



Gang-gang

NOVEMBER 2014

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

NOVEMBER MEETING

Wednesday 12 November 2014

7.30 pm.

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

Annual General Meeting: Please see COG's website home page for links to the President's report for 2013-2014, and the draft minutes of the 2013 AGM. Limited printed copies of these and the financial reports will be available at the door.

After the AGM there will be one main speaker, **George Olah**, a Ph D scholar at the ANU's Fenner School of Environment and Society, on **Conservation and Genetics of Scarlet Macaws in the Peruvian Amazon**.

A scientific research project of the ANU is being implemented in the Tambopata-Candamo region of the southeastern Peruvian Amazon.

The researchers study the breeding biology of large macaws and are developing new genetic techniques for their conservation.

George will talk about the objectives and preliminary findings of their project, while also presenting a way to raise public awareness to their conservation goals.

Everyone welcome

What to watch out for this month

There was an early deadline for the October Gang-gang and this column for the November issue is also being written early because I'll be away from Canberra for two weeks. Thus the period it covers is from 23 September to about 18 October, slightly less than 4 weeks.

Typically almost as soon as I had sent my copy to the editors there were the first reports of the **White-winged Triller** and **Rainbow Bee-eater**, the latter heard high overhead by Michael Lenz when he was watching the **Noisy Friarbird** roosting flights (see below). Interestingly it was nearly a week or more later (late September/early October) when the next of these were reported, with number of the trillers increasing greatly during this month. The first reports of the **Leaden Flycatcher** and **Rufous Songlark** were also close to the end of September, and in the first week of October for the **Dollarbird**, but like the bee-eater and **Latham's Snipe** numbers of these appear not to have yet built up greatly.

Continued Page 2



Leaden Flycatcher

David Cook

Committee News

Following Matt Herring's presentation to COG, the Committee pledged \$2500 to the Bunyip Bird project. At the time of writing it was not clear if the target amount needed for the project will be reached (funds are not transferred until the close of the crowd-funding period).

COG provided comments on the Superb Parrot Habitat Improvement Plan for Throsby/Gungahlin. The main issues were: the need for a more holistic approach to all the species/communities impacted by the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Plan; more detail/specific actions, resourcing and timelines needed, and an ineffective plan for dealing with nest hole competitors of the Common Myna.

Jenny Bounds worked with the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust on the community information campaign, brochure and other products for the Bush Stone-curlew release.

Sandra Henderson

Advance notice of 10 December meeting Members Night

Due to the unavailability of the meeting venue in January the annual Members Night has again been moved forward to December. A programme will be drawn up allowing COG members to contribute short presentations (about 10-15 minutes long) on a range of bird related topics. So if you have a favourite birding moment for 2014, some special photos to share with members, a birding story to tell, or anything that you think might be of interest to other members, please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840 A/H), or by email on jack.holland@environment.gov.au) as soon as possible. Members who have not presented to COG before are particularly encouraged.

2015 COG Field Trips Program

The **draft** 2015 COG field trips program is on **pages 10 & 11**. Thank you to the 'regular' leaders who have again volunteered to lead outings and a particular thank you to new leaders. **However, you will note that there are a number of gaps in the program (look for ??????????????) or trips that require leaders.** In particular, I would welcome suggestions for the Easter campout. If you have a favourite spot and are prepared to lead an outing, please contact me on smashko@gmail.com

Sue Lashko

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

In contrast there have been many reports of the **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **White-throated** and **Western Gerygones**, as well as of the **Superb Parrot**, **Mistletoebird**, **Australian Reed-Warbler** and **Rufous Whistler** in October. Likewise, based on reports the **Pallid Cuckoo** and the **Horsfield's** and **Shining Bronze Cuckoo** seem to have been reported more widely in October than they have been in the past few seasons. However, the above summary can often be fairly subjective and depends on what you might have seen personally, including what is happening in your local area, which may not reflect the wider ACT picture.

An example is that, based on a number of comments on the COG chatline, **Noisy Friarbird** numbers during October were also not yet high, but those reported on the Eremaea Ebird data base contradict this impression. Certainly they were not high in September, though there was an influx towards the end of that month, with Michael Lenz posting on the COG chatline that on the afternoon 23 September he went to the power line corridor at the western base of Mt Majura, mainly to see how many Noisy Friarbirds would pass through, a species he viewed as "currently not yet that common". He noted there were already 3 birds/pairs holding/defending territories and a total of 39 birds passing through towards their roost.

I found this a fascinating follow up to his presentation to COG at our July meeting. A week later he emailed me that 8 **Noisy Friarbirds** passed through his GBS that morning, coming from the direction of Mt Majura. In the late afternoon he went up to Lyneham Ridge (which is in a straight line with the Mt Majura roost flight observation site), and there were 20 Noisy Friarbirds calling and swooping for insects. A bit later they moved deeper into the eucalypt plantation. He thought they stayed and roosted there as it was getting too late for them to head towards Mt Majura. Michael noted he was amazed how slowly the species seems to have spread around Canberra, to judge by comments on the chatline, yet he was getting these larger numbers at roosting times. Whether they stayed and dispersed locally is unclear, and it is quite possible most moved on.

Another example of possible local impressions was my posting on the chatline on 15 October of how the strong overnight wind seemed to have increased the honeyeater migration, at least at my place in Chapman. **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were calling very loudly outside my bedroom window around 6:15 am and later at least 20 were seen doing their typical tree top to tree top movement. Up to 10 October there had been just a few around, but they continued to be very conspicuous right through the third weekend of October, with a few **White-naped** and **Fuscous**

Honeyeaters caught up with them. This is quite late in my experience; usually most have moved on by mid-October.

The **Red Wattlebird** migration I mentioned in my September Gang-gang column abruptly stopped after about a week. Also of interest is that numbers a week or so after (early October) dropped significantly, mainly caused by their abandonment of the two main flowering ironbarks. Why they did so is unclear, as the trees continued to flower profusely, and attract lots of insects, including bees. Those wattlebirds still left were pursuing the smaller honeyeaters which had found this food source a couple of weeks later.

Of the migrants that arrive later in October there have been one or two reports of the **Satin Flycatcher** and **Cicadabird**, as well as of a distant **Eastern/Pacific Koel** calling, but none so far that I can find of the **Brown Songlark**, **Horsfield's Bushlark** or of the **Rufous Fantail**, the latter passing through on its way to the mountains to breed. So watch out for these, as well as the **Brush Cuckoo** also on its passage through to higher areas, and the **White-browed Woodswallow** (just one report of a single bird so far in October), particularly if conditions dry out inland. Another species to look out for is the **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, as a few are usually heard loudly passing through during the next couple of months.

Some of the winter altitudinal migrants were still reported around Canberra during October, notably the **Flame Robin** recorded breeding at Campbell Park (see below). The **Golden Whistler** always seems to be the last to leave, but some of the **Scarlet Robins** and **White-eared Honeyeaters** don't seem to have moved far away yet and were still being reported from peri-urban Canberra. Of the other altitudinal/winter migrants, I can only find single reports of a **Rose Robin** and three **Swift Parrots** (the latter very early in October).



Noisy Friarbird

Tobias Hayashi



Australian Ornithological Services

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enquiries@philipmaher.com

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

All of the “unusuals” reported over winter/early spring also seem to have moved on, but replaced with reports of small numbers **Glossy Back-Cockatoos** around Mount Majura during September and October. An unexpected report was an adult **White-winged Black Tern** in non-breeding plumage present with 3 **Whiskered Terns** at the Fyshwick Sewage Ponds in mid-October, but perhaps the most unusual was the **Australian Little Bittern** seen at the small pond (about 2.5 metres by 2 metres in size) in the back garden of Kim and Geoff Lamour’s standard quarter acre block in Cook. This was watched for much of the day, including catching a frog. So keep an eye out for what might lob into your garden; you never know what might come to delight you!

Despite the slow start to the migration season (things really only got going when the weather warmed up in late September) there has been a significant amount of breeding reported already. To me the undoubted highlight has been the two brown plumaged **Flame Robins** successfully raising and fledging two chicks at Campbell Park; this is significant enough for me to be drafting a note for CBN. In fact, breeding at Campbell Park has been considerable already with Steve Wallace informing me there were at least three **Varied Sittella** nests there early in October, and Geoffrey Dabb posting a photo of a female **Mistletoebird** building her exquisite nest there round the same time. I hope there’s still enough breeding activity there for our nest workshop in mid-November.

Another significant breeding record was of a pair of **Australian Shelducks** with three young at the Bungendore sewage ponds by Wayne Gregson. David McDonald saw them there with nine ducklings the following day and wondered where their nest was, with various references indicating that they usually, though not always, nest in tree

hollows, sometimes long distances from the water in which the ducklings end up (similar to the **Australian Wood Duck**). For me a real delight was finding a **Jacky Winter** on a tiny nest during the K2C surveys, with its partner feeding it repeatedly. This species is allied to the robins, but to me its nest type and site (horizontal fork towards the end of a dead branch) is much more reminiscent of the triller’s; in fact, I suspect it’s even smaller. It’s certainly very different from the **Scarlet** and **Flame Robins** nests I’ve seen recently.

So please continue to watch out for the spring species arriving and the last altitudinal winter migrants moving away, as well as for all breeding activity which may be expected to peak during November. A number of migrants only come here to breed, and often start very soon after they arrive (a late report was of **Leaden Flycatchers** already building). As usual please ensure that all significant observations end up on the COG database.

Jack Holland

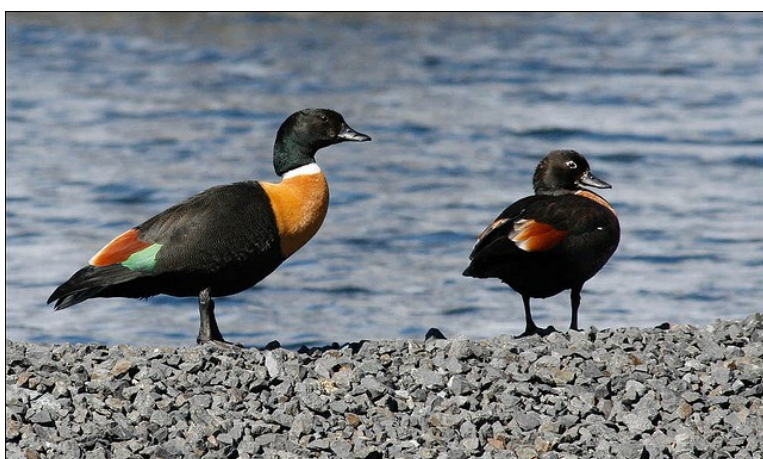
DEUA TIN HUTS (Via Braidwood)

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
Ph 02 4847 1248

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



Australian Shelduck

Julian Robinson

Field Trip Reports

26-29 September – Yerranderie long weekend campout

Canberra Community Day long weekend gave seven COG members the chance to go via Goulburn to the old Oberon Colong stock route that leads to Yerranderie. This dirt road winds around steep mountains and along narrow ridges with spectacular glimpses over the sandstone bluffs and valleys of the Blue Mountains National Park and Yerranderie State Conservation Area. Yerranderie township is a remnant of a boom town settled by silver miners in the late 1800s and deserted during WWI. Mining never became viable again, especially after the Warragamba Dam cut the access road from Sydney. Now only a few buildings remain nestled in the bottom of a valley overlooked by rugged mountains. Most of the group camped here, side by side with the kangaroos who keep the place constantly mown.

The morning chorus of birds was rich, varied and beautiful. We woke to the sound of **Bell Miners**, **Superb Lyrebirds**, **Satin Bowerbirds**, **Olive-backed Orioles**, **Noisy Miners**, **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters**, **Grey Butcherbird**, **Eastern Whipbirds**, **Grey Shrike-Thrush** and many more.

A confusing network of fire trails and derelict walking tracks provided us with plenty of scope for our birding walks. One special moment was when our group paused for several minutes to watch a furtive male **Spotted Quail-Thrush** making its alternately slow and then darting progress in an arc around us.

The habitat varies from dry eucalypt forest to steep damp slopes of tree ferns, and gullies and streams with mixed paperbark, casuarina and semi-rainforest species. This variety is reflected in our total count of 59 bird species for the trip.

Thanks to Julian Robinson for organising the trip and to John Goldie who filled in as leader when Julian couldn't make it at the last minute.

Muriel Story

Sunday 12 October – K2C bird surveys

The tenth K2C bird surveys in the Williamsdale - Bredbo area were held on a warm and eventually windy morning. A total of 96 bird species were recorded across the 39 sites on 20 properties included in the survey.

Almost all the expected summer migrants had returned. Those in abundance included the four species of **cuckoo** (**Pallid**, **Fantail**, **Shining Bronze-**, and **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**), **Rufous Whistler**, **Grey Fantail**, both **Gerygones** (**Western** and **White-throated**), **Dusky Woodswallow** and **Mistletoebird**. Other migrants with sightings at only one or two locations included **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Rainbow Bee-eater**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **White-winged Triller**, **Leaden Flycatcher** and **Rufous Songlark**. Small groups of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** were moving westward on return migration to the mountains.

Hooded Robins were recorded at 3 locations, including one group of 5 birds along the Jerangle Rd. **Brown Treecreepers** were found on 6 properties, and **Scarlet Robins** on 5 properties, with breeding records for both species. Other threatened species recorded included **Little Eagle**, **Gang-gang Cockatoo**, **Speckled Warbler**, **Varied Sittella**, **Flame Robin** and **Diamond Firetail**.

Breeding was recorded for 20 species, the highlight of which was a sighting of **Jacky Winter** on a nest.

It was a most enjoyable morning for everyone, finishing up at the Scottsdale Reserve for a barbecue lunch and a sharing of the morning's findings. The surveys would not be possible without the support of the COG volunteers, the K2C landholders and Bush Heritage Australia – thank you to all. The surveys in 2015 will be held on 12 April and 11 October.

Nicki Taws

Sunday 19 October - Bango Nature Reserve

Thirteen keen birders entered with delight into a surprisingly natural and lovely grassy green, densely treed woodland setting. There were many varieties of spring flowers and five species of orchid scattered amongst the grass and all over the drier parts of the

409 hectares. Within seconds a wide range of bird calls, almost too many to assimilate, alerted us to species such as **Varied Sittella**, **White-throated Gerygone**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Pallid** and **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, **Brown-headed Honeyeater** and **Leaden Flycatcher**. In all there were 41 species including, luckily, a **Tawny Frogmouth** on nest. Other breeding records included **Striated Pardalote**, **Varied Sittella**, **Australian Magpie** and **White-winged Chough**. Fortunately, the only reptile for the morning was a Shingleback.

This reserve is well worth a visit. It was created in 2011 and is located off Blakney Creek Road South, near Bango, north-east of Yass. There are plenty of nesting places in Blakely's Red Gum (*Eucalyptus blakelyi*), Scribbly Gum (*E. rossii*), Apple Box (*E. bridgesiana*), Red Stringybark (*E. macrorhyncha*) and Yellow Box (*E. melliodora*), and preparation for nesting is happening mostly in the lower parts of the reserve. From the entry gate the tree varieties are beautifully mixed, then the terrain gradually rises at times steeply and soil becomes stony and poorer, leading to different stands of tree according to the soil conditions.

A very satisfying morning's walking and birding and some of us took advantage of this lovely place for a picnic under the trees. Many thanks to Sue and Lia for introducing us to this lovely place and for surveying the land in advance.

Jean Casburn

and plants for lucky winners – but you must be there on the night to collect. If you haven't already done so, please either enter your data electronically on COG's system, hand in your datasheets at the November meeting, or mail them to COG, PO Box 301, Civic Square 2608.

Barbara Allan



Fan-tailed Cuckoo, juvenile

Con Boekel

COG'S BIRD BLITZ 2014

COG's tenth annual bird blitz was held over the weekend of 25-26 October, in what turned out to be unusually warm conditions, with a maximum temperature of 30 degrees on both days – a far cry from last year's frost. A warm thank you to all participants! Preliminary results look promising, with a good turnout of blitzers and a few unusual records, including Great Crested Grebe from the Uriarra dam, Painted Honeyeater from Goorooyarroo and Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters from the Naas Valley. A full report will be provided as usual in a forthcoming issue of *Canberra Bird Notes*. There will be a prize-giving ceremony at COG's members' night meeting on 10 December, with a selection of wines, books, pictures



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 2 November – “Bibaringa”, Cotter Road

Bibaringa' is a private property managed by the Guth family and used primarily for horse agistment. It adjoins Mt Stromlo to the west and runs along Cotter Road for a few kilometres.

The topography is quite hilly with some creek lines and numerous healthy eucalypt remnants. Between 1998 and 2008, Stuart Harris regularly visited this property as a friend of the Guths and compiled a list of over 100 species, as well as leading a few COG walks there. Since 2008 Stuart has been preoccupied with numerous projects and has only visited Bibaringa a few times so he is glad to return there to lead a bird walk and see what this lovely property has to offer. The walk will commence at 8.30am so please assemble at the Bibaringa front (pink) gate from 8am onwards. It is a couple of kms past the Mt Stromlo turnoff if heading towards the Cotter. Please take care parking near the front gates, where we will car pool and drive a short way through the property to start the walk. The aim is to finish the walk at approximately 11am. Please bring sturdy footwear and some morning tea and water. Please RSVP to Stuart at shadowplay369@gmail.com by the end of October.

Saturday 8 November – Aranda Bushland

Meet at 8:00 am on the eastern side of Bindubi Street (halfway between Lyttleton Cres/Bandjalong St traffic lights and William Hovell Drive) where the power lines cross over the road. We will take a wander on the lower track over to Caswell Drive and then back and do the Frost Hollow circuit. It is easy walking, but wear sturdy shoes and sun hat and bring some morning tea for about 10:30 am before we finish. Those who wish to continue exploring the area can walk back up towards Aranda, or even climb the heights of Black Mountain (but without us leading the way!). Hopefully we can spot some nesting pardalotes, hear some **Rufous** and **Golden Whistlers** singing, watch **Grey Fantails** flitting about and **White-throated Treecreepers** spiraling up tree trunks. There have been **Speckled Warblers** in the area, but it has been awhile since we spotted any. Think we can chase some up? We will have a better idea of what is around after we do our October Bird Blitz in that same area.

Numbers not limited and booking is not required, but if you want to email us on hahnehk@pcug.org.au or ring 6251-1792, we won't leave without you. If you are late, turn right on the trail towards Black Mountain.

Horst and Kay Hahne.

Sunday 16 November — Campbell Park, morning nest workshop

This will be a repeat of the very successful practical nest workshops held for the past ten years. The very informal outing has again been timed to

coincide with the peak of the breeding season. The morning will start with the usual short presentation including tips on the types of nests built by different species of birds, and how to find nests or breeding behaviour. This will be followed by several hours putting this into practice, with participants looking for signs of breeding, etc. This will also allow plenty of opportunity for bird watching.

This workshop is particularly suitable for beginners or those relatively new to bird watching, though more experienced members and repeat customers are also welcome. Although every year has been different, we often don't walk very far as there is usually a "hot spot" where most of the breeding activity occurs. To participate, please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840 A/H) by email on jack.holland@environment.gov.au.

Meet at 8:00 am at the picnic tables at the far end of the car park. Take Northcott Drive up to the start of the Campbell Park Offices, where you take the right fork and keep to the outside of the very large car park, skirting it until you get to the end. Intending participants might also like to look at the Campbell Park map on the COG web site under the Maps, Forms and Lists button.

Sunday 23 November - Brindabella National Park 4WD

The Brindabella National Park lies along the range west of Canberra, and is notorious as being the epicentre of the 2003 Canberra bushfires. It receives few visits from birders so we will use this opportunity to fill in some gaps in COG's bird distribution data for the summer season. We will explore a number of sites in the Park, driving from one to another. Four wheel drive vehicles are essential. People without such vehicles will have an opportunity to carpool with 4WD owners, subject to space being available. Suggested contribution from each passenger to drivers: \$10. Rendezvous at 7.30 am for carpooling at the Bushfire Memorial car park in Stromlo Forest Park, off Swallowtail Road, Wright, 35 19 28S, 149 01 41E. We will return mid-afternoon. Bring water, lunch and (optionally) swimming togs. Registration for this trip is essential. For further information, or to register, please contact the trip leader, David McDonald, at phone 6238 3706, mobile 0416 231 890, or email brindabella14@canberrabirds.org.au. The trip will be cancelled if a total fire ban is in force, or if the fire danger rating is 'severe' or higher.

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

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.

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.

Gala Dinner

Saturday 22 November 2014 - Gold Creek Station, Hall

In celebration of Canberra Ornithologists Group 50th Anniversary Year

Book now so that numbers can be finalised for catering purposes

The finale of COG's anniversary year celebrations is a dinner, held in the rustic setting of Gold Creek Station function centre, a large woolshed style building. COG is encouraging current and former members to join in the celebrations and they will be given priority for bookings. **The number of places is limited and early booking is advised.**

Cost : \$60 per head all inclusive with meal and drinks. The menu will be country style food, canapés on arrival, a main course, dessert and coffee/tea. All drinks are included (beer, quality local wines, fruit juice, soft drinks).

Time: 6.30pm start with pre-dinner drinks.

Dress: informal.

Venue: Gold Creek Station, off Victoria St, Hall. (Victoria St is the main entrance road into Hall from the Barton Highway. Coming from the Canberra side, turn right at sign on entrance gate, before the Hall showgrounds and village).

Former Senator, Bob Brown will be Guest Speaker. A keen photographer, Bob is expected to focus on birds with his own photos and stories.

To book: download the booking form from the COG website (www.canberrabirds.org.au) or pick up a booking form at a COG meeting. Complete the booking form and send to COG. Payment must be made to secure bookings. Bookings will only be confirmed after payment is received, and will depend on places available at the time.

Enquiries: cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au or speak with COG Secretary Sandra Henderson at meetings.

Further information on the website at <http://canberrabirds.org.au/other-events/50th-anniversary-galah-night/>

NOTE: People who are NOT current or former members of COG who wish to attend this event should contact COG in the first instance.

Draft 2015 FIELD TRIPS PROGRAM

January— July

January			
	14	Wednesday Walk (WW)	
	18	Uriarra (day)	Bruce Limdenmayer
February	1	Jerrabomberra Wetlands (World Wetlands Day - morning)	Sue Lashko
	15	Molonglo Reach Boat Trip (Sunday morning)	Jack Holland
	16-20	Shoalhaven Heads (mid-week accommodated or camping)	Jean Casburn
	18	WW	
March	1	Royalla - Green Gales property (morning)	TBC
Canberra Day 9 Mar	7-8-9	Delegate/ Errinundra (or mid-week campout)	TBC
	15	Oak Hill Mulligans Flat West (morning)	Bill Graham
	18	WW	
	22	Eden pelagic (day)	Sandra Henderson
	29	Burra (morning)	Roslyn Sexton
April	3-4-5-6	Local nature park or similar ????????????????????	leader required
	12	K2C surveys (day)	Nicki Taws
	15	WW	
	18-19	Tumut (camping on private property)	Gavin Small
	25-26	Monga National Park (day)	leader required
May	3	Campbell Park (morning)	Bruce Limdenmayer
	9	ANBG - Beginners (morning)	Anthony Overs
	17	Uriarra (morning)	Judy Middlebrook TBC
	20	WW	
	31	Local nature park or similar ????????????????????	leader required
June Queens Birthday 8/6	6-7-8	Lake Conjola - Little Forest (accommodated or camping)	John Goldie & Kathy Walter
	13	Superb Lyrebird Survey - Tidbinbilla NR (Saturday morning)	Chris Davey
	17	WW	
	21	Local nature park or similar ????????????????????	leader required
July	5	Jerrabomberra Hill (morning)	Sandra Henderson
	15	WW	
	18-19	Local nature park or similar ????????????????????	leader required

Draft 2015 FIELD TRIPS PROGRAM

August— December

August	1-2	Wonga Bawley Point (weekend accommodated)	Terry Bell TBC
	8	Lake Ginninderra - Beginners (Saturday morning)	Anthony Overs
	10-14	Narooma (mid-week accommodated or camping)	Dianne Deans
	16	Callum Brae (morning)	Sandra Henderson
	19	WW	Jenny Bounds & Jack Holland
	30	Late autumn bus trip (day)	
September	5-6	Eden Pelagic (2 day trips)	Sandra Henderson
	12-13	Galong weekend or Bethungra (weekend accommodated)	TBC
	16	WW -	leader required
	20	Local nature park or similar ????????????????????	
F&C Day 28/9	26-27-28	long weekend campout Capertee (followed by optional loop Capertee to Munghorn Gap)	Sue Lashko
October, Labour Day 5/10	3-4-5	long weekend campout Munghorn Gap	Sue Lashko
	11	Gungahlin Cemetery (morning)	Bill Graham
	10-11	K2C surveys (day)	Nicki Taws
	12-16	Green Cape (mid-week accommodated)	Peter Fullagar
	18	Wee Jasper (day)	Lynne Bentley
	21	WW	Barbara Allan
	24-25	Bird Blitz (Saturday and Sunday)	
November	31-1Nov	Hall-One Tree Hill (morning)	Duncan McCaskill
	8	Braidwood Landcare surveys(day)	TBC
	15	Campbell Park nest workshop (morning)	Jack Holland
	18	WW	Libby Keen
	21-22	Tallanganda - private property (weekend campout)	
December	1-8	Norfolk Island (week accommodated)	Neil Hermes
	13	Tharwa sandwash (morning)	leader required
	16	WW	

Gang-gang Cockatoo Project Update—August 2014

Survey progress

With the help of Anne Carrick and Paul Fennell a backlog of around 1500 observations submitted between July and October has now been cleared. Not including the Muster observations a summary from June is as follows:

	No. records	No. observers	Group size	Ratio adult male: female	Ratio adult: young
June	468	87	5	1: 0.91	1: 0.21
July	421	71	4.5	1: 0.88	1: 0.26
August	457	92	4.3	1:0.97	1:0.18
September	402	66	3	1:0.87	1: 0.14
October	181	38	3	1: 0.87	1: 0.11

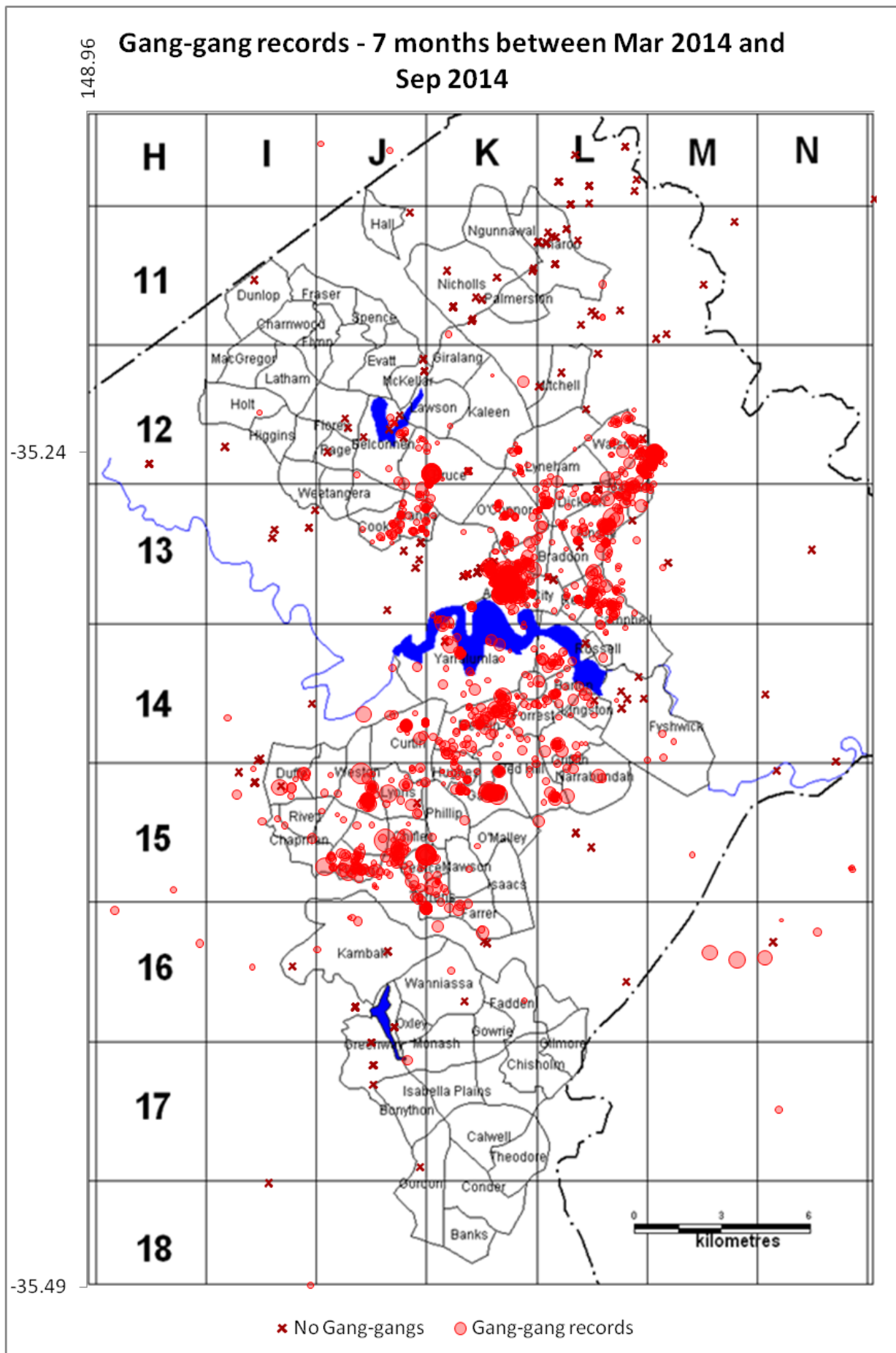
Of these 2000 records over 90% were submitted through the COG/Atlas of Living Australia on-line data entry portal.

Despite now being well into Spring there does not appear to be any change in the urban distribution with the hot spots continuing to border various Canberra Nature Reserves:

Canberra Nature Reserve	Suburbs
Mt. Majura	Watson, Hackett
Mt. Ainslie	Ainslie, Campbell
Black Mt, Bruce Ridge, Gossan Hill	Acton, Aranda, Bruce, O'Connor
Mt. Taylor	Pearce, Fisher
Red Hill	Red Hill, Deakin, Garran

The map below shows all of the urban and peri-urban observations between March and September and clearly shows the majority of sightings in close proximity to various Canberra Nature Parks. Each dot represents an observation; the larger the dot the greater the number of birds observed. It should be noted that the intensity of the dot colour increases with additional records from the same or similar point. Muster records are not included.

Observations on hollow inspecting have been reported throughout the year but since September activity around potential nest hollows has become more intense with both male and female at the same hollow, accompanied by much head-bobbing and mutual preening with occasional copulations observed. Every effort is being made to follow up the September and October inspecting observations but to date there have been no reports of successful breeding. This is not surprising given that most pairs do not commence to nest until October-November, and fledging normally takes place in January-February. If you have reported hollow inspecting could you please return to the area and report any further activity.



The 21-27th August Muster observations are still being received. To date the number of observations is well down compared to the May Muster.

	No. sites	No. suburbs inc. rural observations
May	146	56
August	61	38

The reasons for this decline are unknown although at this stage it appears unlikely to be the result of birds moving away from the urban area to the Ranges to breed. If this were the case there would be a proportional increase in the number of returns with nil observations and this does not appear to be the case. In addition, although the rural observations are sparse, there is no indication of an increase in sightings from the Ranges.

Observations from the next couple of months are critical for us to understand whether Gang-gangs are breeding within the urban area or whether they leave the area to breed elsewhere. So, please continue submitting your observations. Forms are available on the COG website, or at the Members Night on 12th November. Observations can be entered on-line at <http://root.ala.org.au/bdrs-core/cog/home.htm>

November Muster Count - 20-26 November

A reminder that the November Muster Count is coming up (20- 26 November) and we want as many people as possible in the COG region involved in our spring count. This Muster will help us track the expected movement of birds back to the mountains for breeding or perhaps reveal we have a population of resident birds.

The paper data form for Muster week can be downloaded from the website and forms will also be available at the November COG meeting. As for the previous Muster counts, records can also be entered using the electronic form at the end of the Muster week. Instructions for the Muster count and both forms can be found on the Muster page. <http://canberrabirds.org.au/observing-birds/gang-gang-survey/gang-gang-muster-instructions/>

If you are unsure how to participate in the Gang-gang survey details of how to contribute can be found at <http://canberrabirds.org.au/observing-birds/gang-gang-survey/>

If you have any queries please email to ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au

Continued Page 15

Community Engagement

We were invited by the CSIRO to join the 'Inspiring Australia' showcase in the CBR marquee at Floriade on 30 September. Kathy Eyles presented on the Gang-gang survey, chatted to visitors and distributed information about the Gang-gang survey and *imagining Gang-gangs* student art competition.

Our *imagining Gang-gangs* competition was also promoted by Ian Warden at the start of the school holidays in his Gang-gang column in the Canberra Times and competition flyers were left at busy school holiday venues like the CSIRO Discovery Centre and Botanic Gardens.



Student entries to *imagining Gang-gangs* close on 7 November 2014 and our exhibition of student art will be held at the M16 Artspace at Griffith from 26th to 30th November. The official opening will be at 4pm on Wednesday 26th so please come along and support this COG event and vote on your favourite junior and senior student Gang-gang artwork. The most popular choice in the junior and senior category will win a \$250 mysaver bank account with bank mecu.

We were also invited to attend the Scouts ACT EnviroACTION Forum at the Hackett Community Centre on 10 October 2014, to promote the Gang-gang survey and COG. The Forum was targeted to young people (16-24 years) and while a disappointing turn out, some good networking with allied community groups.

Beautiful photos of Gang-gangs appear in the ggquery mail box from time to time including this gem of an immature male by professional local photographer, Lib from LibCreative, who has also given us permission to use on the COG website.

Our engagement with Campbell High has proved fruitful with the birdwatching enrichment program attracting an eager group of students this term.

Science teacher, Eva-Marie Bugledich, had an article published in the *Australian Teacher* about the enrichment program which incorporates COG's Gang-gang survey.

<http://www.educationhq.com.au/news/11344/the-search-for-the-elusive-gang-gang-cockatoo-proves-enriching-for-pupils/>

The GG survey project team



Spring winter surveys

compiled by Jenny Bounds

Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds and the team did the spring survey in good weather conditions on Sunday 21 Sept, in very calm but overcast conditions early, then sunny. Birds were very active at sites, with most teams reporting good numbers of birds. For example, at site 10 on the dry western ridge at the northern end of the reserve, 21 species were recorded in and around the site - unusual for that site. Both gerygones were back, as were **Rufous Whistlers**, **Olive-backed Orioles**, and small groups of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters**. **Superb Parrots** were recorded in 2 sites on the western ridge, as well as flying over the reserve. **Scarlet Robins** were recorded at 8 sites. The most interesting records were 2 sightings of **Fuscous Honeyeaters**, one bird near the flat area west of the Woolshed and 2 birds at site 23 some distance away on the other side of the reserve. **Golden Whistlers** and a **White-eared Honeyeater** (usually cooler season species) were also around. A **Whistling Kite** was recorded on the eastern side of the reserve. The total of 60 species was slightly on the low side for a spring survey which is usually around 65 species. No **Noisy Friarbirds** were recorded.

Goorrooyarroo NR North

Nicki Taws reported on the survey on a fine crisp morning on 3 October. Many of the spring migrants were in full song, especially **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones**, and **Rufous Whistler**. **Mistletoebirds** were prolific although most of the mistletoe fruit seemed unripe. Occasional flocks of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** passed through, and several groups of **Brown-headed** and the occasional **White-eared Honeyeater** were recorded. **Superb Parrots** were recorded in the vicinity of three sites. Nice finds were a **Red-capped Robin** and a **Scarlet Robin**. The resident **Brown Goshawk** was in residence. Only single **Noisy Friarbird**, **Pallid Cuckoo** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** were heard, but no **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Sacred Kingfisher** or **White-winged Triller**. A total of 49 species for the morning. The red-necked wallabies are doing quite well in this reserve with a group of six seen.

Goorrooyarroo South NR

The spring survey was done by Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley, with Dave and Kathy Cook, in excellent conditions on Sunday 5 October. 57 species were recorded, 50 of them during 10 minute counts. Interesting sightings included at least 2 **Diamond Firetails** at site 1, **Mistletoebirds** in good numbers, a **Brown Goshawk** at site 7, a **Varied Sittella** at site 3, **Superb Parrots** in several places, a **Grey Currawong** near site 7 and **Speckled Warblers** at 2 sites. A **Brown Falcon** was seen carrying a large, unidentifiable item of prey. Returned migrants included **Pallid Cuckoo** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** (both heard), a **Rufous Whistler**, at least 2 **White-winged Trillers** at site 3, **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones** and **Noisy Friarbirds** scattered throughout, a few Dusky **Woodswallows** and **Tree Martins**, and a couple of **Olive-backed Orioles**. **Honeyeaters** were fairly plentiful with small groups of **White-naped** and **Yellow-faced** moving through, a **White-eared** heard, and the usual species (**Brown-headed**, **White-plumed**, **Eastern Spinebill**, **Red Wattlebird**, **Noisy Miner**) all recorded. **Thornbills** were rather thin on the ground, with only **Buff-rumped** and **Yellow-rumped** found.

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.

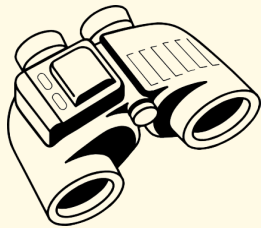
Nature Lodge Optics

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

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

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

Major brands such as Steiner, Zeiss,



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

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

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

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

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

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

Mt Majura NR

John Goldie and Kathy Walter did the survey over several days in late September. Numbers of species were good with around 30 species sighted in total across all sites. The top highlight was a **Tawny Frogmouth**, a first since surveying there. A search nearby did not locate its mate. Other highlights included **Olive-backed Oriole**, 2 **Wedge-tailed Eagles**, a couple of **Speckled Warblers** (only at one site), **Brown**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, **Superb Fairy-wrens**, **Mistletoebird**, **Golden Whistler** and **Common Bronzewing**. A **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** was heard outside one site. Breeding activity included 2 **Kookaburras** inspecting a hollow and a **Galah** in a nest box near the tank in Hackett.

Majura Field Firing Range

Paul Fennell and Barbara Allan did the survey on Monday 22 September with weather perfect for bird watching. There was a profusion of flowering ground cover, but particularly noticeable on some sites were the Spider Orchids. There was a good cross-section of birds expected in spring, with **White-eared Honeyeaters** and **Scarlet Robins** still about, but with **Rufous Whistlers**, **Tree Martins**, **White-throated Gerygones**, **Grey Fantails**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes**, and **Shining Bronze-** and **Fantail Cuckoos** also present. Species observed also included **Grey Shrike-thrush**, all the local thornbills except the Yellow, **Striated** and **Spotted Pardalotes**, **Grey Butcherbird** and **White-throated Treecreepers**. Very few **Noisy Miners** were observed, and there were no observations of **White-winged Chough**, which was a little unusual. A **Wedge-tailed Eagle** was observed soaring over Site 4, being chased by a very energetic **Maggie**. In recent surveys one or two **Diamond Firetails** have been observed near the Range Control buildings on the way out, and once again were recorded there.

Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park

Michael Lenz reported on the survey of the 9 sites on the eastern side of Mt Ainslie on 28 September under pleasant spring conditions. A total of 52 species was recorded, with 49 at sites. That is certainly a record for a woodland survey at this site. A further 3 species were added between sites. However, most species occurred only in small numbers or only once. The most widespread species were **Eastern Rosella**, **Noisy Miner**, **Mistletoebird** and **Australian Magpie**. Of interest were 3 green **Satin Bowerbirds** (mainly feeding in mistletoes), 3 species of cuckoos, the first **Leaden Flycatcher**, a female **Flame Robin**, **Speckled Warblers** on 3 occasions, but only once at a survey site, **Brown-headed Honeyeater** at 3 sites, and also sightings of **Brown Goshawk** and **Little Eagle**.

Newline

Jenny Bounds and Alison Rowell did this survey on 9 October in beautiful weather conditions. Lots of birds were around, especially in the first few (better) sites. Highlights were **Varied Sittellas**, **Little Eagle**, **Striated Thornbills** feeding young, quite a few **Dusky Woodswallows**, and **Shining Bronze-** and **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos**. It was pleasing to record a number of **White-plumed Honeyeaters** in the first few sites, as they are disappearing at other places. A few species were notably absent this time - **Brown Treecreeper**, **Speckled Warbler** and **Tree Martin**. A possible **Crested Shrike-tit** was heard in the front paddock, but the continuous noise from passing cars on the road made positive ID difficult. A total of 48 species.

Jerrabomberra West NR

The spring survey was done in the woodland patch on 1 October by Jenny Bounds and Alison Russell-French. It was a cool, fairly calm and sunny morning after being very windy the day before. The total species count was only 39, a little low for a spring survey with no honeyeaters at all. The usual **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones** were calling, and **Rufous Whistler**, **Golden Whistler** and **Olive-backed Oriole** were also heard. Pairs of **White-winged Trillers** and **Dusky Woodswallows** were around the two sites on the woodland/grasslands edge. A highlight was the pair of Mt Mugga based **Wedge-tailed Eagles** soaring low, right over one site during the count. **White-winged Choughs** were at a nest in one site, and nesting **Nankeen Kestrels** near another. Large groups of **Little Corellas** and **Silver Gulls** flew over the site. **Wood Ducks** which are usually nesting there were not calling and very few **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** were around. **Common Starlings** were in abundance near the grasslands edge.

Callum Brae NR

Sandra Henderson surveyed on 18 September. There were no surprises, but good numbers of most of the expected birds. A **Nankeen Kestrel** was seen flying straight into a hollow, so that appears as a breeding record, while the **Striated Pardalotes** seen nest building recently in the same tiny hole as last year were not in evidence, so may be sitting on eggs. Many parrots were still investigating hollows around the reserve. Surprisingly, no **Dusky Woodswallows** were seen during the survey, but a subsequent visit to the adjoining farm revealed a number around the homestead, so perhaps they are nesting over there this year. **White-throated Gerygones** were heard at most survey sites, and there was a pair in an area where they were observed nesting last year. The **Scarlet** and **Flame Robins** evident during winter seem to have departed the reserve.

Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson did the spring survey on Sunday 28 September, on a sunny, still morning. Of the returning migrants, **Mistletoebird** and **Grey Fantail** were at three sites and **Noisy Friarbird** was at one. Breeding records included **Pied Currawong** and **Australian Magpie** on nests and **Galah**, **Common Myna** and **Eastern Rosella** inspecting or entering hollows. A **Satin Bowerbird** at site 5 joined in harassing a **Collared Sparrowhawk**. Other highlights included two **Speckled Warblers** at site 1, a first record for the survey on the Hill. In all, 29 species were recorded during the survey periods, with a further 3 species seen or heard elsewhere on the Hill.

Rural leasehold property near Tharwa

David McDonald did the spring survey on 28 September in what seemed like perfect birding conditions. As it turned out, species diversity and bird abundance were relatively low, with just 27 species observed within the nine sub-sites and an additional four species between them. The dominant sound in the woodland throughout the morning was the songs of the **Golden Whistler**, **Rufous Whistler** and **White-throated Gerygone**. Although there were few honeyeaters about, of interest were two small flocks of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** intently flying west, the opposite route from autumn. Just one species of cuckoo was heard, **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**. Disappointingly, no **Speckled Warblers** or **Brown Treecreepers**, two of the threatened species of that woodland, were observed on the survey. Also missing were most of the iconic spring migrants such as **White-winged Triller**, **Noisy Friarbird** and **Rufous Songlark**; no woodswallows, and no breeding, were observed.

Wildlife haven for sale

Wonga – Rocky Hall NSW 2550

Fancy owning your own slice of old growth native forest replete with Lyrebirds, Gang-gangs, Wonga Pigeons, Powerful Owls and Yellow-bellied Gliders? Kathy and David Cook are selling their 59.0 hectare property, which is protected by a conservation agreement and bordered by South-East Forests National Park, at Rocky Hall. Included is an A-frame, two bedroom home with two large decks for wildlife watching. The ultimate environmental escape just 3 hours from Canberra. For more information see: <http://www.realestate.com.au/property-acreage+semi+rural-nsw-rocky+hall-117947719> Flora and fauna lists are available.





Gang-gang Cockatoo Survey

Quarterly Muster November 2014

An asterisk (*) means essential information.

Name of Observer*

Location* (address)

Email* OR Phone number*

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

Gang-gangs	Thursday 20 Nov	Friday 21 Nov	Saturday 22 Nov	Sunday 23 Nov	Monday 24 Nov	Tuesday 25 Nov	Wednesday 26 Nov
Largest number or zero (0) if none sighted							
Comments (if able) Feeding, nesting, sex and ages							

Notes:

Please send in any forms with **zero (0) sightings** for the Muster week including all zeros, as this is valuable data. Cross out the day if you were away from the site for the whole day.

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

RETURN FORM:

Gang-gang Survey PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608	OR Scan this form and email to ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au OR place in the Red Box at the COG monthly meetings
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Muster Terms:

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

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

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

Any questions please email: ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au

Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

Donations to this fund are tax deductible. Funds are used to support projects that protect and enhance native birds and the environments that sustain them.

COG membership

2014-2015 memberships:

- Singles: \$40
- Family: \$45
- Institution: \$40
- School student (under 18) \$20

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

C Hill, Downer
S Bennett, Curtin (rejoining)
C Brooks, Queanbeyan
M Mullaney, Higgins
E Millar, Chapman

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for December 2014 edition

Wednesday 26 November 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;

canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au

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

Canberra Bird Notes

Editor: Michael Lenz

lenzmj@homemail.com.au

