



Gang-gang

February 2017

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

FEBRUARY MEETING

Wednesday 8 February 2017

7.30 pm.

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

COG Members' Night

The program for the annual COG Members' Night has been drawn up as follows – each speaker will present for 10-15 minutes:

Lia Battisson – Observations on the use of a nest box

Megan Mears – A Superb Parrot roost in Watson

David Rees – Short videos of local species

Suzanne Edgar – Bird Poems from John Clare (UK, 1793-1864)

Barbara Allan – The 2016 COG Bird Blitz including the lucky draw and other prizes for participants

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

The eight week period from the beginning of December to the day before Australia Day covered by this column has been characterised by further drying out and significant heating up of conditions following our wet and cool start to the spring/summer season. In particular, January has been very hot and dry, which has had some effect on the birds present in the COG area of interest (AoI), though the pattern of spring/summer migrants present was well set before these conditions became too severe.

Perhaps the most notable change has been the sudden return of **Eurasian Coots** with Bill Graham estimating close to 1000 birds on Yerrabi Pond on 19 January, whereas David Rees had only seen around 50 there 2 days before. Other chatline posts indicated normal numbers had also returned at least to Gungahlin Pond and Lake Jerrabomberra, with some still breeding at the latter. The question has again been raised: where did they go to? I favour the theory that they went to the wet western NSW floodplains, with the ACT being an oasis in dry conditions due to the water levels here being artificially maintained. Whether those that have returned actually bred inland is unclear; certainly the few that remained over October to mid-January invariably were breeding.

Continued Page 2



Tawny Grassbird

Shorty

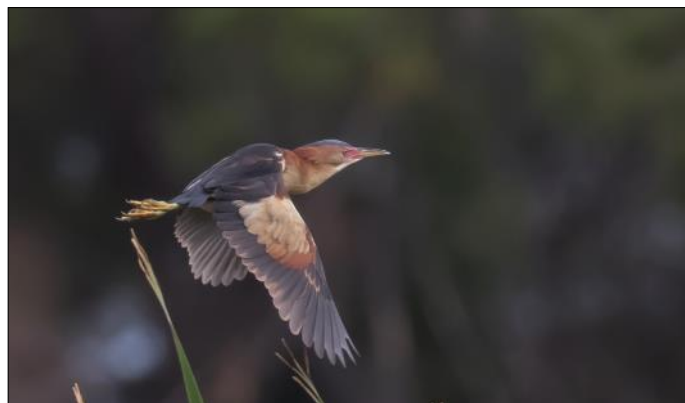
Everyone welcome

It is also unclear to me what other species may have come in recently from the drying inland but probably includes the **Glossy Ibis** first seen at Giralang Pond on 21 January and the **Black-eared Cuckoo** reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 22 January. While also often mainly found inland, the **Whiskered Terns**, seen at the Hoskintown Plain as well as at Spinnaker Island/Jerrabomberra Wetlands up to mid-December, were probably present before conditions there dried out significantly, as was the **White-winged Black Tern**, a more though not exclusively coastal species, seen around Spinnaker Island about the same time.

The 2014-2015 Annual Bird Report (ABR) notes the former is a rare, non-breeding visitor (but see below) and the latter is a non-breeding vagrant for which the ABR indicates there are usually only a few reports each year. This is also the case with the rare breeding visitor the **Little Bittern** reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands from mid-December to mid-January (again possibly too early to be a result of the very dry inland conditions). Surprisingly the rare, non-breeding visitor (also from the dry interior)/escapee **Diamond Doves** reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands and Mulligans Flat Road early in December, as well as the Namadgi Visitors Centre on New Year's Day, were last recorded in 2011-2012 according to the ABR – again they seem to have been present before things became very dry inland.

The **Apostlebird** was still present at North Watson at least up to 22 January, but the most unexpected “unusual” species has been the **Tawny Grassbird**, one of which was first reported by Kim Lamour from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands close to the end of 2016. This species is not listed in the ABR (the COG Rarities Panel, in operation since 1984, has no records for it), or in Steve Wilson's book, *Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change*. While I understand that the eBird checklist annotations suggest that this is the first ACT record, there are apparently five local records on other databases which are being followed up. After a slow start, by mid-January there had been great interest in this species and it was shown that two birds were actually present, and possibly breeding due to the apparent presence of a brood patch from photos, as well as them being observed taking food into a bush. However, while still present by 22 January breeding had not been confirmed.

Despite the increasingly hot and dry conditions it seems to have been an excellent breeding season, due to the moisture levels and abundant insect life, at least to the end of 2016. Sandra Henderson noted that the Kambah Pool carpark was, as usual, a breeding



Little Bittern

Shorty



Glossy Ibis

Duncan McCaskill

hotspot, and significant breeding has also been reported from both the Narrabundah Hill reserve and Mulligans Flat NR. The extent of breeding reported is too extensive to cover in this relatively brief column, and the following are some of the highlights:

- By far the most significant has been the breeding event of the **Whiskered Terns** at a marsh on the Hoskintown Plain. Around mid-December there was a conservative estimate of 10 nest sites and at least 40 birds in total, and by mid-January chicks were reported in the nest with at least 50 birds still present on the drying marsh. As noted above, the ABR lists it as a rare, non-breeding visitor, and Steve Wilson's book does not mention breeding in the ACT. However, the entry (as the Marsh Tern) in *The Birds of the Australian High Country* indicates it bred at Lake Bathurst in early November 1963;
- After last year's first ACT breeding event, **Pink-eared Ducks** have bred again at the big dam at Mulligans Flat, with the 8 ducklings first reported on Boxing Day all surviving until at least 22 January. Widespread waterfowl breeding has continued with another highlight being two separate broods of **Chestnut and Grey Teal** ducklings together at the Foxlow Lagoon and at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands/Mulligans Flat big dam, respectively;
- In mid-December Sandra Henderson found a pair of **White-throated Treecreepers** carrying food repeatedly into what seemed to be an active wombat burrow at the Kambah Pool carpark. The two were very busy, going in and out several times as she watched. This species usually nests in hollows, often quite high up, but HANZAB reports a nest built in a mineshaft about 50 cm below ground level, another pair building in a tunnel, possibly an old nest of a pardalote, and also the use of a hollow log;
- Sandra also reported a **Satin Bowerbird** nest there with a female sitting on 13 December, but on 5 January the nest contained youngsters with flapping wings, so almost ready to fledge. A fledgling was also observed being fed at Casuarina Sands in the first half of January. I was not aware of a possible connection with water and breeding previously;
- In mid-January Julie Clark posted some lovely photos of a **Grey Butcherbird** nest with three large chicks at Aranda Bushland. I'm happy to report that around 18 December 2016 the nest I was

watching on Cooleman Ridge successfully fledged three young this time. This was a surprise as I'd only ever seen one chick in the nest, though one of the parents not being in full adult plumage did lead to some confusion;

- Jean Casburn's patience was rewarded by finally confirming further breeding of the **Scarlet Robin** on the peri-urban Narrabundah Hill. On 21 January two adult birds were seen feeding 2 dependent young close to where a pair had successfully bred late in 2016. However, as there had been two pairs within 50 metres of each other in the September-December period, it was not clear which pair it was. Early in January Desley O'Mara had observed a male repeatedly carrying food some distance into the vegetation there. Julie Clark has also reported a possible second or a late **Scarlet Robin** brood (a family with 2 juveniles) at Mulligans Flat in mid-January;

Towards the middle of December Ryu Callaway reported some **Flame Robin** breeding with juveniles being fed at Mount Aggie and at Mount Franklin, with a slightly older young bird possibly being fed at the Bendora Arboretum.

On 8 January Nathanael Coyne reported the first **Eastern Koel** fledgling that I'm aware of this season. This was close to where he saw a chick in the nest last year. Since then my tally is 11 fledglings, most seeming to be hosted by Red Wattlebirds as usual, with Steve Wallace's four in Fraser being a significant contribution. This suburb and neighbouring Flynn seem to have had the highest activity in an otherwise patchy year. Despite the activity in my local patch during November I've only been able to find two (both light and mobile birds separated by a week and 400 m apart) so far.

The eight week reporting period certainly seems to have been one of two halves, at least for bush birds, with the busy and active December having further reports of **Channel-billed Cuckoo** up to 6 January, and late suburban reports of the **Rufous Fantail** at the ANBG and Wanniasa Hills on 12 and 14 December, respectively. As noted above, as conditions dried out, things changed in January, with some species seeming to have already left the COG Aol. Despite the drying inland there have been no reports of the **White-browed** or **Masked Woodswallow** in this period, and the last reports of the **Brown Songlark** and the **Horsfield's Bushlark** were on 2 and 9 January, respectively. The eBird Australia database also last reports the **Rufous Songlark** for 13 January, but it was still present on Narrabundah Hill on 21 January, though typically silent, as they often are after the New Year compared with their loud calling in December when quite a few of them were still being recorded.



Grey Butcherbird, nest, adult and three

Julie Clark



Australian Ornithological Services

PO Box 385
South Yarra 3141
Victoria

Tel: 03 9820 4223
Mob: 04173 10200

enquiries@philipmaher.com

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



Apostlebird

Julie Clark

I'm not aware of any reports of breeding of the last-named, but this is typically very difficult to confirm in the grass tussock nesting sites they favour, as opposed to the **White-winged Triller**, the other inland species that arrived in mid-November when conditions started to dry out. This includes at least two nests close together at Narrabundah Hill where typically breeding began almost as soon as they arrived. This species was still recorded in the final weekend of the reporting period, but I expect most will have left by early February, so please keep an eye out for them. Both the **Rufous Songlark** and the female triller can present identification problems during this time.

The **Brush Cuckoo** is also usually last reported in February. Quite a few were reported from peri-urban Canberra early in December, as was one at Pine Island on 23 January, possibly already on its way back from the mountains. Another species for which only a few will be seen in March is the **Dollarbird**, which seems to have been unusually common this summer, with some reports of breeding activity. Particularly the immature birds with dull beaks often move from peri-urban Canberra into the suburbs during February, so please keep an eye and ear out for them in your local patch. Finally two species to look out for during February and March are the **White-throated Needletail** and the related **Fork-tailed Swift**. These are mostly seen during these months with only a few of the former reported during summer so far, possibly due to the lack of any storm fronts which they often precede, especially in January. However, both species can be seen in clear air too.

So please watch out for the last leaving spring/summer migrants mentioned above, as well as for any further signs of breeding activity. 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 comprehensive column together.

Jack Holland



Intermediate Egret

Julie Clark



Black Swan at COG Christmas party

John Bundock

Field Trip Reports

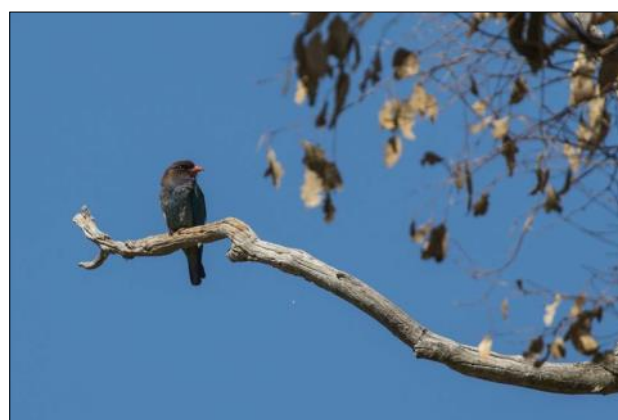
Sunday 18 December 2016 – Aranda Bushland Nature Reserve

The final weekend outing for 2016 saw 17 members and guests enjoy a walk to an area that was new to many. We concentrated on the south-western corner of the reserve and recorded 30 species including nesting **Noisy Friarbirds** (2 nests) and **Grey Fantails**. A single **Dollarbird** on sentry duty close to last year's nesting hollow suggested that the other half of the pair was sitting (2 young fledged between 4 and 6 January – ed!) and **Leaden Flycatchers** were behaving as though they had a nest nearby. Three **Olive-backed Orioles**, including an independent juvenile indicated successful breeding.

We then visited the adjoining Aranda Snow Gums Nature Reserve and recorded 32 species, including nesting **Magpie-larks** and **Willie Wagtails**. The dams were largely waterbird-free, as is the case with many wetlands at present. This reserve is over-run with kangaroos, with at least 200 in a very small area; many are recently out of the pouch.

For the two sites, a total of 39 species was recorded.

Sue Lashko



Wednesday 21 December 2016 - Stoney Creek Nature Reserve and Uriarra East

On a warm morning, 20 participants had not progressed far along the track into the reserve before the front runners spotted a **Pied Butcherbird** perched in a dead tree. Unfortunately it took itself off to the riparian *Casuarina cunninghamiana* before many of the group could spot it.

The most prominent species seen was **Mistletoebird** (at least 20). **Dollarbirds** (4) and **Rainbow Bee-eaters** (6) were both evident perching high on dead stumps. Most other species were present in small numbers.

It was surprising that we did not see a single woodswallow, cuckoo, Rufous Songlark or Sacred Kingfisher. However, 41 species were recorded. Our only breeding record was a **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** emerging from a hollow.

As it was beginning to warm up, we retreated to the shade of the Casuarinas at Uriarra East Reserve. We recorded 29 species here including **Yellow Thornbill** spotted dodging around in an *Allocasuarina*. As we were heading back to the cars a **Collared Sparrowhawk** was seen in a eucalypt where it was being swooped very vigorously by a **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**. The calls of a **Leaden Flycatcher** led to a brief search resulting in both male and female being seen sitting on a nest.

The day's total was 50 species.

Martin Butterfield



Laughing Kookaburra being harassed by **Magpie-lark**, **Common Myna** and **Willie Wagtail**, **Dollarbird**, **Leaden Flycatcher** female, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** feeding young

Gerard Jenkins

Sunday 15 January 2017 – Uriarra

Despite heatwave conditions on the days before and after, 15 January turned out a pleasant, warm, still and cloudless day, attracting 25 COG participants.

Starting at the Uriarra Homestead Dam, It was obvious from the outset that waterbird numbers were down on previous years, but with leaseholder permission we were able to access the property itself, providing additional angles to see waterbirds, but also to find some bush birds in the woodland away from the road. Highlights at this spot were **Sacred Kingfisher**, a small **Galah** flock with dependent young, **Brown Goshawk** and **Nankeen Kestrel**. Except for 25 **Australian Wood Duck**, other duck species were in small numbers, although (perhaps surprisingly, given scant recording in the ACT recently) 8 **Eurasian Coot** were observed. Total species count was 41, down a little on the 2016 record number of 44.

The second stop had us walking along the western bank of the Murrumbidgee both up and downstream from Uriarra Crossing to record 34 species.. Notable observations included **Dollarbird**, **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Mistletoebird**, four species of thornbill, and **Pied Currawong**, **Willie Wagtail** and **Magpie-lark** all with dependent young. A **Noisy Friarbird** was seen dismantling a nest, assumed to be that recently vacated by wagtails.

We found a shady picnic lunch spot at Uriarra East after recording 29 species, most notably a juvenile **Pied Butcherbird** (presumably the one photographed nearby, and posted by Shorty on the COG email Discussion List), **Striated Pardalote** dependent young and, for the fourth year running, breeding **Collared Sparrowhawk**; on this occasion a bird on a nest very high in a casuarina.

The species total for the outing was a creditable 62, although bird numbers were indeed down, perhaps reflecting hot weather in the preceding weeks. Notable absences were **Nankeen Night-heron** from the large dam and **Dusky Woodswallow** from under the casuarinas.

Bruce Lindenmayer

Saturday 21 January – Forde Ponds

The walk to Forde creeks and ponds was surprisingly successful. This creek marks the western boundary of Forde and is a very small tributary of Ginninderra Creek. The choosing of this seemingly insignificant little creek for the walk was to try to observe the smaller water birds which bred there in past years. John Harris, who led the walk, confessed at the start to being a little pessimistic as he had seen far fewer birds in the creek this summer than in previous years. As it transpired the walk exceeded all expectations. Nineteen of us met in Linear Park. Its few small ponds had already provided considerable interest to the early arrivals even before the walk formally started with several species of duck, **Australian Reed-Warblers** obligingly revealing themselves and **Dusky Moorhens** with a single chick. We then walked down the convenient cycle path which borders the creek. Forde Creek is essentially a small water course completely full of reeds. However, small pools of water are created by structures such as bridges and concrete barrages. We soon encountered **Black-fronted Dotterels**, both adults and young. They like to overfly the reeds from pool to pool where they land and fossick on the concrete. This gave plenty of close-up photo opportunities in good light. There were numerous clear sightings of **Reed-Warblers**, one of which caught a large stick insect, beat it on

the concrete and then took it into the reeds, presumably to feed young. Proceeding down the creek, the most productive pool on that day was at the Hibberd Crescent footbridge, which provides an excellent vantage point. Patience paid off there. While photographing dotterels, a single **Buff-banded Rail** dashed across the concrete into the next reed bed, a moment which at least one photographer was lucky enough to capture. It was a young bird without full adult plumage. That was our only sighting of a rail although one of the members, Sandra Henderson, saw five before the walk started. Soon there were glimpses of **Australian Spotless Crakes**. Some were seen and heard moving in the reeds and three flew across the pool to disappear in the same reeds. While none showed themselves for any length of time, the group were pleased to have seen them at all, particularly those who had not seen rails or crakes before. Very secretive and elusive birds, it is always good to be able to have such definite sightings. The Jessie Street overpass did not reveal any crakes or rails on this occasion in the ten minutes we stood there but would certainly reward a patient hour spent there in the shade of the overpass. **Fairy Martins** were nesting in the nearby culvert and one intrepid member negotiated the grass and shrubbery to get there and be rewarded with excellent photos of their mud nests.

The group then drove the short distance to the eastern side of Forde where well-planned construction involved the creation of a chain of ponds by the damming of another small creek. This feature is now called the Lyell Gillespie Corridor, named after the son of a Gungahlin farming family who became a well-known journalist with an enthusiasm for the history of Canberra and the preservation of its natural heritage. Numerous waterbirds were seen here including a breeding pair of **Eurasian Coots**, examples of the few coots which did not depart Canberra. Both parents were busily feeding their single remaining chick. At the lower end of the Corridor, the town planners have fortunately preserved a beautiful stand of old-growth Eucalypts. **Red-rumped Parrots** and **Striated Pardalotes** were using some of the many nesting holes in the old trees and a **Magpie-lark** was feeding two tail-less young birds. It was sad to see that most of the holes had been taken over by **Common Mynas**, an inevitability, but it was still good to applaud the effort to preserve the trees.

The creek and a cycle path pass under Horse Park Drive, so we extended the walk to follow this path to nearby Yerrabi Pond. The main reason for this was to observe first-hand the return of the **Eurasian Coots**. Yerrabi Pond was once the home of at least 1,000 coots ALL of which disappeared a few months ago. After that time, very few coots were observed in the ACT at all and all those observed in Gungahlin were breeding pairs in smaller ponds. Now, interestingly for us, the large numbers of coots had returned to Yerrabi Pond only two days previously. At this concluding part of the walk we decided not to circumnavigate Yerrabi Pond but to restrict ourselves to the small northern basin, technically the water-cleaning basin for the larger pond. The conscientious people counted 97 **Eurasian Coots** in the northern basin, aware that there were uncounted hundreds in the proper pond. The small basin provided considerable interest with not only the usual ducks but at least twelve **Dusky Moorhen** chicks, which appeared to belong to two set of parents.. Interestingly, they were being fed not only by adults but also by immatures As well we saw **Australasian Grebes**, **Little Pied**, **Little Black** and **Great Cormorants** and all the other 'usual suspects' in such ponds. Altogether the group recorded 48 species of bird. Seeing the crakes and rail(s) was of course the real highlight but there was continual interest including at least ten species breeding. A truly worthwhile morning showcasing the value of Gungahlin as a birding region.

Future Field Trips

Sunday 5 February – Jerrabomberra Wetlands

To celebrate World Wetlands Day (2 February), during this morning outing we will visit Kelly Swamp and Jerrabomberra Creek. Depending on numbers, the group may be divided into two, so a volunteer to lead a possible second group would be appreciated. Bring hat, sunscreen, water and, if you have one, a telescope. Meet at 7.30am in the carpark at the end of Dairy Road, Fyshwick. No booking required.

Sue Lashko

Tuesday 7 to Friday 10 February – Shoalhaven Heads

This mid-week trip is designed to give participants the opportunity to visit several birding spots in the Shoalhaven area. Further details will be developed closer to February, depending on bird migration and weather.

Registration is essential at smlashko@gmail.com. The trip will be limited to 14 people and accommodation or camping will be at Shoalhaven Heads Tourist Park, located between the Shoalhaven River and Seven Mile Beach – see <http://www.shoalhaventouristpark.com.au/>. Participants will be asked to book their own accommodation, but any wishing to share cabins will be matched up if possible. Booking is recommended after registering, to ensure the best accommodation.

Sue Lashko

Sunday 12 February – Molonglo Reach boat trip

This outing/cruise will be on the upper parts of Lake Burley Griffin (East Basin) and the adjacent Molonglo River Reach, where late summer/early autumn is usually the peak time for nesting, with darters as well as three species of cormorant known to breed there. The area also has a variety of water birds, and a range of land birds can be seen on the banks.

The boat trip will last about 2 hours from 8 am and will cost \$20, payable in cash on boarding. This year we will again be travelling in the electric boat “MV Gull” which can carry around 22 people. The boat allows both a quiet approach as well as access to areas difficult to get to from the land. **The point of departure will again be from Kingston Harbour using the wharf at the end of Giles Street.** There is plenty of all day free weekend parking close by, particularly in Eastlake Parade. Alternatively participants can park their cars in the SE corner of the Glass Works/Bus Depot Markets car park, which will involve about a 200 m walk.

Registration for this field trip is essential. Please book your place on the boat with Jack Holland (on 6288 7840 or by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com).

Sunday 19 February – Woods Reserve

Meet at 7:30 at the Kambah Shops car park (cnr Marconi and Drakeford). From there we will car pool and head to Woods Reserve in Corin Rd. Numbers will be limited to the first 16. Please bring morning tea and water. A hat, sunblock and sunglasses are also recommended. Interesting bush birds are likely to be seen and heard.

David Dedenczuk 0417 222 154

Monday 20 to Fri 24 February – Cape Conran Coastal Park, Victoria – camping

This is a mid-week campout. The Park is an easy (all bitumen) drive of about 350 km from Canberra, via Cooma, Bombala and Cann River. The camp sites are among mahogany gums in banksia woodland with heathland on one side and ocean and beaches on the other. Facilities include flushing toilets, tables, cold showers and bore water on tap. BYO drinking water. Gas cooking is recommended at this time of year. The website: <http://www.conran.net.au/> gives more details of the camping options and facilities.

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

Numbers are limited to 16 people. Contact Martyn Moffat (mp.moff@bigpond.com) before end of January 2017 to register.

Sunday 26 February – Yerrabi Track

After a successful birding trip in 2016, this walk will be repeated to this lovely spot in 2017. This is a moderate walk of 4 km return (about 2-3 hours). The walk descends from the carpark through peppermint forest to a swamp, and then ascends through mountain gum/snow gum forest to a rocky summit with fantastic views.

The birds we're likely to encounter are the typical montane forest species such as **Superb Lyrebird, Grey Currawong, White-naped, White-eared, Yellow-faced and Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Scarlet, Eastern Yellow and Flame Robins, White-throated Treecreeper, Satin Flycatcher, Fan-tailed and Brush Cuckoos, Grey Shrike-thrush and Grey Fantail**. In addition, at this time of year there are often good highland butterflies and wildflowers in the swamp section of the walk, and small reptiles in the peppermint forest section of the walk, so if people are interested we will have time to stop and look at these.

Please note it can be quite windy and exposed at the summit, so please remember to bring wind and rain gear, and the track can be narrow, steep and rocky in parts so wear sturdy footwear. Bring some morning tea and plenty of water.

The carpark for the walk is located 35 kms south of the Namadgi Visitors Centre on the unsealed Boboyan Rd, but we will organise to meet and carpool from Lanyon Marketplace. We will meet at Lanyon Marketplace at 7am, and it will take us approx an hour to drive in convoy to the carpark for the start of the walk on Boboyan Rd.

Please contact me if you wish to attend (chowchilla29@yahoo.com).

Suzi Bond

Sunday 5 March - National Arboretum

The walk will start at 08:00 from the STEP block at the Arboretum. To save the \$2.00/hour parking fee at the main carpark at the visitors centre, park at the STEP carpark. Parking for STEP just means using the overflow carpark – across the road from the main car park, but parking as far away as possible from the Visitors Centre, ie next to STEP (Forest 20). To get there drive past the main car park and take the first right (a dirt road), which heads off towards the works area. After about 70 metres there is a fainter track to the right which leads to the lower level of the overflow car park. Park near a small pond and rock pile. There will be other cars there. Here is a link to a map of the Arboretum, showing the STEP (Forest 20), the overflow car park and the track down to the works area:

http://www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/463472/FINAL-Forest-map-and-list_24FEB.pdf

The walk will take a couple of hours. Water, sun hat and good walking shoes will be required. No need to book, just turn up. For those interested, the walk will finish with a visit to the café for chat and appropriate refreshments.

Chris Davey 0418 679 847

Thursday 9 to Thursday 16 March – Albury properties

This seven night outing, which includes the Canberra Day long weekend, will have 3 destinations: the first on a property near Lake Mulwala west of Albury where camping and cottage accommodation is available for a 3 night stay. We will then have 2 nights each at 2 properties east of Albury. Both will be camping only. **Participants can come for all or part of the time.**

As I have to confirm the booking, **if you would like to stay in the cottage** which has one room with double bed and two other rooms each with twin beds; ie a maximum of 6 people, **please contact me by 10 February**. Priority will be given to non-campers but campers who would like a bit more luxury for 3 nights (before camping on the other 2 properties) are welcome to give me their names in case there are vacancies.

If you would like to sign up for the whole trip, you are also welcome to contact me now.

Sue Lashko

Sunday 19 March – Eden pelagic

In 2017 COG will run its usual September pelagics, and is also running a single March pelagic (Sunday 19th). The outing will leave from Eden Harbour at 7am, and return mid-afternoon. The boat can accommodate 12 people, and the cost per person will be \$110.

Organising travel and accommodation will be each individual's responsibility.

Bookings will be confirmed only when full payment is received. **Payment must be made by February 15, but please contact Sandra before paying.** These trips need to be fully subscribed to ensure COG does not make a loss, and as is the case with all paid trips, preference is given to COG members. Once you've booked and paid, no refunds can be given unless a replacement can be found. No places will be made available to non-members unless the trips are not fully subscribed by COG members by mid-February. A waiting list allows for late replacements if people have to pull out for any reason, so if you're prepared to make the trip with only a few days' notice please let me know.

As with all boating activities the trip will be weather dependent and rough seas could lead to the cancellation or postponement of the trip.

Please book with Sandra Henderson (shirmax2931@gmail.com). Payment by direct deposit to COG's bank account is preferred – details will be sent to those who express interest. These trips often fill up fast, so if interested please book early. Many places on this March trip have been taken up by those who missed out when one of last September's trips had to be cancelled because of bad weather.

Sunday 26 March – private property near Murrumbateman

Three members of COG were invited last year to a property in Dog Trap Road near Murrumbateman to survey recently re-vegetated sites. During the visit, we found that the remnant vegetation and the strip of box-gum woodland area along the creek were rich in birdlife. The property owner is keen for COG to visit again and reports recent flocks of up to 100 **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos**. There is also the possibility of **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** on the back ridges where they have planted for "glossies". Lower down on those ridges there's a fair amount of remnant stringy-bark woodland.

Registration is essential as we will carpool from Canberra. Please contact me at smlashko@gmail.com if you wish to attend. Include your suburb and a contact number so I can organise the carpooling.

Sue Lashko

Sunday 2 April – Narrabundah Hill

This walk has been timed for the peak of the honeyeater migration season, with the northern and western boundaries of the reserve having some of the few currently known local migration routes. We will walk along these boundaries, depending on conditions and the species seen, and either return by the same or a different path. We will also look for other autumn birds such as **Scarlet Robin** and mixed feeding flocks, or late departing summer migrants such as gerygones.

Meet Jack Holland (62887840 or jandaholland@bigpond.com) at 8:30 am at the parking area and stile at the NE end of the reserve, at the corner of Warragamba Avenue and Eucumbene Drive, Duffy. **Please note that the entry to this parking area is a little tricky, and is in fact about 25 metres past (on the Mount Stromlo side) the T-junction with Warragamba Avenue, and for those driving along Eucumbene Drive from Duffy involves a quite tricky 180 degrees turn, so please take care.**

There is no need to book but an indication of your intentions would be appreciated to get a rough idea of numbers. Please bring your morning tea to have on the track.



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



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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

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

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.



Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

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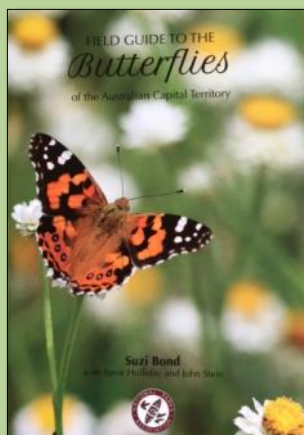
www.birdwatchers.com.au

sootyowl@bigpond.com

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BOOK OF THE MONTH



Field Guide to the Butterflies of the ACT

by Suzi Bond
with Steve Holliday and John Stein

A beautiful book with detailed notes and photographs of the wide range of butterflies found across the Australian Capital Territory.

Dr Suzi Bond is a member of COG and a Visiting Fellow at the ANU where she researches the butterflies found in the ACT. Her research is driven by a fascination for our local butterfly fauna and a desire to better understand their populations and ecology.

With contributions from Steve Holliday and John Stein this book is a must for anyone interested in the butterflies of the ACT.

Members' Price \$27

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

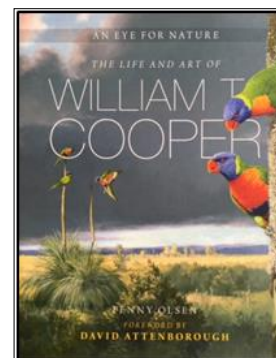


An Eye for Nature – The Life and Art of William Cooper

Penny Olsen

William T. Cooper's paintings of birds which set him apart—his raucous cockatoos, colourful parrots, animated turacos and flamboyantly displaying birds of paradise. Often placed in meticulously studied landscapes, these intricate bird portraits reveal Cooper's close observation not only of his subjects' appearance, but their habits, poses and behaviour.

Members' price \$37



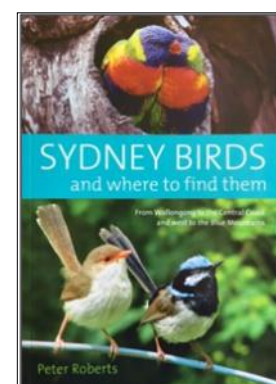
Sydneys Birds: and where to find them

Peter Roberts

This book 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.

Each locality entry lists the key species to look out for, including rare and seasonal visitors. It describes how to access the location, both by public transport and road, and what amenities to expect; maps are featured wherever necessary.

Members' price \$30



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:

N Bowman
K Kelly
A Adair
L Burden
T Scrace

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for March 2017 edition

Wednesday 22 February 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.

COG information

President: Neil Hermes

0413 828 045

president@canberrabirds.org.au

Treasurer: Lia Battisson

cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Secretary:

Bill Graham

cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Address for correspondence

The Secretary
COG, PO Box 301
Civic Square, ACT 2608

Canberra Bird Notes

Editor: Michael Lenz

lenzmj@hotmail.com.au

Publication Sales

Kathy Walter

sales@canberrabirds.org.au

COG website

canberrabirds.org.au

COG Webmaster

Julian Robinson

cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au

COG library

Membership Enquiries &

Updates:

membership@canberrabirds.org.au

for change of address or other details.

Gang-gang Newsletter

Editor: Sue Lashko

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

Lay-out Editor: Gail Neumann

Newsletter distribution:

Dianne Davey

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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