



Gang-gang

May 2018

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

MAY MEETING

Wednesday 9 May 2018

7.30 pm

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

For the short presentation **Alison Russell-French**, chair of the of the **Woodlands and Wetlands Trust**, will provide COG members with a clearer understanding about the Trust, what it has been established to do, and its relationship with the ACT Parks & Conservation Service.

The main presentation will be by **Terry Korodaj** and **Paul Packard** from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, Queanbeyan, on **“Water for the environment – rivers, wetlands, waterbirds and waterbird food”**.

Join Terry and Paul on a fast-tracked 100-year journey to understand exactly what is being done to support river and wetland health in the NSW Murray-Darling Basin.

Water for the environment is actively managed in the Murray Lower-Darling, Murrumbidgee, Lachlan, Macquarie and the Gwydir river valleys to improve these important aquatic ecosystems. Terry and

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

Again it has been very dry for the slightly over 4 weeks since 26 March covered by this report, with only the one widespread but only moderate rain event in the COG area of interest (AoI) in the third weekend of this period. It appeared then that a very strong and windy front moving through would signal the end of our “Indian summer”. However, the weather soon warmed up again and it has been mid 20s since.

There has only been one morning of near frosty conditions over this period, ironically on 27 March, the day after I finalised my previous column. This triggered the first widespread **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** migration event. Since then there have been steady reports of them, especially on the clearer cooler mornings, as noted last month after a while the urge to migrate overcomes the less than perfect conditions. As usual the highest numbers come from Lindsay Hansch’s place in Jerrabomberra (NSW). On 11 April he spent two hours outside during the late morning and many thousands of

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Yellow-faced Honeyeater

Geoffrey Dabb

Everyone welcome

MAY MEETING

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Paul will provide some insights into some of the following important questions:

- What is environmental water?
- Why do we need it?
- Who is managing it and where is it being delivered?
- Is it just for the birds?
- Which birds are benefitting?
- Is it making a difference?



Striped Honeyeater, 2018 Easter Camp

Julian Robinson

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

honeyeaters passed over. The biggest flock was over 1000 and there was another of 740. However, in the main flocks were from 40-50.

Jean Casburn also reported many coming over her place in Duffy, with on the clear morning of 4 April hundreds to thousands of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were streaming over in a wide arc, with a few **White-naped Honeyeaters** heard in amongst them. Interestingly this is only about 1 km from my house where I have seen no evidence of honeyeater migration, indeed I have observed none over the NW end of Cooleman Ridge this season.

On 20 April Lindsay reported several thousand honeyeaters passing over. He took the opportunity to do some “flock sampling” (ie he took many photos which he enlarged on his computer to the extent that he could identify species), with some interesting results. There were many large flocks passing through of between 100 and 300 birds and these were 70-80% **White-naped Honeyeaters**. Interspersed between these were a number of smaller flocks of 15-30 birds and these were predominantly **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**. Lindsay also noted there were also a lot of **Red Wattlebirds** scattered amongst the honeyeaters – more than he remember seeing in past years. However, I can find only a few other reports of small numbers of this species migrating.

So please when you receive your Gang-gang early in May please keep an eye and ear out for the last of these migrating flocks, due to the warm weather it may be prolonged a bit more than usual, as outlined below some other species seem to have delayed their departure.

Of the earlier leaving migratory species still reported as being present during March in my previous report, during April there have only been reports of the **White-winged Triller** (a female from the Namadgi Visitors Centre on 6 April) and of single **Sacred Kingfishers** from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 2 April, and the Yass Valley on 8 April, respectively. There have also been further reports of **Tree** and **Fairy Martins**, which I reported last month seemed to have been the exceptions by leaving early. While the former has been reported from 4 different locations, most recently 3 birds at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 15 April, there has only a report of a single bird of the latter at the same location on 8 April.

Of the other species which usually leave during March there have been no reports of the **Satin Flycatcher** or the **Eastern Koel** in the reporting period, with the last **Rufous Fantail** (2 seen at the ANBG) last reported on 27 March. In contrast the **Leaden Flycatcher**, was still reported from 4 locations, the most recent being from Campbell Park on 6 April. Surprisingly the **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** has not been reported in the period, and there has only been the single report of the **Pallid Cuckoo** (1 bird in the Orroral Valley of Namadgi National Park on 31 March), with reports of the **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** only from two locations, most recently a single bird at Mulligans Flat on 3 April. The **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, which I have previously noted as the least migratory of our local cuckoos, has also been reported from 2 locations, including a series of reports from Campbell Park, most recently on 20 April.

A very late **Latham's Snipe** was reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 8 April, and the **Australian Reed-**



Warbler does seem to have noticeably delayed its departure being reported from up to 10 locations, most recently 2 birds at the Hume wetlands on 22 April. The last confirmed report of the **White-throated Needletail** was of 8 birds on 1 April, with 40 were reported at the Pinnacle on 30 March. Two of the usually less common **Fork-tailed Swift** were last reported from the Jerrabomberra wetlands on 11 April, with on 9 April Steve Wallace posting some photos on the COG chat line of at least 10 birds hawking over the West Belconnen Pond.

Of the species usually leaving during early April, the **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone** have been reported from multiple locations, with the most recent being on 20 and 17 April from Campbell Park and the ANBG, respectively. The **Noisy Friarbird** has been reported from many locations, the most recent being from the Mt Majura NR on 23 April. It will be interesting to see whether any overwinter this year, as the **Rufous Whistler** and **Grey Fantail** (last reported on 18 and 23 April, respectively) often do. Similarly the **Mistletoebird** (last reported on 24 April in Watson) and the **Superb Parrot** overwinter, the latter in increasingly high numbers. It has been widely reported over the past month, including up to 16 birds in Wanniasa by Sandra Henderson. While it may now be accepted as much more often present S of the lake, I have yet to observe it in my local patch of NW Cooleman Ridge and the S end of Narrabundah Hill.

The last of the migratory species to leave are the **Dusky Woodswallow** and the **Olive-backed Oriole**. Many observers have reported the former gathering in flocks and moving through over the past couple of months, including a flock of at least 100 hawking the tree tops in the S of Canberra reported by Kym Bradley on 8 April. Most of this species usually leave by mid-May, but may delay its departure this season though few, if any, have stayed in the recent warm winters. The latter species is usually present in much smaller numbers, most of which leave by mid-May but they have been regularly reported throughout recent winters. So please



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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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Strzelecki Track Outback tour

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Four states. 39th 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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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 **Scarlet Robin** seems to have now returned in numbers to their known peri-urban spots, with the COG Wednesday Walkers seeing 8 birds on O'Connor Ridge on 18 April. In contrast the **Flame Robin** so far has been slow to move into the open areas around Canberra. The **Rose Robin** has been reported from 3 locations in April, with between 1-3 birds from its usual stronghold of the ANBG between 17-19 April. In contrast there have still been no reports of the **Pink Robin** for nearly a year.

The only urban report for the **Crescent Honeyeater** is of one at the ANBG on 18 April, but there have been none of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**. Both are usually first seen in Canberra during late April or early May. Reports of small numbers of **Swift Parrots** at Mt Majura continued until 9 April, with 3 also observed at the Hall TSR on 6 April and a single bird at Cook on 21 April, so keep an eye out for them in your area, especially if the gums are flowering well.

Interestingly following the many observations in March there have been very few reports of the **Restless Flycatcher**, a species which in my experience seems to be mostly present around Canberra in winter, in April. In contrast the **Grey Shrike-thrush** has been the most conspicuous altitudinal migrant into my local patch this year, as it has been in recent ones. A number of subscribers have posted on the COG chat line how the **Grey Butcherbird** has moved into their gardens over the past month, including how it enjoys their birdbaths, something I have never observed in my GBS where it has been present for a number of years. However, the dry weather has seen my water baths being increasingly used by a wide number of species.

The dry weather has also continued to draw some inland birds to the COG Aol, most notably the **Singing Honeyeater**, which Harvey Perkins first reported from the West Belconnen Pond at the COG meeting on 14 March. However, it seems to have been elusive until 22 April when Christine D found it at the nearby Macfarlane Burnet Avenue Pond (Macgregor). She noted it had been recorded in the area a few times over past weeks, and was seen and heard at this location the day before. It has since been further reported. Other inland birds reported in April include further observations of **Black Kites** at several well separated locations, of the **Barn Owl**, and a **Black Falcon** harassing about 1000 **Common Starlings** at the Trucking Yard Lane seen by Mark Clayton on 19 April.

"Unusual" species reported unlikely to be related to a dry inland include further sightings of the **Azure Kingfisher** first seen by the COG Wednesday Walkers at Point Hut on 21 March. This truly aquatic kingfisher species is not migratory

like the **Sacred**, in fact most recent records in the COG Aol seem to have been in autumn/winter. There have also been a number of sightings of the white morph of the **Grey Goshawk** in the Aranda/Black Mountain area, including in company with **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**. So, as I've mentioned in this column previously, look at the latter carefully if they are agitated in case one has yellow legs and a yellow bill with a black tip.

The only breeding that has come to my attention over the past month are up to 4 juvenile **Great Crested Grebes** on the Cotter Dam. I'm sure there would have been other breeding (there were late reports of immature **Royal Spoonbills** at the Giralang Pond and the Jerrabomberra Billabong), though a drop in this activity would seem to be related to the many mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) reported during April. In contrast the large cockie/galah single species flocks don't seem to have formed much so far, at least not where I have been watching. Little roost or roost flight observations seem to have been posted during April. Compared with the past two autumns **Red-rumped Parrot** activity in my local patch has been much reduced, with **Magpie-lark** activity also low.

So please watch out for any late-staying spring/summer migrants which usually leave in May as mentioned above, for the remaining arriving altitudinal migrants, for MFFs and single species flocks, for roost sites and flights, and for any 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

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.

Field Trip Reports

COG Easter Camp 2018

Fourteen COG members had a very rewarding time at this year's Easter camp. We were based on a private property near Wanganella in southern NSW, with use of some old shearers' quarters. The property owner John took time off from his usual farming duties to accompany us on all our birding excursions, show us around the family's extensive properties, and give us an introduction to raising fine wool merinos. John is a very keen birder, and the property has an extensive bird list compiled over many years.

The highlight, of course, was a **Plains Wanderer**, located as we searched a known location on foot at night. After not too much walking, Terry was the one to find the bird, which stood still to be admired and photographed (see next page).

On Good Friday we started by birding around our campsite. A rather manic **Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo** stayed close, and we saw some of the dozens of **Southern Whiteface** and **White-fronted Chat** which live around the buildings. We then set off to explore some local plots revegetated over many years by COG member Phil Maher, who was good enough to give me a tour of them a few months ago. While we admired the work which has obviously gone into the plantings, a few managed to see a couple of **White-backed Swallows**, one of the species we'd hoped for there. At the next plot two unfamiliar birds in a dead sapling had us

wondering, until the male **Pied Honeyeater** flew in to join them.

On Easter Saturday we went further afield, checking out the Gulpa Creek Reed Beds at Mathoura after calling in at a wetland site on the outskirts of Deniliquin. We lunched at Poley's Bridge at Mathoura after walking one of the forest trails. An **Azure Kingfisher** perched a few metres away under the bridge was a nice bonus. Our host asked if we were interested in getting access to the sewage works at Deniliquin. Silly question! A phone call was made and we met up with Tom Weller at the gates, and were blown away by the thousands of **Plumed Whistling Ducks** and large numbers of **Pink-eared Ducks**. A short distance away we were introduced to a separate new settling pond, this one with over a thousand **Grey Teal**. We also wandered through a small forest patch in town where four raptors species (including Square-tailed Kites) breed, but none were at home that afternoon. Thank you to Tom for his assistance on that afternoon.

On Easter Sunday John took us to a number of spots around the family's properties. The dam he constructed behind his own house had **Black-tailed Native Hens**, and close by, a tree hollow inhabited by an **Owlet Nightjar**. A scratch on another dead tree resulted in two **Barn Owls** flying off.

Species seen around the properties included **Banded Lapwings**, **Chestnut-crowned Babblers**, another **Pied**



COG members, 2018 Easter Camp

Julian Robinson



Clockwise from top - Stubble Quail, COG Members,
Plains-wanderer, Black-tailed Native-hen, Shearing shed, Blue
Bonnet - 2018 Easter Camp
Julian Robinson

Honeyeater, scores of **Bluebonnets**, and an astonishingly cooperative Stubble Quail, which wandered around for some time within metres of our feet. The best views we will ever have of this species! At the sheepyards in one area, sprinklers were on to encourage the grass to grow, but the **Striped and White-plumed Honeyeaters** were having a ball, bathing in the water as it hit the peppercorn trees around the yards. **Southern Whiteface** were thick on the ground! A few members of the group stopped at the historic Royal Mail Hotel at nearby Boorooban for a restorative drink on the way back “home”.

A fantastic few days, around 120 species seen by most participants. Very sincere thanks to John Nevinston for his hospitality, company and expertise.

Sandra Henderson



Sunset, Easter Camp 2018

Sandra Henderson

Narrabundah Hill, Easter Saturday 31 March

Thirteen members and guests joined and me on this outing on a fine morning with some cloud and a very pleasant cooling breeze. We walked for about 2.0 km along the northern and about half of the western boundaries of this reserve, and returned by the same route. The aim was to observe honeyeater migration, as well as to find any early arriving altitudinal migrants and any later departing summer migrants. It turned out to be the quietest of the 5 trips I've led here around this time since 2014.

We did, however, manage to see two new species for this outing, the first being a **Common Bronzewing**, which started the day off very well by staying stationary on a dead branch, allowing all the participants a very good look. This species is much less common in the reserve now compared with before the 2003 fires. The second was an **Australian Darter** circling very high overhead. This is a species I haven't recorded locally at least since the fires, but may have been overlooked if it was behaving similarly while I concentrated on bush birds. **Grey Butcherbirds**, a species regularly recorded here but not always easy to see, also posed very well, with good views of both an adult and a couple of immatures. A species which we have seen once before, the



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Olive-backed Oriole, was less easy for all to see, but as it spent its time feeding in the regrowth gums, often seeming to be looking for insects underneath the bark, it finally allowed all participants to have a very good look at an older immature (from its overall colour) bird with still a dull bill.

A total of 34 species was recorded, well down on the between 42 and 49 we have counted on previous trips. While there were high numbers of some of the common species, the day was characterised by the absence of some species we usually see, and low numbers for species we usually see quite a few of, including very few thornbills and their allies, only 7 **Grey Fantail** and 3 **Scarlet Robins**. Of the latter, one was heard and two males were in the distance quite high in a dead tree, which less than half of the participants managed to see before they dropped down into the regrowth. Around 8 **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were counted on the day, 4 of which came through slowly at the known route where we were having morning tea, staying in the trees for about a minute before moving on, while the rest were calling from the trees or moving in the reverse direction from which they usually migrate.

Species not observed included whistlers, gerygones, and importantly no recognisable mixed feeding flock was encountered. A definite low light was the over 20 **Common Mynas**, including one group of over 10 appearing to be trying to feed in the dessicated blackberries, in an area where I have not found them before, perhaps a sign of the low food availability in the very dry conditions. Nevertheless participants enjoyed the outing including the smooth conditions underfoot (the track had only very recently been graded and rolled), and the shade along the N fence where most of the species were found. My special thanks go to Steve Read for keeping the bird list and entering this into eBird.

Jack Holland

Sunday 8 April—K2C Surveys—Bredbo area

The autumn K2C surveys were held in the warmest conditions we have had with most sites showing the effects of the extended hot dry weather. A total of 80 species was recorded, with a number of the summer migrants having departed (cuckoos, gerygones, songlarks) but a few of the late-departers/occasional-overwinterers still evident (**Noisy Friarbird**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Mistletoebird**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Grey Fantail**). Honeyeater migration was in full swing before the wind increased mid-morning. Totals of up to 400 were recorded at several sites over the 20 minute counts, predominantly **Yellow-faced**, with a smattering of **White-naped**, occasional **White-eared** and one **Crescent Honeyeater**, but no flocks of **Red Wattlebirds**. Altitudinal absentees included Flame Robin and surprisingly, Golden Whistler, even though these have been reported in Canberra for a few weeks now. **Scarlet Robins** didn't fail us though with records from 9 properties. Other threatened species

recorded include **Brown Treecreeper** (7 properties), **Speckled Warbler** (5), **Dusky Woodswallow** (4), **Hooded Robin** (3), **Diamond Firetail** (3), **Little Eagle** (1). Other highlights included a new species for the K2C surveys, **Yellow-billed Spoonbill** on one of the large dams, and the second reports for the surveys of **Painted Button-quail** and **Spotted Harrier**. Thank you to those who helped with the surveys. I would also like to thank the landholders for their ongoing cooperation with access to the sites, and Bush Heritage for hosting us at Scottsdale Reserve and covering the cost of the lunch supplied by the Snowy Mountains Cafe in Bredbo.

The next surveys will be held on Sunday 7 October.

Nicki Taws

Wednesday Walk – O'Connor Ridge 18 April

30 members and guests gathered on Dryandra Street for a definite return to the Tom Green model of a Wednesday Walk: close to the centre of Canberra and not too long. (This was reinforced with a unanimous vote not to extend to Bruce Ridge.)

The basic route was along the back of the Youth Hostel and towards the top of the ridge, then a counterclockwise loop. After the initial ascent there was a little excitement with the first **Scarlet Robins** of the day. (We ended with 8, spread fairly well through the walk, but appearing such that we felt they were different birds, not the same ones following us.) **Little Corellas** flew from the direction of the AIS into the suburb.

Shortly after encountering a small flock of **Double-barred Finches** (some seen, others evident by toy trumpet calls) we got onto a mixed feeding flock comprising some of the finches, a **Speckled Warbler**, **Buff-rumped** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills**, **Grey Fantail**, **Grey Shrike Thrush** and **Silvereyes**.

A small dam produced 2 **Australasian Grebes** - until a passing pooch (on lead) went for a wade, whereupon the grebes headed for the reeds.

All up we recorded 36 species for the day. The full species list is at <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44678802> and a few images (some of which even include birds!) are at <http://franmart.blogspot.com.au/2018/04/cog-oconnor-ridge.html>.

Next month the walk will go to North Weston ponds. Details are at the [Field trips page of the COG website](#).

Woodland Surveys- Autumn (late March/early April) 2018 survey round– Part 2

compiled by Jenny Bounds

Jerrabomberra West NR

Jenny Bounds and Alison Russell-French did the survey on Easter Monday, 2 April, in fine and warm conditions with little wind. The reserve was very dry and grass levels low, possibly the driest since COG first surveyed there in 2005/2006. 35 species were recorded, a little below average for autumn, the usual species one would expect. Some **Dusky Woodswallows** still around the woodland and some moving overhead, **Scarlet Robin** (autumn/ winter bird there), **Speckled Warbler** and **Southern Whiteface** in the spots regularly recorded. A lot of **Crimson Rosellas** around, a number of **Grey Fantails** moving through, and some small honeyeater migration/ movement typical of autumn, a couple of flocks of around 30 **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** heading out. A surprise was 3 **Feral Pigeons/Rock Doves** feeding on the ground near one site on the grasslands edge. One **Rufous Whistler** was still around.

Majura Field Firing Range

The weather was fine, but the early start, with the first survey at 7:50am, on 26 March in the last week of daylight saving, meant that there wasn't too much activity on the first couple of sites. However, when Paul Fennell, Barbara Allan and Michael Lenz entered the Grenade Range site, they disturbed three **Wedge-tailed Eagles** roosting on a dead tree! There were only 9 species at this site, all the usual suspects of Noisy Miners, starlings, ravens, rosellas and **Galaks**, apart from the Wedgies and a **Nankeen Kestrel**. Sites 1 and 3, both well wooded sites generally reasonably prolific, were very quiet, with Site 1 having a single record on-site, a lone **Grey Fantail**, while site 3 had only 5 species, including a **Western Gerygone** among **Red Wattlebirds**, **Eastern Spinebills** and rosellas. Site 10 at the far south of the range, generally a poor provider, had observations of **Speckled Warbler**, two Whistler species, **Noisy Friarbird**, both local pardalotes and **Brown Thornbill**. Site 4, patchy open woodland had only 5 species on site, but including excellent views of a very obliging **Red-capped Robin**, a species seldom encountered on the Range.

The three sites at the northern end of the Range were fairly quiet. Site 7 had only 5 species, all the usual suspects, but there were 15 **White-winged Choughs** moving slowly through. The dam site had no waterbirds which was a bit unusual, and not much else apart from the more common species, but did have **Buff-rumped** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills**, both local pardalotes and 6 **Grey Fantails**. The last site, surveyed late in the morning, is usually very quiet, but there were 13 species, including three thornbill species, both pardalotes, 12 **White-winged Choughs**, 4 **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** (the only ones seen on the survey), **White-throated Gerygone**, **Mistletoebird**, **Eastern Spinebill** and **White-throated Treecreeper**.

Roost Census Update

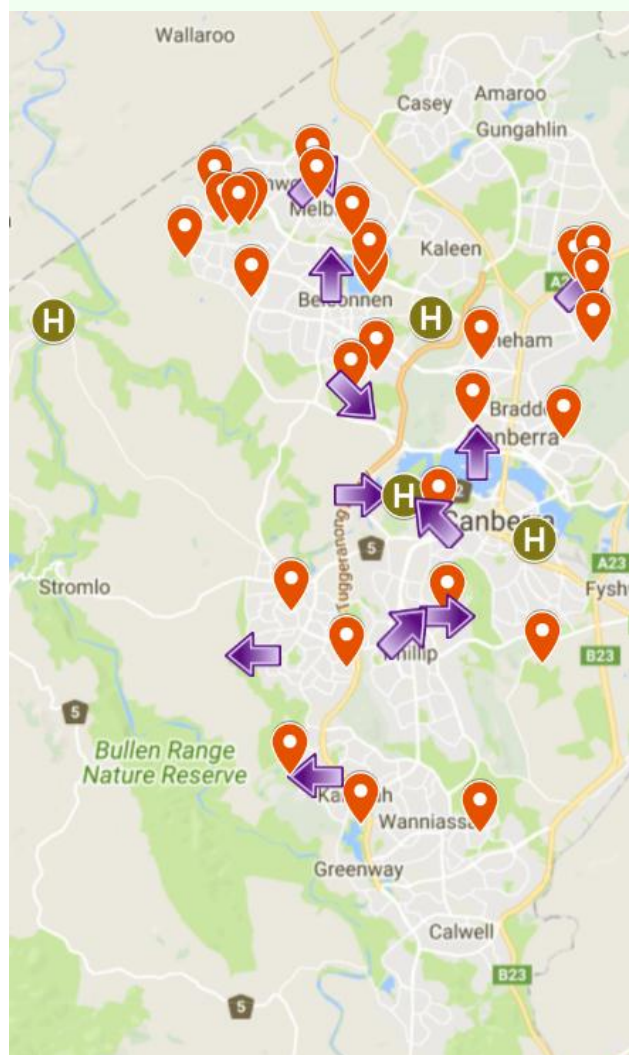
Thanks to your ongoing support with the project, approximately 25 distinct roost sites have now been identified.

A concerted survey effort to get rough counts at all the roost sites over a weekend is slated for early July. A list of sites will be made available in the next month, and volunteers sought to 'adopt' sites to survey over the designated weekend.

More guidance on the process will be provided in due course. In the meantime, any further observations of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** and **Little Corella** roost sites and flights will continue to be accepted by email.

Ryu Callaway

roostcensus@canberrabirds.org.au

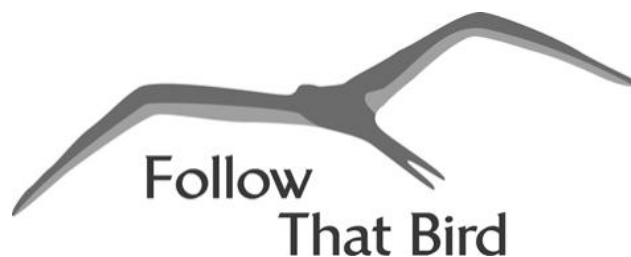


Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson surveyed on Sunday 18 March, on a calm morning, with a promise of strong winds later in the day. Most of the sites had been surveyed before the wind set in, but the birds must have known it was on its way, as they were very quiet. The biggest surprise of the day was the complete absence of **Common Mynas** and **Common Starlings**, even at site 3. The only mixed feeding flock was between sites, feeding frenetically on lerp. It comprised **Grey Fantail**, **Spotted Pardalote**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, **Weebill**, **Willie Wagtail**, **Silvereye** and a **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**. Other records were a **Noisy Friarbird**, **Mistletoebird** and **Eastern Spinebill**. No movement of honeyeaters was seen. It seemed like a very quiet morning, with just 19 species observed in sites, and a further 10 between sites, but over the last few years the total number of species in autumn has generally been 30-32.

Naas Valley rural property

Julie McGuinness surveyed this site near Mt Tennant on 17th March, a clear warm day. The species diversity was quite low. Only **Eastern Rosellas**, **Galahs**, **Striated Pardalotes**, **Starlings** and **Grey Fantails** were in any numbers within the sites, though 60 **Wood Ducks** lifted off from a nearby dam, and **Red-rumped Parrots** were numerous outside of the survey sites. Few migrants were detected, a couple each of **White-throated Gerygone** and **Dusky Woodswallow**. The highlight was 6 **Diamond Firetails**, which have been regulars up until the last couple of years but now seen only intermittently. The lowlight was a **Starling** still investigating a hollow. Only 2 **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** on the move.



September 2018

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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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Iron Range bird banding

Members of the Charcoal Tank banding team, along with banders from Queensland and South Australia, will be banding in the Iron Range National Park on Cape York Peninsula from November 18 until November 25 this year. If any COG member would like to see the Cape "specials" in the hand then all you have to do is organise to get yourself to Iron Range and sort out your accommodation and food and the team will happily show you the birds. Please contact me at chollop7@bigpond.com if you are interested.

Mark Clayton

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 5 May – Australian National Botanic Gardens beginners' outing

This morning walk will be the first for 2018 aimed specifically to help beginners and new members identify birds and to learn about their behaviour and calls. The Botanic Gardens are especially suitable for such an outing, as they allow the opportunity to observe a range of local bush birds in a variety of habitats. Due to the available food supply they are also a relative haven for birds during late autumn/winter. Anthony Overs will lead this outing, which will consist of a stroll through this lovely part of Canberra for a couple of hours. Meet at 9.15am at the ANBG bus shelter. Registration is essential. Please book your place with Anthony (0419202155, or anthony.overs@gmail.com), who will be happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you. Please make sure to bring your binoculars and field guide.

15 to 17 May 2018 - Jenolan Caves Lyrebirds

Nine people have expressed interest in joining me (Michael Robbins) on my May 2018 break at Caves House, Jenolan.

The plan for May 15 to 18 is firming up, although numbers will remain uncertain until close to 14 May. Some people have already decided they'll stay an extra day, so we'll wait until about the beginning of May to firm up car sharing arrangements.

The refurbishment of the Bistro will be finished and lunches and breakfast can be bought there. Chisholm Restaurant, which is the only place to eat dinner unless you drive into Oberon, will be operating in May but seating maybe in the function room if refurbishment of the grand dining room has started by 14/5/18.

We'll aim to leave Canberra at about 9 am on Tuesday 15/5/18, the exact time we get away will depend on car sharing arrangements, and we'll plan to stop at a couple of places on the way to Jenolan Caves, including a lunch stop.

We'll spend all of Wednesday the 16th doing walks around the Jenolan Caves area. If anyone would rather do a cave tour than join a walk that's fine. One walk will definitely be to the old playing fields and beyond, but as it will be an out and back walk, if anyone wanted to stop at the old playing fields and wait for us there that will be fine. On Thursday 17th the plan is to visit Kangangra Walls with probably one other stop on the way back to Canberra.

It is highly unlikely we'll have a large enough group for a group booking. Therefore it will be up to individuals to book their choice of accommodation from one of the three level of room in Caves House, or a bed in the backpacker 'lodge' or a room in the motel style unit. If there are any last minute takers, they will need to make their own arrangements, but should advise mrobbins at home.netspeed.com.au so that we make sure to look out for you.

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

Come and explore Mulligan's Flat and Goorooyarroo by bike. You will need your own dirt-road capable bike (mountain bike or similar) and a moderate level of fitness. Cycling in the reserves is limited to a few vehicular management trails

which are mostly in good condition and gently sloping although there are a few short steeper sections. There will be some walking involved as well.

Meet at the car park at the main entrance to Mulligan's Flat, Amy Ackman St, Forde at 8:30am.

To participate, please contact Duncan McCaskill by email at: duncan.mccaskill@gmail.com. Booking are essential. Numbers will be limited.

Sunday 27 May - Late autumn mystery bus trip – day outing

Jenny Bounds and Jack Holland are planning another bus trip for this date. Aspects are expected to be the same as previous weekend trips of this kind, ie cost of \$20 for transport by two 12-seater buses, the point of departure will be the National Library car park at 8 am, and it will run until mid afternoon (please bring morning tea and lunch). To continue to keep it fresh we are again looking at changing the specific objectives of this trip. These are still being discussed but we plan to visit some spots where participants may not normally go and/or will be able to see some interesting birds. The final itinerary will depend on some rekkies beforehand, as well as which birds have been reported around the time.

If you are interested in participating please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840 H or by E-mail on jandaholland@bigpond.com). Please don't delay booking your seats if you are intending to participate in this very popular outing.

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.

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**

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 questions 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

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 – April

Sandra Henderson

2-8 April – Lake Urana Reserve

Where is it: on the far side of Urana, on the way to Jerilderie. The Lake is visible from the road, but actually finding the reserve can be tricky! The entry is not signposted. The reserve is reached via a dirt track from the Collingullie-Jerilderie Road. Look for a track with no gate, and a Give Way sign facing away from the road. The entry to the reserve is some distance along that track.

I've driven along past Lake Urana on numerous occasions over the last 15 years, and never called in. On the way back from the Easter camp Sue L, Lia B and I spent a short time in the reserve. Like the whole general area, the reserve is very dry at present. A group of **Grey-crowned Babblers** was seen in one of the large Callitris, and there was a large group of White-browed Woodswallows present near the fence separating the reserve from the lake shore. A single **Masked Woodswallow** was identified. Well worth further exploration, preferably in cooler conditions, and when the reserve has had some rain.

<https://ebird.org/australia/view/checklist/S44210897>

9-15 April – Oakey Hill Reserve

Where is it: alongside the Tuggeranong Parkway in Lyons. I used the entry near where Heysen St passes under the Parkway – there's a bitumen track right up to the water reservoir and comms tower from this entry.

The day I went to Oakey Hill the weather was dreadful – windy, overcast, misty rain, and the temperature had only reached 12 by midday. Things were not looking hopeful at the start, but as I got near the water reservoir a male **Golden Whistler** appeared. Enough to brighten any day! On the fence around the reservoir four **Scarlet Robins** seemed to be enjoying the cooler conditions, preening and calling. Right next to the communications tower a family of **Double-barred Finches** were sheltering in the acacias, and as I tried to get a decent photo, I glanced up and found a stunning **Rose Robin** about two metres away. He didn't stick around, but it made my day. As I returned to the car another group of DB Finches right near the entrance had me wandering off-track again, into a mixed flock with **Grey Fantails**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** and **Weebills**.

<https://ebird.org/australia/view/checklist/S44583236>

16-22 April – Countegong Rd, Numeralla

Where is it: alongside the Badja River not far out of Numeralla. A site being monitored by the local Waterwatch group with healthy riparian vegetation.

I visited as part of a group taking part in a Field Day. Leon from Local Land Services and Antia from Waterwatch were the leaders, with other participants expert in ecology, geology and birds, as well as some local landholders. The most numerous birds at this site were **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters**, which feature at all the riverside sites I've visited in that area in the past. **Spotted Pardalotes** were calling constantly, and a **Yellow Robin** joined in occasionally. The most surprising was an **Eastern Whipbird**, calling several times from further along the river. At the local hall, a pair of **Wedge-tailed Eagles** was circling above, while in the village's Badja Reserve a family of **Satin Bowerbirds** were very active, with several carrying nest material into the top of a tall eucalypt.

<https://ebird.org/australia/view/checklist/S44778547>

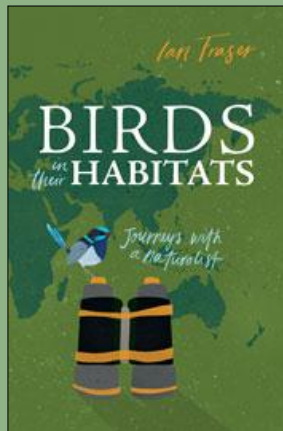
23 – 29 April – Old Sydney Road, Queanbeyan

Where is it: the Old Sydney Road runs about 3km from near the locked gate next to Wright Park in Queanbeyan through bushland to the Captains Flat Rd.

This gravel road has bush on each side, so I thought it might be worth exploring. At the start, as I walked through the walkway next to the gate, four **Gang-gangs** flew over. I walked 1km up the track, then returned through the bush. Only 20 species found, and the while not steep, it is a steady uphill walk, and the return through the bush required a few detours as I encountered steep gullies.

<https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44881895>

NEW PUBLICATION



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.

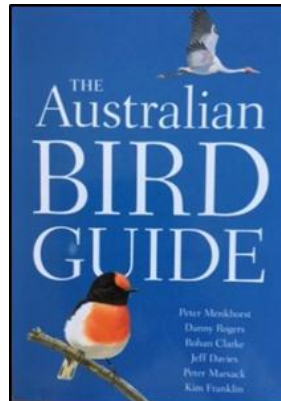
Informed by a wealth of historical and contemporary research, Ian Fraser takes the reader on a journey through four continents: from places as unfamiliar as the Chonos Archipelago of southern Chile and the arid Sahel woodlands of northern Cameroon to those as familiar as a suburban backyard. This is 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.

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

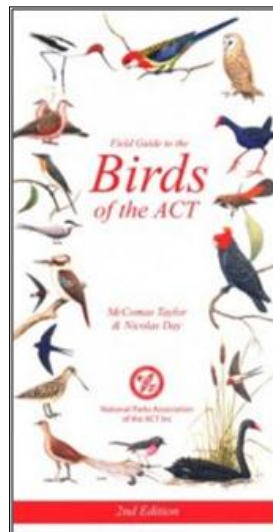


The Australian Bird Guide

Peter Menkhurst, 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

Sized to fit in your pocket, this compact field guide describes 207 birds seen in the ACT. An ideal bird guide for the local area.

Members' price: \$20



Finding Australian Birds: A Field Guide to Birding Locations

Tim Dolby, Rohan Clarke

This book covers over 400 Australian bird watching sites conveniently grouped into the best birding areas, from one end of the country to the other.

Member's 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

2017-2018 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

N Plunkett-Cole
D Clark
W Brown
B Agnew
G Hunt
P Cranston
A Carse
A Mowbray
D Ralph
C Blunt

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for June 2018 edition:

Wednesday 30 May 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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