



Gang-gang

June 2018

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

JUNE MEETING

Wednesday 13 June 2018

7.30 pm

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

The first speaker will be **Paul Fennell**, editor of COG's Annual Bird Report (ABR). Paul will give a short presentation on the **Highlights and Lowlights of the most recent 2016-2017 ABR**.

The main presentation will be by **Richard Beggs**, a PhD student at the ANU's Fenner School for Environment and Society. This is entitled "**War against the Noisy Miner: the *casus belli* may not be as clear as we thought.**"

1878: "gallant little birds" (WaggaWagga Advertiser)

1915: "the carol of the magpie is eclipsed by the song of the miner" (Emu)

2004: "the mafia of the bird world" (ABCRN)

2015: "I hate those f***ing things" (RedditAustralia)

The public image of the Noisy Miner has taken a severe beating in recent decades on account of its violent tendencies towards smaller woodland birds, many of them of conservation concern. Yet it is the loss, fragmentation and degradation of

Continued Page 2

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

Again it has been very dry for the 5 weeks since Anzac Day covered by this report, though there was a change in temperature from the unseasonally warm conditions when a big front moved through about a week into May to much more like what might be expected for late autumn. However, there has hardly been any rain anywhere since 11 May, and as a consequence, as illustrated by the COG bus trip (see the report elsewhere in this issue), general bird activity in the COG area of interest (Aoi) has been very quiet.

The main interest over this period has been reports of at least five species which I hadn't alerted readers to look out for in my May column. The most noteworthy of these was the **Brown Gerygone**, first reported by Ash Allnutt on 26 April, and observed by many since that time, often identified by its characteristic "which is it" call as it fed high in the canopy in the ANBG's rainforest gully area. The recent 2016-2017 Annual Bird Report (ABR) notes it as a rare winter visitor, and as I have noted in previous years, this species

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White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike

Shorty

Everyone welcome

native habitat caused by another invasive species that has fostered both the success of the Noisy Miner and the demise of small woodland birds. Nonetheless, the Department of the Environment issued a fatwa against Noisy Miners in 2014, opening the way for culling as a management response. In anticipation of a jihad against the species, there was jubilation amongst ecologists, and bird lovers celebrated, eager for that perfect experience of diversity and abundance during their Sunday outings before sitting down to their dinner of roast bird.

We do not have clear empirical evidence that removing Noisy Miners from remnant patches of native woodland benefits small woodland birds. Richard's project aims to fill that gap. He monitored artificial nest predation rates, foraging by small woodland birds and aggressive interactions of all species before and after an experimental cull of Noisy Miners. He found that culling at a patch scale had little impact on Noisy Miner population due to immediate recolonization.



Spangled Drongo

Spangled Drongo

Lindsay Hansch



Brown Gerygone

Julian Robinson

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

does a “reverse” migration in coming to Canberra from the coastal regions in late autumn/winter. The reasons for this are not completely understood. A maximum of 4 has been reported there, with the most recent report being of 3 birds on 28 May, so I expect they may spend the winter there.

Another species I had not alerted readers to look out for was the **Spangled Drongo** reported by Jean Casburn at Narrabundah Hill on 8 May. Unlike the above only two other observers managed to see (or at least report) this species, the last on 10 May, which is in contrast to when it was observed in nearby Duffy in 2012. The 2016-2017 ABR notes it as a non-breeding vagrant last reported in 2014, though in the July 2018 issue of CBN there is a Rarities Panel endorsed report from Carwoola on 7 February 2018.

On the same day Duncan McCaskill reported a pair of dark-morph **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes** on the western side of the Lake Ginninderra peninsula. This species, which the 2016-2017 ABR describes as a rare, non-breeding autumn migrant, which as a nomadic species has a patchy continental distribution so that it is only occasionally recorded in the Canberra region, was reported from there by a few more observers, most recently on 19 May. In contrast only Peter Milburn and Alastair Smith saw the **Little Friarbird**, which the 2016-2017 ABR notes as a rare, breeding summer migrant more commonly found to the N and W of the ACT, at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 5 May. The ABR notes that there are only a few records per year and this seems to be the only report so far in 2018, and I can't recall many (any?) for the latter half of last year.



White-headed Pigeon

Robin Hide

On 27 May Robin Hide posted, with a photo, two **White-headed Pigeons** on his power lines in Ainslie. The 2016-2017 ABR notes this species as a rare, non-breeding visitor presumably coming from populations on the coastal plains and ranges, again with only scattered records per year. In respect of other "unusual" species the last report for the **Azure Kingfisher** at Point Hut was on 1 May, and for the **Singing Honeyeater** at the Macfarlane Burnet Avenue Pond (Macgregor) on 25 April.

On 29 April David McDonald posted about reports of a **Powerful Owl** at a Wamboin property for the past few weeks, and then of two calling to each other, which he identified from the audio recording provided. Subsequently on 11 May Martin Butterfield posted about a report of one from Captains Flat, in addition to the report in April of them calling near Cuumbeun Nature Reserve (at the top of the Queanbeyan escarpment) for the past several weeks. There have also been further reports of the **Grey Goshawk** and **Black Falcon**, as well as late report of a **Barn Owl** at Lake Tuggeranong opposite Bunnings.



Barn Owl

Stan Jarzynski



Australian Ornithological Services

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

23 May to 6 June 2018

Mitchell Plateau charter for black
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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

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Strzelecki Track Outback tour

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17 & 18 November 2018

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Reports of migrating honeyeaters ceased around the end of the first week of May. These included **Red Wattlebirds**, the highest number reported being by Lindell Emerton of an estimated continuous flock of 200+ heading east from the Kelly's Swamp carpark on 28 April. Not surprisingly these and smaller numbers of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** have continued to be reported.

Of the earlier leaving migratory species reported in my previous column as still present during April, there have only been reports during late April/May of the **Tree Martin**, the most recent being of a single bird at the Forde Pond by Julie Clark on 9 May. Of the local cuckoo species, only the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, which I have noted many times as the least migratory, was still reported from 2 locations, most recently on 11 May by Alastair Smith at Campbell Park. The **Australian Reed-Warbler** continues to seem to have noticeably delayed its departure, still having been reported from 5 locations, most recently a single bird at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands by Tod Spencer on 18 May.

Of the species usually leaving during early April, despite the colder weather the **Western Gerygone** also seems to have delayed its departure, with reports from 2 locations, the most recent being by Alastair Smith at Campbell Park on 28 May, but there have been no confirmed reports of the **Noisy Friarbird** since 23 April. In contrast the **Rufous Whistler** and **Grey Fantail** were still being reported up to the time of writing this column, so it will be interesting to see how many of these species, as well as the **Mistletoebird** (reported from 9 locations over the period, the last on 28 May at Callum Brae), will overwinter. Similarly it appears the **Superb Parrot** will overwinter in increasingly high numbers, with flocks of up to 25 reported during the period, including on 27 May.

The **Dusky Woodswallow** has been reported from at least 12 locations throughout May, including 39 birds by Alastair

Smith at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 27 May. So compared with recent winters it appears that some will stay over in 2018, as will the **Olive-backed Oriole**, reported from around 6 locations, most recently on 22 May at Callum Brae again by Alastair. So please keep an eye out for the last of these two species, as well as the others mentioned above.

Of the altitudinal migrants that move from the mountains to spend the winter in Canberra the **Flame Robin** seems to have moved only slowly and in low numbers into the open areas around Canberra (5 locations only), though I was able to find 6 in there most favoured local spot on the lower W side of Mt Arawang on 20 May. The **Rose Robin** has been reported from 4 locations to the N and E of Canberra City, including from its usual stronghold of the ANBG. Elizabeth Keen shared her delight on the COG chat line of seeing an adult male at her place at Harold's Cross, first foraging in a maple, then perched, tail flicking and unmistakable, in the adjacent ribbon gum. In contrast there have still been no reports of the **Pink Robin** now for over a year.

There have been further no urban reports of the **Crescent Honeyeater** during May, the closest being Casuarina Sands and the nearby Bibaringa. However, on 20 May Nicki Taws reported that, in the large mixed feeding flock which came through the Red Box (attracted by the lerps) near her house in Cook, there were 8 species of honeyeater, including a single **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**. A single bird of this species was also seen at the Point Hut crossing by Jean Casburn and Desley O'Mara on 17 May, but could not be located there before or during the COG bus trip. In contrast there have been no more reports of the **Swift Parrot** in May, and just a single report on 27 April of a **Restless Flycatcher**, by Marnix Zwankhuisen at his work in Tuggeranong, where it has been observed in previous late autumns/winters.

The only breeding that has come to my attention over the past month has been of the **Black-shouldered Kite** (well known to breed in autumn/winter) at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands. Could all reader please heed the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust's request to respect their space.

Mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) have continued to be reported during May. On 10 May Ryu Callaway noted that over the past 3 days as the weather had finally started to get chilly, the large flocks of cockatoos starting to form on the roadside and median strips had been quite noticeable. My observations since suggest that by the end of the month they were still much smaller there than during a normal winter, though there have been up to 125 **Galahs** on the Rivett Oval. Nick Payne posted that on the afternoon of 10 May the largest flock of **Little Corellas** that he had seen locally (Griffith) flew overhead. He took a few photos and analysed these to estimate a flock size of about 550 birds. Geoffrey Dabb noted that he had a similar experience in semi-darkness early that same morning of a noisy elongated



Little Friarbird

Harvey Perkins

aggregation, he thought of over 500 birds, overflying Griffith. It was the largest group he'd seen, and he thought were heading from a roosting area possibly at Black Mountain to feeding grounds at Symonston rural leases.

Flocks of **Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoos** have also become noticeable during May, with around 100 being observed at the Aranda bushland and on the Paddys River Road in the past week. Over 100 **Red-rumped Parrots** were also reported from Hawker Oval by Barbara Allan on 11 May.

Finally due to the very dry conditions you might have expected waterbird numbers to be high, but at least from COG chat line reports this does not seem the case, though Geoffrey Dabb counted over 100 **Pink-eared Ducks** in Alison Milton's photo of them in flight over the Jerrabomberra wetlands. On 10 May Martin Butterfield stopped at Trucking Yard Lane and, *inter alia*, saw 26 **Plumed Whistling** and 136 **Pacific Black Ducks**. In the paddock around Bungendore Meadow Dam there were at least 87 **Australian Shelduck**. Martin noted that he had spoken with the landowner about the fluctuation in numbers on his property and he explained that if he feeds the stock one type of grain (oats if he recalls correctly) the ducks are present in big numbers, but with another sort (wheat) they are not interested.

So please watch out for any overwintering spring/summer migrants, for the remaining arriving altitudinal migrants, for MFFs and single species flocks, for roost sites and flights, and for any winter 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 chat line") 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



Grey Goshawk

David Pastern

Roost Census

The concerted survey effort of Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Little Corella roost sites around Canberra will be held over the weekend of **6-9 July**. A list of sites will be made available at

docs.google.com/document/d/1xWS5vhRnuil7AzyED6HklIB_6dISVwDj4OBjzuRDItU

Please advise your availability to survey a site to roostcensus@canberrabirds.org.au

Ryu Callaway

Field Trip Reports

Bluetts Block—29 April 2018

On this cloudy morning with rain a low probability, 17 esteemed birders gathered for the 2.45 hour walk around some parts of Bluetts Block. This was as much an orientation visit for those who were new to the 'block' as much as for birdwatching. Surprisingly in spite of the very dry conditions 33 species including 8 or more very attractive Scarlet Robins, Yellow Robins, Golden Whistlers, and White-eared Honeyeaters were seen and heard. Also seen were White-throated Treecreepers, a Speckled Warbler, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Crimson Rosella, Buff-rumped, Brown and Striated Thornbill.

Views from two places in the 'block' were much appreciated by the group. From a high point along the main track it was possible to look over the newly developing suburbs of Molongolo and further towards Black Mountain Tower and distant suburbs. Then again this enthusiastic group of walkers were keen to walk up to the trig station and take in the almost 365 degree views to the west and again over Canberra. The Wide Brown Land Sculpture and Arboretum were visible from here. This must have been a very pleasing morning as there were smiles on faces at the conclusion of the trip.

Many thanks once again to Sandra Henderson for being the scribe.

Jean Casburn

Beginners' outing, Botanic Gardens—5 May

A small group joined Anthony for this annual introduction to birdwatching. As usual there was no difficulty finding plenty of **New Holland Honeyeaters** and **Eastern Spinebills**. The highlight of the morning was a pair of **Bassian Thrushes**, which hopped across the path (one even sat on Tom's seat for a while) and provided everyone with great views.

Sandra Henderson

Jenolan Caves area— 15-18 May

Nine COG members travelled to Jenolan to accompany Michael Robbins on his regular break at this historic location. On the trip down (and on the trip back) some of us stopped at the Bummaroo Ford Camping Area in Abercrombie River National Park, where **Varied Sittellas** were found on both occasions.

We had plenty of time over the four days to explore the River Walk and Blue Lake behind Caves House, where the local platypus and wombat appeared regularly. **Superb Lyrebirds** were seen regularly, even in the tiny rose garden metres from the front of our accommodation!

A day was spent at Kanangra Boyd National Park, with spectacular scenery and LOTS of steps on most of the walks. Some in the party were treated to great views of **Bassian Thrush**, which posed quite nicely for photos. After checking



Superb Lyrebird

Matthew Larkin



Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo

Sandra Henderson



Bassian Thrush

Sandra Henderson



COG members at Kanangra Walls lookout

Sandra Henderson

out the Boyd River camping area, and viewing the valley from the lookout we ventured down to the Dance Floor Cave, then a number of us undertook the more strenuous Plateau Walk. **New Holland Honeyeaters** were darting everywhere, and when we stopped on the rocks for lunch several groups of **White-naped Honeyeaters** passed overhead. There were short excursions down several of the firetrails running off the main track, and on the Kowmung firetrail Matthew spotted a **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo** in a hollow.



Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo

Matthew Larkin

The other main excursion was a walk through McKeown's Valley to Mammoth Flat. The highlight was a group of four **Red-browed Treecreepers** (three more further along the track) and two **Crested Shrike-tits**. This walk also gave us the opportunity to see a lyrebird display mound, and admire the glorious tail feathers of several of the birds. There was a tantalizing clue that the Sooty Owl which frequents the area was active (a Sugar Glider tail was found on the track), but we did not find the bird itself on a subsequent night excursion.

Sandra Henderson



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Wednesday Walk— 16 May

A total of 15 Members gathered at the parking area of the North Weston Ponds near the RSPCA on a beautiful Canberra Autumn morning.

We circled the first large pond and observed the numerous water birds perched on the barrier across the middle of the smaller pond. 1 **Black-fronted Dotterel** was on the concrete drain joining the 2 ponds. There were 16 **Pink-eared Ducks** along with **Grey Teals**, **Hardheads**, Pacific Black Ducks, **Coots** and **Hoary-headed Grebes** and a **Little Pied Cormorant** all adding to the count. **Australasian Pipits** were seen in the open area to the west of the pond.

The track along the southern side of the river yielded a few lbb's but it wasn't until we ventured along the north side that we encountered a large mff. 2 **White-fronted Chats**, many **Superb Fairy-wrens**, **Brown Thornbills**, **Silvereyes**, at least 5 **Double-barred Finches** and more **Australian Magpies**.

One **Australian Wood Duck** (Manned Duck) had us wondering if it was a hybrid of some sort, but on closer study it looked to have some odd and re-arranged wing feathers on the right side only (the left side was quite normal).

All up we recorded 38 species for the day - the full species list is on ebird.

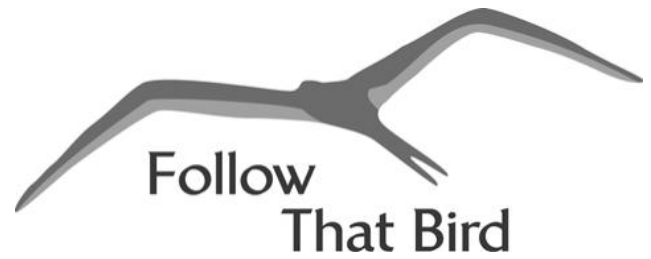
<https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45723373>

Lindell Emerton

Bird Watching by Bike – Mulligan's Flat & Goorooyarroo—Sunday 20 May

A small but keen group of six took to our bikes for a late autumn trip through Mulligan's Flat and Goorooyarroo nature reserves. After entering the sanctuary, we rode along the Old Coach Road, hoping to come upon a mixed feeding flock but finding something better - a group of four Bush-Stone Curlews just near the road. The woodland was otherwise very quiet as we rode through.

At the eastern end of the reserve we found a large group of **Buff-rumped** and **Yellow-rump Thornbills** in the open grassy area, along with a pair of **Scarlet Robins**. A couple of **Mistletoebirds** were in the scattered mistletoe laden trees. We then headed out of the sanctuary into Goorooyarroo where we found **Brown-headed Honeyeaters**, more **Scarlet Robins** and had good views of a couple of **White-eared Honeyeaters** and a mixed flock of thornbills.



September 2018

Barraba – NSW Birding Hot Spot \$2575

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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

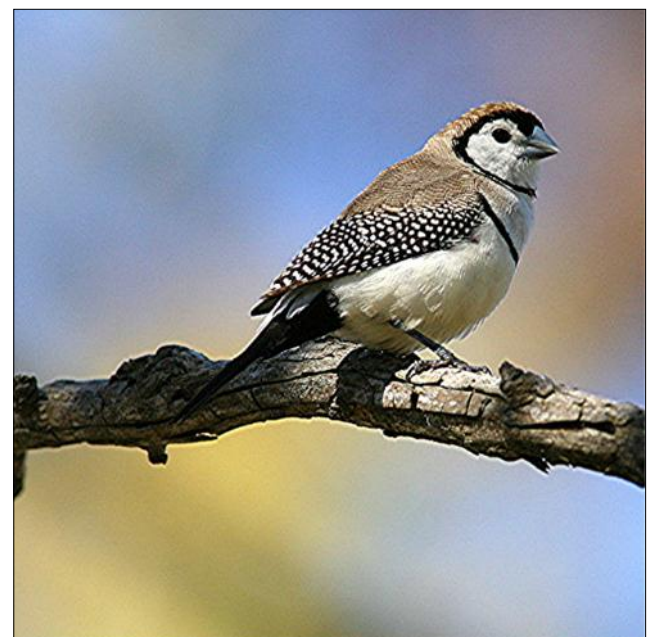
22-27 Jan *Guide: TBA*

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Double-barred Finch

Geoffrey Dabb

We headed back to Mulligan's and visited the very empty large dam. There were two **Pink-eared Ducks** swimming on the small patch of remaining water and five **Black-fronted Dotterels** running around the muddy edges. No other water birds were seen. All up we recorded 33 species for the day.

Duncan McCaskill

Late Autumn Mystery bus trip—Sunday 27 May – Day outing

Two full buses joined Jenny Bounds and myself on this annual COG event, starting under perfect clear, still and relatively warm late autumn conditions. Given the very dry conditions it had been harder than ever to find some spots where we hoped there would be a sufficient species to show participants. In fact while we visited places where we had seen good numbers of birds on our rekkies, on the day it turned out these were relatively quiet, whereas in at least one case we saw lots where it had been very quiet.

Our first spot where the birds were much less co-operative than we had hoped was Point Hut. In contrast to our rekkies, except for brief but close views of a male **Grey Shrike-thrush**, species were very elusive and kept their distance until a couple of **White-plumed Honeyeaters** (one an immature) landed in a dead tree relatively close to us. They were joined, somewhat surprisingly given the seeming lack of flowering, by a pair of **New Holland Honeyeaters**. Shortly after all participants had close views of a **White-eared Honeyeater** feeding under the bark of a gum, and then somewhat distant views of four **European Goldfinches** in a bare tree in the river bed.

These birds were seen while walking down stream along the W river bank. We then moved along the old Point Hut road with the two casuarina-lined ponds, and while the tally of mainly common species grew to 31, in most cases views were fleeting or distant. The most interesting sighting to me was two flocks of around 20 **Little Corellas** flying low (around head height) and fast from the open area to the NW past us and over the Point Hut dam wall.

Our next destination was Gigerline where we first stopped at the Naas River bridge. Again birds had been active there only a couple of days before but was quiet with the best sighting a **Black-fronted Dotterel** in the river bed. A small group of **Flame Robins** with several beautifully coloured males were then seen feeding over 100 metres away in the open ground up the hill. While looking at these a **Golden-headed Cisticola**, the most unexpected bird for the day, was seen much closer, and another heard. However, again it was very hard for all participants to get good views as it often dived into the grass, and when it did sit up it blended in almost perfectly on the dry thistles on which it briefly perched.

We then moved to the hill overlooking the Tharwa Sandwash, everyone enjoying the views of the river in the perfect still and



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European Goldfinch

Julian Robinson

Hard-copy of the *Gang-gang* newsletter to cease from 1 July 2018

The June 2018 issue will be the final print version of the *Gang-gang* newsletter.

For more information see the short item on the topic in the April issue.

sunlit conditions. However, birds were again unexpectedly quiet as participants walked down towards the parking area adjacent to the river, where we encountered the day's only true mixed feeding flock (MFF) we had been seeking. This comprised of more than 10 species all feeding together in the different layers, including **Superb Fairy-wrens**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills** on the ground, many **Striated Thornbills** feeding in the canopy above them, and a **White-throated Treecreeper** moving up the tree trunks. Also amongst them was a pair of **Scarlet Robins** affording the best views of the day (they had been more distant and into the sun at the Naas River bridge), as well as a couple of **Eastern Yellow Robins**, again with the best views of them for the day.

After seeing a total of 27 species at Gigerline we moved to our third spot of the day, Woods Reserve off the Tidbinbilla Road. Unfortunately as we drove there high cloud came over and blocked out the sun, so again in contrast to our rekkie, this spot was very quiet as we had our lunch, and during our walk around the reserve facilities area. We only had fleeting glimpses of the **Satin Bowerbirds** which had come down to our morning tea 10 days earlier. It wasn't until we were nearly back at the buses that we found many **Superb Fairy-wrens** out in the open we had seen, together with some very confiding **White-browed Scrub-wrens**. In total there was a disappointing 20 species for Woods Reserve before we drove back to our meeting point at the National Library.

Counting all the species, including those seen on the road from the Point Hut turnoff, made it a total of 51, with surprisingly only one duck species (**Australian Wood Duck**) and only 1 raptor, a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** at Gigerline. This really reflected the very dry prevailing conditions despite the excellent birding weather. While a number were only heard and others didn't show well, participants had a very enjoyable day, these bus trips are also very much a social occasion. My very sincere thanks again to Jenny Bounds for her considerable help in planning and leading on the day, and for driving the second bus. Special thanks also go to Alison Russell-French and Lindell Emerton for keeping and providing the bird lists for the day.

Jack Holland



Yellow-rumped Thornbill

Geoffrey Dabb



Buff-rumped Thornbill

Lindsay Hansch



Striated Thornbill

David Cook

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/](http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/)

[canberrabirds/2012-03/](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

Sunday 3 June - Hall Village and property on Wallaroo Road

Meet for carpooling at Hall Recreation Reserve, Gladstone St, Hall (on LHS from Canberra) at 9.00 am. We will travel west along Wallaroo Road into McCarthy Road to a private property which has Murrumbidgee River frontage. Later we will visit Hall Common. Bring morning tea and lunch, warm clothing and strong boots.

Contact Bill Graham on 0466874723 or cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Saturday 23 June - Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve- Superb Lyrebird survey

Since the January 2003 bushfires, Peter Fullagar and Chris Davey have been monitoring the return of the Superb Lyrebird to an area of the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. They wish to get an idea of the present distribution within the Reserve and are asking COG members to join them for a morning's survey. They are calling for expressions of interest to join them at 8.00am at the Reserve car park to walk the trails and to record the location of calling birds. Depending on the trails walked the survey should take about three hours.

This outing will be a repeat of the very successful surveys conducted at this time of the year since 2004. For previous survey results see *Gang-gang* p8, July 2017.

Note the change of date for this outing.

Chris Davey (chris_davey@aapt.net.au)

Saturday 30 June - North from Kambah Pool

Meet Michael Robbins at 9am in the car park at the Kambah Pool southern car park. To get to this car park follow the Kambah Pool Road until you cross the cattle grid at the entry to the Bullen Range Nature Reserve, then take the second turning left.

From the car park we'll walk the track which heads north in the direction of Casuarina Sands. This part of the track has more ups/downs than the track which heads south towards Pine Island. It also has some very good bushy habitat in the earlier section and then some open grassland. How far we go will depend on the group and what birds are where on the day. Hopefully there will be some **Yellow-tufted** and **Crescent Honeyeaters** around.

No booking required. If you have any question contact Michael Robbins (mrobbins at home.netspeed.com.au)

Saturday 14 July - Cooma Cottage and Yass Gorge

Meet for carpooling at Hall Recreation Reserve, Gladstone St, Hall (on LHS from Canberra) at 8.00 am. We will visit the grounds and gardens of Cooma Cottage on the Yass Valley Way, Marchmont. It is a National Trust

property of 100 acres which has Yass River frontage. Later we will visit Yass Gorge. Bring morning tea and lunch, warm clothes and suitable footwear. Easy walking.

Contact Bill Graham on 0466874723 or cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Sunday 22 July Rowes Lagoon and Collector TSR

Meet for carpooling at Bywong St, Sutton, in the Sutton Primary School car park at 9.00 am. The circuit of Rowes Lagoon Circuit is 3.5 km and takes almost 2 hours. Collector TSR is on the Breadalbane Road north of Collector. Bring morning tea and lunch. Wear strong boots with gaiters or rubber boots as it is tiger snake habitat.

Contact Bill Graham on 0466874723 or cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

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 (bookings essential on 0419202155 or anthony.overs@gmail.com) at 8.30am in the car park at the western end of Diddams Close on Ginninderra Peninsula (also known as Diddams Close Park). 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 palerang18@canberrabirds.org.au.

Nature Lodge Optics

Nature Lodge Optics, a family owned business based in Huskisson, Jervis Bay, has been supplying quality binoculars to customers in the Canberra region since 2007.

Originally established in the UK in 1946, the owners established a branch in Australia several years ago and have become the region's leading independent binocular store.

Open 7 Days, the store always has over 100 pairs of binoculars in stock with a particular emphasis on



Birdwatching products.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sunday 26 August – Mt Taylor Nature Reserve

Meet at 8am at the Waddock 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.

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.

RENEW YOUR COG MEMBERSHIP

Now is the time to renew your COG membership. Fees remain the same for this year at \$40 for an individual and \$45 for family membership.

The simplest way, and the COG preferred method to do this is to complete and submit the online membership renewal form (<http://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/joining-cog-and-renewing/>) and pay using electronic funds transfer. You can still also renew in person at a meeting (there will be someone taking memberships at the April, May and June meetings), or you can send your renewal by mail with a cheque.

As mentioned above, *Gang-gang* will be available only in electronic form from July 2018. If you still receive Canberra Bird Notes by mail please consider whether this is necessary. As has been pointed out in recent annual financial reports, the costs of providing direct member services exceed the amount collected in subscription fees, so every member who elects to read the electronic versions instead of receiving a print copy reduces costs to COG.

New Places – May

Sandra Henderson

30 April – 6 May Montreal Goldfield

Where is it: near Wallaga Lake, just north of Bermagui.

This was included on the itinerary for a bus trip for members of the Tuggeranong Seniors' Club. Not a lot of species recorded, but well worth a visit. We were shown some Azure Kingfisher burrows near the top of one mine shaft, and smaller nest burrows which I am sure were Spotted Pardalote nest sites (I was told little birds flew through the grates on top of shafts to use the burrows). **Spotted Pardalotes** were calling constantly around the goldfield tour. I photographed a red-bellied black snake at the bottom of another small shaft. Eastern Spinebills were feeding on flowering shrubs, there were numbers of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters**, and a **White-throated Treecreeper** called several times.

7 – 13 May Goulburn Wetlands

Where is it: the wetlands are in May St, with the Mulwarree Chain of Ponds running along one edge.

The wetlands in Goulburn are still quite new, and it's clear much effort continues to be put into planting trees and shrubs. Although dry at present, the area was impressive, despite my first sightings being two foxes and several rabbits! There are three hides, and well maintained paths. It's definitely a place to go back to when there's been some rain. There are few large trees at this stage, apart from on the edges and on the golf course next to the wetlands. The "ponds" are divided up by brick rubble - there used to be a brickworks on the site. No really noteworthy birds were seen on this visit.

14-20 May Kanangra Walls Road

Where is it: Kanangra Boyd National Park near Jenolan.

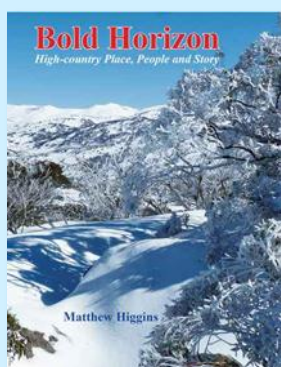
The COG trip to Jenolan Caves gave us all plenty of exercise, and showed many of us some areas we've never visited before. There are a number of firetrails running off Kanangra Walls Road, worth exploring at a later time. There is a trip report elsewhere in this issue.

21-27 May Box Vale Walking Track, Mittagong

Where is it: the track is the location of a former tramway, established to transport coal. It is very close to the Hume Highway, and not far off the Old Hume Highway (I walked 3km from the Mittagong shopping centre) and there is a carpark with large signs warning not to leave valuables in cars. There are a number of tracks leading from carpark, so check the maps. The actual track is also not well signposted, with many side tracks running off.

It was recommended by the Mittagong visitors' centre and is also listed in the local birdwatchers' guide. I walked only the first 2kms, since it was a very windy day and a bit unpleasant as a result. The full walk takes you to a lookout, and through an old tramway tunnel and various cuttings, and is "5 hours return" meaning much more for a birdwatcher! It's a nice patch of bush, with an old weir resulting in a large lake close to the start. Apart from the usual coots, cormorants and **White-faced Herons**, a single **Musk Duck** was feeding in the middle of the lake. The **Grey Shrike-thrushes** in the area were very confiding - two approached to within a metre or so. On a nicer day this walk would be really pleasant.

NEW PUBLICATION



Bold Horizon: High-country Place, People and Story

Matthew Higgins

What is it really like in Australia's high country?

Matthew Higgins traces the mountain experience in a rich variety of ways. Firstly, he talks of his own times in the alps as a bushwalker, cross-country skier, historian, and oral-history interviewer. Then, he profiles a range of people who have worked, lived, or played in the mountains: stockmen, skiers, Indigenous parks officers, rangers, brumby runners, foresters, authors, tourism operators, and others.

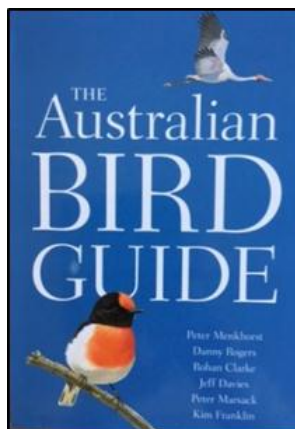
The central themes of place, people, and story are interwoven with concerns about environmental impact and climate change. An extensive collection of beautiful images helps to tell the magnificent mountain story, from Kosciuszko to Kiandra, Brindabella to Bimberi and Bogong, to Tidbinbilla and beyond.

Members' Price \$22.

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

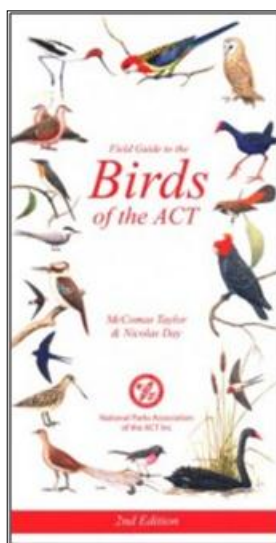


The Australian Bird Guide

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

The most comprehensive field guide to Australian birds ever seen and winner of the 2017 Whitley Medal. The guide features around 4700 colour illustrations, with particular emphasis on providing the fine detail required to identify difficult groups and distinctive plumages. Comprehensive species accounts have been written by a dedicated team of ornithologists to ensure identification details, distribution and status are current and accurate.

Members' price \$38.



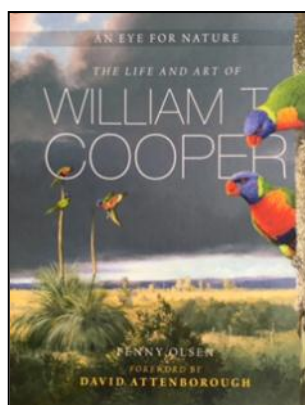
Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT

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



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

Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

Donations to this fund are tax deductible. Funds are used to support projects that protect and enhance native birds and the environments that sustain them.

COG membership

2017-2018 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

S Fieg
P Downey
C Wallis
B Reville

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for July 2018 edition:

Wednesday 27 June 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.

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COG E-mail Discussion List

COG E-mail Discussion List

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

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

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

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

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