



# Gang-gang

**MAY 2015**

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

## MAY MEETING

**Wednesday 13 May 2015**

**7.30 pm.**

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

To reboot the Bird of the Month (BOM) talks **Jack Holland** will reprise (a revised version of) his 2009 BOM "**Fuscous and Brown-headed Honeyeaters.**"

The main presentation entitled "**70 years of Bird Photography**" will be by **David Hollands**.

David is a very well known bird watcher and photographer including through his publishing of a number of books, most recently *Waders: the Shorebirds of Australia*, but also for his earlier books on *Owls*, *Frogmouths* and *Nightjars*. His love of photography started so long ago that David says he can hardly remember it. He took his first, so called, bird photograph with a little box Zeiss camera at the age of about 8. David's presentation will take us through the long 70 year period of his taking of photographs to the modern digital age which has brought a number of advantages to the wildlife photographer. Better lenses are one advance but David says the ability to keep shooting is the major breakthrough.

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

Two thirds of the way through autumn my distinct impression is that it has been the best honeyeater migration season for a number of years, with many chatline subscribers noting this, including some reports from places where they do not normally come through. This migration was just starting when I was finalising last month's column on 25 March, with two of the last four days of March (Saturday 28 and Tuesday 31 March) particularly good, due to the ideal conditions (a cold clear night followed by a clear still day). The cloudy and then wetter conditions from the start of April were less favourable, but there were continued reports of them moving throughout the month generally in lesser numbers (except for the isolated finer days), even on unfavourable days. After a while the urge to migrate tends to override any concern the birds have with less than ideal conditions. They were still being reported as this column was being written. As usual **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** predominated earlier,



**Yellow-faced Honeyeater migration**

*Geoffrey Dabb*

**Everyone welcome**

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

with a steady increase in numbers of **White-naped Honeyeaters** as we moved through April. I expect the honeyeater migration to have largely finished when this issue of Gang-gang lands in your email inbox or your letter box in the first week of May, but with possibly still some **White-naped** coming through.

Also reported migrating though in much smaller numbers have been **Red Wattlebirds**. Many **Grey Fantails**, **Silvereyes** and **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** have also been moving through on migration, but generally do so much less conspicuously, as do **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalotes**. However, only a few **Noisy Friarbirds** have been reported migrating, with most notably Leo Berzins' posting at the end of the first week of April that for the previous few weeks his birdbaths in West Queanbeyan had been in almost constant use by **Noisy Friarbirds** (and **Red Wattlebirds**). They were mainly younger birds and had been feeding on lerps in nearby eucalypts, which seemed to make them quite thirsty. They were still there on Sunday 5 April but had all gone the following day with no spread out of departures.

Of the above-named species, the **Noisy Friarbird** is the only one that completely leaves our area (the last one reported was around 16 April) with all of the others, apart from the **Red Wattlebird** and the pardalotes which continue to be present in good numbers, staying over in winter in small but variable numbers. This is also the case for the **Dusky Woodswallow** and **Olive-backed Oriole** generally considered as the last of the near complete migratory species to depart before winter starts. Significant numbers of the former, but

typically fewer of the latter, were still reported in April, so please keep an eye out for these two species, most of which have usually departed by the first or second week of May.

Again the above was mainly taken from postings on the COG chat line or direct correspondence with me, whereas my other main source of information, the Eremaea eBird website, was also consulted for a number of the sightings and information in the next paragraphs.

Of the species that most, if not all, were expected to have left well before the end of March, there has been three reports of possible **White-winged Trillers**, two late in March and one well into April. There have also been reports of a single **Sacred Kingfisher** each week up to the week of 16-20 April, late for this species which often has left by the end of the first two weeks of March, but possibly consistent with its late breeding noted in last month's column.

Of the birds that usually mostly leave by the end of March there were a few reports of the **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** during the first week of April, but the **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** and the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** were reported up to mid-month, as was the **Leaden Flycatcher** and **Tree Martin**. In contrast the **Australian Reed-Warbler** was still being reported as I was drafting this column. Of the species that move through Canberra during March as "passage migrants" from their breeding sites in the mountains there have only been reports of the **Rufous Fantail**, including a very late one present at Fadden Hills Pond on 23 April. So please



Flame Robin, female

*Kym Bradley*



Flame Robin, male

*Kym Bradley*

continue to keep an eye out for the above species, some of which have stayed very late.

Of the species that usually leave during April the **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone** were reported to about mid-month, but the **Rufous Whistler** and **Mistletoebird** were still present as this was written. A number of these last two species will overwinter, as the **Superb Parrot** is doing in increasing numbers with many still reported as present in the last week of April.

Of the altitudinal migrants that move from the mountains but stay here over winter, there have been plenty of reports of the **Scarlet Robin** and **Golden Whistler** in Canberra's suburbs and peri-urban areas, with the **White-eared Honeyeater** also moving into these during April. However, while present at its usual spots around Point Hut/Tharwa, as far as I can tell the **Flame Robin** does not seem to have moved yet into the open areas of peri-urban Canberra, so watch out for this species and other winter altitudinal migrants such as the **Pink Robin**, and the **Crescent** and **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** which may be first seen around Canberra during early May. On the other hand there have been continued reports of the **Rose Robin**. Of special interest were reports by Steve Holliday of the **Swift Parrot** in Ainslie for four consecutive mornings from 22 April, with their numbers gradually increasing from four to seven. Interestingly they only seemed to be visiting Steve's area early in the morning, so watch out for them feeding and roosting elsewhere, as they may not be simply passing through.

As I've mentioned in previous years, finding roosts and observing roost flights also seems to be an autumn and winter phenomenon. On 10 April Michael Lenz reported to me that apart from **Red Wattlebirds** and **Noisy Friarbirds** the roost flight count from his Lyneham Ridge vantage post for **Crimson Rosellas** was 121 birds (well down from the February maximum of 225!), and 96 for the



Superb Parrot

Leo Berzins



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## 2015 tours

*Good birding, good food ...*

### 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)

**Australian King Parrot** (up from 49 in February). Since the beginning of February I've been watching **Magpie-larks** roost flights from and to at least 3 different roosts within my GBS site. Though the numbers are now down to about 15-20 from their peak of 60 birds early in March, I can still observe this most days, with in particular the still evening flights the most spectacular as they come floating across from the direction of the paddocks to the west in which they feed during the day. **Galahs** often also come down to roost in the trees around my GBS site, and in the past week a **Common Myna** roost has formed with up to 40 birds seen surprisingly sometimes in a half bare exotic tree. Earlier some were found roosting with the **Magpie-larks** on several occasions.

Many mixed feeding flocks have also been reported since my previous column. Winter is also a time for single species flocks to be observed and already I have seen those of the **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** feeding on the road verges in my local area (a pair have also been seen regularly feeding dependent young in my GBS site), as well as flocks of over 100 **Galahs** on the wires etc. I've also seen a large flock of **corellas**, and over 50 **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** with dependent young near the Scrivener Dam. Flocks of well over 100 **Little Ravens** and close to that number of **Little Black Cormorants** have also been reported, though these are not necessarily related to the autumn season.

At the time of writing this column the **Powerful Owl** was still present in the trees at the Canberra North Bowling Club in Turner despite it being harassed by **Pied Currawongs** and some of its favourite roosting trees losing their leaves. During April it has added **Crimson Rosella** to its known diet, but amazingly it still seems to find enough Ringtail Possums to eat as well. It's been there for 6 months now and I would have thought it would have depleted its territory's food reserves by now, but with its adaptive diet who could predict how long it may still stay.

Other "unusuals" for this reporting period from the last week of March were two separate reports of **Pied Butcherbirds**, as well as reports of a **Regent Honeyeater** briefly seen at Mount Rogers Reserve and a party of **Scarlet Honeyeaters** at the ANBG. The **Plumed Whistling Ducks** continued to be found at Bungendore, at least to mid-April, with the maximum reported being 82, as well as up to 124 **Australian Shelducks**.

Finally impression when writing my previous column was that the dry March had put a stop to the breeding season from about mid-March. However, there have been some further reports, most notably by Michael Lenz of a pair of **Diamond Firetails** near Collector with 2 loudly begging young on 19 April. Mid-month Steve Read reported from Campbell Park a large and untidy **Red-browed Finch** nest low down in a hawthorn bush, being visited regularly by two adults and (from the sounds when an adult entered the nest) containing a brood of several nestlings. Earlier in the month I saw an adult **Pacific Black Duck** trying to escort about 8 very young ducklings across Yarra Glen at Deakin (very hazardous even if it was on a Public Holiday). Michael Lenz also reported a pair of **Australian Wood Ducks** with 1 small young in mid-April, and subsequently Elizabeth Compston reported **White-winged Choughs** with three dependent young at Uriarra Crossing. This is further confirmation that this breeding season is continuing well into autumn. So please continue to look out for and report all signs of breeding, and enter your records into the COG database.

Winter isn't far away and the end of the autumn season of considerable movement and migration is near. However, as described above Canberra and the ACT will continue to provide rewarding birdwatching. So during May please continue to watch out for the last of the departing species and the altitudinal migrants still to come mentioned above, as well as for any late autumn breeding, roosts and roost flights and mixed or single feeding flocks. As usual please ensure that all significant observations end up on the COG database.

*Jack Holland*



Scarlet Honeyeater

*David Cook*

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# Field Trip Reports

## Friday 3 to Monday 6 April – Easter campout

Fifteen members of COG joined fellow COG members Veronica and Erik Doerr, their daughter Zoe and border collie Katie for COG's Easter camp on the Doerr's conservation property near Holbrook. It was especially pleasing that long-time COG members June and Peter Gotham, now of Wangaratta, could join us. A few showers over Easter (especially rain on the final morning) dampened things a little, but the good company and excellent birding ensured everyone had a good time.

The property yielded 63 species within easy walking distance of our campsite, including numerous **Restless Flycatchers** and **White-crowned Babblers**. Visitors to the campsite itself included **Crested Shrike-tit**, **Varied Sittella**, **Owlet-nightjar**, **Common Bronzewing**, **Scarlet Robin** and **Mistletoebird**. Up to nine **Diamond Firetails** were seen at once on the dam adjacent to the camp, and a host of honeyeaters appeared in the flowering eucalypts, including many **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters**.

The first of the scheduled outings was to Woomargama National Park. Unfortunately there had been extensive controlled burning very recently, so further plans for that area were abandoned. A short walk along Tin Mines Road did produce **Gang-gang Cockatoos**, **Golden Whistlers**, **Fuscous Honeyeaters** and several thornbill species, among others, to add to our bird list for the trip.

Lunch sitting by the Murray River in a TSR just beyond the southern border of the Park produced a **White-bellied Sea-eagle**, but the presence of several groups of campers, complete with revving utes and chainsaws, stifled plans for an after-lunch walk.

On Easter Sunday we made our way to Morgans Lookout near Culcairn, the hideout of bushranger Dan Morgan and his gang in the 1860s. The lookout is a granite outcrop with some nice woodland close by, and is a reliable **Brown Treecreeper** site. Other birds sighted by at least some of the party included **Diamond Firetail**, **Collared Sparrowhawk**, **Cockatiel**, **Restless Flycatcher** and **Nankeen Kestrel**.

Sunday afternoon saw a few more of the group catch up with some elusive **Red-capped Robins** on the Doerr's property, as well as **Speckled Warbler**.

The trip list (property and outings) reached 105 species.

Sandra Henderson.



COG members on the Easter Campout near Holbrook

Sandra Henderson

## Easter Saturday 4 April - Narrabundah Hill

Seventeen members and guests joined Jean Casburn and me on this outing, an indication that having a local one during the Easter holiday break is viable. Others may have joined except for the forecast and the weather which was cool, very cloudy but still and with luckily the rain holding off. We walked for about 2.5 km along the northern boundary of the reserve and most of the western border, and returned by the same route.

Unfortunately the conditions were not conducive for significant honeyeater migration (a cold clear night followed by a clear still day is best) and except for a flock of about 15 in the distance which Jean Casburn saw early on (and I caught the rear end of), none were seen migrating on the day. We did, however, find at least three significant examples of that other autumn phenomenon, mixed feeding flocks (MFF), with one in exactly the same spot as last year's very big one. In these the **Grey Fantail** was by far the most conspicuous species (around 50 seen on the day with up to 15 together, many seeming to be of the much more clearly marked Tasmanian race), though were probably outnumbered by **Silvereyes**. Species also with numbers in these MFFs included **Weebills** and **Red-browed Finches**.

Other species probably on migration were **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** doing so in smallish numbers, and possibly the over 50 **Welcome Swallows** moving through hawking high overhead, with several **Rufous Whistlers** and a quiet **White-throated Gerygone** seen by only a few of the group still not having departed. Winter altitudinal migrants included a single **White-eared Honeyeater** as well as a number of **Scarlet Robins** scattered throughout the walk. The latter proved elusive to locate, except when we had returned to the cars where a pair with a very coloured female allowed very close views on a nearby fence.

At the start of the walk there was surprising number of **Satin Bowerbirds** (at least eight) seen. Other interesting birds included a **White-necked Heron** flying slowly past and a single **Diamond Firetail** which I heard but only Dave had conclusive views, possibly because we were distracted by the **Tawny Frogmouth** that Ken found sitting very upright in the tree into which the former had flown. We stopped here to have morning tea hoping it would re-appear; it didn't but up to 20 **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** (heard previously or seen in the distance) flying through slowly and alighting in the trees around us more than made up for it.

Despite the less than ideal weather participants voted it a successful outing with a total of 42 species recorded, with 24 in the first 30 minutes. Participants agreed it was worth repeating next Easter which will fall a week earlier and hopefully will be on a clear calm day so we will be able to experience the honeyeater migration.

Jack Holland

## 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

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## Sunday 12 April - K2C Bird Surveys I

The K2C bird surveys have started on their 6<sup>th</sup> year, with plenty of helpers and plenty of birds to see. A total of 87 species were recorded, which is a high number for the autumn surveys when many of the summer migrants have departed the region. 44 sites were surveyed across 22 properties from Williamsdale down to south of Bredbo. The very dry spell through February-March had been broken last week with up to 100mm of rain in the region. Conditions on the morning were mild and relatively still, although the sun didn't break through until late morning.

Honeyeaters were a feature of the survey, despite the overcast conditions which are generally considered less than ideal for migration. Movement was most pronounced at the sites in the Michelago region with small groups of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** constantly moving through. At other sites these species plus **White-eared Honeyeater**, **Brown-headed Honeyeater**, **Red Wattlebird** and **Eastern Spinebill** were spending time feeding on lerp rather than moving through. **Fuscous Honeyeaters** were prominent in their usual habitat of Apple Box woodlands.

Some of the late-departing summer migrants recorded were **Western Gerygone**, **Mistletoebird**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Noisy Friarbird** and **Fantail Cuckoo**. Flocks of species such as **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Diamond Firetail** and **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** included a high proportion of immature birds indicating a good breeding season.

It was a pleasure to see many robins, particularly **Scarlet Robins**, recorded on 14 of the 22 properties. And it's always exciting to see the **Hooded Robin**, this time on 5 properties. **Flame Robins** are sometimes not recorded in the April surveys, but this time they were seen on 6 properties; possible the early snowfall in the mountains last week has hastened their appearance. **Brown Treecreepers** were recorded at 7 properties, including one group of 6 birds. A highlight for one survey team was a **Spotted Harrier** seen from the highway just north of Scottsdale. Another highlight was **Spotted Quail-thrush** on one property in typical habitat of dry forest on a rocky ridge.

Thank you once again to the COG volunteers, the landholders for their ongoing involvement, and to Bush Heritage Australia for providing lunch and the venue at Scottsdale Reserve. The next survey will be held on Sunday 11 October 2015.

Nicki Taws

## Friday 17 to Saturday 18 April – Tumut

Just three intrepid souls made the two hour drive in continuous rain to Tumut, after several late withdrawals. Between showers, we set up tents on Gavin Small's 100 hectare property. 87 Ha are under a Voluntary Conservation Agreement with the NSW Govt and 20 Ha are in the Federal White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland Scheme. A break in the weather saw us set off for the highest point on the property which gave commanding views over the surrounding area before we were enveloped in mist, causing us to retreat to the comfort of Gavin's shed.

After intermittent but light rain overnight, we woke to grey skies but only the lightest of showers. We joined the Tumut Field Study Group to survey the Tumut Wetlands, an area of approximately 20 ha located on the edge of Tumut township adjacent to the sewerage works. The area is Crown Land which was previously the town common, dedicated in 1870, but the stock have now been removed and many trees have been planted to create a lovely reserve. Despite the conditions, we recorded 44 species, including **Black-shouldered Kite**, **Nankeen Kestrel**, **Double-barred Finch**, **Yellow Thornbill** and **Golden-headed Cisticola**.

At the completion of the survey, we adjourned to a local café for a welcome hot drink – and the heavens opened! A check of the BOM website revealed plenty more rain to come and forecast to last until Tuesday. At that point, we decided to return to our campsite, pack up our wet tents and head back to Canberra. Before we left, a pair of **Jacky Winters** and a number of **Double-barred Finches** put in an appearance, with a **Flame Robin** calling in the background. We hope to return to Tumut in the spring to revisit the property, the wetlands and to check out a number of other birding spots in the area.

Sue Lashko



## FOR SALE

### Toyota Landcruiser Tilt top camper

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Trakka roof conversion (engineer's certificate). The interior is  
custom built to maximise storage.

148,000km, 1999 model, 180 litres fuel, towbar, bull bar, dual  
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Sleeps 2, bed tilts & remains made-up (can walk around inside),  
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external cooking, large tarpaulin and separate rear awning included  
- along with other extras.

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Contact John or Kathy on 0428 824 673.

## The Red Box

After many years of faithful service, the 'Red Box' has been put out to pasture. The Box started life as an essential part of the ACT Atlas before the advent of online data entry. It was always made available at the monthly members' meetings as the receptacle for observation records. The Box was for many years conveniently stored between meetings at the Girls Grammar School saving the effort of someone having to store the Box and bring it along to each meeting. This is no longer possible.

In future there will be two trays, one into which all completed forms can be placed, the second to contain clean sheets such as the General Observations Form and the Incidental Form (all of which can be printed from the COG website) for members to take. As usual the completed forms will then go to the COG Records Office (Nicki Taws) for checking and subsequently into the COG database. The trays will be found on a table next to the entry into the Common Room.

If anyone would like to keep the Box as a memento please let me know!

Chris Davey (0418679847, 62546324)



Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

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## 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 3 May – Campbell Park

Last year's outing to this delightful piece of woodland and forest turned up 35 species, including a few summer migrants and unusual locals such as **Jacky Winter**, **Common Bronzewing**, **Varied Sittella** and **Flame** and **Scarlet Robins**.

Meet in the car park near the northern end of **Campbell Park Offices** at **8.30am**. Travel north along Northcott Drive until you come to the office block, turn right, skirt the car park on your left and park next to the woodland at the very northern end.

Bring sturdy walking boots, sun hat, sun cream and water to drink. We will walk on easy established paths for about 3 hours.

Bruce Lindenmayer

### Saturday 9 May – Australian National Botanic Gardens – beginners' outing

This morning walk will be the first for 2015 aimed specifically to help beginners and new members identify birds and to learn about their behaviour and calls. The Botanic Gardens are especially suitable for such an outing, as they allow the opportunity to observe a range of local bush birds in a variety of habitats. Due to the available food supply they are also a relative haven for birds during late autumn/winter. Anthony Overs will lead this outing, which will consist of a stroll through this lovely part of Canberra for a couple of hours. Meet at 9.15am at the ANBG bus shelter. Registration is essential. Please book your place with Anthony (6254 0168, or [anthony.overs@gmail.com](mailto:anthony.overs@gmail.com)), who will be happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you. Please make sure to bring your binoculars and field guide.

### Sunday 10 May – Mulligan's Flat – Joint Mulligan's Friends/COG outing

The Mulligan's Friends has an Autumn Mothers' Day bird walk in the Sanctuary planned with 2 COG members as leaders (John Brannan and Bill Graham) on Sunday 10 May. Start time is 9am meeting at the Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve, Amy Ackman St, Forde

### Monday 18 to Friday 22 May – Narooma

COG's second mid-week trip for 2015 will be to Narooma, staying at the Big4 Narooma Easts Caravan Park, Princes Highway Narooma [http://  
www.eastsnarooma.com.au/ph](http://www.eastsnarooma.com.au/ph) 02 44762046.

Contact Dianne Deans to register on 02 61546719 or 0428380778 or [diannedeans@icloud.com](mailto:diannedeans@icloud.com)

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### Sunday 24 May – The Pinnacle Nature Reserve

The Pinnacle NR is one of a chain of Canberra Nature Park reserves in the Belconnen hills. Heavily planted with trees in the 1980s and 1990s, it now offers a lovely mix of woodlands and open areas, including a largely undisturbed patch of remnant Red Stringybark woodland, and expansive views across the Molonglo Valley. At this time of year, the local regulars are joined by migrants stopping in on the way through and the winter residents returning to stay.

Meet at 9 am under the big gum tree at the southern end of Dungowan St, Hawker.

John Brannan

### Sunday 31 May – Uriarra Village

Meet at 8.30am at the Uriarra Village Community Centre on Jim Bradley Crescent, most easily found entering from the eastern entrance to the village off Brindabella Road and then it's on the right, one block in. We can use the toilets and kitchen facilities in the community centre and make cups of tea/coffee. I will bring ANZAC biscuits.

We can walk around the village itself. The trees around the community centre are usually bird havens. There is also a good walk around the track bordering the horse paddocks. Of particular interest is the track leading uphill on the south eastern end of the village from where we can see the new Cotter Dam. To the west of the village (following the same path) there is a block (part of the water catchment area) known as the Eucalyptus block. There is also an easy walk not far from the community centre through the gums bordering Brindabella Road on the east of the village.

Judy Middlebrook and Sue Lashko

### Saturday 13 June - Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve- Superb Lyrebird Survey

Since the January 2003 bushfires Peter Fullagar and Chris Davey have been monitoring the return of the Superb Lyrebird to an area of the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. They wish to get an idea of the present distribution within the Reserve and are asking COG members to join them for a morning's survey. They are calling for expressions of interest to join them at 8.00am to walk the trails and to record the location of

calling birds. Depending on the trails walked the survey should take about three hours.

This outing will be a repeat of the very successful surveys conducted at this time of the year since 2004.

Note that both outing leaders will be overseas between 9 May and 8 June. If interested and for further details please contact Sue Lashko on 62514485 (h), email [smlashko@gmail.com](mailto:smlashko@gmail.com)

Chris Davey

### Sunday 21 June – McQuoids Hill Nature Reserve, Kambah

Map 27 D14 (UBD). Meet at 9.30am. Park at step-through access gate on the right hand side of Kambah Pool Road which is about 700 metres from the roundabout where the Kambah Pool Rd crosses Allchin Cct/Barritt St, Kambah. The gate is opposite the start of the golf club driving range and 400 metres before the entry to the golf club.

We'll head first to the small farm dam to check if there is anything on it besides **Wood Ducks**, then across to the reserve proper, where we'll walk the perimeter track anticlockwise, hopefully seeing some of the interesting finches, thornbills, robins and raptors recorded on previous visits. No bookings required. If you have any questions, contact Michael Robbins ([mrobbins@home.netspeed.com.au](mailto:mrobbins@home.netspeed.com.au))

#### 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.

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## Tues 23-Thurs 25 June - Little Forest Plateau near Ulladulla

This trip was scheduled for the June long weekend but due to other commitments the leaders are now offering it as a mid-week trip. Over the 3 days we will focus on birdwatching in the heathland of Little Forest Plateau and reserves near Ulladulla. We will stay at Ulladulla Headland Tourist Park (ph 4429 8982) which has cabins and campsites. Please book your own accommodation. Be aware that the road to Little Forest is gravel and car pooling is encouraged for the drive to the Plateau.

We hope to find a variety of heathland birds including **Beautiful Firetails** and **Southern Emu Wrens** as well as spending time at the lighthouse looking for seabirds. The walk at Little Forest Plateau will be an easy/moderate grade.

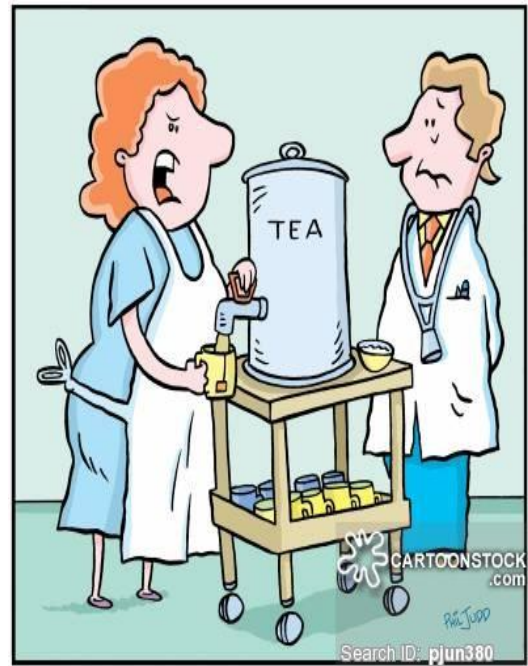
Please book a place on this outing with Kathy Walter or John Goldie by email [walter.goldie@optusnet.com.au](mailto:walter.goldie@optusnet.com.au). The trip will be restricted to 20 participants and filled on a first reply basis. More detailed instructions will be provided closer to the day.



Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo

David Cook

## TEA PERSON REQUIRED



"No I don't do decaf, soy lattes with a shot of vanilla!"

Bruce Lindenmayer is currently our very efficient and affable tea person dispensing tea, coffee and biscuits after COG meetings. However, it would be very useful to have an extra person to assist or to take over if Bruce is away. If you are a regular attendee at meetings and enjoy staying for a cuppa afterwards, you could be just the person we are looking for. Please contact Bruce at [blaags@bigpond.net.au](mailto:blaags@bigpond.net.au) if you can help.

## 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)

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# Woodland Surveys- autumn survey round

compiled by Jenny Bounds

## Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds and the team did the survey at Mulligans Flat on Sunday 29 March in ideal weather conditions, mild, sunny and with no wind. However, the reserve was very dry with some dams drying out, due to very low rainfall over the previous 6 weeks. There was a lot of small bird flock activity and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** on the move, especially along the ridges. Highlights of the 59 species' total were 2 **Freckled Ducks** on the large dam, **Superb Parrots**, and **Varied Sittellas**. Both **Whistlers** (**Golden** and **Rufous**) and both **Gerygones** (**Western** and **White-throated**) were around, **White-eared Honeyeaters** were at several sites, and a **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** and an **Olive-backed Oriole** were moving through. **Yellow Thornbills** (now quite uncommon there) were recorded at site 22, an **Australian Owlet-nightjar** at site 17, several **Australian Pelicans** on one of the small dams near the Woolshed, and a collection of the usual ducks, dotterels and other waterbirds on the large dam. **Scarlet Robins**, either pairs or single birds, were reported from 9 locations/sites, usual for autumn when numbers in the reserve increase with birds moving in for the winter. Interestingly no **Red Wattlebirds** or **Noisy Friarbirds** or raptors were recorded.

## Goorooyarroo NR North

Nicki Taws reported on the autumn survey on Sunday 29 March. The **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** migration is not usually a feature of these woodlands but the movement seemed particularly marked in Canberra, and even before sunrise small groups of these birds were flitting through the treetops, sometimes stopping to feed or bathe in the dewy leaves. Many of the summer migrants were still present and forming large active feeding flocks. **Grey Fantail** and **Striated Pardalote** were in abundance, **Rufous Whistler**, and **White-throated** and **Western Gerygone** were still calling, **Mistletoebird**, **Dusky Woodswallow** and **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** were recorded at several sites, and **Shining Bronze-**

**Cuckoos** were present at two sites in amongst the feeding flocks. **Scarlet Robins** were prevalent and very vocal. **Superb Parrots** were present in the northern woodland, with one **Grey Currawong** near the southern site. The Blakely's Red Gum across the whole district are purple with a heavy lerp load, which seems to happen periodically for this species with a dry autumn – a bounty for the pardalotes, gerygones, **Weebills** and honeyeaters. No raptors or waterbirds were recorded in the total of 40 species.

## Goorooyarroo South NR

Steve Holliday, with Prue Buckley and Dave and Kathy Cook, had an interesting morning for the first woodland survey of the year. The day started cold and grey, with a quite heavy pall of smoke. The birds responded accordingly – little was seen during the first few counts, even at normally productive sites. Fortunately things then picked up and some quite unusual species for the reserve were amongst the 44 species eventually recorded. Notable were a roosting **Tawny Frogmouth** (a first for the surveys), 2 **Southern Whitefaces**, the first for a considerable time, male and female **Rose Robins** at site 2, and a couple of **White-throated Treecreepers**, not often found in the southern half of Gooroo. At least 20 **Grey Fantails** were at site 7, associating with good numbers of **Silvereyes** and **Spotted** and **Striated**



Common Bronzewing

David Cook

**Pardalotes.** **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** were prominent with up to 8 at one site. There were very few other summer migrants noted – just a couple of **Rufous Whistlers** and a juvenile **White-throated Gerygone**. Winter birds included Scarlet Robins heard at several sites and a few **Golden Whistlers** and **White-eared Honeyeaters**. Amongst other sightings were singles of **Speckled Warbler**, **Common Bronzewing**, **Brown Falcon**, **Wedge-tailed Eagle** and a couple of **Mistletoebirds**.

### Majura Field Firing Range

Paul Fennell and Barbara Allan, assisted by Defence's Environmental Officer, did the autumn survey on Friday 27 March between 7.30 and 11 am at the end of daylight saving, but the early start did not appear to affect the birdwatching. Despite cool conditions and a rising breeze, it was quite good birding all round, with nearly every one of the 8 sites providing some interesting species, with the mix of birds indicating a change of season. For example, at Mick's Lake (a medium sized farm dam) there were 16 **Grey Fantails**, a **Rufous Whistler**, a **Golden Whistler**, a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, 4 **Scarlet Robins**, a **White-eared Honeyeater**, 2 **Australasian Grebes** (each with a young offspring in tow), and a **White-throated Gerygone**. Between sites a group of about 7 **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** were heading north. **White-throated Gerygones** were observed at many of the sites, and **Grey Butcherbirds** were heard at a couple of sites, a species that has been seldom seen previously. There were quite a few **White-throated Treecreepers** about, and **White-winged Choughs** were often heard, and there were 3 **Speckled Warblers** and 2 **Mistletoebirds** at site 3. The highlight was a dark shape skulking about the treetops at site 7, eventually identified as a **Brown Goshawk**.

### Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park

Michael Lenz surveyed under overcast and calm conditions on 3 April. The area was very dry, and several sites were heavily overgrazed by kangaroos.

Small woodland birds and flocks were a rarity. Fortunately site 8 (out of 9) included the only mixed feeding flock, comprising few individuals, but a couple of interesting species, a juvenile **Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo** and an adult **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**. **Noisy**

**Miners** were present at 7 sites and were dominant at several of those. **Magpie-larks** were found at 7 sites, an indication of how open and often rather bare the ground was. The most widespread species was the **Crimson Rosella** (at 8 out of 9 sites). Honeyeaters were represented with 1 **Brown-headed Honeyeater** in the flock and a couple of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** between sites. 34 species were recorded in total.

### Newline

Sue Lashko surveyed on 3 April under grey skies but calm conditions. It was a morning for big honeyeaters with large numbers of **Noisy Friarbirds** and **Red Wattlebirds** feeding in the trees before flying off to the next clump of eucalypts, allowing easy counting. Other migrants included plenty of **Grey Fantails**, **Silvereyes**, a few **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** and **Olive-backed Orioles**. A female **Golden Whistler** was perhaps an early arrival for the winter. **Superb Fairy-wrens** have clearly had a good breeding season, no doubt assisted by the many *Pyrocanthus* and briar rose bushes which provide excellent cover. **Crimsons Rosellas** were feasting on the dried flower stalks of the many exotic herbs and grasses, the latter also favoured by **Double-barred** and **Red-browed Finches**. Notable absences were **Common Myna**, **Rainbow Lorikeets** and raptors. The species count for the morning was 37, slightly lower than previous autumn surveys.

### Jerrabomberra West NR

After overnight rain and storms, Jenny Bounds was relieved to get the survey done on 7 April, in an amazing window of fine, calm weather with mostly blue skies and the sun shining. There was a lot of bird activity, and a total of 44 species, a few higher than normal for autumn there. Groups of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were moving through, as were a few **White-naped Honeyeaters**, **Noisy Friarbirds** and **Red Wattlebirds**. Feeding flocks of small birds were at several sites. Highlights included **Southern Whitefaces** at site 2 near the grasslands edge (a species not recorded for several surveys), **Varied Sittellas** and **Diamond Firetails**, a pair of **Scarlet Robins**, an **Olive-backed Oriole**, and **Speckled Warblers**. A pair of **Wedge-tailed Eagles** was perched in dead trees on the nearby Woden property. Parrots were particularly

common, including more than normal numbers of **Red-rumped Parrots**. Several **Rufous Whistlers** were still around and one **Western Gerygone** call was heard. A large number of **Common Starlings** with young/immature birds was disappointing to see.

### Callum Brae NR

Sandra Henderson surveyed on 24 March, recording 34 species. The usual species were around, which included **Dusky Woodswallows** at three sites, **Leaden Flycatcher** at one site, and a **White-throated Greygone** at another. Quite a few parrots were around, with good numbers of **Galahs** and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**. **Noisy Friarbirds**, **Red Wattlebirds** and a few **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were moving through. Three **Scarlet Robins** were recorded, along with three raptor species, **Brown Goshawk**, **Wedge-tailed Eagle** and **Nankeen Kestrel**.

### Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson surveyed on Sunday 29 March, in overcast and cool but still conditions. Site 3 was the most productive, with thirteen species observed. Only one small flock of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** rested in the trees before continuing on their way. A **Rainbow Lorikeet** at site 2 challenged three **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and at site 5 the **Satin Bowerbird** is becoming a regular. As usual, most of the activity was between sites. Three small mixed feeding flocks were seen, comprised mainly of **Grey Fantails** and **Silvereyes**, but they were accompanied variously by **White-eared Honeyeater**, **Mistletoebirds** and **Speckled Warbler**.



Noisy Friarbird

Leo Berzins

The total of 39 species is possibly a record for the survey.

### Rural leasehold property near Tharwa

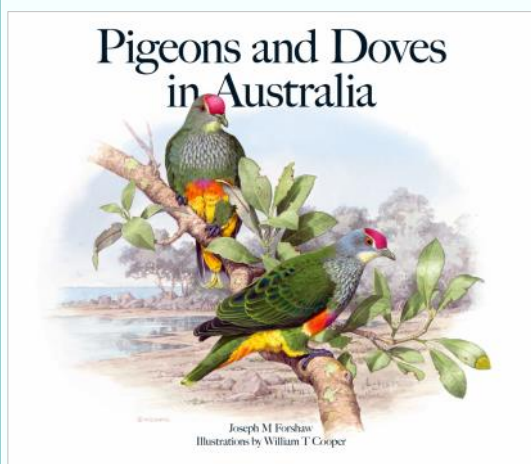
David McDonald did the autumn survey on 22 March under a heavy layer of low cloud. The site had changed hugely since the summer survey, much of the grass had dried off and been flattened by grazing, and most of the Blakely's Red Gums (the dominant tree species there) were wholly or partially defoliated by lerps. The upside of the lerp infestation was that it provided a fine food source for the leaf-gleaning guild of birds. The second site was a corker: 15 species including the vulnerable **Brown Treecreeper** and **Diamond Firetail**. A flock of **Tree Martins** was pleasing to see - decades ago they were breeding residents at that spot, but have been absent for many years. Among the migrants yet to leave were **Sacred Kingfisher** and **Dusky Woodswallow**. There was no sign of migrating honeyeaters, but there were substantial flocks of **Silvereyes**, and larger than usual numbers of **Grey Fantails**, presumably both species getting ready to migrate. 35 species were recorded in all.

### Naas Valley rural leasehold (near Mt Tennent)

Julie McGuinness surveyed on 21 March during cool and reasonably clear weather with a gentle breeze. The Blakely's Red Gum, particularly the younger trees, were very lerp-affected. Otherwise the property was looking pretty dry with the understorey grazed down. Most remarkable on this survey was the substantial parties of small insectivores, including 25 **Grey Fantails** in one party in one site, 22 **Dusky Woodswallows** in a group, 13 **Willie Wagtails** in another group, with smaller parties of **Striated Pardalotes** and **Silvereyes**. One each of **Rufous Whistler**, **Leaden Flycatcher** and **White-throated Gerygone** were seen. Also seen were a couple each of **Scarlet Robins** and **Jacky Winters**, as well as three **Diamond Firetails**. There were good numbers of **Eastern** and **Crimson Rosellas** and **Red-rumped Parrots**.

## FEATURE PUBLICATION OF THE MONTH

**ORDER NOW AT A GREAT PRICE!**



### **Pigeons and Doves in Australia**

*Joseph Forshaw and William Cooper*

From dense rainforests of north Queensland, where brilliantly plumaged Superb Fruit-Doves *Ptilinopus superbus* are heard more easily than seen, to cold, windswept heathlands of Tasmania, where Brush Bronzings *Phaps elegans* are locally common, most regions of Australia are frequented by one or more species.

In *Pigeons and Doves in Australia*, Joseph Forshaw and William Cooper have summarised our current knowledge of all species, including those occurring on Christmas, Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands. All species are illustrated with a full page plate and the book is scattered throughout with study sketches and smaller coloured drawings.

Retail price \$185.00.

**Price for members \$122.**

**Order at/or before the  
May meeting.**

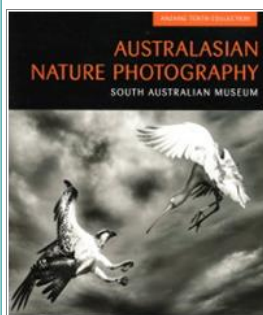
**Contact**

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

## 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)

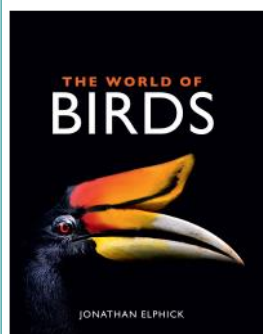


### **Australian Nature Photography**

*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**



### **The World of Birds**

*Jonathan Elphick*

Explore the wonders of the avian world with this ultimate reference book. The World of Birds is a comprehensive guide to every aspect of bird life and a concise survey of the world's orders and families. Highly respected ornithologist and wildlife expert, Jonathan Elphick, begins by defining the distinguishing features of birds before going on to describe their evolution since the age of the dinosaurs.

**Member's price \$60**

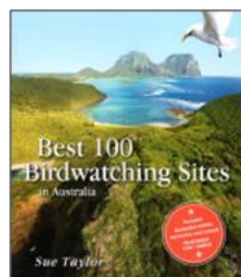


### **Finding Australian Birds: A Field Guide to Birding Locations**

*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**

## 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:

A Plant  
R Lister  
D Frazer  
R Crates  
J Tett  
G Andrew  
K Staunton  
V Mastera  
K Dundas  
G Carter  
J Bailey  
K Speldewinde

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

**Deadline for June 2015 edition**

**Wednesday 27 May 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.

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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;

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