



# Gang-gang

**FEBRUARY 2015**

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

## **FEBRUARY MEETING**

**Wednesday 11 February 2015**

**7.30 pm.**

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

The short presentation will be by **Jim Hone** on "**Birds of Namadgi National Park: trends, structure and management.**"

The talk will describe, briefly, the results of 16 years of surveying birds in the eastern part of the park. The focus will be on trends in the number of species, the structure of the bird community (big versus little birds), and describing whether there is evidence of association of the birds and feral pigs.

**Mike Tarburton** will give the main presentation entitled "**Swifts: Extreme fliers above and below ground**".

Mike is acknowledged as Australia's swift expert. He will look at some of the flight patterns and abilities of our migrant swifts, what human activities are thought to be causing a decline in the **White-throated Needletail's** population and what new factors our echolocating swiftlets are having to contend with, and how they deal with them. He will also take a glimpse at the capabilities of the **Australian Swiftlet** in the air, through high speed photography.

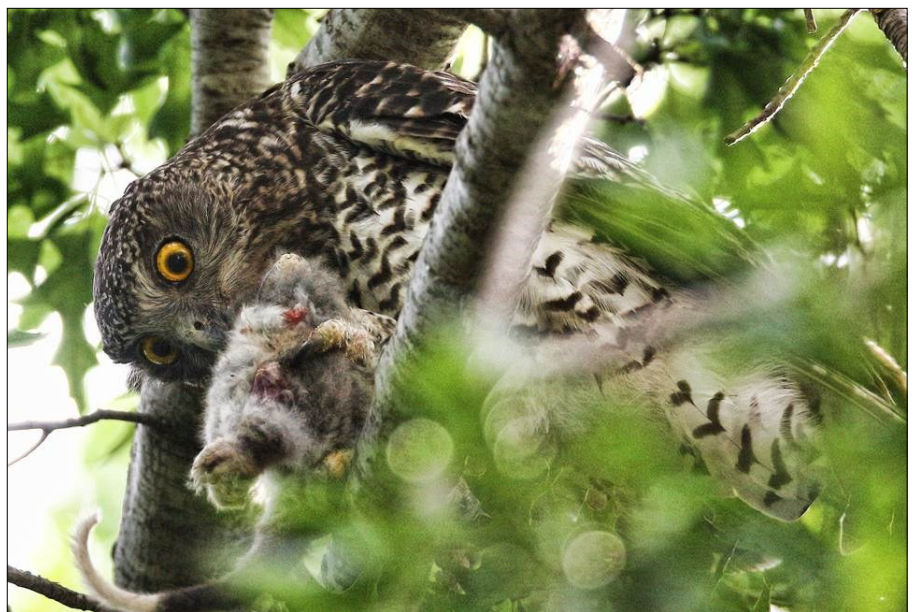
**Everyone welcome**

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

The two months since the drafting of my column for the December Gang-gang have been surprisingly wet (considering the forecast for a hot, dry summer), with over 100 mm of rain falling each month. While there have been some hot (and often humid) days, my prediction following the windy, hot and dry November that it should be an above average year for the summer migrants, especially those moving in from the dry inland, has not been realised, with reports of the inland honeyeaters limited to several observations of a single **Painted Honeyeater**. Steve Holliday also reported hearing a **Black-eared Cuckoo** in his Ainslie GBS site several times early in the reporting period.

By far and away the most noteworthy "unusual" bird reported is the **Powerful Owl**, serendipitously found roosting in the trees at the Canberra North Bowling Club in Turner at the end of November by the two "terriers", Bell and Munro. This has excited interest from far and wide, with many birders visiting Canberra

*Continued Page 2*



**Powerful Owl**

*Geoffrey Dabb*

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

from interstate and overseas to add this “lifer” to their lists. It was still present at the time of completing this column two months later, which makes me wonder how long it had been there prior to its discovery and how long it will stay there (until its food supply is exhausted?)? The possible presence of a second bird at the Botanic Gardens was never fully confirmed, nor were chatline reports of them being seen up to several years earlier in other suburbs, but it makes me wonder if are there others around? I’m also surprised no-one has reported them calling which they do all year round, save for Gail Neumann who watched the bird till it left its roost and then heard it give its normal “whoo-hoo” call a number of times before it set off to hunt.

The other notable “unusual” bird was a **Scaly-breasted Lorikeet** seen consorting with a **Rainbow Lorikeet** in Fadden. Other new unusuals for spring/summer have been the **Red-necked Avocet** and a **Caspian Tern**, seen only by a few observers as both are typically mobile in the ACT. The rain has meant that observations of waterbirds featured only early in the reporting period, and it was a surprise when David McDonald posted the presence of a big flock of **Plumed Whistling-Ducks**, about 60, at the Bungendore Meadows dam towards the end of January. This is a record number according to Martin Butterfield who has written up the records for this species for Canberra Bird Notes, and also provides evidence that their presence there is not drought-related.

The surprisingly wet weather has meant, however, that the excellent breeding season has continued with many important observations posted on the COG chatline etc. A summary of highlights follows:

The most impressive of these has been the considerable amount of breeding at the Forde Creek/wetlands as posted by Julie Clark (with some great photos) and others. This has included a second breeding event by the **Australian Spotted Crake**, as well as two separate broods of **Buff-banded Rail** chicks (which are also initially black), again a relatively rare observation. Coupled with breeding reported there for **Fairy Martins**, **Welcome Swallows**, **Little Grassbirds**, **Australian Reed-Warblers**, **Pacific Black Ducks** and **White-winged Trillers**, as well as a juvenile **Spotless Crake** and **Black-fronted Dotterel**, and a possibly juvenile **Lewin’s Rail** observed, this again underscores the importance of these relatively new water features in northern Canberra as not just good places to see birds but also increasingly providing favourable conditions for breeding for a range of species.

A **Collared Sparrowhawk** nest with young about to fledge was found at Stirling Ridge just before Christmas. The parents were correctly identified and reported on the chatline by self-described “novice” Alison Turner. This post attracted attention given several previous posts where this species was misidentified and turned out to be the more commonly

observed breeding **Brown Goshawks**, for which several successful nests were also reported in the period.

A rare record initially reported by Martin Butterfield was of a young **Brush Cuckoo** fledgling being fed by its **Leaden Flycatcher** hosts at Gigerline, which is also an unusually low altitude spot for this species which generally is thought to breed higher in the mountains. There have also been posts of juvenile/immature **Fan-tailed Cuckoos**, and two records of a dependent young **Pallid Cuckoo** (one with **Brown-headed Honeyeaters** as the host). Elizabeth Compston reported **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos** copulating at Campbell Park early in 2015, and Lindell Emerton a probable fledgling three weeks later. Martin also posted a sighting of four **Horsefield’s Bronze-Cuckoos** including two juveniles/immatures in his GBS site at Carwoola, another example of their interacting/associating with adult cuckoos post breeding (see my December column). These were all calling which is unusual for this species which is usually silent post breeding.

The first **Eastern Koel** fledgling was reported on 21 December in Page by Barbara Allan. This is very early, and she estimated egg laying must have occurred very shortly after their arrival in late October. Surprisingly there have only been 3 further reports, all in the last week before the Gang-



Eastern Koel

John Gordon

gang cutoff, with the one at Kippax by John Layton both being in an area of low Koel activity, and with the host unclear. So please keep an eye/ear out for further fledglings; late January/February seems to be the peak time for these despite if being towards the end of the very long **Red Wattlebird** breeding season. My experience in Rivett this year is that the fledglings are both easy to pick up (though not necessarily to locate/observe) due to their repeated begging, and that they tend to stay put in the area at least for a few days.

Many people have reported **Superb Parrots** with dependent young moving into their local areas from mid-December, so it seems to have been another excellent breeding season for them in the ACT, with a maximum of 110 adults and young reported at the Belconnen Golf Course by Chris Davey. Except for a report of three birds (including a dependent young) in Yarralumla by Wayne Gregson all again have been northside, despite my expectation that as numbers and their range in the ACT increases their presence south of Lake Burley Griffin/the Molonglo River should also rise. It remains unclear to me why in particular the river remains such a barrier.

Towards the end of the reporting period Anthony Overs reported the presence of at least two, possibly three, juvenile **Southern Boobooks** calling in Hawker for at least four evenings. These make a cricket-like trill which is very different from the adult call, so if you hear this persistently after dark it is well worth investigating. A number of late fledging **Tawny Frogmouths** were also reported in mid-January, some of which were second attempts when the first nests failed.

Perhaps helped by the good conditions, a number of the many **White-browed Woodswallows** reported at Campbell Park in November stayed to complete their breeding cycle, leaving the area around mid-January. This was one of three confirmed breeding spots in the COG area of interest (AOI) this summer, including at Mulligan's Flat where Peter Milburn reports they had one of their best breeding seasons he can remember. There were 3 colonies, all producing young and in one colony a pair of **Masked Woodswallows** hung around, but with no apparent breeding effort. I understand TSR 48 north of Gundaroo, another area this species is known to favour, had a similar breeding effort to Campbell Park. There may have been a further breeding event at the



Brown Treecreeper, juvenile

Leo Berzins



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## 2015 tours

*Good birding, good food ...*

**Special NSW Parks Week  
Plains-wanderer Weekend**  
14 — 15 March (catered)

**Alice Springs birding tour**  
18 — 25 April: Fantastic season!

**Top End birding tour**  
25 May — 2 June — 7 June  
Pt 1 Darwin Kakadu Katherine.  
Pt 2 Katherine Kununurra  
Mitchell Plateau day now open to non-Top End  
participants: few places remaining.

**Iron Range parts 1 & 2**  
Pt 1 Atherton Tablelands 10 - 15  
Pt 2 Iron Range 15 - 23 July

**New Caledonia birding tour**  
16 — 23 August

**Strzelecki Track outback tour**  
4 — 23 September 36<sup>th</sup> tour!

**Barren Grounds, Gloucester Tops, Wingham &  
coastal NSW**  
26 September — 4 October

## 2015 Plains-wanderer weekends

7 & 8 November 2015  
6 & 7 December 2015

## 2016 Tasmania February

*Please see itineraries, checklists and latest news  
on our website*

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

Jerrabomberra West Nature Reserve, but this was not confirmed.

The excellence of the breeding season is further illustrated by the report of **Crested Shrike-tits** building a nest at Lake Ginninderra, a **Rose Robin** nest with young being fed by their parents on the January COG Wednesday Walk to the Brindabellas, **Banded Lapwing** dependent young near Gundaroo, **Rainbow Bee-eater**, **Satin Bowerbird**, **Brown Treecreeper**, **Hooded Robin** and **Little Eagle** fledglings. Breeding of many other “more common” species was also reported, but a shortage of space does not allow coverage.

Please remember that the breeding season can continue right into autumn, and I expect it will do so even more than usual this year given the excellent conditions out there. So please continue to look out for and report signs of breeding, as many experts believe this is the most important information that can be reported for birds and personally I’m delighted by your efforts of posting this information this year – hopefully most, if not all, breeding records will be entered into the COG database.

For some species the breeding season is over, and by the time you read this column most of these birds, if not all, will have left. This includes the **Rufous Songlark** which seems to have had patchy presence this season. One place they were very common was the western border of Narrabundah Hill where in a rough triangle with sides less than 500 m at least fifteen birds were counted on 21 December. Some were still giving their nuptial flight call, a couple were carrying food to their well hidden nest in the grass, while others were flying about silently. By New Year’s Day there was hardly a bird to be found there, though some were still present but silent during January, the main diagnostic feature being the rufous rump on a plain “pipit-like” bird.

Another breeding species which usually leaves early is the **White-winged Triller** of which a male was still calling loudly at Narrabundah Hill mid-January (and a female seen at Kama NR on 19 January – ed!) Other early leavers which may or may not have bred due to the very small numbers present include the **Brown Songlark** and the **Horsfield’s Bushlark**. I can find only a single report this spring/summer for the **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, which is more likely to be a passage migrant. So watch out for the last of these species to leave, and please enter these observations into the COG database.

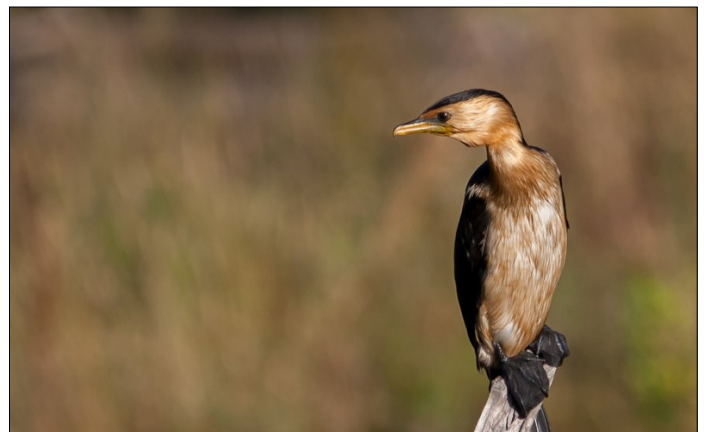
Species usually leaving during February include the **Brush Cuckoo** and **Dollarbird**. The latter may stay until early March, but is more noticeable in the Canberra suburbs from now until then as in particular this year’s brood come to hawk from the wires, etc, before leaving. Indeed this has already been reported with Sue Lashko observing a pair with six juveniles (HANZAB lists the clutch-size as from two to eight, but normally four to five) in Fyshwick. The **Rainbow Bee-eater** is also more noticeable over Canberra during

February often on migration, usually high over but sometimes at tree top height or below.

Two species whose presence in the ACT generally peaks in February/March are the **White-throated Needletail** and the **Fork-tailed Swift**. Given the rain and thunderstorms of the past two months there have already been a number of reports of these species, though usually not in the large numbers that they can sometimes be, and generally high and not low enough to hear their wings scything through the air. So please keep an eye in the sky for these, especially on approaching storm fronts, though they can also be present in clear skies. And please come along to the February meeting to hear Mike Tarburton’s story about them; I’m intrigued as to what factors are causing the former species to be considered in decline given that it spends most, if not all of its time, airborne when over Australia.

The above demonstrates what an exciting time it has been for ACT birdwatchers this summer, and I expect it will continue over the next few months as species prepare to leave after such a successful breeding season. So please continue to watch out for any late departing species mentioned above and “unusuals”, as well as for all breeding activity which may be expected to continue though at a lower rate. Several mixed feeding flocks, usually an autumn phenomenon, have also already been reported, so keep an eye out for them too. As usual please ensure that all significant observations end up on the COG database.

*Jack Holland*



**Little Pied Cormorant, juvenile**

*Rawshorty*

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## Field Trip Reports

### Sunday 17 December 2014 - TSR 48, Gundaroo

The 11 members and guests who visited this travelling stock reserve 9km north of Gundaroo had a memorable morning. Entry was via an avenue of trees by an old section of the Gundaroo Road. After a week of thunderstorms the reserve was at its best. The 12-14 hectares have a good coverage of mainly eucalypts, native grasses and the dam was full. In that setting the residents and migrants put on quite a performance, like the Drover's Dream with new acts in succession. The **Brown Treecreepers** early on were active followed by the **White-browed Woodswallows** with a male scolding the group then settling onto a nest. There was a varied chorus which included **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Pallid Cuckoo**, **Grey Shrike-thrush** and **Noisy Friarbirds**. A **Diamond Firetail** was also recorded. A noisy juvenile **Crested Shrike-tit** attended by the parents was the highlight near the end of the walk. They stayed in one tree long enough to allow good views of plumage and to hear the begging call. On the way back we stopped at a long paddock 2km north of Gundaroo, beside the Yass River. We had good views of three **Banded Lapwings**, 2 adults and a juvenile and heard their calls. A flock of 40+ **Straw-necked Ibis** fed in the paddocks and earlier another flock had wheeled past the reserve. The total number of species counted was 40. A big thank you to Michael Lenz for sharing his special spot with us.

Bill Graham



Crested Shrike-tit

David Cook



Banded Lapwing

Julian Robinson

### Wednesday 17 December 2014 – Hall area

Twenty-three members and guests gathered for the walk through the Travelling Stock Reserve and the adjoining woodland. The "best bird" seen was a **Crested Shrike-tit**, first located in an *Acacia dealbata* and then seen in many nearby perches. The bird was very aggressive to **Dusky Woodswallows** and it was thought likely that a nest was in the vicinity. It clearly met the criterion for the "Agitated Behaviour" category of Breeding records in ebird. Two **Jacky Winters** were seen in the far western corner of the woodland but displayed no evidence of breeding behaviour. A single **Brown Treecreeper** was seen by one observer close to where very young birds were seen a year ago. Other breeding records at the first site were: **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** inspecting hollow; **Magpie-lark** on nest; **Willie Wagtail** nest with young; **Dusky Woodswallow** on nest; **Welcome Swallow** with dependent young; and **Noisy Friarbird** on nest. We recorded 39 species at this site. There were a number of notable absentees. Not a

#### 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

single thornbill was seen or heard, likewise not a single cuckoo, nor any Rufous Whistlers. While the length of the grass might have made the area unattractive for some species in these groups, the arboreal species, especially those with a taste for larger insects, should have been very well suited.

About half the group moved on to the nearby Hall Cemetery. This was relatively quiet for birds (but not for cicadas). The less common birds seen were 2 **Dollarbirds** (well away from the hollow used for nesting the previous two years) and an **Australian Hobby** feeding on prey (probably a fat cicada). A flock of 9 **Straw-necked Ibis** soared overhead with a single **White-necked Heron** well above them. 11 species were recorded here.

Martin Butterfield

### Sunday 18 January - Uriarra area

Despite being the 12th anniversary of The Great Fire of Canberra, our day out was fine, still and cool with some spectacular cloud formations. We broke three records for our largest number of birds species at the Uriarra Homestead Dam (42), the largest number overall (65) and, dare I say, the largest number of birders (24) including a few on their first ever COG outing.

Uriarra Dam area highlights were **Latham's Snipe**, **Nankeen Night-Heron**, **Yellow-tailed Black-** and **Gang-gang Cockatoo** flocks overhead, **Whistling Kite**, **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Golden-headed Cisticola**, **Restless Flycatcher** and both **Hoary-headed Grebe** and **Eurasian Coot** with dependent young.

At Uriarra Crossing West we recorded five raptor species (**Black-shouldered** and **Whistling Kite**, **Collared Sparrowhawk**, **Wedge-tailed Eagle** and **Nankeen Kestrel**), a flock of 11 **Australian Pelican** overhead, **Galah** and **Willie Wagtail** dependent young. We were entertained by a juvenile **Rufous Whistler** calling and both male and female **Leaden Flycatcher**. Sue spotted a pair of **Yellow Thornbill**, an uncommon species, but which in previous years has been seen in a clump of wattles and casuarinas just downstream from the crossing.

Perhaps the outstanding tick for the day was the **Collared Sparrowhawk** family of an adult and two juveniles at Uriarra East Picnic Area. They were quite mobile, calling and the adult was observed dismembering a small but unidentified prey. Last year on this outing we saw a single sparrowhawk in juvenile plumage in the same area. It's notable that for the first time ever at this site **Dusky Woodswallows** and **Red-rumped Parrots** were missing. Perhaps sparrowhawk Amelia has the answer! Other highlights were an overhead flock of 15 **Straw-**



Australian Hobby

David Cook



Whistling Kite

Stuart Harris



Collared Sparrowhawk

Roger Curnow



**Rufous Fantail**

*David Cook*

**necked Ibis** and **Buff-rumped Thornbill** making a total all 5 local thornbill species recorded during the day.

Bruce Lindenmayer

### Wednesday 21 January - Brindabellas

Twenty-four members and guests assembled at Stromlo Forest Park to car pool for the drive to Warks Road in the Brindabellas. As the weather forecast was still a tad iffy, it was decided to go directly to high areas and if time and energy permitted stop off at Uriarra Dam on the way back.

Our first two stops were on Blundell's Creek Rd where **Rufous Fantails** were seen. A **Brush Cuckoo** and a **Superb Lyrebird** were heard and, on driving off, some people saw a **Satin Bowerbird** cross in front of the cars.



**Satin Flycatcher and fledglings**

*Julian Robinson*

We stopped at the junction of Blundells Creek and Warks Rds and - in a break with tradition - headed downstream for a while. As usual at this time of year honeyeaters, including **Yellow-faced**, **White-naped** and **White-eared**, were active in the canopy.

Returning to the junction we headed uphill. We were soon getting interesting breeding records. Possibly the highlight of the day was a male **Rose Robin** flying into a nest decorated with lichen and three hungry mouths. An **Eastern Yellow Robin** was seen in the gully feeding its young. A **Satin Flycatcher** was seen on its nest and some members spotted two small heads therein. The last of the 'specials' of the area was two **Crested Shrike-tits**.

Much debate occurred with respect to an obviously young and heavily striated bird begging on a branch. It was being fed and the feeder eventually revealed itself as a female **Rufous Whistler**. So the default position is very recently fledged **Rufous Whistler**; some photos were taken and research will happen..

We then moved up the road towards Bendora Dam Rd stopping at the first intersection for a foray in this drier woodland. We had good views of a **Sacred Kingfisher** and a **Flame Robin** was seen feeding young.

Our final stop was at the Uriarra Homestead Dam. The dam was not as well plastered with birds as usual, the highlight being **Tree Martins** hawking over the water. As the weather finally seemed to have got rainy we didn't stay long.

49 species were recorded on the day.

Martin Butterfield



**Tree Martins and nestlings**

*Julian Robinson*

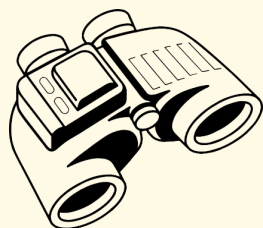
## Nature Lodge Optics

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

## Update on the Fyshwick Sewage Ponds

Recently members of COG conducted the quarterly bird survey of the Jerrabomberra Wetlands under agreement with the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust. As part of the survey two members were given special approval by ACTEW Water to also survey the Fyshwick Sewage Ponds. The area has been closed to the public since January 2014 to allow for remedial work in the area.

We were accompanied by Gail Sutton, Remote Plants Engineer, ACTEW Water, on the condition we signed in and wore high-vis jackets. The area is a construction site and no access is allowed to the general public. On talking to Gail she confirmed that the area was off-limits 24/7 to all members of the public and this situation would continue for the next 6 months as work is about to start on rock armouring one of the ponds.

Gail also confirmed that any prior arrangement for entry was null and void. Anyone who thinks they have entry to the area or would like to discuss the situation further can contact her on MOB 0477 743 775 or [Gail.Sutton@actew.com.au](mailto:Gail.Sutton@actew.com.au)

Once the final stage of the work is complete ACTEW Water will be discussing with COG the possibilities of access into the future. It was emphasised that if unauthorised people were found on the site it was possible that any access in the future would be denied with the possibility of a high fence around the entire area to prevent access.

To reiterate, if anyone thinks they have permission for access to the site could they please contact Gail Sutton for confirmation.

Chris Davey



Intermediate Egret

Steve Wallace

## 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 website

<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

### Sunday 15 February Molonglo Reach Boat Trip

This will be the outing/cruise for 2015 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 20 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 but as the boarding spot we used last year is hard to find, and now even more difficult as it's behind a building site, we will use 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, and a wait list will be started once we reach the limit of 22 participants. So please make contact early if you want to be assured of a place.

### Wednesday 18 February – Forde Ponds

Start for Forde Wed 18, 0800h at Amy Ackman main entrance to Mulligan's Flat NR. Sunday 15 March Oak Hill.

The walk will start from the carpark entrance to Mulligans Flat near Amy Ackman and Cleggett St. We will walk north to Hibberd St and down to Mulligans Flat Road to see the hotspot for rails and crakes, Fairy Martin nests under the bridge and twin ponds on the Bonner side, then follow the path on the Forde side to Horse Park Drive, then back. There is good coffee at Forde shops.  
Bill Graham

### Sunday 1 March – Urambi Hills

Meet at 7:45am for 8am departure, at the layby on Learmonth Drive, near the intersection with Athllon Drive. Contact Lia Battison if you have any queries on 0412 788 791 but there is no need to register.

### Sunday 15 March – Mulligan's Flat North

Meet at Mulligan's Flat north carpark at 0800. Turn off Horse Park Dr at Mulligan's Flat Rd, go 2km north to carpark. We will walk the perimeter of nearly 5 km taking

about 3 hours. It includes part of the ACT/NSW border. Wear sturdy shoes and hat, bring water and morning tea. A reasonable level of fitness is required. This is dry eucalypt woodland with a good mix of species. (The walk goes towards Oak Hill but stops short. That can be another day from a closer starting point).

Bill Graham

## Sunday 22 March – Eden pelagic

In 2015 COG will run its usual September pelagics, and is also running a single March pelagic. Since many people missed out on last September's pelagics, places on the March trip were offered to those who missed out, and at this stage all places are taken. There are inevitably a couple of people who drop out - if you'd like to be on a waiting list for March, please contact Sandra Henderson ([shirmax2931@gmail.com](mailto:shirmax2931@gmail.com)) to go on the list. No payment is required right now, and the cost will be as for 2014 (\$100). Bookings for September will be taken in mid-2015.

## Narrabundah Hill, Easter Saturday 4 April - morning outing

Those members who will be staying at home this Easter and/or will have visiting birder friends are welcome to join this outing to the Narrabundah Hill reserve. This is a repeat of the March 2014 walk but about 2 weeks later, which should be in the peak of the honeyeater migration season, with the northern fence line one of the few currently known local migration routes. We will walk along this boundary, as well as most of the western border and either return by the same or a different path, looking for other autumn birds

such as mixed feeding flocks or late departing summer migrants such as gerygones.

Meet Jack Holland (62887840 or [jandaholland@bigpond.com](mailto:jandaholland@bigpond.com)) at 8 am at the parking area and stile at the NE end of the reserve, at the corner of Warragamba Avenue and Eucumbene Drive, Duffy. **Please note that the entry to this parking area is a little tricky, and is in fact about 25 metres past (on the Mount Stromlo side) the T-junction with Warragamba Avenue, and for those driving along Eucumbene Drive from Duffy involves a quite tricky 180 degrees turn, so please take care.**

There is no need to book but an indication of your intentions would be appreciated to get a rough idea of numbers.



Powerful Owl

Rawshorty



Pied Currawong hawking a Christmas beetle

Bronwyn King

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# Gang-gang Cockatoo Project Update

## January 2015

### Survey progress

The November update (Gang-gang newsletter December 2014) indicated that at the time of writing we were in the middle of the November Muster week. How time flies for it is now time to think about the final Muster for the survey.

The project will finish at the end of February having been going for the past 12 months. The final Muster will as usual go for a seven day period starting on 19 February to coincide with GBS week number 8. Results for this Muster compared with the February 2014 Muster will be of particular interest. A copy of the Muster sheet can be found in this newsletter or on the web at <http://canberrabirds.org.au/observing-birds/gang-gang-survey/gang-gang-muster-instructions/>

Remember that it is possible to enter your sightings online at the above link but this cannot be done until the 7 days of observations have been collected. For those new to the Muster, survey information can be found at the above link. Send any queries about the survey to [ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au)

For general observations not associated with the Muster the online data entry portal will remain open until the middle of April for those wishing to submit forgotten observations. The portal can be found at <http://root.ala.org.au/bdrs-core/cog/home.htm>

As we write (mid- January) general observations continue to be submitted with 45 online entries for January. An analysis of the number of general observations submitted over the last four months indicates a reduction in the number of records submitted due partly to a reduction in the number of records per observer and in December to a reduction in the number of observers.

	September	October	November	December
Number of records	409	355	298	238
Number of observers	54	49	52	33
Number of suburbs	36	32	33	27

The Muster results show a slightly different pattern.

	August	November
Number of sites	83	67
Number of Gang-gangs per site	1.35	0.52
Number of Gang-gangs per site with Gang-gangs	5.32	2.41
Number of suburbs	44	40
Number of suburbs reporting Gang-gangs (%)	56.6	56.7

Between the August and November Muster there was a large reduction in the number of sites, the number of Gang-gangs per site and the number of Gang-gangs per site which recorded Gang-gangs therefore indicating a drop in numbers reported. Whether this was due to birds moving out of the area or to a change in behaviour is unknown. Despite the reduction, there was only a slight drop in the number of suburbs from which observations were submitted (including zero sightings) and no drop in the number of suburbs reporting birds.

During November and December there were 23 records from nine suburbs of birds observed inspecting hollows. To date none appear to have produced any young. Information from three sites with multiple observations indicates that the heavy rain in mid-December may have put an end to any successful breeding. **Any reports of adults with begging young are especially important at this time of the year.**

Linda Beveridge filed this interesting observation on Australia Day about a pair of adults with a young bird possibly getting its flying wings at Rosenthal Street, Campbell.

*The adult male and female perched in a Eucalyptus polyanthemus near 31 Rosenthal St, and watched the junior (possibly female) fly from this tree in a large slightly wobbly loop to an exotic tree in a neighbouring yard. Then adults flew to a Eucalyptus at the above address and called junior who flew in a big loop still a little wobbly towards them then veered away and flew on to a E. polyanthemus in Ferdinand Street (the next street up the hill). Direct distance between junior's perches would have been about 100m, but with the loop probably more like 150m.*

## Community engagement

The *Imagining Gang-gangs* student art exhibition, held at the M16 Artspace Gallery Griffith, in the last week of November was a great success. Ian Warden was given a sneak preview before the opening and gave the exhibition great press, including a photograph of the drawing by Lara Hedley of Campbell High that was awarded the most popular senior artwork (and was the most popular artwork overall) as voted by visitors to the exhibition. Louise Maher opened the exhibition and did a live radio cross to ABC 666's Drive Show including an interview with Campbell High student Lara Hedley and her art teacher Louise Pinder. Many of the students who entered their artworks attended the opening and visited the exhibition with their families. There was great excitement and pride, especially among the junior artists, to see their artworks hung in a real gallery.



Neil Hermes, Dan Leivesley, Jo O'Sullivan

Kathy Eyles

## Questabird

[QuestaBird](http://www.questabird.com/) 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](http://www.questabird.com/) 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.

The prizes (\$250 for each winner) donated by bankmecu were presented to Lara Hedley and Dan Leivesley from North Ainslie Primary (Dan won the most popular junior artwork) at a ceremony for the winning artists and their families at the bankmecu's Civic branch on Thursday 11 December 2014. COG Vice President, Neil Hermes, and Jo O'Sullivan, Community Development Manager bankmecu, presented certificates to the winners. A big thanks to all the enthusiastic students and their teachers for making the exhibition such a memorable event in COG's 50th birthday year, and to bankmecu for their generous support.

The artworks from *Imagining Gang-gangs* travelled to Civic Library for exhibition over the January 2015 school holidays. Civic library staff report that library users are enjoying the display on the mezzanine level with over 100 colourful but 'silent' Gang-gangs. Canberra families attending school holiday events and people attending public meetings at the library have viewed the exhibition. Ian Warden promoted the Civic library exhibition in Gang-gang in the Canberra Times and the Canberra Weekly also gave it a plug. Copies of the Gang-gang survey brochure and COG's *Where to find Birds in the ACT* have been provided for visitors to the exhibition.

As part of reporting on the Gang-gang survey, we will be analysing community interest and engagement over the duration of the survey. Presentations about the survey findings will be made to the Friends of the Botanic Gardens on Thursday 6 August 2015 and at other community forums. A report will also be published in Canberra Bird Notes.

The Gang-gang project team



Dan Leivesley, Neil Hermes, Lara Hedley, Jo O'Sullivan

Kathy Eyles



Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

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### 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.

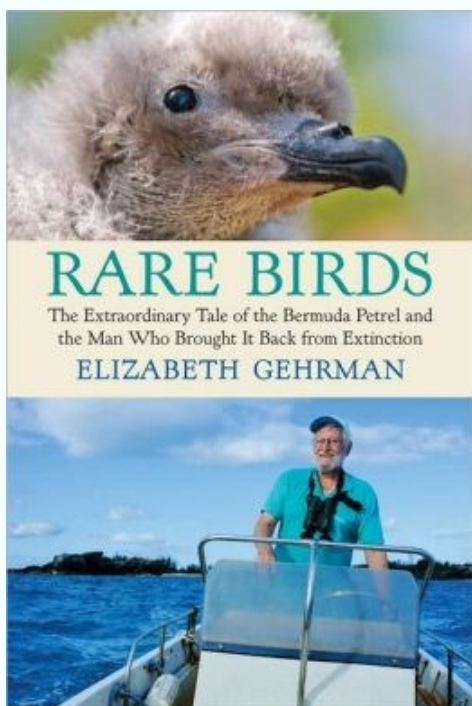
A short walk into the Deua National Park, the Big Hole and Marble Arch, walks in the beautiful Shoal haven Valley. Reasonable rates, hampers on request.. Group booking discounts. Email [enquiry@deuatinhuts.com](mailto:enquiry@deuatinhuts.com)

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

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## FEATURE PUBLICATION OF THE MONTH

**ORDER YOUR COPY NOW AT A  
GREAT PRICE!**



**Rare Birds:** The Extraordinary Tale of the Bermuda Petrel and the Man Who Brought It Back from Extinction

*Elizabeth Gehrman*

The inspiring story of David Wingate, a living legend among birders, who brought the Bermuda Petrel back from presumed extinction.

**Member's price: \$23**

## Publications for sale

COG provides a range of birdwatching related publications for sale to members at discounted prices (at least 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)

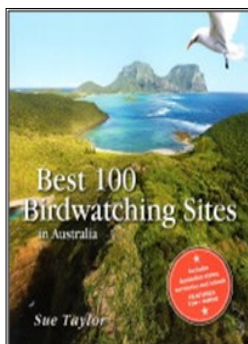


**Finding Australian Birds: A Field Guide to Birding Locations**

*Tim Dolby, Rohan Clarke*

This book covers over 400 Australian bird watching sites conveniently grouped into the best birding areas, from one end of the country to the other.

**Member's price: \$35**

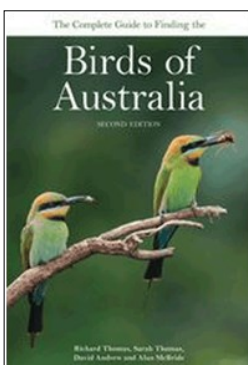


**Best 100 Birdwatching Sites in Australia**

*Sue Taylor*

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

**Member's price: \$28**

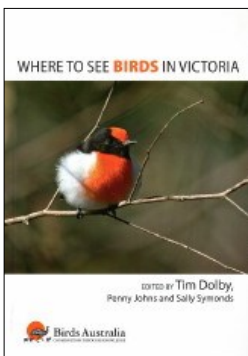


**The Complete Guide to Finding the Birds of Australia. 2nd Edn.**

*Richard Thomas, Sarah Thomas, David Andrew, Alan McBride*

The fully revised second edition describes the best-known sites for all of Australia's endemic birds, plus regular migrants such as seabirds and shorebirds.

**Member's price: \$35**



**Where to See Birds in Victoria**

*Tim Dolby, Penny Johns, Sally Symonds*

*Where to See Birds in Victoria* features the very best places in Victoria for seeing birds. Despite being Australia's smallest mainland state, its varied landscapes provide habitat for more than 500 bird species. It is without question one of Australia's best-kept birding secrets.

**Member's price: \$32**



# Gang-gang Cockatoo Survey

## Quarterly Muster February 2015

An asterisk (\*) means essential information.

**Name of Observer\***

**Location\* (address)**

**Email\* OR Phone number\***

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Choose a location where you usually spend time every day. Each day, record the **largest number** of Gang-gangs **near** your location at any **one time**. Birds can be perched or in flight. Use a separate form for each location if reporting from two or more e.g. school, work as well as home.

Gang-gangs	Thursday 19 Feb	Friday 20 Feb	Saturday 21 Feb	Sunday 22 Feb	Monday 23 Feb	Tuesday 24 Feb	Wednesday 25 Feb
<b>Largest number</b> or <b>zero (0)</b> if none sighted							
<b>Comments</b> (if able)  Feeding, nesting, sex and ages							

**Notes:**

Please send in any forms with **zero (0) sightings** for the Muster week including all zeros, as this is valuable data.

Cross out the day if you were away from the site for the whole day.

If involved in the COG Garden Bird Survey (GBS) please complete this Muster Form and GBS chart.

**RETURN FORM:**

Gang-gang Survey PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608	OR <b>Scan</b> this form and email to <a href="mailto:ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au">ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au</a>
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**Muster Terms:**

**‘Largest Number’** - the most Gang-gang you observe at any one time. Example: two Gang-gangs fly over in the morning, and you see one Gang-gang feeding in the afternoon, Report 2 Gang-gangs, don’t count the extra bird.

**‘Near’** - within a radius of 100 metres of your location. Example: At your home, this is about 4 houses either side of your house along the street, and to the next street over both behind and in front of your house.

**‘One time’** - a period of a few minutes.

Any questions please email: [ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au)

## 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:

C Chapman, Jerrabomberra  
D Dedenczuk, Narrabundah  
M Wallace, Kaleen  
N Gowan, Kaleen  
L Page, Bungendore  
K Bissett, Amaroo  
M Forde, Curtin  
J Oakeshott, Wanniasa

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

**Deadline for March 2015 edition**

**Wednesday 25 February 2015**

**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  
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**Vice-President:** Neil Hermes  
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**Treasurer:** Lia Battisson  
[liabattisson@grapevine.com.au](mailto:liabattisson@grapevine.com.au)

**Secretary:** Alan Thomas  
(02) 6251 5104 (h)  
[cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au)

**Address for correspondence**

**The Secretary**

**COG, PO Box 301**

**Civic Square, ACT 2608**

## COG website

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

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Lay-out Editor: Gail Neumann

## Newsletter distribution:

Dianne Davey

## 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](mailto:canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au)

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

## Canberra Bird Notes

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