

# Canberra bird notes

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A CONCENTRATION OF BLACK-FACED CUCKOO-SHRIKES AT BERRIMA,  
N.S.W.

*Isabel Crowe*

On 31 March at 10 a.m. a noisy group of Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes on our property attracted my attention. On going to investigate I found them moving amongst the eucalypts, and counted thirty-eight, which flew off directly to the west. Prior to this date we had had over 450 mm of rain and I wondered whether they were leaving our very much over-watered countryside. Has any other member noticed these birds congregating in large numbers?

*Mrs. J.F. Crowe, Jellore Street, Berrima, N.S.W. 2577.*

## BIRD REPORT, 1 JULY 1977 TO 30 JUNE 1978

G.S. Clark and M. Lenz

Once again it is time for an annual bird report and here it is.

As usual the first task is to thank all those people who have contributed information for the report and whose names are listed at the end of the report. In particular we would like to thank those who regularly record in one area and then make their records available to us. They are K. Anway (Aranda), M. Basten (Campbell), D. Johnson (Hughes), J. McNaughton and A.D. Ross (east end of Lake Burley Griffin), D. Purchase (Melba), S. Webb (Weetangera) and S.J. Wilson (Narrabundah).

The second task is to talk a bit about the future. This annual bird report has been prepared mainly from two sources - the records in the observations book and some area records kept by the individuals mentioned above.

As from this year it is hoped to use three sources as follows. Firstly the observations book (present at all C.O.G. meetings) for unusual records. Secondly area records in a standardised format for records of unusual movements in numbers of common birds. Thirdly breeding records more than before, especially from particular species, selected for each breeding season.

More observers are required to assist with the collection of data. So please if you are prepared to help ring Michael Lenz on 49 1109 and find out how easy it is. Even beginners can help and will find by I helping they increase their own knowledge.

### NOMENCLATURE

The English and scientific names and the taxonomic order used in the following systematic list are those used in *A field list of the birds of Canberra and district* and also *Birds in the Australian high country*. The reason for this is that the systematic list should be read in conjunction with those two publications. The names are therefore kept the same in order to enable easy cross-reference to those two publications.

Where the English names used in the systematic list differ from

those in the recently published RAOU recommended English names, the RAOU recommended name is added in brackets after the English name.

#### SYSTEMATIC LIST

A species is included in the following list if during the period 1 July 1977 to 30 June 1978 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).
- (d) It has been recorded breeding outside its accepted breeding parameters in the above references.
- (e) In the opinion of the compilers of the list it is a record worth recording.

Notes: (i) LBG stands for Lake Burley Griffin.

(ii) The figures 2, 1 or 0, 1 reflect the number of birds of each sex present. In the examples given 2, 1 means 2 males and 1 female, whereas 0, 1 means 0 males and 1 female - the male figure is given first,

(iii) 4/24 Aug means that 4 birds were recorded on 24 August.

LITTLE GREBE (Australasian Grebe) *Podiceps ruficollis*

HOARY-HEADED GREBE *Podiceps poliocephalus*

The call from the previous annual report to record numbers and fluctuations of these two species is repeated.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus* Only 2 records from LBG: 1/5 Aug east end (AR), 1/15 Oct Black Mt Penins. (ML).

PELICAN (Australian Pelican) *Pelecanus conspicillatus*

Numbers built up in connection with dry conditions inland Nov-Jan, with up to 100 birds on LBG east end; smaller parties on rivers, and other waters. Monthly max., mainly based on data from AR: July 1, Aug 0, Sept 1 Oct 5, Nov 35, Dec 50, Jan 125, Feb 110, Mar 90, Apr 65, May 60, Jun 15.

DARTER *Anhinga rufa* 59 records, mainly based on data from LBG east end (AR), max. Apr 13 and May 19, max. number 3/24 Nov (AR).

BLACK CORMORANT (Great Cormorant) *Phalacrocorax carbo* Max.  
200/1 Feb LBG east end (AR).

LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* Max.  
250/31 Jan LBG east end (AR).

WHITE-NECKED HERON (Pacific Heron) *Ardea pacifica*  
Observations of single birds LBG east end Nov, Jan, Mar,  
Apr, May (AR) and for other localities 21 Oct near  
Murrumbateman and Lake Springfield (JP), 29 Oct-and 20 Nov  
near Bungendore (JP, DB), 12 Dec Caloola Farm (JS).

WHITE-FACED HERON *Ardea novaehollandiae* Max. 15+/4 Jan LBG  
east end (AR). [white Egret - see p. 13.]

PLUMED EGRET (Intermediate Egret) *Egretta intermedia* Up to  
3/3 Nov -8 Dec; 5 observed 1 Jan - 16 Feb, max. 5/6 Feb,  
all LBG east end (mostly AR; E. Andrew); 1/23 Feb AMU,  
Sullivans Creek (ML).

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta* 2 records: 1/17 Nov LBG east  
end (AR), 1/8 Jan ANU, Sullivans Creek (ML).

CATTLE EGRET *Ardeola ibis* LBG east end 27 Oct - 17 Nov with  
max. 5; again April - June with max. 15.

NANKEEN NIGHT HERON (Rufous Night-heron) *Nycticorax*  
*caledonicus* Winter records: 1/5 Jul ANU, Sullivans Creek  
(ML); 1/22 Jul, 7/12-15 Aug, 10/26 Aug LBG east end (AR,  
JMN), 1/3 Jun Scrivener Dam (ML).

LITTLE BITTERN *Ixobrychus minutus* 1/8 Jan ANU, Sullivans  
Creek (ML).

BROWN BITTERN (Australasian Bittern) *Botaurus poiciloptilus*  
3 records outside A.C.T.: 1/25 Dec south of Mogo, 1/26 Dec  
Sunpatch Swamp (JP), 1/8 Jan north of Collector, on swamp  
on highway (RR).

STRAW-NECKED IBIS *Threskiornis spinicollis* Max. for LBG  
east end 40+/j 24 May, 80/1 Jun, 40/25 June, at other times  
only up to 5 birds (AR).

WHITE IBIS (Sacred Ibis) *Threskiornis molucca* Max. for LBG  
east end 50+/31 Jan (AR) .

GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus* 2 records: 1/15-22 Jan  
(BB, AR), 1/19 Mar Kelly's Swamp (AR).

ROYAL SPOONBILL *Platalea regia* Most records from LBG east  
end Nov -Jan with max. 5 birds 14 Jan (AR); Jan also 2  
records from ANU, Sullivan's Creek, with max. 5/8 Jan (ML).

YELLOW-BILLED SPOONBILL *Platalea flavipes* 2 peaks in Jan and Mar-Apr. Distribution of number of records (birds seen) per month, data mainly from LBG east end (AR): Nov 4 (12), Dec 3 (5), Jan 15 (55), Mar 4 (13), Apr 6 (18), May 2 (2), Jun 2 (2).

GRASS WHISTLE-DUCK (Plumed Whistling-Duck) *Dendrocygna eytoni* One record: 5/30 Jan LBG east end (JMN). So far no January observation.

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus* Max. LBG east end 60/24 Nov and 7 Jan (AR). 590/24 Sep Lake George south end (ML). Breeding: 2 pairs with 2+6 cygnets 5 May LBG east end (AR).

FRECKLED DUCK *Stictonetta naevosa* One record: 1/4 Jun Fyshwick, sewage ponds (RM).

MOUNTAIN DUCK (Australian Shelduck) *Tadorna tadornoides* LBG east end from Jan to mid Mar numbers above 10 birds, max. 40+/5 Jan (AR) .

BLACK DUCK *Anas superciliosus* Breeding: 1 with 16 young 11 Nov LBG east basin (AR).

GREY TEAL *Anas gibberifrons* As with many other species no numbers recorded; only 20/27 Apr and 9 May ANU, Sullivan's Creek; 60/11 Jun Kelly's Swamp (ML). Breeding: 1 with 6-7 young 5 Nov, Fyshwick, sewage ponds (AR).

SHOVELER (Australasian Shoveler) *Anas rhynchotis* Records of more than 10 birds from LBG east end: 20+/22 Jan (BB), 14/30 Jan, 20/24 Apr (AR), 10, 5/11 Jun (ML).

PINK-EARED DUCK *Malacorhynchus membranaceus* 18 records with 43 birds from LBG east end in the following distribution (number of birds): Sep 1 (3), Oct 1 (2), Nov 2 (3), Jan 1 (2), Feb 1 (1), Apr 5 (7), May 2 (4), Jun 5 (21) (mainly AR); max. 3/5 Apr (AR), 7/11 Jun (ML), 8/18 Jun (AR).

HARDHEAD *Aythya australis* Max. numbers recorded for LBG east end 100+/22 Jan (BB), 200+/17 Feb (AR), 365 (sewage ponds) 11 Jun, fell to 150/18 Jun (ML).

WOOD DUCK (Maned Duck) *Chenonetta jubata* Monthly max. for LBG east end: Jul 8, Aug 3, Sep 2, Oct 0, Nov 10, Dec 50, Jan 70+, Feb 20, Mar 50, Apr 0, May 10, Jun 0 (AR).

MUSK DUCK *Biziura lobata* LBG east end, monthly max.: Jul 36, Aug 24,

Sep 26, Oct 12, Nov 25, Dec 25, Jan 35, Feb 25, Mar 40, Apr 41, May 32, Jun 31 (AR).

BLUE-BILLED DUCK *Oxyura australis* One record: 1/18 Jun Fyshwick, sewage ponds (ML).

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE *Elanus notatus* Regular 1-2 birds, 3/1 Jan + 22 Apr, LBG east end (AR). Other areas with regular observations? Breeding records?

WHISTLING EAGLE (Whistling Kite) *Haliastur sphenurus* 20 records, of these 16 from LBG east end in the following monthly distribution: Jul 3, Aug 3, Sep 1, Oct 0, Nov 2, Dec 0, Jan 1, Feb 1, Mar 1, Apr 1, May 4, Jun 3. Always single birds except 2/1 May (AR).

GREY GOSHAWK 2 records: 1 bird of the white phase 16 Jan (JMN) and 22 Jan (BB) Kelly's Swamp.

LITTLE EAGLE *Hieraaetus morphnoides* 13 records of single birds: Jun 1, Aug 2, Nov 5, Dec 3, Jan 1, Mar 1 (BB, AR, RR, RC), of these 5 from Rehwinkels Animal Park.

WHITE-BREASTED SEA-EAGLE (White-bellied Sea-Eagle) *Haliaeetus leucogaster* 3 records from Lake George: 1/31 Jul (RR), 2/24 Sep (ML), 1/13 Nov (RR).

SPOTTED HARRIER *Circus assimilis* Early spring and autumn records, all LBG east end/Kelly's Swamp: 1/31 Jul (WW), 1/12 Aug, 2/19 Aug and] 2/15 Jan, 2/31 Jan (AR).

SWAMP HARRIER (Marsh Harrier) *Circus approximans* 13 records from LBG east end in the following distribution: Jul 1, Aug 2, Jan 2, Mar 4, Apr 1, Jun 3 (mainly AR).

PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus* One record: 1/13 Mar LBG east end (AR) .

BLACK FALCON *Falco subniger* 3 records, 1/14 Jan, 1/2 Apr LBG east end (AR), 1/18 Jan near Captains Flat (NH), see also CBN 4 3, p. 19.

KESTREL (Australian Kestrel) *Falco cenchroides* Apparently common, but only 1 record available: 1 pair feeding 2 fledged young Higgins (ML). Where else is the species breeding?

BOOBOOK OWL *Ninox novaeseelandiae* 1-2 calling Aug - Apr Campbell (MB), one record each Sep, Oct, Nov Higgins (ML), one record each

Dec, Feb Weetangera, the bird on 13 Feb a juvenile (SW), one. record each Mar, Apr Ainslie (ML).

COMMON PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus* Escapee 1,0/24 Sep Mt Ainslie (Anderson, Brown); see also CBN 4 1, p. 7.

STUBBLE QUAIL *Coturnix pectoralis* Only one record: 2/23 Jan Kelly's Swamp (BB).

BROWN QUAIL *Synoicus ypsilophorus* Only one record: 2/23 Jan Kelly's Swamp (BB) .

BANDED LANDRAIL (Buff-banded Rail) *Hypotaenidia philippensis* 4 records of single birds from ANU, Sullivan's Creek: 27 Nov, 10 Dec, 16 Jan, 29 Mar, the last 3 always from same area (ML).

DUSKY MOORHEN *Gallinula tenebrosa* Autumn max. ANU, Sullivan's Creek 130/21 May (ML).

AUSTRALIAN PAINTED SNIPE (Painted Snipe) *Rostratula benghalensis* 2 records of this rare species: 2/18 Dec LBG east end (JMN), 1, 1/7 Jan Fyshwick, sewage farm (AR).

MASKED PLOVER *Vanellus miles* 2 suburban breeding records: 1 pair

3 young 14 Sep Parliament House (AR), nest with 4 eggs 18 Oct NZ High Commission (JL).

RED-CAPPED DOTTEREL (Red-capped Plover) *Charadrius ruficapillus* 2 records each Jan and mid Mar LBG east end (AR, BB).

BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL (Black-fronted Plover) *Charadrius melanops* Max. 20/15 Jan LBG east end (AR).

RED-KNEED DOTTEREL *Erythrogonys cinctus* 5 records Kelly's Swamp, of these 2 outside normal range: 2/28 Nov, 3/18 Dec (JMN), max. 4/13 Mar (AR) .

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia* 11 records (28 birds) 18 Dec - 22 Jan Kelly's Swamp (AR, JMN, BB), max. 5/22 Jan (BB).

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola* 8 records (10 birds), 28 Nov - 22 Jan Kelly's Swamp (BB, mainly JMN).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Tringa hypoleucos* 3 records of a single bird 1, 3 and 7 Jan Kelly's Swamp (AR, JMN).

JAPANESE SNIPE (Latham's Snipe) *Gallinago hardwickii* 3 records (6 birds) Oct-Dec ANU, Sullivan's Creek, max. 3/4 Oct (ML). Other localities: 1/22 Dec near Bungedore (JP), 1/1 Jan LBG east end (E. Andrew).

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER *Calidris acuminata* One bird already  
12 Aug LBG east end (AR).

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea* One record: 1/18 Sep  
Breadalbane, N.S.W. (RR).

DIAMOND DOVE *Geopelia cuneata* One bird recorded in Page  
from 4 Dec to 12 Dec was probably an escapee feeding on  
parrot food)(HE).

YELLOW-TAILED BLACK COCKATOO *Calyptorhynchus funereus* An  
interesting record was of 3 birds flying high over  
Weetangera 17 Feb (SW).

SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO *Cacatua galerita* The continuing  
increase in numbers over-wintering in Canberra has led some  
observers to concentrate on roosting flights. In Campbell  
large flocks fly over regularly each morning from the  
direction of Mt Majura towards the city and return each  
evening unless it is foggy - they follow the same route  
each day below Cobby St, but if foggy they fly over Holmes  
Cres. in dispersed and excited fashion (MB). Other flights  
noted were 290/18 Jun flying along Red Hill to City between  
0708 and 0800 h; 229/13 May flying towards Mt Ainslie  
between 1526 and 1645 h; 366/14 May flying towards Mt  
Ainslie between 1425 and 1620 h (all ML).

COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus* 2 birds flying low across  
Higgins 12 Oct were probably escapees judging by time of  
year (ML). Fairly numerous Dec-Jan in  
Yass/Murrumbateman/Gunning and areas west (CB, GC)

KING PARROT (Australian King-Parrot) *Alisterus scapularis*  
An idea of the large numbers of this bird over-wintering in  
Canberra is given by the following numbers of birds flying  
over Scrivener Dam to roost: 320/30 Apr between 1635 and  
1705 h; 755/6 May between 1525 and 1705 h, 646/3 Jun  
between 1500 and 1700 h (all ML).

SUPERB PARROT *Polytelis swainsonii* This bird was recorded  
just north of Sutton 3/1 Dec and Bywong 5/12 Dec (RR). Also  
numerous around Murrumbateman Dec-Jan (GC).

RED-RUMPED PARROT *Psephotus haematonotus* A pre-roost  
gathering of 30 birds was noted at Scrivener Dam on 30 Apr  
(ML).

PALLID CUCKOO *Cuculus pallidus* First record of a bird  
calling was at Campbell 27 Aug (MB), followed by Melba 8  
Sep (DP) and Weetangera



13 Sep (SW). Last heard calling on 21 Nov in Weetangera (SW) and in Nov at Hughes (DJ).

FAN-TAILED CUCKOO *Cacomantis pyrrhophanus* One recorded in Campbell in June, where a pair were seen in Oct-Nov (MB).

BRUSH CUCKOO *Cacomantis variolosus* No records of this species from Canberra this year: the only record reported was of a single bird at Guerilla Bay 23 Oct (JL).

HORSFIELD BRONZE CUCKOO *Chrysococcyx basalis* First record in Melba on 1 Sep (DP).

CHANNEL-BILLED CUCKOO *Scythrops novaehollandiae* One bird being chased by a magpie near Moruya on 1 Oct (CA).

TAWNY FROGMOUTH *Podargus strigoides* Heard calling twice at Campbell in Sep (MB).

OWLET NIGHTJAR (Australian Owlet-Nightjar) *Aegotheles cristatus* Recorded as follows: 1/18 Oct at Oakdale property near Button (ML); 1/12 Apr calling at Campbell 0500 h (CA); 1/4 Dec at Kylwong, Mac's Reef Rd, where 'according to landowner birds of this species breed. (RR)

SPINE-TAILED SWIFT (White-throated Needletail) *Hirundapus caudacutus* Several records of this species were received as follows: occasionally in Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr over Chapman (DS). Over Aranda on 22 Jan and 24+/13 Mar (KA). Over Mawson 100+ at 1730 h (RC). Few over Campbell in Sep (MB). Also recorded over Scullin 17 Jan and Higgins 22 Jan (ML)

SACRED KINGFISHER *Halcyon sancta* First record at Melba 1 Oct (DP).

RAINBOW BIRD (Rainbow Bee-eater) *Merops ornatus* Two pairs breeding near Googong Dam 6 Nov (BL). Also 3/28 Sep near Hall (DJ).

DOLLARBIRD *Eurystomus orientalis* First record 14 Oct at Campbell (MB)

TREE MARTIN *Petrochelidon nigricans* Recorded at east end of LBG on 24 Aug and 1 Sep (AR).

FAIRY MARTIN *Petrochelidon ariel* Recorded at east end of LBG on 12, 14, 19 and 26 Aug (AR).

BLACK-FACED CUCKOO-SHRIKE *Coracina novaehollandiae* Two breeding pairs recorded at ANU (ML). Still present at Narrabundah until at least 10 Apr (SJW).

CICADA BIRD *Edoliisoma tenuirostris* at Tidbinbilla 11 Feb (RR). One pair of these were recorded.

WHITE-WINGED TRILLER *Lalage sueurii* First observed in Campbell in Sep, increasing Oct to Dec, few in Jan (MB). Recorded at Weetangera 8 Oct (JL), Mt Ainslie 17 Dec (DB), Higgins 6 Nov (ML). Also first recorded ANU 15 Nov, later bred there producing 2 juveniles (ML).

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula* Hughes (DJ). Breeding (unsuccessful) recorded in Oct at

AUSTRALIAN GROUND THRUSH (White's Thrush) *Zoothera dauma* Again recorded during winter in the Botanic Gardens on 20 Jun (ML). Also an unusual record was of a single bird in a dry gully at Kowen Forest 5 Nov (RM) .

SPOTTED QUAIL-THRUSH *Cinclosoma punctatum* Circus 30 May (ML).

One record at Piccadilly

REED WARBLER (Clamorous Reed Warbler) *Acrocephalus stentoreus* Winter records were 1/21 Aug LBG east end (AR), 1/30 Sep at Scrivener Dam, 2/12 Apr, 1/21 May, 1/22 May all at Sullivan's Creek (the May birds were singing short snatches) (all ML).

[Brown Songlark and Rufous Songlark - see p. 13.]

WHITE-THROATED WARBLER (White-throated Gerygone) *Gerygone olivacea* First heard in Campbell on 3 Sep then daily until Apr. Juveniles appeared in Dec (MB).

WESTERN WARBLER (Western Gerygone) *Gerygone fusca* Pair recorded in Campbell 23 Nov (MB).

LITTLE THORNBILL (Yellow Thornbill) *Acanthiza nana* A few were recorded in Campbell from Aug to Feb (MB). Recorded at ANU in wattles in Nov and Dec (ML). Where do they go in winter?

PINK ROBIN *Petroica rodinogaster* At least two birds wintered in the Botanic Gardens. Separate birds were banded there on 23 Jul and 13 Aug (GC). Birds (all brown) also recorded on 16 Jul (JM), 31 Jul (WW)

HOODED ROBIN *Petroica cucullata* A few more records were forthcoming of this species but still not many. Surely there must be more around? Recorded: Angle Crossing 1 male 16 Jun (JS); Fitz's Hill 1 pair 11 Sep (DJ); Gundaroo Rd 1/8 Jan (JP); Mt Tennant 1 pair 1 Apr (DB). Please keep on recording all sightings of these species.

WILLY WAGTAIL (Willie Wagtail) *Rhipidura leucophrys*  
Breeding records as follows: 8 breeding pairs at ANU (ML);  
1 nest Weetangera 8 Oct (JL); also bred at Haig Park,  
Turner (ML).

MISTLETOE BIRD *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* A winter record was of  
a male at Chapman 18 Jun (JS).

SILVEREYE *Zosterops lateralis* Breeding record was of 3  
juveniles at Hughes 30 Nov (DJ). Silvereyes noted moving  
east through Gungahlin on 31 Mar - was this the first  
suggestion of autumn migration? (DP) Also large flocks of  
Silvereyes heard passing overhead 0400-0500 h 9 Mar, at  
O'Connor - next day Tasmanian race abundant in local  
gardens (HN).

PAINTED HONEYEATER *Grantiella picta* Recorded on Queanbeyan  
- Captains Flat Road 20 Nov (DB), also at Rehwinkels Animal  
Park 4 Jan (RR).

YELLOW-FACED HONEYEATER *Meliphaga chrysops* Spring migration  
noted in small groups flying south-westerly at Melba on 25  
Sep (DP). Autumn migration noted at Melba between 25 Mar  
and 16 Apr (DP). Large numbers noted at Weetangera on 9,  
13, 15 Apr (SW). At Ainslie on 9 Apr 3000 were noted moving  
north-east between 0940 and 1145 h.

YELLOW-TUFTED HONEYEATER *Meliphaga melanops* One bird  
recorded in Campbell in June (MB), also 1 bird 1, 2 Jul at  
Melba (DP). Present in small numbers (circa 6) from Jul to  
Sep in the Botanic Gardens (GC).

WHITE-NAPED HONEYEATER *Melithreptus lunatus* Autumn  
migration noticed at Clunies Ross St, Acton, 200/11 Apr and  
150/13 Apr (both mornings), also at Button St, Ainslie,  
430/16 Apr 0950 to 1215 h (all ML). In Melba seen in winter  
occasionally 1 Jul, 2 Jul and 28 Jul to 16 Aug (DP).

RED WATTLE-BIRD *Anthochaera carunculata* A total of 16  
breeding pairs at the ANU (ML).

NOISY FRIAR-BIRD *Philemon corniculatus* Winter records are  
1/3 May at ANU (ML), 1/22 Jun at Melba (DP).

DIAMOND FIRETAIL *Zonaeginthus guttatus* The only records of  
this species were on Mt Ainslie 17 Dec (DB) and 1 in Jan at  
Campbell with Yellow-rumped Thornbills (MB).

ZEBRA FINCH *Taeniopygia castanotis* Reported at LBG east end  
1/8 Jan 2/15 Jan (JM).

INDIAN MYNA (Common Myna) *Acridotheres tristis* Recorded at Dairy Flat 22 Apr (AR). Also present throughout year Weetangera-Page-Scullin (GC).

OLIVE-BACKED ORIOLE *Oriolus sagittatus* A bird nested for second year in a row (Nov to Dec) near Physics SGS at ANU (JS). Another nest reported at ANU in Jan (ML).

DUSKY WOODSWALLOW *Artamus cyanopterus* Aug until Apr, young in Dec (MB). Present at Campbell from 30

WHITE-BROWED WOODSWALLOW *Artamus superciliosus* This was one of the 'irruptive' years and this bird became quite numerous around Canberra, especially to the north. Recorded breeding north of Gundaroo, near Murrumbateman and near Gunning 27 Dec and 5 Jan (CB, GC, JP). Near Tharwa and Naas 6 Dec and 12 Dec (breeding) (JS). Near Mt Ainslie 17 Dec and near Wanna Wanna 3 Dec (10+) (DB). At Campbell in Jan (MB) Also hawking north-east in 2s and 3s at Narrabundah between 1000 h and 1100 h on 4 Apr (SJW).

MASKED WOODSWALLOW *Artamus personatus* Recorded in small numbers north of Gundaroo in association with White-browed 5 Jan (GC).

PIED CURRAWONG *Strepera graculina* Six pairs bred at ANU (ML). Roosting flights at Scrivener Dam were 1615 on 6 May from 1525 to 1730 h; 3130 on 3 Jun between 1500 and 1700 h (all ML).

GREY CURRAWONG *Strepera versicolor* Two birds of this species plus two juveniles noted on 24 Jan at ANU (ML). Did they breed on Black Mountain?

SATIN BOWER-BIRD *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* A bird unsuccessfully attempted to breed in the Botanic Gardens at end of Nov (KT). The first breeding record of this species in the Gardens.

#### CONTRIBUTORS

KA	K.	Anway	RC	R. Cox
CA	C.	Appleby	HE	H. Evans
BB	B.	Baker	NH	N. Hermes
DB	D.	Balfour	DJ	D. Johnson
MB	M.	Basten	JL	J. Land
CB	C.	Bear	ML	M. Lenz
GC	G.	Clark	BL	B. Lindenmeyer

JM	J. McKean	JS	J. Slobbe
RM	R. Mason	DS	D. Stewart
JMN	J. McNaughton	KT	K. Thaler
HN	H. Nix	SW	S. Webb
DP	D. Purchase	WW	W.R. Wheeler
RR	R. Rehwinkel	SOW	S.J. Wilson
AR	A.D. Ross		

APPENDIX - HONEYEATER NUMBERS

[The following was provided from notes kept by Dave Purchase and shows the use that can be made of regularly kept records.]

It is interesting to note the substantial difference in the number of days in May, June and July during which honeyeaters were seen from 5 Orchard Place, Melba. This difference is shown in the following tabulation.

Species	1976	1977	1978
Noisy Friarbird			2
Red Wattlebird		11	26
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	3	19	
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater		9	
Fuscous Honeyeater		43	
White-plumed Honeyeater	1	12	1
White-naped Honeyeater		7	
Brown-headed Honeyeater		22	

The low numbers in 1976 could have been caused by the garden not being well developed at the time and therefore less attractive to birds. However this would not account for the difference in figures for 1977-78.

Although the above figures do not prove anything by themselves they do show that there were more honeyeaters around Melba in 1977. Was this true throughout Canberra? If so, why was it?

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WHITE EGRET (Great Egret) Egretta alba Max. 20+ / 4 Jan LBG east end, at other times at the most 6 birds (AR).  
 BROWN SONGLARK Cinclorhamphus cruralis One record at Majura Lane (near airport) 15 Nov (RR).  
 RUFOUS SONGLARK Cinclorhamphus mathewsi Numerous at Campbell from Sep to Feb - with breeding recorded (MB).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1978

*Richard Gregory-Smith*

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Ornithologists Group was held on Wednesday 12 July at the Land Use Research Building, CSIRO, Black Mountain. The President, Richard Schodde, was in the chair.

The Treasurer, Cyril Appleby, presented the accounts for the year 1 July 1977 - 30 June 1978. The main expenditure had been on the printing of 5000 copies of the Pocket list of Australian birds, in which most of the Group's funds were now invested. The Group was solvent but it had been necessary to increase membership subscriptions due to ever-increasing postal, stationery and printing costs.

The following office bearers were confirmed/elected for the coming year, although some will be able to serve only for a limited period.

R. Schodde	President
G. van Tets	Vice-President
R. Gregory-Smith	Secretary
D. Johnson	Assistant Secretary
K. Anway	Assistant Secretary
C. Appleby	Treasurer
S. Wilson	Editor
B. Baker	Acting Editor
M. Clayton	Expeditions Officer
A. Drake	Assistant Expeditions Officer
C. Tidemann	Publications Officer
M. Lenz	Records Officer
H. Nix	Member (President designate)
J. Penhallurick	Member
J. Slobbe	Member

Following the AGM a forum was led by Barry Baker in which ButcherBirds and Thornbills were discussed.

C.O.G. WEEKEND OUTING TO TIANJARA FALLS 2-4 JUNE 1978

*Kay Anway*

Did you hear the story about the Englishman, the Irishman and the American? They were out in the bush for the weekend, led through mud, rain, floods and impassable roads by a fearless Australian -our Excursions Officer, Mark Clayton. Alistair Drake, Kerry Atkinson and Kay Anway braved the elements for an enjoyable weekend of 2 - 4 June at Tianjara Falls, N.S.W. We spotted our first Rock Warbler on the rocks near the top of the falls; and our first Emu Wren, Crescent and Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters in the open, hanging swamp area up the road from the falls. The ground parrots we hoped to see did not materialise. When birds got a bit scarce on Sunday, we started turning over rocks, jumping (or detouring) 30 m deep rock crevices, falling into deep holes of water, and catching frogs! Birds identified in the falls area were:

Wonga Pigeon	Lewin's Honeyeater
Crimson Rosella	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
King Parrot	White-eared Honeyeater
Laughing Kookaburra	Brown-headed Honeyeater
Superb Lyrebird (heard only)	Crescent Honeyeater
New Holland Honeyeater	Tawny-crowned Honeyeater
Eastern Spinebill	Mistletoe Bird
Silvereye	European Goldfinch
Red-browed Firetail	Beautiful Firetail
Pied Currawong	Australian Raven
Welcome Swallow	Eastern Yellow Robin
Golden Whistler	Grey Shrike-thrush
Superb Fairy-wren	Southern Emu-wren
Rock Warbler (Origma)	Brown Thornbill
Striated Thornbill	White-throated Treecreeper
Red Wattlebird	

Twice we drove back to the Endrick River for a look and a walk about this wooded area. An additional two species were found here -the Yellow-tufted Honeyeater and Grey Currawong.

A total of thirty-three species were seen.

C.O.G. EXCURSION TO BOTANIC GARDENS

*Kay Anway*

On 16 July 1978 twenty-two members of C.O.G. turned out on a cold, frosty morning to walk through the Botanic Gardens with leader Mark Clayton. Although cold, the day was sunny and calm, but the birds were not as active as usual. Perhaps they thought it too cold to start the day very early! Nevertheless, thirty-two species were observed.

Striated Thornbill

Black Duck

Common Bronzewing

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

Crimson Rosella

Eastern Rosella

King Parrot

Laughing Kookaburra

Blackbird

Eastern Yellow Robin

Olive Whistler

Grey Shrike-thrush

Grey Fantail

Superb Fairy-wren

White-browed Scrubwren

Weebill

Brown Thornbill

White-throated Treecreeper

Yellow-faced Honeyeater

White-eared Honeyeater

White-naped Honeyeater

Crescent Honeyeater

New Holland Honeyeater

Eastern Spinebill

Spotted Pardalote

Silvereye

Red-browed Firetail

Australian Magpie

Pied Currawong

Australian Raven

The rangers have a printed list of the birds found in the Botanic Gardens area, which is a great help in identification. This list gives old common names and the Atlas number of each bird. The rangers will be happy to give you a copy of the list, and current information on the whereabouts of interesting species.

*Mrs K. Anway, 10 Gingana Place, Aranda, A.C.T. 2614.*



OBSERVATIONS ON THE GROWTH OF A NESTLING  
AUSTRALIAN KESTREL NEAR CANBERRA

*Andrew Bodley*

I became interested in birds when I was 6 years old. Three years ago I bought a poster on birds of prey of Australia and I have been particularly interested in raptors since that time. Last year I found a teacher at my school who was interested in birds of prey and he advised me to do a field study on a bird of prey in my area. Soon afterwards I found a pair of kestrels nesting near Watson, A.C.T. The following are notes I took during the growth of their single nestling.

*3 December 1977:* A grass fire burnt 2-3 acres surrounding the nesting tree, while the female may have been incubating. I hadn't found the nest at this stage.

*4 December 1977:* I spotted a pair of kestrels and spent most of the day watching them. I am unable to identify the male and suspect it is in its first year plumage. The kestrels usually went to one particular tree which I later found to be the nesting tree. The nest was in a hollow in the trunk of a grey box where a large branch had been torn off some years before. It is 5.3 metres above the ground and the nest contained two eggs. The measurements of the hole are:  
width 13 cm, height 10 cm, depth 11 cm. The opening faces 85° east.

*5 December 1977:* Today I climbed the grey box. The nest still had two eggs in it. The kestrel left the nest and flew to a tree 10 metres away and gave warning calls. The other bird usually sat in a tree 60 metres away and I think this must be the male because I have read that the males are more timid. The birds appeared to become used to my visits to the nesting tree and when I got within about 10 metres of the tree they flew into nearby trees where the female gave her warning calls.

*6 December 1977:* Today I numbered both the eggs so that if another egg is laid I will be able to work out how long the incubation period is, and I would be able to tell which eggs were which. The kestrel did not lay any more eggs.

*22 December 1977:* One egg probably hatched today, some time between 11 a.m. on 21st and 1 p.m. on 22nd.

23 December 1977: I put a black mark down the chick's back for identification if the other egg hatched. I weighed the chick every second day from this time (see graph). The second egg failed to hatch and disappeared from the nest on 5 January.

24 December 1977: The chick's eyes opened.

5 January 1978: I notice that the pin feathers are growing.

7 January 1978: Feathers are noticeable on the chick's head.

9 January 1978: Wing and tail pins are well into growth.

10 January 1978: I went up to the nest with Jerry and Penny Olsen and we banded the chick with a band from the Australian bird banding scheme. They also took the chick's measurements.

13 January 1978: The chick weighed 190 grains. This was its highest weight and it later lost weight. Jerry and Penny Olsen continued weighing the chick while I went away for ten days' holiday with my parents.

21 January 1978: The chick has fledged at 31 days of age. I collected six castings and some debris from the nest and gave them to the Olsens to be identified by the CSIRO. Their contents were:

Castings taken 22.12.77:

28 grasshoppers

6 Christmas beetles

3 spiders

1 cricket

Nest debris collected 21.1.78:

grasshopper

Christmas beetle

1 spider

crickets

beetles

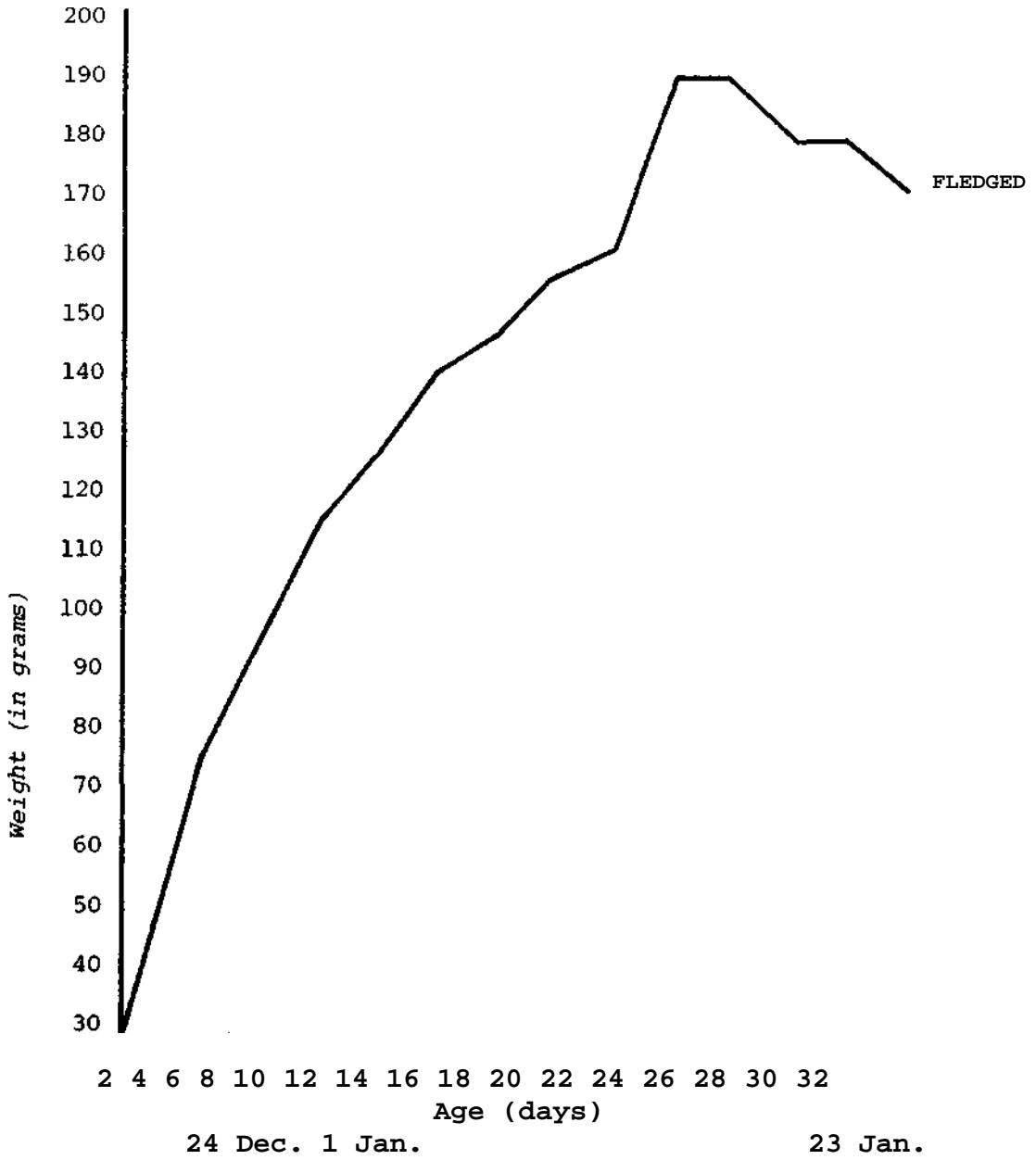
ants

1 mouse

1 small lizard

I am looking forward to next season when I will continue my study of these birds. It will be interesting to find out if the nest is used again and if the chick returns.

*Andrew Bodley (age 12), 10 Rooth Place, Watson, A.C.T.  
2602.*



## THE SLAUGHTER GOES ON

*John Penhallurick*

A recent copy of the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* brought news of the failure of another attempt to stop the massacre of migrating birds in southern Europe.

The slaughter of birds as they move between northern Europe and Africa and the Middle East is on a horrifying scale. A German committee has estimated that about 300 million birds are killed yearly in Italy alone. Killing on such a scale is a threat to the survival of whole species. The chief culprits have been Italy and France, although other countries, notably Malta, also have a black name. In both Italy and France, strong hunters' lobbies have blocked any attempts at control. What movement there has been in the laws of these countries has often been retrograde. For example, one of Mussolini's achievements (in addition to getting the trains to run on time) was to ban the trapping of migrating quail. It has been estimated that prior to 1931 80 per cent of quails migrating from North Africa were trapped annually in Italy. The Italian government recently revoked that ban.

As a result of pressure from a wide range of conservationist groups in many European countries, the British government put a proposal to a meeting of EEC environment ministers. This would have given complete protection to sixty species recognised as endangered (and sadly, this list includes not only birds like the peregrine and osprey, but many songbirds) and would have restricted the hunting of recognised game birds to specific seasons. The villain in this case was not Italy (which surprisingly accepted the British proposal) but France. The French insisted that skylarks and corn buntings be removed from the protected list. Now it might be thought that conservationists should have accepted the French amendment as the best they could get for the moment. But the French demand opened up a hole in the restrictions through which the proverbial truck could be driven. For French shooters would have been able to justify the killing of any small brown bird, on the basis that they thought it was a skylark or bunting.

The struggle to protect migrating birds will go on until the

killing is stopped - hopefully sooner rather than later. Further action is already being taken in the Council of Europe and the EEC. In the meantime one hopes that as many people as possible will make clear to the French government that its toleration of this scandal makes a mockery of that country's pretensions to civilisation.

*J.M. Penhallurick , 86 Bingley Crescent, Fraser, A.C.T. 2615.*

#### MASKED LAPWING BREEDING AT THE CAMERON OFFICES

Cedric Bear

The Masked Lapwing (*Vanellus miles*) is known for nesting in unusual places, for example the N.Z. High Commission parking lot. In Tasmania and Victoria it has even been noted to breed on city rooftops. This latter behaviour has also been observed in the A.C.T., as the roof of the Cameron Offices, Belconnen, has been used as a nesting site.

In mid August (1978) the aggressive behaviour of a pair of Masked Lapwings at the Cameron Offices indicated that they might be breeding in the area. An investigation of the rooftop garden led to the discovery of a pair of chicks approximately a week old. The parents and chicks were observed for about a week until, during an absence of three days by the observer, the chicks disappeared and the adult birds were only seen occasionally in the locality. This breeding behaviour has apparently been occurring since at least September 1976 when an office worker noted the birds and chicks and reported it to CSIRO Wildlife. The gardens were not so well developed then and the chicks apparently starved to death. The bodies are now preserved at Gungahlin.

As the chicks seen this year appeared to be vigorous and finding sufficient food their disappearance is probably due to causes other than lack of food, possibly taken by predators or even removed from the area by the adult birds. At the time of writing (October 1978) the birds or another pair are brooding on the same rooftop.

*C. Bear, 23 Horsley Crescent, Melba, A.C.T. 2617.*

C.O.G. EXCURSION TO TIDBINBILLA

*Kay Anway*

On Sunday 13 August 1978 a party of seventeen, led by Mark Clayton, met at the gates to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve at 9 a.m. Multitudes of grey kangaroos were seen on either side of the road near the gates and on into the reserve; also one swamp wallaby was seen along a wooded hiking area, and sixteen emus were present along the road and picnic areas.

The shaded, wooded hiking trail was lightly covered with snow. First of all we were shown a snow-covered bower made by a Satin Bowerbird. A Superb Lyrebird was calling, and we saw fresh scratch marks in the leaf litter, but unfortunately got no glimpse of the bird itself. Birds seen or heard in the area were: Wonga Pigeon, Laughing Kookaburra, Eastern Yellow Robin, Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, White-browed Scrubwren, Buff-rumped, Striated and Brown Thornbills, White-throated and Red-browed Treecreepers. Next stop was the waterfowl enclosure. Here we observed a Black Swan on a nest, Cape Barren Geese, Black Ducks, Grey and Chestnut Teal, Dusky Moorhens, Coots and a Grey Currawong.

It was not feeding time at the feeding station at 12 noon; however in and around the area there were Maned Ducks, Masked Lapwings (Spur-winged Plovers), Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Crimson Rosellas, a pair of Scarlet Robins, Satin Bowerbirds, White-winged Choughs, Australian Magpies (both black-backed and white-backed forms are in this area), Pied Currawongs and Little Ravens.

It never pays to go home early. Those who stuck it out till the very end were rewarded with seeing a male emu on a nest, an Australian Kestrel hovering nearby and a Wedge-tailed Eagle soaring in the distance. A total of forty-eight species were recorded during the morning.

*Mrs K. Anway, 10 Gingana Place, Aranda, A.C.T. 2614.*

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## ARTIFICIAL FEEDING OF BIRDS

*Isabel Crowe*

My husband and I have been engaged in nursery work here, at Berrima, for the past thirty-four years, and during that time have planted many exotic shrubs and trees on our property, as well as endeavouring to preserve the native plants which were here when we commenced.

We use very little in the way of toxic sprays and rely on the birds to keep down insect pests.

Over many years of bird observation, we have noticed that birds are great opportunists, and seem to know instinctively when the food they like best is within their reach. The only time we think birds need artificial feeding, in this area, is in a very cold winter, when flowers particularly are scarce, or when there is heavy snow.

A few small pieces of cheese and breadcrumbs, spread over the bird table in the early morning or late afternoon, together with a little bird seed, will attract many of the small birds such as Sparrows, Superb Fairy-wrens, White-browed Scrubwrens, Striated Thornbills, Red-browed Firetails and Grey Shrike-thrushes, as well as the Magpies, Magpie-larks, Currawongs and Satin Bower-birds. The Blackbirds will occasionally collect a few breadcrumbs, as will the White-throated Treecreepers.

Now that Canberra gardens have so many native flowering shrubs and trees, as well as exotics, the provision of artificial feeding for birds such as Honeyeaters should not be necessary and we have heard Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and Eastern Spinebills singing in Canberra gardens in the middle of winter.

*Mrs C.C. Crowe, Jellore Street, Berrima, N.S.W. 2577.*

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