



Gang-gang

August 2016

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

AUGUST MEETING

Wednesday 10 August 2016

7.30 pm.

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

Barbara Allan's short talk will be the annual review of the previous year's **Bird Blitz**, a brief look at the findings across the eleven years of blitzes thus far, and an invitation to participate in **Blitz 12, on 29-30 October**. Please come along ready to nominate your preferred sites!

Dominique Potvin, a Postdoctoral Scientist at the Research School of Biology at the ANU, will give the main presentation entitled "**City bird, country bird: The effects of urban noise on wildlife**".

Over the past decade, numerous studies have observed changes in bird vocalizations – especially song - in urban habitats. Such changes tend to increase the signal range in the new environment, and are therefore considered to be advantageous. While some adjustments are flexible, others have been identified as cultural modifications occurring over generations, indicative of cultural evolution or adaptation. However, the

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

Over the nearly 5 week period from 25 June to 27 July this report covers, the weather has been very different from the stable, clear, frosty conditions Canberra often experiences in July. There have been only been around a handful of such days, with the days usually cloudy, and often wet and windy. As for June this may possibly have affected bird activity in the COG area of interest (Aoi), certainly from the number of postings on the COG E-mail Discussion List ("COG chat line") it seems to have deterred people from going out to bird watch. However, as noted below, there has been still plenty of activity to report.

The weather does seem to have caused most of the **Dusky Woodswallows** to depart as they have been reported only in small numbers mainly from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands during July (none on the COG chat line), and possibly less frequently observed than the **Olive-backed Oriole** of which single birds have been relatively regularly reported. One unexpected species staying over winter seems to be the **Tree Martin**, with Michael Lenz reporting 6 at the West Belconnen Pond on 21 July and Christine D two on Mt Ainslie/Campbell Park on 24 July. They were a surprise observation in my monthly survey of the S side of

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Tree Martin

Noel Luff

Everyone welcome

AUGUST MEETING *continued ...*

mechanisms mediating this evolutionary process are, as yet, unknown. Dominique will be presenting results from field observations as well as captive experiments to try and dig deeper into the issue of how urban noise might be affecting bird songs, including investigations into population genetics, cultural evolution, behavioural flexibility, endocrinology, song learning and even brain development.

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

the Narrabundah Hill reserve on 25 June, with around a dozen circling around a large gum, seeming to be feeding on insects coming off the canopy, for about a minute before they ghosted away. Interestingly these were the first records anywhere in my local patch since 27 October 2012, though they have been recorded since that date on the N side of the reserve. Perhaps they do stay over for winter more frequently than reported, and difficulty with their correct identification may explain the lack of records?

Yellow-faced and **White-naped Honeyeaters** seem to be over wintering in higher numbers than the first two species mentioned above, with Ryu Callaway reporting a mixed flock of 14 moving through Wanniasa Hills on 2 July. Later, 2 smaller flocks of **White-naped**s seemed to be migrating through. **Fuscous Honeyeaters** also seem to be staying over in small numbers, interestingly those I recorded (with the above two species) on 11 July were in the same flowering gum as they were a month earlier. As expected the **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** and **Grey Fantail** are also being reported in small numbers, but with Barbara Allan noting they have been surprisingly infrequent in her local area, though in my experience their distribution during winter can be very patchy. The **Mistletoebird** has continued to be observed during July, supporting my view that this species can now be included amongst the regular overwinterers, like the **Superb Parrot**, whose numbers for the past month seem to have been relatively low.

Surprisingly there still have been no reports of the **Rufous Whistler** (a few of which usually stay over winter) since 25 May. In contrast on 10 July John Layton heard a **Noisy Friarbird** calling near his house in Holt and found the bird jumping about in a large grevillea shrub two doors down. Interestingly, he had a record from July 2011 of a Noisy Friarbird in the same garden, probably in the same shrub. Other winter reports are for the **Australian Reed-Warbler** by Ian McMahon at Lake Ginniderra on 9 July, and the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** (the least migratory of the local cuckoos but as far as I can tell not reported since 19 April) is present at the Botanic Gardens, often a good place to find it in winter.



Fairy Martin

Roger Curnow

Also of interest is Jean Casburn's report on 24 July of over 25 **Red Wattlebirds** flying by in front of her house in Duffy, coming from towards the top of Rivett somewhere and heading towards Mt Stromlo. Maybe the previous relatively warm week before this prompted this partial migrant to return from somewhere not too far away. Another sign that the return migration is not far away is that on 25 July Duncan McCaskill reported a **Fairy Martin** near home in Giralang. It was spending most of the time huddled on tiled roofs in the sun, probably trying to get warm, so perhaps its return was a bit premature. The species listed above, as well as the other cuckoo species, are usually also the first "summer migrants" to return to Canberra, and depending on the season this can happen well before the end of August. So in the next month watch out for any of these species, as well as any other overwintering or early returning spring/summer migrants.

Of the species that come to Canberra for winter, the **Flame Robin** continues to be reported in small numbers in the new suburb of Coombs, though I'm not clear where else they still might be present, as in July I wasn't able to find them again in the local spot which has been most reliable for them in recent autumns/winters. Several more **Rose Robins** have been reported away from the Botanic Gardens, but there doesn't seem to have been any new reports of the **Pink Robin** or of the **Swift Parrot**. Shortly again reported 2 **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters** at the Tharwa Sandwash on 17 July, as noted in my July column at the northern end of their main stronghold along the Murrumbidgee River, though from the July Gang-gang they were also seen well above this at the Red Rocks Gorge on the COG walk there on 29 May.

Crescent Honeyeaters have been reported from the Botanic Gardens, again often a good place to find them in winter. One has continued to be present intermittently in my GBS site (but not outside of it) in Chapman, often only heard briefly, though on 24 July a female was feeding for a few minutes in the current favourite banksia for

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

honeyeaters, including for the aggressive (pre-breeding?) Red Wattlebird which has resulted in fewer smaller birds over the past month. The **Restless Flycatcher** was still present at Callum Brae on 19 July.

So please keep an eye out for the above species which will all move out of the Canberra area towards the end of August/early September, as will the **Scarlet Robin** and **White-eared Honeyeater**. I've hardly recorded the last named in my local patch in July after being recorded almost daily in June, further supporting my experience that this species pretty much stops calling towards the end of its period here, which makes them much harder to observe. The **Golden Whistler**, which is often present until early October, has also been absent from my local patch in July. Unusually it was also not present during the late June woodland surveys at Mulligans Flat and Goorooyaroo.

Again there have been few sightings of "unusual" birds during June. The **Azure Kingfisher** seems to have gone from Lake Ginninderra but Sandra Henderson reported that on the Native Plant Society outing at Googong on 29 June, two were seen along the walk from London Bridge. The **White-cheeked Honeyeater** continues to be present at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, and now that John Bundock has returned from holidays the **Powerful Owl** has again been regularly reported roosting in Turner. The **Grey Goshawk** has also still been reported as present on Ginninderra Creek. However, reports indicate that the high numbers of **Pink-eared Ducks**, **Hardheads** and **Australasian Shovelers** have departed from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, probably encouraged by the wetter conditions inland. It is not clear whether this also applies to the **Australian Shelducks** and **Plumed Whistling Ducks** at Bungendore.

David Cook



Azure Kingfisher



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Good birding, good food ...

2017 tours

Tasmania birds & mammals

28 January — 4 February 2017 includes
Melaleuca flight & pelagic

Alice Springs & the West MacDonnell Ranges tour

22 to 30 April 2017
One day added for Sandhill Grasswren

Top End tour 2017

22 May to 7 June 2017
Part 1: Darwin, Kakadu NP, Pine Creek &
Katherine. Part 2: Katherine, Victoria R,
Timber Creek & Kununurra. Mitchell Plateau
optional

Queensland's Gulf Country 26 June to 13 July 2017

Two days added for Rusty Grasswren.

Iron Range & Atherton Tablelands tour 2017 (Tablelands optional) 17 to 30 July 2017

New Caledonia birding tour Early August 2017

Strzelecki Track Outback tour 3 to 22 September 2017 38th tour! Covering 4 states & 5 species of grasswren

Plains-wanderer Weekends 2017 28/29 October 2017 18/19 November 2017

Please see itineraries, checklists and
latest news on our website

www.philipmaher.com

The July Gang-gang also revealed some more June breeding activity than I reported in my previous column, most notably of a **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** (a well-known early breeder) building a nest on the COG outing to Wanniasa Hills on 19 June. Records from last autumn's season breeding include Robin Hide reporting on 28 June that his **Gang-gang Cockatoo** family of three returned again to their garden, with the adult male again feeding the young male, which for the first time also made a few tentative attempts to feed itself. Jenny Smits also reported a begging juvenile with an adult male in her liquid amber on 15 July. On 16 July Shorty posted that he had seen **Long-billed Corellas** on Narrabundah Lane not long ago including a begging juvenile, and a dependant young **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** was still being fed in my local patch as late as 24 July.

In respect of the coming spring breeding season there have been further reports of the **Australian Wood Duck** either inspecting nest holes in trees or copulating. In late June the **Wedge-tailed Eagle** was photographed doing the latter by Kym Bradley. On 2 July I was surprised to see one of our resident **Australian Magpies** flying up to last year's nest fairly low over a public path and then settle down and size it for at least a couple of minutes while one of its mates looked on from the nearby wires. About 10 minutes later it then approached the nest again this time with one bird only a couple of metres away in the tree and a third (a threesome has stayed together all of the non-breeding season) on the wires. Last year I first noticed them building on 22 July, but though this behaviour has been increasingly observed, sitting does not seem yet to have occurred, nor has it from other reports on breeding activity, including the swooping of a dog, for this species.

This contrasts with a mid month report of a **Masked Lapwing** sitting (with its partner on sentry) for over a week in the same place each day in the same spot as last season in Tuggeranong. Other reports have been of **Galahs** and **Rainbow Lorikeets** inside nest holes, as well as a **Noisy Miner** carrying nesting material. On 22 July a near neighbour in Chapman reported **White-browed Scrubwrens** carrying nesting materials into a fern in a hanging basket just outside their kitchen window. The dome-shaped nest was well hidden and hard to see despite being only about a metre from the kitchen sink.

In respect of the coming breeding season Ian Baird from the Environment and Planning Directorate ACT Government has noted that, following the recent release of the ACT's Draft Action Plan for the **Scarlet Robin**, it is important to improve our knowledge of breeding behaviours and of up-to-date breeding sites for this species in the ACT and region. He noted there are relatively few breeding records for this species locally, especially recent records, and that knowledge of the location of breeding and breeding success will be crucial in taking any worthwhile steps towards conservation of this species in the years to come. It can be

an early breeder with the COG bus trip on 31 August 2014 finding it already on a nest at the Pinnacle.

Interestingly the reports of mixed feeding flocks (MFF) continued right throughout to near the end of July, a sign that the new breeding season is yet to commence in earnest, as they usually break up once it starts. Another sign that winter is not yet over is the continued presence of **Sulphur-Crested Cockatoos** feeding on the road verges and median strips etc. My wife and daughter saw a flock of over 80 **Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoos** near the airport on 7 July, and a number of people have reported larger than usual flocks of up to 40 **White-winged Choughs** together (often several groups of this species coalesce over winter). In respect of roosting behaviour Ryu Callaway reported that he saw a total of 405 **Australian White Ibis** depart the Mugga Lane Tip for their roost in Lake Tuggeranong, the second highest total from the start of the year. John Leonard posted that **European Goldfinches** have resumed their last winter's pattern in the fenced off section of the derelict Alexander Building in Woden. They are roosting in the garden shrubs, ascending higher in the shrubs for a communal twitter before dispersing. On 11 July there were 20-30 of them, still twittering very cheerily at 8.45 am due to the gloomy morning.

Once again my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to my two main data sources, postings on the COG E-mail Discussion List ("COG chat line") and the eBird Australia web site, as well as some direct correspondence to me. As usual I am very grateful to all involved for publishing this information without which it would not be possible to put this column together.

So please keep up the reports for any overwintering or early arriving summer migrants or the departing altitudinal migrants mentioned above, for further signs of early breeding, for roosts and roost flights, and for the last mixed or single species feeding flocks. As usual please ensure that all significant observations are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

Jack Holland



European Goldfinch

Julian Robinson

Steve Wilson Award

Nominations close **31 August 2016** for Steve Wilson Award .

Nominations are called for past or current members of COG to be considered for the award of the Steve Wilson Medal 2016.

This Award is the highest honour awarded by COG and is given to a person who has given meritorious service to the Group.

The Award was inaugurated in COG's 50th year and the 2014 awardees were Jenny Bounds and Graham Clark. Last year Chris Davey and Barbara Allan were the recipients. Nominees can be made by any member.

To be considered the nominee must have

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



NOMINATIONS

- Nominations are due on or before the 31 August 2016
- Nominations for consideration for the award can be in writing or by email to the COG President.
- Nominations must have the signature of two or more current financial members of COG.
 - Written nominations must be less than 1 page in length.
- An Awardee does not have to be a current member of COG
- An Award can be given posthumously.
- The Award can be announced at the COG AGM.

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

Neil Hermes

Latham's Snipe survey

As mentioned in the July COG newsletter and at a recent presentation at the Australian National Botanic Gardens, COG is conducting a survey on the Latham's Snipe. The aim of the survey is to find out about other locations in urban and rural ACT and local region where the Snipe may be found and to compare numbers and frequency of use with the birds using the Jerrabomberra Wetlands.

We are looking for volunteers who will survey their chosen wetland for Latham's Snipe during 2016-17 spring/summer on the following weekends: August 20-21, September 17-18, October 15-16, November 19-20, December 17-18, January 21-22, February 18-19 and March 18-19. For either day of the weekend walk slowly around your wetland and record the number of Latham's Snipe you see or hear. The number seen, the date and the start and end time of the survey need to be recorded and can be submitted through any of the following:

COG Incidental Form to be found at <http://canberrabirds.org.au/observing-birds/incidental-record-form/>

eBird

Email to Lori.Gould@woodlandsandwetlands.org.au

Remember, please submit a record if you have surveyed but not seen any Snipe.

Once you have chosen an urban wetland to survey could you register your wetland by letting Lori Gould, Program Manager, Woodlands and Wetlands Trust (Jerrabomberra Wetlands) know either via email at

Lori.Gould@woodlandsandwetlands.org.au or telephone 0439 030058 or email to chris_davey@aapt.net.au

Chris Davey



Latham's Snipe

Stuart Harris

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 17 July- Gungahlin Hill Forest Reserve

A group of eleven turned out on a cold morning, some having had trouble finding the entrance to the Reserve due to the thick fog. Luckily the walk did not start until 9:00am for the weather did not clear until mid-morning.

As expected, birding was slow until the fog lifted but the mist through the trees provided some great photographic opportunities. There was much discussion on the whereabouts of the boundary between the Forest Reserve and the Gungaharra Grasslands Reserve but no matter for this reserved area provides a good opportunity to explore dry forest, open woodland and grassland in one outing.

The most common species seen would have been the **Crimson Rosella** with a passing feeding flock consisting of the usual members; **Yellow-rumped and Buff-rumped Thornbills**, **Scarlet Robin**, **White-throated Treecreeper**, **Grey Shrike-thrush** and **Grey Fantail**.

Similar to the reported walk at Fadden Pond and Wanniasa Hills in the July newsletter, we found a very active example of 'scarring' although no **Galahs** were seen in action.

In total 31 species were recorded including **Brown-headed Honeyeater**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, **Golden Whistler** and at the last minute a **Grey Butcherbird**.

Chris Davey

Saturday 25 June – Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve – Superb Lyrebird Survey

Despite a week of wet and windy conditions the thirteenth survey of Superb Lyrebirds was run in excellent weather on a cool morning with no wind and a clear sky. This annual event is designed to provide an index of the numbers of lyrebirds within the Reserve. Initially, the purpose was to monitor recovery of the lyrebird population following the wildfires that swept through the Tidbinbilla Valley in early 2003.

Fourteen COG members and friends assembled at the car park by 8.00am. Teams then surveyed six trails: five that have been surveyed every year and one, the Lyrebird trail, recently added following its restoration.

Taking a minimum count and excluding those birds only seen on the Lyrebird Trail, 17 individual **Superb Lyrebirds** were recorded within the Reserve compared with 6, 14, 12, 12, 19, 19/20, 20, 13, 22, 21, 24 and 23 in previous years. The numbers by trails were as follows: Gibraltar Rocks – 1; Devil's Gap – 1 (seen only); Fishing Gap – 3; Ashbrook – 3; Camel Back – 9 (2 seen); and Lyrebird – 9 (one seen). It was clear that three individuals were recorded from both the Camel Back Trail and the Lyrebird Trail, leaving a total number of lyrebirds reported as 23. However, four birds were reported as seen but not singing, thus leaving 19 as the number of singing males heard this morning. If we exclude the 6 birds reported from the Lyrebird Trail only and birds only seen, the figure reduces to 15.

Twenty-nine different species of birds were recorded with the species found, as usual, depending very much on the trail walked: Gibraltar Rocks – 18; Devil's Gap – 14; Fishing Gap – 10; Ashbrook – 15; Lyrebird – 7; and Camel Back-12. As usual, a greater species diversity was recorded from trails on the drier west-facing southern side of the valley. The species composition was similar to previous years but only the Superb Lyrebird was recorded from all six trails.

Species seen from one trail only included **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Common Bronzewing**, **Galah**, **Weebill**, **Yellow Thornbill**, **Buff-rumped Thornbill**, **Crescent Honeyeater**, **New Holland Honeyeater**, **Eastern Spinebill**, **Scarlet Robin** and **Spotted Quail -thrush**. Five of these species were seen only on the Gibraltar Rocks Trail.

Peter Fullagar



Light overnight snowfall remaining at Fishing Gap trailhead.

Peter Fullagar

COG'S BIRD BLITZ 2016

Yes, it is on again, on the weekend of 29-30 October - COG's annual effort to record over the last weekend in October all species of birds present in the ACT across as wide a variety of habitats as possible; and to record any breeding activity. All COG members are warmly encouraged to participate, so that we can cover as much of the ACT as possible. COG members are encouraged to "adopt" one or more locations or entire grid cells, and those already adopted will be shown on our website and updated from time to time. But don't be perturbed if your favorite location has been taken - multiple surveyors per location are quite acceptable, though it would be good if you took on at least one unclaimed site as well. Think about giving an unknown area a try - it might prove exciting. In order to claim a grid cell, please put in your bid to Barbara Allan, the blitz organizer, on blitz@canberrabirds.org.au or phone her on 6254 6520.

If you are very familiar with a site and regularly survey there, or do BirdLife Australia-registered two hectare surveys there, you would probably be the best person to survey that site for the blitz if you can. But if last years' sites were boring or unpleasant or bird-free zones, pick somewhere new this time. Or better still, do a 2-ha 20-min survey to "cover" the site, then move on to somewhere more interesting. If you are a beginner, probably the easiest way to participate is to do a survey in your local park - but remember only to record the birds whose identity you are absolutely sure of. And if work or family commitments preclude you from doing much at all, be sure to try and do at least a 20-minute, 2-ha survey of your own backyard and environs, to support COG's blitz.

As usual, depending on the weather and Namadgi National Park management, we hope to be able to conduct surveys beyond the locked gates in the Park. The organizer is looking for more 4WDs and competent drivers to tackle the fire trails. Please contact Barbara if you'd like to be involved and/or if you have room in your vehicle and are willing to take passengers.

All standard BirdLife Australia survey methods are acceptable - just indicate on the electronic or hard-copy datasheet which one you used:

1. a 20-minute survey over 2 hectares (rectangle of 100 m x 200 m; or circle of radius 80 m)
2. a survey within 500 m of a central spot, time unlimited but 20 mins or more
3. a survey within 5 km of a central spot, time unlimited

(though please stay within the one grid cell).

Remember to record the *abundance* of each bird species seen - e.g. 2 Laughing Kookaburra; plus any indication of breeding using the following codes: ih (inspecting hollow); co (copulating); nb (nest building); ny (nest with young); cf (carrying food); dy (dependent young). *Only* record species you are sure about. If you see a bird species on COG's "unusuals" list, take a photo of it, if at all possible; take copious field notes of all the details you observe and any features you didn't see; then submit a completed "unusual bird report form" (available on the COG website) with your hard-copy datasheet or email it to rarities@canberrabirds.org.au.

Hard-copy datasheets are available at COG meetings; from the organiser; or from the COG website under "forms" - the COG observation record sheet is the general-use form. You may also submit records electronically via eBird, though please make sure you "share" the data with me or at least tell me that you have submitted records. If you use hard-copy datasheets, please mail them to COG blitz records, PO Box 301, Civic Square ACT 2608; deliver them to Barbara; or hand them in at the November COG meeting. If you use other electronic bird input systems, contact Barbara for advice on how to provide your data.

While most of us find the act of going out and recording birds rewarding enough in itself, it is good if we can offer modest incentives such as participation "lucky draw" prizes. If you are prepared to donate books, wine, DVDs, native plants or anything suitable as a blitz prize, the organizer would love to hear from you!

There will be regular blitz updates on the COG website, including lists of unloved sites awaiting adoption, so do check it out. And join us for a fun weekend of birding for a cause. Accounts of the outcome will be published in *Gang-gang* and *Canberra Bird Notes* in due course.

Barbara Allan

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.

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LATEST UPDATES AND CHANGES TO TRIPS are notified on the trips page of the COG website:

canberrabirds.org.au/
then select 'Our Activities' and 'Field Trips'.

and on the COG chat-line at:

bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds/2015-08/

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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

Saturday 6 August – Lake Ginninderra – beginners' outing

This is the second of our bird walks for 2016 that is aimed specifically at beginners. Meet Anthony Overs (bookings essential on 0419202155 or anthony.overs@gmail.com) at 8.30am in the car park at the western end of Diddams Close on Ginninderra Peninsula (also known as Diddams Close Park - see Yellow Pages Map 38, ref A9). We will walk the shores of the peninsula around to the eastern side, then back to the car park along Diddams Close. We should be able to view several species of waterbirds up close, focusing on the identification features of the common species such as the various ducks, "waterhens" and cormorants. A variety of bush birds are also likely to be seen. Bring your binoculars and field guide.

Anthony Overs

Saturday 13 August – Percival Hill

This walk will begin at Gungahlin Pond dam wall at 9.00 am and will take up to 3 hours. Bring morning tea – no coffee shops (and no toilets, by the way!)

Directions: Turn off Gundaroo Drive into Candlebark Close and park at the end of Candlebark or at the end of any of the other little nearby streets which run into the reserve near the dam such as Platypus or Lyrebird. Meet on the dam wall at the closest (eastern) end although it is pretty obvious anyway when you get there.

John Harris

Sunday 21 August – London Bridge Homestead

Meet London Bridge carpark 9am. From Queanbeyan, take Old Cooma Rd and turn left into Burra Rd. From Canberra on Monaro Highway, turn left into Old Cooma Rd; 8km turn right into Burra Road; 7.8km turn left into London Bridge Rd. Becomes dirt road, fine for any vehicle. Through closed gate to end: carpark next to woolshed. Tel John Bundock 0400249429.

Sunday 28 August - Late winter mystery bus trip – day outing

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

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

Jack Holland, Jenny Bounds

Saturday 3 September – Sherwood Homestead Complex, Uriarra State Forest

The 'Sherwood' historic site, formally known as the 'Sherwood Homestead Complex', is a European settler homestead site located on Uriarra Creek in the Blue Range Hut/Uriarra State Forest area. The homestead was occupied from 1863 to 1922. In September, the descendants of the daffodils planted there at that time should be in flower, a magnificent sight. More information on the Sherwood Homestead Complex is available online at <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2015-661/default.asp> and <http://tinyurl.com/jtwlhev>.

Please rendezvous for carpooling in the carpark of the Stromlo Forest Park at 8.00 am. We will drive to the Blue Range Hut and do a circular walk from there, about 10 km total distance, a bit hilly. Suggested contribution from each passenger to drivers: \$5. We expect to arrive back in Canberra early to mid-afternoon. Please bring your lunch and water. There are no toilets at the venue.

For further information, please contact the trip leader, David McDonald, at phone 6238 3706 or 0416 231 890, or email sherwood2016@canberrabirds.org.au.

David McDonald

Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 September – Eden pelagics

As usual, COG will be running two spring pelagic trips, on 3 and 4 September, from Eden. With early places offered to those who missed out on the March trip, there are a very limited number of places now available each day.

To participate, you need to be at the Eden Wharf by 6.45am on the day of the trip (returning by around 3pm). The cost is \$110 per person per day, payable as soon as possible. The September trips nearly always see a number of whales, as well as a variety of seabirds such as albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters.

If interested, please contact me. Please don't pay until I've confirmed you have a place. At the end of July there are still a few places available.

Sandra Henderson, shirmax2931@gmail.com

Sunday 18 September – Flemington Rd. and Mitchell Ponds

Meet at 8.00am in carparks near the corner of Flemington Rd and Randwick Rd., opposite the Canberra Racecourse. Both ponds are on Sullivan's Creek. The eBird list has 87 species for Mitchell Pond including **Double-barred Finch**, **Pink-eared Duck** and **Little Grassbird**. The second pond is on the corner of Flemington Rd and Morisset Rd., opposite the Belconnen Dog Obedience Club. 94 species have been recorded here on eBird, including **Latham's Snipe** and **Cattle Egrets**. As there are stables nearby, **Little Corellas**, **Rock Doves** and other grain eaters are often present.

Bill Graham



LOIRE VALLEY TIME TRAVEL

The Loire Valley is riddled with caves. They are not natural but the result of over 2000 years of limestone quarrying. In the winter they provide a perfect habitat for hibernating bats, but their constant humidity and temperature also provide perfect habitat for winemakers.

A visit to a small family run winemaker here can be a fascinating experience. The area excels in light tannic reds, crisp fruity whites and vintage sparkling wine. If you have ever wondered if the French concept of terroir really exists, a visit to any of our carefully chosen winery partners will convince you. Equally impressive is how open and honest the winemakers are. Ask a question about winemaking and vineyard management and you will get a direct and detailed answer.

Winemakers are very aware of their heritage, but are also open to improving their wine by adopting new practices. We highly recommend including a tasting on your itinerary with us.

Susan & Simon

www.tourtheloire.com

[loirevalleytoursnature
walks](http://loirevalleytoursnaturewalks)

**Tel: 0261 00 7744
(Canberra)**

contact@tourtheloire.com

Tuesday 20 to Thursday 22 September – private property near Young

There will be a 2 night campout on private property 10 km from Young – no facilities so take everything you need including water. We will survey the property and hope to gain access to another property as well as visit a TSR. Further details in September Gang-gang. The dates may change slightly closer to the time if wet weather is forecast. Numbers will be limited. Register with Sue Lashko (smlashko@gmail.com).



Feathers'n'Friends

Birdwatchers & nature lover's accommodation

Feathers'n'Friends cottage is fully self-contained with extensive facilities to ensure guests can enjoy short or extended stays.

The secluded lodging is surrounded by tropical rainforest and beautiful gardens with varying habitats and a large variety of birds and wildlife.

Activities in the area include birdwatching at nearby Mt Lewis and other birdwatching locations, as well as Daintree River nature tours and other attractions.

Discounts available for Birdlife Australia members.

Check our website for comprehensive details, rates, and bookings:

www.feathersnfriends.com.au

Fred & Jeanette Birkbeck

244 Clacherty Road
Julatten QLD 4871
Tel: 07 4094 1665
Email: freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au

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**

Introducing the Canberra Nature Map

The Canberra Nature Map (CNM) is a partnership between the general public with an interest in nature, nature professionals and the ACT Government. The aims of the Map are to:

Accurately map plants and animals within a 200km radius of the Civic GPO

Maintain these records for future generations

Improve public education and awareness of the diversity and significance of Canberra Nature Parks

Influence development and management decisions by providing critical location data to Government

The Map allows anyone to supply images of plants, fungi and mosses and liverworts etc, reptiles and frogs, birds, butterflies and mammals. Images can be captured with a camera or smartphone and can be downloaded to the Map from images stored on a computer or directly from a downloadable App. If the camera or smart phone is GPS enabled then the location will be embedded in the image and with the date and time will be automatically loaded to the Map. If the equipment is not GPS enabled then location can be entered manually, once a user has requested trusted user status from the site administrators.

To register, log onto the website, click on **Register** at the top banner and follow instructions. To load an image, click on **Report** at the top banner then select **Group** (plants, birds etc) then select **Category**, say **Birds of prey**, then select **Species**. Click on '**I don't know**' if in doubt. Enter the **abundance** and whether the image is of a **nesting site**. Click on **Image** and find the directory where the image is stored. If the image is not GPS enabled then manually input the location from the supplied Google map. The image and associated information is then made available for a moderator to approve.

If the photo is of a bird then Steve Wallace, Ryu Callaway and I will be notified and one of us will then have a look at the photo and confirm the details. If we do not agree with the identification then we will suggest the id and this suggestion will then subsequently be accepted or rejected

until an id is agreed on. At the same time an email is sent to the contributor indicating that the moderator is not happy with the id or requests further details. In this way the photo is not added to the database until the id is accepted by a moderator. It is possible to not accept a photo either because the image is too difficult to id or there are other species in the photo which makes it difficult to know which bird the image is referring to. Once accepted the photo and its location can be accessed by the general public

To look at images on the Canberra Nature Map click on **Species** at the top banner and then on the **Group** you are interested in. Taking **Nocturnal birds** for instance a list of ten species will appear with up to three images of each species. By clicking on **More information** a link will take you to the photo gallery on the COG website. By clicking on the species name all images of that species will appear. Clicking on **View Species Distribution** will show a map of the location of all images, together with the relevant species sightings from the over 1.1 million COG records that have been loaded into the searchable database .

The COG committee decided that the CNM was a great opportunity to educate the public about the birds in the local region and to utilise the distribution information in the COG database. So, we have downloaded all of the records collected over the past 10 years to the Map so for birds the distribution map shows the location not only of the loaded images but also all of the COG General Observations and Garden Bird Survey records for that species.

One of the interesting features of the CNM is the RADAR. By clicking on **Maps** at the top banner it is possible to obtain a list of bird species or any other animal or plant species reported from individual Canberra Nature Parks or other areas of interest i.e. National Arboretum. In addition, by clicking on **Radar Environmental Report** it is possible to click on the Google image of a spot that you would like to obtain a list of bird species for. It is then possible to choose the radius around the spot you have located. A radius from the marked spot of 100m, 500m, 1 km is possible.

For instance, taking a 500m radius from the centre of the Gungahlin Hill Forest Reserve, 63 bird species are listed with the number of records for each species. Of the 31 species recorded during the COG outing on Sunday 17 July, see Outings Report this newsletter, once submitted the **Grey Teal** and **Grey Shrike-thrush** will be new sightings for the Map.

The responsibility of maintaining each Group i.e. Plants, Butterflies Frogs/Reptiles is assigned to a particular individual or organisation. In the case of birds it is COG's responsibility to maintain the section on birds and at present I have been assigned that duty. COG will update their records to the CNM once a year to ensure up to date information. It should be noted that the location of all COG database records are made available. At the same time the location of all images are also made available except for those images which show a nesting location. This we have done to protect known nesting sites of all bird species. At present all images and their locations are sent to be included in the Atlas of Living Australia database. The COG committee has yet to decide whether records from the COG database are to be down-loaded to the ALA database.

I urge COG members to explore the CNM which can be found at <http://canberranaturemap.org/>

If you have any queries do not hesitate to contact me chris_davey@aapt.net.au

Chris Davey



Grey Teal

David Cook

DEUA TIN HUTS (Via Braidwood)

Comfortable accommodation on the door-step of the Deua National Park at Krawarree via Braidwood NSW.

Three cosy huts accommodating up to 14 people.
A short walk into the Deua National Park, the Big Hole and Marble Arch, walks in the beautiful Shoalhaven Valley.
Reasonable rates, hampers on request..
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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



**Wednesday
17th August
2016
Mount Hope**



Malleefowl Monitor Training

Monitoring Malleefowl will not in itself save them, but it is an extremely important tool in understanding how the species is going. If there was a sudden crash in any population, we need to be aware of the situation ASAP. Annual monitoring is also essential if we are to understand long term trends that may vary due to many factors including climate change.

Malleefowl exist right across Australian so we need to ensure everyone is monitoring in the same way. Over many years we have developed a method of monitoring Malleefowl that doesn't upset the birds, doesn't place more demands on the people doing the work than necessary and is scientifically robust.

We have developed a system that uses modern technology and is easy to use. Volunteers are supplied with smartphones with our own monitoring app installed.

At the training we will show you how to use the equipment and we will visit several mounds and go through the real thing!

Apart from learning how to take part in this important Citizen Science project, you will be mixing with lots of very knowledgeable Malleefowl people.

Please RSVP by 29-7-16 to Graeme Tonkin
graeme@malleefowl.net.au

**Wednesday 17th
10.00am -12.00pm**
at the Public Hall,
Mount Hope

- We will look at the National database and talk about where all the data goes
- everyone gets to play with smartphones and learn how we use them in the field

1.00pm -4.00pm
Travel to Site.

- We will use GPS to navigate to Malleefowl mounds
- At the mound we will practice the best monitoring methods and how to use the smartphones to record data

BBQ lunch supplied.

Note that we will be walking through sometimes heavy bush.

Ensure that you have good walking shoes and clothing to protect yourself from scratching and sun...sounds fun doesn't it?

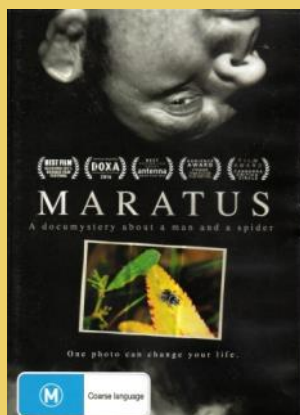
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Western**



DVD OF THE MONTH



**The multi award winning documentary
MARATUS
is out now on DVD !**

When an Australian garbage collector photographs an alien-like spider it triggers a series of life-changing events that make scientific history. A stranger-than-fiction story about citizen science and discovery

Self-described underachiever, Stuart Harris (who incidentally is a COG member) takes a photo of a spider near Canberra and posts it online. Scientists, including spider expert Dr Jurgen Otto, tell him it might be an undiscovered species. All he has to do is go back and find it so it can be described and named. There follows an epic three year quest in which Stuart discovers much more than just a spider. Award-winning filmmaker Simon Cunich creates a stunning story of determination, self-discovery and the power of citizen science to reveal nature's most extraordinary and well-hidden wonders.

Duration 30 mins.

Members Price \$15. (RRP \$20)

Publications for sale

COG provides a range of birdwatching related publications for sale to members at discounted prices (around 10-30% off RRP).

Below are highlighted a sample of popular publications available from the sales desk at COG meetings. We get new books in all the time and sometimes popular books sell out, but they can easily be re-ordered. If you are looking for a particular book, talk to the sales desk team at the meeting, as they can look at ordering it for you or contact Kathy on

sales@canberrabirds.org.au

NEW BOOKS IN STOCK

Bird Book

Caren Lockhart and Adrian Lockhart

Bird Book is a 70 page softcover book of poems and drawings.

The book has an unassuming name and poetically tells wonderful stories of our interactions with the bird world. Delightful illustrations not only capture the form of each story's birds, but also provide a magical glimpse of their behaviour. The book covers many of our favourite birds such as bowerbirds, cockatoos, oystercatchers, Crested Pigeons and Sacred Kingfishers.



Members' Price \$20.

CHILDRENS BOOKS

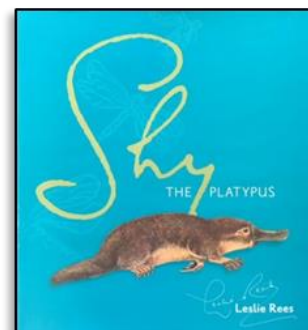
Shy The Platypus

Leslie Rees

National Library Publishing presents a stylish, highly illustrated re-publication of Leslie Rees' classic tale, Shy the Platypus. This exciting story of the life of a young platypus describes her growing up and experiencing encounters with humans, other platypuses and different animals.

Leslie Rees published over 40 children's books and won major awards (Order of Australia & NSW Premier's Award) for his 'contribution to Australian literature'. Leslie Rees' animal stories were an important part of the Australian children's books from the 1940s onwards.

Members' price \$15.

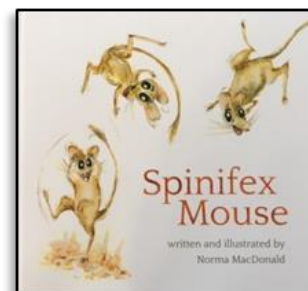


Spinifex Mouse

Norma Macdonald

Spinifex Mouse is the heart warming tale of Cheeky, a spinifex hopping mouse, who lives in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Cheeky is an adventurous little mouse who loves to leap high into the air and practice acrobatic tricks. Every morning, when his family have returned to their burrow to sleep after a nights foraging, Cheeky sneaks out to look for more food and practice his flips. Each day, he ventures a little further from the burrow. One morning, when Cheeky is far from home, he shows off his clever tricks in front of a hungry snake and becomes swept up in a heart-stopping and very risky adventure.

Members' price \$18.



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

2015-2016 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for September 2016 edition

Wednesday 31 August 2016

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 Webmaster

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COG library

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for change of address or other details.

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COG E-mail Discussion List

COG E-mail Discussion List

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

Join (subscribe to) the list by following the links on the COG website or by sending an email message to

[canberrabirds-](mailto:canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au)

subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au. The

subject line and body of the email can be empty.

To unsubscribe, either permanently or temporarily, send an email message to

[canberrabirds-](mailto:canberrabirds-unsubscribe@canberrabirds.org.au)

unsubscribe@canberrabirds.org.au.

If you wish to re-subscribe after being unsubscribed temporarily, simply follow the 'subscribe' instructions above.

