



Gang-gang

SEPTEMBER 2014

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Wednesday 10 September 2014

7.30 pm.

*Canberra Girls Grammar School,
Multi-media centre, corner Gawler Cres
and Melbourne Ave, Deakin*

The September meeting will be dedicated to three presentations on **aspects of COG's history** in relation to **COG's 50th Anniversary celebrations**.

The first presentation will be by **Dr Richard (Dick) Schodde** who will talk on **"The Early Days, or Recollections."**

The next speaker will be **Mark Clayton** on **"Banding in the ACT."**

Finally **Neil Hermes** will give a talk about the **"Norfolk Island Campout and Congress"**.

Everyone welcome

What to watch out for this month

Perhaps due to the first two weeks of August where we finally had the characteristic July weather of big frosts followed by clear still days, and the indifferent weather that followed, it took until the few warmer days around the fourth weekend (there were five this month) before there were the first signs of the expected beginning of the spring migration. The main subjects of discussion on the chatline at this time were **Grey Fantails**, with some observers seeing them for the first time in months, but others noting that had been present in their garden/local patch all winter. **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were noted slightly before this, with the question asked, are they overwinterers or the first returnees? This is always very difficult to answer as both of the above species seem to have overwintered in reasonable numbers and it is impossible to know whether the birds observed have moved a long way or only a short distance. This may not have been the case for the small flocks of **White-**

Continued Page 2



Grey-fantail

Photo: David Cook

Committee News

COG has provided input to a Conservation Council response to release of a Territory Plan Variation which includes new boundaries for Throsby and Kinlyside in Gungahlin. A main issue is the urban edge treatments and outer asset protection zones (bushfire protection) which are not dealt with in detail in the variation.

COG has received an ACT Environmental Grant to support the Gang-gang project (see full text elsewhere in Gang-gang).

Thank you to all who provided responses to the field trips survey. There were lots of useful suggestions.

Bruce Lindenmayer is representing the views of the COG Committee in meetings with the ACT Government about the increase in numbers of Spotted Doves in the ACT. They have become a pest species in other Australian cities.

Sandra Henderson

Steve Wilson Medal

As part of the COG 50 year celebrations the COG Committee is pleased to announce the inauguration of the annual award of the Steve Wilson Medal. A Committee has been established to receive nominations for the award which will honour the contribution made by Steve Wilson, one of the founding fathers of COG. The Committee consists of the current COG President Alison Russell-French, Bruce Lindenmayer and Neil Hermes. Committee decisions must be unanimous.

The award will recognise meritorious contribution by an individual to COG and is open to any COG member or ex member. The recognised service will have been voluntary and may have been through committee or other roles. It is not necessarily recognising long service or research. It is for service to COG, not service to birds.

Nominations can be made by any current COG member and must be in writing (no more than 2 pages). Each nomination must be endorsed by a proponent and one other member.

The inaugural award will be made to two recipients and will be announced at the Gala Dinner on 22 November.

Please make nominations to hermes.neil@gmail.com until 1 October 2014.

What to watch out for this month—*continued from Page 1*

naped Honeyeaters also seen passing through then, as very few seem to have been reported earlier in August.

Tree Martins, of which there have been more reports than the related **Fairy Martins**, also seem to have returned after an absence in winter. These two species can be very difficult to properly identify, especially if they are circling high over as they were at two locations when Jenny Bounds and I were doing our reccies mid-month for the COG bus trip. Of the other spring/summer migrants the **Superb Parrot** again seems to have been the most reported during August with central Gungahlin still seeming to be the best spot to see them, though numbers seemed to drop off after the first week or so. Small numbers of **Fuscous Honeyeaters**, the **Olive-backed Oriole** and the **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** continued to be reported during August, with the first sighting of the last-named in my local patch since April. However, as for July, the **Dusky Woodswallow** seems to have been present in very low numbers, and I can find only two records with a maximum of two birds. This species tends to form small flocks when it overwinters, and can be quite conspicuous as they hawk for insects from overhead wires or trees.

Other spring/summer migrants observed during August, mostly as single birds and some of them probably returnees, have been the **Mistletoebird**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Latham's Snipe**, **Australian Reed-Warbler**, **Noisy Friarbird** and the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, the least migratory of the six main cuckoo species which may be found in the ACT each summer. The first **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** was also reported just before this article went to the editors. So it certainly appears that the major influx of spring/summer migrants is yet to begin, and please keep an eye out for the above-named species, particularly if the weather warms up. Should this happen it is quite possible that observations of species that usually arrive sequentially may be compressed, as they seem to have been over the past few springs. Please also keep an eye/ear out for species that usually return during September, such as the **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone**, **Leaden Flycatcher** and, perhaps towards the end of the month, the **White-winged Triller**, **Rufous Songlark** (if conditions dry out inland for these two species), **Sacred Kingfisher** and **Rainbow Bee-eater**.

The weather may also have been responsible for the winter altitudinal migrants still staying around Canberra for the entire month, with reports still (though possibly diminishing) of the **Scarlet Robin** as well as the **Flame Robin**. While reports of the **Golden Whistler** seem to have remained steady during August, those of the **White-eared Honeyeater**

dropped significantly from mid-month; the latter can be harder to find towards the end of winter when it is often not calling. There have been further reports of the **Crescent Honeyeater**, as well as records of the **Rose Robin** which doesn't seem to have been present to any extent in the Botanic Gardens this winter. However, I can find no records for the **Pink Robin**, **Swift Parrot**, the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** or the **Brown Gerygone**. So please keep an eye out for these species before they leave the urban/peri-urban parts of the ACT, mostly by early September.

The species seemingly responsible for the most posts on the COG chatline in August has been a somewhat elusive **Azure Kingfisher** at the Jerrabomberra wetlands. Reporting of this bird seems to have been a bit of a sleeper, as it was first posted by Sue Lashko on the 18 July (as well as in April), but it was not until early August that other observers seem to have found it, with some discussion as to whether there was only one or actually two birds. Surprisingly to me this species, at least from the New Atlas of Australian Birds maps, does not seem to be clearly migratory. There has also been quite a bit of chatline traffic on the **Pied Butcherbird** located at the National Film and Sound Archive (no doubt visiting to have its lovely call recorded!). My experience with this species in Canberra is that it is often hard to relocate, but this one, though again somewhat elusive, seems to have stayed in the same vicinity for at least several weeks. The **Musk Lorikeets** also seem to have been long stayers this winter, as they were still reported as present in Wanniasa at the end of August.

Mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) finally seem to have largely broken up by the start of August, in line with a higher number of reports of breeding during the month, the possible highlight being **Long-billed Corellas** already observed fledging mid-month at Campbell Park from the same tree hollow they used last season. The **Australian Magpie** has been widely reported as breeding, and



Azure Kingfisher

Photo: Roger Williams



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2014 tours

6 — 25 September
Strzelecki Track 35th tour
The 4 states outback expedition
(1 place left)

30 September — 8 October
NSW Central Coast. Gloucester Tops
NP, Barren Grounds NR,

10 — 19 December
SW Western Australia

2015 tours

31 January — 7 February
Tasmania birding & mammal tour

February/March
New Zealand: South & Stewart Is-
lands & North incl. Hauraki Gulf pelagic

18 — 25 April **Alice Springs**

24 May — 7 June **Top End**
Part 1: Darwin to Katherine
Part 2: Katherine to Kununurra
Part 3: Mitchell Plateau

July **Iron Range & Atherton Tablelands**

September: **Strzelecki Track outback
tour**

Please see itineraries, checklists and
latest news on our website

www.philipmaher.com

there were reports of breeding activity at various stages in August of the **Black Swan** (an all year round breeder), **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Tawny Frogmouth**, **Buff-rumped** and **Striated Thornbill**, **White-browed Scrub-wren**, **White-plumed** and **New Holland Honeyeaters**, **Eastern Spinebill**, as well as further reports of the **Australian Raven** and **Australian Wood Duck** breeding, and of **Masked Lapwings** with very small chicks on a median strip. After having not been recorded since January, **White-winged Choughs** were nest building again at their usual spot close to the dam at the end of Kathner Street Chapman during the fourth weekend in August.

With rain falling as I write this column, it could point to a good breeding season, with Con Boekel already reporting “Breeding activity seemed to be rampant” at Campbell Park just before this column went to press. Let’s hope it still is for the nest workshop to be held there in mid-November. As another sign that winter is nearly behind us fewer single species flocks of larger birds have been reported, largely of the **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** (over 100 on one occasion), though this is not necessarily a winter phenomenon. Finally the only report of roosting I can find for August is from Michael Lenz of 170 Welcome Swallows at the known Norgrove Park roost site.

So by the time the September Gang-gang hits your letter- or in-boxes it will be spring and we can look forward to what is usually the most active time of the Canberra bird calendar. Certainly the first signs of the major spring influx of birds can be expected to be happening by then or soon after, so please continue to watch out for these species arriving and the last altitudinal winter migrants moving away, as well as increased breeding activity. As usual please ensure that all significant observations end up on the COG database.

Jack Holland



Pied Butcherbird

Photo: David Cook



Long-billed Corella

Photo: Noel Luff



Azure Kingfisher

Photo: Roger Williams

CALL FOR HISTORIC COG PHOTOS

As part of the COG 50 year celebrations there will be a special edition of Canberra Bird Notes at the end of 2014. The edition will include articles on historical aspects of COG going back to the earliest days.

If anyone has old photos of COG activities, particularly of people, could they forward electronic files to Neil Hermes. Could you please identify any COG members in the pictures.

Neil Hermes hermes.neil@gmail.com

Gala Dinner

Saturday 22 November 2014 - Gold Creek Station, Hall

In celebration of Canberra Ornithologists Group 50th Anniversary Year

The finale of COG's anniversary year celebrations is a dinner, held in the rustic setting of Gold Creek Station function centre, a large woolshed style building. COG is encouraging current and former members to join in the celebrations and they will be given priority for bookings. **The number of places is limited and early booking is advised.**

Cost : \$60 per head all inclusive with meal and drinks. The menu will be country style food, canapés on arrival, a main course, dessert and coffee/tea. All drinks are included (beer, quality local wines, fruit juice, soft drinks).

Time: 6.30pm start with pre-dinner drinks.

Dress: informal.

Venue: Gold Creek Station, off Victoria St, Hall. (Victoria St is the main entrance road into Hall from the Barton Highway. Coming from the Canberra side, turn right at sign on entrance gate, before the Hall showgrounds and village).

Former Senator, Bob Brown will be Guest Speaker. A keen photographer, Bob is expected to focus on birds with his own photos and stories.

To book: download the booking form from the COG website (www.canberrabirds.org.au) or pick up a booking form at a COG meeting. Complete the booking form and send to COG. Payment must be made to secure bookings. Bookings will only be confirmed after payment is received, and will depend on places available at the time. Bookings must be made by **1 November 2014** at the latest (early booking recommended).

Enquiries: cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au or speak with COG Secretary Sandra Henderson at meetings.

Further information on the website at <http://canberrabirds.org.au/other-events/50th-anniversary-galah-night/>

NOTE: People who are NOT current or former members of COG who wish to attend this event should contact COG in the first instance.

Field Trip Reports

Saturday 16 August – Brindabella Hills Winery

At the Hall Cemetery, where incidentally we visited Bryce Courtney's headstone, fourteen COG members and one international photographer/twitcher were well briefed by Stuart Harris on the plans for a morning of birding, wine tasting and refreshments Brindabella Hills-style. Following Professor David Lindenmayer's encouragement of collaboration between birders and agriculturalists, we had privileged access to a circuit walk from the cellar door, through woodland overlooking the Murrumbidgee River and ending in the open vineyards. Our sightings included a **Pied Butcherbird**, three **Robins**, **Scarlet**, **Flame** and **Jacky Winter**, other woodland birds including **Striated Pardalote**, **Weebill** and **Buff-rumped Thornbill** and, courtesy of the Murrumbidgee, a **White-faced Heron** flying overhead and **Great** and **Little Pied Cormorant** on rocks in the river. We concluded that birdlife is a feature of the distinctive terroir of the Brindabella Hills vineyards, as evidenced by the **Jacky Winter** and **Flame Robin** perching on the vine fence posts, the piles of grape marc being a popular food source for a **Willie Wagtail** and **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas** and the vine prunings providing an ideal habitat for **Superb Fairy-wrens**, of whom we saw dozens. Our privilege extended to a wine tasting overseen by Stuart and time to decide our purchases over coffee and scones.

The species total for the morning was 36.

Elizabeth Moore

Wednesday 20 August – Mount Jerrabomberra

Twenty-one members and guests gathered at the start of the road up to Mount Jerrabomberra.

As is often the case there were interesting birds seen before the walk started, with about 12 species written down at that stage including 3 **Gang-gang Cockatoos** and 5 **Eastern Spinebills** being logged. Later in the walk an **Eastern Spinebill** was seen sitting on a nest as was a **Common Bronzewing**. The third breeding record of the day was curious behaviour - eventually recorded as Inspecting Hollow by a pair of **White-throated Treecreepers**. (The presence of an **Australian Wood Duck** on a branch was quite able to be rated as Inspecting Hollow!)

At least 5 **Golden Whistlers** (2 stunning males) were seen low down on the mountain so they have not yet retreated to the higher country. In a similar vein at least 2 pairs of **Scarlet Robins** were seen.

For returning migrants I recorded **Yellow-faced** and **Fuscous Honeyeaters** and an **Olive-backed Oriole**. **Red Wattlebirds** and **Grey Fantails** were also present in fair numbers.

In total we recorded 33 species.

Martin Butterfield

Sunday 24 August – Lake Tuggeranong

Eight COG members joined me for the 7km walk around Lake Tuggeranong on a beautiful morning. Lots of others thought the same thing - we encountered many



Great Cormorant

Photo: Julian Robinson



Little Black Cormorant

Photo: Julian Robinson



Little Pied Cormorant

Photo: Lindsay Hansch

walkers, cyclists and dogs. Despite the many people, we managed a very respectable 55 species. Most numerous were **Eurasian Coots**, with large numbers also of **Purple Swampheens**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**, **Australasian Darters**, **Red-rumped Parrots**, **Welcome Swallows**, **Noisy Miners** and **Red Wattlebirds**. An immature **Olive-backed Oriole** provided a wonderful rendition of the familiar song and a great variety of other calls as we watched at close quarters. A group of **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** flew past before the official start of the walk, and we examined a small nest in the reeds which included a lot of clear plastic. A **Nankeen Night-Heron** seen a couple of weeks ago was still roosting in casuarinas at the end of one of the islands. **Great, Little Black** and **Little Pied Cormorants** and both **Hoary-headed** and **Australasian Grebes** were noted, as well as a good selection of small bush birds, including **White-plumed Honeyeaters** which were seen mating and nest building. The flowering grevilleas near the silt trap next to Athllon Drive had attracted quite a range of birds, including **Eastern Spinebills**, **New Holland Honeyeaters**, **Silvereyes** and **Brown Thornbills**.

Sandra Henderson

COG'S BIRD BLITZ 2014

Yes, it is on again, on the weekend of 25-26 October - COG's annual effort to record over the last weekend in October all species of birds present in the ACT across as wide a variety of habitats as possible; and to record any breeding activity. All COG members are warmly encouraged to participate, so that we can cover as much of the ACT as possible. COG members are encouraged to "adopt" one or more locations or entire grid cells, and those already adopted will be shown on our website and updated from time to time. But don't be perturbed if your favorite location has been taken - multiple surveyors per location are quite acceptable, though it would be good if you took on at least one unclaimed site as well. Think about giving an unknown area a try – it might prove exciting. In order to claim a grid cell, please put in your bid to Barbara Allan, the blitz organiser, on blitz@canberrabirds.org.au or phone her on 6254 6520.

If you are very familiar with a site and regularly survey there, or do BirdLife Australia-registered two hectare surveys there, you would probably be the best person to survey that site for the blitz if you can. But if last years' sites were boring or unpleasant or bird-free zones, pick somewhere new this time. Or better still, do a 2-ha 20-min survey to "cover" the site, then move on to somewhere more interesting. If you are a beginner, probably the easiest way to participate is to do a survey in your local park – but remember only to record the birds whose identity you are absolutely sure of. And if work or family commitments preclude you from doing much at all, be sure to try and do at least a 20-minute, 2-ha survey of your own backyard and environs to support COG's blitz.

As usual, depending on the weather and Namadgi National Park management, we hope to be able to conduct surveys beyond the locked gates in the Park. The organiser is looking for more 4WDs and competent drivers to tackle the fire trails. Please contact Barbara if you'd like to be involved and/or if you have room in your vehicle and are willing to take passengers.

All standard BirdLife Australia survey methods are acceptable – just indicate on the electronic or hard-copy datasheet which one you used:

1. a 20-minute survey over 2 hectares (rectangle of 100 m x 200 m; or circle of radius 80 m)
2. a survey within 500 m of a central spot, time unlimited but 20 mins or more

a survey within 5 km of a central spot, time unlimited (though please stay within the one grid cell).

Remember to record the *abundance* of each bird species seen – e.g. 2 Laughing Kookaburra; plus any indication of breeding using the following codes: ih (inspecting hollow); co (copulating); nb (nest building); ny (nest with young); cf (carrying food); dy (dependent young). *Only* record species you are sure about. If you see a bird species on COG's "unusuals" list, take a photo of it, if at all possible; take copious field notes of all the details you observe and any features you didn't see; then submit a

completed “unusual bird report form” (available on the COG website) with your hard-copy datasheet or email it to rarities@canberrabirds.org.au.

Datasheets are available at COG meetings; from the organiser; or from the COG website under “forms” – the COG observation record sheet is the general-use form. You may also use COG’s electronic input option for your blitz records, using the standard ABA code, not a specific blitz one. [This means that any ACT bird record entered over the blitz weekend will be treated as if it were a blitz record]. If you aren’t already a user of the online data entry system and would prefer to enter your blitz records this way, please contact Paul Fennell our database manager for details – ptf@grapevine.com.au or 6254 1804. If you use hard-copy datasheets, please mail them to COG blitz records, PO Box 301, Civic Square ACT 2608; deliver them to Barbara; or hand them in at the November COG meeting. If you use other electronic bird input systems, contact Barbara for advice on how to provide your data.

While most of us find the act of going out and recording birds rewarding enough in itself, it is good if we can offer modest incentives such as participation “lucky draw” prizes. If you are prepared to donate books, wine, DVDs, native plants or anything suitable as a blitz prize, the organiser would love to hear from you!

There will be regular blitz updates on the COG website, including lists of unloved sites awaiting adoption, so do check it out. And join us for a fun weekend of birding for a cause. Accounts of the outcome will be published in *Gang-gang* and *Canberra Bird Notes* in due course.

Barbara Allan



Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

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Nature Lodge Optics

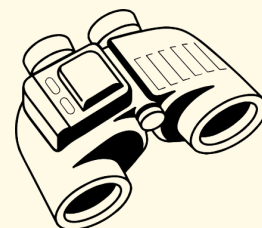
Nature Lodge Optics, a family owned business based in Huskisson, Jervis Bay, has been supplying quality binoculars to customers in the Canberra region since 2007.

Originally established in the UK in 1946, the owners established a branch in Australia several years ago and have become the region's leading independent binocular store.

Open 7 Days, the store always has over 100 pairs of binoculars in stock with a particular emphasis on Birdwatching products.

Major brands such as Steiner, Zeiss, Bushnell, Nikon & Pentax are represented together with smaller hi-tech brands like Weaver, Vortex, Forest Optics, Visionary and Vanguard.

A selection of Spotting Scopes, Night Vision & Tripods are always available.



As a family business and NOT a franchise the owners Daniel and Joanna Payne will always be happy to source the specialist or unusual products that individual customers require having established a global network of suppliers.

The store also specialises in polarised eyewear with brands such as Maui Jim, RayBan & Oakley to name just a few.

The helpful and informative website www.binoculars4u.com.au is regularly updated but is no substitute for personal service and recommendation which is always on hand.

COG Trips

At the start of each trip, and before proceeding on the trip, each participant must sign a COG Field Trip Registration Form, which acknowledges the participant's responsibilities as follows:

- I declare I am capable of undertaking this trip having: discussed with the Trip Leader any limitations I have (e.g. medications, physical), assessed the risks to myself and my property, and ensured I am adequately equipped.
- I will follow the instructions of the Field Trip Leader, and advise them before moving away from the group.

Changes to trips are notified on the trips page of the COG web-site

<http://canberrabirds.org.au/>

and on the COG chat-line at:

[http://
bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/
archives/html/
canberrabirds/2012-03/
index.html](http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds/2012-03/index.html)

A reminder that COG has a long-standing policy to give preference to members for field trips that can accommodate only a limited number of people.

Future Field Trips

Saturday 6 September - Kelly Road - morning walk

Kelly Road runs parallel to the Monaro Highway south of Williamsdale. This morning walk in early spring should produce some of the early migrants. Meet for carpooling at Kambah Inn (corner of Marconi Crescent and Drakeford Drive) for a 7:45am departure to arrive at Kelly Road at 8:30am. People who prefer to drive themselves there could meet us on-site [first exit to Kelly Road, about 2km south of ACT/NSW border] at 8.30am. Bring morning tea.

Ian Anderson and Tony Willis

Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 September – Eden pelagics

COG has booked the weekend of September 6 and 7 for two one-day pelagic trips. The outings leave from Eden Harbour in the early morning (time to be confirmed), and return mid-afternoon. Each trip can accommodate 12 people, and the cost per person per trip will be \$100.

Organising travel and accommodation will be each individual's responsibility but there may be opportunities for car-pooling and an informal get-together for dinner/drinks in Eden on the Friday and Saturday evenings.

As with all boating activities the trip will be weather dependent and rough seas could lead to the cancellation or postponement of the trip.

This trip is currently full, with a waiting list. Sometimes there are cancellations so if you wish to be added to the waiting list, please book with Sandra Henderson (shirmax2931@gmail.com) and indicate which day you prefer (Saturday or Sunday).

Friday 12 to Sunday 14 September – Mates Gully TSR – campout

Mates Gully TSR is about 20 km south of Tarcutta, approximately 2 1/2 hours driving time (210km) from Canberra. The vegetation is Mugga Ironbark/Scribbly Gum/Red Box Shrubby Open Forest. We plan to arrive late Friday afternoon and depart after lunch on Sunday. The campout will be on a "take everything in, take everything out" basis – there are **NO FACILITIES**. We will bird in the TSR as well in neighbouring areas. The campout will be limited to 15 people. Please register with Sue Lashko at smlashko@gmail.com. Further details will be sent to participants.

Wednesday 17 September – Yerrabi Pond

The Wednesday Walk will be to Yerrabi Pond, with an intention of circling the pond (about 4kms). Meet at Wunderlich St, Gungahlin at 9am.

Martin Butterfield

Friday 26 to Monday 29 September – Yerranderie – long weekend campout

This is an exploratory trip to a fascinating and relatively unknown ghost town set deep in the Blue Mountains. There's plenty of Spotted Quail-thrush, Wonga Pigeons, Lyrebirds, Whipbirds &c, and potential for any of the summer migrants and other birds of both wet and dry eucalypt forest. Unfortunately Bell and

Noisy Miners are close to the campsite, though they don't seem to have cleared out other species yet. I tried spotlighting in March, finding only one Ring-tailed Possum -- hopefully greater expertise available in Spring may do better.

Yerranderie was a silver mining town until production ceased in the 1920s. Despite subsequent efforts to restart mining, its fate was sealed when Warragamba Dam was completed in 1959, cutting off the direct road to Sydney. The township was later purchased by a now-elderly woman Val Lhuede who developed it into a quaint wilderness tourist destination. In 2012 due to her advancing age Val donated the town to NSW National Parks. Not much has changed since her time and it's still pretty much as shown on her original website at <http://www.yerranderie.com>. Access from Sydney is now through Oberon so visitors are relatively few considering that, according to Val, "One quarter of the population of Australia is within 100 kilometres of Yerranderie. It deserves to be better known."

Yerranderie is 250km from Canberra but driving time is 3 1/2 to 4 hours due to the last 70km being gravel with some narrow, steepish winding sections and a couple of shallow creek crossings. The road is not difficult but may be a little nerve-wracking and navigationally difficult at night, so the plan is to travel in daylight, in convoy. Depending on people's availability we will depart Canberra at 2pm Friday (arrive at dusk) or 8am on **Saturday morning** (arrive at lunch time), with a couple of short stops at Taralga and a bush picnic area in Blue Mountains National Park. The program for Sat, Sun and Mon morning will include a few bird walks and time to fossick around the town. We'll depart about 9am Monday to enable an exploratory walk on the way home at another mine site, to what is reputed to be a spectacular waterfall.

This is primarily a camping trip, however participants can choose to stay in ye olde cabin-style accommodation adjoining the campground – there are two rustic cottages or basic individual rooms available in the old post office. Anyone wanting to do this should book for themselves by ringing the caretaker on 02 4659 6165, stating that you are associated with the COG trip. The campground is pleasant, green and undulating, surrounded by the old cottages and mine paraphernalia. Camp fees \$12 per person per night.

Trip limit is 15 people. The road is OK for 2WD vehicles unless it is wet; 'soft' 4WDs would give added security but are not necessary unless wet. Car sharing will be arranged closer to the time.

Please register with Sue Lashko at smlashko@gmail.com

Friday 3 October to Monday 6 October - Buddigower Nature Reserve – long weekend campout

The October long weekend outing will be to Buddigower Nature Reserve near West Wyalong. Instructions are as follows. Get yourself to West Wyalong. If coming from the Wyalong end of town turn left on to the Newell Highway (to Narrandera) and follow this until you see the Charcoal Tank Rest Area sign. 500 metres past the rest area is the Charcoal Tank Road off to the RIGHT. Turn here and travel for approximately 7.1 km until you come to a well-defined laneway to the left. This should have a sign on the left of a cut out sheep and the name MACOMA and AJ and LM Clarke.



Spotted Quail-thrush, female
Photo: Roger Williams



Spotted Quail-thrush, male
Photo: Julian Robinson



Wonga Pigeon *Photo: David Cook*



Eastern Whipbird *Photo: Tobias Hayashi*



Diamond Firetail

Photo: James Rolevink



Speckled Warbler

Photo: John Gordon

MUDBRICK COTTAGE— MALLACOOTA

Our mudbrick cottage (Blue Wren Cottage) is available for rental. It is set amongst the trees in Mallacoota, Victoria (approximately 4 hours drive from Canberra). 10 minutes walk to the beach, 5 minutes walk to the golf course and about 15 minutes walk to town. It sleeps 4-6 upstairs and there is a sofa bed downstairs. It is fully self-contained with a kitchen and laundry.

Contact: Barbara de Bruine (02) 6258 3531, or barbdebruine@hotmail.com

Turn left down this lane and follow until the lane turns left to the farm house through a double gate – **DO NOT** turn into the farm house but go straight ahead over a short, sharp rise (there are a couple of big farm dams to the right) and follow what now has become a two wheel track. **NOTE** about half way along this section on the right is a wash out followed by a small gully. It should be possible to get a two-wheeled drive vehicle over this with care – it may be best to do this section in daylight. Keep going until you see the open gate and the Buddigower Nature Reserve sign. Turn right at the gate and look for my signs. You will go through some burnt mallee then into open box woodland. Follow the track until you see tents set up. The area we will be camping in is an old mining lease and there are several old shafts in the general area. Try to stay left of the track as there is one area I am not sure would take the weight of a vehicle. **There are NO facilities on site;** it is a take everything in, take (almost) everything out camp. West Wyalong is only about 17 km away so if people wish to slum it in a motel or caravan park they are welcome to do so. I hope we will have several bird banders operating in the reserve that weekend.

If coming from the Arian Park direction, once you are on the Newell Hwy again look for the CT rest area sign. Before you get to the rest area the Charcoal Tank road is off to the left. Whichever direction you are coming from please be aware of heavy vehicles on the road – they don't always see your indicators and I have had to take evasive action on more than one occasion. In the event of very wet weather the trip will be called off. If unsure please call 62413620 (h) or 0419 482341 (m) – mobile reception is not all that good in the reserve.

To register, or for more detail contact me on my home phone or email chollop7@bigpond.com

Mark Clayton

Sunday 12 October – K2C bird surveys, Bredbo region.

COG will continue with the K2C surveys that have been running since April 2010. The surveyed properties have healthy populations of many of the rarer woodland birds such as **Diamond Firetail**, **Hooded Robin** and **Speckled Warbler**. We will be visiting the same sites to continue the monitoring and see if we can add to the property lists with spring-summer migrants. The surveys will be undertaken in 'blitz' fashion; that is, observers in small groups will visit a number of sites on one or more properties before regrouping for lunch and a sharing of the survey's findings. Less experienced observers are welcome to join in the survey as each team will have at least one experienced observer.

Anyone interested in participating is asked to contact Nicki Taws.

Email: ntaws@bigpond.com or phone 6251 0303, mobile 0408 210736.

Sunday 19 October – Bango Nature Reserve

This is a new destination and a reconnaissance visit is planned for this weekend, so further details will appear in October Gang-gang.

Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 October – Bird Blitz

See separate notice, see Page 7.

“Rankins Springs – Birds of the Bush Festival” to be held on the weekend of 11th & 12th of October.

The festival is now in its 5th year and is run by a very dedicated community group, trying to put their area “on the map” as a great birding place to visit.

I’ve been to the festival 3 years running and it is an absolutely fantastic weekend. Last year, on the Saturday birding bus trip, we saw Budgies, Black Honeyeaters, Painted Honeyeaters, Splendid Fairy-wrens (5 males together... wow!), Crimson Chats, Bluebonnets and great views of a Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, to name just a few.

There are many birding-dedicated activities including :

- Photography & Art competitions
- Birding bus trips on the Saturday and Sunday - (Saturday being an all-day fully catered trip costing only \$40 – this year going to Lakes Ballyrogan, Brewster and Cargelligo, and also a visit to Lake Cargelligo Sewerage Treatment Ponds – an absolutely great birding spot).
- Saturday evening dinner, with this year’s guest being comedian Steve Abbott (aka The Sandman), who also is a birder and released a very funny ABC Podcast “Birdbrain”- <http://www.abc.net.au/local/sites/birdbrain/>

There are also many other activities to the weekend, such as a market day, a family/community fun run, and of course, the chance to meet up with some “local characters”... such as “Wally the Junk-Sculptor”.

For further details, visit the website - www.birdsofthebush.com

John French

DEUA TIN HUTS (Via Braidwood)

Comfortable accommodation on the door-step of the Deua National Park at Krawarree via Braidwood NSW. Three cosy huts accommodating up to 14 people.

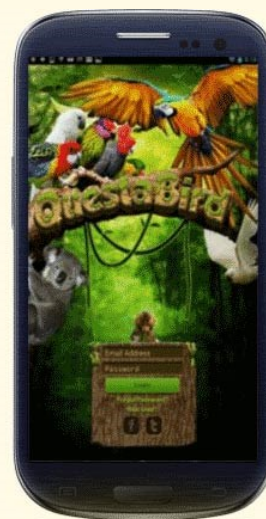
A short walk into the Deua National Park, the Big Hole and Marble Arch, walks in the beautiful Shoal haven Valley. Reasonable rates, hampers on request.. Group booking discounts.

Email enquiry@deuatinhuts.com www.deuatinhuts.com

Ph 02 4847 1248

Questabird

[QuestaBird](#) is a fun new adventure app for mobile devices that gets kids (and adults too!) outdoors and experiencing the environment. Players join quests to photograph birds, earn gold, buy supplies, gain levels, build their collection and become Australia's highest-rated adventurers. The game uses real bird data, with all the known Australian species, along with GPS location tagging. Verified sightings are submitted to the Atlas of Living Australia to help protect our biodiversity.



As part of the COG's 50th anniversary, [QuestaBird](#) will include a special COG-sponsored "Gang-gang Cockatoo Quest" for the Canberra region, with special prizes, bonus gold, and the sightings coming directly to COG for follow-up.

To find out more log onto <http://www.questabird.com/>

Note: The game is currently available only on Android devices, with an iPhone version expected soon.

Gang-gang Cockatoo Project Update—August 2014

Survey progress

Community participation in the Gang-gang survey continues to grow. As of 27 August, there are 400 registered users and 2452 records in the ALA Gang-gang survey database. Together with paper records, we have over 2500 sightings.

At the time of writing this report, we are in the midst of the August Muster Survey count so no data is yet available from the Muster week.

No sightings of breeding activity have been sent through to the survey query line. We are keen for observers to report any obvious breeding behaviour as we head into spring and particularly adult birds inspecting and working on hollows. Observers of breeding behaviour and/or nesting are asked to send in these sightings via ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au.

A sighting at Mt Taylor Nature Reserve on 24 August recorded parent birds feeding a clutch of juveniles. Any dependent behaviours (feeding cry, begging and feeding) should be noted in your observation records.

If you are unsure how to participate in the Gang-gang survey, details of how to contribute can be found at <http://canberrabirds.org.au/observing-birds/gang-gang-survey/>. If you have any queries please email to ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au.

Community engagement

Just ahead of the August Muster, we launched the 'Imagining Gang-gangs' Student Art Competition and Exhibition at North Ainslie Primary School. North Ainslie has the Gang-gang Cockatoo as its school emblem and was a fitting venue for the launch. COG member and North Ainslie teacher, Megan Mears, facilitated the event at the school. One of the student leaders, Edward York, chaired the launch and another leader, Nyssa Murphy, read the Gang-gang poem composed for us by John Leonard (reproduced below). Parks and Conservation Service ranger and COG member, Michael Maconachie, talked cockatoos and Gang-gangs with the students who displayed very good knowledge about our bird of the year.



Ranger Michael Maconachie and students from North Ainslie Primary School in front of their colourful art-works in the school foyer

Photo: Kathy Eyles

Louise Maher from ABC 666 produced a wonderful story about the launch, part of which was relayed live to Alex Sloan's afternoon program. The sound of the primary students mimicking the Gang-gang call was a priceless piece of journalism.

Make sure your families and local schools are aware of the Gang-gang student art competition. There is an A4 poster and flyer on the webpage that members can place on community noticeboards.

Campbell High School students are busy creating their Gang-gang artworks. Students from Ms Louise Pinder's ceramics classes are working towards producing artworks based on Canberra's territory emblem the Gang-gang Cockatoo and their habitat, as the birds reside in close proximity to the school. This photo shows Year 8 Student from Campbell High Sonya McNee-Darrach sculpting her Gang-gang series out of clay to be fired and decorated for exhibition.



Campbell High School Gang-gang artworks

Photo: Louise Pinder

A big thanks to Ian Warden for keeping the momentum going in his Gang-gang column in the Canberra Times and the Canberra Weekly team for promoting the Muster counts.

The GG survey project team

Gang-gang Friends

A poem by John Leonard

I can hear my grey friends calling
From the gum trees in the morning.

I see them flapping slowly from tree
To tree, swooping up to a branch.

The male: bright red head,
Curling wispy crest, grey body;

The female: grey curly crest,
Grey body barred with orange-yellow.

You can see them chew gum nuts,
Holding them in the left foot,

Or inspecting leaves for larvae
With intent black eye,

Always cautious, often hidden,
But curious, unafraid, watching.

Hear them growl and creak,
See them fly away suddenly!

Canberra's special bird, special sound,
My grey Gang-gang friends.



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*Deputy Speaker of the ACT Legislative Assembly
Chair of the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs
Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts*

11 August 2014

Ms Sandra Henderson
Secretary
Canberra Ornithologists Group
cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Dear Ms Henderson

I write to you to congratulate you and the Canberra Ornithologists Group on receiving an ACT Environmental Grant.

I understand this grant will help support the hard work of the Canberra Ornithologists Group, particularly its work with the gang-gang cockatoo citizen science survey.

I would like to thank you and the Canberra Ornithologists Group for your dedication to building the resilience of the ACT's natural environment, by gathering information regarding the Gang-Ganga Cockatoo's abundance, movements, food preferences or seasonal distribution and the frequency of breeding events.

I believe this important research is of special significance in relation to the effort to manage threats to biodiversity within the ACT region.

I wish the organisation all the best in its future endeavours. If there is anything I may be able to do to assist Canberra Ornithologists Group don't hesitate to contact me at any time.

Yours sincerely

Ms Mary Porter AM MLA
Member for Ginninderra

Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

Donations to this fund are tax deductible. Funds are used to support projects that protect and enhance native birds and the environments that sustain them.

COG membership

2014-2015 memberships:

- Singles: \$40
- Family: \$45
- Institution: \$40
- School student (under 18) \$20

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

I Zumstein, Kambah
F Leary, Crace
P Straw, Rockdale
F Anchell, Ainslie

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for October 2014 edition

Wednesday 24 September 2014

Please send articles, advertisements, updates etc. to the Editors at:

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au Or

c/- The Secretary COG, PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608

Articles should be less than 500 words (300 for reports of 1-day field trips) except by prior arrangement with the editor.

Photographs (prints or electronic) with or without articles are encouraged.

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COG E-mail Discussion List

COG has an email discussion list for members and friends: 'Canberra Birds'.

Join the list by following the links on the COG website or by sending an empty email message to:

canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au

The subject is 'subscribe' (without the quotation marks).

