



# Canberra bird notes

Volume 3 Number 8

October 1976

## EDITORIAL

The Bird Report for the year ended 30 June 1976 is published in this issue.

In regard to that year, seven members who are given special mention in the report provided regular records from surveys carried out in various places in the A.C.T. A further thirty-nine members provided information on sightings in the Observations Book. Excellent!

The Editorial Committee values all this information most highly; naturally more and more information is always sought but nevertheless the whole of the Bird Report is based thereon; it is only by such notes and especially those relating to regular observations that the ever-changing picture of the avifauna of the A.C.T. can be recorded. Please keep up the good work.

All information submitted is permanently recorded on the C.O.G. card index system and all lists are retained. In the past full details of the various surveys have been published individually. This time greater detail has been extracted for the Bird Report and publication of the individual surveys will depend on the availability of space in Canberra Bird Notes.

This is not to undervalue these reports in any way. C.O.G. cannot function adequately without regular reports of our local birds from the greatest possible number of our members.

BIRD REPORT, 1 JULY 1975 TO 30 JUNE 1976

*Grahame Clark*

Note: For convenience, scientific names are given in the list only.

This report is based on sightings recorded in the observations book and also on regular observations by various people in a fixed area, which may range from the east end of the Lake through a back garden to a regular lunchtime walk.

The large numbers of the White-necked Heron and the Nankeen Night-heron disappeared from the Canberra area during the first half of the year, as was to be expected. What was more interesting was the variation in numbers of other water birds such as the various cormorants and water hens (Coot, Moorhen and Eastern Swamphen). These changes were more puzzling, as was the virtual disappearance from the local scene during the year of all the ibis and egret species, although these latter are now returning.

With the passerines it is harder to be definite about fluctuations in numbers for two reasons: they are not as obliging about being counted as the larger birds, and there is not so much past history with which to compare this year's results to show changes in status. The lesser numbers of the White-naped Honeyeater migrating this year may be based on subjective judgment but all three observers involved are experienced with this species. The Rose Robin appears to be increasing in numbers and even overwintering, and two species from the Brindabella Ranges, the Olive Whistler and the Australian Ground Thrush, also seem to be regularly appearing during winter in the Botanic Gardens. Perhaps they will also be recorded elsewhere in Canberra.

This report does give a few leads into what to be on the lookout for during the coming period and what to record. In particular please note all sightings of the Indian Myna, Little Eagle and Whistling Eagle, Hooded Robin and Little Thornbill. See the particular species notes for the reasons why these records are required.

There are a few sightings included from the South Coast area in this report. The reason for this is that the area between Durras Lakes and Merimbula is almost an extension of Canberra (especially during the holiday season).

Therefore these notes are intended to help people holidaying there.

There is also an appendix listing articles which appeared in journals other than Canberra Bird Notes during the period and which have comments about the status of birds in our area or nearby.

Finally thanks are due to all the contributors who are listed at the end of the article, but particularly to those who regularly recorded in one area, viz. J. McNaughton (east end of the Lake), M. Basten (Campbell area), C. and R. Allen (Red Hill), S. Webb (Weetangera), K. Anway (Aranda), D. Johnson (Deakin/Hughes), A. Stokes (New Chums Road, Brindabellas). Without their help such a report would be impossible to compile.

Any further records to be added to those listed should be entered in the observations book or posted to Records, C.O.G., P.O. Box 301, Civic Square, A.C.T. 2608.

#### SYSTEMATIC LIST

This list should be read in conjunction with the second edition of *A Field List of the Birds of Canberra and District* and also *Birds of the Australian High Country*. For that reason the English and scientific names and the taxonomic order in those publications is adhered to here for ease of comparison.

A species is included in the following list if during the period 1 July 1975 to 30 June 1976 one or more of the following conditions applied:

- (a) it is represented in the Field List by a dotted line for part of the year at least and it was recorded during that non-continuous period;
- (b) it has changed in status in our district;
- (c) it has been recorded in unusual circumstances (numbers and/or locality); or
- (d) it has been recorded breeding outside its accepted breeding parameters in the above reference.

[*Example*: 4/24 Aug means that 4 birds were recorded on 24 August 1975.]

HOARY-HEADED GREBE *Podiceps poliocephalus* Reports of small numbers from the east end of Lake Burley Griffin - 4/24 Aug, 2/5 Sep, 14/9 Sep (SW), then no more until several

birds (max. 13) were seen between 4 Jan and 8 Feb (JMN,  
SW).

Again seen on 12 Jun (BOC). One at Campbell during Nov (MB).

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus* Only report on Lake Hurley Griffin was 4/16 May (AR) - see CBN vol. 3 no. 7, p. 13.

PELICAN *Pelicanus conspicillatus* Still very uncommon at the east end of the Lake. Records of ten birds overflying on 11 Jan (JMN), two birds on 18 and 19 Get (JMN, JM) and single birds on 21 Sep, 26 Oct, 2 Nov, 21 Dec, 28 Mar (JMN). Also seen on 12 Jun (BOC).

DARTER *Anhinga rufa* Present throughout year at east end of Lake with nesting recorded during December and again in March and April (JMN). Max. numbers recorded up to ten (JMN, SW).

PIED CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax varius* Only record during year was of a single bird at Sullivan's Creek 10 Aug (GC).

LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* Present at east end of Lake Burley Griffin throughout the year in unusually large numbers (max. 60), almost as common as Large Black Cormorant and far more common than the Little Pied Cormorant (JMN).

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos* Very few birds present at east end of Lake. Only single or two birds until 19 Oct then none at all until 29 Feb. After this, present in small numbers (max. 11) (JMN) .

LESSER FRIGATEBIRD *Fregata ariel* One bird seen at Merimbula 1 Feb (AL) was of this species.

WHITE-NECKED HERON *Ardea pacifica* The large numbers of this bird recorded throughout the area during the period of the last bird report disappeared during the first half of the period under review. The bird near Canberra Airport remained until 27 Jul (MF, JL). Other birds were seen throughout August and September as follows: 1 near Hall 2 Aug (NH), 1 east end of Lake 10 Aug (JMN), 4 Weston Park 24 Aug (GC), 1 Ballalaba Bridge 7 Sep (BB), 1 Curtin 20 Sep (TG). There were no records in October, then in November there were reports of 30 birds at Lake George 2 Nov (FL,

JL), also single birds at Captains Flat 2 Nov (GC) and east end of Lake 2 Nov and 9 Nov (JMN). Again no records in December with a sighting of a single bird at Lake George 25 Jan (SW). Since then there have been no further records.

WHITE-FACED HERON *Ardea novaehollandiae* Two examples of winter flocking by this species were recorded. A flock of 20+ birds was recorded at Ginninderra Experimental Station throughout August and September (GH). Also a flock of 50+ was seen at Lake George 7 Aug (AL).

WHITE EGRET *Egretta alba* Only records at east end of Lake since end of September were a single bird on 4 Jan and two birds 4 Apr (JMN)

PLUMED EGRET *Egretta intermedia* A single bird at east end of Lake 9 Nov (JMN).

CATTLE EGRET *Ardeola ibis* Records from east end of Lake are 2/10 Aug, 4 (breeding plumage)/2 Nov, 1/7 Dec, then 3 to 6 birds present from 28 Mar to 28 Apr (JMN, BB, AR).

NANKEEN NIGHT HERON *Nycticorax caledonicus* This species varied in numbers in the same manner as the White-necked Heron. Following the increase in numbers during the previous period they were numerous at east end of Lake until beginning of November (max. 23) (JMN, AL, IMR, AR). Following that the only records (again at east end of Lake) were 1/7 Dec, 1/11 Jan, 3/29 Feb, 1/4 Apr (JMN).

STRAW-NECKED IBIS *Threskiornis spinicollis* Present at the east end of the Lake until 28 Sep (max. 60). Since that time the only record there was 10/21 Dec (JMN). Similarly at Gungahlin numbers decreased during the above period, although birds have now started to return (GVT).

WHITE IBIS *Threskiornis molucca* Similar fluctuations in numbers to previous species. Present at the east end of the Lake in reasonable numbers (max. 40) until 28 Sep. Then only record was 3/9 Nov until recently when small numbers have returned from end of April (JMN). Records away from that area were on Molonglo Stud (Captains Flat Road) 4/2 Nov (NC) and 1 near Campbell during Dec (MB).

ROYAL SPOONBILL *Platalea regia* Only record) was a flock of 50+ at Lake George 2 Nov (FL).

YELLOW SPOONBILL *Platalea flavipes* Like the two ibis, somewhat reduced in numbers. Only records at east end of

Lake were 4/21 Oct (SJW) and 1/25 Apr (JMN). Also single bird at Lake George 2 Nov (JL).

SHOVELER *Anas rhynchos* Fairly numerous (max. 36) at the east end of the Lake until beginning Oct then in small numbers throughout rest of period (JMN).

PINK-EARED DUCK *Malacorhynchus membranaceus* The following records were made at the east end of the Lake: 4/15 Jun, 2/22 Jun, 4/29 Jun, 3/6 Jul, 2/7 Sep, 6/10 Sep, 2/19 Oct (JMN, MCK).

MUSK DUCK *Biziura lobata* Numbers of this species on Lake Burley Griffin seem to be increasing - see CBN vol. 3 no. 4, pp. 10-12.

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE *Elanus notatus* A late breeding record for this species were the two adults and three young seen on Southern Cross Drive 6 Apr (AS).

FORK-TAILED KITE *Milvus migrans* A single bird of this species was seen at Charleyong (near Bungendore) 31 Aug (PW, GO).

WHISTLING EAGLE *Haliaeetus sphenurus* This species now appears to be less numerous around Canberra than in earlier years. The only records were at the east end of the Lake 1/31 Aug (JMN), 1/14 Sep (SW), 1/4 Apr (JMN). Please note any observations of this species in the observations book.

BROWN GOSHAWK *Accipiter fasciatus* A breeding record near Campbell was towards the end of the accepted breeding period - fledging presumed in January (MB) - see CBN vol. 3 no. 7, p. 23.

LITTLE EAGLE *Hieraaetus morphnoides* This species is supposed to be less common than the Whistling Eagle according to the Field List, yet judging from recorded observations the reverse is the case. Is this due to a biased sample or is the Whistling Eagle really becoming less common? Birds were recorded at the east end of the Lake on 6 Jul, 10 Aug, 24 Aug, 19 Oct (eating dead fish) and 21 Oct (with dead swamphen (?) in talons) (JMN, JL). Also seen at Hindmarsh Drive 12 Aug (SW).

WHITE-BREASTED SEA-EAGLE *Haliaeetus leucogaster* One adult recorded at the east end of the Lake 9 Aug (AR) . Also at



Lake George 26 Jan (FL).

SWAMP HARRIER *Circus approximans* Regularly recorded from  
east end of lake (JMN, JL, BB)

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus* Reported from the Moruya and Guerilla Bay areas during the period from Sep to Jan (GC, JL).

BLACK FALCON *Falco subniger* One female harrying ibis at Gungahlin 11 Aug (TH).

BOOBOOK OWL *Ninox novaeseelandiae* Heard calling in Deakin from end of August to middle of October (DJ). Present at Campbell most months of year from August to May (MB).

BARN OWL *Tyto alba* Several records during the year. At the east end of the Lake 1/9 Jul (MCK), 1/31 Aug, 1/2 Nov, 1/18 Jan (JMN). The last three records were road casualties. Also recorded at Kambah 7 Jul (TG), and dead on road 16 km south of Yass 21 Aug.

DUSKY MOORHEN *Gallinula tenebrosa* Regular observations at the east end of the Lake. Numbers fell during November from around 150 to about 50 for the rest of the year (JMN).

EASTERN SWAMPHEN *Porphyrio melanotus* As with the previous species the numbers fell during November from about 100 to about 20 although numbers increased slightly again in April (JMN).

COOT *Fulica atra* Unlike the previous two species Coot numbers (average 200 to 300) stayed fairly constant until the end of Feb when they all but disappeared from the east end of the Lake.

SOOTY OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus fuliginosus* One pair near Guerilla Bay 3 Jul (JL).

BANDED PLOVER *Vanellus tricolor* This species is still around the area in small numbers. At Hall 2/2 Aug (NH), Charnwood 5/10 Nov (NH), Ginninderra Drive 1/22 Jan (JL), Sutton 10/7 Jun (RR). The last record is an unusually large number together for this species.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia* One bird at the east end of the Lake 14 Sep (SW).

JAPANESE SNIPE *Gallinago hardwickii* Recorded in small numbers at the east end of the Lake from 31 Aug to 11 Jan (JMN).

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER *Calidris acuminata* Recorded in small numbers at the east end of the Lake starting with 2/24 Aug rising gradually to the last record 10/2 Nov (JMN, SW, BH).

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea* One record of a single bird on 24 Aug (JMN).

MARSH TERN *Chlidonias hybrida* Single bird at the east end of the Lake on 9 Nov (JMN).

BROWN PIGEON *Macropygia amboinensis* Recorded on Buckenboura River (below Monga) 1/10 Apr (KT).

RAINBOW LORIKEET *Trichoglossus haematodus* A single bird at Weetangera during December (JL) was almost certainly an escapee.

LITTLE LORIKEET *Glossopsitta pusilla* A single bird recorded at Narrabundah 20 Dec (SW). Flocks recorded flying over Braddon in late December and early January, also large flocks seen feeding in flowering *Eucalyptus melliodora* and *E. bridgesiana* near Federal Highway Quarry 13 Jan (JM).

SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO *Cacatua galerita* Numbers around the city appear to be remaining at last year's level and the bird is now fairly common around suburban Canberra in winter. Recorded in reasonable numbers in most observation areas.

COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus* One pair at Coppins Crossing 13 Apr (LC) and one female near Sutton 19 Apr (RR). All could have been escapees.

SUPERB PARROT *Polytelis swainsonii* Two birds near Hall 8 Nov.

CRIMSON ROSELLA *Platycercus elegans* A Crimson was seen feeding in Duffy several times during August and September with a presumed Crimson/Eastern cross. This latter bird was smaller than a Crimson with red head and chest, bluey-white cheek patches, while the wings were the colour of those of an Eastern.

YELLOW ROSELLA *Platycercus flaveolus* One seen regularly at University House during July (DJ) was obviously an escapee.

MALLEE RINGNECK *Barnardius barnardi* (DJ). Obviously escapee.  
One at Hughes 25 Mar and 21 Jun

PALLID CUCKOO *Cuculus pallidus* First record near Hall 2 Sep (NH), then recorded by most observers within the next week. Last records 23 Jan Mugga Lane (SW) and middle Feb at Red Hill (CLA).

BRUSH CUCKOO *Cacomantis variolosus* First record 8 Nov  
O'Connor (MC). Last record 19 Jan Botanic Gardens (SW).

HORSFIELD BRONZE CUCKOO *Chrysococcyx basalis* First record  
25 Aug Scullin (NC). Last record in April at Campbell (MB).

GOLDEN BRONZE CUCKOO *Chrysococcyx lucidus* Recorded in  
Botanic Gardens 10 Aug (JP). Also recorded (and calling) at  
Ginninderra Experimental Station 7 Sep (calling also during  
Aug (GH). Still present at New Chums Road during April  
(AS).

KOEL *Eudynamys scolopacea* One bird at Merricumbene, between  
Araluen and Moruya, 21 Nov (NC).

TAWNY FROGMOUTH *Podargus strigoides* One bird early July  
Tallaganda Forest (BB). One bird Araluen 27 Dec (GC). Three  
immature birds (slight traces down) Brindabella 3 Jan (NC).

OWLET NIGHTJAR *Aegotheles cristatus* One record during year  
was at Tallaganda Forest during early July (BB).

WHITE-THROATED NIGHTJAR *Eurostopodus mystacalis* One single  
bird on Aranda side of Black Mountain 19 Feb (SB).

SPINE-TAILED SWIFT *Hirundapus caudacutus* Several records  
during year. Regular at Campbell during Jan, Feb and Mar.  
Large flocks at Botanic Gardens 20 Dec (RM), Scullin 30 Dec  
(GC), Southern Cross Drive 5 Apr (AS), Narrabundah 19 Feb  
(SW). The final record was of birds 24 km north-east of  
Cabramurra at an altitude of 1800m on 6 Mar (IMR). East end  
of Lake 8/21 Sep (JMN) was first record for year.

SACRED KINGFISHER *Halcyon sancta* First records 18 Oct  
Botanic Gardens (RM) and October in Campbell (MB).

RAINBOW BIRD *Merops ornatus* First record was of two birds  
at Curtin 11 Nov (SW). Last records were near Sutton: 6/11  
Apr, 12/13 Apr and 25/24 Apr (RR).

DOLLAR BIRD *Eurystomus orientalis* First record 12 Oct on  
Mounts Ainslie and Majura (DB), the last record being of a  
solitary bird at Royalla 5 Jun (SG). An interesting  
observation was 3 birds displaying over Braddon on 10 Jan  
(RE).

WELCOME SWALLOW *Hirundo neoxena* Flocks of this species gathered at east end of Lake during Apr (JMN) 60/19 Apr, 40/25 Apr.

WHITE-WINGED TRILLER *Lalage sueurii* One brown bird in Scullin 8 Aug, 9 Aug, 10 Aug (NC). Nesting at Campbell Park Offices late December - two nests (JM).

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula* Common at Araluen 27 Dec (GC).

AUSTRALIAN GROUND THRUSH *Zoothera dauma* Winter records for the Botanic Gardens were 2/1 May, 1/30 May (CA) and 1/23 May (AM).

SPOTTED QUAIL-THRUSH *Cinlosoma punctatum* Blundell's Creek Road 1/1 May (BB). One record for the last report which was too late to be included was of a bird banded at New Chums Road, 7 June 1975 (AS). This was the first time one was actually seen there although they are often seen higher up the ranges in drier more open timber near Bulls Head.

LITTLE GRASS-BIRD *Megalurus gramineus* An interesting fact was the lack of observations of this species at the east end of the Lake during the winter months of June, July, April and May (JMN). Whether this is due to their more secretive habits during this period or their movement from the area is not clear. Winter observations of this species would clear this point up.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus stentoreus* A late record of this species was of birds among reeds along Sullivans Creek on 3 Jul (SG). They were not calling. There was a crop of records in September at the east end of the Lake starting with 1/7 Sep (JMN) and increasing in numbers throughout the month (JMN, SW, JL, IMR). A further record was of a bird in a suburban garden at Braddon 21 Sep and 22 Sep (JM). Another bird was recorded in a suburban garden at Scullin 8 Mar (NC). The remarks made about the Little Grass-bird also apply to this species.

BROWN SONG-LARK *Cinclorhamphus cruralis* There was a pair of this species on the Dairy Flat Road 1 Nov behaving as if breeding (IG). Breeding records for this species are needed.

WHITE-THROATED WARBLER *Gerygone olivacea* A winter record was 1/15 Aug at Campbell (MB).

WESTERN WARBLER *Gerygone fusca* One bird recorded in August at Campbell; not recorded there after December (MB).

LITTLE THORNBILL *Acanthiza nana* Again several records throughout the year from various parts of Canberra and Lake George but numbers of individuals sighted were small (SW, GC). Present most of year at Campbell - not Sep, Oct, Nov or May (MB). More records are required.

BROWN WEEBILL *Smicrornis brevirostris* Following last year's report of a late nest, there was a record of this species building and breeding during August and September (HN). Another interesting fact is that it has been seen at least weekly since 1 May in Narrabundah where it has not been present before (SW).

JACKY WINTER *Microeca leucophaea* Another bird whose movements are not fully understood. At Campbell present from July until February (MB). Only record at east end of Lake was 2/17 Aug (JMN) and in the Botanic Gardens 1/26 Jan (CA). Also at Tidbinbilla 13 Jun (BOC).

SCARLET ROBIN *Petroica multicolor* Recorded at Campbell July and Aug then not until Mar after which present continuously (MB). At Red Hill present July then Apr to June (CLA).

RED-CAPPED ROBIN *Petroica goodenovii* One male near Ainslie Tip 21, 22 and 23 Oct (DB).

PINK ROBIN *Petroica rodinogaster* One 'brown' bird banded in Botanic Gardens 23 May (AM, RM, DP).

ROSE ROBIN *Petroica rosea* Winter records of this species appear to be increasing. A male banded in the Botanic Gardens on 19 Jul (RM) was the first banded there for several years. A banded male was sighted again 31 Aug (GC) and on 11 Apr with a 'brown' bird (GC) - the same male? Other records outside the normal period were at Aranda 1/9 May (RM), Botanic Gardens 1/5 Jun (AL) and 1/6 Jun (FC). Also male and female regularly recorded in Botanic Gardens between 19 Apr and 30 May (CA). Recorded at Campbell during August (MB).

HOODED ROBIN *Petroica cucullata* Despite last year's plea



for records of this bird, the only recording was on the BOC outing to Tidbinbilla 12 Jun. Surely the bird cannot be as uncommon as this? More records please.

WILLIE WAGTAIL *Rhipidura leucophrys* The movements of this species are still rather confusing. At Campbell it is present in small numbers in all months except Oct, Nov and Dec (MB). On Red Hill the bird is fairly numerous from Oct to May with only two isolated sightings outside that time (CLA). At the east end of the Lake it is absent from Oct to Apr with small numbers rest of the year (JMN). Other areas in Canberra only recorded isolated birds throughout year (DJ, KA, SWB). A good discussion of possible movements in this species is given in a paper by Mrs M. Baldwin in CBN vol. 3 no. 7.

LEADEN FLYCATCHER *Myiagra rubecula* First appeared at Campbell in September (MB). Botanic Gardens 18 Oct (RM).

SATIN FLYCATCHER *Myiagra cyanoleuca* A record of a male in the Botanic Gardens was the first for this area on 10 Mar (GC, NC, CA). Present in September at New Chums Road, earlier than shown in the Field List (AS).

RUFOUS WHISTLER *Pachycephala rufiventris* Records outside normal period are: Hughes female 11 May and male 25 Jun (DJ); Campbell present Jul, Apr, May, Jun in smaller numbers than rest of year (MB); Weetangera a female in May (SW).

OLIVE WHISTLER *Pachycephala olivacea* Appeared for a third year running as winter visitor to Botanic Gardens. Last year's bird reported 8 Aug (GC) and 10 Aug (JP). A bird appeared again in May: reported 1 May and 30 May (CA), 12 Jun (BOC).

BROWN TREECREEPER *Climacteris picumnus* An early breeding record for this species was a nest with two eggs near Hall 7 Sep (NH).

MISTLETOE-BIRD *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* Records outside normally accepted limits were Burton Hall a male 20 Jul (SWA) and Tidbinbilla 1/13 Jun (BOC).

REGENT HONEYEATER *Zanthomiza phrygia* An unusual record was of a single bird at the south-west end of Lake George 31

Aug (DJ). Other records Mt Ainslie 1/7 Dec (DB), Gundaroo Road 2/20 Dec.

FUSCOUS HONEYEATER *Meliphaga fusca* Fairly numerous Botanic Gardens during Aug-Sep (RM, CA). Recorded at Campbell Jul, Mar, May, Jun in small numbers (MB). An interesting record was of flocks at the Gudgenby-Orroral Valley road junction on 1 Feb, 3 Feb, 15 Feb (FC, BB).

YELLOW-TUFTED HONEYEATER *Meliphaga melanops* Two records were both on 6 Jun, 5 birds at O'Connor (HN) also present at Campbell (CA). Only other record Campbell July (MB).

WHITE-PLUMED HONEYEATER *Meliphaga penicillata* An early breeding record was at Gungahlin - a bird with young just out of the nest during the first week in August (MC).

WHITE-NAPED HONEYEATER *Melithreptus lunatus* Several people mentioned that they thought this bird was less numerous during the migration period this year (MB, NC). Also this appeared to be the case in Berrima (Mrs C. Crowe, pers. comm.).

NEW HOLLAND HONEYEATER *Meliornis novaehollandiae* An early breeding record was at Botany Dept ANU with young out of nest in late July (RE).

NOISY FRIARBIRD *Philemon corniculatus* Records outside normally accepted times are: Campbell 1/25 Aug (MB); Aranda, seen from 8 Aug (KA).

RED-BROWED FINCH *Estrilda temporalis* Present at New Chums Road from Sep to March (AS). Conversely only recorded at Campbell in Aug and Sep then Apr, May and June (MB). Present throughout year at Botanic Gardens (GC). Large flocks recorded at Ginninderra Experimental Station during July, Aug and Sep (GH).

ZEBRA FINCH *Taeniopygia castanotis* One record 6/3 Apr (GC). Two birds (male and female) seen at Scullin 15 Mar were thought to be escapees but sightings of 10 (incl. 5 immature) and 2 used nests not far away on 6 Jun (FC) might indicate they were not.

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris* Recorded at east end of Lake as follows: 1/19 Oct, 3/4 Jan, 8/11 Jan, 6/4 Apr, 5/2 May

(JMN).

INDIAN MYNA *Acridotheres tristis* Recorded regularly throughout older parts of Canberra in apparently slowly growing numbers (BBL, GC, SW, JM, DJ). Please keep records of this species and enter them in the observations book as this is the only way the spread of this species will be documented.

WHITE-BROWED WOOD-SWALLOW *Artamus superciliosus* Recorded hawking north at Narrabundah 3/31 Mar (SW). Also in mixed flocks with Dusky Wood-swallow on 16 Apr at Narrabundah (SW).

MASKED WOOD-SWALLOW *Artamus personatus* Only record was at Narrabundah flying high on 8 Mar (SW).

GREY BUTCHER-BIRD *Cracticus torquatus* Recorded at New Chums Road in March (AS). Also 16 km south of Yass 1/21 Aug (SB).

CONTRIBUTORS

CLA	C. Allen	AL	A. Lucas
CA	C. Appleby	FL	F. Lucas
KA	K. Anway	RMR.	R. Magrath
BB	B. Baker	JMK	J. McKean
DB	D. Balfour	JMN	J. McNaughton
MB	M. Basten	IMR.	I. McRae
SB	S. Bennett	JM	J. Miles
MCK	M. Chuck	AM	A. Morris
GC	G. Clark	HN	H. Nix
NC	N. Clark	GO	G. Olsen
MC	M. Clayton	DP	D. Purchase
LC	L. Collett	JP	J. Penhallurich
FC	F. Crome	RR	R. Rehwinkel
RE	R. Elvish	PR	P. Roberts
MF	M. Fleming	AR	A. Ross
SG	S. Garnett	AS	A. Stokes
TG	T. Gourlay	KT	K. Thaler
NH	N. Hermes	GVT	G. Van Tets
TH	T. Holden	SLW	S. Wallace
BH	B. Holt	SWB	S. Webb
GH	G. Hutchings	SW	S. Wilson
DJ	D. Johnson	PW	P. Woollard
JL	J. Land	BOC	outing (12-14 June)

APPENDIX

*Articles from other journals with reference to the local area*

1. Seabird watches off the southern coast of New South Wales' by S. Marchant, *Australian Seabird Group Newsletter* no. 6, p. 20.
2. 'The Pink Robin in New South Wales' by J. Trudgeon, *Australian Birds* vol. 10 no. 2, p. 38.
3. 'A white phase Reef Heron in southern Australia' by J. McKean et al., *The Sunbird* vol. 7 no. 1, p. 20.
4. 'The effect of a bushfire on the banding of Flame Robins in the Brindabella Ranges' by A. Stokes, *The Australian Bird Bander* vol. 13 no. 4, p. 75.
5. 'Seabird Islands - No. 25 Grasshopper Island' by S.G. Lane, *The Australian Bird Bander* vol. 14 no. 1, p. 27. October 1976

6. Seabird Islands -No. 26 Wasp Island' by S.G. Lane, *The Australian Bird Bander* vol. 14 no. 1, p. 28.
7. 'Exotic pine forest as a bird habitat' by J.H. Stevens, *The Australian Bird Watcher* vol. 6 no. 3, p. 77.
8. 'Analysis of hybridisation between Black-backed and White-backed Magpies in south-eastern Australia' by T. Burton and A. Martin, *The Emu* vol. 76 part.1, p. 30.

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#### BOTANIC GARDENS OUTING

*Neil Hermes*

The Botanic Gardens reputation for being the most rewarding winter bird watching area near Canberra was maintained during a group outing on 11 July. The nineteen members who attended saw about thirty species and were fortunate in that the day was comparatively warm and there was no fog.

For some, the most useful observations were of the five honey-eaters: Crescent, White-eared, White-plumed, New Holland Honeyeaters and the Eastern Spinebill. Good views were had of all these species and comparisons were made easily.

Near the end of the morning all were delighted to see a pair of Gang-gang Cockatoos feeding at close range and in full sunlight.

The following were among the species noted: Gang-gang Cockatoo, Crimson Rosella, Kookaburra, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Common Blackbird, Eastern Yellow Robin, Golden Whistler, Grey Fantail, Superb Blue Wren, White-browed Scrub-wren, Brown Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, White-throated Treecreeper, White-eared Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, Crescent Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Spotted Pardalote, Silvereye, Red-browed Firetail, Common Starling, Pied Currawong, Australian Magpie, Australian Raven.

*N. Hermes, 'Oaklands', Spring Range Road, Hall, A.C.T. 2600.*

## VISIT OF THE BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB

*Steve Wilson*

The long weekend in June saw the first official visit to Canberra of members of the Bird Observers Club. Eighteen members flew up on the evening of Friday 11 June 1976 and stayed at the Banjo Paterson Motel, Narrabundah.

Thanks to many local volunteers, transport was provided for the party for bird watching trips on the Saturday and the Sunday and even for a few on the Monday, but the party officially dispersed early on that day.

Saturday commenced with a visit to the Botanic Gardens for the morning, followed by lunch on the Black Mountain Peninsula, a look at various parts of the lake including Weston Park, then a visit to the sewerage area at Fyshwick and Kelly's Swamp. The party and drivers were entertained at 2 Scott Street Narrabundah on Saturday evening. Saturday's weather was a perfect winter sunny day.

The Sunday trip was via the Cotter area to the Tidbinbilla Fauna Reserve returning via Tharwa. Because of drought conditions birds were not as numerous in the Reserve as they are normally in winter, though there were plenty to be seen and lots of colour at the feeding area. The weather was cooler with some wind but the party were not troubled by it.

The following species were observed. In the list (C) indicates that the bird was seen in the Canberra area on the Saturday while (T) indicates that it was seen on the Tidbinbilla trip on the Sunday. All others were seen on both days.

Hoary-headed Grebe (C), Little Grebe (C), Australian Pelican (C), Darter (C), Little Pied Cormorant (C), Black Cormorant (C), Little Black Cormorant (C), White-faced Heron, Black Swan, Cape Barren Goose (T) (several seen flying within the Reserve), Mountain Duck (C), Black Duck, Mallard hybrids (C), Grey Teal (C), Chestnut Teal (T), Wood Duck, Musk Duck, Black-shouldered Kite, Wedge-tailed Eagle (T), Brown Falcon (C), Nankeen Kestrel, Dusky Moorhen, Coot, Masked Plover, Black-fronted Dotterel (C), Silver Gull (C), Domestic Pigeon, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (T), King Parrot, Crimson Rosella, Eastern Rosella (C), Red-rumped Parrot,

Kookaburra, Superb Lyrebird (T), Common Skylark (C), Welcome Swallow, Richard's Pipit (C), Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Common Blackbird (C), Flame Robin, Scarlet Robin, Hooded Robin (T), Eastern Yellow Robin, Jacky Winter (T), Crested Shrike-tit (T), Olive Whistler (C), Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush (C), Grey Fantail (C), Willie Wagtail, Superb Blue Wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Speckled Warbler, Weebill (C), Brown Thornbill (C), Buff-rumped Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Southern Whiteface (T), White-throated Treecreeper, Red-browed Treecreeper (T), Brown Treecreeper (T), Red Wattlebird, Noisy Miner (T), Yellow-faced Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater (C), White-naped Honeyeater (C), New Holland Honeyeater (C), Eastern Spinebill, Mistletoebird (T), Spotted Pardalote, Silvereye, European Goldfinch (C), House Sparrow, Red-browed Firetail, Diamond Firetail (T), Double-barred Finch (C), Common Starling, Satin Bowerbird (T), White-winged Chough (T), Australian Magpie Lark, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Grey Currawong, Australian Raven.

On the Canberra outing seventy-one species were recorded and on the Tidbinbilla trip the count was sixty. Birds seen on both days totalled forty-four and the total for both days was eighty-seven.

*S.J. Wilson, 2 Scott Street, Narrabundah, A.C.T. 2604.*

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#### A PEREGRINE FALCON IN CANBERRA

*Doug Ross*

A Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* was seen feeding on the lawns between the National Library and the Lake at 8.30 a.m. on 22 June 1976. The bird was feeding on the ground. All that was left at the feeding place when the bird had gone was a few vertebrae and the remains of a wing, about 22 cm long, with light grey, dark-tipped feathers - insufficient to indicate what the kill had been. Presumably the kill had been made elsewhere and part of the carcass had also been eaten elsewhere.

*A.D. Ross, 64 Sprent Street, Narrabundah, A.C.T. 2604.*

## OUT AND ABOUT

G. Tibicen

The gremlins hit the note about dead birds (CBN vol. 3 no. 7) and the wrong Post Office box number appeared. Apologies to the holder for any unwanted corpses inadvertently delivered to that box. To emphasise the matter the paragraph is reprinted with the correct address.

Remember if you find any dead birds which are in good condition - don't throw them away. Dead birds can be very useful in the preparation of skins and skeletons for museum use. If you find a corpse (apart from Magpies) ring Dick Schodde (81 3732), Steve Wilson (95 7128) or Grahame Clark (54 1279) and they will arrange for it to be collected. If you live outside Canberra put the corpse in a plastic bag, wrap it in newspaper and send it to the Museum, P.O. Box 84, Lyneham, A.C.T. 2602.

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One of our C.O.G. members who has recently been overseas reports that the British Museum of Natural History is selling Pigeons and doves of the world by D. Goodwin for the sum of two pounds sterling. Postage would be about one pound more - a total of three pounds sterling. At present rates of exchange that would be about \$4.50. Apparently the reason for the sell-out is that another edition is soon to be published (at about eight pounds fifty sterling). If you are interested why not write to the British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London SW 7, and see if they have any left.

\*\*\*\*\*

Most bird watchers tend to disregard introduced species and even that particular breed of American-inspired bird watcher, the dreaded 'ticker', sometimes has qualms about 'ticking' such species. It is therefore of interest to note that Norfolk Island has chosen to depict an introduced species, the California Quail *Lophortyx californica*, on a commemorative stamp. The stamp was issued on 5 July to mark the bicentenary of the U.S.A. and has



a face value of 45 cents. I suppose that an introduced bird is a good choice to show links between two countries, so they do have their uses!

\*\*\*\*\*

*The Biter Bit.* Aforementioned C.O.G. member on his travels was hoist with his own petard. One of his problems is explaining to people how their first record of a species for the A.C.T. is probably an escapee from an aviary and sometimes getting roundly abused for his pains. Lo and behold he looked out of a window in Britain and saw a species which is rare in that area; not only that but it was colour banded. The beak was not quite right in colour but never mind; obviously a juvenile! Upon checking with an associate to confirm his good fortune it was carefully explained to him that it was not a Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* but a female House Finch *Carpodacus mexicanus* - a common aviary bird.

Seriously though, this little story has a moral and that is the fact that local knowledge of an area and its idiosyncrasies is extremely important in bird watching and should not be underrated. Anybody can make a mistake and we all do, especially in a strange environment. Therefore always double check unusual observations with a local man if possible. A short note to those who have bird lists for past years. The Atlas of Australian Birds is now collecting historical information and would like your help. For further details write to Atlas of Australian birds, RAOU, 119 Dryburgh Street, North Melbourne, Vic. 3051.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Brindabella Banding Group has a number of surplus mist nets for sale. All are of English make and most are- in sizes no longer available.

30 ftx 12 ft - 1¼ mesh - several available  
40 ftx 9 ft - 3" mesh - duck net  
40 ftx 9 ft - 2" mesh - wader net  
20 ftx 9 ft - 1¼ mesh

These are available for sale to banders licensed under the Australian Bird-banding Scheme, CSIRO. Please contact Tony Stokes, 16 Badgery Street, Macquarie, A.C.T. 2614.

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A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Bird Observers Club  
Box 2167T,  
G.P.O. Melbourne,  
Vic. 3001  
5 April 1976

Dear Sir,

We are pleased to be able to announce that the Bird Observers Club Centre has now been opened at 183 Springvale Road, Nunawading, just south of the railway line and Whitehorse Road.

Hours - Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. plus Friday 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
Tel. 877 5342

Sales items will have a natural history theme, with emphasis on birds, and include such articles as books, bird feeders, colour slides, cassettes of bird song and souvenirs.

If you would publicise these details about the Centre to your members I- would be most grateful.

Yours sincerely,  
Ellen M. McCulloch (Mrs)  
Secretary

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A WHALE AND ELEPHANT SITUATION

*Doug Ross*

A whale and elephant situation was seen by the big pond on Dairy Flat Road just below the old Kingston tip embankment at 10 a.m. on 4 July 1976, with a fox and a Little Eagle (white phase) *Hieraaetus morphnoides* as participants. The eagle was sitting on a fence post, the fox prowling around and leaping up towards the eagle, which did not appear in the least disconcerted.

*A.D. Ross, 64 Sprent Street, Narrabundah, A.C.T. 2604.*

BOOK REVIEW

*Interim List of Australian Songbirds* by R. Schodde, Royal, Australasian Ornithologists Union, 1975.

Don Lamm

In contrast to Part 1 of the Checklist, the present work is an interim one with a vast amount of preparation remaining before a final Part 2 embodying sub-species, distribution etc. appears. Nonetheless it is assumed from the introduction that the taxonomic concepts will be retained, and it is this aspect which will be reviewed.

The author refers at the beginning to the 'conservatism of taxonomic delimitation appropriate to a checklist', but one nevertheless finds this work much less conservative in treatment than Part 1. This is obviously due in part to the fact that most non-passerine orders and families are more generally distributed outside Australia than are the passerines. Even at the family level, many controversial decisions had to be made such as placing the Australian chats in a separate family (*Ephthianuridae*). The treatment tends towards the use of smaller family units than has been general in recent overseas checklists, for example *Orthonychidae* (Log-runners, Quail-thrushes and Whip-birds) and *Timaliidae* (Babblers) which are considered as sub-families by Peters (Birds of the World). Understandably, certain distinctive Australian groups are also given familial rank, such as the *Maluridae* (Australian Wrens), the somewhat heterogeneous *Acanthizidae* and *Neosittidae* (Sittellas).

The handling of the generic concept follows the present world trend towards ever larger genera. Within *Campephagidae* (Cuckoo-shrikes) for example, the Ground Cuckoo-shrike is included in *Coracina*, with the remark that its peculiar features seem to be directly related to its terrestrial existence. This conclusion seems readily acceptable, particularly since sub-genera can be used to indicate a degree of distinctness, but the decision to include the Cicadabird in the same genus is harder to accept. In attempting to evaluate the taxonomic decisions, the reader is confronted by the fact that many of the papers discussing these matters

are not yet available to him. Some forty of the references in the preface refer to papers in press, ten to work in preparation and eight to personal communications. Happily this is a temporary inconvenience only, and much of the material will certainly be contained in the forthcoming publication of the proceedings of the 16th International Ornithological Congress ('The Relationships of some Monotypic Genera of Australian Oscines', Schodde and McKean).

The preface to the list will repay very careful study by all students of Australian birds, even those not greatly interested in taxonomy. It is clear that Schodde et al. have done their studies in a very comprehensive manner, giving consideration to the major sources of taxonomic views available, and have accepted a good many concepts from these sources - for example, Salomonsen on the honey-eaters in Peters (1967). When departures are made, the reasoning is generally quite clear and concise.

The reviewer, having made several comments regarding vernacular names in his review of Part 1, is mildly amused by the remark in the preface that 'vernacular names are deliberately not made the responsibility of any one person'. The criteria outlined in the preface for the choice of such names seem eminently reasonable. By adopting those names in general international use, the author follows the same principle that has impelled Americans as a whole to change their vernacular name of *Falco sparverius* from the misleading 'American Sparrow Hawk' to 'Kestrel'. One new name, however, the 'Varied Sittella', may in fact prove a little too apt. Instances are not lacking, outside Australia, where overly enthusiastic lumping of morphologically dissimilar species on the basis of one or two known instances of hybridization have not proved justified by closer study of the alleged sub-species at the zone of contact.

Surely the author has properly stressed that the Interim List attempts as far as possible to provide information about "evolutionary relations". Since the general acceptance of the theory of continental drift in recent years, the former evolutionary assumptions regarding Australian birds are obviously open to basic questioning, but such work has barely commenced and will require some decades of study and perhaps several later checklists, before the appropriate questions are even raised, let alone resolved.

In the acknowledgments, no less than in the text of

the preface, it is evident that the author has sought assistance from a number of authoritative sources both within and outside Australia. He and

Messrs McKean, Ford and Parker are to be congratulated on the production of this very important Interim List. It provides a nomenclature which should be used uniformly for Australian ornithological papers other than those of a specifically taxonomic nature.

*D.H. Lamm, 6722 E. Nasumpta Drive, Tucson, Arizona, 85715, U.S.A.*

#### BOOK MARKET

##### FOR SALE

*Notornis* - the following four bound parts of *Notornis* are for sale. The colour of binding is green with white lettering.

Part 1 - vol. 1, nos 1 to 11, vol. 2, nos 6 to 8

Part 2 - vol. 3, nos 1 to 9 (1948 to 1950)

Part 3 - vol. 4, nos 1 to 8 (1950 to 1952)

Part 4 - vol. 5, nos 1 to 8 (1952 to 1954)

For private sale;- what offers please?

*Pigeons and Doves of the World* - D. Goodwin (see Out and About)

*Bird Migration* - G.V.T. Matthews (1968 edition) - \$13.00.

##### WANTED

Any books or magazines for sale. At the moment Book Market is embarrassed by the lack of merchandise for sale; everything goes so quickly. So please let us have details of anything you would like to turn into ready cash. Contact Book Market, P.O. Box 301, Civic Square, A.C.T. 2608 or phone (062) 54 1279.

A Sydney member is anxious to complete his stock of back numbers of *Canberra Bird Notes*; he requires vol. 1, nos 1, 7, 10 and 11. Please reply to Book Market at the above address.

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*Canberra Bird Notes* is published quarterly by the Canberra Ornithologists Group. The annual subscription of \$3.00 is payable on 1 July to the Secretary.

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October 1976