



Gang-gang

AUGUST 2017

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

AUGUST MEETING

Wednesday 9 August 2017

7.30 pm.

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

The short talk will be **Barbara Allan's** annual review of the previous year's **Bird Blitz**, a brief look at the findings across the twelve years of blitzes thus far, and an invitation to participate in **Blitz 13, on 28-29 October**. Please come along ready to nominate your preferred sites!

The main presentation will be by **Dr Richard Major** of the Australian Museum Sydney, on "**Conservation ecology of the White-fronted Chat - a declining bird in an endangered ecological community**".

The **White-fronted Chat** is a Vulnerable species in NSW, with the Sydney population listed as endangered. In this talk, Richard will discuss historic and contemporary declines of this population and use genetic analysis to demonstrate that it is isolated from its nearest neighbours by a wall of urbanisation. This barrier results in genetic differentiation similar to variation between mainland and island populations. He will also describe Australian Museum research investigating nest-caging as an option for boosting reproductive success in populations that are vulnerable to high-predation risks, as is the case for the endangered Sydney population.

Everyone welcome

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

It has continued to be very dry over the four week period from 29 June covered by this column, with very little rain (only around 10 mm in total so far this winter). In addition it has been much colder than in June, with maximums mostly in the low teens and with many frosts, some of them very severe. These two factors seem to have combined to make for very low bird activity in the COG area of interest (Aoi), probably the quietest it has been in the many years I've been writing this column. Indeed, in my normal local transect survey in the last weekend of the period, I recorded by far the lowest number of species in any I have conducted over the years. This feeling has been reinforced by my new ability, thanks to help from Ryu Callaway, to undertake a

Continued Page 2

Con Boekel

Olive Whistler, at ANBG



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

much more in depth analysis of the eBird database for the COG Aol.

With the colder weather in July it should not be a surprise that no **Dusky Woodswallows** were reported over the period, with the most recent records remaining those at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 13 May. So it seems to be a winter where this species has completely left the COG Aol. There have also been no further reports of the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** or **Rufous Whistler**, with the most recent ones being from 18 and 22 June, respectively. However, small numbers of **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, **Grey Fantail**, and **White-naped** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** have continued to overwinter, and were still being recorded over the last weekend of the reporting period.

Very small numbers of **Fuscous Honeyeaters** also were present in July with, in mid-month, Barbara Allan reporting them in the Argyle Apple and mistletoe at Rocky Knoll on the Lake Ginninderra Peninsula, where participants of the end of August 2014 COG bus trip got great views of them. Small numbers of the **Mistletoebird** also have been present in July. By contrast, good numbers of **Superb Parrots** continue to overwinter, and seem to have been recorded particularly at the Mulligans Flat NR. On 25 July Michael Lenz reported a single **Tree Martin** at the West Belconnen Pond, the first record since 21 May.

The species listed above, as well as **Fairy Martin**, **Australian Reed-Warbler** (last recorded on 17 March and 22 May, respectively), and other **cuckoo species** are usually the first “summer migrants” to return to Canberra. Depending on whether it remains cold or warms up, this could 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. An unexpected early record was that of David Lindenmayer observing a **Rufous Fantail** in his Aranda garden on 28 June.

As might be expected, the continuing dry conditions have led to further influxes of waterfowl, particularly in the Bungendore area where at the large “pond” on Lake Road a maximum of 197 **Freckled Ducks** were counted by Michael Lenz on 16 July. As he left there was one less as he saw a fox that managed to grab a resting bird (this species is a well-known “loafer”). Large numbers of **Pink-eared Ducks** have also been present there, with a maximum of 146 reported there by Christine D on 28 June (just within the reporting period for this column). By contrast, numbers of these species in the ACT at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands and the big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR have been much lower, with the



Mistletoebird

Geoffrey Dabb

Freckled Duck numbers remaining below 10, and a maximum of 48 and 12, respectively for the **Pink-eared Duck**.

Surprisingly the numbers of **Hardheads**, also known to come here during dry times, have been much lower at both areas, as have the numbers of **Australian Shelducks** and **Plumed Whistling Ducks** around Bungendore. David McDonald counted around 200 **Grey Teal** at the Trucking Yard Lane



Rufous Fantail

David Cook

dam several times during July, although from the eBird database it appears numbers of other ducks in the COG Aol were lower in July than in June. The reason for this is not clear to me.

My ability to better analyse the eBird Australia database has revealed that the **Flame Robin** was widespread in the open peri-urban areas around Canberra in June, but from early July seems already to have started to move towards the mountains; for example, following the high numbers in June (maximum of 15) at Campbell Park/Mt Ainslie, the last record there seems to have been of 4 birds on 2 July. Few seem to have been reported elsewhere in the peri-urban areas in July. Further support for this comes from the 16 recorded at Tidbinbilla during the COG Wednesday walk on 19 July. Similarly the last report of the **Rose Robin** seems to have been on 30 June at the ANBG, and no reports of the **Pink Robin** since 5 May.

The last record of the **Crescent Honeyeater** near my Chapman home was on 19 June, and apart from 1 bird at the ANBG on 30 June, there seems to have been no further reports of this species from the Canberra suburban area. It appears there have been none of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** anywhere in the COG Aol since 3 birds were reported at the Gigerline NR on 21 May. Likewise there have been no further reports of the **Swift Parrot** since 1 May, of the **Brown Gerygone** since 14 May, or of the **Restless Flycatcher** in July.



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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

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**. There have been a number of reports of largish numbers of the former with, on 10 and 14 July, Jean Casburn reporting 9 **Scarlet Robins** on the northern end of Narrabundah Hill and 4 in the southern corner. There were also 9 recorded at Tidbinbilla during the COG Wednesday walk on 19 July. I've recorded very few of the latter in my local patch this winter, with unusually only a single call in my GBS site. My experience is that the **White-eared Honeyeater** 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 largely absent from my local patch this winter, with only the single record since mid-June.

The very quiet reporting period has resulted in limited, if any, reports of "unusual" species. Of the uncommon species, the **Olive Whistler** at the ANBG was seen there several further times and was last reported by Peter Milburn on 14 July. There has also been only a single report of the **Musk Lorikeet** at the Fadden Primary School on 20 July. On 15 July Michael Lenz reported an unexpected winter record of a **Whiskered Tern** on the east side of Lake George. On 10 July Kim Larmour reported a **Barn Owl** on the Federal Highway at the ACT border, noting that a very white bird, with rounded wings and smooth efficient flight, flew over the road between the trees on each side of the Highway. The 2015-2016 Annual Bird Report (ABR) notes this as a rare, non-breeding visitor, with the local population fluctuating according to the availability of suitable food such

as mice. While not an uncommon species (the 2015-2016 ABR lists it as a common breeding resident sparsely but widely distributed in wooded areas), there were a number of reports in mid-July of the **Australian Owlet-nightjar** sunning itself during the day, to the delight of the observer.

In keeping with the cold conditions, limited reports of breeding have come to my attention, restricted to **Australian Magpies** and **Australian Ravens** nest building at the end of June/early July (and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** nest building at Tuggeranong Hill on the COG outing on 23 July – ed!). Whether the subsequent cold weather has arrested breeding until it warms up again is not clear. Over the past couple of weeks my local **Australian Magpies** have been very obvious in the disputing of their territories (of which there are at least 3 partially in my GBS site) but I haven't seen any sign of nest building yet. The only other breeding record that I'm aware of was an active **Little Raven** nest in the Carwoola area on 17 July. While Martin Butterfield noted that a bird was occasionally visible within the nest (about 25 m high in an elm) and vocalised constantly for at least 20 minutes, he couldn't work out if the nest was still being built or if the bird was attending to eggs or young.



Barn Owl

David Cook

That the breeding season is yet to start in earnest is underlined by the reports of continuing mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) throughout July. Flocks of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** are also still very obvious feeding on road verges and median strips, etc. In respect of roosting, on 15 July Ryu Callaway went out to the Rose Cottage Horse Paddocks (off Mugga Lane) to count the **Australian White Ibis** departing from the tip, and recorded 575

birds (exactly, as counted from his photos) departing between 4 pm and 5 pm. Very impressive. There were 3 **Straw-necked Ibis** mixed in amongst them. Ryu noted this is the best place to count them with such a good wide sky space, with previously Liam Manderson counting 514 there, also from photos.

Ryu also heard and saw **Silver Gulls** (150+ but the view was obscured) rise up from the tip. However, he could not tell which way they went other than that they didn't come south. This confirmed that the flight over Fadden has ceased, which he hadn't seen since the 5 cases over a fortnight I reported previously. Subsequently he received a report of gulls roosting on the boardwalk construction site at the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, and suspects that they have switched directions and may have started to breed on Spinnaker Island in Lake Burley Griffin. In support, Chris Davey's paper in the December 2016 issue of CBN reports there were 129 nests with eggs already there on 23 August 2013, and 161 on 31 August 2015.

Ryu noted the highlight of the count was witnessing for the first time a **Magpie-lark** roost flight. They came over in large groups of up to 27 all heading in the same direction as the ibis, towards Macarthur. Total numbers exceeded 135 birds, possibly up to 150. Again these are very

impressive numbers, well exceeding the maximum of 60 I witnessed several times in my local area in 2015, as published in CBN. Interestingly for the past few months I have been able to observe limited, if any, roost flights of this species, in spite of keeping an eye out during the time they might be expected to come over.

So please keep up the reports for any overwintering or early arriving summer migrants or the departing altitudinal migrants mentioned above, for signs of early breeding, for roosts and roost flights, and for the last MFFs or single species flocks. 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 Email 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



Olive Whistler

Con Boekel

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 2 July – Orroral Valley

Four COG members and a guest braved the sub zero temperatures for the trip to Orroral Valley. Our first planned stop was just after the turn-off to the Apollo Road, at the Gudgenby River bridge. We were greeted by a large flock of small birds which turned out to be **Double-barred Finches**. So a good start, especially as we also had good views of a **Grey Butcherbird**, a large flock of **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** and **Scarlet Robin**, female and male. However, the highlight at this stop was the **Brown Treecreepers** on the side of the hill north of the river. The views were so good because the birds were being rockcreepers, and hence posed well for the photographers.



Brown Treecreeper

Ryu Callaway

Our second stop at the Orroral Campground was quiet and so we moved fairly quickly to our third stop at the Nursery Swamp carpark. Just up the hill we had an excellent, although brief, view of a **Crescent Honeyeater**. It was posed beautifully, high in a dead tree, rather than hidden while



Crescent Honeyeater

Ryu Callaway

feeding in the flowering *Banksia marginata*. The photographers also had excellent opportunities to get good pictures of **Eastern Yellow Robin**, but not of the **Striated Thornbill**, nor the **White-eared Honeyeater**, and the **Superb Lyrebird** was heard, not seen. Below us in the grassland two **Masked Lapwing** were visible and calling.

Our last stop was at the old tracking station area where the highlights were a pair of very dark **Wedge-tailed Eagles** flapping until they caught a thermal and then circling in opposite directions as they gained height. Our views of the other predator were not nearly as good. However, I'm convinced it was a **Brown Falcon** based on the wing dihedral which was very obvious as it flew away from me, although as it had started to thermal the end of its wings looked quite rounded. The other highlight, maybe low light, of this stop were good views of five **European Goldfinch**; oh, and the ice on the Orroral River at noon!!!

Michael Robbins

Sunday 16 July – Hume

A dozen members met in the Hume industrial area on a beautiful winter morning. A call from a **Diamond Firetail** led us to the woodland area but, alas, no bird showed itself (despite groups of nine and seven birds being seen the same week in the area). The Couranga St dam and pond did not add much to the bird list, but we explored the garden of the neglected Couranga Homestead and the slab hut home of Tralee Station's original family.

More productive was the area between Tralee St and the railway line. The soil dumps and woodland produced **Speckled Warbler**, **Scarlet Robins**, **European Goldfinches**, **Superb Fairywrens** and thornbills. A **Brown Falcon** was sitting just beyond the railway line, and the trees along the railway yielded a **Golden Whistler** and **White-eared Honeyeater**. **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas**, as well as **Red-Rumped Parrots** were seen in various locations.

At the end of the outing a few visited the vacant blocks at the end of Tralee St, and found a group of 16 **Australasian Pipits**, bringing the morning's total to 39 species.

Sandra Henderson

Wednesday 19 July – Tidbinbilla NR

Twenty-seven members and guests gathered at the carpark at Tidbinbilla on a fine and initially calm morning. A breeze came up later in the proceedings but not dramatically. The facilitator had suggested that lots of robins would be on offer. Such was indeed the case with 16 **Flame Robins** (more

males than brown birds), 9 **Scarlet Robins** (5 males, 4 females) and 8 **Eastern Yellow Robins** being recorded. Unfortunately, despite much looking, the number of Hooded Robins (0) matched recent records for the site.

Two **Emus** were seen initially, and then 4 in the fenced-off area near Birrigai – again as expected for this site.

Seven **Speckled Warblers** were a highlight of the rest of the smaller birds seen, which included 42 **Yellow-rumped Thornbills**. **Common Starling** were in fair numbers (32) and 27 Red-browed Finches were a welcome sight.

For larger birds, the largest was a **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, while the most numerous were **32 White-winged Choughs**.

In total 35 species were recorded in two and a half hours.

Martin Butterfield

Sunday 23 July – Tuggeranong Hill

Twelve members enjoyed the walk from Theodore on a pleasant winter's morning, with just an occasional little zephyr. We saw several **Scarlet Robins** and all of the **thornbills** except Yellow. Honeyeaters were represented by **Yellow-faced** and **White-eared**, as well as **Eastern Spinebill** and **Red Wattlebird**.

Highlights were nice views of two **Wedge-tailed Eagles** soaring on the thermals nearby, a pair of **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** building a nest and **Satin Bowerbirds** which had advertised their presence with blue objects scattered widely. Sandra was able to show us a bower, which was well hidden in the undergrowth. We returned to the cars via the gully, where we managed to add a few more species to our short list. In all, 29 species were observed.

Lia Battisson



Pilotbird

David Cook

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**

Resort based birding in Espiritu Santo (Vanuatu)

"There are many reasons for coming to Vanuatu, " the blog said, " but birding is not one of them."

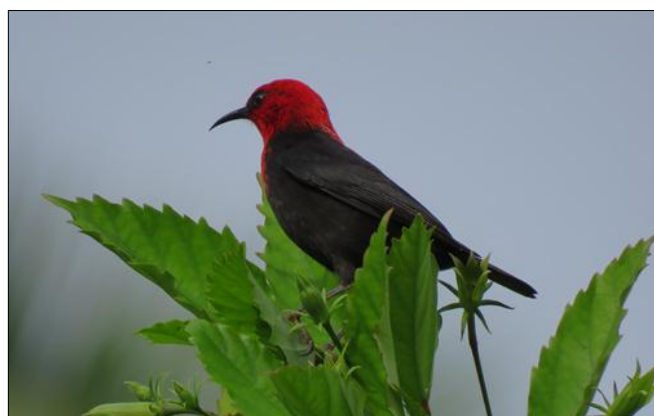
Faced with this off putting comment, a suggestion that you need to go to the highlands to find the best birds, and unaware of any local birding tours, I was pessimistic. I often struggle to spot birds in the trees anyway compared to many. I blame cataracts, but maybe I am just not that good!

My birding expeditions on Santo were mostly early morning walks from the two resorts we stayed in, Turtle Bay and Aore Island. At both places I managed one longer walk of 3-4 hours one morning

Turtle Bay Resort is not an encouraging place to bird, being surrounded by old coconut plantations and the sea. Vanuatu has few seabirds and in 10 days on the coast I only managed a handful of **Crested Terns** and an **Eastern Reef Egret** seen on a trip up to Port Orly. Around the resort **Yellow-fronted White-eyes** and **Silvereyes** seemed to be the predominant small bird, with the evening skies filled with the flutter of **Pacific Swallows**. There were a number of other swift-like birds including (I think- but they are a bit hard to tell apart) the **White-rumped** and the **Glossy Swiftlet**. **Pacific Kingfishers** are commonly seen on the wires leading to the property and **White-breasted Woodswallows** sat on top of some very tall, senile, leafless coconut trunks. **Rainbow Lorikeets** occasionally flew in and **Common Mynas** were found outside the resort. The **Rainbow Lorikeets** are different to the ones we see in Sydney, with no yellow present, and are called **Coconut Lorikeets** in some books. The only pigeons at Turtle Bay were the **Pacific Emerald Doves**. The hibiscus at the entrance to the resort was my favourite place to bird as a brilliant, red-headed **Cardinal Myzomela** and its partner hung around there, as did a bunch of **Chestnut Munias**, a male and female **Melanesian Flycatcher**, and **Streaked** and **Grey Fantails**.

My longer morning trip was along a dirt road just north of the resort that rose through a small belt of rainforest. Mostly I just heard tweeting through the dense foliage. However, in addition to my 15,000 steps, I added a **Vanuatu Whistler** and a **Southern Melanesian Cuckoo-shrike** to my list.

Aore island is about 30 minutes south of Turtle Bay, just opposite the capital of Luganville. Although I saw many similar birds, I was surprised at how different the predominant bird life was. Despite many more hibiscus in the resort grounds, there was not a flycatcher or



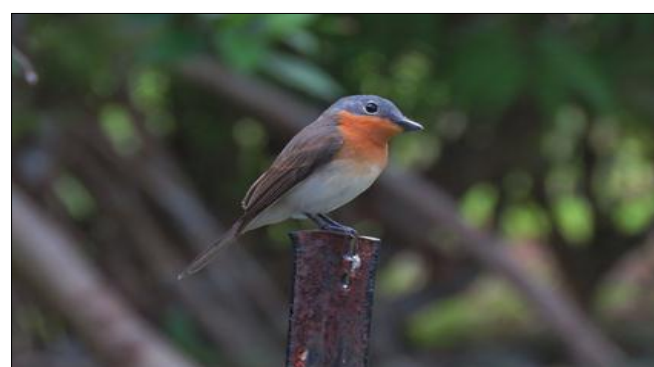
Cardinal myzomela

Alison Turner



Streaked Fantail

Alison Turner



Melanesian Flycatcher

Alison Turner

honeyeater in sight until I ventured outside the property. In the resort the pigeons rule!

One is wakened in the morning by the trilling hoot of the large **Pacific Imperial Pigeon**, high on the treetops. There are probably over 20 in the resort grounds and plenty elsewhere. **Silvereyes** and **Mynas** seem to make up the balance of the bird life although the ground-loving **Pacific Emerald Dove** hung around the edges of the resort and was frequently seen when we biked around parts of the island.

There are 4 'pigeons' on the island I was told, and while I could hear another one it took me a little more work to find pigeon no 3. This was the smallish **Red-bellied Fruit-dove** which I found sitting under the top foliage of a large spreading tree just outside the grounds. I also found a **Long-tailed Triller** nearby. One morning my husband and I went on a 2 hour walk with one of the local staff to see the WW2 relics as well as the cocoa and coffee plants growing wild, having escaped earlier plantations. Importantly though (from my perspective), he showed us the uphill road to denser vegetation where the tweet intensity increased. I was keen to get back with more time! One WW2 bunker housed hundreds of **Pacific Swallows**.

The next day was our last day and so my quest was to find the last pigeon, which I assumed (correctly) was the green **Tanna Fruit-dove**. A friendly gardener (the local people are all friendly here) said they are reasonably common, found high in the treetops, but first you need to find a fruiting Banyan tree. So I set off in search of a fruiting Banyan tree retracing the steps of the previous day and beyond to the highest part of the island. I managed the whole trip walking on good 4 wheel drive roads which made walking easier, and avoided the need to go into the areas of denser foliage. I heard the Tannas eating well before I could see them as it is not the easiest to spot a green bird very high up in the huge foliage crown of the Banyan trees. The area at the top of this road around the large Banyan trees was the best birding spot I found. As well as the **Tanna Fruit-dove**, there were **Melanesian Flycatchers**, **Vanuatu Whistlers**, **Buff-bellied Monarchs** and **Streaked Fantails**, as well as the other more common birds. I suspect I may have found more birds if I had stayed longer. I was also lucky enough to snap the perched **Swamp Harrier**, the most common (and only) raptor I saw on this trip.

While Vanuatu may not have the bird colour, ease, density and variety of say Sri Lanka, as a nearby holiday destination, Espiritu Santo certainly maintained my birding interest. Although a developing economy, there is none of the hassle you get elsewhere and I felt very safe walking alone. The locals who stopped to talk to me did so to check I was OK and to ask whether I needed a lift!

Mosquitos are very prevalent and insect protection is essential for birding, or other activities. I worked my way through a whole can of 40% DEET while I was there. Next time I will take my gaiters, not for any dangerous reptiles or spiders, as there are none I was told, but to stop the heaps of small prickly seeds sticking to my socks.

The blog that I read reported 34 birds after 12 dedicated birding days. Given my limitations I was pleased to have seen a total of 27 over 10 days, including 20 new birds for me. My lists, along with photos of much of what I saw, are on eBird. I didn't take a book with me, just some downloaded photos from eBird's Macaulay Library. However I have subsequently bought the Helm field guide "Birds of Melanesia" to confirm and identify all the species I saw from my photos. This has been helpful, but the names are frequently different from what is used on eBird.

If (like me) your spouse has holiday objectives that don't include birding, Espiritu Santo might just tick both sets of boxes. Combined with balmy warm weather and great snorkelling and swimming, it made for a great Canberra winter break.

Alison Turner
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On the website, of interest to new members

(All are under "Publications: at canberrabirds.org.au)

Canberra Bird Routes

<http://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/canberra-bird-routes/>

Checklist of all of Canberra's birds, with status

<http://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/maps-forms-and-lists/>

Some maps of resources

<http://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/maps-forms-and-lists/>

Vintage but good pocket guide to the birds of Canberra

<http://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/pocket-guide-to-the-birds-of-canberra/>

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 5 August – Lake Ginninderra beginners outing

This is the second of our bird walks for 2017 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.

Tuesday 8 to Friday 11 August — Wonga at Bawley Point

The last August visit to Bawley Pt. was very successful because the milder, early spring weather featured blossom-laden trees with a profusion of honeyeaters including photo opportunities for **Scarlet Honeyeaters** right on the doorstep. Other target species are **Bassian Thrush**, **Hooded Plovers**, **Black-faced Monarchs** and **Topknot Pigeons**.

Very comfortable and reasonably priced accommodation is available, with limited camping also allowed for the more rugged types. Carpooling from Canberra is an option.

This trip is restricted to 14 persons. Contact Terry Bell for bookings and further details by email (preferred) terrybellbird@gmail.com or mobile 0427292298.

Sunday 20 August – Monga National Park – day outing David McDonald will lead a day outing to this area of wet forest just before the escarpment around 20 km east of Braidwood off the Kings Highway. Target species include the **Black-faced Monarch**, **Pilotbird**, **Olive Whistler**, **Bassian Thrush** and **Pink and Rose Robins**. Meet at 8.00 am in the Spotlight carpark in Queanbeyan, for carpooling. Suggested contribution to drivers from each passenger: \$10. Bring lunch and drinks. Comprehensive information about the National Park and its birds is found in the wonderful book, Steller, R (ed.) 2005, *Monga intacta: a celebration of the Monga Forest and its protection*, the author, Braidwood, NSW.

Registration for this trip is essential: please phone David McDonald on 0416 231 890 or email monga2017@canberrabirds.org.au.

Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 September - Eden pelagics

COG will run two pelagic trips over the first weekend in September. At this stage I am seeking expressions of interest for these trips. The cost will be \$110 per day, and the trips start from the Eden wharf at 7am each day. Please contact me to put your name on the list if you've not already done so. I will confirm your attendance and request payment closer to the time.



Scarlet Honeyeater

David Cook



Black-faced Monarch

Geoffrey Dabb

After many years as our resident expert, Anthony Overs will no longer be undertaking the pelagic trips. His expertise, enthusiasm and willingness to educate us about seabirds has been much appreciated. Tobias Hayashi has agreed to take over this role.

Sandra Henderson,

shirmax2931@gmail.com

Wednesday 6 September – mid-week Early Spring Mystery bus trip – day outing

Jenny Bounds and Jack Holland are planning another bus trip for this date. Some aspects are expected to be the same as previous trips; ie cost of \$20 for transport by two 12-seater buses, starting at 8 am, and running until mid-afternoon (please bring morning tea and lunch). However, as it's a week day it allows consideration of destinations which would not normally be visited on a weekend bus trip. The point of departure will also be different and we've been looking at relatively central places accessible by public transport and where the all day parking is free. Current places being investigated include adjacent to Cooleman Court on the western side of Liardet St Weston that abuts Streeton Drive, or the part of the Curtin shops car park adjacent to the Statesman Hotel. However, our attention has been drawn to the much larger, more central, free car park off Macgregor St Deakin behind (to the west of) the Fitness First Gym. Once the day's itinerary is more settled intending participants will be advised of the meeting spot.

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 (and point of departure/parking) will depend on some reccies beforehand, as well as which birds have been reported around the time.

If you are interested in participating in this usually popular outing, please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840 H) or by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com to book your seats.

Could you please advise when booking if you will be using public transport to get to the meeting point, and from where?

Jack Holland, Jenny Bounds

Saturday 9 September – Mt Rogers

Meet at the end of Wickens Place, Fraser, at 8.30am for a stroll through Mt Rogers Nature Reserve. **Superb Parrots** may have returned, as well as other migrants. Bring morning tea.

Angharad Dean

Sunday 17 September – Gigerline

I've been inspired by reports of the wonderful birding country in the eastern section of Gigerline Nature Reserve. The walk is about 2km from the Highway to the river, and the same distance to return. There is a hill to descend to the river, but the effort is worthwhile. Great woodland and riverine birds have been seen here, including **Yellow-tufted**

Honeyeaters and **Southern Whitefaces**. Meet at the old service station at Williamsdale (about 15km south of Tuggeranong on the Monaro Highway) at 8am. Contact David Dedenczuk on 0417 222 154 or at ddedentz@bigpond.net.au for more information.

Saturday 30 September to Monday 2 October – Buddigower NR

I will be arriving on site on the Friday afternoon (29th) and will start to set up the nets. There are NO facilities on site and it will be a take everything in, take (almost!!) everything out, campout. If people want to “rough it” in a motel or caravan park in West Wyalong then that is OK but the reserve is about 15 km from town. People wishing to join the banders should contact me chollop7@bigpond.com and I will send them directions to the site. In the event of heavy rainfall in the days leading up to the campout then I may have to call it off as access can become difficult. Most cars should be able to make it in to the reserve with care.

Mark Clayton

Monday 9 to Friday 13 October – Green Cape – accommodated

For some time now, COG has visited Green Cape every second year to stay in the former lighthouse keepers’ cottages and enjoy the wonderful wildlife watching (birds and whales, in particular) in Ben Boyd National Park and in the surrounding seas. There are only 14 places available for this trip. The commitment is for a 4-night stay – no concession for shorter stays. Accommodation costs will be finalised once numbers are known. There is also a \$7 fee per car per day to enter Ben Boyd National Park. This can be paid at a self-registration booth on arrival. An alternative is a single park pass which costs \$22 and is available online.

To register, email smlashko@gmail.com. As with all COG trips, preference will be given to COG members. More detailed information will be sent to participants closer to the date.

Sue Lashko and Peter Fullagar

Monday 17 to Thursday 26 October – Northern NSW – extended camping trip

This is advance notice of a camping trip to northern NSW. Due to the current dry conditions, a final itinerary has not yet been decided. However, if there is water around Moree, in particular in Gwydir Wetlands, that will be our focus, with stops at Coonabarabran and Pilliga NP. If not, we may visit some of the following national parks: Warrumbungle, Mt Kaputar and Kings Plain, or other good birding spots suggested by participants. If you are interested please contact me by email smlashko@gmail.com

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

Seeking Roosting Site Data

I am currently compiling data on roost sites of communally roosting species around Canberra. Communally roosting species refers to those species for which dispersed individuals of one or more species gather to roost together overnight. Some examples of communally roosting species include, but are by no means limited to, cockatoos, corellas, starlings, ibis and cormorants. Data is being gathered for any and all such species.

It is intended that this will feed into a proposed annual roost census starting next year, which will aim to have all known roosts of select species surveyed simultaneously by COG members and fellow birders to gain a better idea of the population of those birds in Canberra. The data being sought is as follows:

Roost Flight Observations

By combining roost flight observations from multiple observers, a fairly good idea can be obtained of where unidentified roosts in less frequented locations may occur. Some species are also easier to count on their roost flight.

Roost flights generally take place in the evening or at dusk as birds head for their roost site, and can consist of one or few very large flocks moving purposefully in a set direction, or constant movement of individuals and small groups in a consistent direction over a duration of time. You can expect to see similar movement repeated on differing days.

Please supply the following details:

- **Species**
 - **Coordinates or address** of the location from which you made your observations
 - If birds are not flying directly overhead or through the immediate vicinity, please *also* provide an approximate location or landmark over which they are likely to be flying
 - Eg. If your observations are of birds moving in the valley as viewed from the top of a hill, or of distant high-flying flocks.
- Direction of flight** (The direction in which they are heading, such as E or NW, although obvious landmarks that birds are headed for is also okay)
- Contact details** of observer (name and email)
- Any other useful **notes** (timing of flight (eg. 40 to 15 minutes before last light), the sort of flight, rough flock size or the number of flocks etc.)

Roost Site Observations

Roost sites are locations where communally roosting birds gather to sleep overnight.

Please supply the following details:

- **Species**



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.naturewalks

Tel: 0261 00 7744
(Canberra)

contact@tourtheloire.com

- **Location** (coordinates, along with a description or map to identify the expanse of area would be appreciated)
- Rough indication of the **number of birds** (are we talking a few dozen, a few hundred, or thousands?)
- **Direction of arrival** (If known: do birds fly in from all directions, or perhaps only from the southern and eastern aspects?)
- **Seasonality** (If known: is this roost used all year, seasonally, sporadically, or temporarily?)
- **Contact details** of observer (name and email)

Any other useful **notes** (timing of arrival (time before last light), etc.)

If multiple species share the roost site, please make a note of that and supply details for each species if they differ.

Fig 1.



Decimal coordinates are preferred. This can easily be obtained through clicking on the location in satellite view on Google Maps, and copying the coordinates (see Fig 1).

Please keep an eye out for roost flights and roost sites over the coming weeks and months, and email these observations, along with details of any communal roost sites that you may already know of, directly to me or via roostcensus@canberrabirds.org.au

Ryu Callaway



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

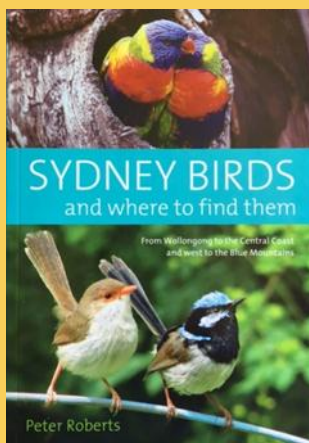
Fred & Jeanette Birkbeck

244 Clacherty Road
Julatten QLD 4871

Tel: 07 4094 1665

Email: freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au

BOOK OF THE MONTH



Sydney Birds and where to find them

Peter Roberts

A guide to where to see birds in and around Sydney - from Wollongong to the Central Coast and west to the Blue Mountains.

Sydney Birds and Where to Find Them features the 30 top bird-watching localities in and around Sydney. These birding hot spots stretch from Tuggerah Lakes on the Central Coast to Lake Illawarra near Wollongong and from the Blue Mountains in the west to some surprisingly accessible sites tucked away in the heart of the city.

Members' Price \$30.

Publications for sale

COG provides a range of bird watching 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

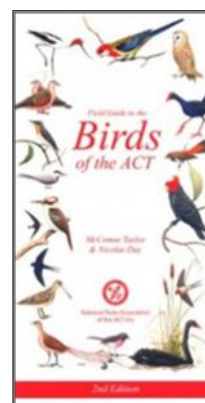
NEW BOOKS IN STOCK

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

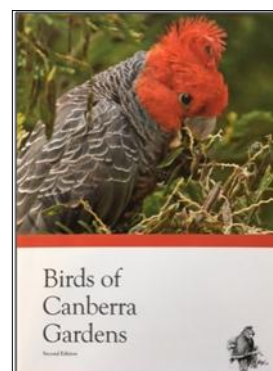


Birds of Canberra Gardens

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

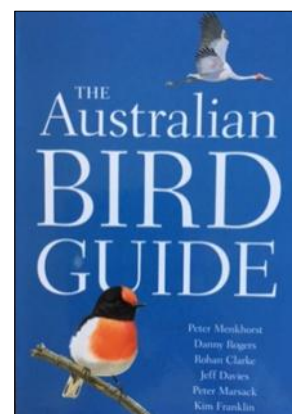


The Australian Bird Guide

Peter Menkhurst, Danny Rogers, Rohan Clarke, Jeff Davies, Peter Marsack, Kim Franklin

The most comprehensive field guide to Australian birds ever seen. The guide features around 4700 colour illustrations, with particular emphasis on providing the fine detail required to identify difficult groups and distinctive plumages. Comprehensive species accounts have been written by a dedicated team of ornithologists to ensure identification details, distribution and status are current and accurate.

Members' price \$38



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

2017-2018 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

D McCarthy/
C Mackinnon
H Savy

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for September 2017 edition

Wednesday 30 August 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.

To unsubscribe, either permanently or temporarily, send an email message to canberrabirds-unsubscribe@canberrabirds.org.au.

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

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