



Gang-gang

March 2017

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

MARCH MEETING

Wednesday 8 March 2017

7.30 pm.

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

The short presentation will be by **Suzi Bond**, author of the new **Field Guide to the Butterflies of the ACT**, COG's current Book of the Month.

Suzi will provide an overview of the butterflies of the ACT, including what sorts of species occur here and where to find them. She will also focus on what has been happening with the current butterfly season, with species like the Australian Painted Lady dominating so far, and what butterflies to look out for during the rest of the season.

The main presentation will be by **Geoffrey Dabb** on 'An Illustrated History of Australian Bird Names'.

Geoffrey has been a member of the Birdlife Australia English Names Committee for several years, and is currently the chair. The committee has a membership representing different parts of Australia. Participation in the

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

The four week period from Australia Day has been very hot and dry, with some brief cooler weather only in the last few days. Again it is interesting to try to gauge what effect this has had on the birds present in the COG area of interest (Aoi), particularly those escaping an even drier inland to our area where waterbodies are still relatively full.

Perhaps the most notable of these has been an influx of juvenile **Nankeen Night Herons** seen in a number of places in addition to the Jerrabomberra Wetlands where there has been a maximum of 3 birds together. Given the paucity of adult sightings this summer it appears they probably were bred inland and dispersed when conditions dried out. Whether this also applies to the **Intermediate Egret** (which also has an inland but only eastern distribution), and for which a maximum of 8 birds has been recorded at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, is unclear, as I understand at least some have been in breeding plumage. It is also unclear whether the dry inland has been responsible for the increase in sightings of the widely distributed **White-necked Heron** since mid-January. Interestingly,

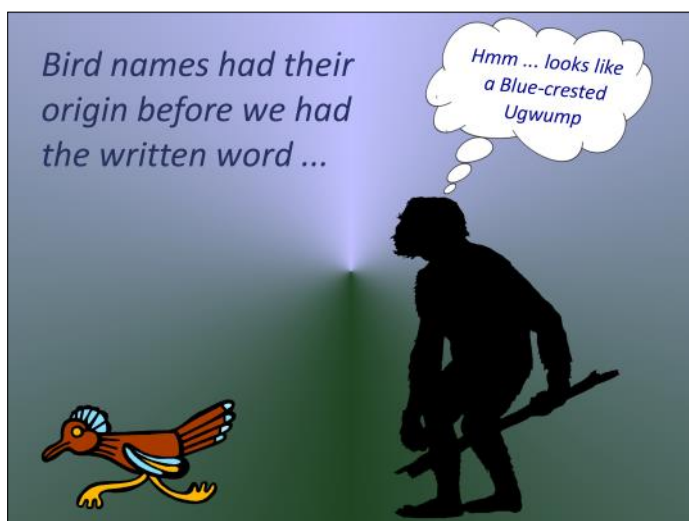
Roger Williams

Australian Painted Snip



Everyone welcome

March Meeting —continued from Page 1



committee has led to exposure to a large number of competing views on the most appropriate names for Australian birds – and on the policy that should be adopted. The talk is a summary of the long history of the search for suitable English names, up to the growing popularity of global lists. Towards the end of the talk, time permitting, some current naming issues will be discussed. Graphic aids will be used to enliven the presentation.

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

the **Glossy Ibis**, thought to have come from the dry inland to Giralang Pond, seemed to move on after staying for only about a week, with up to 2 present and the last record being on 28 January.

I'm also not certain that the pair of **Australian Painted Snipe** first found by Mark Clayton on 2 February at the big dam along Lake Road on the west side of Lake George had come in from the drier inland. Somewhat unusually for this often cryptic species this pair loafed around in a quite open spot and were observed by many viewers, and were present around the dam at least until 21 February. At one stage there was a suggestion that they might have bred, but the cow pat theory prevailed. This species certainly took all the attention away from the **Tawny Grassbird** which was still present and last reported at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 16 February. The dry inland is probably not the reason for the sighting of the other "unusual" during the reporting period, the **Turquoise Parrot** at Namadgi National Park early in February. This species has been recorded in that area before but its presence and distribution in the COG Aol is not well understood.

Despite the very hot and dry conditions, reports of breeding have continued with surprisingly many coming from the second half of the reporting period. Again the extent of breeding reported is too extensive to cover in this column, and the following are some of the highlights:

- Probably the most significant was the report early in February of 2 adults and a juvenile **Blue-faced Honeyeater** in Yass. It was suspected they may have successfully reared at least 1 young from the nest I noted in my November 2016 column. This appears to be the first breeding record for the COG Aol as the bird info data on the COG website, where it is listed as a rare vagrant, does not indicate any breeding. Surprisingly this species does not seem to be included in the COG Annual Bird Report (ABR), despite a number of sightings in the past 10-12 years.
- Not far behind is Marnix Zwankhuisen's report on 31 January of an **Olive Whistler** with a dependent youngster in Tallaganda National Park, again a very important record as the bird info data on the COG website indicates a breeding record only for the 1987 season.

Also significant was the observation by the COG Wednesday Walkers on 15 February of a very recently fledged **Pilotbird** and its parent at Warks Road in the Brindabellas. The bird info data on the COG website indicates a breeding record for the 2011 season, and the 2013-2014 COG ABR notes a further one in that year. However, the latter indicates this was only the fourth breeding record since 1982, underlining the importance of this new observation.



Nankeen Night Heron

Julie Clark

- The same outing also recorded a **Rufous Fantail** on a nest, only the 12th breeding record for this species since 1982. Mid-February seems surprisingly late given this species will have moved out of the COG AOI by early April.

- On 5 February Marnix reported a male and female **Crested Shrike-tit** at Tidbinbilla. Each had a vocal hungry youngster following them, flapping their wings and constantly chirping until fed. At one point a pair was in a shrub a metre or two from him.

On 19 February Sandra Henderson reported a female **White-winged Triller** feeding two well-grown offspring at Callum Brae. Given that most of this species often depart by the end of January, this is also late, though in February 2012 Elizabeth Compston reported this species breeding there around the same time, as published in CBN.

Martin Butterfield reported that in mid-February the **Whiskered Terns** had left the marsh on the Hoskinstown Plain, where around the end of the first week of February there were still 50-60, so it seems breeding was successfully completed despite the very dry conditions towards the end. Also reported have been a **Satin Flycatcher** and further dependent young **Satin Bowerbirds** being fed, including one of the latter in my GBS. On 2 February I found a young **Grey Butcherbird** still being fed 500 m from the nest on Cooleman Ridge I reported on in last month's column. This was well over 6 weeks from when they fledged, and interestingly the begging calls sounded almost exactly identical to a dependent young **Australian Magpie**.

Compared with last year the **Eastern Koel** seems to have had a very good breeding season. Despite some members reporting surprisingly quiet activity in their area this year, I'm aware of at least 35 fledglings, with the most recent first seen on 21 February. This is the highest combined total I've been aware of since keeping a count over the past few years, though

Bill Hall



Noisy Friarbird



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2017 tours

Good birding, good food ...

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

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and latest news on our website*

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I expect there might be many more not reported or not even recognised. My personal tally in Chapman/Rivett within a kilometre of my house is at least 6 and possibly up to 9 depending on how mobile these have been (some much more so compared with previous seasons). Highlights include one being fed by **Noisy Friarbird** hosts in O'Connor, only the second record for this species in the COG Aol, as well as another still in a **Red Wattlebird** nest at North Lyneham; most are first noticed by their loud begging call once fledged.

So please keep an eye and ear out for any late **Koel** fledglings as well as adults before they depart during March. Yes, despite the seemingly never ending hot and dry summer, March is always a month of much bird movement in particular for the spring/summer migrants departing. Indeed some have left already some time ago, with no reports of the **Black-eared Cuckoo**, **White-browed** or **Masked Woodswallow**, or **Brown Songlark** in this period, with the last **Horsfield's Bushlark** reported on 24 January, and **Channel-billed Cuckoo** on 30 January. However, the **Rufous Songlark** was still present on 20 February and the **White-winged Triller** was still breeding on 19 February (see above). So please keep an eye out for the above; as mentioned previously both the **Rufous Songlark** and the female triller can present identification problems late in the season. The former may still be found skulking around in the bushes and is most readily identified by its rufous rump on an otherwise very plain bird.

The most recent record of the **Brush Cuckoo**, usually last reported in February, was by the COG Wednesday Walkers on 15 February, and the **Dollarbird** was still observed on 22 February. So please keep an eye/ear out too for these species, as the last of the latter usually depart by about the end of the first week of March. Usually leaving slightly later is the **Rainbow Bee-eater**, for which there seem to have been very few recent reports, so keep an eye/ear out for them, particularly as they migrate overhead when their characteristic "pirr pirr" call and orange wings allow them to be readily identified. Usually leaving slightly later still is the **Sacred Kingfisher**, again a species to look out for as it often visits gardens (including mine last weekend) post-breeding.

Other birds that mostly leave by the end of March/early April include **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Latham's Snipe** (still 28 counted at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands during the 18-19 February survey), **Australian Reed-Warbler** (often very quiet this month), **Tree** and **Fairy Martins**, **Pallid Cuckoo** (again very few appear to have been present this season) and **Horsfield's** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos**. Also continue to keep an eye out for the **White-throated Needletail** and the related **Fork-tailed Swift** on their return migration. Due to the hot dry weather very few of the former have been reported (maximum of 18 over Garran on 12 February) and it appears none of the latter to date this summer.

Some species will be seen in Canberra during March as "passage migrants" as they move north from their breeding sites in the mountains. These include **Satin Flycatcher**, **Rufous Fantail** and, rarely, **Cicadabird**. Look out also for the first migrating **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**; this movement usually starts in the last week of March. There have been reports already, mainly from Narrabundah Hill, of up to 35 **Red Wattlebirds** migrating in mid-February. Other species move from the mountains but will stay here, so look out for the first altitudinal migrants, **Scarlet Robin** (present all summer at Narrabundah Hill), **Golden Whistler** and **White-eared Honeyeater** in Canberra's suburbs and peri-urban areas in March.

Finally there have already been reports from late January of that autumn phenomenon the Mixed Feeding Flock (MFF), including in my garden. These can have unusual or unexpected compositions, so watch out for them; as I've mentioned many times nothing in bird watching gives me a bigger thrill than a MFF and looking out for the unexpected species lurking quietly in amongst all that activity. Watch out also for pure or nearly pure single species flocks which can also form for small species preferring to be on the ground such as the **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, **Superb Fairy-wren** and the local **finch** species.

So please watch out for the last of the spring/summer migrants which usually leave in March as mentioned above, for the first arriving altitudinal migrants, MFFs and for any further 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 web site, as well as some direct correspondence to me. As always I am very grateful to all involved for publishing this information without which it would not be possible to put this column together.

Jack Holland

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 29 January – Murrumbidgee River Walk

A dozen enthusiastic people met at Pine Island reserve on a warm summer morning to explore the Murrumbidgee River Corridor, north of Pine Island to its junction with Tuggeranong Creek. Whilst still within the Pine Island reserve we saw **European Goldfinch**, **Laughing Kookaburra** and an array of regular bird species. As the trail lead closer to the river we were able to see and hear a variety of smaller birds, such as **Silvereye**, **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalote** and **Superb Fairy-wren**. We were grateful when the track brought us under the shade of mature River She-oaks, giving some relief from the increasingly hot sun. Along the river a few members saw **Yellow Thornbill**, and also seen were **Red-browed Finch**. It was enjoyable to listen to the regular calls of summer along the river, which included **Rainbow Bee-eater**, **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**, **Dollarbird**, **Mistletoebird**, **Rufous Whistler** and **Noisy Friarbird**.

We enjoyed a rest at the half way mark, in the shade of trees overgrowing the remnant Tuggerang Dry Stone Wall, which was built in the 19th century to divide two properties of the region. We were entertained by the **Leaden Flycatcher** before heading back to Pine Island along the Bicentennial National Trail, between the river and the Tuggeranong Town Centre. This area was of interest to members as it was put under the spotlight last year for potential urban development. On the way back we saw **Noisy Miner**, **Crested Pigeon**, **Australian Magpie** and **Magpie-lark**, amongst others. We stopped along the way to get a close look at an Eastern Blue-tongue basking in the sun on the path, and also admired some of the native flowers, such as Bluebells, Common and Sticky Everlastings and Blue Devils. The temperature was warming considerably by the time we arrived back at Pine Island, and with a very hot day in prospect, we concluded the outing. Thank you to Sandra Henderson for recording all the bird species and entering them online.

Matthew Frawley

Sunday 5 February – Jerrabomberra Wetlands

This annual outing to celebrate World Wetlands Day was well attended and it was pleasing to see a number of COG's newer members improving their birding skills. We began by visiting Ardea hide which gave us great views of three juvenile **Nankeen Night Herons** cavorting in front of us. There was an interesting interaction between a **Little Pied Cormorant** fishing in a small patch of water and a Night Heron which wanted to share the same patch. Five **Intermediate Egrets** perched in a dead tree and a well-coloured **Australasian Grebe** was accompanied by two large stripe-faced young. **Dusky Moorhens** and **Australasian Swamphens** were also busy tending chicks. At least 7 **Latham's Snipe** were seen.

As we circumnavigated the swamp, we were lucky enough to watch **New Holland** and **White-plumed Honeyeaters**, as well as **Red-browed Finches** perched for unusually long periods of time. Male and female **Australasian Darter** were obligingly sitting on dead sticks allowing everyone excellent scope views.

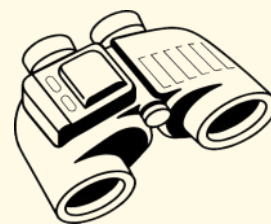
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We crossed the bridge to visit the woodlands where we had great views of a pair of **Sacred Kingfishers**. From Fulica hide on Jerrabomberra Creek, the highlight was an **Eastern Great Egret**.

The species total for the morning was 53 which was very pleasing in the hot conditions.

Sue Lashko

Tuesday 7 - Friday 10 February – Shoalhaven area

The weather forecast for the trip was interesting: two days with maximums in the low 20s accompanied by heavy rain, to be followed by two fine days with maximums in the high 30s/low 40s.

Despite this, the trip got off to a good start with the 11 participants meeting at Lake Wollumboola. The lake is currently open to the sea, with the crossing requiring waist-deep wading. Those of us below average height weren't keen, so were relieved when our leader, Sue Lashko, decided we should stay on the one side. We had useful views of three species of **terns**, **Caspian**, **Little** and **Crested**, showing clearly the variations in size, and the first of the wader species for the trip: **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Red-necked Stint** and one each of **Curlew** and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. There was a brief sighting of a **Square-tailed Kite**. After lunch, we moved on to Orient Point where **Eastern Curlews** and **Whimbrels** were seen, and then to Crookhaven Heads where a walk to the now defunct lighthouse produced views of an **Arctic Jaeger**.

The forecast rain held off, more or less, until we were safely in our accommodation at Shoalhaven Heads but it was then so persistent and so heavy that it was agreed that if it was like this in the morning, we should simply roll over and go back to sleep.

On rising, the weather didn't look good, but there was just enough blue sky to tempt us to undertake the walk along Seven Mile Beach. On the way, we passed through the River Road

Stuart Harris



Eastern Great Egret



Laughing Kookaburra

Sandra Henderson



Eastern Curlew

Geoffrey Dabb

Reserve which has a series of excellent NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service sign-boards informing visitors about shorebird conservation.

We spent about three hours on the sand enjoying good views of shorebirds including **Pacific Golden Plovers**, **Bar-tailed Godwits** and **Red-capped Plovers**, plus one **Red Knot**, one **Black-tailed Godwit** and, excitingly, a single **Common Noddy** which swooped into view like a raptor and disappeared after only a few seconds. On the way back, the rain clouds which had been moving all around us appeared directly overhead and soaked us fairly thoroughly.

In the afternoon, we walked to another area of the beach, returning via the Dunes Walking Track through sand forest. The highlight for most was a **Yellow Thornbill**.

The weather changed as forecast, and the next morning dawned with a clear blue sky. Four extra-keen members of the group took an early morning walk to Seven Mile Beach and were rewarded with a view of a **Double-banded Plover** which had been searched for unsuccessfully the previous day. We had no luck in our search for the **Inland Dotterel** reported recently, and concluded that the rumour about it being taken by a **Peregrine Falcon** was probably true.

We spent the rest of the day around the southern part of Jervis Bay, mostly in Booderee National Park. Our first stop was the carpark for the walk to the Cape St George Lighthouse, now also defunct. Sue had told us that the carpark was a hot spot for **Eastern Bristlebirds** and she was quickly proved right. We got excellent views of a bird that hopped around the edges of the carpark, went under one of our vehicles to drink in a puddle, and then flew to the other side of the carpark where it continued to feed in full view. After morning tea at Green Patch, we walked the Telegraph Creek Nature Trail. It's a lovely walk but the temperature was rising uncomfortably by this time and the birds were very quiet, so we headed to the Booderee Botanic Gardens for lunch. Here we were briefly entertained by a young echidna waddling across the grass.

We spent most of our time at the Gardens in the cooler rainforest area. This produced some of the highlights of the trip: **Rufous Fantail**, **Black-faced Monarch**, **Green Catbird**, **Bassian Thrush** and four **Topknot Pigeons**. A **Scarlet Honeyeater** was heard but couldn't be seen in the foliage.

We were packed and on our way early on Friday morning, in the expectation of an extremely hot day. Our first and, as it turned out, only birding destination for the day was the Bomaderry Creek reserve. I'd never heard of this, and was delighted to find that it is a lovely, green, ferny, scenic rainforest gully. We spent about three hours walking the track along the creek. Normally it's full of birdlife but the heat was having its effect even here. Nevertheless, the first 100 metres or so produced good views of our target bird, the **Rock Warbler** and one or two more were seen further along the track. After a late morning



Pacific Golden Plover, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit

Geoffrey Dabb



Double-banded Plover

A comparison of the unseasonal DBP of 2015 with the 2017.

Comments: First discount the colour tone. The colour is untouched. The 2015 photos were taken in light overcast, the 2017 ones in golden early morning sunlight. The birds are similar but not identical. I am not qualified to say whether they are adults in seasonal non-breeding plumage or immatures. However one would not expect an immature from the last breeding season to arrive before adults. It would help to know whether, in each case, the bird was here over the whole of spring/summer.

Geoffrey Dabb



Black-faced Monarch, Topknot Pigeon

Geoffrey Dabb

tea, the group broke up and headed for their various destinations, having agreed that conditions were too hot for humans (and birds) to continue on to The Grotto. (Nowra's maximum for the day was 43°.)

Overall, 109 species were seen over the four days. Given the weather, this was felt to be a very satisfactory result. Many of us visited areas that were new to us, quite a few of us were able to tick off a lifer or two, and most of us can now put a name to at least a handful of shorebirds. Thanks to Sue Lashko for her excellent organisation, leadership and teaching skills. (We mightn't put her in charge of the weather again, though!)

Wendy Whitham

Sunday 12 February – East Basin/Molonglo Reach boat trip

Under very warm and humid but surprisingly still conditions (given the forecast), 24 members and guests joined me for what was my eighteenth time since we started in 2003 for this now annual trip to view the water and land birds of this area. We again left from Kingston Harbour on the electric boat, the EL Gull, along the east bank of East Basin and into the Reach and along the south bank to the site of the new bridge before tracing our route back.

It was one of those trips where most of the best birds came early with 3 juvenile **Nankeen Night Heron**, an **Intermediate Egret** and a **White-necked Heron** seen at the mouth of Jerrabomberra Creek. From COG chatline posts these were known to be in the area but we were very pleased to find them, with only the first named having been recorded on one of these trips previously



Pacific Golden Plover, Red Knot

Geoffrey Dabb

(December 2004). Even better was that they all were very co-operative so that all participants were able to have very good views, unlike the **Latham's Snipe** that was flushed but disappeared before most could see it, only the 3rd record on these trips after February 2013 and 2016.

Given the hot dry conditions experienced in 2017 to date, lake levels were still surprisingly high but we did not encounter an **Australasian Darter** until nearly halfway up Molonglo Reach. This was an adult male after which we recorded another 5 males singly or in twos and no females until well over halfway back followed by another 3 in East Basin. None of the 10 (two more than last year) were identified as immature birds by their dirtier and lighter plumage or were near a nest, and none of the males had a significant amount of red on the neck indicating breeding plumage.

This was the second year in a row no breeding was confirmed, though unlike last year there were no signs of even a single no longer occupied nest. It now seems that the more than 10 years of this species breeding there are definitely over. The reasons for this remain unclear; if due to the complete clearing of the trees on the north bank in May 2008, the effect was quite slow compared with the cormorants which completely abandoned breeding on the Reach within a few years. The increased canoe and paddle board traffic remains a possible factor.

We saw a total of 5 **Great Cormorants**, generally resting on bare branches close to the mouth of Jerrabomberra Creek, several with white flanks indicative of breeding plumage. There was only 1 **Little Black Cormorant** and no **Little Pied Cormorants** seen on the day. However, on our return, a single **Pied Cormorant** sat low and tight above the water near the mouth of Jerrabomberra Creek, again allowing good views for all participants.

I'm aware of only very limited darter/cormorant breeding this summer. I understand that there may still be breeding on the northern side of the Molonglo River downstream (west) of the Tuggeranong Parkway, but I'm unclear as to whether any breeding is still occurring near the upstream end of the new Cotter Dam.

Other waterbird activity was very low, with only **Black Swan**, **Australian Wood Duck**, **Pacific Black Duck** and **Silver Gulls** and a smattering of **Purple Swamphens**, **Dusky Moorhens**, **Eurasian Coot** and **Masked Lapwings** recorded, the lowest range of such species I can remember. Three **Greylag Geese** were seen at the water's edge close to where they were on the previous 4 trips, this time with the addition of a completely white bird, all were very tame allowing canoeists, etc, to walk through or around them.

Of the land birds, **Dollarbirds** and **Sacred Kingfishers** were again seen, but were much less conspicuous than last year, with the best species being the 5 **Double-barred Finch** seen between the two bridges, a species only recorded twice before. Surprisingly





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common on Molonglo Reach were **Red Wattlebirds** and **Noisy Friarbirds**, which appeared to be undergoing some local movement, possibly following the boat. A dependent young was observed for the former; another breeding record was a **Welcome Swallow** still on a nest underneath one of the bridges.

At 45 the total number of species was a bit down on previous years. As for last year the species total from Molonglo Reach was much the same as those from Jerrabomberra Creek/East Bank. Despite the complete lack of darters/cormorants breeding, participants again enjoyed the trip which remains a popular late summer outing, and I would expect to run it again at the same time in 2018.

Jack Holland

Wednesday 15 February – Warks Road

For the twelve members on this outing, the first stop was the big dam at Urriarra Homestead where we scored 26 species. This included a tightly knit squad of 18 **Hoary-headed Grebes** and an overflight of 6 **Gang-gang Cockatoos**.

We moved on to Blundells Creek Rd where we had an involuntary pause due to a fallen tree across the road. While that was being disposed of, members spotted the first of several **Rufous Fantails**. After parking and heading up Warks Rd, 3 **Red-browed Treecreepers** were observed. The next highlight was a **Rufous Fantail** on a nest with everyone having good looks.

While strolling up another trail, a very alert member spotted a small bird on a branch close to ground level. It eventually scuttled off, but had given good enough views for identification as a very recently fledged **Pilotbird**. This was confirmed when an adult was seen on the far side of the track. We hurriedly left the area and on turning to watch saw the adult fly across in the direction of the fledgling and then then both fly across the track. Possibly the first breeding record of **Pilotbird** since the 2003 fires?

Two further stops were made on the way home. Moonlight Hollow Road delivered a **Brush Cuckoo** – after much deliberation and examination of images. Driving to Bulls Head Picnic area, several **Flame Robins** were seen and a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** heard. We recorded a total of 54 species for the day.

Martin Butterfield

Sunday 19 February – Woods Reserve

Four COG members met on a cool clear bright morning to survey the birds of Woods Reserve on the Corin Dam Road.

In a pretty little dell, a crystal-clear Gibraltar Creek babbled happily while sleepy campers began to stir. The COG party listened to the many thornbills, pardalotes and honeyeaters

calling and tried to see them in the canopy and in the lush green undergrowth.

As **Gang-gang** and **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos** flew overhead, the energetic COG party climbed the track to the Gibraltar Falls carpark, which proved to be another hotspot.

There a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** was upsetting the neighbours, including **Grey Fantails**, **White-browed Scrubwrens** and **Eastern Yellow Robins**. Returning to Woods Reserve, we found more charismatic birds, including a pair of **Satin Flycatchers**, and espied in the understory a plump **Red Wattlebird** chick, so newly fledged that it could scarcely fly. A terrific morning's surveying produced a count of 31 species.

David Dedenczuk



Eastern Yellow Robin

Julian Robinson

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



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

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

Susan & Simon

www.tourtheloire.com

[loirevalleytours nature
walks](http://loirevalleytoursnaturewalks)

Tel: 0261 00 7744 (Canberra)

contact@tourtheloire.com

COG's Bird Blitz 2016

At the February COG meeting, lucky draw and other prizes in the following categories were awarded:

Best bird recorded: Apostlebird – North Watson – Julie Clark
(Julie won a bottle of wine donated by Stuart Harris)

Highly commended: Hybrid New Holland-White-cheeked Honeyeater – Jerrabomberra Wetlands – Geoff Dabb; Rufous Fantail – Yaouk Track – Lindsay Hansch; Lewin's Honeyeater – Kowen - Shirley Kral; Red-browed Treecreeper – Yerrabi Track – David Landon and Jeannie Gray; Bush Stone-curlew – Mulligans Flat – Jenny Bounds. They each won a pink native orchid, donated by Alison Mackerras.

Every year blitzer: Tony Willis – who won a bottle of wine donated by the Lipscombes.

Special effort (>10 hours or >10 datasheets or behind locked gates) prize: Steve Read – who won a framed Frank Knight print.

Best breeding record: Southern Whiteface – Centennial Trail – Duncan McCaskill – who won a copy of Penny Olsen's "Cayley and Son".

Vulnerable species record: Varied Sittella – Kama NR – Chris Davey – who won "Australian Predators of the Sky" by Penny Olsen.

Many thanks to all Blitz contributors – those present at the meeting were able to choose from a selection of books and cards.

Thanks too to the parks service, for facilitating access behind locked gates; and to Jaron Bailey for manipulating the increasingly cumbersome data.

An outline of Blitz 12 findings will be prepared for *Canberra Bird Notes*. And please put the dates for the next Blitz in your diary NOW – 28-29 October 2017.

Barbara Allan



Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

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Hooded Robin

Julie Clark

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.

Changes to trips are notified on the trips page of the COG website

<http://canberrabirds.org.au/>

and on the COG chat-line at:

[http://
bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/
archives/html/
canberrabirds/2012-03/
index.html](http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds/2012-03/index.html)

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

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.** Registration is essential at smlashko@gmail.com.

Sue Lashko

Wednesday 15 March – Campbell Park

Meet at the northern end of the carpark at 8:30am.

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. At this stage the trip is full, but late vacancies will be advertised if there is no-one on the waiting list. As with all boating activities the trip will be weather dependent and rough seas could lead to the cancellation or postponement of the trip. Contact: Sandra Henderson, shirmax2931@gmail.com

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.

Jack Holland

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**.

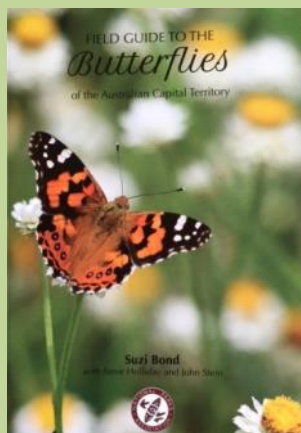
Round Hill is between Lake Cargelligo and Mt Hope and is 5+ hours' drive from Canberra. We will spend most of our time close to camp with perhaps a couple of short drives. It will be a “bring everything” camp.

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.

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

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

BOOK OF THE MONTH



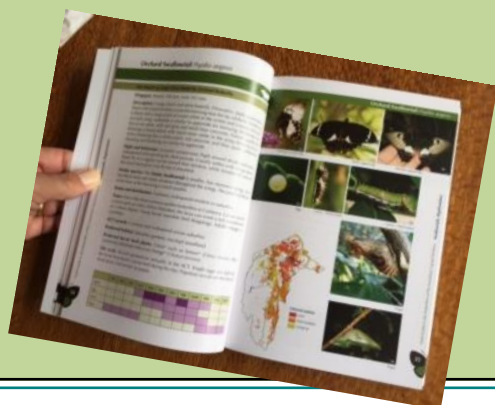
Field Guide to the Butterflies of the ACT by Suzi Bond, with Steve Holliday and John Stein

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

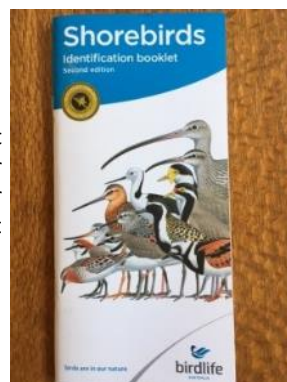
NEW BOOKS IN STOCK

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

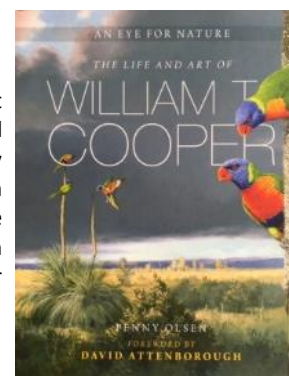


An Eye for Nature – The Life and Art of William Cooper

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



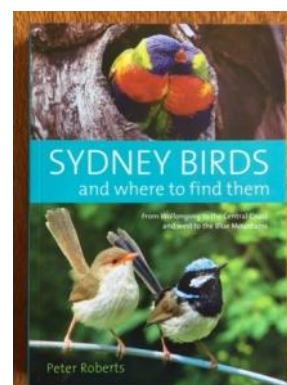
Sydney Birds: and where to find them

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:

M Booth
T Sudirjo

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for April 2017 edition

Wednesday 29 March 2017

Please send articles, advertisements, updates etc. to the Editors at:

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

Or

c/- The Secretary COG,

PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608

Articles should be less than 500 words (300 for reports of 1-day field trips) except by prior arrangement with the editor.

Photographs (prints or electronic) with or without articles are encouraged.

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COG E-mail Discussion List

COG E-mail Discussion List

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

Join (subscribe to) the list by following the links on the COG website or by sending an email message to canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au. The subject line and body of the email can be empty.

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