



Gang-gang

AUGUST 2018

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

AUGUST MEETING

Wednesday 8 August 2018

7.30 pm

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

The two presentations this month will be by long-time COG members.

The short presentation will be by **Stuart Rae** on “**Local or not so local Little Eagles**”. This will give details of their breeding status in 2017-2018 and an update on the movements of the bird currently being tracked by satellite.

The main presentation will be by **Richard Allen** on “**Birds at the Weddin Mountains – some results from a long-term study.**”

Since 1986 Richard has coordinated a banding project adjacent to the Weddin Mountains National Park near Grenfell NSW. With the assistance of many participants (including COG members), thirty years of banding data and observations has been collected. Richard will present some of the findings including long term trends and seasonal variations, as well as a few surprises.

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

Over the four weeks from the last couple of days of June covered by this column there has been virtually no rain, and even though the ACT isn't yet drought-declared it is seriously dry out there. Together with the many heavy morning frosts we've experienced, the effect has been that bird activity in the COG area of interest (Aoi) seems to have been extremely quiet, with mixed feeding flocks (MFF) proving increasingly difficult to find, as noted in the 18 July report from the COG Wednesday Walkers elsewhere in this issue of *Gang-gang*.

For the first time in a number of months there have been no reports of new “unusual” species, though many of those first reported earlier in 2018 have continued to be observed. These include the following still from the same spots; the **Brown Gerygones** at the ANBG (3 last reported on 11 July), the **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** around the National Library/High Court (2 last

Continued Page 2



Yellow-tufted Honeyeater

Kym Bradley

Everyone welcome

reported on 16 July), and the **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** at Lake Ginninderra (last reported on 12 July).

There were no further reports of the **Yellow-plumed Honeyeater** from Hall but remarkably on 11 July Sue Lashko found one in the Aranda Bushland Nature Reserve. It was an unusual chap chap call that alerted her to the bird, which she watched for about 3 minutes before it was chased off by a **Red Wattlebird**. There was also a further as yet unconfirmed report on 18 July from Bluetts Block. Assuming these were all of the same bird, it appears very lost considering the apparent movement in a southerly direction well away from its preferred Mallee country habitat. Also reported from different spots have been an **Azure Kingfisher** perched on a branch overlooking the Murrumbidgee River at the Stony Creek Nature Reserve on 9 July, and 2 **Red-necked Avocets** at Kelly Swamp from 29 June to 4 July, this time staying around long enough for many observers to admire them.

There have also been reports of a **Black Kite** from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 2 and 3 July (the new Bird Info data on the COG website confirms it to be the month in which they have been least reported), a **Grey Goshawk** at the Cork Oak Plantation on 4 July, and **Barn Owls** at West Hume and the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 11 and 14 July, respectively. Please continue to look out for the above species, some of which may be here due to the very dry conditions. In particular, look out for **Barn Owl** for which an ABC news article (www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-12/something-killing-barn-owls-in-victoria/9980016) reports that, so far in 2018, Wildlife Victoria has received over 117 rescue requests, compared with only 12 for the same period in 2017. This has been put down, at least in part, to the lack of food in the very dry conditions.

Of the less common winter altitudinal migrants, the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** has been reported from a work carpark in central Tuggeranong and a number of times from Tuggeranong Hill, with up to 3 seen there on 21 and 23 July. A **Crescent Honeyeater** was also reported from there during this time, as well as from Bibaringa and Bluetts Block, where 3 were recorded on 19 July. After noting in my last month's column that it may possibly be one of the rare winters I won't record it in my Chapman GBS site, a male was outside our TV room window for around 90 minutes on 29 June. Unlike previous winters, he stayed there attracted by the newly flowering Banksia cones. He also spent a lot of time looking at himself in the window, undeterred by the occasional lunges our two Beagles made at him from the inside. In the end he was attacking the window so aggressively we were concerned he would harm himself and we had to shoo him away. He's been around since and back there a few times, but luckily only at the window for short periods.

There has been just a single report of **Restless Flycatcher** so far in July, but none of **Swift Parrot** or **Olive Whistler**, and none of **Pink Robin** for 2018. A single **Rose Robin** was reported from only 3 locations in July. More of the last-named may be expected during August as it moves through to its preferred habitat in the mountains. While in mid-month I was still able to find around 8 **Flame Robins** each in 2 different spots on the south-west side of Cooleman Ridge, they seem already to have moved away from other open areas around Canberra, with observations from only 4 such locations, and only one report after early July. Given the cold, frosty conditions, it would be surprising if they have already started to move back to the mountains, similar to what we found them doing in large groups at the end of August/beginning of September on the COG bus trips in 2016 and 2017.



Flame Robin

Gail Neumann

In contrast the **Scarlet Robin** has still been reported from around 25 locations in peri-urban Canberra. Unusually this winter I have been able to find more in my local patch on the north-west of Cooleman Ridge compared with the southern half of Narrabundah Hill where I have recorded just a single female. While some of this species will leave during August, many will stay into early/mid September, as will the **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Golden Whistler**. As I've mentioned a number of times in this column, the last two species tend to be quieter and less conspicuous from early July; in fact, I have only observed two of the former in my local patch and a female and then a male of the latter separately on 24 July in my GBS site since the end of June. However, this



Mistletoebird

Geoffrey Dabb

contrasts with the eBird Australia maps which show widespread observations elsewhere in Canberra during this time.

Of the summer migrant species still present in June, the **Dusky Woodswallow** has been reported from 7 locations in July, again mainly from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, including 19 birds seen there on 16 July, and with all spots except for one close to the shores of Lake Burley Griffin, in line with its liking for locations close to water during this time. Single **Olive-backed Orioles** have been reported from 4 locations to the east of Canberra City in an arc from Callum Brae to Mt Ainslie, most recently in Symonston on 22 July.

Grey Fantail and **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** continued to be regularly reported during July, each from around 15 locations, the latter mainly around central Canberra. In contrast, single **Mistletoebirds** have been reported from only 4 locations during July, the most recent being on 17 July at the Goorooyarroo NR. Small numbers (not more than 3 together) of **Superb Parrot** have been reported from 7 locations, all from Lyneham and to the north-east of there, except for a late report from Garran on 24 July. Reports of the **Rufous Whistler** in July have been from 5 widespread locations, in one case of two birds and the most recent from Callum Brae on 16 July.

As for June, there have been reports of the **Tree Martin**, with 1 bird at Cook on 10 July, and of a **Western Gerygone** at Mt Ainslie on the same day. A **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** was also reported from Callum Brae on 11 July, as well as a **Noisy Friarbird** at the ANBG on the same date. The new Bird Info data on the COG website confirms few of the above species are reported for June or July, the last-named in particular. However, it is a sign that, despite the very cold, wintery weather, spring is just around the corner with the first of the spring/summer migrants being expected to arrive during August.

The species listed above, as well as **Fairy Martin**, **Australian Reed-Warbler**, and other cuckoo species are usually the first to return to Canberra. Depending on whether it remains cold or warms up, this could happen well before the end of August. So in the next month watch out for any of the above species, as well as any other overwintering or early returning spring/summer migrants.



Australian Ornithological Services

PO Box 385
South Yarra 3141
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Good birding, good food

Top End birding tour includes Kakadu NP, Kununurra and Mitchell Plateau

23 May to 6 June 2018
Mitchell Plateau charter for black grasswren open to non-tour birders.

Atherton Tablelands

13 to 18 June 2018

Gulf of Carpentaria Cairns Karumba, Cloncurry, Mt Isa & Winton & Atherton Tablelands. Includes Rusty Grasswren
2 to 20 July 2018

Atherton Tablelands

26 to 31 July 2018

New Caledonia birding tour

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includes Lifou and Ouvéa Islands

Strzelecki Track Outback tour

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20 & 21 October 2018
3 & 4 November 2018
17 & 18 November 2018
1 & 2 December 2018

2019

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Another sign of spring coming is that, as noted above, mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) have been much more difficult to find during July, consistent with them breaking up when the breeding season starts. Despite this, only limited breeding has come to my attention, consisting mainly of common species such as **Australian Magpie** and **Pied Currawong** copulating or gathering nest material, with **Grey Shrike-thrush**, probably the most consistently observed winter visitor to my local area, also doing the latter.

A sign that winter is still here is the flocks of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** still feeding on the road verges, etc. Prompted by Ryu Callaway's Great Cocky Count in early July, I have been keeping a closer watch on this species, which has shown how variable numbers and flight paths can be in the local roosts or roost flights, very much dependent on the day's weather conditions. Meanwhile the very large flock of **Little Corellas** at Narrabundah and to the south of there seems to have persisted at least to mid-month. On 15 July, Ryu reported a massive flock of about 250 **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** flying over at Kowen Forest. He noted the biggest previous ACT count on eBird Australia is 200 from Uriarra Forest pre-fires, but many readers will remember how conspicuous this species was immediately after the January 2003 fires, with flocks up to 500 reported. Groups of **White-winged Choughs** also gather together in winter, with Isobel Crawford estimating a flock of at least 64 in Ainslie on 25 July, busily searching for food on the very dry ground.

On 9 July, when Ryu went out to Rose Cottage horse paddocks to look for roosts flights, he observed no **Silver Gulls** this year but close to 600 **Australian White Ibis** departing for Lake Tuggeranong. Between 16:27 and 17:05 hours, he also counted 178 **Magpie-larks**, including a flock of 49, using exactly the same flight path as last year (when total numbers were up to 150). This count is around three times as many as I have ever estimated around my place in Chapman/Rivett, where interestingly I have hardly been able to observe any roost flight activity since the beginning of 2017.

Finally space allows me to include a special request for a species readers may like to look out for. In my Bird of the Month presentation on the **Brown** and **Stubble Quail** at the July COG meeting (see comparison table on page 5), I deliberately did not include the **Painted Button-quail** as I did not want to make it too complex. This is a convergent species which prefers woodlands and for which there are only 2 sightings on the eBird Australia database so far this year, one being from Bluetts Block where the habitat would be suitable. Often the first sign of this species is a distinctive shallow, circular, bare "soup-plate" depression made when they are foraging for food, by spinning alternately on either leg and using the other to scrape away the leaf litter. I have since looked for these without success in my local spot where they have been known to occur, perhaps due to the cold and very dry conditions. So this is a

species to look out for as the weather warms up; the new Bird Info data on the COG website confirms they occur widely in low numbers throughout the ACT.

Please keep up the reports for any overwintering or early arriving summer migrants or the departing altitudinal migrants mentioned above, for signs of early breeding, for roosts and roost flights, and for the last MFFs or single species flocks. As usual please ensure that all significant observations are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

Once again my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to my two main data sources, postings on the COG email Discussion List ("COG chatline") and the eBird Australia database, 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



Little Corella

David Cook

Cockatoo/Corella Roost Census

Thanks to everyone that helped make the survey a success, either by reporting sites or surveying them over the census period, and especially to those who took on extra sites at the last minute when a number of surveyors became unavailable. A summary of results and findings will be published in Canberra Bird Notes in due course.

Ryu Callaway

roostcensus@canberrabi.rds.org.au

Brown and Stubble Quails – a comparison

The table below is based on Jack Holland’s talk at the July COG meeting.

	Brown Quail	Stubble Quail
Back	Finely streaked with white	Boldly streaked with white
Below	Fine transverse black barring (chevrons) on a brownish background	Chest has longitudinal black streaks on a white belly (female duller)
Head	Faint white lines on centre of head; dark ear patches	Clear white lines down centre of head, above and below eyes
Throat	Light brown	Male rich buff, female pale
Numbers seen together	More likely in groups up to 10	More likely singly or in pairs
Flight	Often flush on close approach, may be in different directions Said to dive head first into cover	Often flush on close approach, may be in different directions Said to skid in tail first (but not reliable)
Typical habitat	Said to be rank grasslands near wetlands, but often in dry grass, sometimes short, or edge of tracks or around rocks on ridges (eg Cooleman Ridge)	Overgrown pasture, cereal crops, etc, usually drier
Calls (best diagnostic feature but they don’t call much)	2 note drawn-out rising whistle – “tuweeee”	3 note whistle – “pippy wheat” or “cuck-ee-whit”



Brown Quail

Tobias Hayashi



Stubble Quail

Tobias Hayashi

Field Trip Reports

Saturday 30 June – north from Kambah Pool

All days out birding are good days, and so it was on the last day of the 2017/18 financial year, even though the winds were unfortunately strong enough to make hearing bird calls difficult.

The highlight for the seven people who attended this trip was watching two **Wedge-tailed Eagles** playing in these winds, especially the display flight by one of the birds, almost certainly male, which continued for several minutes. After this, both birds flew off together and we didn't get to see them locking talons and tumbling.

Almost on a par were the excellent close views we had of **Scarlet Robin**; full plumage males, immature plumage male and female. All were very obliging for those carrying long lenses and stayed still, in good positions, close to us.

So the fact that we recorded only 17 species didn't make for a disappointing day. However, the leader was a little disappointed that the *Grevillea* had very few open flowers and it will obviously be about 2 to 4 weeks before the many buds open. The only obvious honeyeater was the **Eastern Spinebill**, mainly heard. Probably only two of us saw the one **White-eared Honeyeater**. The most abundant species on our morning was **Brown Thornbill**, of which several flocks were seen/heard. However, there was one good sized flock (11) of **Buff-rumped Thornbill**, and quite a few **Grey Shrike-thrush**. Good views of the river helped us add **Pacific Black Duck** and **Little Pied Cormorant** to the list.

Michael Robbins

Saturday 14 July – Cooma Cottage and Yass River Gorge

Six intrepid members met at the Hall Recreation Reserve for car-pooling. It was very, very cold and foggy, so we were glad of the drive to Cooma Cottage in warm cars. Pat from Boorowa met us at Cooma Cottage and we had a stroll around the perimeter of the areas accessible to the public. Visibility was very restricted, and it was still foggy, and bitterly cold, so very few birds were observed. **Common Starlings** and **House Sparrows** were abundant. We made a unanimous decision to adjourn to a coffee shop in Yass to give the fog a chance to lift. The coffee and raisin toast at the Galutzi Café were very comforting.

Our next venue was the Yass River Gorge. We walked along the northern side of the river almost as far as the dam wall and returned along the southern side. The first part of the southern side was very overgrown. The end of that side has clearly had a lot of attention from the Landcare group.

Superb Fairy-wrens were in abundance, with small parties in several places along the length of the trail. **Rosellas** were unperturbed by the cold and both species were bathing in the rapids in the stream that flowed into the river at Riverbank Park. Fortunately, by midday it had warmed up sufficiently for us to sit and have our lunch there. The highlight was a juvenile **Blue-faced Honeyeater** at Riverbank Park, which was feasting on lerps.

On the way home, we drove down Dog Trap Road and stopped at Merryville TSR. It was heavily stocked with cattle, so we walked around the perimeter of the paddock in front of the south gate and along the road to the northernmost gate. **Common Starlings** again featured very heavily. The total species count for the day was forty-three.

Wendy Whitham

Wednesday 18 July – Mt Ainslie

Eighteen members and guests gathered at the end of Phillip Avenue in quite mild weather with nice clear skies. We walked up to the major powerlines and followed them for a while before dropping down through the woodland hoping to meet a mixed feeding flock. Unfortunately the closest we got was when we tried a small side trip towards the summit of Mt Ainslie. Approximately 6 **Weebills** were feeding, in traditional helicopter flight mode, low down in a eucalypt while we were surprised to see 4 **Superb Fairy-wrens** on top of the canopy. A **Scarlet Robin** was also at the base of this tree and some **Striated Pardalotes** were nearby. It was hypothesised that the large number of **Noisy Miners** were one cause of the low diversity of smaller bush birds seen. The current drought would be another factor.

There were many parrots and relatives seen, including **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos**. The most interesting observations were of **Galahs** and a hybrid **Crimson x Eastern Rosella** which seemed to be investigating real estate while **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and **Crimson Rosella** were deep within nest hollows and were rated as occupying a nest.

Other breeding activity was a **Weebill** carrying nesting material and an **Australian Magpie** was seen building a nest within a clump of *Ameyemas* (mistletoe).

In total we recorded [24 species \(plus the hybrid\)](#) which is about the lowest diversity ever recorded on a Wednesday Walk.

Martin Butterfield

Sunday 22 July – Rowes Lagoon and Collector TSR

On a very cool and cloudy July morning, a goodly party of 23 COG members assembled at Sutton for the subsequent journey to Rowes Lagoon. The sun soon burnt away the morning mist, and the party arrived at the lagoon in crystal-clear, though chilly, conditions. Notable birds greeted the party on arrival at the car park, including two **Swamp Harriers** circling above. Bill led the party in a clockwise circuit of the lagoon in which the water level was low, but nonetheless apparent between the clumps of dormant reeds and rank grass. Among this vegetation could be seen good number of waterbirds, including **Great Egrets**, **Australian White Ibis**, and **Royal** and **Yellow-billed Spoonbill**. Small woodland and grassland birds zipped around on the margins of the lagoon, including a party of six **Flame Robins**.

Raptors became increasingly apparent above, with a **Little Eagle** (dark morph) putting in an impressive appearance. A **Whistling Kite** flew over, accompanied by two **Galahs**, and an **Australian Raven**. The party completed the circuit and returned to the cars with a list of 35 species.

The COG party then proceeded to the Collector Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR). Bill led the party in a circuit of the TSR boundary, this time in an anti-clockwise fashion. The TSR woodland was quiet – nonetheless, the party observed some good birds including a **Brown Falcon** flying by, as well as **Scarlet Robin** and **White-eared Honeyeater**. The list for the Collector TSR was 20 species.

David Dedenczuk



Yellow-tufted Honeyeater

Kym Bradley



Birdwatchers & nature lover's accommodation

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COG Trips

Each participant must sign a COG Field Trip Registration Form at the start of each trip and before proceeding on the trip which acknowledges the participant's responsibilities (wording follows). An Emergency Contact Name and Number are required.

"I declare that I am capable of undertaking the 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 that 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 COG chatline

[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)

and trips page of COG website.

A reminder that COG has a long-standing policy to give preference to members for field trips that can accommodate only a limited number of people.

Future Field Trips

Saturday 4 August – Lake Ginninderra beginners outing

This is the second of our bird walks for 2018 that is aimed specifically at beginners.

Meet Anthony Overs at 8.30am in the car park at the western end of Diddams Close on Ginninderra Peninsula (also known as Diddams Close Park).
(bookings essential on 0419202155 or anthony.overs@gmail.com)

We will walk the shores of the peninsula around to the eastern side, then back to the car park along Diddams Close. We should be able to view several species of waterbirds up close, focusing on the identification features of the common species such as the various ducks, "waterhens" and cormorants. A variety of bush birds are also likely to be seen. Bring your binoculars and field guide.

Sunday 12 August 2018: the birding highlights of western Palerang

On this field trip we will visit various TSRs, nature reserves and other delights in western Palerang, i.e. the Wamboin, Bywong, Bungendore, and nearby areas. This will be a morning outing, but you may care to bring your lunch and remain in the area, independently, in the afternoon, or lunch at any of Bungendore's fine eateries.

Meet in the Spotlight (Queanbeyan) carpark at 8.00 am for carpooling, or in the carpark of the Mick Sherd Oval in Bungendore's Gibraltar Street opposite the Post Office at 8.40 am. Suggested contribution to drivers from each passenger: \$10.

Registration for this trip is not required. It will be co-led by David McDonald and Martin Butterfield. For information please contact David on 0416 231 890 or email palrang18@canberrabirds.org.au.

Wednesday 15 August – Hume

Meet on Couranga Crescent, Hume at 9am.

Martin Butterfield

Sunday 26 August – Mt Taylor Nature Reserve

Meet at 8am at the Waldock Street car park in Chifley. This walk is a repeat of last year where we explored the lower slopes of the north-west area of Mt Taylor Nature Reserve, an important component of Canberra Nature Park. Bring water, sunscreen and morning tea. Numbers are not limited so no requirement to register. Contact Matthew Frawley at frawley.matthew@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Tuesday 28 to Friday 31 August – Wonga at Bawley Point

A visit to Wonga at Bawley Point in early spring is usually a very enjoyable and productive experience for birdwatchers and this will be our fourth visit. As usual, Margaret, our local guide will check out some hot spots in advance.

Some target species are **Black-faced Monarchs, Rufous Fantails, Scarlet Honeyeaters (reliable), Hooded Plovers** and **Cicadabirds**.

On this occasion we plan to extend our visit to the ANU Kialoa campus to include the temperate rainforest situated on the escarpment frequented by **Topknot Pigeons**.

As usual this visit is limited to 14 persons to be accommodated in two comfortable self-contained cottages with limited camping opportunities specially permitted and approved for COG members.

Registrations are invited from Wonga regulars and others perhaps with interests in social activities such as cards, scrabble and bridge, to be played warmed by a log fire with a glass of red.

Further enquiries from leader Terry Bell at
email terrybellbird@gmail.com (preferred) or 04272929

Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 September – Eden pelagics

COG has booked the weekend of September 1 and 2 for two one-day pelagic trips. The outings leave from Eden Harbour at 7am, and return mid-afternoon. Each trip can accommodate 12 people, and the cost per person per trip will be \$130.

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

Bookings will only be confirmed when full payment is received. **Payment must be made by July 31.** 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 end of July.

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) as soon as possible, and indicate which day you prefer (Saturday or Sunday). 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. Please note that because our March trip was cancelled because of poor weather, some places are already taken by people who had booked on that trip.

Sunday 9 September Kelly Road

Meet for carpooling at 8.30am at the Motor Registry on Couranga Cres in Hume. Kelly Road is off the Monaro Highway, not far past the NSW border. It runs for several kilometres parallel to the highway, and in the past has been a popular spot with COG members. No need to register - just be on time at Hume! Once we get to Kelly Rd we'll be driving along the road, with several stops, with walks along the road at points where the vegetation looks promising. Any questions to Sandra Henderson at shirmax2931@gmail.com

Saturday 15 September - Tuggeranong lakes by bike

Note change of date.

This outing will encompass some or all of the following lakes in the Tuggeranong area, Lake Tuggeranong, Isabella Pond, Upper Stranger Pond, Stranger Pond, Gordon Pond and Point Hut Pond, and will probably conclude early to mid-afternoon incorporating a lunch break at some point. It will predominantly feature wide shared paths, but there will be some sections on gravel or grass so a mountain bike will be necessary. Expect to do about 20-25kms total although there will be plenty of breaks as we stop at the different ponds along the way.

Registration is essential, limited places available.

Email roostcensus@canberrabirds.org.au to register and further details will be provided closer to the date.

Ryu Callaway

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



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Major brands such as Steiner, Zeiss, Bushnell, Nikon & Pentax are represented together with smaller hi-tech brands like Weaver, Vortex, Forest Optics, Visionary and Vanguard.

A selection of Spotting Scopes, Night Vision & Tripods are always available.

As a family business and NOT a franchise the owners Daniel and Joanna Payne will always be happy to source the specialist or unusual products that individual customers require having established a global network of suppliers .

The store also specialises in polarised eyewear with brands such as Maui Jim, RayBan & Oakley to name just a few.

The helpful and informative website www.binoculars4u.com.au is regularly updated but is no substitute for personal service and recommendation which is always on hand.

**We welcome customers new
and old to call us on
02 4441 7770**

Sunday 23 September – Urambi Hills Nature Reserve

Meet at 8am at the Meredith Circuit entrance to Urambi Hills Nature Reserve (off Learmonth Drive - if unsure of location, copy this into Google: -35.396822, 149.047919). This walk will explore the lower western slopes of Urambi Hills, an area on the very western edge of suburban Canberra, with uninterrupted views towards the Murrumbidgee River and the ranges beyond. Being an early spring walk, we will have the opportunity to look for newly returned migrants. Please bring water, sunscreen and morning tea. As parking is limited at the starting point of this walk, please register with Matthew Frawley at frawley.matthew@gmail.com.

25-28 September 2018 – Camping trip to a private property near Kangaroo Valley.

This three-night campout will be on a private block very close to Kangaroo Valley. Arriving in time to set up before dark on Tuesday afternoon, we will explore the property and nearby nature reserves on Wednesday and Thursday. On the way home on Friday we will stop off at places of interest along the way.

Campers will need to bring everything in, including water, and take everything out. Further details will be given to participants. Booking is essential before 10 September. Please contact the organiser, Lia Battisson on 0412 788 791 or liabattisson@grapevine.com.au.

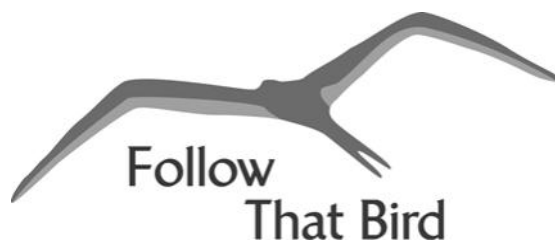
Advance notice of the COG spring camp

Tuesday 30 October to Sunday 4 November - Balranald Area

There will be two camps. The first is three days at Lake Paika, a farmstay north of Balranald. I believe they have access to wetlands on their property. The second three days will be at Yanga National Park. For those who do not wish to camp there is accommodation available at Lake Paika. There is no accommodation at Yanga, but Balranald is close by. I need to know bookings for accommodation at Lake Paika well in advance and will require payment before I confirm the booking. Those who wish to stay in Balranald can make their own arrangements.

In order to make the group manageable I would like to limit the numbers to a maximum of 20 persons.

Bookings for the trip and Lake Paika accommodation to be made by contacting Noel Luff at noelluff@hotmail.com.au



September 2018

Barraba – NSW Birding Hot Spot

\$2575

2-6th Sept *Guide: Christina Port*

Broken Hill & Menindee Lakes

\$4610

11-19th Sept *Guide Christina Port*

November 2018

Cape York

TBA

28 Nov–3rd Dec *Guide: Rob Hynson*

January 2019

King & Flinders Islands

\$4105

22-27 Jan *Guide: TBA*

Birds & Camaraderie

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) 6174 2171, or barbdebruine@hotmail.com

Woodland Surveys- winter round - Part 2

compiled by Jenny Bounds

Campbell Park/Mt Ainslie NR

The lower eastern slopes of Mt Ainslie (9 sites) were surveyed by Robin Hide and Michael Lenz on Sunday, 24 June. It was a cold but unusually still, fine morning. Twenty species were recorded at sites and a further 12 between sites. No mixed feeding flocks were encountered. The most widespread species were **Crimson Rosella**, **Spotted Pardalote** and **Noisy Miner** (at 8 sites) and **Striated Pardalote** (at 7 sites). Overall, small birds were largely absent or only present in small numbers. Of interest were 20 **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** that made their way in small parties from nearby pines into the survey area; and one bird each of **White-naped** and **Brown-headed Honeyeater** and **Golden Whistler**.

Rural leasehold near Tharwa

David McDonald conducted the winter survey on the last day of the survey period, Saturday 30 June, in very poor birding conditions, cold, windy and cloudy, and a landscape terribly dry. It was the lowest bird abundance since surveys commenced in 1989 and probably the lowest species diversity in all that time. Of the nine sites, three had no birds in the allotted time period, and three more had just one or two species. Fortunately, David did record (within sites) two **Speckled Warblers**, an **Eastern Yellow Robin** (very unusual there, especially considering the dry conditions), and two **Double-barred Finches**, also very unusual there. The finches were part of a mixed feeding flock, along with **Buff-rumped**, **Brown** and Yellow **Thornbills**. Also present were two **Scarlet Robins**, presumably down from the ranges for winter.

Rural leasehold near Mt Tennent

Julie McGuinness surveyed on Sunday 24 July, commencing in very frosty but clear weather. It was a very quiet survey. The dry summer and autumn had left the survey sites looking bare, with the exotic grassy understorey well eaten down. Most of the mature Blakely's Red Gums looked quite straggly. The surveys threw up a total of 19 species only, 10 seen within the sites and another nine between sites. **Eastern Rosella** was the most prolific with 20 sightings. Most species were seen in only ones or twos, and very few were small birds. No threatened species were seen, nor were there any mixed species feeding flocks. One interesting observation was a pair of Galahs, one head down in a hollow gnawing it out.

New Places – June-July

Sandra Henderson

18-24 June

Galvin Gorge

A few days into our great Kimberley camping trip, we walked along a reed-filled creekline, where I was assured a **Black Bittern** would appear. Sure enough, the bird flushed and flew up onto a branch, allowing us some excellent views. Other species seen at this location included an **Azure Kingfisher** and **Northern Rosellas**, but we were also able to get a good look at a Mertens' Water Monitor, and a Magnificent Tree Frog high in the rocks over a pool.



Black Bittern

Sandra Henderson

25 June – 1 July

Gibb River Road at Pentecost River crossing.

One of many new places on a recent camping trip in the Kimberleys, the river crossing is wide and rocky, and the birds seen from the car at this point included a **Black-necked Stork**, a couple of **Caspian Terns**, **Black** and **Whistling Kites**, and a flock of **Little Corellas**. These corellas were white, in contrast to those we saw at many other places which had been feeding in burnt areas, and which ranged from just grubby to almost black!

2 – 8 July

Beltana Park, Googong

Beltana Park is in the centre of the new Queanbeyan suburb of Googong, and it finishes with a pond surrounded by reeds. I note that a couple of other birders have submitted records in the past, including a sighting of a **Spotted Crake** by Christine D. The thick reed cover suggests it will be very good for the more secretive water birds. I've contacted the management to ask if they will consider a branching log in the pond – there is currently nowhere for perching species such as cormorants and darters to sit. Well worth a visit in warmer weather.

9 - 15 July

Queanbeyan River track.

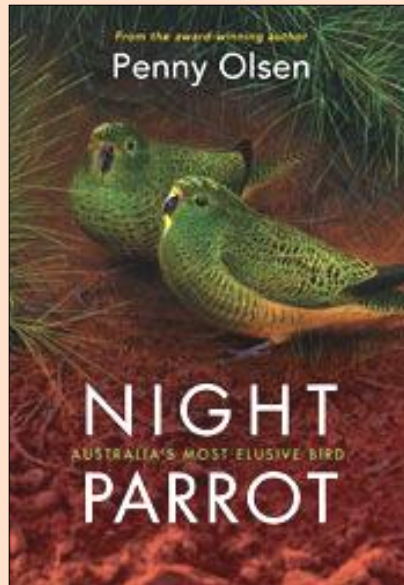
I walked along the river, most of the way on a formed track, from the Queanbeyan Leagues Club to a point about 1.6km along the river towards Barracks Flat (by this stage my one-year old grand-daughter had tired of the outing). The highlight was a number of **Satin Bowerbirds**, including one high in a tree carrying nesting material, and the lowlight the pair of **Spotted Doves** near the golf course. There would seem to be a **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** roost not far from the Leagues Club, as there were many feathers on the ground next to the river.

16 – 22 July

Montgomery Rise, Googong

This is quite some distance from Beltana Park which I visited earlier in the month. The ponds on Montgomery Rise are formed along Montgomery Creek and, in addition to a very large pond, there are some shallow ponds near one end, and water in Montgomery Creek which runs for quite some distance – I followed it for over a kilometre. The shallow ponds, with very little water at this stage, still had enough for a pair of **Black-fronted Dotterels**, but will be better when some rain falls. The large pond, separated into several sections, has an attractive fountain which serves to oxygenate the water, and a few ducks and coots were on the very chilly water – there was a lot of ice on the water in the first section. The creek is narrow, with lots of vegetation and several little pools – excellent habitat for crakes/rails, although I did not see any. A very easy walk, as there are concrete paths much of the way on both sides, and a little suspension bridge meant I could cross the creek and return on the other side. The highlights of the morning were seeing a **Nankeen Kestrel** swoop down, pick up a mouse, and sit on a post to begin eating it, and an **Australian Hobby** in a dead tree beside the creek, busy plucking feathers from a **Common Starling**.

ORDER NOW!
Due September



Night Parrot

Australia's Most Elusive Bird

Penny Olsen

The competitiveness and secrecy, the triumphs and adventures of the history of the Night Parrot and its followers.

For well over a century, the Night Parrot lured its seekers into Australia's vast, arid outback. From the beginning it was a mysterious bird. Fewer than 30 specimens were collected before it all but disappeared, offering only fleeting glimpses and the occasional mummified body as proof of its continued existence. Protected by spinifex and darkness, the parrot attained almost mythical status: a challenge to birdwatchers and an inspiration to poets, novelists and artists.

Night Parrot documents the competitiveness and secrecy, the triumphs and adventures of the history of the bird and its followers, culminating in the recent discovery of live birds at a few widely scattered locations. It describes what we are now unravelling about the mysteries of its biology and ecology and what is still left to learn. Complemented by guest essays, illustrations and photographs from a wide variety of sources, this book sheds light on Australia's most elusive bird.

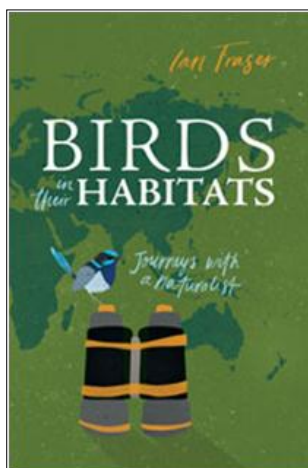
Due in September-Members' Price: \$35

Publications for sale

COG provides a range of bird watching related publications for sale to members at discounted prices (around 10-30% off RRP).

Below are highlighted a sample of popular publications available from the sales desk at COG meetings. We get new books in all the time and sometimes popular books sell out, but they can easily be re-ordered. If you are looking for a particular book, talk to the sales desk team at the meeting, as they can look at ordering it for you or contact Kathy on

sales@canberrabirds.org.au

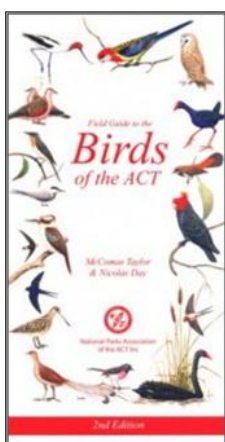


Birds in their Habitats: Journeys with a Naturalist

Ian Fraser

Everywhere we go there are birds, and they all have mysteries to be unravelled. These mysteries include the way they look, from bizarre to apparently mundane, why they live where they live, and the things they do, many of which are far too incredible ever to be imagined as fiction. *Birds in Their Habitats* is a collection of stories and experiences, which introduce fascinating aspects of birdlife, ecology and behaviour. Informed by a wealth of historical and contemporary research, Ian Fraser takes the reader on a journey through four continents. This is a book of discovery of birds and the places they live. And with humour and personal insight, it is a book about the sometimes strange world of the people who spend a life absorbed in birds.

Members' Price \$33.



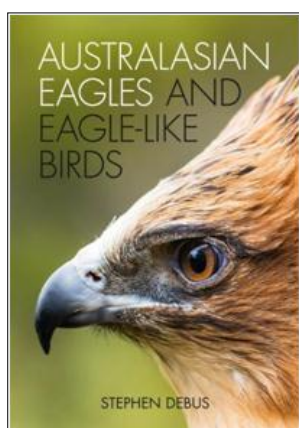
Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT

McComas Taylor & Nicolas Day

This revised second edition illustrates in colour the 217 birds likely to be seen in and around the ACT. It has easy-to-follow descriptions in a compact format. Only local birds are shown making this Field Guide much simpler to use than comprehensive national guides.

McComas Taylor has been watching birds in Canberra for over 30 years and has written, broadcast and lectured on the subject. Nicholas Day is widely recognised as one of Australia's foremost wildlife artists.

Members' price: \$20



Australasian Eagles and Eagle-like Birds

Stephen Debus

Eagles are awe-inspiring birds that have influenced much human endeavour. Australia is home to three eagle species, and in Melanesia there are four additional endemic species. A further three large Australian hawks are eagle-like. All of the six Australian species covered in this book are threatened in at least some states (one also nationally). This book places the Australasian species in their regional and global context, reviews their population status and threats, provides new information on their ecology, and suggests what needs to be done in order to ensure the future of these magnificent birds.

Members' price: \$35.

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

2018-2019 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

C Taylor
G McAllister
M Hellyer
E Guenther
G Feltham

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for September 2018 edition:

Wednesday 29 August 2018

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:

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@home.com.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

Publication Sales

Kathy Walter

sales@canberrabirds.org.au

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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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