



# Gang-gang

**December 2015**

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

## DECEMBER MEETING

**Wednesday 8 December 2015**

**7.30 pm.**

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

### COG Members' Night

A program for the annual COG Members' Night has been drawn up as follows:

**Con Boekel** – Observations from Campbell Park

**Suzi Bond** – My 2015 Diamantina / Birdsville Track trip

**Ryu Callaway** - My first year of birding - the highlights

**Ann Eldridge** – Photos from the 2015 COG pelagic trip

**Noel Luff** - A Fiordland Penguin at the Eyre Bird Observatory in 2015

**Barbara Allan** – The 2015 COG Bird Blitz including the lucky draw and other prizes for participants

Please come along to see and hear your fellow members who want to show you what they did in 2015.

## Summary/analysis of the past month and what to watch out for this month

The expected dry weather did not continue after my last column was written on 16 October; instead there was some rain in the second half of the month, but much more in the first half of November and then it warmed up and dried out again quickly by 25 November. However, this pattern did not seem to have had a major impact on the ACT bird scene with most species that had already arrived seeming to stay on, except for the **White-browed Woodswallow** and the related **Masked Woodswallow**. On 17 October Nicki Taws last reported a flock of about 100 Woodswallows of the White-browed/Masked variety heading northwest quite high over Cook. So for this season it appears these two nomadic species only passed over/through, or alighted only briefly, with no breeding as there has been in the past two years. I expect conditions here were not to their liking this year, or were more favourable elsewhere. However, if it continues to dry out there is a chance they may still return in December, so keep an eye out for them.

There has been another record of the **Red-backed Kingfisher**, this time at Parkwood on the northwest edge of the ACT, an area where they have been

### COG January BBQ

*Black Mountain Peninsula*

*6.00pm Wednesday 13 January 2016*

*Bring a salad or dessert to share, and serving utensils*

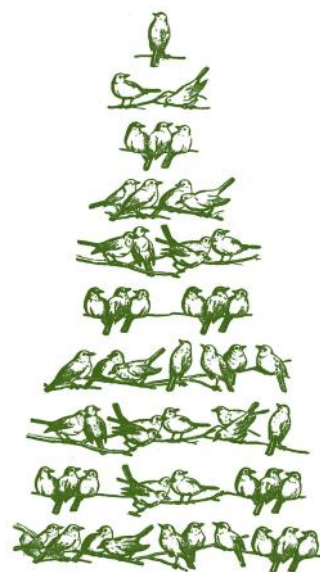
*BYO plates, cutlery, glasses, table and chairs*

*Sausages, beer, wine and soft drink provided*

*Lucky door prize*

*Usual monthly raffle*

*Theme: a poem, song or clothing related to flying things!*



**Everyone welcome**

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

previously recorded. Another dry inland species, the **Black-eared Cuckoo**, was reported from Mulligans Flat for a period of about 10 days to the end of October and seen by a number of observers. Again this was a surprise to me; the 2013-2104 Annual Bird Report (ABR) notes that it is a rare visitor for which there had been no records for the third year in a row, with 2 records in 2009 and only 6 since records began.

Also seen by a number of observers at Mulligans Flat, but a coastal/wet forest species, has been the **Brush Cuckoo**, which was present there from the last week of October. On 17 November Ken Bissett posted a photo on the COG chatline of a pair of cuckoos he thought might have been a parent feeding a fledgling, but they were identified as a pair of adult **Brush Cuckoos** with the female being an uncommon barred morph, and it was suspected that this may have been a case of courtship feeding by a male to a barred female. This species usually spends its summer in the higher country in the COG area of Interest (Aol), though in my many years of helping with Mulligans Flat woodland surveys it was regularly there in the late 1990s but then with a gap until the December surveys for the last couple of years, when particularly in 2014 they were conspicuous by their very characteristic call.



Black-eared Cuckoo

Stuart Harris



Brush Cuckoo, male and female

Jill Duncan

Of the other dry inland species that reach the COG Aol in small numbers a **Brown Songlark** and a **Horsfield's Bushlark** were also recorded at Parkwood at the beginning of November. As far as I can tell there has only been one further report of each of these species, both recent in grassland at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands and south of Uriarra Crossing on Uriarra Rd, respectively. So keep an eye out for these two species in December and January as they are among the first to leave the ACT. Also keep an eye out for the **White-throated Needletail** for which there have several further reports this spring, but together with the related **Fork-tailed Swift** is mostly seen from January to March on their return migration. In contrast most records for the **Channel-billed Cuckoo** are usually before Christmas; there was a report by Kathy Walter and John Goldie on 13 November, not surprisingly a first for their GBS chart.

Of the passage migrants on their way to breed in the mountains, the **Satin Flycatcher** was seen by a number of observers also at Mulligans Flat around the end of October, but I can find only two other records in urban/peri-urban Canberra, both at the beginning of November, one near there on the Centennial Trail and the other seen in Waramanga for a number of days. Likewise I can find only two records of **Rufous Fantails** passing through, 2 birds on 17 October at Norgrove Park and one in a tea-tree gully, on the south side of Aranda bushland on 8 November (and one photographed at Campbell Park on 17 November – ed!). By now these species should all have arrived in the mountains, from where John Leonard posted on 12 November the only record this spring I can find of a surprisingly confiding **Cicadabird**, plus several pairs of **Satin Flycatchers**.



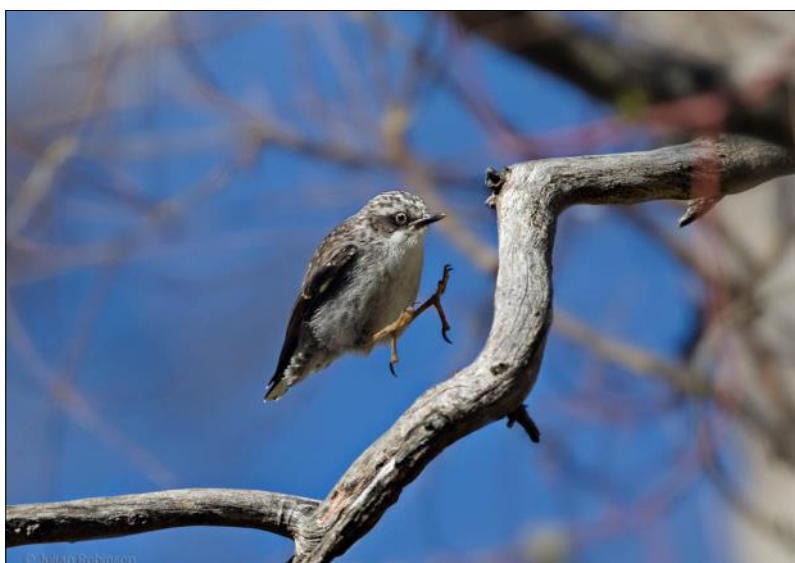
Brush Cuckoo, female

Jill Duncan

The **Eastern Koel** arrived in numbers very shortly after my column was written in mid-October and is now widely established, often causing annoyance and loss of sleep by its incessant calling. On 17 November Martyn Moffat had 3 males in a tree in his backyard, forming a triangle about 1.5 m from each other. They acted aggressively to each other with loud calling and two females were perched on the power line 1 m apart and 5 m from the males (this scene was beautifully described by Lindsay Nothrop as a “koelescence”).

Virginia Abernathy, who many readers will remember from her October COG presentation, is studying Koels and noted that the males were likely fighting over the females. Other inveterate Koel watchers such as Barbara Allan, Geoffrey Dabb and myself have also already noted courtship activity, so please keep a special watch out for any fledglings which may be first be seen around New Year, but most likely from late January and into February. I’m keen to see if we can beat last year’s total of over 25 reported fledglings, which I am certain was a severe underestimate. So if you hear any strange begging noises in your local area with Red Wattlebirds in attendance please pay special attention and report any breeding activity (young in nests even better) to the COG chatline and to Virginia on [Virginia.abernathy@anu.edu.au](mailto:Virginia.abernathy@anu.edu.au). Note that in my experience Koel fledglings are not necessarily associated with major Koel activity beforehand; they may turn up anywhere in suburban Canberra.

This leads naturally to the other main topic of this month’s column; from all reports it seems to have been a very good breeding season so far despite the turns in the weather. One feature has been of many species breeding together, and nowhere is this better exemplified than at Campbell Park as can be seen from the report of this year’s Nest Workshop elsewhere in this issue. Philip Veerman has been regularly reporting on **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **Australian Magpie**, **Noisy Miner** and usually hard to find **Satin Bowerbird** nests all within about 20 metres at Pine Island South. Sue Lashko in her regular survey



Varied Sittella, juvenile

Julian Robinson



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*Good birding, good food ...*

## 2016 tours

### Tasmania birds & mammals

30 January – 6 February 2016  
includes Melaleuca flight & pelagic

### Alice Springs & the West

**MacDonnell Ranges tour**  
25 April – 2 May 2016

### Top End tour

22 May – 6 June 2016  
Darwin, Kakadu NP, Katherine &  
Kununurra. Mitchell Plateau optional

### Queensland’s Gulf Country tour

22 June – 9 July 2016  
Two days added for Rusty Grasswren

### Iron Range & Atherton

**Tablelands tour**  
12 – 25 July 2016 (Tablelands optional)

### New Caledonia birding tour

14-21 August 2016

### Strzelecki Track Outback tour

2 – 21 September 2016  
37<sup>th</sup> tour! Covering 4 states &  
5 species of grasswren

### Plains-wanderer Weekends 2016

15 & 16 October 2016  
12 & 13 November 2016  
26 & 27 November 2016

Please see itineraries, checklists and  
latest news on our website

[www.philipmaher.com](http://www.philipmaher.com)

of Aranda Bushland has noticed 12 species breeding, including again **Leaden Flycatchers** (this species certainly arrived in numbers after mid-October and has been reported as breeding widely) as well as **Olive-backed Orioles** (numbers of this species also seem to be higher this year including in my local patch where they've rarely been recorded in past years).

The species that has had by far the most reports of breeding to date is the **Tawny Frogmouth**; by my count 18 nests so far with some young yet to fledge still. Stephanie Haygarth and Matthew Higgins have been watching 7 pairs in Ainslie, five of which were successful at fledging, and two failed. This iconic species always seems to attract a lot of attention during the breeding season; apart from being so attractive, they can also be easy to observe as was the one in my local patch this year, which could be seen by the naked eye sitting on the nest from over 100 m away.

Other breeding reports are too numerous to be able to list them all but the following are a few highlights:

- two reports of **Gang-gang Cockatoos** copulating in urban/peri-urban Canberra and later of a pair changing duties in a nest hollow during the COG Wednesday walk to Red Hill; the latter is particularly interesting given the paucity of confirmed breeding records in Canberra during the Gang-gang survey last year;
- reports of **Rainbow Bee-eaters** excavating a tunnel and a month later copulating. Please watch out for breeding of



**White-winged Triller, on nest**

*Julian Robinson*

this species on the banks of the sandier parts of rivers and creeks in the COG Aol;

- A report of a **Restless Flycatcher's** nest in the casuarinas at Casuarina Sand, again of interest given the paucity of breeding records for this species in the COG Aol according to the 2013-2014 ABR.

- Several reports of **Sacred Kingfisher** breeding including of a pair calling loudly and strongly defending from a Pied Currawong a large old eucalypt stag of a tree with many hollows in O'Connor. They repeatedly 'dive-bombed' the currawong and kept it away from the hollow tree.

A young **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** being fed by **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** host parents at Mulligans Flat. It could feed itself but it preferred the tiny offerings from the 'parents'.

As noted in the Nest Workshop report, **White-winged Triller** breeding seems widespread but the challenge I'm setting readers for this summer is to confirm breeding of the other spring/summer migrant present in numbers this year, the **Rufous Songlark**, as their nests are very well hidden in the grass on the ground.

Finally in my last column I noted an increase in numbers of the **Plumed Whistling Ducks** at Bungendore and expected them to further increase and peak over the summer. Surprisingly they were then absent for about a month until 2 were sighted on 5 November, and this number slowly rose to 6 recently. There is still a lot to learn about their behaviour locally. The nearby **Banded Lapwings**, for which I never saw a confirmation of their reported breeding, appear to have gone. But yes, the **Powerful Owl** is still present in Turner following the first anniversary of it being found.

Once again my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to my two main data sources, postings on the COG Email Discussion List ("COG chatline") and the Eremaea eBird website, as well as some direct correspondence to me. Without this information it would not be possible to put this column together. So please keep up these reports, in particular for further species escaping the drying inland, for the last records of those spring/summer migrants that leave the COG Aol early, and in particular for further breeding. As usual please ensure that all significant observations are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

*Jack Holland*

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## COG STEVE WILSON MEDAL RECIPIENTS FOR 2015

### Barbara ALLAN

Barbara joined COG in the 1980s.

Barbara was tea lady and storer of COG goods for many years.

She was editor of Gang-gang 1989-1994.

One of the many behind the scenes jobs undertaken by Barbara was organising speakers for meetings for many years, from at least 1993, until that role was taken over by Jack Holland.

Barbara was editor of Canberra Bird Notes with Harvey Perkins from 1999 to 2007.

She was COG secretary 2003-2006.

A major contribution by Barbara has been the introduction and management of COG's bird blitz which she began in 2005.

She has so far coordinated the Blitz up to the 2015 event.



Another backroom task happily undertaken by Barbara has been the entry of data for the Blitz and Garden Bird Surveys.

Barbara has been a writer for the Annual Bird Report for many years and secretary of COG's Rarities Panel since 1998.

### Chris DAVEY

Chris has been an active member of COG since joining in the early 1970s. He well remembers the first meeting he attended at CSIRO Land and Water with about 15 members in attendance.

Since then Chris has been involved with COG on various committee positions. Of late he re-joined the committee in 2005/6, Vice-president 2006/7, President 2007/8-2011/12 and Vice-president 2012/13.



The surveys that he has initiated or helped with the design of include: the long-running COG Woodland Bird Survey, bird surveys on Lord Howe Island and a series of surveys involving the Superb Parrot for the ACT Government. He also initiated collaboration with surveys for CSIRO and ANU. In addition, he has involved COG in surveys at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands and Fyshwick Sewage Ponds to better inform the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust and the Canberra Airport Authority.

Chris has on many occasions represented COG at the Bird Interest Group Network (BIGnet), has been a long-serving member of the Records Management sub-committee and recently was the Project Coordinator for the year-long Gang-gang Citizen Science survey initiated to celebrate COG's 50<sup>th</sup> Year.'

## CONGRATULATIONS!

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## Gang-gang project seeking further data required on hollow inspecting and breeding success

An analysis of the survey has provided 150 records from 50 observers of **Gang-gang Cockatoos** hollow inspecting. From these sites only one appears to have produced young although it is unknown how frequently any of the sites were revisited. To obtain further information on the breeding of Gang-gangs within the COG Area of Interest we would like to obtain further details on hollow inspecting during this coming breeding season.

For any sightings of Gang-gangs showing interest in potential nest hollow sites or any other indications of breeding, could you please fill in an online form to be found at <http://canberrabirds.org.au/observing-birds/incidental-record-form/> and provide information on the location, number of birds and their activity, then if possible regularly return to the site and record any further activity. If there is no activity please still fill in the form and enter a zero for numbers with the words 'This is a zero Gang-gang report' in the notes section.

The project team will also be contacting survey participants who submitted observations about nesting and breeding behaviour to invite them to record observations over this breeding season.

For any enquiries please email [ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au). If unable to access the online site then please just send an email to the above address with the details. Note that all locations will remain confidential. Of interest, one site has been reported in August and another on the November Wednesday walk.



*Chris Davey and Kathy Eyles (The GG team)*



Alison Russell-French, Chris Davey, Neil Hermes,  
Barbara Allan, Bruce Lindenmayer at the  
presentation of the Steve Wilson Medal

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# Field Trip Reports

## Sunday 1 November - One Tree Hill (Hall)

Eight members gathered on the edge of the village of Hall for the walk to the summit of One Tree Hill. It was a warm morning but rain was forecast and ominous clouds gathered in the west. We noted a number of species at the start, including a couple of **Leaden Flycatchers**. Early in the climb we passed through open paddocks where we had good views of 4 **Australasian Pipits**. A bit further in the wooded country there were a good number of woodland birds. **White-eared Honeyeaters** were particularly common and noticeable, **Rufous Whistlers** and **Grey Shrike-thrushes** were in fine voice and some places were alive with thornbills. A male **Satin Flycatcher** was a surprising bonus. After about 3 hours we reached the summit to enjoy the excellent views over Canberra and beyond. The return trip was considerably faster, and the birds were quieter, but we did find a couple of species we had missed on the way up such as **Speckled Warbler** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**. Contrary to expectations, the weather remained fine and warm apart from a few drops of rain on the way down. A total of 50 species was recorded.

Duncan McCaskill

## Sunday 8 November – Braidwood Landcare Surveys

Six members of COG surveyed six Braidwood properties which looked resplendent after recent rain. This was the third biennial survey and we have now recorded 98 different species. Species seen this year but not previously recorded were **Pink-eared Ducks**, **Little Grassbird**, **Collared Sparrowhawk**, **Jacky Winter**, **Little Eagle**, **Azure Kingfisher**, **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** and **Grey Currawong**.

On one property, in willows beside a dam, we counted at least 17 **Little Pied** and 6 **Little Black Cormorant** nests, some with adults sitting on eggs and others with up to 4 young per nest, as well as two **Australian White Ibis** nests with chicks. The dam itself had a wonderful array of ducks, with **Pink-eared**, **Australian Wood** and **Pacific Black Duck**, **Grey** and **Chestnut Teal**, and **Hardhead**.

It was pleasing to see good numbers of small birds in revegetated sites, including **Yellow Thornbills** busily nest building. This species particularly favours acacias and casuarinas for feeding, although the nest was in a young eucalypt.

As always, the gardens around the houses were favoured by species such as **Rufous Whistler**, **Grey Fantail**, **Eastern Spinebill**, **Superb Fairy-wren** and **Satin Bowerbird**, with bowers seen at two properties.

Our thanks to the property owners for allowing access and for providing a delicious lunch at Durham Hall after the surveys.

Sue Lashko

## Sunday 15 November — Campbell Park, morning nest workshop

After a rainy week 17 members and guests joined me on a fine morning for the 13th running of this annual and still popular event. Again the emailing of the notes beforehand allowed me to dispense with the usual short spiel and we decided to head out to beyond the horse gate where an inspection the day before had revealed most of the breeding activity was taking place within a pretty confined area.

Before doing this we inspected the nest of a **Noisy Miner** with an adult incubating in a small tree in the car park. I expect this species is a large contributing factor to the lack of birds on the SW quadrant of the horse gate as on both days they could be seen/heard up to there, whereas originally they were pretty much confined to the car park areas. We did, however, find **Crimson Rosellas** entering and leaving a nest hollow, as well as a **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** nest and young about 100 m before the horse gate, the only breeding activity we found in this area except for a number of dependent young **Australian Magpies**.



Mistletoebird, chick

Julian Robinson



Grey Fantail

Julian Robinson



Varied Sittella

Julian Robinson

Once we crossed the horse gate, breeding activity really picked up, and we soon found **Dusky Woodswallows** on a nest in a slightly unusual spot amongst some regrowth on a large eucalypt branch (later we had good views of a bird on a nest at a more typical site, between peeled off bark against the trunk of a tree), and a **White-winged Triller** nest similarly hidden and only found when the adults swapped sitting duties. There was another of this species on a nest only about 10 m away, and later we found another 2 nests relatively close by. Also nearby were **Grey Fantails** building a nest of which only the base and pony tail were yet present, with another pair of this species feeding dependent young nearby. A bit further away was a dome-shaped **White-throated Gerygone** nest, where we could watch both parents coming in to deliver food to their young through the side entrance.

Also within this very small area we were able to inspect a vacated **Willie Wagtail's** nest in a very unusual position on a horizontal part of a large twisted bit of loose bark, as well as a vacated dome-shaped nest of the **Buff-rumped Thornbill** placed against the tree trunk behind some peeled off bark, and a much more substantial but falling apart old **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** nest. Also in this area **Red-rumped Parrots** were repeatedly returning to presumed hollows in a dead tree masked by a group of Kurrajong saplings, and we later also found **Brown-headed Honeyeaters** feeding dependent young near here which allowed excellent views for this normally very actively moving species.

When we crossed back over to the SE side of the horse gate we were first shown by another group of observers a **Mistletoebird's** beautiful pear-shaped purse nest with the slit-like entrance suspended high in a sapling, and then all participants were able to watch the female come in to feed the young. We then moved to the corner where the Flame Robins nested last year trying to locate the **Leaden Flycatchers** we heard calling there, but only the male could be found; in contrast both were quite conspicuous by their calling and movement the afternoon before. I was informed that the nest built previously had been abandoned due to the rain. However, we were rewarded by good views of a pair of calling **Western Gerygones**; again these were quite mobile and a nest site could not be located. (An almost completed nest decorated with a lovely pink Galah feather was located two days later – ed.)

We then moved back to the original area for a late morning tea, hoping that the young **Australian Owllet-**

**nightjars**, so beautifully photographed and posted on the COG chatline the day before by Shorty, would finally show themselves. Unfortunately they would not co-operate, but those of us that remained were able to attract the **Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo** that we had heard calling intermittently, and also get good views of a similarly calling **Olive-backed Oriole**. Also seen during the morning was a lone and largely silent **Noisy Friarbird** and a male **Rufous Whistler** calling loudly, but neither of these three species showed any signs of breeding activity.

A total of 49 species were seen on the day, 13 of them recorded breeding at some level; unfortunately this includes **Common Mynas** again seen entering or examining several nest holes. (4 further species were recorded as breeding two days later – **Western Gerygone** as mentioned above, **Magpie-lark** on nest, **Speckled Warbler** nest building, **Striated Pardalote** entering hollow with nesting material – ed.) Everyone was amazed at so much breeding activity taking place in such a small space (estimated as less than 2 hectares), centred around the horse gate, and especially to the NW and SE of it this year. My thanks again to Elizabeth Compston for pointing out some nests and nest sites during my inspection the afternoon before, to Con Boekel for doing so on the day, and to Shorty for the very timely posting of the owllet-nightjars on the COG chatline and providing directions for the tree.

Jack Holland

### Wednesday 18 November – Red Hill

When 25 members and guests gathered in Buxton St Deakin, it was already warm and I was regretting not moving to an 8:30 start. The first third of the walk was uphill through bush with not a great deal of understorey. There was not a great diversity of birds either; while a number of birds were evident they were nearly all **Noisy Miners**! A pleasing exception was a **Speckled Warbler** seen by several members.

Where the walk went parallel to the golf course, the understorey became more evident, the number of **Noisy Miners** decreased, and the diversity of birds picked up. Particularly good sightings along this stretch included a **Common Bronzewing** feeding a fledgling and a pair of **Gang-gang Cockatoos** changing duties in a nest hollow. Other parrot species recorded breeding here included **Eastern Rosella** and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** sitting in a spout. A pair of **Laughing Kookaburras** were



Australian Owllet-nightjar

Rawshorty



Dusky Woodswallow, on nest

Sandra Henderson



Grey Fantail, with beak covered in cobwebs

Julian Robinson

carrying food - a spider in at least one case - into a hollow from which the dulcet tones of nestlings could be heard. Smaller species observed in this section included both local species of pardalote, **Brown** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, and **Weebill**. A single **Dusky Woodswallow** was seen flying over the canopy; this species seems to be in lower numbers this year. A **Dollarbird** was seen in the area where the species has nested in recent years.

Two **Pacific Koels** were heard calling, one somewhat distant in Hughes, while the other was almost certainly in the Reserve and thus countable on the trip-list. Our final notable bird was a **Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike** carrying nesting material.

In total we recorded 29 species, of which 8 were observed at some section of the breeding continuum. Of interest were the Missing In Action: no cuckoos, other than the **Koel**; no honeyeaters other than the big aggressive 3 - **Noisy Miner**, **Noisy Friarbird** and **Red Wattlebird**; and no finches of any species. Possibly this is a logical outcome of the understorey being eradicated.

Martin Butterfield

## COG Wins Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Cities National Award for Environmental Education

I am delighted to inform members that COG won the National Award for Environmental Education at the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Cities National Awards event held in Brisbane on 13 November 2015. This was in recognition of our 50 years of working to gather and disseminate information on birds in the ACT and region.

The awarding of this particular category was a great outcome for us. We were up against 5 City Councils as the other national finalists so all round we did really well. We had lots of very positive comments on our presentation about COG and what COG does and has done for over 50 years.

The criteria used by the national Judge, Sean Rooney, for the background to our receiving the award was: **recognises outstanding initiative, organisation or community for its innovative environmental advocacy and/or awareness program across any/all categories.**

The summary paragraph of his judgment states:

“For over 50 years the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) has played a key role in environmental conservation and education in the ACT. This community based organisation of volunteers has had a significant impact on environmental outcomes. Science-based and collaborative in its approach, COG has influenced conservation policy, planning and practice in the ACT.

In summary, for over 50 years COG has proven to be a credible, authoritative, independent and collaborative organisation that has made a significant contribution to conservation outcomes in the ACT. COG is not just about watching birds – they have demonstrated an enviable contribution to scientific knowledge, environmental education and care for the environment.”

**Alison Russell-French**



**COG Secretary Alan Thomas with the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Cities Award**

## 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.

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LATEST UPDATES AND CHANGES TO TRIPS are notified on the trips page of the COG website:

[canberrabirds.org.au/](http://canberrabirds.org.au/)  
then select 'Our Activities' and 'Field Trips'.

and on the COG chat-line at:

[bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds/2015-08/](http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds/2015-08/)

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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

### Sunday 13 December - Tharwa Sandwash

This is a very good spot for migrants such as **Rainbow Bee-eater** and **Dollarbird**, and the resident **Tawny Frogmouths** are usually easy to find. Travel south from Tharwa, turn left onto Smiths Road and take the side track to the left just after you cross Gudgenby River. The walk will commence at 8am. Bring morning tea.

David Dedenczuk

### Wednesday 16 December – London Bridge Homestead

Meet at 8:30am (note earlier time) at the car park at the end of London Bridge Rd, Googong. The basic walk will be 3km return but there is a possibility of returning over the Bridge which might add another 0.5km. It may be warm and there isn't much shade so carry water.

Martin Butterfield

**Advance notice of field trips for 2016 as there is no January edition of Gang-gang:**

### Sunday 17 January – Uriarra

The meeting point for COG's annual outing will again be next to Uriarra Homestead big dam, close to the T-intersection of Uriarra and Brindabella Roads at 8.30 am. We will spend some time looking at birds on and around the dam, then come back to Uriarra Crossing and then Uriarra East for lunch. We are likely to see quite a few unusual birds and migrants including **Nankeen Night-Heron**, woodswallows, **Dollarbird** and **Rainbow Bee-eater**. There are good picnic and toilet facilities at both Uriarra Crossing venues. Please bring lunch and water.

Getting there is a bit complicated, following rapid urban development in Molonglo. OLD STREET DIRECTORIES ARE LIKELY TO BE UNHELPFUL! Starting at the intersection of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive, travelling out of Canberra, Cotter Road becomes John Gorton Drive. Follow John Gorton Drive. YOU NOW HAVE TWO POSSIBLE ROUTES.

ROUTE 1. Travelling along John Gorton Drive you will (again) come to an intersection with Cotter Road. Turn left and follow this for about 15km past Mt Stromlo and the Cotter Reserve to the T-intersection with Uriarra Road. Turn right and the big dam is on your right.

ROUTE 2. In John Gorton Drive go on until you come to Opperman Avenue. Turn left and follow on straight to the roundabout near Stromlo Forest Park, where you turn right to Uriarra Road. Follow Uriarra Road over the Uriarra Crossing, turn left up the hill until you come to the big dam on your right. It is slightly shorter than ROUTE 1. If coming from Belconnen over Coppins Crossing, take a right turn from John Gorton Drive into Opperman Avenue.

Bruce Lindenmayer

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### Sunday 31 January - Jerrabomberra Wetlands (World Wetlands Day)

To celebrate World Wetlands Day, during this morning outing we will visit Kelly's Swamp and Jerrabomberra Creek. Depending on numbers, the group may be divided into two, so a volunteer to lead a possible second group would be appreciated. Bring hat, sunscreen, water and, if you have one, a telescope. Meet at 7.30am in the carpark at the end of Dairy Road, Fyshwick. No booking required.

Sue Lashko

### Sunday 14 February - Molonglo Reach Boat Trip

This outing/cruise will be on the upper parts of Lake Burley Griffin (East Basin) and the adjacent Molonglo River Reach, where late summer/early autumn is usually the peak time for nesting, with darters as well as three species of cormorant known to breed there. The area also has a variety of water birds, and a range of land birds can be seen on the banks.

The boat trip will last about 2 hours from 8 am and will cost \$20, payable in cash on boarding. This year we will again be travelling in the electric boat "MV Gull" which can carry around 22 people. The boat allows both a quiet approach as well as access to areas difficult to get to from the land. **The point of departure will again be Kingston Harbour using the wharf at the end of Giles Street.** There is plenty of all day free weekend parking close by, particularly in Eastlake Parade. Alternatively participants can park their cars in the SE corner of the Glass Works/Bus Depot Markets car park, which will involve about a 200 m walk.

Registration for this field trip is essential. Please book your place on the boat with Jack Holland (on 6288 7840 AH or by email on [jandaholland@bigpond.com](mailto:jandaholland@bigpond.com)). These trips have always been popular, so please make contact early if you want to be assured of a place.

Jack Holland

### Sunday 28 February - Yerrabi Track to Boboyan Trig in southern Namadgi

This is a moderate walk of 4 km return (about 2-3 hours). The walk descends from the carpark through peppermint forest to a swamp, and then ascends through mountain gum/snow gum forest to a rocky summit with fantastic views.

The birds we're likely to encounter are the typical montane forest species such as **Superb Lyrebird, Grey Currawong, White-naped, White-eared, Yellow-faced** and **Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Scarlet, Eastern Yellow and Flame Robins, White-throated Treecreeper, Satin Flycatcher, Fan-tailed** and **Brush Cuckoos, Grey Shrike-thrush** and **Grey Fantail**. In addition, at this time of year there are often good highland butterflies and wildflowers in the swamp section of the walk, and small reptiles in the peppermint forest section of the walk, so if people are interested we will have time to stop and look at these.

Please note it can be quite windy and exposed at the summit, so please remember to bring wind and rain gear, and the track can be narrow, steep and rocky in parts so wear sturdy footwear. Bring some morning tea and plenty of water.

The carpark for the walk is located 35 kms south of the Namadgi Visitors Centre on the unsealed Boboyan Rd, but we will organise to meet and carpool from Lanyon Marketplace. We will meet at Lanyon Marketplace at 7am, and it will take us approx an hour to drive in convoy to the carpark for the start of the walk on Boboyan Rd.

Please contact me if you wish to attend ([chowchilla29@yahoo.com](mailto:chowchilla29@yahoo.com)).

Suzi Bond

### 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](mailto:barbdebruine@hotmail.com)

### Sunday 6 March – Crace Wetlands

Meet at 9.00am near the children's playground on Narden Street Crace - parking is available on Narden Street. Likely species include the usual common water birds, plus **Grey Teal** and **Hardhead**, grebes, **Black-fronted Dotterel**, **Little Grassbirds**, **Australian Reed-Warblers**, and possibly **Golden-headed Cisticola**. There are a few coffee shops close by which people may want to go to afterwards.

Fleur Leary

### Tuesday 8-Friday 11 March – Wonga at Bawley Point

We have again obtained special permission to bring a group of about 15 people to this delightful bush/coastal location of 50 acres with abundant bird life, previously visited by COG in August 2015. The two comfortable, well-equipped cottages contain three bedrooms with double beds, plus additional singles and trundles with a possible maximum capacity of 10 persons. For COG, approval has been granted for limited camping and, for the sake of convenience and avoidance of congestion, we shall provide our own long-drop toilet facility. Some of the Illawarra region birds we expect to see are **Scarlet** and **Lewin's Honeyeater**, **Black-faced Monarch**, **Bassian Thrush** and of course **Hooded Plover**. As the accommodation arrangements are flexible, subject to personal preferences of participants, it is recommended that you secure places early to avoid disappointment. Further enquiries to the leader at [terrybellbird@gmail.com](mailto:terrybellbird@gmail.com) or 61619093 or mobile 0427292298.

Terry Bell

### Sunday 20 March – Eden pelagic

In 2016 COG will run its usual September pelagics, and is also running a single March pelagic. The outing will leave from Eden Harbour at 7am, and return mid-afternoon. The boat 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 Saturday evening.

Bookings will be confirmed only when full payment is received. Payment must be made by February 15. These trips need to be fully subscribed to ensure COG does not make a loss, and as is the case with all paid trips, preference is given to COG members. Once you've booked and paid, no refunds can be given unless a replacement can be found. No places will be made available to non-members unless the trips are not fully subscribed by COG members by mid-February. As with all boating activities the trip will be weather dependent and rough seas could lead to the cancellation or postponement of the trip.

## 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](http://www.binoculars4u.com.au) is regularly updated but is no substitute for personal service and recommendation which is always on hand.

**We welcome customers new and old to call us on  
02 4441 7770**

Please book with Sandra Henderson ([shirmax2931@gmail.com](mailto:shirmax2931@gmail.com)). Payment by direct deposit to COG's bank account is preferred – details will be sent to those who express interest. These trips often fill up fast, so if interested please book early.

Sandra Henderson

## COG'S Bird Blitz 2015 preliminary results

Not all datasheets have been received – if yours are outstanding, please get them to me asap! But so far we've had 282 datasheets – 85 via eBird, 40 via COG's electronic system and 155 hard copies, from 68 named participants. One hundred and seventy-three bird species were recorded over the weekend of 24-25 October, with 68 of them breeding (taking the broadest definition of breeding). Some highlights so far: **Cicadabird** at Old Boboyan Rd (Handke/Kennedy); **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** along the Naas Fire Trail (Harris/Read); Spotted Quail-thrush, Smokers Trail (Bissett) and Fishing Gap (Allan); **Bush Stone-Curlew** and **Black-eared Cuckoo**, Mulligans Flat (Bounds); **Bassian Thrush**, Tidbinbilla (Allan); **White-fronted Chat**, North Weston Ponds (Mackerras); **Wonga Pigeon**, Lees Creek (Luff). And "Turner," our very own **Powerful Owl**, was duly recorded in its usual spot by the two Terries. Some interesting breeding records were obtained: **Crested Shrike-tit** nest-building, Naas Fire Trail (Harris/Read); **Hooded Robin** with dependent young, Glendale (Lashko/Robinson); and the **Peregrine Falcons** again at Red Rocks Gorge (Henderson).

There will be prizes awarded in various categories at the December COG meeting so be there for your chance to win on 9 December. Many thanks again to all participants in our eleventh blitz.

Barbara Allan

### 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 Shoalhaven Valley. Reasonable rates, hampers on request..

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Ph: 07 40941263



### Birdwatchers & nature lover's accommodation

Feathers'n'Friends cottage is fully self-contained with extensive facilities to ensure guests can enjoy short or extended stays.

The secluded lodging is surrounded by tropical rainforest and beautiful gardens with varying habitats and a large variety of birds and wildlife.

Activities in the area include birdwatching at nearby Mt Lewis and other birdwatching locations, as well as Daintree River nature tours and other attractions.

Discounts available for Birdlife Australia members.

Check our website for comprehensive details, rates, and bookings:

**[www.feathersnfriends.com.au](http://www.feathersnfriends.com.au)**

Fred & Jeanette Birkbeck

244 Clacherty Road  
Julatten QLD 4871

Tel: 07 4094 1665

Email: [freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au](mailto:freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au)

## Bird Calendars for 2016

**Great Christmas presents!**



### 2016 Australia's Colourful Birds

**\$14**

size: A4, 210mm x 297mm

From parrots to finches, kingfishers to doves, of the most spectacular sights in Australian parks, gardens and bush are the brightly coloured birds. This calendar features some of the most striking.

### 2016 Australian Parrots and Cockatoos

**\$14**

size: A4, 210mm x 297mm

Frequently referred to as the Land of Parrots, Australia is famous for its abundant, diverse and splendid parrots and cockatoos. This calendar features a selection of some of the most interesting and beautiful, many of which can be seen in our region.

### The Photographer

Martin Willis is a well-published wildlife photographer with a passion for the natural environment. With wife Sam, he is located in Malanda, Far North Queensland, an area known for its natural beauty and diverse fauna and flora.

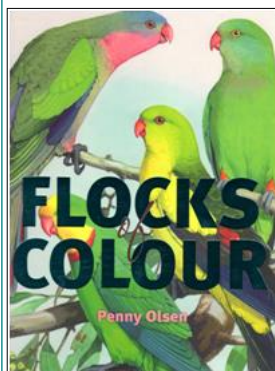
## Publications for sale

COG provides a range of birdwatching related publications for sale to members at discounted prices (around 10-30% off RRP).

Below are highlighted a sample of popular publications available from the sales desk at COG meetings. We get new books in all the time and sometimes popular books sell out, but they can easily be re-ordered. If you are looking for a particular book, talk to the sales desk team at the meeting, as they can look at ordering it for you or contact Kathy on

[sales@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:sales@canberrabirds.org.au)

### LOOKING FOR THE IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENTS??

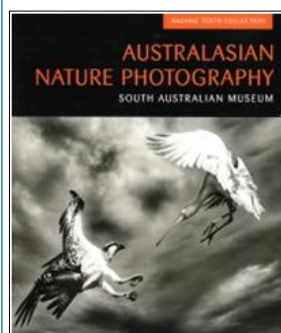


#### Flocks of Colour

**Penny Olsen**

With introductory essays by ornithologist Penny Olsen, *Flocks of Colour* covers two and a quarter centuries of discovery and illustration of Australia's avifauna.

**SALE price \$22**

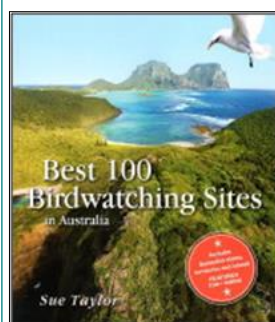


#### Australian Nature Photography

*South Australian Museum*

ANZANG Tenth Collection presents the finest photographs submitted to the 2013 Australian Geographic ANZANG Nature Photographer of the Year competition. Each photograph is accompanied by technical information as well as anecdotes about how the picture was taken, which will stimulate yet further interest in the flora and fauna and their conservation in the region.

**Member's price \$28**

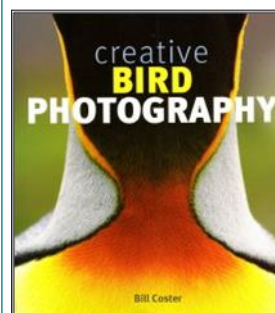


#### Best 100 Birdwatching Sites in Australia

*Sue Taylor*

Inside this illustrated guide you'll discover some of Australia's better birdwatching sites.

**Member's price \$28**



#### Creative Bird Photography

*Bill Coster*

Bill Coster carved out a niche taking photographs of birds in flight and has become one of the U.K.'s top wildlife photographers. This book shows how to photograph specific aspects of birds' lives, such as eating and drinking, courtship and flight.

**Members price: \$27**

## 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

2015-2016 memberships:

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

## New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

W Hall

A Skinner

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

**Deadline for February 2016 edition**

**Wednesday 27 January 2016**

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

[gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto: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.

## COG information

**President:** Alison Russell-French  
0419 264 702  
[president@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:president@canberrabirds.org.au)

**Vice-President:** Neil Hermes  
0413 828 045  
[hermes.neil@gmail.com](mailto:hermes.neil@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Lia Battisson  
[liabattisson@grapevine.com.au](mailto:liabattisson@grapevine.com.au)

**Secretary:**  
Vacant  
[cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au)

### Address for correspondence

The Secretary  
COG, PO Box 301  
Civic Square, ACT 2608

## COG website

[canberrabirds.org.au](http://canberrabirds.org.au)

**COG Webmaster**  
Julian Robinson  
[cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au)

### COG library

For all enquiries or access to COG's library  
phone Barbara Allan on 6254 6520

**Membership:** Sandra Henderson  
(02) 6231 0303 (h)  
[membership@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:membership@canberrabirds.org.au)  
for change of address or other details.

**Gang-gang Newsletter**  
**Editor:** Sue Lashko  
[gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au)

**Lay-out Editor:** Gail Neumann  
**Newsletter distribution:**  
Lia Battisson

## COG E-mail Discussion List

*COG E-mail Discussion List*  
COG has an email discussion list for members and friends: 'CanberraBirds'.

Join (subscribe to) the list by following the links on the COG website or by sending an email message to [canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au). The subject line and body of the email can be empty.

To unsubscribe, either permanently or temporarily, send an email message to [canberrabirds-unsubscribe@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:canberrabirds-unsubscribe@canberrabirds.org.au).

If you wish to re-subscribe after being unsubscribed temporarily, simply follow the 'subscribe' instructions above.

## Canberra Bird Notes

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