



Gang-gang

November 2016

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

November MEETING

Wednesday 9 November 2016

7.30 pm.

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

The short presentation will be by **Liam Bailey** of the Research School of Biology at the ANU on **"Love thy neighbour: Importance of nest density in a mobbing bird"**.

The main presentation, **"Citizen science study into bird feeding and watering in Australia"** will be by **Dr Grainne Cleary** of Deakin University

More details about these presentations are on the next page.

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

In the nearly 7 weeks since I wrote my October column very early on 10 September the weather remained cool and very wet for the first 5 weeks, with some major rain events and local flooding, including reports of stream flows where observers had never seen them before. It has only been in the last fortnight that things dried out somewhat (still regular but only small rainfall events), though the days have remained cool with only the odd few warmer days dispersed among them. It's interesting to see what effect this has had on the presence so far of the spring/summer migrants this year in the COG area of interest (Aoi). Below follows a discussion treating them into those with coastal/mountains versus those with an Australian wide distribution, with a subset of those which mainly occur inland and only come to the COG Aoi in significant numbers in the drought years. It appears in many cases their presence is as might be expected (ie a delay in arriving and fewer of the species with the more inland distributions), but with some surprises.

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Pacific Black Duck and ducklings

Julie Clark

Everyone welcome

Details for Speakers Wednesday 9 November 2016.

Liam Bailey - Love thy neighbour: Importance of nest density in a mobbing bird.

Many bird species are known to mob as a method of reducing nest depredation. It is likely that these species will benefit from nesting at higher densities, potentially increasing both the size and aggression of mobbing groups. With widespread bird declines, the nesting densities of many mobbing species may be greatly reduced, potentially undermining the effectiveness of anti-predator mobbing defences and increasing nest loss. In this talk, Liam will discuss a project investigating the relationship between nest density and nest depredation in the Eurasian oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), conducted as a portion of his Ph D thesis. Understanding this relationship will not only provide important information for the conservation of *H. ostralegus* but will also have widespread implications for a number of well known Australian species.

Grainne Cleary - Citizen science study into bird feeding and watering in Australia

Bird baths are a familiar sight in Australian gardens but surprisingly little is known about the precise role they play in the lives of birds. In a dry continent such as Australia, bird baths may be vital to supporting an otherwise stressed bird population. Researchers at Deakin University and Griffith University wanted to find out more, so they enlisted the help of thousands of citizen scientists across Australia to gather as much data as they could on how birds use bird baths. And so the Bathing Birds Study was started in 2014. This study involves collecting data online from 2,500 citizen scientists on bathing birds all over Australia. The study has revealed so far that bird baths are much more than just ornamental splash pools for feathered visitors. They're also a site where animals socialise and intense rivalries play out. Human choices – such as the design of the bird bath, where it is located and how often it is cleaned – can have a big impact on birds.

A bird feeding study component has recently been added to the research. Bird feeding is a major issue that cannot be ignored and the absence of any real evidence based research means we don't know the effect bird feeding is having on the environment. The study will help fill this information gap to inform principles around bird feeding.

In her presentation Grainne, who is leading the Australian Bird Feeding and Watering Study, will discuss the design, methodology and results to date for both aspects. She is extremely passionate about getting the best results for our birds and communicating these results and outcomes to participants to ensure they fully understand how important they are to citizen science studies. By doing so citizen scientists can see how their data is used and gain an understanding and information from studies like this one about what they can do to improve their gardens for birds. She is a wildlife ecologist from Ireland and her area of interest is working



Gail Neumann

Satin Bowerbird

with the public through citizen science to gain the best outcomes for urban wildlife. She is especially interested in how people interact with wildlife in their own back gardens and what resources are provided, both intentionally and unintentionally. She finds this of great interest as our behaviour can have a huge influence on urban wildlife and how wildlife can use gardens in otherwise inhospitable environments.

CIMAG AGM Talk by Dr Richard Major

COG members are welcome to attend Canberra Indian Myna Action Group AGM at the Southern Cross Club, Catchpole Street, Macquarie from 7.30pm Monday 5 December. Light refreshments provided.

A highlight of the meeting will be an interesting address by Dr Richard Major from the Sydney based Australian Museum Research Institute who is working with scientists from Newcastle & Queensland Universities on the analysis of DNA from Common Myna populations, sampled from throughout the species' range in Australia.

Questions being investigated are:

- The number of separate introductions
- Origins of populations
- Are some populations more invasive than others?
- Is native vegetation a barrier to dispersal?
- Are populations evolving to become more invasive?

Bruce Lindenmayer.

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

Of the spring/summer migrants yet to arrive when I forwarded my October column to the editors, on the morning after (11 September) Steve Read reported a **Sacred Kingfisher** sitting quietly on the wires at the north end of Dairy Road, close to the Molonglo River. The next record I can find was not until 23 September, a more usual time for the species to first arrive. More reports followed until by the end of the first week of October it seemed to be well established, with up to 3 birds reported together on several occasions, promising a good year for this species with an Australia wide distribution, except for some of the western inland.

The **Rainbow Bee-eater** and the **Dollarbird** were much slower to arrive, with the first record of the former for the COG Aoi being a threesome reported by Ryu Callaway at Burrinjuck Waters State Park (30 km SW of Yass) on 29 September. They did not seem to reach the ACT until 7 October when Rosemary Blemings first reported watching them hawking for insects above the main Strathnairn Dam. There were several more reports that day, including of birds overhead, and by mid month this species (with a similar distribution to the Sacred Kingfisher) had reached its favoured spots such as the Tharwa Sandwash where 6 were reported on 16 October (and 9 on 22 October!). The first **Dollarbird** report I'm aware of was from Curtin on 4 October and over the next fortnight this coastal/mountains species was increasingly reported and had also arrived at its regular summer spots. So for these three species it doesn't seem the cool wet weather has had a major effect on their presence.

Surprisingly the coastal/mountains **Eastern Koel** arrived earlier than I expected, with a record on 1 October, and then a series of reports noting their first calling for the spring from 8 October. On 23 October I tracked down the first local one (it had called the day before) for the season to the same silky oak in Rivett as I first did last year, but a fortnight earlier, consistent with their seeming earlier arrival this year. I had expected they would continue to arrive over the next weeks before settling down to try to breed, but two days later there was excited activity by two males and a female, which I usually associate with later in the season. Other have also noted this activity including the presence of females already, but in other areas there have been few records, so please keep an ear out for their first arrival and signs of breeding activity in your local patch.

A species that I expect will still continue to arrive is the coastal **Leaden Flycatcher**. While it was first reported from Campbell Park on 4 October,



White-throated Gerygone

Con Boekel



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Good birding, good food ...

2017 tours

**Alice Springs & the West
MacDonnell Ranges tour
22 to 30 April**

One day added for Sandhill Grasswren

Top End

22 May to 7 June

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

Cairns to Mt Isa and Winton
Two days added for Rusty Grasswren.

Atherton Tablelands FNQ

17 to 22 July

Iron Range NP FNQ

22 to 30 July

New Caledonia

5 to 12 August

includes Lifou and Ouvéa Islands

Strzelecki Track Outback

3 to 22 September

38th tour and celebrating 30 years.
4 states & 5 spp. of grasswren

Plains-wanderer Weekends 2017

Amended dates

21 & 22 October, 18 & 19 November
2 & 3 December 2017

Tasmania 2018

3 to 10 February

Please see itineraries, checklists and
latest news on our website

www.philipmaher.com

quite late for this species, there were only 2 more reports up to the 18 October, after which there were some more including of 3 birds at Campbell Park (where they always breed) on 23 October. There have been a few reports of the related **Satin Flycatcher**, including by Ryu Callaway at Wanniasa Hills on 3 October, and at the same place (and possibly the same bird) on 15 October. The cool wet weather may have caused it to delay its journey to the mountains to breed, supported by the fact that I can find no reports so far this spring of the similar passage migrants, the **Rufous Fantail**, **Brush Cuckoo** and **Cicadabird**.

In keeping with their preference for the drier inland there have only been a few reports of the **White-winged Triller**, the first from Mulligans Flat on 26 September, the next of a female at Belconnen on 4 October, and with only scattered reports since. Likewise the only report I can find for the **Rufous Songlark** is of 2 birds at Mulligans Flat on 13 October. On 24 October there certainly were none present on the western side of Narrabundah Hill, where they have breed for the past few seasons (particularly 2014-2015). With the wet conditions inland I expect very few of either species will make the COG AoI their home this spring/summer. This also applies to the **Brown Songlark** and **Horsfield's Bushlark**, which usually arrive in small numbers in October or November, but for which here have been no reports to date. For the same reason I also expect few if any **White-browed** or **Masked Woodswallows** to come here this year. So please keep an eye/ear out for these possibly late arriving migrants.

There have been a few surprises with John Layton reporting about 25 to 35 **White-throated Needleetails** over Holt on 13 October, this species is mostly seen in the COG AoI on its return journey after the New Year. On 15 October a **Channel-billed Cuckoo** (a mainly coastal species) was reported from Fraser and Spence, on two occasions actually perched rather than flying through quickly as it often does. Another was reported from Gungahlin the following day. The presence of the other cuckoos reflects the expected with very few reports of the more inland **Pallid Cuckoo** (I can only find 3 records for it since 8 September) and **Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo** (only a few more of these) compared with the coastal/mountains **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** and **Shining Bronze-cuckoo**.

A number of observers have reported how much more common **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** have been in their local patches this spring. They are still present, at least in my local



Channel-billed Cuckoo, Pied Currawong

Harvey Perkins



Eurasian Coot with chicks

Kenneth Black

patch of NW Chapman, Cooleman Ridge and Narrabundah Hill. It seems they too have delayed moving to the mountains to breed. Finally it is interesting that it appears reports of numbers of the **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone** seem to be fairly similar despite the former having the much more widespread inland distribution. Surprisingly the **Noisy Friarbird** was common in September but as noted by several observers now seems less so; I haven't seen or heard one in my local patch for the past fortnight.

Likewise the passage migrant (and over winterer), the **Rose Robin**, continued to be reported in September, the last being on 28th of the month. Of the other winter altitudinal migrants the **Scarlet Robin** is still present in the peri urban parts of Canberra, where it has bred (see reports below), whereas the last **Flame Robins** in these areas were reported from Mulligans Flat on 3 October. **Crescent Honeyeaters** were still reported at the ANBG up to 17 September, and Matthew Frawley reported the last one at West Greenway on 22 September. Two **Golden Whistlers** were still observed at Mulligans Flat on 24 October, cementing their reputation as the last altitudinal migrant to leave Canberra.

Despite all the water around the **Latham's Snipe** seems to be present in good numbers with 17-24 regularly reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, and possibly up to 30 seen at Lake George, which has more water in it than in many years, in early October. Perhaps it's been a good year to do the survey, or maybe this has been responsible for the extra attention. However, many other waterbirds have dispersed, with early in October Bill Graham noting on his walk round Yerrabi Pond that it was almost empty of waterbirds with no **Eurasian Coots** (which usually number between 600 and 800) or grebes and only a pair of the duck family. Others reported a similar experience at their local water bodies.

However, it seems that most waterbirds which remained behind were breeding with at least 3 broods of **Eurasian Coots** and **Purple Swamphens** reported over the period, with in one case a family of the latter wowing the crowds at Floriade by their behaviour (there was also a family of **Dusky Moorhens** nearby). Young chicks of the **Buff-banded Rail** have also been reported. Around half a dozen separate broods of the **Pacific Black Duck** have been reported, and nine of the **Australian Wood Duck**, with in one case 23 ducklings being looked after (creched?) by one set of parents on Sullivan's Creek. There have been a similar number of breeding

events reported for the **Black Swan** if you include birds seen on the nest as well. Three broods of **Masked Lapwings** have also been reported, as well as a **White-faced Heron** nest with 3 large chicks at Hall.

Bush bird breeding has also been reported. To me the most important has been the sighting by Julie Clark on 19 September of two recently fledged broods of **Scarlet Robins**, with 4 chicks in the first brood and two or possibly more in the second. On 24 October she reported two juveniles (possibly different from the above) seen in the company of two adults who appeared to be preparing for a second brood (male feeding the female and female carrying nesting material). HANZAB indicates the species is multi-brooded usually rearing two or three broods per year, but from recent Annual Bird reports (ABR) there seems to be limited local evidence of later breeding. Jean Casburn found a **Scarlet Robin** nest at Narrabundah Hill on 23 September and then first observed the pair feeding young in it and then dependent young when they fledged on 14 October (as it's on my local patch I've been privileged to see both as well, they were still present on 24 October). It's great to get breeding records in peri urban Canberra of this recently listed species. As an added bonus Jean has also recently found **Southern Whitefaces** nest building nearby.

Other breeding records include Con Boekel observing a single female **Flame Robin** feeding a single well-developed youngster out of the nest on the flat near London Bridge early in October (Con has clarified that he could no longer find them at their usual spots in Campbell Park, so it appears no breeding there again this year). In mid September Kym Bradley posted a photo of an **Eastern Yellow Robin** incubating, followed by a post that she had seen a male **Hooded Robin** feeding a female on the nest, and in early October posted a video of two baby **Wedge-tailed Eagles** in the nest. In mid October baby **Rainbow Lorikeets** were observed being fed in gums by their parents near Taylor Primary in Kambah. **Tawny Frogmouths** also appear to be breeding normally, with for the first time 3 males on the nest in my local patch.

The most unexpected record has been of a **Blue-faced Honeyeater** observed sitting on a nest in Yass in mid September, since there have been no further posts I am unaware of the outcome. Likewise for the **Little Eagles** reported on a nest at a property on Sutton Rd. One species that does seem to be having a good breeding season (probably due to the ready availability of mud for their nests) is the **White-winged Chough**, with at least five records of birds on the nest or dependent young being posted in October. The other local mud nest builder, **Magpie-lark**, should as well, but this common species is probably under reported. I know of two nests close to my GBS this year, one of which is the resident pair which didn't breed last year.

So please watch out for further breeding activity; given the good conditions I expect it will be a very good breeding season.

In respect of mud nesters the most unexpected "unusual" bird has been an **Apostlebird** in North Watson, first reported on 29 September, but subsequently seen and photographed by many observers up to at least 19 October. One has to wonder what this single bird, usually not found closer than Boorowa, was doing there. It appeared to be quite tame and able to fend for itself, though I understand it's not a common cage bird or pet. It's not listed in the ABR and the only previous record in Steve Wilson's book, *Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change*, is of 6 birds from Hall in the summer of 1948. Its presence may remain a mystery



Apostlebird

Maurits Zwankhuizen

similar to the single **Grey-crowned** and **White-browed Babblers** present for several years in the mid 2000s.

The other unusuals include the **Banded Lapwing** with a few first recorded near Bungendore for a couple of days in mid September, and then up to 12 seen off Lake George early in October. Two **Caspian Terns** were also reported from the new ponds near Coombs in late September, but only stayed there for a day. The **White-cheeked Honeyeater** still seems to be present at Kellys Swamp, with Shorty posting photos of two in late September, one of which may have been a hybrid with the **New Holland Honeyeater**, which was seen to feed it early in October. Finally as far as I'm aware the **Powerful Owl** has not been reported since the end of July, and seems to have moved on after being recorded at Turner for about 21 months.

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 always I am very grateful to all involved for publishing this information without which it would not be possible to put this comprehensive column together.

If the weather finally warms up and it dries out there may be more spring/summer migrants. So please look out for them, and particularly for further any signs of breeding. As usual please ensure that all significant observations are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

Jack Holland



Con Boekel

Buff-banded Rail

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 9 October—K2C Surveys—Bredbo region

The K2C bird surveys for spring 2016 were held on 9 October with a few sites surveyed later due to issues with access. A total of 82 species was recorded, slightly lower than the usual spring count, mostly due to fewer waterbird species. In this particularly cool and wet season it seems the waterbirds have dispersed far and wide from their usual haunts. Highlights included a new species for the survey list; a pair of **Pied Butcherbirds** at Stonehouse, south of Williamsdale. According to the landholders they had been seen there fairly regularly in the last year. Other highlights were a **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, and 6 **Hooded Robins** (2 family groups) at one site. The return migration of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** has been a feature of the past month in the region, and despite the windy and overcast conditions on the day small groups of both species were recorded moving westwards through several sites. Some of the threatened species such as **Diamond Firetail** and **Scarlet Robin** are seemingly more scarce in the spring than the autumn and we had only a couple of sightings of these species. Other threatened species' sightings included **Brown Treecreeper** (5 properties, one breeding record), **Speckled Warbler** (4 properties), **Flame Robin** (3), **Varied Sittella** (1), **Gang-Gang** (1) and the recently listed **Dusky Woodswallow** (5). We thank the landholders for their ongoing interest and cooperation, and Bush Heritage Australia for supporting the surveys with lunch for the COG volunteers. The next surveys will be held 9 April 2017.

Nicki Taws

Sunday 16 October—Yerrabi Pond

Five members met for a cold and windy walk around Yerrabi Pond. Usually full of waterbirds, it was almost deserted. There were two pairs of **Black Swans** with cygnets with one male driving off others with aggressive posturing and honking. One **Pacific Black Duck**, **Dusky Moorhens**, **Australasian Swamphens**, **Little Pied** and **Little Black Cormorants** were the only other waterbirds. The **Eurasian Coots** which usually number between 600-800 had all gone. There was total of 28 species with **Pied Currawongs**, **Maggie Larks** and **Red Wattlebirds** breeding. In contrast, at The Valley Avenue Ponds, later, for the Latham Snipe Survey, there were two pairs of **Eurasian Coots** with young broods. So where conditions were more favourable some coots had stayed.

Bill Graham

Wednesday 19 October—Mulligans Flat

Allowing for 2 members who were a little delayed, 20 members of COG and 9 guests from the Bird Life Southern Highlands gathered at Mulligans Flat for an exploration of the area around the Big Dam. Using the entrance off Eric Wright Street saved us quite a step, although it did give an early experience of the dampness of the area.

We recorded quite a number of bush birds as we moved towards the big dam, with the highlight being 2 **Speckled Warblers** foraging in company. This was considered to meet the eBird breeding category "Probable - Pair in suitable habitat" as did a male and female **Scarlet Robin** moving in concert. Several migrants were heard and/or seen including **White-throated** and **Western Gerygones**; up to 3 **Sacred Kingfishers**, **Leaden Flycatcher** and **Olive-backed Oriole**.

The big dam was replete with water: indeed it was as full as I have seen it for many years. In common with many other water bodies in the area it was less than replete with water birds. We observed a family of **Pacific Black Ducks**, including 7 very young ducklings, 2 **Australian Wood Duck** and singles of **Pink-eared Duck** and **Musk Duck**. A few **Eurasian Coots**, **Little Pied Cormorants** and a **White-faced Heron** completed the set.

We picked our way through the puddles to the small dam nearby where the only **Australasian Grebes** of the day were seen. On the walk back the highlight was two **Sacred Kingfishers** and two **Tawny Frogmouths**.

As well as the activities reported above other breeding records were **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** and **Red-rumped Parrot** (both Probable--Visiting Probable Nest site), **Noisy Miner** (Confirmed -- feeding Young), **Australian Magpie** (Confirmed -- Nest with Young), **Australian Raven** (Confirmed--Nest Building), **White-winged Chough** (Confirmed --Occupied Nest), **Common Blackbird** and **Common Starling** (both Confirmed--Carrying Food).

In total we recorded 52 species.

Martin Butterfield

Sunday 23 October—Bird photography workshop at Jerrabomberra Wetlands

A dozen participants enjoyed a brief general introduction to improving bird photography. This was followed by a more technical discussion of how to manage depth of field. Artfully arranged feather arrays were then used by the participants to practice using different settings on their cameras in order to manipulate depth of field. The final session was a field shoot. **Purple Swamphen**, **Grey Teal** and **Pacific Black Duck** paraded their young in order to provide photo opportunities.

Glenn Pure and myself provided one-to-one assistance during this phase. Special thanks to Glenn, for providing his considerable technical expertise during the workshop, and to Michael Maconachie for the helpfulness with which he coordinated access to the facilities and for opening the JWNR Ranger Office at 7.30 am on a Sunday morning. The workshop was well-oversubscribed. The general feedback was good and this serves as advance notice that I will probably run another workshop in 2017.

Con Boekel

Future Field Trips

Sunday 6 November – Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve

Meet at 8am in the carpark on Horse Park Drive. This will be a morning walk through woodlands and grasslands where we may see species such as **Superb Parrot**, **Speckled Warbler**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Southern Whiteface** and **Diamond Firetail**. We will walk to the area where **Hooded Robins** were last reported from the reserve in 2010. It should be an easy to moderate walk over undulating (and possibly quite boggy) ground, and we may stop along the walk to look at whatever wildflowers and butterflies are out. Please bring appropriate sun protection, some water and possibly gumboots.

There will be a limit on numbers for this walk so please register with Suzi Bond (chowchilla29@yahoo.com) for details.

Sunday 13 November – Campbell Park nest workshop

This will be a repeat of the very successful practical nest workshops held over the past eleven years. As usual it will be a very informal outing which again has 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 nesting behaviour. This will be followed by several hours putting this into practice, with participants breaking into groups looking for breeding behaviour, signs of nesting etc. This will also allow plenty of opportunities 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 very welcome. Though 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) or by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com.

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. Please remember to take morning tea to have out in the field.

Jack Holland

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.

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.

Sunday 20 November – Mulligans Flat

Meet at 8:00 am, in Amy Ackman St carpark, opposite Cleggett St, returning at about 10:00 am.

This should be a great walk with lots of breeding activity to be observed.

McComas Taylor

Sunday 27 November – Kama Nature Reserve

Meet at 8:00am at the car park on William Hovell Drive. The car park is difficult to access and it is best to go past the car park, around the roundabout at the intersection with Drake-Brockman Drive, and then return along William Hovell Drive. The car park will then be on your left.

The walk will cover the northern, wooded section of the Reserve and if time permits we will explore the grasslands and then on to the Molonglo River.

Chris Davey (MOB 0418 679 847)

Sunday 11 December – Australian National Botanic Gardens

The ANBG is a favourite birding spot for lots of Canberrans, so we are going for a visit. Meet at the bus stop between the bookshop and the cafe at 8:00 am. Remember that you need to pay for parking. When the day starts getting hot we will retreat to the rainforest, and we will go to the café for morning tea so bring some small change. There is no need to book for this outing.

For any enquiries contact Lia Battisson:

on 0412 788 791 or liabattisson@grapevine.com.au

Sunday 18 December – Aranda Bushland

Meet at 8 am on Bindubi Street beside the second gate (when travelling north) where the Powerline Track begins. There is plenty of parking well off the road but do not park on the walking/cycle track.

We will visit the section of the reserve where there was plenty of breeding activity in 2015 (see articles in February and March Gang-gang) and, if time permits, we may also walk through the Frost Hollow, also known as the Snowgums Reserve. Bring morning tea.

Sue Lashko

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

Latham's Snipe survey progress report

The **Latham's Snipe** survey is run as a collaboration between COG and the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust. In late July a request was sent out on the COG Discussion List (Chat-line) and in the COG newsletter to adopt a wetlands and to survey once a month on selected dates between August and March 2017. By the middle of August, 36 wetlands had been adopted by 27 volunteers.

Since the first survey over the weekend 20-21 August surveys have been conducted over the weekends of 17-18 September and 15-16 October. The date of the October survey was set to align with the National Latham's Snipe Survey. The results received to date (25 October) are as follows:

Site	August	September	October
Aranda Snow Gums - 5 ponds	0	0	
West Belconnen Ponds	1	2	4
Fassifern Ponds	0	0	0
Jaramalee Ponds	0	0	0
Chapman horse paddocks	0	0	0
Ginninderra Creek	0	0	2
Horse Park Drive Forde Pond	0	9	25
Giralang Pond	0	0	0
Horse Park Drive Pond, Forde	2	2	2
Bonner (Valley Ave) Ponds, Gungahlin	0	0	0
Jerra - Kellys	0	0	0
Jerra Shoveller Pond	0	0	0
Jerra Wetlands Peninsula	2	2	17
Sewerage Ponds	0	0	0
Lake Ginninderra (western shore and peninsula)	0	0	0
Maza St Ponds, Bonner		0	0
McKellar Ponds		0	
McKellar Ponds (Large and Small)		0	
Stranger Ponds (Bonython)	0	0	0
Uriarra Station Dam	0	0	0
Ginini Flats	0	0	
Gungahlin Pond	0	0	0
Crace Wetland	0	0	
Lake Tuggeranong	0		0
Isabella Pond	0	0	0
Norgrove Park, Kingston	0	0	0
Lake Burley Griffin - Acacia Inlet to Scrivener Dam		0	0
Lake Burley Griffin - Acacia Inlet to Scrivener Dam	0	0	0
Lake Burley Griffin - Warrina Inlet to Westbourne	0	0	0
Lake Burley Griffin - Warrina Inlet	0	0	



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

[loirevalleytours.com/nature walks](http://loirevalleytours.com/nature-walks)

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

contact@tourtheloire.com

Site	August	September	October
Nursery Swamp, Namadgi NP	0	1 (incidental)	
Gungahlin Pond	0		
Mulligans Dam		4	
Horse Park Wetlands			2
NSW Sites			
89 Weeroona Drive, Wamboin			
159 Brooks Road, Bywong NSW			
Ryans Road to Brookes Creek, Wamboin	0	0	

If a wetland is mentioned more than once then two different observers surveyed the area over the same weekend.

In addition to the above observations, sightings have been reported from elsewhere within the local area. In particular a count of at least 30 birds at the southern end of Lake George on 6 October. At West Belconnen Ponds the COG Wednesday outing recorded five Latham's Snipe.

Further surveys are set for the following dates; 19-20 November, 17-18 December, 21-22 January, 18-19 February and 18-19 March. Additional volunteers and adopted wetlands would be most welcome. The survey protocol is very easy and involves walking slowly around your wetland and record the number of Latham Snipe you see or hear. The number seen, the date and the start and end times of the survey 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, a record needs to be submitted even though you may not have seen any Snipe.

Happy sniping, Lori Gould and Chris Davey

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350 acres secluded, covenanted Box Gum Woodland on NSW SW Slopes. Abundant fauna and flora, including 148 bird species (14 threatened or endangered). Creek and three dams. Spacious solar passive home. Sealed roads to Canberra 138km, Sydney CBD 318km. For description, species lists and images contact:

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kingfisher park
birdwatchers lodge

Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

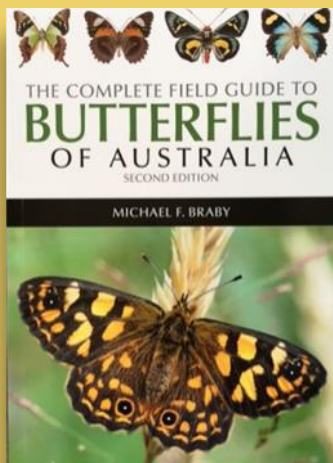
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BOOK OF THE MONTH



The Complete Guide to Butterflies of Australia (Second Edition) Michael Braby

The second edition of the award-winning book *The Complete Field Guide to Butterflies of Australia* is a fully updated guide to all butterfly species on Australia's mainland and remote islands. There are new species added and the text and regional maps have been updated.

Written by one of Australia's leading lepidopterists, the book is stunningly illustrated with colour photographs, many of which are new, of each of the 435 currently recognised species. There is also a distribution map and flight chart for each species on the Australian mainland, together with information on similar species, variation, behaviour, habitat, status and larval food plants.

The second edition of the award-winning book *The Complete Field Guide to Butterflies of Australia* is a fully updated guide to all butterfly species on Australia's mainland and remote islands.

Members Price \$37. (RRP \$50)

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

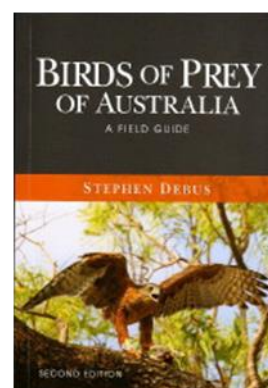
sales@canberrabirds.org.au

NEW BOOKS IN STOCK

Birds of Prey of Australia *Stephen Debus*

An illustrated field guide to diurnal raptors, a bird group that many people find among the most difficult birds to identify. The book has been completely revised and updated,

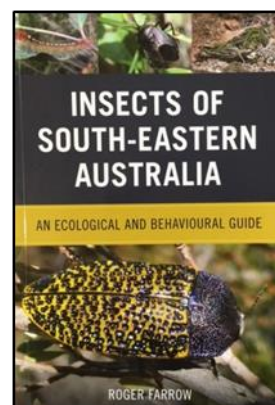
Member's price \$28



Insects of South- Eastern Australia *Roger Farrow*

Insects of South-Eastern Australia is a unique field guide that uses host plants and behavioural attributes as the starting point for identifying insects. Richly illustrated with colour photographs, the different species of insects found in Australia's temperate south-east, including plant feeders, predators, parasites and decomposers, are presented.

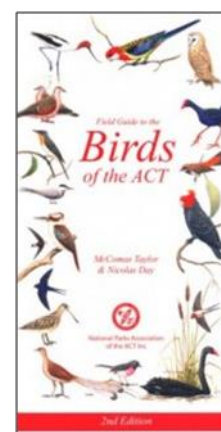
Members Price \$34. (RRP \$45)



Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT *McComas Taylor & Nicolas Day*

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

Member's price: \$20



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

2016-2017 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

R Nissanka
H Hampton
R Bartolich
M Pikler
A Milligan

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for December 2016 edition

Wednesday 30 November 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 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-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-unsubscribe@canberrabirds.org.au.

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