



Gang-gang

JULY 2015

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

JULY MEETING

Wednesday 8 July 2015

7.30 pm.

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

The meeting will start with a brief presentation by **David McDonald** on the **Canberra Birds Conservation Fund**.

Following this the short talk, an **Introduction to the birds of Norfolk Island**, will be given by **Neil Hermes**.

The main presentation will be by **Professor Dominique Homberger** of Louisiana State University, and is entitled **"The feeding ecology of the Australian Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos and the Patagonian Austral Parakeets: Implications for the Evolution of the Psittaciformes"**.

A study of the bill morphology of cockatoos and parrots, in connection with observations of their feeding behaviour and ecology, has revealed how the Psittaciformes have successfully adapted to changing environments as Gondwana broke up and its continents moved towards the equator. The diversification of the bill morphology within the Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos exemplifies this adaptational scenario. In contrast, the

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

Prior to drafting this column, I had formed the impression that bird activity in June had been fairly low, but on completion it is clear that as always there has been sufficient activity to interest the Canberra birdwatcher during in the first month of winter. The information below was again obtained from my two main sources, postings on the COG Email Discussion List ("COG chatline") and the Eremaea eBird web site, as well as some direct correspondence to me. Once again my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to these data sources, without which it would not be possible to put this column together.

A theme for June seems to have been that species which generated much interest in May were thought to have gone only to be rediscovered later. This applies in particular to the **Swift Parrots** in Ainslie which were down to 2-4 birds during the first week of June. They then seemed to have

Kym Bradley

Black-shouldered Kite and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo



Everyone welcome

July Meeting —continued from Page 1

Patagonian parakeets were able to retain much of their original adaptations to the Gondwanian evergreen temperate rainforests that still exist in pockets in Australia (*Nothofagus*, Winteraceae, Proteaceae, Araucariaceae), and provide a broader context to the evolutionary history of parrots and cockatoos.

Members who recall Professor Homburger's presentation to COG in 2000 will agree this is a talk not to be missed!

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

gone by 11 June, one factor possibly being lack of rain resulting in the drying up of the water they used for drinking in the levee. However, on 17 and 19 June Steve Holliday found at least 2 birds, the latter perhaps co-incidentally after the heavy rain had filled their drinking spot, which was now a watercourse a few metres across. There were subsequent reports of three and then four seen up to 24 June, so keep a further lookout for this winter visitor, which has now been present there for over two months and may stay for at least one more.

The **Superb Parrots**, which were also on the lower slopes in Ainslie in high numbers, were last reported from there before the start of June, but on 22 June as I was drafting this column two birds were reported in Ainslie, and then 10 birds as this column was going to the editors. I expected this species had dispersed early in the month, but several small groups were seen elsewhere during the month, including a pair in a Monash garden, a rare southside record.

Another species which was thought to have moved on was the **Plumed Whistling Ducks** at Bungendore, until on 18 June David McDonald posted on the chatline that he had just seen 20 at the Trucking Yard Lane Dam (up to 22 after that I understand). These are the first records there in June, with Martin Butterfield's paper in the December 2014 edition of Canberra Bird Notes indicating they had not been reported there from May to August inclusive. Thus there now seems to be at least some evidence that this species is not just a "summer" visitor. Martin has also clarified that the **Australian Shelducks** have been continuously present in that area with groups of 30-50 reported at one or other of the dams after 10 May, and with similar numbers in June.

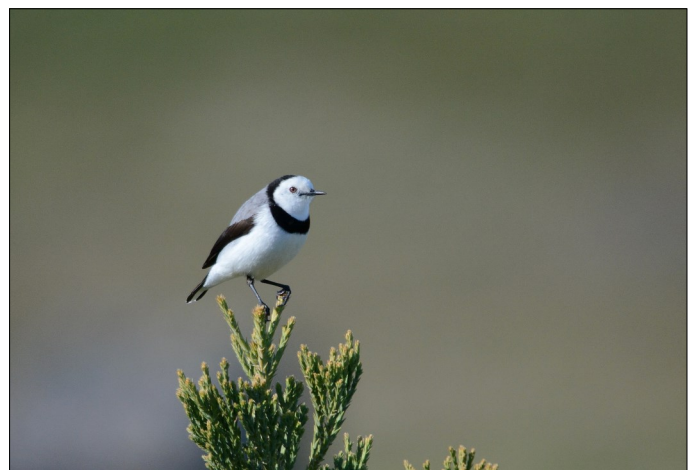


Powerful Owl

Julian Robinson

The **Crescent Honeyeaters** in my GBS site in Chapman were also last seen on 31 May, until two males suddenly turned up again for a brief period 3 weeks later. There have been a few other urban sightings of this winter visitor. On 28 May Michael Lenz unexpectedly saw an immature male on Lyneham Ridge in the eucalypt plantation habitat there feeding with 4 **Eastern Spinebills** on the small flowers of the African Boxthorn. I understand there have also been some on Mt Rogers during June as well as reports at some other places including Aranda.

In contrast, the **Powerful Owl** has still been regularly observed in June, which may be due to it now having a



White-fronted Chat, male

Ken Black

couple of favourite roost spots in a callitris and a pencil pine. Terry Bell made a guesstimate, calculated on a kill every two nights for six months, that from a very wide area it has by now taken about 90 mammals, including gliders, ringtail and brushtail possums, plus several species of birds. Despite that it has now attracted the attention of politicians, its popularity seems to be falling further down the charts in favour of other species such as the **White-fronted Chats** at the Arboretum, which a number of chatline subscribers have enjoyed observing, possibly for the first time. The habitat there seems very similar to that of Stromlo Forest Park which for a number of years has been the only reliable place to find them.

One bird that is a probable “winter” visitor, after it disperses from rice paddies from where most current breeding records come, is the **Australasian Bittern**. Steve Wallace reported at least 3 birds at Rose Lagoon on 27 May, and Geoffrey Dabb 2 birds on 11 June. There seem to have been no records from the ACT so far this year, so they are a species to look out for in your local wetlands, particularly those with reeds.

Of the altitudinal migrants that move from the mountains but stay here over winter, the **Flame Robin** has by now moved more widely into the open areas of peri-urban Canberra. On 29 May Elizabeth Compston reported about 10 mature males and 10 females or juveniles at Campbell Park on the other side of the horse gate close to where a pair bred last year. I was wondering whether they would stay and breed there again this year, but I understand they have moved on. They have been reported at other spots such as the archery range in Tuggeranong, Mt Painter and the Arboretum, and I’ve finally found four at the extreme edge of my local patch on Cooleman Ridge, the only place I can find them in recent years. So please keep an eye out for them, particularly at Campbell Park.

There have been a couple of reports of the **Rose Robin** but none so far of the **Pink Robin** or the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**. The



White-fronted Chat, female

Kym Bradley



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2015 tours

Good birding, good food ...

Strzelecki Track outback tour

4 — 23 September 36th tour!

Barren Grounds, Gloucester Tops, Wingham & coastal NSW

26 September — 4 October

2015 plains-wanderer weekends

21 & 22 November 2015

6 & 7 December 2015

2016 tours

Tasmania birds & mammals

30 January — 6 February

Alice Springs

25 April — 2 May

Top End & Mitchell Plateau

22 May — 6 June

Queensland's Gulf Country

22 June — 9 July

Two days added for Rusty Grasswren

Iron Range & Atherton Tablelands

12 — 25 July (2 parts)

New Caledonia birding tour

14-21 August 2016

Strzelecki Outback

2 — 21 September

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

www.philipmaher.com

Fuscous Honeyeater seems only to be present in small numbers. Following my passing on a report to me from Duncan McCaskill that there were quite a few at Percival Hill, Julie Clark found them there in amongst the many birds bathing (she noted that for some it was more like dive-bombing!) late in the afternoon. As with the **Swift Parrot**, the importance of water for drinking and bathing, even in winter, was again demonstrated. So far this winter there have been regular reports of the **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**, but I can only find a single report of a **White-naped**.

In the reporting period there have been further observations of summer migrant species including a couple of reports of a single **Western Gerygone**, **Mistletoebird** and an **Australian Reed-Warbler**, as well as some **Tree Martins** early in June. There have been regular reports of small numbers of the **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** and the **Olive-backed Oriole** during June, with higher numbers of **Grey Fantails** and still many **Silvereyes**. However, I can find no reports of the **Dusky Woodswallow**, and my prediction that they may over winter in greater numbers this year than in the past few seems to have been unfounded. So watch out for this and any of the other species mentioned above.

There have been many reports of mixed feeding flocks during the month, one including 30 **Brown Thornbills**, a very large number together for this species. Some large single species flocks out of their usual areas were about 1000 **Silver Gulls** feeding on the ploughed and flooded area of the Turf Farm on the eastern side of the Monaro Highway after the rain. At around the same time about 200 of them at the Long Gully tip

were accompanied by 100s of **Australian White Ibis** that unusually were all out on the grassy area. There have also been reports of more **Red-rumped Parrot** flocks, in particular around Lake Burley Griffin, the biggest being more than 100 on the grass next to the lake behind the National Museum on the Acton Peninsula.

On 27 May I observed around 60 **Red-rumped Parrots** on their evening roost flight from the Chapman horse paddocks into Rivett. This is a regular phenomenon that can be seen in the non-breeding season if you can get your timing right. Remarkably Michael Lenz got his timing right to witness the complete exodus of **Welcome Swallows** from their roost site at Kingston Harbour; he estimated a total of 600 birds departed (they left in groups which made them easier to count). Michael noted that the site must attract swallows from a wide area and I can't help wondering what percentage of the Canberra winter population this would have been.

Even more remarkable was Philip Veerman's observation of over 50 **Satin Bowerbirds** over about 2 minutes flying low within the canopy on the Murrumbidgee River at Kambah Pool late on the evening of 6 June. There is very little information in the literature on roost flights of this species; much is mine and all my observations have been from the edges of the suburbs. There has also been a report of **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** arriving and going to roost at about 5 pm on Lyneham Ridge.

There have still been a few late breeding records with on 20 June Kym Bradley recording **Little Corellas** feeding dependent young. This has also been reported for the **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo**, presumably from last season's brood, as is the dependent young **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** that has been begging loudly and has regularly been seen being fed in my GBS site for the past few weeks. Kym's report of many **Diamond Firetails** near a nest is less clear, as this could possibly have been a roost nest.

And as one breeding year closes another starts, with a pair of **Noisy Miners** reported copulating at the end of May. The **Black-shouldered Kites** at the Jerrabomberra wetlands have been reported doing this many times (according to one chatline post "vociferously to the delight of the assembled photographers"). The year-round breeder the **Australian Wood Duck** has been reported checking out nest hollows during June. So keep an eye out for



Little Corella

Kym Bradley

any signs of breeding beginning in July, such as by the early starters like the **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**. Just as this column was going to the editors Isobel Crawford posted her observation of an **Australian Raven** carrying and then adding a stick to a beautifully constructed nest.

Again the above shows that while we are now in mid-winter, Canberra and the ACT continues to provide rewarding birdwatching. So please watch out for any overwintering summer migrants or the altitudinal migrants mentioned above, for any signs of early breeding, for roosts and roost flights, and for mixed or single species feeding flocks. As usual please ensure that all significant observations end up on the COG database.

Jack Holland

Renew your COG membership

Now is the time to renew your COG membership.

The simplest way to do this is to complete and submit the online membership renewal form (<http://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/joining-cog-and-renewing/>) and pay using electronic funds transfer. You can still also renew in person at a meeting (there will be someone taking memberships at the June and July meetings), or you can send your renewal by mail with a cheque. If you still receive Gang-gang and/or Canberra Bird Notes by mail please consider whether this is necessary. As has been pointed out in recent annual financial reports, the costs of providing direct member services exceed the amount collected in subscription fees, so every member who elects to read the electronic versions instead of receiving a print copy reduces costs to COG. The online versions include colour photos, and notification of their availability is usually sent out several days before the print version is posted.



White-fronted Chat

Julie Clark



Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

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Nominations close 8 July 2015 for Steve Wilson Award 2015

Nominations are called for past or current members of COG to be considered for the award of the Steve Wilson Medal 2015. This Award is the highest honour awarded by COG and is given to a person who has given meritorious service to the Group.

The Award was inaugurated in COG's 50th year and the 2014 awardees were Jenny Bounds and Graham Clark.

Nominees can be made by any member.

To be considered the nominee must have

- served COG in a voluntary capacity
- contributed to COG in a professional way
- contributed for many years
- been on any of
 - committee
 - executive member
 - in another regular role of COG
- supported the aims of COG



NOMINATIONS

- Nominations are due on or before the night of the COG meeting on 8 July 2015
- Nominations for consideration for the award can be in writing or by email to the COG President.
- Nominations must have the signature of two or more current financial members of COG.
- Written nominations must be less than 2 pages in length.
- An Awardee does not have to be a current member of COG
- An Award can be given posthumously.
- The Award can be announced at the COG AGM.

The Award Committee comprises the COG President Alison Russell-French, and Bruce Lindenmayer and Neil Hermes.

Bronwyn King

Laughing Kookaburra and mouse



Field Trip Reports

Sunday 31 May – Uriarra Village

Participants were well-rugged up on a cold and breezy morning. Judy Middlebrook, a resident of the village, guided us to a small patch of woodland that is usually very birdy but, after not finding a single bird, we adjourned to the community hall to warm up with a cuppa and Judy's delicious Anzac biscuits. Once back outside, the birds had warmed up too and our fortunes changed with plenty of **Flame** and **Scarlet Robins** in the nearby paddocks as we walked up to a vantage point overlooking Cotter Dam. The surrounding area was a mix of regenerating native scrub, pines and a single strawberry tree (*Arbutus*), the latter with **New Holland Honeyeaters** feeding on the flowers.

On the opposite side of the village, in a large patch of woodland labelled Murrumbidgee Corridor Territory Land, we encountered a large mixed feeding flock which included **Weebill**, **Brown**, **Buff-rumped** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, **White-throated Treecreeper**, **White-eared Honeyeater**, **Grey Fantail**, **Silvereye**, **White-browed Scrubwren** and **Scarlet Robin**. Three **Eastern Yellow Robin** perched and pounced off the neighbouring fence.

The total species count for the morning was a very respectable 42, given the chilly conditions.

Sue Lashko

Saturday 13 June - Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve - Superb Lyrebird Survey

The twelfth annual survey of the **Superb Lyrebird** was run under perfect conditions with a cool morning, no wind and clear skies. The survey is designed to provide an index of population numbers within the Reserve since the 2003 bushfires.

Twelve COG members and friends were assembled at the car park by 8.00 am and after breaking up into teams we soon started to survey the five main walking trails. In addition, because of the number of volunteers, it was possible to also survey the Lyrebird trail. The trail is not part of the original five because it was not until sometime after the 2003 fire that it was reopened. It was noted that there had been a relative recent control burn at the southern end of the Ashbrook trail.

Taking a minimum count, 23 individual **Superb Lyrebirds** were recorded within the Reserve compared with 6, 14, 12, 12, 19, 19-20, 20, 13, 22, 21 and 24 in previous years (Gibraltar Rocks-4, Devil's Gap-4, Fishing Gap-2, Ashbrook-3, Camel Back-10); see Figure 1. The total number takes into account two birds counted from the Camel Back and the Lyrebird trails. These two birds were allocated to the Camel Back count. In addition a single bird was reported from the Ashbrook trail and the Camel Back trail. This individual has also been included in the Camel Back count. Three birds were reported from the Lyrebird trail and not included in the totals.

During the survey 33 bird species were recorded, similar to previous years, with the species seen depending very much on the trail walked: Gibraltar Rocks-24, Devil's Gap-18, Fishing Gap-15, Ashbrook-16, and Camel Back-11, with 12 species reported from the Lyrebird trail. As usual, a greater number of species were recorded from the drier western-facing slopes. All species reports were similar to previous years except for the Fishing Gap trail where the number of species reported fell from 22 last year to 15. There were 4 species reported from the six trails: **Superb Lyrebird**, **White-throated Treecreeper**, **White-browed Scrubwren** and **Brown Thornbill**, with the **Striated Thornbill** being recorded from all trails apart from the Lyrebird trail.

Species seen from one track only included **Common Bronzewing**, **Satin Bowerbird**, **Weebill**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, **Golden Whistler**, **Scarlet Robin** and **Common Blackbird** and, of particular interest, **Spotted Quail-thrush**, **Eastern Whipbird** and **Pilotbird**.

Many thanks to the participants and to the authorities for waiving the entry fees.

Chris Davey

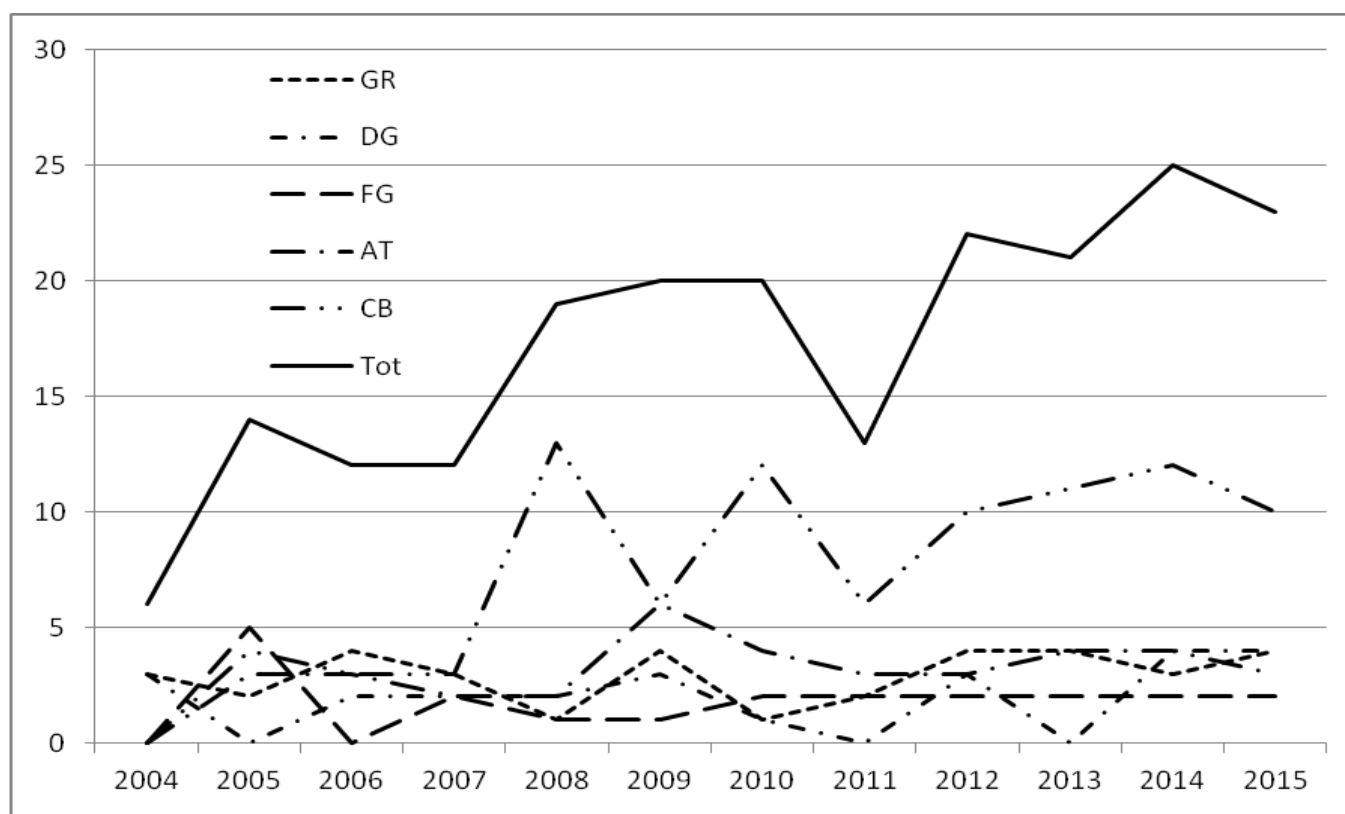


Figure 1. Numbers of Superb Lyrebirds recorded from walking trails at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, 2004-2015. GR-Gibraltar Rocks, DG-Devils Gap, FG-Fishing Gap, AT- Ashbrook Trail, CB-Camel Back, Tot- Total number of birds.

Wednesday 17 June – Australian National Botanic Gardens

Nine intrepid members gathered under the shelter of the Visitors Centre for a walk in the Australian National Botanic Gardens. The weather was very promising for drought stricken farmers, but less positive for birders with the rain varying between steady and heavy the whole time. As a result it was the shortest Wednesday outing I can recall.

We walked up the western side of the Rainforest Gully, noting a tall eucalypt which had fallen across the gully. **Superb Fairy-wren**, **White-browed Scrubwren** and **Brown Thornbill** were the only birds seen or heard. Emerging on to the main track we followed it up to the top of the gardens. and down to the CSIRO fence. Two **Eastern Yellow Robins** were seen perched on a fence near the Red Centre Garden and various small, silent and generally unidentifiable silhouettes were seen in the canopy.

Once down at the lower levels, where many Banksias were flowering, there were good numbers of **New Holland Honeyeaters** and a couple of Red **Wattlebirds**. We also recorded **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Eastern Spinebills** in a few spots.

In total, we recorded 13 species in 83 minutes. There were a **number of surprising missing birds: the absence of Crimson Rosella, Galah, and Gang-gang** and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**, was commented on. There weren't even any **White-winged Choughs** hanging out at the café.

Martin Butterfield

Sunday 21 June – McQuoids Hill

Fourteen new and long-standing COG members joined in a pleasant stroll around this small but floristically fairly diverse unit of the Canberra Nature Park on a beautiful, frosty morning. And we enjoyed some good birding, with 32 species in total.

Our first highlight was about 15 **Double-barred Finches** in a flock of **Yellow-rumped** and **Buff-rumped Thornbill**. At that stop we heard **Red Wattlebird** and had a quick look/listen to a **White-eared Honeyeater**. Although honeyeaters weren't abundant we also saw **White-plumed Honeyeater** and **Eastern Spinebill** feeding on blossom in a Yellow Box on the western facing slope.

Most of us were fortunate to have a fairly close view of a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** flying away, which we must have disturbed as we sought better views of **Buff-rumped Thornbill**, which we eventually got, along with much better views of **Scarlet Robin**, and an excellent opportunity to see the differences between **Yellow-rumped** and **Buff-rumped Thornbill**. Soon after, we saw a large flock of small birds which included 30 **Red-browed Finches**.

Our mystery bird for the day called several times on the western slopes where the frost still lay in the shade late in the morning, but no ID has been decided upon.

Michael Robbins

Bird Books – Bargain sale – July meeting - \$5 or \$2 (small)

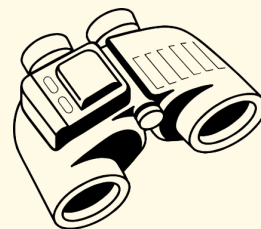
The COG Committee is rationalising what it can keep in its storage facility. A decision has been made to offer to members books which are peripheral to our core business and excess to needs. The Committee acknowledges that some of these have been kindly given by members/former members. Many have been in storage and unused since COG closed its office in the old Griffin Centre, Civic, some years ago. The July meeting will have a number of bird field guides from all around the globe (Americas, UK, Europe, Southern Africa and Asia – some may be a little dated), as well as volumes from the National Photographic Index series. Many are in very good condition. All funds will go to the Conservation Fund which sponsors bird-related research projects. As the number of books is quite large, there will be a second group for sale at another meeting; details will be in Gang-gang.

Nature Lodge Optics

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

COG Trips

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

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

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

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

and on the COG chat-line at:

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

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

Future Field Trips

Sunday 5 July – Jerrabomberra Hill

This will be at Jerrabomberra Hill (Mount Jerrabomberra) in the Jerrabomberra area of Queanbeyan. Meet at 9am at the carpark.

Access via Tomsitt Drive off Lanyon Drive. Take first left off the big roundabout, into Limestone Drive, then a left at Halloran Drive. Jerrabomberra Hill Road is off to the right along that road - look for the signpost. There is a small parking area next to the locked gate into the reserve. There is limited on-street parking.

The road to the top of the hill is a very pleasant, easy walk on a well-maintained dirt road through woodland with lots of stringybark, other eucalypts and acacias. Keep your fingers crossed for a non-foggy morning, so that the view from the newish lookout at the top can be admired! No bookings required.

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 12 July - Mullangarri Grasslands.

Meet at 9.00 am at the Cringan Cres. carpark at the corner of the Valley Ave and Warwick St. opposite Gungahlin College and Swimming Pool. The grasslands cover most of the area with some isolated mature eucalypts. A wetland near Burgmann College has **Golden-headed Cisticolas**. About 20 species is the usual count. In summer, Eurasian **Skylark** and **Superb Parrots** feed or fly over and **Tree Martins** breed. Other species include **Australasian Pipit**, **Nankeen Kestrel** and **Noisy Miners**. We could do half the time in the grasslands and half at the Valley Ponds. Bring morning tea. No booking required.

Bill Graham

Wednesday 15 July – Tidbinbilla

The July Wednesday Walk to Tidbinbilla will have a particular aim of spotting robins in the more open country. Further details will be announced by email closer to the date.

Friday 31 July to Sunday 2 August - Wonga Bawley Point

The booking for a combined camping/accommodated visit to Wonga appearing in the 2015 Draft Field Trips Programme is now confirmed under the leadership of Terry Bell. We have obtained special permission to bring a group of about 15 persons to this delightful bush/coastal location of 50 acres with abundant bird life. 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 Honeyeaters**, **Black-faced Monarchs**, **Bassian Thrushes** and of course **Hooded Plovers**. 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 or 61619093 or mobile 0427292298.

Saturday 8 August - Lake Ginninderra Beginners' Outing

This is the second of our bird walks for 2015 that is aimed specifically at beginners. Meet Anthony Overs (bookings essential on 6254 0168 or anthony.overs@gmail.com) at 8.30am in the car park at the western end of Diddams Close on Ginninderra Peninsula (also known as Diddams Close Park - see Yellow Pages Map 38, ref A9). We will walk the shores of the peninsula around to the eastern side, then back to the car park along Diddams Close. We should be able to view several species of waterbirds up close, focusing on the identification features of the common species such as the various ducks, "waterhens" and cormorants. A variety of bush birds are also likely to be seen. Bring your binoculars and field guide.

Sunday 23 August – Callum Brae (Note the change of date)

Meet at 9am at the Narrabundah Lane entrance to Callum Brae - there is parking across the other side of the road. The walk will take in some key areas of Callum Brae: "nursery corner" (if you've ever wondered when people refer to it on the chatline), several of the dams on the reserve, and some areas that are good to come back to later in the breeding season. The walk will follow a circuit around the reserve, mostly on mown tracks. No bookings required.

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 30 August - Late winter mystery bus trip - day outing

Jenny Bounds and Jack Holland are planning another bus trip for this date. Aspects are expected to be the same as previous trips of this kind; ie cost of \$20 for transport by two 12-seater buses; the point of departure will be the National Library car park (still free on weekends) at 8 am and it will run until mid-afternoon (please bring morning tea and lunch). However, to keep it fresh we are again looking at changing the specific objectives of this trip. These are still being discussed but we again plan to visit some spots where participants may not normally go and will be able to see some interesting birds. The final itinerary will depend on some reccies beforehand, as well as which birds have been reported around the time.

If you are interested in participating please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840 H or by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com).

Three field trips which will be held later in the year but for which bookings are required now are:

Saturday September 5 and Sunday September 6 – Eden pelagics

COG has booked the weekend of September 5 and 6 for two one-day pelagic trips. The outings leave from Eden Harbour at 7am, and return mid-afternoon. Each trip can accommodate 12 people, and the cost per person per trip will be \$100.

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

Bookings will be confirmed only when full payment is received. Payment must be made by July 17. 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-July.

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

Please book with Sandra Henderson (shirmax2931@gmail.com) and indicate which day you prefer (Saturday or Sunday). 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.

There are still places available on both trips. Could those who have booked please ensure COG receives your payment by 17 July.

Saturday 26 September to Monday 5 October – Capertee and Munghorn Gap

To take advantage of two consecutive long weekends, an extended camping trip has been planned, beginning in the Capertee Valley at Glen Davis campground for the Canberra Family and Community Day long weekend. We will probably then move to other national parks in the area, before arriving at Munghorn Gap where we will be camping at the field station there for the Labour Day long weekend.

A more detailed description of the trip will be emailed to participants later but at this stage, if you are interested, please email me at smlashko@gmail.com. Participants may join the trip for all or part of the time, with a maximum of 16 people at any one time.

Sue Lashko

Monday 12 to Friday 16 October – Green Cape (accommodated)

For some time now, COG has visited Green Cape every second year to stay in the former lighthouse keepers' cottages and enjoy the wonderful wildlife watching (birds and whales, in particular) in Ben Boyd National Park and in the surrounding seas. The internal layout of the cottages has recently been altered to provide space for a live-in caretaker. As a result, there are only 10 places available for this trip. The commitment is for a 4-night stay – no concession for shorter stays. The total accommodation costs will be \$140 per person (payment details will be

provided once numbers are finalised). There is also a \$7 fee per car per day to enter Ben Boyd National Park. This can be paid at a self-registration booth on arrival.

As with all COG trips, preference will be given to COG members. More detailed information will be sent to participants closer to the date.

To register, email
smlashko@gmail.com.
One place remaining.

Sue Lashko and Peter Fullagar

David Cook

Southern Emu-wren



Help needed with PhD project

I've just started a PhD with David Lindenmayer at the Fenner School at ANU looking at the impact of **Noisy Miners** on small woodland birds. I will be conducting my first season of fieldwork between September and December of this year and I'm looking for volunteers with a good knowledge of the region's birds to help with some of the practical aspects. I wondered therefore if any COG members might be interested. All expenses will be paid.

The project will be based in the South-west Slopes region around Gundagai and the study sites will be fragments of remnant vegetation on farms. The plan is to have 6 farms with two fragments per farm. This year, fieldwork will aim to get baseline data for the sites on the following parameters:

1. Noisy miner population
2. Population of other birds
3. Predation rates of artificial nests (This is an imperfect but efficient way of getting a baseline of potential predation. There will likely be very few nests in sites with miner colonies)
4. Nesting occurrence of other species (ie absolute number of nests in a site over the breeding season)
5. Nesting success of other species (measured as total survival rate ie the probability that an egg present at start of incubation will produce a fledgling)

Then next year miners will be removed from half the study sites and all sites once again monitored for the same parameters to see if culling is an effective method of encouraging small woodland birds to use the sites for breeding. Now that the noisy miner is listed federally as a key threatening process it is likely that culling will be increasingly used as a control measure. This study hopes to provide scientific evidence for the effectiveness or otherwise of such a drastic measure.

If you can help please contact me directly at richard.beggs@anu.edu.au and let me know what period you might be available for (ideally for a minimum of one week).

Thanks for your assistance,
Richard Beggs.

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

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..

Group booking discounts.

Email enquiry@deuatinhuts.com

www.deuatinhuts.com

Ph 02 4847 1248

THORNBILLS AND THEIR ALLIES

By Bruce Lindenmayer

At the June COG meeting, Bruce Lindenmayer gave a very useful presentation about LBBs (little brown birds). Afterwards, several members commented that they would like to see the information presented in a table so that they could carry it with them in the field.

Species	Field marks	Call	Habitat/ Location/ Elevation	Size of flock
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	slightly larger, yellow-rump, black cap with white spots, dark bill, pale eye	loud, musical, “circular”	ground, low altitude; short grass, lawns, urban	small flocks
Buff-rumped Thornbill	buff rump, slightly darker below than Yellow-rumped; brown bill, pale eye	less musical than Yellow-rumped	open eucalypt forest with grass / scrub understorey	small flocks
Yellow Thornbill	smaller, olive above, yellow or light-coloured below, variable, dark eye	two notes repeated, first louder	non-eucalypt forests & scrub, feathery leaves; arboreal, mid-storey	singly or pairs
Striated Thornbill	striated behind ear and breast; overall lighter than Brown; head streaks lengthways; light eyebrow, dark eye	soft “zit-zit”, can be hard to hear	outer and upper of eucalypts	small to medium flocks
Brown Thornbill	brown above, breast striated but not behind ear; head streaks cross-wise; dark eye	typical “pee-orr” but many calls and mimics, noisy	dense vegetation including pine forests	singly or pairs
Weebill	tiny, short light-coloured bill, pale eye, light to yellow below; noisy and active; hovers	three notes: second loudest, “a-WEE-bill”	small eucalypts / scrubby regrowth; generally low in trees	small to medium flocks
White-browed Scrubwren	browner above than others; white stripes above and below eye; dark shoulder patch with white stripes	loud “zee-zee”, buzzing deep alarm call, mimics	low in understorey, pines and exotics, near water	ones or two, small groups

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

Stocktake sale!

Come to the meeting and select from a range of heavily discounted publications.

Below are a few bargains.
More to be found at the meeting.

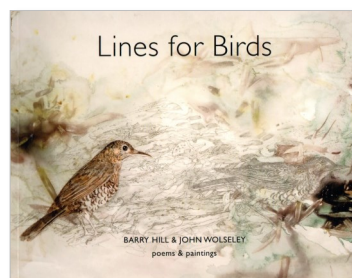


Buy the set of 5 books for \$20

Or buy 1 for \$5

Australian Natural History Series

Titles available include: Australian Magpie, Albatross, Australian Bustard, Bowerbirds, and Mound-builders.

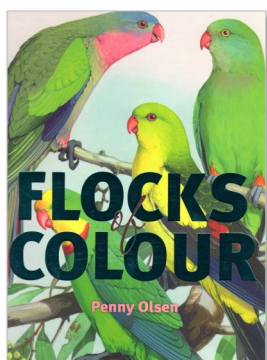


50 % off

Lines for Birds: poems and paintings Barry Hill, John Wolseley

This is a dazzling book, a conversation between two venerable artists in love with birds.

SALE price \$21

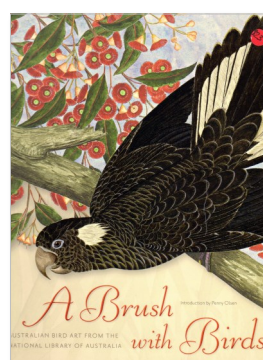


50 % off

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



50 % off

A Brush with Birds Australian Bird Art from the National Library of Australia Penny Olsen

This book is lavishly illustrated with vibrant and luscious art and it includes the stories of the artists behind the paintings.

SALE price \$12

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:

N Kastelic, Gungahlin
C Ikin, Canberra City
L McVeigh, Watson
L Mitchell, Cook
H Bluhm, Bruce
R Callaway, Fadden
E Saltau, Turner
and welcomes back
C Thompson, Lyons

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for August 2015 edition

Wednesday 29 July 2015

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

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

Or

c/- The Secretary COG,

PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608

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

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

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COG website

www.canberrabirds.org.au

COG library

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

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COG E-mail Discussion List

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

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

canberrabirds-

subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au

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

