



Gang-gang

APRIL 2014

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

MARCH MEETING

Wednesday 9 April 2014

7.30 pm.

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

The first presentation on an **aspect of COG's history** in relation to **COG's 50th Anniversary celebrations** will be by **Bruce Lindenmayer** on "**COG's contribution to ANU Research Programs**".

The main presentation will be by **Dr Veronica Doerr** from CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences on "**The Spaces In Between: connections and habitats in the broader landscape**".

In late 2012, COG volunteers did some unusual birding – they watched individual trees out in the middle of paddocks to see what birds were there and which directions they were moving. These 'connectivity tree watches' were part of the 'Flyways and Byways' project funded by the ACT Government to test our current ideas about connectivity – the bits and pieces in between proper habitat patches that

What to watch out for this month

March is a time of considerable bird movement in the ACT, but a surprise to me was the apparent early start to the **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** migration season with, on 19 March, well over 500 passing through/over Lindsay Hansch's place in Jerrabomberra, these days arguably the best spot, at least in terms of GBS sites, to see this migration in Canberra. One reason for the surprise was that conditions weren't really ideal for the migration to start, with still relatively mild overnight temperatures. It was, however, probably the best day in the week either side, with Lindsay telling me that the migration virtually dried up with the cloudier weather and warmer nights. So perhaps the real migration still needs to start; watch out for it after a clear, cold (preferably frosty) night, though if such conditions don't eventuate the urge/need to migrate will result in them moving on less than ideal days, though often in reduced numbers.

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Yellow-faced Honeyeater

Photo: Geoffrey Dabb

Everyone welcome

March meeting—continued from Page 1

allow animals to move through the landscape. The method was a new one and we weren't sure it was going to work. But it did, and provided even deeper insights than we anticipated! In this talk, Veronica will share the intriguing results of COG's hard work, and hopefully inspire you to look at the landscapes of the ACT just a bit differently.

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

Other chatline subscribers also reported smaller number migrating through on that day, together with large flocks of **Silvereyes**. This species often migrates at night, so keep your ears open when picking up the paper on these dark mornings. Also noteworthy have been the observations on COG outings and surveys of flocks of **Noisy Friarbirds**, **Red Wattlebirds** and, perhaps less familiar, loose flocks of **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrikes** on the move. Also observed have been **Dusky Woodswallows** overhead. While the last of this species won't leave Canberra until early May, over the next few weeks, on warmish still afternoons, they can often be heard and seen circling overhead, slowly drifting along. So keep an eye and ear out for these species, including the increasing presence of the **White-naped Honeyeaters** in the migrating honeyeater flocks, as well as any **Fuscous Honeyeaters** which sometimes get caught up in them.

Another sign that summer is over and autumn has begun is a number of observers reporting some very large mixed feeding flocks (MFFs), containing over 100 individual birds often comprising well over 10 species. Also in the second half of March an influx of **Scarlet Robins** was reported into areas where they weren't present earlier. There have also been reports of the **Golden Whistler** and **White-eared Honeyeater** moving into suburban and peri-urban Canberra in March. The **Flame Robin** seems not to have moved yet into the open areas of peri-urban Canberra in any numbers, so watch out for these and other winter altitudinal migrants

such as the **Rose** and **Pink Robins**, and the **Crescent** and **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, which may be first seen during April or early May.

Watch out also for the **Swift Parrot** migrating from Tasmania, especially if the gums in your area are flowering well. Other species which I associate more with autumn/winter, at least in my local patch, include the **Grey-Shrike-thrush** which first arrived early in March, and the **Restless Flycatcher**, with one already reported from Wamboin. In my experience autumn/winter is also the time you're most likely to see a **White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike**, a very marked one of which was captured beautifully on film in the ANBG by Roger Williams and posted on the chatline (see next page). The **Scarlet Honeyeater**, two of which were reported in an Evatt garden, are also more likely to be seen in Canberra during the cooler months.

Of the species I mentioned as seeming to have left early year, I can find only a single report of the **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** at Mulligans Flat on 11 March. The **Dollarbird**, **Rainbow Bee-eaters** and the **Sacred Kingfisher** that leave by early March were being reported up to about the middle of March, so any further sightings will be

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Scarlet Honeyeater Photo: David Cook

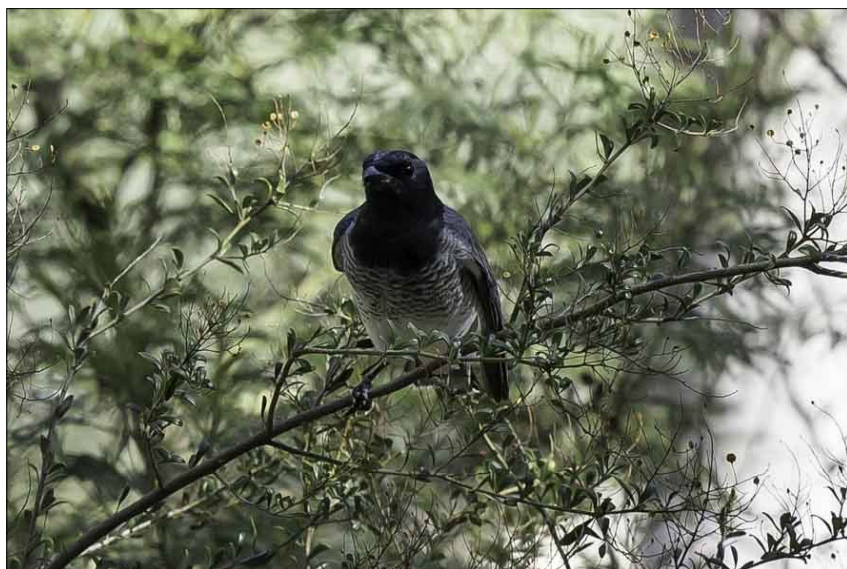
What to watch out for this month—continued from Page 2

significant. This is also the case for the **Eastern Koel**, for which the last report I can find is before mid-month, perhaps a little earlier than in recent years, but again after a very successful breeding season, with Barbara Allan reporting she had at least 7 separate fledglings round her place in Page over the season. Other birds that usually mostly leave by the end of March including the **Leaden Flycatcher**, the **Latham's Snipe**, and the **Australian Reed-Warbler** were still being reported in the second half of March. A surprise, considering the number of storm fronts that moved through during the month, has been the sparse reports of the **White-throated Needletails** (a maximum of 10 together); the last of them will have been seen by the end of March/early April.

Of the "passage migrants" moving north from their breeding sites in the mountains there were lots of reports of the **Rufous Fantail** in the first half of March (and still some towards the end), but none that I can find of the **Cicadabird** or the **Satin Flycatcher**. There seem to have been very few of the last-named reported in the ACT this year. Species that are still being reported but usually leave during April include the **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone**, **Noisy Friarbird**, and most of the **Rufous Whistlers**, as well as most of the **Grey Fantails** of which there again seem to have been very many moving through this March. A number of these will overwinter, as will the **Mistletoebird** and increasingly the **Superb Parrot**, of which flocks of up to 25 were still being reported in the second half of March.

Apart from a late Eastern Koel fledgling there have been some reports of breeding

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White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike

Photo: Roger Williams



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2014 tours

19 — 26 April
Alice Springs and
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Mitchell Plateau/black grasswren option

12 — 27 June
Queensland's Gulf of Carpentaria
& Atherton Tablelands

3 — 10 August
New Caledonia

6 — 25 September
Strzelecki Track 35th tour
The four states outback expedition

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

10 — 19 December
SW Western Australia

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6 & 7 December 2014

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activity in March, most notably the female **Musk Duck** feeding two dependent young on Yerrabi Pond, seen by many including participants in a COG outing. Also of note was a group of **White-winged Choughs** starting to build a nest using cattle dung in late February, but it appears otherwise the rain in mid-February didn't trigger significant autumn breeding compared with the past couple of years.

April will still be a time of considerable bird movement in the ACT, so watch out for migrating flocks, birds moving down from the mountains to spend the winter near you, the dates of the last departing migrants and any MFFs as well as any late breeding. As usual always please ensure that all significant observations end up on the COG database.

Jack Holland

Committee news

The Conservation Council will write a letter to the ACT Government on behalf of member groups about the proposed relocation of the RSPCA, raising a number of concerns due to its location next to Callum Brae (eg tree retention, connectivity, asset protection zone) and seeking answers to other questions (eg alternative sites considered, where this fits with Eastern Broadacre Strategic Plan). COG, and other groups, has been approached by local landowners about this issue.

COG is hosting the BIGnet meeting (NSW birding groups) in April at the Botanic Gardens. Work on the agenda and other meeting arrangements is well underway.

Some issues with the new website are being addressed.

Sandra Henderson

A Special Presentation – “Rediscovery of the Night Parrot”

You are invited to attend a special event, that will be co-sponsored by Eremaea eBird (ACT) and the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG), to hear a presentation by **John Young** about the ‘Rediscovery of the Night Parrot’.

Please note this will not be a normal COG meeting but a special event for which you will need to register. It is also being held both at a different venue and starting time.

When: Wednesday 11 June 2014 at 7:00 pm

**Where: St Marks Theological College Chapel
corner Kings Avenue and Blackall Street
Barton ACT**

The Chapel is a concrete bunker-looking building right on the corner of Kings Avenue. Further details of location and parking will be provided in the June Gang-gang.

Come and hear this wonderful story of a search lasting 17,000 hours for a parrot considered extinct.

The presentation will take about 90 minutes and will begin with the natural history of the Night Parrot. It will then cover the search for the parrot from when John first recorded its call until its subsequent sighting and capture by digital photography. It will conclude with the ongoing study of the bird's ecology. The presentation will contain about 25 still images and a short video of the Night Parrot. There will be time set aside for questions at the end of the presentation.

On the night, John will also be selling limited edition prints of the Night Parrot (\$300) to raise funds for continuing study about this bird.

Despite the move to a larger venue you will still need to register for this event and you should email your intention to attend to Alastair Smith of Eremaea eBird (ACT) on ebirdact@gmail.com or by phone on 0428 466739.

The cut-off date for registrations will be **16 May 2014**, **so please ensure you register as early as possible.**

Field Trip Reports

Friday 7 to Monday 10 March - Ben Boyd NP campout

The magnificent Bittangabee Bay in Ben Boyd National Park near Eden was the venue for the Canberra Day long weekend campout where 12 COG members, led by Kathy Walter and John Goldie, shared the campground with dozens of Victorians who were also having a long week-end.

On Saturday morning we walked northwards along the coast track seeing a mix of coastal birds like **Sooty Oystercatcher** and **Australian Gannet** as well as many bush birds like **Gang-gang Cockatoos**, **Spotted Pardalotes** and **Southern Emu-wrens** out on the heath. The warm water in the Bay enticed a number of people in for a pleasant swim before lunch. In the afternoon we drove to Green Cape Lighthouse to look for sea birds. **Crested Terns**, some **Wedge-tailed Shearwaters** and a single **Shy Albatross** were seen from the headland but no fur seals were to be seen. In the surrounding grass and Westringia we searched unsuccessfully for **Striated Fieldwren** but did get several views of three **Ground Parrots** which was perhaps the highlight of the day (& a “lifer” for some of the birders).

The COG communal dinner was another success with everybody bringing tantalising food to share. Spotlighting after tea on the northside of the bay revealed Common Ringtail and Common Brushtail Possums, and Sugar Gliders were heard – the nocturnal birds were silent.

Sunday started off with showers and wind but we headed off for the heath on Green Cape to look for heath specialists. Unfortunately most of Green Cape’s heath was severely burnt earlier in the week. The only remaining heath was a small patch between Pulpit Rd and the adjacent forest. We were all very dejected at the prospects for the sedentary heath species that could take decades to recolonise from somewhere else. On the bird front, we did see 2 or 3 very dark **Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters** trying to find something to eat in the ashes and some people got a glimpse of a **Striated Fieldwren** and a single **Ground Parrot** near the main track. A few people observed a **Crested Shrike-tit** in the eucalypts on the edge of the forest.

For the afternoon’s outing we drove around to Saltwater Creek for a walk on the beach and another piece of heath. A large flock of **Crested Terns** were trying to roost on the beach in between constant foot traffic. Numerous **White-bellied Sea-eagles** in a



Rose Robin

Photo: David Cook



Glossy Black-Cockatoo

Photo: Stuart Harris

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Field Trip Reports—continued from Page 5

range of plumages were visible while walking the heath – a maximum of 7 were seen on one occasion.

Before packing up on a beautiful Monday morning, most of the group walked along the south track through the forest where we were able to get views of male **Rose Robin**, **Beautiful Firetails** and 3 flying **Glossy Black-Cockatoos**.

John Goldie

Sunday 16 March – Gungahlin Wetlands

On a cool and blustery morning, 19 members, many from the “deep south” side of Canberra, enjoyed a morning exploring some of the many ponds and wetlands of Gungahlin. Local residents John Harris and Julie Clark shared their local knowledge, starting at Crace Recreation Park where, among the 22 species recorded, the highlight was stunning views of a **Little Grassbird**, the first or best view of this species for many observers. We then visited The Valley Ponds, a new wetland area with extensive plantings and 3 ponds at different levels. A very obliging **Golden-headed Cisticola** sat high and still in tall grass stalks, giving everyone excellent views and was the stand-out bird among the 20 species seen, although a young **Black-shouldered Kite** also impressed the group.

The remainder of the morning was spent at Yerrabi Pond, where the wind had increased to such a degree that the water had white caps. Nevertheless, we recorded a very respectable 43 species amongst them a female **Musk Duck** feeding her two young with yabbies, while the male took no interest and was a considerable distance away. Other birds of interest included a raft of about 70 **Little Black Cormorants**, 2 **Eastern Great Egret**, an **Olive-backed Oriole** and a female **Leaden Flycatcher**.



Musk Duck

Photo: Duncan McCaskill

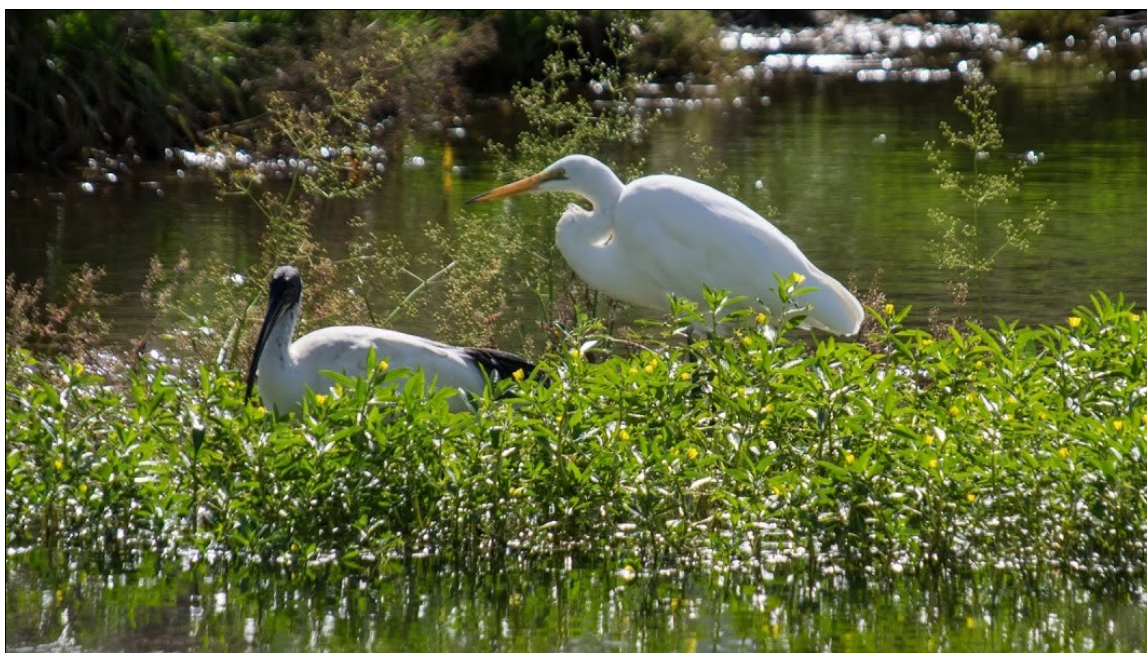


Australian Pelican

Photo: Duncan McCaskill

In total, 48 species were recorded, proving that it is indeed worth venturing into new territory to explore the many wetlands tucked away in Gungahlin.

Sue Lashko



Australian White Ibis,
Great Egret,
Gungahlin Wetlands

Photo: Duncan
McCaskill

Field Trip Reports—Continued from Page 6

Wednesday 19 March – Kama Nature Reserve

Twenty-four members and guests assembled around the entrance to Kama Reserve at 8:30 on a brilliantly fine morning. While waiting for meeting and greeting 2 **Wedge-tailed Eagles** and 2 **White-faced Herons** were seen perched. The next interesting bird turned out, after some debate, to have been a relatively large **Australian Hobby**.

Moving on through the bush we recorded several of the regular bush bird species including a flock of 6 **Brown-headed honeyeaters** and 2 **Dusky Woodswallows** high overhead. We were alerted to the presence of a **Brown Treecreeper** by the call and eventually got good views of it high on a dead tree.

As we moved into more open country we began to notice **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes**. While the most seen at one time was 5 birds they were all seeming to move uphill from the Molonglo and, by the time we had finished, the count of birds present was at least 20. Three more **White-faced Herons** were seen close to the river. A raptor just below the sewage service road resolved, after even more debate, to be a **Nankeen Kestrel**.

The river corridor was very active with large flocks of **Silvereyes** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** (at least 50) moving through. This coincides with two reports on the chatline of the honeyeater migration starting today. An unusual "bubbling call" heard from the Casuarinas eventually turned out to be an **Olive-backed Oriole**. The walk back through the open country delivered 7 **Australasian Pipits**.

In total we recorded 44 species.

Martin Butterfield.

Sunday 23 March - Narrabundah Hill

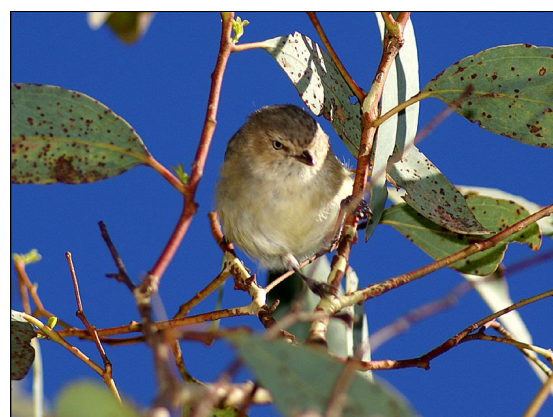
About 20 members and guests gathered at the NW corner of this reserve west of Duffy, and then set off from the stile along the northern fence line. Possibly due to the cloud cover, things were relatively quiet for over the first 500 metres, with a pair of **Scarlet Robins** being the highlight until we came upon a very large mixed feeding flock (MFF), consisting of well over 100 birds of at least 12 species. It started off very quietly, with mainly **Grey Fantails** seen moving in their typical way in the trees, but it built up in intensity until birds were moving and calling all around us and it was impossible to identify and count them all. Major species amongst them in the trees and regrowth were well over a dozen **Weebills**, **Striated Thornbills**, **Striated Pardalotes** and over 40 **Silvereyes**, which dominated towards the end. Near ground level were **Superb Fairy-wrens** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills** and, as is often the case, a single bird from several different species



Brown-headed Honeyeater Photo: Stuart Harris



Olive-backed Oriole Photo: Duncan McCaskill



Weebill Photo: David Cook

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Field Trip Reports—Continued from Page 7

was also caught up in all the action, a **Speckled Warbler**, a **Golden** and a female **Rufous Whistler**, a **Grey Shrike-thrush** and a quiet **White-eared Honeyeater**, recently arrived from the higher parts of the ACT, and very obligingly allowing very close views.

Then almost as quickly as it formed the MFF moved on and we continued along the northern and then turned along the western fence line, first deviating into the reserve to identify a gerygone whose call was fooling some of us, including at first some experienced observers. This was tracked down to a **Western Gerygone**, a very light grey and active bird which would have been difficult to identify if it wasn't calling. Most participants got reasonable looks, including of a couple of others we saw later. Activity was quieter along the western fence line, but we did see 12 **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** migrating NE in a loose flock, and soon after well over this number of **Red Wattlebirds**. Earlier we had seen 24 **Australian Ravens** also moving through in a loose flock; this species has been quite numerous in the local area over the past month, and an estimated well over 100 **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** were also moving through noisily or feeding in the paddocks. A lone **Diamond Firetail** was seen, and a **Little Pied Cormorant** moving between dams was our only waterbird of the day.

About 75% of the way towards the south western corner we turned around and retraced our steps back to the cars, first with some participants seeing a somewhat elusive couple of **Olive-backed Orioles**, at last some **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, and then before the MFF spot we found two male **Rufous Whistlers** calling loudly, followed by two shimmering female flycatchers which we put down as **Leaden** because of the habitat, though we couldn't be 100% certain that they weren't **Satin** on passage through while migrating back from the mountains.

Participants agreed it a very enjoyable morning, with a total of 43 species seen. The area covered is often the best part of the reserve to visit, with significant regeneration of former pine forest that had been logged in 2001 and then burnt in the 2003 bush fires.

Jean Casburn & Jack Holland



White-eared Honeyeater

Photo: Peter Cowper



Western Gerygone

Photo: David Cook

Future Field 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. The form reads as follows:

I declare I am capable of undertaking this trip having: discussed with the Trip Leader any limitations I have (e.g. medications, physical), assessed the risks to myself and my property, and ensured I am adequately equipped.

I will follow the instructions of the Field Trip Leader, and advise them before moving away from the group.

Changes to trips are notified on the trips page of the COG website <http://canberrabirds.org.au/> and on the COG chat-line at: <http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds/2012-03/index.html>

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.

Sunday 6 April - Nursery Swamp

On this trip we will visit one of the most delightful spots in Namadgi National Park to ascertain which birds may be found in the high country in mid-autumn, and to obtain records for COG's and Birds Australia's Ongoing Atlas Project. We will drive to the Orroral Valley. The first part of the walk is uphill on a good track, then we continue along a valley through Black Saltees to Nursery Swamp, a fen at 1,100 metres altitude containing peat that has been dated to 10,000 years BP. The area is of great significance to Aboriginal people, containing both rock art and tool-making sites. Meet at the Kambah Village shopping centre car park (cnr Drakeford Drive and Marconi Crescent) at 8.30 am (Eastern Standard Time) for carpooling. Suggested contribution from each passenger to drivers: \$10. We will return in the early afternoon, so bring lunch and water, and be prepared for changeable weather. Registration for this trip is essential. To register, or to obtain further information, please contact the trip leader, David McDonald, at telephone (02) 6238 3706 or email NS2014@canberrabirds.org.au. Please note that daylight saving ends at 3.00 am on the morning of the trip.

Sunday 13 April – K2C bird surveys, Bredbo region.

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

Anyone interested in participating is asked to contact Nicki Taws. Email: ntaws@bigpond.com or Ph. 6251 0303, mob.0408 210736.

Wednesday 16 April – Birrigai Rock Shelter.

Meet at Tidbinbilla Visitors Centre at 9 am.

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Friday 18 to Monday 21 April – Round Hill Nature Reserve

The Easter campout this year is to Round Hill Nature Reserve in central NSW. We should see quite a variety of western birds as there is a big range of habitat types in the area, including mallee, callitris and eucalypt woodlands. Past COG trips have seen **Splendid Fairy-wren**, **Crested Bellbird**, **Major Mitchell's Cockatoo**, **Yellow-plumed Honeyeater** and much more. Depending upon how the season is going (& luck) we could see some of harder to find or unusual species as well.

Round Hill is between Lake Cargelligo and Mt Hope and is 5+ hours' drive from Canberra. I expect we will spend most of our time close to camp with perhaps a couple of short drives. It will be a "bring everything in, take everything out" camp. Note: there are NO FACILITIES. Participants will be required to provide me with their car registration to forward to NSW National Parks. If you wish to attend, please contact me at smlashko@gmail.com. Further details, including directions will be emailed to participants.

Sunday 4 May – Campbell Park

This outing will commence at 8.30 am. Campbell Park is one of Canberra's best preserved native woodlands, and wonderfully close to the city. It is habitat for a great variety of woodland birds.

Travel north along Northcott Drive until you reach the Campbell Park Offices. Turn right into the car park and then left, and go to the extreme north end of the car park.

Bring sturdy boots, sunblock and water to drink. We will walk for about 2 hours.

Bruce Lindenmayer.

Saturday 17 May – Australian National Botanic Gardens

This morning walk will be the first for 2014 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), who will be happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you. Please make sure to bring your binoculars and field guide.

Saturday 17 May – Tallaganda

Our evening spotlighting for nocturnal birds and mammals will commence from Lowden Forest Park picnic area in Tallaganda State Forest at 5pm. If we are lucky we will hear/see **Powerful Owl**, **Southern Boobook** and Greater Glider. There is also a possibility of Sugar Glider, Common Ringtail and Common Brushtail Possum, **Tawny Frogmouth** and **Owlet-nightjar**.

Bring your own picnic tea (& table and chair if you want) which we will have just before sunset. Once it gets dark we will drive slowly back towards Canberra spotlighting and listening as we go. You will also need a torch, warm clothes and a map to get you there and back. A spotlight is not necessary, but if you have one all the better. Rain and spotlighting don't mix, so if rain is forecast the trip will be cancelled.

Lowden Forest Park picnic area has some interesting history and a couple of short walks in the forest nearby, so you might enjoy arriving early enough to spend some time looking around before dark.

As we are stopping and starting on the side of forest roads in the dark there will be a limit of 5 vehicles for this trip. If you are interested in coming, contact Kathy Walter or John Goldie at walter.goldie@optusnet.com.au.

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Future Field Trips—Continued from Page 10

Sunday 25 May – Bungonia

Thank you to Denis Wilson who will lead this outing. Participants should meet at 7.30am in the carpark at the netball centre just north of the intersection of Northbourne Ave and Mouat Street, Lyneham. We will carpool from there with passengers making a contribution to petrol costs of the driver. It takes about 1 ½ hours to reach Bungonia. Bring morning tea and lunch. Please register with Sue Lashko at smlashko@gmail.com

Friday 6 to Monday 9 June - Deua Tin Huts

The June long weekend trip will be to Deua Tin Huts, south of Captain's Flat and 1 ½ hours drive from Canberra. Accommodation will be in 3 huts with a maximum of 14 beds. Note that 2 of the huts are open plan (ie 4 people will be sharing the same room). More details are available on www.deuatinhuts.com. We will bird on the property and in various spots nearby such as the Big Hole and Marble Arch.

Register with Sue Lashko on smlashko@gmail.com. DO NOT book with Deua Tin Huts – COG has already made a booking for the 3 huts.

Saturday 14 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 calling for expressions of interest from COG members 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. If interested and for further details please contact Chris Davey on 62546324 (h), email chris_davey@aapt.net.au.

Saturday 21 June to Sunday 22 June - Moruya area

In association with the Eurobodalla Natural History Group this weekend outing will visit local estuaries, lakes, beaches and rainforest of the Moruya area. Details are not yet available but the plan will be to drive down on Friday evening 20 June to Moruya, 3 hours from Canberra. It is envisaged that we will visit various areas starting early Saturday morning and return to Canberra after lunch on Sunday.

Members may choose to stay in cabins or camp at BIG4 Moruya Heads East Dolphin Beach Caravan Park; see <http://turu.com.au/parks/nsw/illawarra---south-coast/eurobodalla-coast/big4-moruya-heads-east-dolphin-beach.aspx> for details. The caravan park will be our base for this outing. Bring along some appropriate food for a BBQ on Saturday night after which we plan to go spotlighting for gliders and owls.

Contact Chris Davey chris_davey@aapt.net.au or 62546324 for further information or to register your interest.

Advertisements

Nature Lodge Optics

This month we welcome our new advertisers Nature Lodge Optics, based in Huskisson, Jervis Bay. This family owned business 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 and Pentax are represented together with smaller hi-tech brands like Weaver, Vortex, Forest Optics, Visionary and Vanguard. A selection of Spotting Scopes, Night Vision and 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 polarized 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 .

Questabird

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



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

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

Note: The game is currently available only on Android devices, with an iPhone



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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 barbdebrune@hotmail.com

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Gang-gang project update

The Gang-gang project was officially launched by Ian Fraser, Canberra's own well-known naturalist at Corroboree Park, Turner on Thursday 13 March with various media outlets in attendance. Observations have been collected since the start of February and at the time of writing there have been over 373 observations placed on-line through the COG-ALA portal from over 88 contributors whilst an additional 58 observations have been received on paper forms.

Of the 88 contributors 50% have entered a single observation possibly indicating the early stage of the project and/or a distribution of occasionally observed individuals. It will be interesting to see if this picture changes with the seasons. So far the seeds from Eucalyptus spp, Liquidamber and Chinese Pistachio appear to be the flavour of the moment.

There have been some Interesting sightings: one off the east coast of Argentina and another off the east coast of Japan, both easily fixed and explainable with the addition of a minus sign to the record or the same longitude coordinate as the latitude coordinate corrected. No names will be mentioned!

The first Muster was held during the week 19-25 February. The Muster was based on COG's long-running Garden Bird Survey with reporting required each day rather than once a week. So far 30 sheets have been received covering 22 suburbs with one form received from outside the urban area. It was most encouraging to receive 14 forms with no observations. This invaluable information will allow us to map in some detail the distribution of Gang-gangs within urban Canberra. The largest number reported was 14 on Friday 21 February at a site in Red Hill. The next Muster will be held during the week May 21-27 and work is underway to engage school and scout groups in the May Muster. To assist this work, could COG members with contacts in their local school or scout groups please forward the contact details for environmentally motivated teachers or scout leaders to kathy.eyles@anu.edu.au. Members may also be part of other groups (like U3A, Walking for Pleasure, Wednesday Walkers etc.) who may be interested in the GG survey.

The map below shows the Gang-gang reporting rate over the period 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2013; the larger the dot the higher the reporting rate which takes into account the number of COG Observation Sheets submitted for each cell and the number of those sheets that report Gang-gangs. A large dot does not necessarily mean hot spots for Gang-gangs. Thanks to Steve Wallace for producing this map from data extracted from the COG database.

Of particular importance for the project will be to locate breeding sites within the survey area. If anyone knows of breeding sites could they please let us know via ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au. All information will be kept confidential so please DO NOT enter the location of known nesting sites on the COG-ALA on-line data entry portal. Possible breeding sites are those where birds are seen to frequently inspect a hollow or are seen to frequently visit a tree hollow during the breeding season. Sites where adults have been observed feeding young or where birds have been observed hollow inspecting very occasionally or out of the breeding season do not indicate breeding sites.

If you have any queries or wish to report problems please send an email to: ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au.

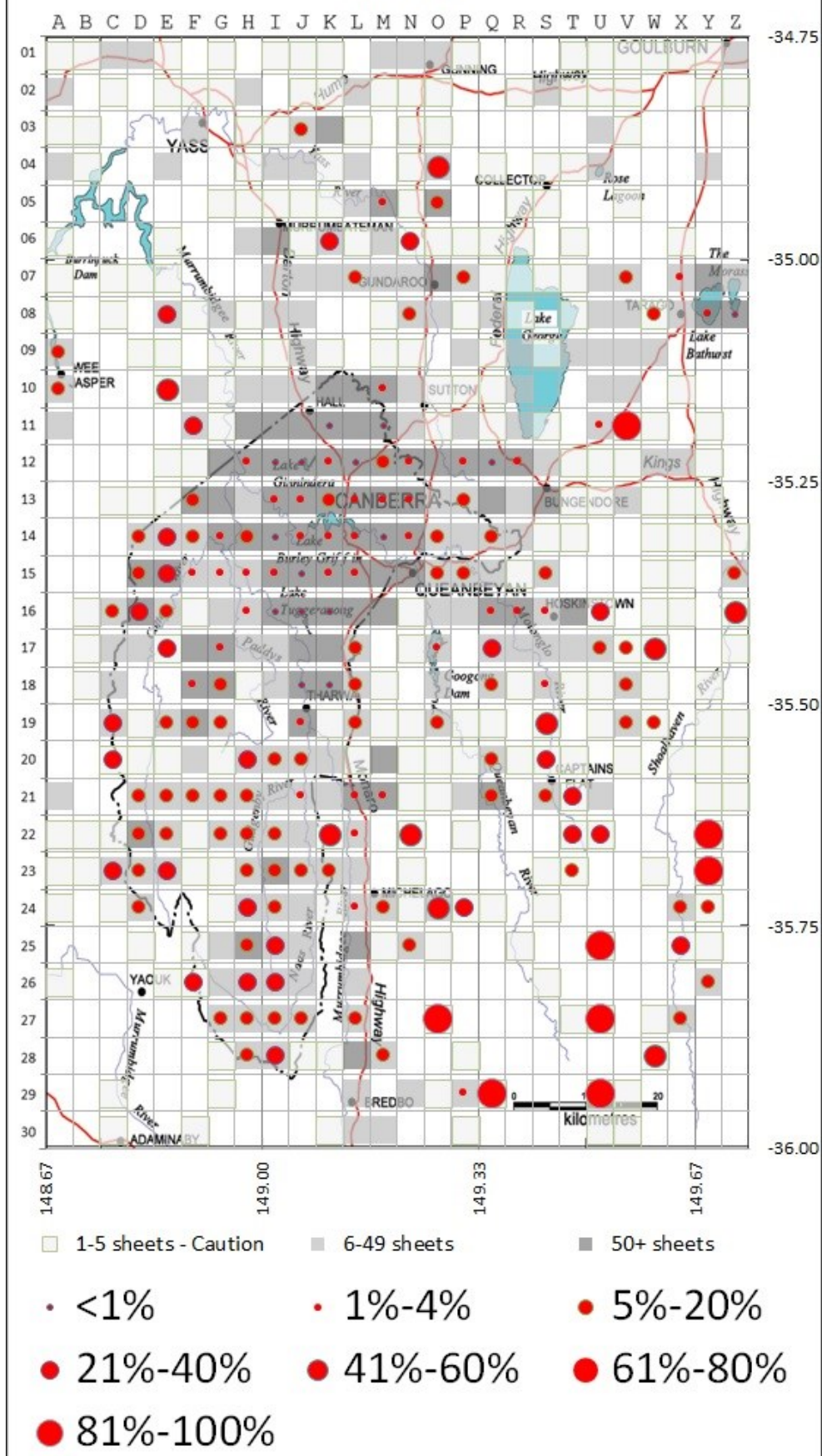
The GG survey team



Gang-gang Cockatoo

Photo: Julian Robinson

Gang-gang Cockatoo - Reporting Rate 1 July 2003 - 30 June 2013



Book Review

QUESTION : When is a guide to the birds of a large region of virtually no use in bird identification?

ANSWER : When it is “A Guide to the Birds of East Africa”!

The quaint title is in fact, a tongue-in-cheek one for a light-hearted and at times very funny novel about a group of well-to-do people from the Indian and European communities living in Nairobi. They are fanatical birdwatchers and the plot follows the rivalry between two aging male characters, both infatuated with the lovely widowed leader of the weekly bird walks. Their competition leads inevitably to a bird race (read Twitchathon) and, after some nasty incidents, a happy ending.

This is not a new book, and as a family Xmas present in 2012, has just come to the top of my reading list. The author, Nicholas Drayson, was born in England but moved to Australia where he studied biology and did a PhD in Canberra, before moving to Nairobi where his wife was posted.

Woven into the story is Drayson’s great love and deep understanding of the birds of East Africa, not to mention the foibles of people who watch them. It’s rated **** and well worth it, in my opinion.

“A Guide to the Birds of East Africa” by Nicholas Drayson. Penguin Books (2009).

Bruce Lindenmayer.

(The sequel “A Guide to the Beasts of East Africa” was published in 2012 - ed.)

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

2013-2014 memberships:

- Individuals, families and institutions: \$35
- school students (under 18): \$17.50.

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

R Gribble, Pearce
J Williams, Carwoola
B Knight, Griffith
J Clark, Amaroo

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for May 2014 edition

Wednesday 30 April 2014

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

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au Or

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

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

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

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COG E-mail Discussion List

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

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

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Canberra Bird Notes

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