hassle, especially if the horses were still there. I guess if it was some adventures I wanted. I got my fair share of them.

Despite my busy schedule I managed to lead a trip for members of COG to Stirling Park. Before we started I promised Gang-gang Cockatoos, a nesting pair of Red-rumped Parrots *Psephotus haematonotus*, Striated Pardalotes *Pardalotus striatus*, Dollarbirds *Eurystomus orientalis* and the commoner woodland species such as the Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*, Silveryeye *Zosterops lateralis*, Grey Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa*. The latter is more a bird of wet sclerophyll forest and is seldom found in a woodland habitat. This trip, I was later told, was a first to be led by a leader who had taken the trouble to get to the site by bus and then on foot. Looking back, I don't think that was the troublesome part of it. Rather, catching the bus meant I had to get out of bed much earlier — now that was a problem!

My busy schedule did not stop me from continuing with my favourite pastime — observing birds on the ANU campus. From March 1993 through to April 1995 I had been observing the behaviour of the Magpie-larks *Grallina cyanoleuca* on the campus. This culminated in a paper which was published in *Canberra Bird Notes* (Er, Wong and Chee 1995). It was this paper, coupled with the publication of my review of the effects of nest harvesting on the Edible Birds' Nest Swiftlets by the ANU's Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies (Er, Vardon, Tidemann, Tanton and Webb 1995) that allowed me to make the acquaintance of McComas Taylor. An effable person, he was instrumental in the speedy publication of the publication. This was to me a signal of the end of my time in Canberra. I was, however, determined to leave behind something for members of

COG. With the help of Chris Davey and David Purchase, I wrote a paper for *Canberra Bird Notes* describing various bird sampling methods which could be used by members of COG (Er 1995a). This is an important paper as I recognise the contribution made by COG to the conservation of birds in the ACT.

All in all, I had a great time in Canberra and hope to return one day. In the four years I was in Canberra I was fortunate to have colleagues, friends and family who shared my interests in the study of birds. They greatly helped me in my pursuit of answers to the complexities of avian dynamics in a woodland system. In particular there was Henry Nix, who, for a long time has been an avid supporter of COG; Anne Marie Wilson who is working on ironbark woodland; Gillian Slocum who completed a study on Common Mynas in Canberra; Frans Arentz and Lorraine Lamothe who took time to be with me and to support my endeavours; Chris Tidemann who provided the direction and friendship; Stuart Pell for giving me the impetus to work on birds; Robert and Norma Eastment who provided the companionship; David Purchase, Chris Davey and other members of COG who provided the audience; and last, but not least, Thiang Ham who has been a constant source of encouragement and support.

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Kenneth Er graduated from the Australian National University with a B.Sc. (Forestry) (Honours) in 1996 and was also awarded the Schlich Memorial Trust Prize and the University Medal in Forestry. He is now a Park Manager with the National Parks Board of Singapore and continues to be involved in ornithology.

**COURTSHIP DISPLAY IN THE
DOUBLE-BARRED FINCH**

On the morning of 27 November 1996, in a copse near the hides at Jerrabomberra Wetlands, a small bird flying by appeared to have something long and thin dangling behind it. It seemed as if it was caught up in something like string. I followed the bird in the forlorn hope that I might do my good deed for the day by untangling the bird from this encumbrance. Fortunately the bird soon settled on a branch close by and in full view. It proved to be a Double-barred Finch *Taeniopygia bichenovii* and the 'string' was a yellow straw at least 30 cm long. The straw was held upside-down in the bill, at the very bottom of the stalk so that it hung vertically, with the few seed husks left on the stalk dangling below. A bit long for nest building, I thought, but it will easily be broken into suitable lengths. However, it turned out to have a very different purpose. The bird sat briefly on the branch then, still clutching its token, started to jump up and down, both feet together and scarcely leaving the branch, with the husks of the grass all aquiver about 30 cm below. After at least a dozen jumps it dropped the grass. A second Double-barred Finch appeared from nowhere and the birds copulated immediately.

In the introductory chapter to his book, Immelmann (1967, *Australian Finches in Bush and Aviary* (revised edition) Angus & Robertson: Sydney) says that the courtship behaviour of Australian grass-finches shows great interspecific differences but the basic movement of the male's dance is a vertical and almost stationary up-and-down bob, achieved by alternate stretching and bending of the legs. In several species the bird's feet actually leave the branch as it jumps up and

down. Immelmann goes on to say that in some species the male holds a piece of grass during courtship. However, in the chapter on the Double-barred Finch, Immelmann says that courtship behaviour is inconspicuous and subdued and 'There is no actual courtship dance and no nesting symbol is used'.

More recently other authors have also said that dancing and nesting symbols are not used in the courtship display of the Double-barred Finch. Schodde and Tidemann (1986, *Reader's Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds* (second edition) Reader's Digest: Sydney) say 'Courtship is inconspicuous and subdued with no dancing nor stem-holding by the male', and Rowland (1996, *Finches, Bowerbirds and other Passerines of Australia* (editor R. Strahan) National Photographic Index of Australian Wildlife and Angus & Robertson: Sydney) repeats what Immelmann said: 'There is no actual courtship dance and no nesting symbol is used'.

My observation indicates that courtship dancing and the use of a nesting symbol is practised by at least some Double-barred Finches.

*Phyl Goddard, 25 Southwell Street,
Weetangera, ACT 2614*

**A SUBURBAN KILL BY A
PEREGRINE FALCON**

At about 11.00 a.m. on 18 February 1997 I was driving beside the Reid Oval, near the junction of Elimatta and Euree Streets, when I noticed a bird with a fresh 'kill' on the ground, about 5 m from the road. It was under the trees which surround the oval. I

was able to get within 10 m of the bird, in the car, without disturbing it. It was a Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* which, judging by its size, was a female. It was very busy plucking a Galah *Cacatua roseicapilla* which I presumed it had killed.

After watching it for about 5 minutes I went home and brought my teenage daughter back for a rare opportunity to see a Peregrine Falcon at such close quarters. By this time an Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides* was walking around the falcon, in a circle, but not approaching closer than 3 m. The falcon would not give up its prey. Occasionally it would turn its head to fix us in an imperious stare, while standing high over the dead galah. We left quietly to allow it to feed.

At 12.30 p.m. I returned and found that a golfer had parked his car close to the kill and, as the falcon was not visible, I got out of my car to check the carcass. The falcon had been in the trees above me and flew off calling, then circled back and perched high on a dead Atlas Cedar *Cedrus atlantica* street tree to watch me. I quickly examined the remains of the galah. The head and one leg were missing, and a wing was detached. The flight muscles of the breast had been eaten, the sternum was missing and the entire body cavity was empty. I have no way of knowing if the raven had participated in the feast, but from the way the carcass had been torn open and the major organs and muscles cleaned out, and from its continued presence, the falcon had made the most of its kill. This had occurred in less than 1 1/2 hours and, judging by its continued observation of the carcass from the trees, it was still interested in its prey.

*Denis Wilson, 39 Anzac Park,
Reid, ACT 2601*

MAGPIE VS. HOBBY

Our house faces a reserve in which about 60 eucalypts were planted in the early 1970s and many now exceed 25 m. The reserve forms the greater part of a territory of a pair of Australian Magpies *Gymnorhina tibicen*.

At about 11 a.m. on 17 March 1997 I was at the front of our house and my attention was drawn to the aggressive calling of the magpies and the alarm call of an Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis*. As I caught sight of the trio the male magpie struck the hobby on the back with its claws and locked on so that the pair flew in this manner for about 10 m. before the hobby was able to escape and disappear through the nearby trees. From the quick glimpse I got, I had the impression that the hobby was an adult male as the magpie was by far the larger and heavier bird.

*Steve Wilson, 56 Harrington Circuit,
Kambah, ACT 2902*

SOAKING AND HIDING OF FOOD BY AUSTRALIAN RAVENS

Like other members of the crow family, the Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides* is omnivorous and versatile in its methods of obtaining food. This has enabled it to take advantage of opportunities presented in urban environments. Canberra is no exception and the Australian Raven is becoming increasingly common within the urban area. This is reflected in the 'A' statistic (the average number of individuals recorded at a site for each week over the full year) reported from sites in the Garden Bird Survey: in 1984-85 (the first year for which this figure is available) it was 0.699, and in 1991-92 (the last year for which this figure has been published) it was 1.0598.

We moved into our house in April 1973 when the area was largely grassland with few trees. Australian Ravens were frequently seen or heard, usually flying overhead or scavenging in the rubbish tins by the nearby primary school. Since then the area has become well vegetated and contains many trees and other plants. In October 1990 our garden began to be frequented by two ravens, an adult (with white eyes) and an immature (with brown eyes). Soon after they arrived, the eye colour of the immature bird changed from brown to white. The ravens are now seen in and around our garden on most days. In 1991 the pair successfully bred in a Blue Gum *Eucalyptus globulus* in a garden at the end of the cul-de-sac, and have nested there ever since. Neither of them is marked but, from their behaviour, we feel fairly confident that the same birds have been present since 1990.

On 30 July 1992 one of the ravens was seen placing half a slice of bread in the bird bath in our front garden. It was joined shortly afterwards by its mate and they both flew off leaving the bread in the water. This was the first time we saw ravens bringing food to the bird bath, but it then became a regular occurrence — particularly during the breeding season when the bird bath was rarely without food items. Sometimes they would start to eat the food as soon as they had deposited it in the water. However, on most occasions they would place the food in the water and fly off, leaving it to soak and return later to eat some, or all of it.

As well as houses, there is one secondary college and two primary schools within

0.5 km of our garden. All provide good pickings for the ravens. This is reflected in the variety of food items brought into the bird bath. These include pieces of cooked and uncooked meat and bones, bread and bread rolls, sandwiches, pizzas, meat pies, cakes, biscuits, potato and corn crisps, and dog biscuits. In addition to these 'processed' food items there have been the remains of House Sparrows *Passer domesticus*, Common Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris*, Common Blackbirds *Turdus merula*, Red Wattlebirds *Anthochaera carunculata*, Budgerigars *Melopsittacus undulatus*, a Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca*, a Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes*, a Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans*, a Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*, and a lovebird *Agapornis* spp. Mammals have been represented by House Mice *Mus musculus* and a Black Rat *Rattus rattus*. It is not known how the birds and mammals were acquired.

In addition to soaking food items the ravens will also secrete food under bark and other mulch lying on the ground in and around the garden. Occasionally they have been seen to recover this food some time later.

Both the soaking and storage of food is well known in corvids, including Australian Ravens (Goodwin 1977, *Crows of the World* University of Queensland Press: Brisbane). A number of explanations have been offered for this behaviour, but none seem entirely satisfactory.

*David and Shirley Purchase,
5 Orchard Place, Melba ACT 2615*

In my opinion.....

(This is the second 'In my opinion', the first was by Michael Lenz who discussed the role of the amateur bird watcher in Australia (Lenz 1991). In his article Michael discussed the contribution which individuals can make to Australian ornithology.' In this article Steve Wilson discusses the contribution which a local group can make. We urge members to read both articles. Steve has lived in Canberra since 1959. He has been a member of COG since its inception in 1971 and was one of the people who, in 1964, was responsible for the formation of the ACT Branch of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union which preceded COG. He has served on the committees of both groups in a variety of capacities including eight years as Editor of Canberra Bird Notes. He was made a Life Member of COG in 1981. As Steve says 'I know I have the reputation of voicing opinions regarding the workings of COG at meetings and to office bearers, so it appears to be a good idea to record a few ideas in Canberra Bird Notes.')

THE ROLE OF CANBERRA ORNITHOLOGISTS GROUP

S. Wilson

56 Harrington Circuit, Kambah ACT 2902

The President's Report for 1996 which was distributed at the Annual General Meeting on 14 May 1997 (see pages 43-47 in this issue of *Canberra Bird Notes*) has prompted me to put on record my views as to what I see as the role of Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) and whether it is performing this role.

The role of COG is defined by Rule 2 (objects and purposes) of its constitution:

- to encourage interest in, and develop knowledge of, the birds of the Canberra region;
- to promote and co-ordinate the study of birds; and
- to promote the conservation of native birds and their habitat.

In my opinion COG should be performing better in this role. I believe it would help if more members with ornithological or executive experience offered to serve on the committee.

I have two main concerns:

1. We should be doing more to promote and co-ordinate the study of birds in our area as our knowledge of their changing status is declining; and
2. We should put more effort into promoting the conservation of our local birds.

Annual Bird Reports

The Annual Bird Reports reflect the status of birds within our area of interest at that time. As a resident of Canberra since 1959 I am aware of the increase in numbers of a few obvious species but there has been a subtle decline in numbers of most species of the open dry forests. It is imperative we publish reliable information relating to the abundance of local species on an annual basis so that we can provide strong evidence to the appropriate authorities to support the implementation of conservation measures.

At present the Annual Bird Reports are several years behind. The last one published was for the period 1 July 1991 to 30 June 1992. I know that because of this delay observers are not submitting observations to COG because they no longer have the stimulus of seeing their observations published a short time later. The result is that when the overdue reports are finally published they will provide an inadequate reflection of the status of the birds of our area. This state of affairs will continue until once more we see Annual Bird Reports being published within six or seven months of the end of the reporting period. In my opinion, this is the most urgent matter currently facing the committee.

Canberra Bird Notes

Canberra Bird Notes publishes a wide variety of articles, but its most important role is the publication of articles which contain information on the status of birds of the local area. In this way it provides an historical record of changes in the local bird population in more detail than can be provided by the Annual Bird Reports. I believe it was a retrograde step for the committee to cut out an issue of *Canberra Bird Notes*.

Long-term changes in the local bird population may be of little interest to 'recreational' birders, but these changes, and the papers which document them, are of great importance to anyone involved with the conservation of local birds. For example, Stephen Marchant (1973) wrote a paper detailing the results of a study he undertook from October 1964 to December 1968 of the birds in the area now occupied by Caswell Drive and the Glenloch Interchange. This paper provides information on the birds, including Hooded Robins *Melanodryas cucullata*, that bred in the area. Another example is the papers

which document the spread of the Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* in Canberra since its introduction in 1968 (these include Anon. 1969, Gregory-Smith 1985. and Davey 1991).

If *Canberra Bird Notes* did not exist, this and similar information would have been lost. My concern is that a reduction in the number of issues will result in fewer papers, especially 'Odd Obs', being published. This in turn will result in a reduction in our knowledge of changes occurring in the local bird population. Unfortunately the full effect of this loss will not be apparent until some time in the future. It will then be too late to rectify it.

In the President's Report it was suggested that consideration may be given to *Canberra Bird Notes* being provided only to those who are willing to pay for it. This I also consider to be a retrograde step. Every effort needs to be made to encourage all members to read and contribute to *Canberra Bird Notes*, and thus increase our knowledge of local birds. This will not be achieved by restricting the distribution of *Canberra Bird Notes*. It should be remembered that it is by reading and by field work that 'recreational' birders become ornithologists.

List of birds of the ACT

One other thing that needs doing is to compile and publish a definitive list of the birds of the ACT. All recent publications have dealt with this in a confusing manner and it needs sorting out. I envisage a list which provides, for each species that has been recorded in the ACT, its current English name, scientific name, details of where and when it was first recorded, distribution and status in the ACT. This list will be a 'benchmark' on which to base future studies of the changing status of birds in the ACT.

Projects

The committee has access to a large and enthusiastic workforce with skills in bird recognition. The challenge facing the committee is to find ways of harnessing this resource and using it to increase our knowledge of the changing status of birds in COG's area of concern. The enthusiasm of this workforce was demonstrated during the three years of data gathering for the ACT Avifauna Database Project which was undertaken with funds provided by the National Capital Development Commission. This resulted in four interim reports that described the avifauna of the Molonglo River corridor, Gungahlin, the Paddys River Catchment, and raptor breeding habitats; and a final report which, together with some more fieldwork, brought together the major findings of the four reports. The data collected for these reports was then used to produce *Birds of the Australian Capital Territory — an Atlas* (Taylor and COG 1992). In his foreword, Sir Ninian Stephen said 'The Atlas is a fine example of how committed individuals, assisted by government funding, can work for the benefit of the community.'

The enthusiasm of members to become involved in projects was recently demonstrated by the large number of members who participated in the survey of migrating honeyeaters, and the continuing participation of members in the Garden Bird Survey, Waterbird Survey, and Mulligans Flat survey.

There is no doubt that large-scale projects such as the ACT Avifauna Database Project require funding if they are to be undertaken and the committee should continue to seek funding for large-scale projects, as indeed they are with considerable success. However, COG should also undertake small projects directed towards getting members to

gather information on particular species or areas. These projects should be designed so that as many members as possible can become involved. A lack of funding should not be used as an excuse not to undertake these projects.

Outings

A strong aspect of COG which reflects its large membership, is the many outings, all of which seem successful. Included in the program are guided tours to distant places. I'm not against this aspect of COG's activity as we should cater for all tastes. However, it would help to improve our knowledge of local birds if space could also be found in the program for visits to areas within COG's Area of Concern which are rarely visited. One only has to look at the large number of grid cells from which no data were collected in the last (1991-92) Annual Bird Report (Canberra Ornithologists Group 1996) to see which areas need to be visited and data collected.

Local conservation issues

I am concerned that COG is not maintaining a high public profile on local conservation issues. Two examples will suffice.

Last year the *Canberra Times* reported the illegal clearing and burning of several hectares of native forest near Murrumbateman in preparation for the planting of grape vines. This resulted in several letters to the Editor either supporting or opposing the clearing. This presented COG with an excellent opportunity to push the ornithological viewpoint regarding the destruction of a habitat used by a group of birds which is declining in numbers.

More recently the question of the supply of firewood for Canberra, which adds to the loss of huge areas of dry country forests

which are home to many species of birds which are declining in numbers, was raised on radio and a debate ensued. Again nothing was heard from COG despite the fact that this matter has been raised by the RAOU in relation to Canberra's wood supply on more than one occasion.

Wherever possible COG should seek to keep its name in front of the public and government by making informed and sensible comment regarding local environmental matters which involve birds.

Subcommittees

The system of subcommittees which was introduced in 1991 is in principle an excellent system as it spreads the workload and can make use of the expertise of members (or even non-members) which may otherwise be unused. Unfortunately the system no longer seems to be functioning in the way it was envisaged. The way I see it, the committee should have a purely executive function and concern itself with overseeing the direction and operations of COG. It should not be doing the work involved with the day to day running of the group — this should be left to subcommittees (or something similar) and appointed individuals. If such a system is to operate effectively the committee must ensure that those involved in the system are performing their roles — especially by providing them with policy guidance and encouragement. I acknowledge that this problem is now beginning to be tackled.

Thus in summary, in my opinion, the committee needs to take a hard look at what COG is achieving. It needs to utilise the workforce contained in the membership more effectively and to spread the

administrative workload by reinvigorating the subcommittee system. Every effort needs to be made to ensure that changes in the local bird population are documented. In particular the Annual Bird Reports must be brought up to date and the mechanism put in place to ensure they are once more published within six months or so of the end of the reporting period.

So go to it COG. The people are there and it is up to the committee to direct our activities so that we achieve the objects as defined in our constitution. I am a firm believer in COG and its place in the local scene.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT — 1996.

Dear Members.

I would like to report on another year of successful COG activities. COG membership remains steady at over 400, and up to 100 turn up to our monthly meetings. Our membership appears now to consist more of 'recreational' birders rather than 'ornithologists' than it did in times past. and that COG's activities are reflecting this. However, I am sure that many COG members would like to improve their knowledge and skills of birding through participating in more 'scientific' studies. The continuing interest in the Mulligans Flat survey is evidence of this.

The objects of COG, as described in the COG Constitution are: to encourage interest in, and develop knowledge of, the birds of the Canberra region; to promote and co-ordinate the study of birds; and to promote the conservation of native birds and their habitat. I will use these stated aims of COG as the main organising framework for this report, mainly to reflect on how well we, as a birding group, are achieving these aims, and, conversely, whether these aims reflect the expectations of members.

Encouraging an interest in birds ... COG Meetings

Barbara Allan and Harvey Perkins have very successfully organised the speakers for our monthly meetings at Forestry House in 1996. The short talk/ main talk format is working well, with informative and entertaining speakers. Geoff Dabb's dissertations on the not-quite Purple Swamphen and the elusive Painted Honeyeater spring to mind as excellent short talks. I thought the range of main talks last year was superb: the Henry Nix natural history epic over ten years in the north of

Australia; Robert Willson's talk about John Gould; the forum on RAOU Bird Sanctuaries with Peter Fullagar, Tony Howard, Isobel Crawford, Raoul Broughton and Christine McNamara; and of course, Dick Schodde's guided tour of his collection at Gungahlin at the Christmas Party. I believe the Forestry venue is congenial and convivial, and one which provides a good atmosphere for social interaction. While it is not the ideal shape for large audience viewing, we will continue to work on ensuring that everyone has a good view and can hear clearly.

I would also like to thank the COG members, such as Ann McKenzie and Carol Macleay spring to mind, who set up the COG Stall and run the raffle every month. I also want to thank particularly Barbara Allan who organises the tea, coffee and biscuits. and ensures the washing up is done. It is this unobtrusive practical help which makes the events run smoothly.

Encouraging an interest in birds ... *Gang-gang*

Harvey Perkins has produced a eleven interesting and informative issues this year. I am particularly impressed with the layout, and how Harvey includes those cute little bird illustrations in a low cost publication which keeps us all informed of COG activities. COG members who write up the field trip reports also deserve recognition. Thanks Harvey, and to Ann McKenzie and her team who dispatch *Gang-gang*.

Encouraging an interest in birds ... Field Trips

Jenny Bounds and John Avery have co-ordinated an extensive series of field trips

further afield. Every issue of *Gang-gang* has a number of pages with reports of successful field trips and notices for field trips in the future. The use of a minibus for tours has proved very successful, both for day and weekend trips, but also for longer excursions farther afield, such as for example, the Feast of Mallee Tour from 30 August — 10 September which covered the west of NSW and Victoria, and included visits to Hattah-Kulkine and Wyperfeld National Parks and Scotia Sanctuary.

While there has been popular support for these more extensive peregrinations, there has still been strong emphasis on local morning and day field trips in the COG area of interest, which are well supported by members. These include the Midweek Walk on every third Wednesday, and walks organised for special occasions. For example, during the ACT Heritage Festival in April, nine walks were led by COG members in the Australian National Botanic Gardens and in various sites in Canberra Nature Park. Many COG members, such as Bruce Lindenmayer, Malcolm Fyfe, Gwen Hartican and many others have long supported these COG activities in the COG area of interest. This high level of activity extends through 1997 where there are 18 field trips planned in the COG area of interest, and fifteen further afield to destinations like Cooper Creek or Lady Elliott Island. While many of these are purely excursions for interest and pleasure, others such as the regular survey of Mulligans Flat, or the Tumut Ecological Survey have a more serious purpose.

Encouraging an interest in birds ... Natural History Centre

Both Gwen Hartican and Wally Brown have given a lot of time and effort to support the operation of the Natural History Centre in the Griffin Centre in Civic, as have a lot of

other people whose volunteer services enable the shopfront to operate. The shop front serves many useful purposes for us, and is currently the most visible public access to COG. However, there are a number of issues which need to be looked at in relation to the continuation of this initiative. These include: the uncertain future for the Griffin Centre as a whole; the increase in rent and other operational expenses; the loss of the Government grant which applied in the early years of operation; the low number of customers, and the reduction in the number of volunteers. While the shopfront was reviewed formally at the end of its first year of operation, and has been reviewed informally by the Committee every year, it has been some time since we have stepped back and had a long hard look at its cost-effectiveness and value for money. This could be something for the Committee to consider in 1997-98.

To promote and co-ordinate the study of birds ... Surveys

COG conducts long term surveys of a significant kind. These include the Waterbird Survey (Michael Lenz and Malcolm Fyfe), the Garden Bird Survey (Philip Veerman), and the Mulligans Flat Survey (Jenny Bounds). As well, COG participates in surveys conducted by other organisations, such as the Regent Honeyeater Survey - Capertee Valley (Joan Price), the NSW Shorebird Survey (Paul Fennell), and the Tumut Ecological Survey (Bruce Lindenmayer).

To promote and co-ordinate the study of birds ... COG Database

COG is one of the few regional birding groups in Australia to have its bird sighting data on a database. Data collected in the COG area of interest is entered on the database, which is currently being

maintained by Andrew Newbery and the Computer Subcommittee. Recently the database was modified to enable data collected at a point, rather than in a grid square, to be entered. This is a significant improvement, and will enable data from the Mulligans Flat survey to be handled properly.

There are now about 400,000 bird sightings in the database. There is still a relatively steady stream of data sheets coming in from COG members, at a rate not dissimilar to that which is considered 'normal' when there are no large scale projects under way, such as the atlas of ACT birds. However, I believe we can do much better than this, because it is very important to document the abundance of birds in our region for environmental reasons. The Committee could consider approaches (apart from simple exhortation) to encourage members to do more serious birdwatching in our area of interest, and ensure that the data is entered on the database.

I am writing this report during the period of the annual migration of Yellow-faced, White-naped and other honeyeaters. COG is co-operating with the Murrumbidgee River Corridor Unit of ACT Parks and Conservation Branch, to monitor the 1997 honeyeater migration on 13, 20 and 27 April. There is a clause in the Murrumbidgee Corridor Management Plan indicating the need to survey the migration. Nikki Taws is co-ordinating the project, with support from the COG Committee. This is by way of a pilot project, replicating to a certain extent, the study done by Chris Davey in 1986. We hope this pilot project will lead to bigger and better things in terms of co-operation with ACT government agencies in monitoring birds in our area of interest.

To promote and co-ordinate the study of birds ... *Canberra Bird Notes* (CBN) and *Annual Bird Report* (ABR)

David Purchase and Grahame Clark continues to do a sterling job with CBN. The new two-column format on white paper is a significant step forward. Following consultation with David, the Committee decided that there would be two issues of CBN each year, with the ABR as a supplement. A major reason for this is the increasing costs of printing, something which is a worldwide problem for many journals. CBN is the journal of record for COG and as such plays an important part in documenting trends in bird populations in our area of interest. However, the question has been put to me whether all members wish to receive CBN, or whether it should be provided, at additional cost, only to those who indicate that they are willing to pay for it. This too is a question which could be taken up by the Committee in 1997-98.

The 1991-92 Annual Bird Report was published after a lapse of some years. The delay was caused by difficulties COG experienced in converting its data to a computer database. Nevertheless, the 1991-92 ABR is published. While there are many many people involved in compiling the ABR I want to put on record the significant input made by Malcolm Fyfe, in co-ordinating it, David Purchase for his editorial work, Philip Veerman and Chris Davey for sorting out the Garden Bird Survey, and Andrew Newbery for getting the COG database to do mystical things in churning out the required reports and numbers.

We are still working hard to get the three-year block from 1992-93 onwards completed as one project. The database is all but up to date, but the reports have to be written. I ask members to consider nominating themselves to be part of the

ABR authoring team. There is a lot of work to be done, and there are vacancies on the team.

To promote the conservation of native birds and their habitat—Endangered Species Nomination

A team of COG members, in close consultation with Dr David Shorthouse and Dr Jill Landsberg of the ACT Flora and Fauna Committee, nominated a group of birds to be declared endangered or vulnerable in the ACT. They are part of the Yellow Box / Red Box woodland community which is so much under threat. The birds nominated are Swift and Superb Parrots, Hooded Robin, Regent and Painted Honeyeaters, Brown Treecreeper and Jacky Winter. Each member of the team adopted one bird species, and drafted a scientifically based document for that species. The team of writers consisted of Mark Clayton, James Nicholls, Darren Evans, Warren Martin, David Landon, Jenny Bounds and myself. Anthony Overs edited each paper. Dr Landsberg congratulated COG on the quality of the submissions. To date the Swift and Superb Parrots, the Hooded Robin and Regent Honeyeater nominations have been accepted by the Flora and Fauna Committee, but they still await formal recognition by Government. I want to congratulate all members of the team for a job well done in a short period of time. These nominations will assist in establishing management plans for the threatened woodland and its fauna.

Other conservation initiatives

Conservation issues are now a significant part of the COG agenda. Until his recent resignation, Anthony Overs was the COG Conservation Officer. There has been considerable discussion in COG over recent years on a policy for duck hunting. Bruce

Lindenmayer pulled all the threads of the debate together in a discussion paper, and from that Anthony Overs distilled the short document which is the draft policy. Other members also represent COG in various conservation forums: Bruce Lindenmayer (Conservation Council), David Pfanner (Canberra Nature Park) and Maurice Sexton (Namadgi National Park).

Finance and Management

COG managed to turn a small profit in 1996, mainly due to various small fund generating activities, by Ann McKenzie and Carol Macleay, such as the sale of publications, T-shirts, cards and the like at the COG stall at meetings and in the shopfront. The COG bus trips also produce a small surplus. John Avery has done an excellent job in keeping track of COG finances, and thanks also to Noel Luff, for auditing the accounts on the one hand, and for processing membership applications. Special thanks are also due to Susan Newbery the COG Secretary for her efforts.

Looking to the future

The most important task for the COG Management Committee in the future is to ensure that the activities COG undertakes meets the needs and expectations of its members. It is important also to contain costs and keep membership fees at an acceptable level.

I believe our regular meetings, publications and field trip program are doing well in the first COG objective to encourage an interest in birds. However I hope to see more of our bird study activity applied more directly to preserving the environment, particularly our threatened Yellow Box woodlands. I believe that many members would appreciate being more involved in local scientific studies and

monitoring activities related to conserving the environment in the COG area of interest.

However to achieve this, COG administrative structure has to gear up to higher levels of activity and a greater degree of co-ordination than currently exists. The processes of goal setting, project planning, data gathering, data processing, data analysis, report writing and publication have to be more closely co-ordinated than at present, if COG is to sustain a higher level of project activity. While this is a challenge, it is clearly achievable. COG has done it before and will do so again. With this in mind I am proposing that the next COG

committee reorganise its subcommittee structure, and seek to recruit new members while retaining the services of those members whose work over the years has kept COG activities going.

I wish to thank all the members of the Management Committee for their good work and strong support for COG over the past year. In particular I wish to thank Jenny Bounds and John Avery for all the solid work they have put in to make COG such an active, successful and enjoyable organisation to be in.

Paul Fennell, May 1996

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.

It has often crossed my mind whether *Canberra Bird Notes* is read widely (or even at all) and whether the articles in it help with the study of birds. After all *Canberra Bird Notes* is published to assist with that study. However, from time to time I see articles from *Canberra Bird Notes* cited in other Australian publications and realise that long after we are dead and cremated the efforts of authors will still be appreciated and utilised. Recently one author went a step better by receiving a request for a reprint from the University of Naples. So remember, when you next write for *Canberra Bird Notes* you also may achieve international status!

Most environmentalists are becoming aware about the use and misuse of firewood for

home heating and the detrimental effect of uncontrolled harvesting of trees for this purpose. People are often unaware that more wood is harvested as firewood in Victoria than as woodchips, yet people who disapprove of woodchipping do so whilst sitting in front of a box wood fire. A Masters student at the University of Canberra, Allison Treweek, has been studying the firewood industry in Canberra. She has found that the majority of wood burnt in Canberra originates from western New South Wales, over 500 km away. The quantities of box wood required to satisfy our fires is affecting an area where there is little remaining original vegetation. The removal of what little remains is having a negative effect on the environment, causing erosion and the destruction of wildlife habitat. Out of a typical \$130 load of

firewood only \$2—\$10 would go to the land-owner. A working party has been formed by the ACT government to develop a code of practice. Is this an area where COG could make a submission?

Allison is optimistic and believes that when the consequences of burning box timber is explained to fire owners they become interested in the problem and possible solutions. If you want to learn more, give Allison a ring on 02 6289 9706 (bh). It is good to see students at university addressing the broader issues of conservation rather than concentrating on individual species.

On the issue of trees, did you know that our national planners have changed their name to *urban infrastructure units*? If you do not believe me, look at the ACT Strategic Plan *Canberra Future*. After all what self respecting bureaucrat would use one word when three will do?

In January a Common Tern was retrapped in Gippsland which was originally banded as a chick six months previously in Finland. This bird is now in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the holder of the worlds longest verified trip by a bird. There have been two previous recoveries in Australia of Common Terns banded in Europe, but this is the first to be trapped and released in good

condition. The distance between trapping and retrapping points in a straight line is 15,000 km, although via the Cape of Good Hope, the presumed way the bird would come, it is 26000 km. And how did we reward this audacious bird? By slapping a second metal band and two flags on its legs and releasing it to attempt to fly back carrying twice the weight. I am still puzzling why it was necessary to add a second band without removing the first one. Marking birds with a metal band can add to our knowledge and help with their conservation — but how does two metal bands help? Perhaps some intelligent person could explain this to me.

In case you might think from the previous item that research on wildlife including free living animals is totally uncontrolled you would be wrong. In the case of universities, CSIRO, schools and other institutions, the research is subject to a code of practice for The Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes. This code outlines the creation and use of Animal Ethics Committees (AECs) in institutions to review and approve any research. Membership of these AECs must include animal welfare organisation and independent members. Are these AECs an avenue for COG to use to investigate what research (and collecting) is being authorised in the Canberra district?

FOR SALE

BIRD SONGS OF CANBERRA

Price \$10

This cassette contains recordings of the songs and calls of 73 birds that are commonly heard in Canberra gardens and parks. The majority have been recorded in Canberra or the surrounding area. Seasonal variation in songs have been included where appropriate.

Available from the Natural History Centre, Room G5, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Civic, ACT, or at monthly meetings.

(Continued from inside front cover)

COMMUNICATIONS GROUP	David Landon (Co-ordinator)	6254 2334
Publications Production	Paul Fennell (Co-ordinator)	6254 1804
<i>Canberra Bird Notes</i>	David Purchase and Grahame Clark	6258 2252
<i>Gang-gang</i>	Harvey Perkins	6231 8209
Internet Home Page	Mick O'Shaunessy	6257 2282
Other publications	Paul Fennell	
Meetings (speakers)	Barbara Allan	6254 6520
Membership Administrative Support	Sue Newbery (Co-ordinator)	6254 0960
Membership list and renewals	Noel Luff	6288 3291
	Cedric Bear	6258 3169
Publication distribution	Ann McKenzie	6288 0167
Product sales and promotion	Carol Macleay	6286 2624
Public Presentation	David Landon (Co-ordinator)	6254 2334
Displays and events:	David Landon	
Exhibitions	David Landon	
Publicity and Advertising	Vacant	
Slide Library	Delia Johnson	6288 5177
Shopfront	Wally Brown	6281 5319
Library	Chris Curry	6253 2306
Hotline	Ian Fraser / Anthony Overs	6247 5530
Internet Home Page	<i>Vacant</i>	
CONSERVATION GROUP	Anthony Overs (Co-ordinator)	6257 2282
Conservation Council	Bruce Lindenmayer, Jenny Bounds,	6288 5957
Other Forums:		
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Canberra Nature Park Issues	David Pfanner	6247 7572
Barren Grounds	Tony Lawson	6288 9430
Environment Centre	David Pfanner	
Specific Issues	Anthony Overs	6257 2282
FIELD TRIPS GROUP	Jenny Bounds (Co-ordinator)	6288 7802
Local Field Trips:	Vacant	
Standard local walks	Vacant	
Mid-week walks	Malcolm Fyfe	6254 3310
Special public walks	Vacant	
Walks co-ordinated with		
COG surveys	Vacant	
Regional Field Trips / Campouts	John Avery and Jenny Bounds	6281 4631
COG Tours further afield	Jenny Bounds	6288 7802

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Canberra Bird Notes is published biannually by the Canberra Ornithologists Group. Contributions are welcome. These should fit into one of the following categories: major articles (up to about 5000 words); short notes and "Odd Obs" (up to about 400 words); reviews of books and articles (up to about 800 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, preferably on an IBM-formatted disk together with a hard copy, to the editors do David Purchase, 5 Orchard Place, Melba, ACT 2615 (Tel 258 2252).

CONTENTS

Canberra Bird Notes 22(2) September 1997

Articles

Crimson Rosellas and Common Starlings compete for control of a nest box. <i>John A. Gleeson</i>	29
Observations of successive nesting by a pair of Crested Pigeons in Fisher. <i>George Davidson</i>	30
Four Years of birding in Canberra. <i>Kenneth B.H. Er</i>	32

Odd Obs

Courtship display in the Double-barred Finch. <i>Phyl Goddard</i>	36
A suburban kill by a Peregrine Falcon. <i>Denis Wilson</i>	36
Magpie vs. hobby. <i>Steve Wilson</i>	37
Soaking and hiding of food by Australian Ravens. <i>David Purchase and Shirley Purchase</i>	37

In my opinion.....

The role of Canberra Ornithologists Group. <i>Steve Wilson</i>	39
--	----

President's Report - 1996	43
---------------------------	----

Out and About	47
---------------	----

(Printed August 1997)