



Gang-gang

APRIL 2017

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

APRIL MEETING

Wednesday 12 April 2017

7.30 pm.

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

The short presentation will be by **Darren Le Roux**, Environmental Project Officer, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, on: **“Standing tall: Recreating vertical habitat structure for wildlife”**.

Mature tree decline due to human activities is a global phenomenon and a key threatening process underpinning biodiversity loss. An innovative restoration trial is currently being undertaken in the Molonglo, which aims to provide short-term benefits for tree dependent species by relocating and resurrecting dead trees.

The main presentation will be by **Laura Rayner**, a Postdoctoral Fellow at the ANU's Fenner School of Environment and Society, on **“Studying difficult birds to prevent their extinction”**.

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

Over the five week period from 22 February covered by this column the weather changed significantly. While it remained warm, it grew increasingly wetter, culminating in the third week by the most significant rain we've had so far in 2017. As a result the very dry brown landscape is now green again. However, it's not possible to gauge what effect this has had on the birds present in the COG area of interest (AoI), particularly as it has only happened in the past week or so, and also considering it's a time of much movement.

As I write, my impression is that the full scale autumn migration is only just commencing with only small flocks of the first migrating **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** reported from over the last weekend of March. Despite the continuing warm weather, especially overnight, this is about when it might be expected; after a while the urge to migrate overcomes the less than ideal conditions. So in April watch out for larger flocks of these, especially when the weather is optimal; ie still clear days following a cold night. Watch out too for the **White-naped Honeyeaters** that will join them from about mid-month, and

Continued Page 2

Julian Robinson

Yellow-faced Honeyeater



Everyone welcome

March Meeting—continued from Page 1

To prevent the extinction of species we must first understand their ecology. In her talk, Laura will present key conservation lessons gathered by the Difficult Bird Research Group: a team of ANU scientists undertaking bold and intensive field studies to save some of Australia's most critically endangered birds, including the Orange-bellied Parrot, Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot.



Four egret species together in the rain

Christine D

Summary/analysis of the past two months and what to watch out for this month —continued from Page 1

gradually become the dominant bird in the flocks towards the end of April.

There have been very few reports to date of the partial migrant, the **Red Wattlebird**, which sometimes joins these flocks or more often migrates separately in pure flocks of up to about 100 birds. However, movement of other partial migrants has been reported from mid-month, including mixed flocks of **Striated** and **Spotted Pardalotes**, and many readers will have noticed an influx of **Silvereyes** into their gardens or local area. As Nicki Taws noted the latter can often be heard overhead pre-dawn, so if you're up early listen out for them. On the other hand the influx of **Grey Fantails**, which often occurs from mid-March to mid-April before most move on, doesn't seem to have started yet, at least not in my local patch of Chapman, Cooleman Ridge and Narrabundah Hill.

Some of the early-leaving spring/summer migrants seem to have been slow to leave. While the last report of a **White-winged Triller** was mine of a female at Narrabundah Hill on 23 February (the first day of the reporting period), Michael Lenz still observed a **Rufous Songlark** at Gundaroo on 5 March. Even later was the report of a **Brush Cuckoo** at Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park by Tony Nairn on 19 March. A bit later than usual, **Dollarbirds** were last reported at Garran on 15 March by Alastair Smith, whereas the last report of **Rainbow Bee-eaters** was by Terry Munro over Black Mountain Peninsula on 21 March, and of **Sacred Kingfishers**, again by Alastair, at Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 26 March.

I'm drafting this column on 28 March, and there may still be some reports of the last two above species in the next few days, though probably not when the Gang-gang reaches your inbox or letterbox early in April. This also applies to other birds that mostly leave by the end of March/early April such as the **Horsfield's** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos** (both still reported around 20-21 March, compared with the **Pallid**

Cuckoo which was last reported on 4 February, confirming the poor season for the latter), **Tree** and **Fairy Martins**, also last reported around this time. In contrast the **Leaden Flycatcher** was still reported on 27 March, and the **Australian Reed-Warbler** on 26 March, but surprisingly the last **Latham's Snipe** was reported on 14 March at the Point Hut Pond.

Despite the increasingly wet and often stormy conditions, there have not been many reports of the **White-throated Needletail**, particularly in large numbers, with the up to 100 reported by Matthew Frawley over the Tuggeranong Town Centre on 21 March seemingly an isolated case. As far as I can tell there has been no verified sighting of the related **Fork-tailed Swift**, though the possibility of them accompanying the former species cannot be ruled out.

Of the species often seen in Canberra during March as "passage migrants" as they move north from their breeding sites in the mountains, the **Satin Flycatcher** was last reported in the ANBG on 22 March, but I'm only aware of an early report of the **Rufous Fantail** in Ainslie on 7 March. Not surprisingly there have been no reports of the **Cicadabird** moving through, as this is usually a rare event. Again the above species may sometimes still be observed into the first few days of April.

Species that are still being reported but usually leave during April include the **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone**, **Noisy Friarbird**, and most of the **Rufous Whistlers** and **Grey Fantails**. A number of these will overwinter, as will the **Mistletoebird** (there seem to have been few reports of this species during March) and increasingly the **Superb Parrot** (see further below).

Of other species that move from the mountains but stay here (the altitudinal migrants), the **Scarlet Robin** started to re-appear at their known peri-urban spots in mid-March,

though they had been present all summer at Narrabundah Hill. John Brannan tells me at that at least one pair attempted to nest at the Pinnacle back in November-December, and then completely disappeared until mid-late February. This is the first season for several years that he hasn't had confirmed breeding there. **Golden Whistlers** moving back into Canberra were also first reported in mid-March, but there was a very early report of a **White-eared Honeyeater** at Stranger Pond on 23 February by Kym Bradley.

Of the altitudinal migrants still to arrive in urban or peri-urban Canberra (I'm not aware of any reports of them so far), watch out for the **Flame Robin** moving into the open areas around Canberra, and the **Rose** and **Pink Robins** for which the ANBG is a favoured spot. Watch out as well as for the **Crescent** and **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, which may be first seen during late April or early May, and also for the **Swift Parrot** migrating from Tasmania, especially if the gums in your area are flowering well.

In respect of unusual birds, there have been reports of a **Great-crested Grebe** at West Belconnen Pond on 23 February by Roger Williams, and at Point Hut Pond on 14 March by Ryu Callaway. On a wander around Lake Jerrabomberra (NSW) on 3 March, Sandra Henderson observed an **Azure Kingfisher** low in a willow. Julie Clark reported a juvenile **Little Friarbird** from Mulligans Flat on 9 March. Perhaps due to the rain there seem to have been fewer reports of juvenile **Nankeen Night Herons** or **White-necked Herons** in March, and the last report I can find of the **Australian Painted Snipe** (apparently only the female was seen for the last few days) at the big dam on the western side of Lake George was on 27 February. In contrast **Intermediate Egrets** seem to still be around, with 5 reported on 25 March (compared with 20 by Geoffrey Dabb in mid-February), and on 15 March Christine D seeing 4 egret species together in the rain. Another **Glossy Ibis** has been reported, this time at Edgeworth Pond Coombs on 6 March.



Little Friarbird, juvenile

Julie Clark



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enquiries@philipmaher.com

Good birding, good food ...

2017 tours

Queensland's Gulf Country
Cairns to Mt Isa and Winton
26 June to 13 July
Two days added for Rusty Grasswren.

Atherton Tablelands FNQ
17 to 22 July

Iron Range NP FNQ
22 to 30 July. One place left

New Caledonia
includes Lifou an Ouvéa Islands
5 to 12 August

Plains-wanderer Weekends 2017
2 & 3 December 2017

Some 2018 tours

Tasmanian bird & mammal tour
Bruny Island, Melaleuca, pelagic trip
3 to 10 February

Alice Springs birding tour
21 April

Top End birding tour incl. Kakadu NP,
Kununurra and Mitchell Plateau
29 May to 9 June

New Caledonia birding tour
includes Lifou an Ouvéa Islands
4 to 11 August

Strzelecki Track Outback tour
2 to 21 September

Please see itineraries, checklists and
latest news on our website

www.philipmaher.com

Despite it being autumn, reports of breeding have continued, and the following are some of the highlights:

- Sandra Henderson with another interesting **White-throated Treecreeper** breeding record of a pair repeatedly carrying food into the old disused boat shed at Corin Dam. The birds were going behind the timber stacked against the wall – it was too dark to see a nest from outside, and she didn't want to go in and disturb them.
- Martin Butterfield visiting the Queanbeyan Sewage Ponds on 12 March where two pontoons were decorated with active **Great Cormorant** nests. In one case when the bird moved off two small chicks were visible. Together with the now confirmed **darter** and **cormorant** breeding (exact species unclear due to difficulties in observing the breeding area) along the Molonglo River west of the Tuggeranong Parkway bridge, these are the only spots I'm aware of (note late summer/autumn breeding is common), though Martin estimated about 80 **Little Pied Cormorants** at Foxlow Lagoon on the same day, and Susan Robertson reported similar numbers of **Little Black Cormorants** on West Basin.
- Other late waterbird breeding includes a report on 20 March by Julie Clark of a single tiny **Australasian Grebe** chick which had survived the washing away of its nest at Casey. Over time it got bolder and spent more time away from hiding in its parents' backs. Chris Davey also reported two tiny **Eurasian Coot** chicks being fed by an adult at Jaramlee Pond on 18 March.
- Michael Lenz reported that on 14 March a group of **White-winged Choughs** had gathered in a tree on Lyneham Ridge, and next to where they were sitting they had plastered a small amount of mud to the branch. The mud was dry, as at that time little rain had yet fallen in the area. By 23 March they had built 50% of a nest and were actively adding more material, no doubt triggered by the more substantial rain of recent days.

Last, but certainly not least, I am now aware of around 60 **Eastern Koel** fledglings this summer, about double the number for the past two seasons (many thanks again to all those who provided information in response to my chatline request). The last one was seen on 23 March, but on 28 March there was still 1 male in Christine D's fig in her Flynn garden.

Finally there have been many reports of that autumn/early winter phenomenon the Mixed Feeding Flock (MFF), and single species flocks, particularly of the larger cockatoos, also seem to be forming. Roost flights and roosts also seem to be easier to find in autumn/winter, the most significant of which has been the re-formation of the **Superb Parrot** roost in Watson in mid-March, which Megan Mears described in CBN for last year. Nearby on 12 March Megan observed over 150 **Red-rumped Parrots** coming in to roost. That's about double my maximum numbers observed on

their roost flight in Rivett/Chapman during 2016, and five times my largest roost. On 28 March I joined her at the Stirling and Northbourne Ave lights and we counted around 180 coming in, the vast majority high from the Mt Majura direction and then dropping mostly into the big trees including pines at the NW side of this busy intersection, such a contrast with how my birds behaved.

At the same time I enjoyed watching other species on their roost flights, including around 25 **Magpie-Larks**, but only a few of the over 200 **Galahs** Megan also noted on 12 March. On 20 March Ryu Callaway first noted **Australian White Ibis** back on their roost flight route to Lake Tuggeranong after months of absence (during which he said Sandra Henderson had noted they were roosting in Hume), and they were also roosting at the Fadden roost site, where **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** and **Little Corella** numbers were currently really high. A few **Straw-necked Ibis** were also roosting for the first time in many months.

April is the second of the two autumn months when there is significant bird movement in the ACT. So please keep up the reports for the last records of the spring/summer migrants that leave the ACT during this month, those species that are still to come down from the mountains into Canberra to spend autumn/winter here, for MFFs, single species flocks, roost flights and any further breeding. As usual please ensure that all significant observations are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

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 chatline") and the eBird Australia website, 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 column together.

Jack Holland



Australasian Grebe, chick

Julie Clark

Field Trip Reports

Monday 20 to Friday 24 February - Cape
Conran Coastal Park, Victoria



Twelve COG members took part in the mid-week trip to Cape Conran led by Martyn Moffat. We were based in banksia and eucalypt scrub on the old dunes behind East Cape Beach. Constantly present were **Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Rainbow Lorikeet, Willie Wagtail, Grey Fantail, Eastern Yellow Robin, White-throated Treecreeper, Little Wattlebird, White-browed Scrubwren, Eastern Spinebill, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, White-throated Needle-tail** – and patrolling goannas. At night two **White-throated Nightjars** were seen by some but, in compensation, spot-lighters found several gliders and we had visits from Antechinus, bats, a Brush-tailed Possum and large but gentle Sugar Ants.

On East Cape Beach were **Pied Oystercatcher** and a pair of **Hooded Plover** with two youngsters that skittered between the dunes and the water-line, a triumph of survival in the face of beach-users. **Pilotbirds** were spotted in the low scrub on East Cape a short walk away.

As the days were hot, we birded early morning and late afternoon, visiting Cabbage Tree Creek Flora Reserve, Frenches Narrows, Marlo township and jetty, Brodribb River marshes, Marlo State Forest, Yeerung River Estuary Track, East Cape Conran boardwalk, the local aerodrome, Heathland Walk and the Old Coast Road. We experienced a variety of vegetation and habitats in covering these spots.

Cape Conran, Yeerung River

Hooded Plover

Julian Robinson





Cabbage Tree Creek Flora Reserve protects one of the few groves of Cabbage Fan-palms *Livistona australis* in Victoria. In this rainforest pocket we found, amongst other things, a **Top-knot Pigeon**, **Brown Gerygone**, **Lewin's Honeyeater**, **Black-faced Monarch**, **Rose Robin** (heard), **Superb Lyrebird**, **Large-billed Scrubwren** and **Beautiful Firetail**.

At Frenches Narrows, where the Snowy River joins the sea, we found the usual coastal birds and **Red-capped Plover**, **Crested, Little and Caspian Tern**, and **Sooty Oystercatcher**. A boardwalk enabled us to get close to the water and to cross the estuary to the ocean beach.

The dry Marlo State Forest was busy with bush-birds such as **thornbills**, **honeyeaters**, **Satin Flycatcher**, **Sacred Kingfisher** and a much-prized sighting of four **Southern Emu-wrens**.

We saw our greatest number of waterbirds at the marsh of the Brodribb River where it merges into a series of wetlands containing some fauna reserves and an area internationally designated as an IBA (Important Bird Area). Our best viewing spot had us teetering on the edges of the Marlo Road near the bridge. Thanks to those who brought telescopes we had good views of **Whiskered Tern** and some managed to see a **Common Greenshank**.

The Yeerung River Estuary Walk passes through a variety of habitats: heathland (pink Common Heath was flowering),



COG members at Cape Conran Coastal Park

Scarlet Honeyeater

Julian Robinson

eucalypts, tall banksias, stands of paperbark trees, moist banks of ferns and dry tea tree scrub. The gallery forest on the river banks was reflected in the glassy waters and we were transfixed for some time watching an **Azure Kingfisher** swooping and dipping into the water. We also had clear views of a **Scarlet Honeyeater** feeding on a banksia cone.

Our visit to East Cape coincided with a geology students' field trip. With so much activity our hopes of seeing any rock-loving species sank.

Some of us went on to the aerodrome and here we found **Crested Shrike-tit**, **Red-browed Finch**, **Jacky Winter** and **White-naped Honeyeater**. Later visits yielded **Eastern Ground Parrot**.

Other notable sightings were the **Turquoise Parrot** on the Old Coast Road and **Musk Lorikeet** on the Heathland Walk near the camp.

In total, we recorded 101 species.

Muriel Story Edwards



Sunday 26 February – Yerrabi Track, Namadgi National Park

A repeat of the 2016 trip to this lovely part of southern Namadgi attracted 23 participants this year. After we carpooled from Lanyon Marketplace to the Yerrabi Track carpark, we began the walk through the peppermint forest in very quiet, overcast, cool conditions. As we approached the swamp, we encountered a mixed feeding flock in the wattle understorey and this yielded two **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren**, one of which offered many in the group clear views as it perched on a dead branch. We then proceeded through the swamp, where we had a male **Flame Robin** perched in the open. We ascended through mountain gum / snow gum forest to Boboyan Trig, where a few lucky participants managed to see three **Superb Lyrebirds**. After taking a rest for morning tea, we retraced our steps to the carpark, with a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** seen soon after we set off. By the time we reached the swamp, the weather was warmer and the cloud had cleared, and the birds suddenly became active, with lots of **Spotted Pardalotes**, **White-throated Treecreepers** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** seen and heard throughout the walk. Other highlights included great views of **Satin Flycatchers** (female, male, and two fledged young), **Red-browed Treecreeper** for a few and, rather unusually for this location, an immature **White-throated Gerygone**. Also recorded were **Sacred Kingfishers** including one fledged young being fed, **Gang-gang Cockatoos**, **Brush** and **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, **Grey Currawongs**, **Dusky Woodswallows**, **Varied Sittella** and several species of thornbill and honeyeater. In total 35 species were recorded.

In addition to the birds, we also found a Greenhood Orchid, Mountain Log Skinks, Mountain Katydid with their boldly-coloured abdomen, and many day-flying moths. Eight species of butterfly were seen, with lots of Silver Xenicas, Marbled Xenicas



Lace Monitor, Pacific Gull, Hooded Plover

Julian Robinson

and Shouldered Browns, and it was great to see a Two-brand Grass-skipper. It was fantastic to learn more about the geology and botany of the walk too. Many thanks to Sandra Henderson for entering the eBird list for this walk, and thanks to such an enthusiastic and interested group for making this a very successful walk yet again.

Suzi Bond

Thursday 9 to Thursday 16 March – Albury area

The trip report will appear in the May Gang-gang.

Sunday 26 March – Private property on Murrumbidgee River near Murrumbateman

A cool, sometimes misty, then sunny morning becoming hot. The group of 12 led by Sue Lashko was warmly welcomed at the homestead by the owners of the property. Fortunately we were taken by troopie and ute some distance to our starting point atop a steep hillside which gave beautiful 360° views of distant rolling hills. The walkers wound their way over steep hills, down gullies, along Mullion Creek and then the beautiful wide and fast flowing Murrumbidgee River.

Birds were scattered widely over the property and to our eventual surprise yielded 53 species. Most notable was a **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** which was seen a couple of times along the river, and 4 other raptor species, **Nankeen Kestrel**, **Australian Hobby**, and **Wedge-tailed Eagle** being harassed by a **Brown Goshawk**. Other birds of note included 2 **Pied Butcherbirds**, **Golden** and **Rufous Whistler**, about 42 **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** in migration mode and a **White-throated Gerygone**, not forgetting the one that got away unseen but heard, a **Leaden Flycatcher**. Thanks to all for a happy day.

Jean Casburn



White-bellied Sea-Eagle

Michael Agnew



White-throated Gerygone

Julian Robinson

Future Field Trips

Sunday 9 April – K2C surveys, Bredbo area

COG will continue with the K2C surveys that have been running since April 2010. The surveyed properties have healthy populations of many of the rarer woodland birds such as **Diamond Firetail**, **Hooded Robin** and **Speckled Warbler** and are good locations to observe the autumn honeyeater migration. We will be visiting the same sites to continue the monitoring and see if we can add to the property lists. The surveys will be undertaken in 'blitz' fashion; that is, observers in small groups will visit a number of sites on one or more properties before regrouping for lunch and a sharing of the survey's findings. Less experienced observers are welcome to join in the survey as each team will have at least one experienced observer. Anyone interested in participating is asked to contact Nicki Taws **before Wednesday 5 April**. Email: ntaws@bigpond.com or 0408 210736.

Friday 14 to Monday 17 April – Round Hill Nature Reserve – Easter campout

The Easter campout this year will be to Round Hill Nature Reserve in central NSW. We should see a variety of western birds as there is a range of habitat types, including mallee, callitris and eucalypt woodlands. Past COG trips have seen **Malleefowl**, **Chestnut-backed Quail-thrush**, **Southern Scrub-Robin**, **Shy Heathwren**, **Gilbert's Whistler** and **Spotted Nightjar**. There is always a slight chance of a **Red-lored Whistler**.

Round Hill is between Lake Cargelligo and Mt Hope and is 5+ hours' drive from Canberra. We will spend most of our time close to camp with perhaps a couple of short drives. It will be a "bring everything" camp.

Please book a place on this outing with Kathy Walter or John Goldie on 6241 7639 or email walter.goldie@gmail.com. The trip will be restricted to 20 participants and filled on a first reply basis. Detailed information will be provided to participants closer to the trip.

Wednesday 19 April – Gigerline East

Meet at Williamsdale at 9am (note change of time to allow for the change to Standard Time and the cooler weather). Honeyeaters should be the main focus, both migrating species and the **Yellow-Tufted Honeyeaters**, usually found at the river.

Martin Butterfield

Sunday 30 April – Murrumbateman Reserves and TSRs (day trip)

Meet at 8am at the corner of Victoria and Gladstone St Hall at the Recreation Reserve on the left. We will be visiting two TSRs west of Murrumbateman and a third between Hall and Murrumbateman. Bring morning tea and lunch, strong shoes, hat, protective clothing and sunscreen. We will be carpooling and numbers are limited to 14. Phone Bill Graham to register - 0466 874 723.

Saturday 6 May – Australian National Botanic Gardens beginners' outing

This morning walk will be the first for 2017 aimed specifically to help beginners and new members identify birds and to learn about their behaviour and calls. The

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.

We welcome customers new and old to call us on

Botanic Gardens are especially suitable for such an outing, as they allow the opportunity to observe a range of local bush birds in a variety of habitats. Due to the available food supply they are also a relative haven for birds during late autumn/winter. Anthony Overs will lead this outing, which will consist of a stroll through this lovely part of Canberra for a couple of hours. Meet at 9.15am at the ANBG bus shelter. Registration is essential. Please book your place with Anthony (0419202155, or anthony.overs@gmail.com), who will be happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you. Please make sure to bring your binoculars and field guide.

Anthony Overs

Sunday 14 May – Yass Gorge

Awaiting details from Local Land Services – see website.

Sunday 21 May – Mt Taylor Nature Reserve

Meet at 8am at the Waldock Street car park in Chifley. This walk will explore the lower slopes of Mt Taylor Nature Reserve, an important component of Canberra Nature Park. Bring water, sunscreen and morning tea. Numbers are not limited so no requirement to register. Contact Matthew Frawley at frawley.matthew@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Sunday 4 June – Brooks Reserve, near Bungendore

Hill Reserve is on the Kings Highway. Often passed, but less frequently visited, the reserve car-park is located on the right hand side at the bottom of the last hill before the flat stretch leading to Bungendore.

We'll plan to walk back up the old highway and then through the bush, which is fairly open, and not especially uneven ground, back to the car park. We'll be out for about 2 to 3 hours, depending on how many birds are around, so those that need a mid-morning snack should bring one, as well as water, sunscreen and appropriate clothing.

Meet Michael Robbins (mrobbins@home.netspeed.com.au) at 8 am at Spotlight, Queanbeyan for carpooling, or 8:30 am at the reserve parking area.



COG members at Cape Conran

Julian Robinson

This is the first of what we hope will be an ongoing series of articles for Gang-gang providing locals with tips, tricks and advice for effectively using eBird.

#1 eBird hotspots and personal locations

eBird has two types of precise locations to record your sightings – personal locations and hotspots.

A **personal location** is a site that others are unlikely to bird. This may be because the site is truly private and will not be used by others for list entry (such as your garden) or because you are undertaking surveys that would be corrupted by data that do not conform with the survey methodology (eg COG woodland surveys).

Despite its name, a **hotspot** is not necessarily rich in avifauna, but simply a shared site, and as such may be birded by others. It can be private or public.

eBird prefers you assign lists to hotspots, and promote all personal sites to hotspots, unless you have good reason to leave them as personal sites. Guidance for doing this is [here](#).

There is no way to aggregate eBird data for locations, so if you create a personal site for Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve, your data will not be included in the eBird outputs for Mulligans Flat.

eBird hotspots can have sub-locations or child sites within them. For example, Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve is the hotspot for the whole reserve, but there are also two sub-locations including the Woodland Loop. If you birded Kelly's Swamp, the overarching hotspot is the one to use but if you walked in from Kingston and just birded the woodland to the bridge, then the sub-location should be your preference. You can tell a sub-location as it is prefixed by a double-dash in the hotspot name in the format 'Hotspot location--sub-location'.

In Australia we do not use abbreviations in hotspot names. These are always spelled out in full.

Hotspots follow eBird naming conventions. If you create a personal location, then please use those eBird [naming conventions](#). Some examples are:

Location at a point with no apparent name, such as a roadside stop, include lat/long in name, using decimal degrees – eg Uriarra Road at -35.1515, 149.1515

Location not apparent, add locality in parentheses, eg Eddison Park (Philip)

Location not open to public, add '(restricted access)' to site name, eg Bibaringa (restricted access)



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 nature walks](#)

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

contact@tourtheloire.com

Street names use 'name, suburb' format eg Bamford Street, Hughes

Some examples of names to avoid *when naming a site* are:

Vague descriptions such as 'my backyard', 'my house'. Similarly personal descriptions such as 'mum's house', 'Jane's backyard'

Full number and street name for your house site, eg '42 Bamford Street, Hughes'

If using eBird app, personal locations are given a unique name in format AU-ACT-Barton-9 Brisbane Avenue - 35.3099x149.149.1372. Please change this name at the first opportunity

If you have any comments or would like the eBird reviewers to provide guidance or advice on a particular eBird topic, please get in touch.

Alastair Smith
ACT eBird reviewer and hotspot editor
berigora (at) gmail.com



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

The Macaw Project

You may recall George Olah's talk to COG about his macaw research. He has produced a documentary entitled **The Macaw Project**. It will be screened, along with two other wildlife documentaries, on 18 April in the Palace Electric Cinema Acton, **but it will only go ahead if 55 people buy tickets online before 7 April**. Note that you will not be charged if the screening does not go ahead.

Tickets: <https://fan-force.com/screenings/the-macaw-project-palace-electric-canberra-act-2/>

Facebook event page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1681613702142022>

Screening Date: Tuesday 18 April at 7:00pm

Films:

The Macaw Project (26')

This documentary of macaw conservation research was filmed in the Peruvian tropical rainforest. The documentary was made with the aim to direct public attention towards the problems that macaws and other creatures face in their natural habitat and the importance of scientific conservation research in this region. This film differs from previous nature documentaries because it is filmed mainly by the researchers themselves, something that is rarely seen on the screen. We explain the newest methods of conservation biology and present up-to-date findings in a comprehensible way in this spectacular movie.

The Macaw Project also seeks to provide an alternative solution for biodiversity conservation, an internationally applicable model that can help to protect highly biodiverse places in many different regions of the Earth. Our model incorporates scientific research, eco-tourism, and the collaboration of local communities to live in their ecosystem in a sustainable way.

The Invisible Wildlife Photographer (26')

To take a good photograph is never easy. To take a great photograph of an uncooperative subject – like a bird for example – is even harder. But to take the perfect image of a bird amidst breathtaking behaviour is practically impossible. Bence Máté however, knows the trick, for he is invisible! To the bird's eye, at least.

Winter in Hungary. A thin layer of ice separates the lake from the frozen world above. It makes a difference between life and death. If they want to survive, birds have to find their way to the water. A breathing hole. A small patch of water that's kept free of ice by the constant movements of birds. In wintertime a small hole like this means survival. No wonder birds are here.

In this episode Bence ventures into the water wonderland of Hungary. This is the domain of the Grey Heron and the Great Egret. Enormous birds, with enormous appetite. And their favourite dish is... the fish.

Lapalala – An Example to Follow (26')

In South Africa's Waterberg Mountains, land was bought and sold for practically nothing after being taken from the native people. Then in 1981 two men – Dale Parker and Clive Walker – came and realised the potential of this remote part of the country. Thanks to their joint efforts, 19 farms were obtained. This is how Lapalala Wilderness was established. By now the 36 000 hectare reserve became a safe haven for endangered species such as the white and black rhino. In Lapalala, native people and professional conservationists work in close collaboration to save the wildlife. Whether their efforts are coming to fruition or not is still a question. But one thing is sure. This nature reserve – in a lot of ways – sets an example to follow.

George Olah, PhD

Postdoctoral Fellow

Fenner School of Environment and Society, ANU

The Macaw Project, Peru hosted by Dr. George Olah

23 September – 9 October 2017

17 days from \$7172pp twin share

Highlights include:

Explore Lima and its historic centre, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Stay in lodges in the Amazon Rainforest

Observe the birdlife around Lima and in the Amazon Jungle

Discover mammals, amphibians and diverse plants in the rainforest

Be a researcher for a day and help researchers to find a new insect species

Assist the researchers in collecting data from the camera traps, set new ones and evaluate the footage



For all enquiries please contact Active Travel on 1300 783 188 or groups@activetravel.com.au

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



Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

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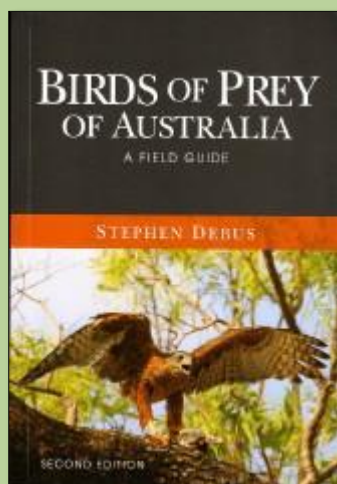
www.birdwatchers.com.au

sootyowl@bigpond.com

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Ph: 07 40941263

BOOK OF THE MONTH



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.

Raptors are popular and iconic birds, and
important ecologically as well as in
legislation, with some species listed as
threatened. *Birds of Prey of Australia* will
enable people to more easily identify them. It
also provides a brief overview of the biology
of raptors and an indication of the current
state of knowledge on them.

Members' Price: \$28

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

Shorebird identification booklet

Birdlife Australia

This booklet covers all 54 shorebird species that occur regularly in Australia. For easier identification Birdlife have included ID tips for each species and maps of where you are most likely to find them.

Members' price \$2.25

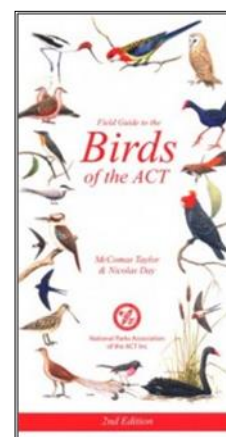


Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT

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.

Members' price: \$20

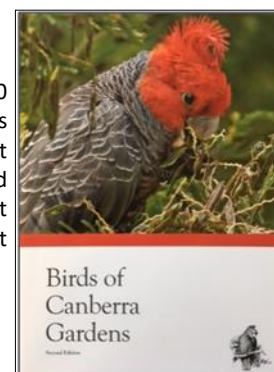


Birds of Canberra Gardens

Canberra Ornithologists Group

This book is based on the observation of more than 200 bird species in and around Canberra suburban gardens and in adjacent Canberra parks and open spaces. It describes the abundance and distribution of birds, and discusses how the birds are likely to be found at different times throughout the year, and in different places. The book also provides some ideas on how your garden may be made more attractive to native birds.

Members' 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:

J Aitken

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for May 2017 edition

Wednesday 26 April 2017

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.

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