



Gang-gang

DECEMBER 2014

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

DECEMBER MEETING

Wednesday 10 December 2014

7.30 pm.

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

COG Members' night

Due to the unavailability of the meeting venue in January the annual Members' Night has again been moved forward to December. A program has been drawn up and is as follows:

Sandra Henderson – Peregrine Falcon and Mistletoebird's Nests

Bill Handke – An update on CIMAG activities

Bill Graham – Birds from my Recent Trip to Korea

Neil Hermes – Slide show/synopsis of COG's Gala Night

Steve Wallace – Video highlights of local birds taken in 2014

Barbara Allan – The 2014 COG Bird Blitz including the lucky draw and other prizes for participants

Followed by refreshments

So please come along to see and hear what your fellow members want to show.

What to watch out for this month

This report covers the well over 5 weeks since I drafted my column early for the November Gang-gang. During this time the weather became increasingly hot and dry, with only a single significant rain event, the benefits of which were only fleeting as the weather quickly returned to, windy, hot and dry. The weather seemed to have an effect on the reporting of birds, in particular for the end of October and first few days of November (fatigue after the Blitz?) However, there is still plenty to report on and also to anticipate in the coming two months.

The conditions mean that it should be an above average year for the summer migrants, especially those moving in from the dry inland, though I'm not sure my analysis below totally supports this. Of those species that hadn't fully arrived by last month's column the **Rufous Songlark** appears to be well established, at least in some areas, with around 10 territories in my local patch of Cooleman Ridge/S half of Narrabundah Hill, mainly on

Continued Page 2



COG January BBQ
Black Mountain Peninsula
6.00pm Wednesday
14 January 2014
Bring a salad or desert to share
BYO plates, cutlery, glasses,
table and chairs
Sausages, beer, wine and
soft drink provided
Lucky door prize
Usual monthly raffle

Everyone welcome

the W side of latter, and with Jean Casburn estimating a similar number on the N boundary. The **Eastern/Pacific Koel** also arrived in good numbers during the last week of October/first week of November, and has been reported from Carwoola, a less “urban” site than usual. This species will now be looking for naïve **Red Wattlebird** and their nests in which to lay their eggs (I wonder how quickly this species will learn to recognise the Koel as a threat, and force a switch in hosts?).

Rainbow Bee-eater, Dollarbird, Leaden Flycatcher and **Latham’s Snipe** numbers also have increased and stabilised during the period, though not necessarily very high compared with some years. Of the migrants that usually arrive later in October there have been a few reports of the **Satin Flycatcher, Brush Cuckoo** and **Cicadabird** in urban/peri-urban Canberra on their way to breed in the mountains, as well as for the **Rufous Fantail**, the first of which was not reported until nearly a week into November, quite late for this species. Numbers reported for these species have been low, as have, not surprisingly those for the **Brown Songlark** and the **Horsfield’s Bushlark**. However, there don’t appear yet to be any reports of the **Channel-billed Cuckoo**. So watch out for these species, to help clarify whether there are lower than may be expected numbers of them this summer.

A sign of conditions drying out inland have been the number of reports of **White-browed Woodswallows** particularly around mid-month when flocks of 100+

were seen, including at Campbell Park around the time of the annual nest workshop (see report elsewhere in this issue, including of the immediate commencement of breeding, which is also noted below), where a handful of **Masked Woodswallows** were also present. While reported numbers of the **Shining Bronze Cuckoo** seem to have remained relatively high compared with previous seasons, surprisingly those for drier country species the **Horsfield’s Bronze Cuckoo** and in particular the **Pallid Cuckoo** have dropped over this reporting period. So there have been some mixed signals, for example while **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** are no longer in my GBS site, I have heard them regularly in at least half a dozen spots in my local patch during November – are they staying to breed?

In contrast increasing numbers of drier country waterbirds, especially during November, support a drying inland. These include small numbers of **Freckled** and many **Pink-eared Ducks** and **Hardhead** as well as some **Black-winged Stilts**. While I’m not sure their presence is drought related (it seems more to be a summer phenomenon) the number **Australian Shelducks** seen at Bungendore topped over 100, a record according to Martin Butterfield, with 20 **Plumed Whistling Ducks** also seen there. I’m still unclear why these species prefer the conditions there, as well as further to the NE of the ACT.

Waterbirds also featured amongst the “unusals” seen in the reporting period, including **Common Greenshank**,



Eurasian Coot, chicks

Browyn King

Pectoral Sandpiper, **Red-necked Stint** and **Pacific Golden Plover**, as well as two **Great Crested Grebes** at Uriarra Homestead. However, the species that seems to have caused the greatest excitement was the **Regent Honeyeater** seen in Greenway. It only stayed there for a couple of days and was not seen again despite the considerable number of flowering eucalypts there and elsewhere in Canberra. The **Pied Butcherbird** was relocated at the National Film and Sound Archives, and seen at several other spots in the ACT, and small numbers **Glossy Back-Cockatoos** were again reported. A **Spangled Drongo** was reported from Wamboin, but so far it seems just an average year for “unusuals”, with the dry conditions out west I’m surprised no inland honeyeaters have been reported so far. So look out for these, and report any unexpected observations.

After an early start the very good breeding season has continued, and let’s hope the continuing hot and dry conditions (it’s a windy 38°C Sunday as I’m drafting this!) doesn’t put a stop to it. The undoubted highlight so far has been the 3 black **Australian Spotted Crane** chicks first found in Forde by Bill Graham, followed by some lovely photos posted on the COG chat line by Julie Clark (see next page). Surprisingly it appears that this is first breeding record on the COG database for this species, though the ACT Atlas contains a record (probably mine as I was surveying there at the time) of 5 chicks at the Point Hut pond in December 1990. Lots of **Eurasian Coot** and **Dusky Moorhen** chicks have also been reported during November, in particular from the relatively new ponds in the N of Canberra.

After Mark Clayton reported **Australian White Ibis** nesting at Tidbinbilla I was surprised to find out that this common (and sometimes nuisance) species does not have any other known breeding spots in the ACT, with the former one on the Yowani golf



Regent Honeyeater

Julian Robinson



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2015 tours

Tasmania

31 January – 7 February

Alice Springs

18 – 25 April

Top End

25 May – 2 June – 7 June

Pt 1 Darwin Kakadu Katherine.

Pt 2 Katherine Kununurra Mitchell Plateau

Iron Range

July 13 days

New Caledonia

2 – 9 August

Strzelecki Track

5 – 24 September

Central Coast NSW

1 – 8 October

2015 plains-wanderer weekends

7 & 8 November 2015

21 & 22 November 2015

6 & 7 December 2015

Please see itineraries, checklists and latest news on our website

www.philipmaher.com

course destroyed several years ago. Surprising also has been a couple of reports of adult **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos** interacting with, or close to juveniles of their own species, with in one case the latter begging but not being fed. In both cases the host species was not in evidence.

Also very interesting were the number of reports of **Tawny Frogmouths** fledging young quite synchronously in the few days from the end of the first week of November. This included those in the nest near the dam at the end of Kathner Street Chapman, where I have been able to follow the breeding sequence much more closely than in past years when only dependent young were observed. This tree is adjacent to the one where in late October my wife and daughter had baby **Australian Wood Ducklings** parachuting around them from out of the nest. The only record after this was when I saw them early one morning about 10 days later huddled together in the horse paddocks about 50 metres away, with the parents guarding them on either side. They were never seen on the dam itself, which echoes some of the other posts on the chat line of ducklings of this species "disappearing".

Sandra Henderson was also able to follow the progress of the **Peregrine Falcon** nest at Red Rocks Gorge, and will be showing photos of this on the December Members' Night, as well as the nearby **Mistletoebird's** nest. As noted elsewhere in this issue participants at the Nest Workshop were also able to see one of these (with young being fed) for the first time. However, the most notable event from this COG outing was the signs of breeding activity already of the recently arrived **White-browed Woodswallows**, which were seen copulating later that day, and a number of nests already having been built before the end of that week. This species is well known to arrive and if the conditions appear right attempt to breed in an unseemly hurry, including abandoning if for some reason they are not satisfied.

So please continue to watch out for any late spring species and "unusuals", as well as for all breeding activity which may be expected to peak soon. A number of migrants only come here to breed, and by the two months' time of writing of my next column a number such as the **White-winged Triller** and **Rufous Songlark** will have completed nesting and will already be planning to leave, if not already left. As usual please ensure that all significant observations end up on the COG database.

Jack Holland



Australian Spotted Crake, chicks

Julie Clark

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 2 November – “Bibaringa”

The outing at Bibaringa was very popular, with 26 members and friends turning up for the morning. Leader Stuart Harris had compiled a bird list of 108 species for the property over many years, and we managed to find almost half of them (52 species recorded, including a new one for Stuart's list). Bibaringa was badly affected by the 2003 bush fires, so much of the vegetation is re growth, with many of the older trees having been killed outright.

A pair of **Wedge-tailed Eagles** were sighted overhead, being harassed at times by an **Australian Raven**, an **Australian Magpie**, **Little Corellas** and a **Nankeen Kestrel**. The surprise birds of the morning were three **Red-capped Robins** near the start of the walk, a bird not previously recorded by Stuart at Bibaringa. Further on **Scarlet Robins** (with dependent young) and **Eastern Yellow Robins** were seen. **Speckled Warblers** were heard, and seen briefly, at two locations. Other good sightings were **Double-barred Finches**, a **White-winged Triller**, a **Diamond Firetail**, **Red-browed Finches**, **Sacred Kingfishers** and nesting **White-winged Choughs**.

Many thanks to Stuart for organising a most enjoyable walk.

Sandra Henderson



Grey Currawong

Margaret Leggoe

Sunday 9th November, Aranda Bushland

A dozen or so lucky folk, including a couple of American visitors, had a lovely walk in Aranda Bushland on a clear, warm Sunday morning.

With the sun filtering through the open eucalypt forest, we hadn't gone far when we found the first of a pleasing number of breeding species - a **Leaden Flycatcher** on a nest. As we wandered slowly along the fire trails we found **Noisy Friarbird** and **Willie Wagtail** on nests, and an **Olive-backed Oriole** building a nest. As well, we observed **Red Wattlebird** and **Welcome Swallow** feeding dependent young; and **Magpie Lark** and **Australian Magpie** dependent young. And finally, a juvenile **Grey Currawong**.

All in all we saw or heard 40 species over the morning. Besides the breeders the notable ones being **Speckled Warbler**, **Common Bronzewing**, **White-winged Triller**, **Rufous Songlark** and **Little Eagle**.

As well as the forest and woodland birds, a saunter through the adjacent Snow Gum frost hollow, which includes a dam, netted

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

White-necked Heron, Straw-necked Ibis, Little Pied Cormorant, Australian Reed-Warbler, Grey Teal, Wood Duck and Purple Swamphen. One of our American visitors had not yet seen a kangaroo in the wild; she was very happy with the couple of dozen Eastern Greys we encountered.

The forest hasn't seen rain in a while and few plants were in flower. A few Eucalypts, the odd small patches of bluebells and yellow buttons, the occasional small low grevillea, Hibbertia and pea species, everlastings and common fringed lily. No orchids unfortunately - perhaps we were visiting a bit late.

We really are very lucky to have breeding hotspots like Campbell Park and Aranda Bushland so close to our homes. Many thanks to walk leaders Horst and Kay Hahne for generously escorting us around their patch.

Julie McGuiness

Sunday 16 November — Campbell Park, Morning Nest workshop

After the early morning soaking rain over 20 members and guests took a punt on conditions drying out and joined me in this 12th running of this annual and continuing popular event. The e-mailing of the notes beforehand allowed me to dispense with the usual short discussion and we decided to inspect a couple of special nests first in case more rain arrived.

The first of these was the deep cup of the **Olive-backed Oriole** suspended on the outer branches of a small spindly eucalypt in a surprisingly low position. One of the pair arrived and allowed us good views before switching the sitting duties with its mate. We then moved onto the **Mistletoebird's** nest having seen a very obliging male in a dead tree beforehand. The beautiful pear-shaped purse nest with the slit-like entrance was suspended low (around head high) in a very small sapling, with a number of participants being able to see the female feeding the young. This appeared to be white (deskinned?) mistletoe fruits very similar to those shown in the Reader's Digest book. Nearby was a dome-shaped **White-throated Gerygone** nest, where we could watch the parents coming in to deliver food through the side entrance.

We then examined where the brown-plumaged **Flame Robin** pair had successfully nested behind the small bit of torn off bark of a gum tree trunk in September/October, as well the exquisite **Varied Sittella** nest, typically in a upright (very slender in this case) dead fork, around which the recently fledged young were said to be still being fed during the week (only one bird was seen on the day). We then found a male **White-winged Triller** sitting on a typically shallow cup nest in the tree behind this nest, numbers of males of this species were high



Plumed Whistling Duck

Martin Butterfield



Mistletoebird nest and chicks

Sandra Henderson



White-throated Gerygone in nest

Julian Robinson



Dusky Woodswallow, adult and juvenile

David Cook



White-browed Woodswallow

Robin Hide



Masked Woodswallow

Christine D.

and particularly conspicuous by their calling, including being seen on the ground. This was followed by a **Willie Wagtail** on a nest, somewhat atypically obscured by dead twigs and foliage, followed by the mud nest of the **Magpie-lark**, again with a bird sitting and exchanging with its mate.

It was then that a thunderstorm blew over about an hour into proceedings and was severe enough to make most (about 75%) of the participants return to the shelter of their cars. Once it cleared the five people that stayed behind joined me in the search for more breeding activity known to be present. We located a **Dusky Woodswallow** almost hidden in a nest quite high at the top of a vertical spout, some dependent young **Grey Fantails** being fed nearby, and after quite a bit of searching finally the nest of the **Leaden Flycatcher**, helped by following the pair, including seeing them swapping brooding duties. This was on a horizontal branch but like last year without a branch directly overhead. There didn't seem to be as many as usual of this species present this year, unlike the number of **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** flying around, though we were unable to find any nests or nest building of the latter. Unusually there didn't seem to be any **Noisy Friarbirds** around.

Other breeding activity included **Red-rumped Parrots** feeding dependent young, and less welcome the **Common Starling** carrying food into a nest into a hollow in a tree (one of the two often occupied by the Owlet Nightjar no less, which we couldn't find possibly due to this taking over, but was seen by Lindell later in the week), and even less welcome **Common Mynas** entering or examining nest holes on the E edge of the trees, the first breeding records for these two species since 2006.

One of the undoubted highlights was the presence of around 100 **White-browed Woodswallows**, which apparently had arrived the day before when I had seen them during a brief visit to the site. All were still there, but much more in the trees, fences and on the ground than the day before, though on several occasions a great cloud of them rose into the air. I predicted that with the rain they would now stay and attempt to nest, with courting type behaviour observed on a number of occasions (later in the day Lindell saw a pair copulating, and the next day Stuart Rae recorded three nests already being built). There were a handful of **Masked Woodswallows** amongst them, seen in the air and also while on low perches.

Only 31 species were seen on the day (12 of them recorded breeding, not including the recently arrived woodswallows), both well down on previous years. Much of this could be attributed to the lower number of participants after the rain, but also the sheer numbers of woodswallows occupying the site in the final hour was very distracting, with so much movement that nearly every bird you put your binos on was this species. With the very dry previous month I had been concerned that breeding may have been arrested, but from reports and my

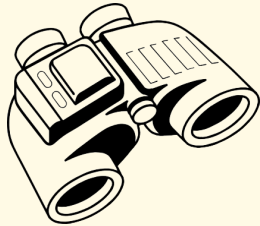
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brief visit the day before made it clear that breeding activity was in full swing and surprisingly still in the relatively early stages with many of the birds sitting on eggs.

Based on the level of calling and noise, activity seemed greater than in the previous few years, confirming Campbell Park's reputation as being an important breeding site in the drought years. Everyone was amazed at so much breeding activity taking place in such a small space (estimated as less than 2 hectares), centred around the horse gate, and especially to the E/SE of it this year. The lack of obvious predators was also a surprise, we have rarely recorded the Pied Currawong at these events, and it is hard to believe how all the noisy and busy activity doesn't seem to attract them for the tasty meals on offer.

My thanks again to Elizabeth Compston who provided breeding activity information on the COG chat line, as well as to me personally, as did Stuart Rae, who unfortunately was unavailable to help with leading the workshop this year, but still put in time beforehand trying to locate nests etc. The event has been put on the COG trips calendar again for next year, and hopefully the breeding activity will again be high and the weather kinder.

Jack Holland

COG'S BIRD BLITZ 2014

A warm thank you to all participants.

Please come along to our Members' Night on 10 December for a preliminary report on the results of blitz 10, and for lucky draw prizes. We've got a fine selection of wines, books, plants and cards to hand out, plus one or two surprises.

A few laggards have not as yet returned their datasheets (or fessed up to not doing their surveys).

Please contact blitz@canberrabirds.org.au asap to clarify the situation and/or to arrange delivery.

Barbara Allan, Blitz coordinator

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Wednesday 19 November, Stony Creek Nature Reserve

23 members and guests gathered at Urriara East Picnic ground. After noting a dependent young **Pied Currawong** and a **White-winged Chough** nest with young in the Allocasuarinas in the car park we headed off along the track above the Murrumbidgee.

A single **Dollarbird** was seen very early on and then a pair seen in a group of large dead trees appearing to defend them against all intruders. These included a male **Collared Sparrowhawk** and a **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**. A surprising sighting in these dead trees was a pair of **House Sparrows** apparently utilising a nest hollow. Other Summer visitors noted in this area were 4 **Rainbow Bee-eaters** and 3 **Tree Martins** pursuing a female Collared **Sparrowhawk**. Somewhat further along the track a **White-faced Heron** nest complete with sitting bird was noted high in an Allocasuarina.

Raptors were well in evidence during the walk. We also observed a **Brown Goshawk** (by size, a female); at least 2 **Nankeen Kestrels**, a **Brown Falcon** and 3 sub-adult **Wedge-tailed Eagles**.

This walk at this time of year had been suggested as a check if **Painted Honeyeaters** had returned. Alas, none were seen or heard during this walk. Also missing were any woodswallows: we didn't even record a **Dusky Woodswallow** let alone the horde of **White-browed** seen on our previous foray here. However we did pick up 44 species which is quite good for a warm morning in a pretty open area.

Thanks to Darren and the staff of The Murrumbidgee Corridor Team for arranging the gates so as to facilitate access.

Martin Butterfield



Pied Currawong, dependent young

Martin Butterfield



Rainbow Bee-eater

Martin Butterfield



COG outing to Stony Creek Nature Reserve

Martin Butterfield

COG Trips

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

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

Changes to trips are notified on the trips page of the COG website

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

and on the COG chat-line at:

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

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

Future Field Trips

Sunday 7 December – TSR 48, north of Gundaroo

We aim for an early start to visit this open yellow box/red box woodland reserve with a good suite of common and not so common woodland species. Participants should meet at 7.00am in the car park at the netball centre just north of the intersection of Northbourne Ave and Mouat Street, Lyneham, for carpooling. The drive will take about 35 minutes from the meeting point to the reserve. The number of participants is restricted to 10. Wear sturdy shoes and bring morning tea. Please register with Michael Lenz at 6249 1109 or michael.lenz.birds@gmail.com

Wednesday 17 December— Hall TSR

The December Wednesday Walk will be at Hall TSR. Meet at 8:30am on the Barton Highway about 150m past the junction with Victoria Street, just before the State border.

Advance notice of January and February outings as there is no January Gang-gang newsletter.

Sunday 18 January 2015 – Uriarra

The meeting point for COG's annual outing will again be next to Uriarra Homestead big dam, close to the T- intersection of Uriarra & Brindabella Roads.

We will spend some time looking at birds on and around the dam, then come back to around Uriarra Crossing and then Uriarra East for lunch. We are likely to see quite a few unusual birds and migrants including **Nankeen Night-Heron**, woodswallows, **Dollarbird** and **Rainbow Bee-eater**.

There are good picnic & toilet facilities at both Uriarra Crossing venues. Please bring lunch and water.

Getting there is now a bit more complicated, following rapid urban development in Molonglo. OLD STREET DIRECTORIES ARE LIKELY TO BE UNHELPFUL!

Starting at the newly refurbished intersection of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive, travelling out of Canberra, Cotter Road becomes John Gorton Drive. Follow John Gorton Drive. YOU NOW HAVE TWO POSSIBLE ROUTES. ROUTE 1. Travelling along John Gorton Drive you will (again) come to an intersection with Cotter Road. Turn left & follow this for about 15km past Mt Stromlo, the Cotter Reserve to the T-intersection with Uriarra Road. Turn right and the big dam is on your right.



Sacred Kingfisher and nest

Robin Eckermann

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

I WILL CHECK THE ROUTES AGAIN JUST BEFORE JAN 18 AND POST ANY CHANGES ON THE COG CHATLINE.

Bruce Lindenmayer

Sunday 1 February – Jerrabomberra Wetlands (World Wetlands day)



Jerrabomberra Wetlands

Gail Neumann

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

Sue Lashko

Monday 2 to Friday 6 February 2015 – Birding in Nowra/ Comerong area

This mid-week trip is designed to give participants the opportunity to visit several birding spots in the Shoalhaven area. Further details will be available developed closer to February, depending on bird migration and weather.

The trip will be limited to 14 people and accommodation or camping will be at Shoalhaven Heads Tourist Park, located between the Shoalhaven River and Seven Mile Beach – see <http://www.shoalhaventouristpark.com.au/>. Participants will be asked to book their own accommodation, but any wishing to share cabins will be matched up if possible. Booking is recommended after registering in December, to ensure the best accommodation.

Leaders will be Sue Lashko and Jean Casburn. Contact for bookings is jean.casburn@bigpond.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. A short walk into the Deua National Park, the Big Hole and Marble Arch, walks in the beautiful Shoal haven Valley. Reasonable rates, hampers on request.. Group booking discounts. Email enquiry@deuatinhuts.com www.deuatinhuts.com
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Sunday 15 February — East Basin/Molonglo Reach— Electric boat cruise

This will be the outing/cruise for 2015 on the upper parts of Lake Burley Griffin (East Basin) and the adjacent Molonglo River Reach, where late summer/early autumn is usually the peak time for nesting, with darters as well as three species of cormorant known to breed there. The area also has a variety of water birds, and a range of land birds can be seen on the banks.

The boat trip will last about 2 hours from 8 am and will cost \$20, payable in cash on boarding. This year we will again be travelling in the electric boat “MV Gull” which can carry around 20 people. The boat allows both a quiet approach as well as access to areas difficult to get to from the land. As Kingston Harbour is now open and operational, the point of departure will again be from there. Participants will need to leave their cars in the Glass Works car park and walk across Eastlake Parade and down Trevillian Quay from where the boat will be visible. Alternatively there is street parking with various time limits on Eastlake Parade, including free all day parking on weekends along the way in.

Registration for this field trip is essential. Please book your place on the boat with Jack Holland (on 6288 7840 AH or by E-mail on jandaholland@bigpond.com). Bookings are always popular, so please make contact early if you want to be assured of a place.

Sunday 22 March – Eden pelagic

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



Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

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Gang-gang Cockatoo Project Update

November 2014

Survey progress

As this report is being written we are in the middle of the November Muster; the fourth Muster covering the Spring distribution of Gang-gangs. It is great to see ABC Canberra News picking up the story with a short interview on what the survey is about and what information we hope to gather. A young Gang-gang and Gang-gang Muster participant are pictured below.



Photo: Michael Maconachie

The first Table in the November newsletter indicated 181 records were submitted for October by the time the article needed to be submitted. By the end of the month this had increased to 356 records. At present the number of records for November stands at 165. Given a similar increase for the remainder of November this would indicate a slight drop in the number of submitted Spring records when compared with other seasons. It is hoped that the November Muster results will help us determine if this drop is due to a change in behaviour or distribution by the birds or due to changes in surveyor participation.

To date there have been no records of successful breeding. This is not surprising for this early stage of the breeding season. Hopefully observations from December and into mid-January will tell a different story.

The COG Blitz held over the weekend 25-26 October will provide some very useful distribution information but the records are still being checked and analysed.

Up to 22 November there are eight observations of Gang-gangs hollow-inspecting from the following or surrounding areas; Watson, Ainslie, Anzac Parade, Deakin, Curtin, Aranda and Greenleigh. A reminder that if any successful breeding is observed, in order to protect the site, could you please submit any location data to ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au

Apart from sunflower seeds there are only a few observations on what the birds are presently feeding on. The only plants mentioned are *Eucalyptus bicostata*, *E. melliodora* and Cootamundra Wattle.

Many thanks to all those who have contributed their observations since the start of the project in March 2014. Please keep the records coming in over the Summer period. The next Gang-gang report will be in the February 2015 newsletter, by which time the project will have been going for nearly 12 months.

Community Engagement

Our Imagining Gang-gangs student art exhibition has attracted over 80 entries to date and an amazing array of creative artworks about our much loved faunal emblem. The beauty of the competition is that the participating students have been observing and researching the bird to construct their artworks and most importantly, will be very excited to see their work on display in an art gallery. We hope to travel the exhibition around Canberra to highlight the students work and excite people about how lucky we are to share our city with the Gang-gang cockatoo. A photo by Lillian Burless, age 12 from the exhibition.

A big thank you to our local Canberra journalists, Ian Warden from the Canberra Times, Panorama's Tim the Yowie Man and Louise Maher from ABC 666, who have all generously contributed print and radio air space to get the word out about the Gang-gang survey this year.

The GG survey project team



Photo: Lillian Burless

Questabird

[QuestaBird](#) 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.



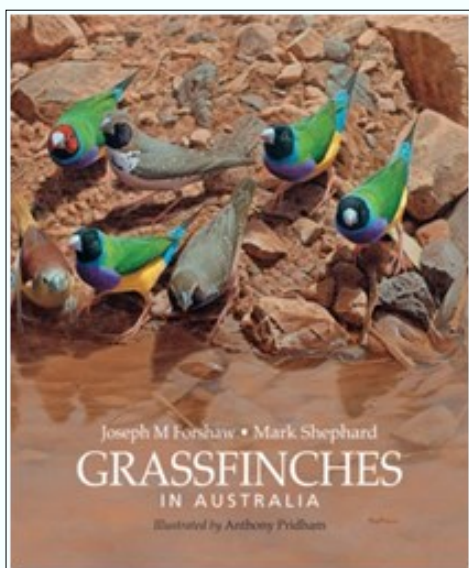
As part of the COG's 50th anniversary, [QuestaBird](#) will include a special COG-sponsored "Gang-gang Cockatoo Quest" for the Canberra region, with special prizes, bonus gold, and the sightings coming directly to COG for follow-up.

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

Note: The game is currently available only on Android devices, with an iPhone version expected soon.

FEATURE PUBLICATION OF THE MONTH

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



Grassfinches in Australia

*Joseph M Forshaw, Mark Shephard,
Anthony Pridham*

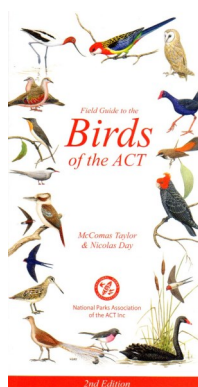
This beautiful book is a summary of our present knowledge of each species, and gives readers a visual appreciation of the birds in their natural habitats and in aviculture. The resulting combination of superb artwork and scientifically accurate text ensures that this volume will become the standard reference work on Australian grassfinches.

Members price: \$130 (RRP \$185)

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 walter.goldie@gmail.com

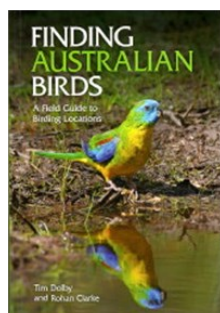


Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT

McComas Taylor & Nicolas Day

Sized to fit in your pocket, this compact field guide describes 207 birds seen in the ACT. An ideal bird guide for the local area.

Member's price: \$25

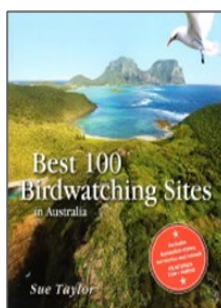


Finding Australian Birds: A Field Guide to Birding Locations

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



Rare birds: the extraordinary tale of the Bermuda petrel and the man who brought it back from extinction.

Elizabeth Gehrman

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

Member's price \$23

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:

P. Gattenhoff, Gordon
A. Drake (rejoining)

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for February 2015 edition

Wednesday 28 January 2015

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

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

Or

c/- The Secretary COG,

PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608

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

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

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COG website

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COG library

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(02) 6258 3531 (h)

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for change of address or other details.

Gang-gang Newsletter

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COG E-mail Discussion List

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

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

canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au

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

