



Gang-gang

OCTOBER 2018

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

OCTOBER MEETING

Wednesday 10 October 2018

7.30 pm

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

Following the AGM there will be a single presentation by **Leo Joseph** of the Australian National Wildlife Collection, CSIRO, entitled **"Who Doesn't Like a Change of Scientific Names Every Now and Then? Science, taxonomy, nomenclature and Australian birds."**

Apart from birds themselves, few things arouse passion and angst among those who study birds as names - especially scientific names and how, when and why they change. I often hear frustration that the scientific names for a group of animals as relatively well-known as birds are still changing. In response, I often quietly wonder when were they supposed to have stopped changing? 1915? 1983? 2017? When I became interested in birds? When you became interested in birds? Would we travel on long-haul jet flights or enter high-rise buildings if engineers and architects all declared, say in 1947, that we know all there is to know about the design of those things and there will be no more change?

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

While there were two promising moderate rain events in the first week of the four week period to 26 September covered by this column, it has essentially been dry in many areas since then, and already there are signs in my local patch that the green growth which followed these falls is stressed and starting to brown off. Though it has not been particularly cold, as demonstrated by my report below, there has been a slow start to the spring migration season in the COG area of interest (Aol), perhaps even slower than last year which had very cold weather for the first 10 days of September.

The major influx of spring/summer migrants did not seem to get underway until around the middle of September. In my local area the only spring migrant species recorded so far are **Red Wattlebird**, **Grey Fantail** (lots came through around 16 September) and the occasional **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, all of which overwintered elsewhere in the ACT. The very dry conditions have meant many areas have been very quiet as indicated by the

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Swift Parrot

Julie Clark

Everyone welcome

So, in this talk, I am going to take a light-hearted tour through some oddities of scientific names to do with Painted Honeyeaters (an example inspired by the COG chatline), Pied Currawongs (an example inspired by a recent article), Galahs (a favourite example of mine bringing a little history from the Baudin Expedition and the modern DNA sequencing world into the fray) and that perennial favourite, the Crested Shrike-tit (where do I start??). My aims will be to tease apart why scientific names still change and convey something of a deeper understanding about scientific names themselves.

Ultimately, the real point of the talk will be to help listeners understand the links between (a) our science, which is how we try to understand the natural world, and that it in turn guides, (b) how the taxonomy we use summarises that understanding, which is *meant* to grow and change, and (c) how the rules of nomenclature guide us in how to construct and apply names in a consistent way. The talk will be a success if one can go home a little clearer about how our science, which itself changes and evolves, underpins the whole operation.

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

COG mid-week walk to Red Hill on 19 September (see the report elsewhere in this issue), by reports from the COG Woodland surveys done in the parched reserves, and as Michael Lenz noted from his many surveys in the COG Aol: “it’s not only that species are arriving slowly, but once they get here, there is not very much for them to feed on and they move on again.”

However, a mixed flock of 60 or more **White-browed** (mainly) and **Masked Woodswallows**, species which I hadn’t alerted readers to look out for in my previous column, were first reported high overhead in Giralang in the strong winds of the morning of 15 September by Mark Clayton. They were reported over Cook soon after and that afternoon flying over Macarthur. These observations should not have been a surprise given the dry conditions, with these highly nomadic species often using windy conditions to move high over in search of more suitable locations. At least some did land with, on the next day, Rosemary Blemings reporting a flock of at least 10 **White-browed** utilising the fence wires to fly down into the grassed area to forage for prey in the spelled horse paddock 50 metres west of Hollows Circuit, Macgregor. Small numbers have been reported since, each from 5 locations, with the maximum being 20 and 10 birds, respectively, at Narrabundah Hill by David Dedenczuk on 23 September.

The **Dusky Woodswallow**, present at only 2 locations near water in August, has certainly become established, with reports from over 30 locations in the past month, with a build up over time. Likewise the **Olive-backed Oriole** has also been reported from over 30 locations, but more evenly throughout the month of September, compared with 9 in August. The **Fairy Martin**, first reported on 26 August, has now been reported from 18 locations, again with a build up over time, whereas the **Tree Martin**, already reported from a surprising 19 locations in the COG Aol during August, was reported from over 25 locations in the past month. So, all these species may be considered as well established by now, as are the **Grey Fantail** and **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, each reported from over 60 locations compared with around 20 in August. The former had a very noticeable build up over September.

Reports of the **Superb Parrot** have also built up from 7 locations in August to around 26 in the past month, 6 of these from south of the lake. The **Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo** and the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** have also had a steady build up during September, and were reported from 18 locations each over the past month, but with few of the latter yet in the ranges to the west and south of Canberra. These contrast with the **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** recorded from only 8 locations, the first on 7 September, and **Pallid Cuckoo**, recorded from 12 locations, the first for this spring on 8 September (quite late), but with most of the reports after mid-month.

Consistent with the several reports each month over winter, the **Western Gerygone** was first reported on 2 September, but from only another 4 locations since then. The related **White-throated Gerygone** was first reported from two locations on 15 September (again rather late), and from a further 9 spots since. After the 2 winter records, the **Noisy Friarbird** did not arrive until after the start of September and, though there have been reports from over 35 locations since then, its numbers in some areas are still very low; for example, Michael Lenz has hardly seen any while looking for their roost flights from

Lyneham Ridge, and by 26 September I had no records yet in my local patch of Chapman/Rivett, NW Cooleman Ridge and S Narrabundah Hill.

The spring return migration of the **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** also seems to have been late and, as may be expected, much less noticeable than the autumn migration. The first report I have of them moving was from Sue Lashko who saw them joining a mixed feeding flock (MFF, see details below) for 3 or 4 minutes at Aranda Bushland on 4 September before they were on their way again, arriving from the direction of Black Mountain and leaving towards the west. Though they have both been reported from many locations since, as far as I can tell groups seemed to have been small until the weekend of 22-23 September.

The **Rufous Whistler** also seems to have been slow to return; following the 2 reports in August, the next one was on 15 September, and it has been reported only from 14 locations so far. After not being recorded in August, the **Mistletoebird** was first reported on 11 September, and from 10 locations to date. Numbers of the **Australian Reed-Warbler**, for which there was a single record up to 28 August, have also built up over the past month, with reports from close to 40 locations by now. Similarly numbers of the **Latham's Snipe**, for which there were already a number of reports from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR in August, have built up over the past month, with reports now from 8 locations.

Following the very early report of a **White-winged Triller** at Kelly Road on 23 August, there have been only 4 further reports so far, of a male and female calling and moving through trees in Latham on 5 September, 3 birds in Macquarie on 13 September, a non-calling bird at Mulligans Flat on 23 September, and one at Narrabundah Hill on 25 September. Likewise there have been only 2 reports of the **Rufous Songlark**, the first of a non-calling bird on 14 September at the Hall Travelling Stock Reserve, and the second of a bird at the Mountain Creek Road dam on 19 September. There have also been a number of reports of the **Sacred Kingfisher** from the Jerrabomberra wetlands since 16 September, and



White-browed Woodswallow

David Cook



Australian Ornithological Services P/L

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FNQ: Atherton Tablelands & Iron Range

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22 to 31 August 2019

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10 to 18 September 2019

Plains-wanderer Weekends

26/27 October 2019

23/24 November 2019

8/9 December 2019

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also one from Callum Brae on 24 September. In contrast, there have been no reports yet of returning **Leaden Flycatchers** or **Rainbow Bee-eater**; in particular the former could have been expected by now.

During October watch out for first arrivals of the last two mentioned above, as well as the last remaining spring/summer migrants still to arrive, the **Dollarbird**, **Eastern Koel**, **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, **Brown Songlark** and **Horsfield's Bushlark**. Look out as well for the passage migrants the **Satin Flycatcher**, **Rufous Fantail**, **Brush Cuckoo** and **Cicadabird**, as they pass through Canberra on their way to breed in the mountains. Also keep a lookout for the **Black-eared Cuckoo** and **Red-backed Kingfisher** and other species which only come to the COG AoI in the driest of times.

Of the species which visit Canberra during the winter months the **Swift Parrot** has attracted by far the most attention. Firstly, a single one was seen by Sandra Henderson at the Wanniasa Hills Primary School on 8-9 September, but then from 20th of the month up to 11 birds have been widely admired by many observers in the area of the National Gallery and High Court. They were present until at least 26 September, probably feeding up before making their long migration journey to Tasmania. As a late development, on the afternoon of 25 September Ash Allnutt posted the news of at least 25, possibly up to 30, Swift Parrots in the flowering trees along Negus Crescent in Watson. They were still present the following morning.

The **Brown Gerygone** stayed longer than I expected, with 1 bird last reported at the ANBG on 14 September. In contrast the **Pink Robin** was not further reported from there over the past month (the last record was on 24 August), though the **Rose Robin** was still recorded there and from 10 other locations (the most recent being 17 September), compared with 5 in August. This is consistent with its status as mainly a passage migrant through Canberra.

Over the past month the **Flame Robin** has been reported from around 18 locations, with about half of them from the mountains to the west of Canberra where they spend the summer to breed. While the **Scarlet Robin** has been reported from a similar number of locations, only 2 of these were from the mountains, consistent with them travelling less distance to breed. The **White-eared Honeyeater** and the **Golden Whistler** were reported from over 40 locations each, but with only 10 or less from the mountains. Again I haven't recorded any of the above 4 species in my local patch of Chapman/Rivett, NW Cooleman Ridge and S Narrabundah Hill during the period.

I also haven't recorded the **Crescent Honeyeater** there in the past month and, while they have been recorded from 4 locations, only one of these was in urban Canberra, the ANBG, from where it was last reported on 22 September, with 3 seen there on the 12th of the month. There have been no further reports of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, though Nicki Taws has informed me that at the beginning of August there was a single bird hanging around with other honeyeaters as they regularly foraged through the Red Box (*E. polyanthemus*) around Wybalena Grove Cook. Together with her earlier report from there included in my June column, this means that reports were not restricted to the southern half of the ACT this winter. There have also been no reports of the **Restless Flycatcher** in September, though the **Bassian Thrush** was last reported from the ANBG on 21 September (see breeding below). So please keep an eye out for the last of the above altitudinal migrants and other species that spend the spring period in Canberra during October.

Of the "unusual" species, the only new one for 2018 has been the **Whiskered Tern**, all of which came from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands area. It was first reported (maximum of four birds) by a number of observers on 2 September, and then 1 bird was seen there from 19-23 September. However, by far the most reports were of the **Barn Owl** seen there from 3-24 September. Interestingly there have been no reports from other locations despite Denise Kay reporting that twelve have been taken into care since July, sadly not all with happy endings. There were also many reports of the **Yellow-plumed Honeyeater** from the Bicentennial



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National Trail near Hall, where it was last seen on 3 September. An **Azure Kingfisher** was also reported by 3 observers from the Cotter from 13-18 September. Apart from the **Brown Gerygone** reports at the ANBG (see above), there have been further reports of a **Black Kite** from Dickson, a **Grey Goshawk** from the ANU, two **Great Crested Grebe** at Black Mountain Peninsula, and a single **Red-necked Avocet** at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands.

For some species the breeding season seems to have been poor or slow so far. Evidence for this includes:

The **Australian Magpie** for which, apart from some harassment of other species, I have not yet been able to find any evidence of local breeding yet. I counted 30 of them flying around/feeding in groups on a 3.5 km transect survey on 10 September. I also saw one still building its nest on the Mulligans Flat Woodlands survey on 23 September, a time when I would have expected them to be feeding young. Sandra Henderson had a very similar experience on her Isaacs Ridge survey on 25 September.

Local **Tawny Frogmouth** expert Stuart Rae informed me on 10 September that the long, cold, dry winter/spring had not been good for them. He only knew of one pair on eggs thus far. Most had not yet built a nest and some territories were still vacant. After being unable to find them all year one of my pair at the NW end of Cooleman Ridge was first on the nest (the same spot now for 3 years) on 16 September, Martin Butterfield's at Carwoola was first seen sitting on 24 September, and on the same day Geoffrey Dabb reported one utilising an old Australian Magpie nest in Narrabundah.

Chris Davey reported that after the **Silver Gulls** expressed an interest during early-mid August 2018 in breeding on Spinnaker Island, they have not been seen around there since 24 August. They appeared to have left the area with very few around Lake Ginninderra or Lake Burley Griffin.

However, the following species seem to be on their usual timing:

- Jean Casburn reported **Grey Currawongs** feeding young in a nest at the Casuarina Sands picnic area on 7 September. This is the same timing as it was seen on the COG bus trip on 6 September 2017;

On 16 September **Grey Butcherbirds** commenced sitting on the nest in the same area of NW Cooleman Ridge for the fourth year in a row, and on 23 September Sue Lashko and I saw two adults appearing to be bringing food to a low nest at Mulligans Flat. Thus, based on the conclusions in my recent CBN paper this species does seem to be breeding at an early time compared with the closely related magpies.



Grey Butcherbird

Roman Soroka

There is some other interesting breeding to report, the undoubted highlight being:

- Steve Wallace reporting successful fledging from at least one or possibly two **Bassian Thrush** broods at the ANBG on 19 September. That day two fledglings were seen about 70 and 130 m from a nest he had first reported on 13 August, and which had contained two well developed chicks on 10 September. This is a rare successful nesting record, with Andrew Cockburn, who has studied the ANBG bird populations extensively, telling Steve that **Bassian Thrush** young there rarely survive due to predation, mostly by Pied Currawongs. The Bird Info data on the COG website indicates only 8 breeding records, between July and November, over the 33 years to 2017, three of these from the ANBG;
- On 9 September David Rosalky reported a pair of **Common Mynas** in his Deakin street had chosen a broken street light for a nesting hollow. The shield glass had broken leaving a fair-sized, if rather jagged, opening. While he couldn't see exactly what stage they were at, it appeared there was grass and other nesting material in the light. He had seen one bird in the nest and one on top of the post with a large insect in its bill and he had also seen both birds in the nest. This reminded me of a similar incident with the same species in Darwinia Tce Chapman within my GBS site many years ago. The light cover had split open at the seam allowing access, but the globe was still on throughout. Despite all the fire hazard debris in it, I can clearly recall young were fledged from the nest; and Michael Lenz reported on 20 September about a pair

of **Flame Robins** in the wider Campbell Park area. He saw the male feeding the female and the latter collecting spider webs. However, they were very secretive and just disappeared, so he didn't know where the actual nest site was.

A slow start to the breeding season is supported by some observations still of mixed feeding flocks (MFF) during September, such as Sue Lashko's MFF of both **pardalotes, Brown, Striated** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills, Fuscous, Yellow-faced, White-naped** and **Brown-headed Honeyeaters** at Aranda Bushland on 4 September, and Jenny Bounds' at the Jerrabomberra West NR on 22 September, which included **Weebills, Buff-rumped** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Speckled Warblers** and a single **Flame Robin**, a brown bird. Sandra Henderson reported a MFF of **Speckled Warblers** with **Superb Fairy-wrens** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills** at Isaacs Ridge on 25 September. However, it was clear that the large single flock species of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**, etc, in my local area had broken up early in September, a timing which Ryu Callaway confirmed, including that the **Little Corella** flock was down to around 100 early in the month.

Please keep up the reports for the later arriving summer migrants or any unexpected arrivals from the parched inland, for the last departing altitudinal migrants mentioned above, and for further breeding. As usual please ensure that all significant observations are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

Once again my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to my two main data sources, postings on the COG Email Discussion List ("COG chatline") and the eBird Australia database, as well as some direct correspondence to me. As always I am very grateful to all involved for publishing this information without which it would not be possible to put this column together.

Jack Holland

Notice of the COG Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 10 October 2018, 7.30pm

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc. will be held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 10 October 2018, in the Multi-media Centre Theatre, Canberra Girls Grammar School, corner of Gawler Crescent and Melbourne Avenue, Deakin.

Agenda

- Opening
- Apologies
- Confirmation of minutes of 2017 AGM
- President's Report
- Adoption of President's report
- Presentation of annual statement of accounts
- Adoption of annual statement of accounts
- Appointment of auditor for 2018-19
- Election of office-bearers (President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer) and ordinary committee members
- Other matters for which notice has been given
- Close of meeting.

(Please note that the minutes of the 2017 AGM are available on the website).

Ian Fraser awarded OAM

Congratulations to Ian Fraser, well-known Canberra conservationist, communicator, tour leader and blogger, as well as a COG member, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2018 Australia Day Honours List for services to conservation and the environment. Many of you were avid readers of the 100 Avlan Whimsies that Ian wrote for Gang-gang for just over 9 years (I'm still trying to find a replacement for his wonderful column), and many of you have enjoyed tours with Ian around Canberra, into other parts of Australia and overseas. His regular spot on ABC Radio 666 was a popular source of information about all sorts of flora and fauna in our local region.

I'm sure you'll enjoy the radio interview found in the following link:

http://mpegmedia.abc.net.au/radio/local_canberra/audio/201801/abk-2018-01-26-us-day-honours-ian-fraser.mp3

Here is Ian (in borrowed tie), with partner Louise Maher, with his OAM, at Government House.

Ian's most recent book *Birds in Their Habitats: Journeys with a Naturalist* is available at the COG sales desk and Ian's blog can be found at <http://ianfrasertalkingnaturally.blogspot.com/>



COG's Bird Blitz - Saturday 27 and Sunday 27 October

Only another month to go until our 14th October bird count across the ACT takes place. Thanks to all those who have adopted sites to survey. Those who are waiting to mop up unloved sites might like to consider some of the following: Tidbinbilla NR; anywhere in the Brindabellas; Campbell Park; Mt Painter; Tharwasandwash; Square Rock; Nursery Swamp; Booroomba Rocks; Brandy Flat; Glendale Crossing; Tuggeranong Hill; Newline paddocks; Lake Tuggeranong; Mt Ainslie; Mt Majura – to name just a few. Check out the website under the heading, Observing and Reporting Birds, for details of the blitz and sites adopted and let me know, to blitz@canberrabirds.org.au where you'd like to survey – or for more information.

Barbara Allan, Blitz organiser

Field Trip Reports

Tuesday 28 to Friday 31 August – Wonga at Bawley Point

Another relaxing few days at this property at Bawley Point. The gardens and birdbaths around the cottages again provided a good bird list. The highlights at Wonga itself were a pair of **Crested Shrike-tits** in a large eucalypt, and a **Spotted Harrier** being pursued by **Masked Lapwings** in the adjoining paddock. The Gynea Lily near the back deck of the main cottage was flowering, and being visited regularly by **Eastern Spinebills**, **Little Wattlebirds** and **New Holland Honeyeaters**. The wetland in the Watts Reserve yielded a large group of **Royal Spoonbills** and seven **Nankeen Night Herons**, along with ducks and waterhens. We were privileged to be given access to forest behind the ANU Coastal Campus, where we walked along a track on the escarpment and found very large numbers of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters**, **Rainbow Lorikeets** and **Spotted Pardalotes**, with a single **Red-browed Treecreeper** located by Libby. At Pebbly Beach a **Brown Cuckoo-dove** was wandering among the kangaroos at a BBQ shelter. We finished off with a visit to a very impressive sculpture exhibition at Willinga Park, where we admired the gardens and listed the birds.

Sandra Henderson

Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 September – Eden pelagics

After watching the forecasts anxiously for some days, it was a relief to find the boat skipper Mark was confident of both days being OK for our trips. On September 1 we had a very calm trip out to the continental shelf drop-off. A single **Brown Skua** followed the boat out for many kilometres, giving us very good views. The variety of species seen on the trip out and at the shelf was very impressive, although numbers of most species were lower than usual. Five species of albatross was a great result, and other highlights included a **Grey-backed Storm-petrel** (rare for NSW), **Providence Petrel**, **White-fronted Terns**, **Northern** and **Southern Giant Petrels**, **Common Diving Petrels** and four shearwater species. The wind picked up dramatically, making for a very rough trip back into Eden. One COG member managed 16 lifers on this trip!

On the second trip, species diversity was much lower, but we still managed four albatross species, some fantastic views of **White-faced Storm-petrels** close to the boat, and more entertainment from the large numbers of cute **Fairy Prions**. On the trip back, three of us got brief views of a **Cape Petrel**.

Many thanks to boat skipper Mark, deckhand Lindsay, and our seabird expert Tobias Hayashi.

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 9 September – Kelly Road

On a fine spring morning, a COG party proceeded to Kelly Road Williamsdale, to survey the birds at several sites along the road. Conditions had been very dry. Nonetheless, the first site at the northern end of the road proved productive, with **Diamond**



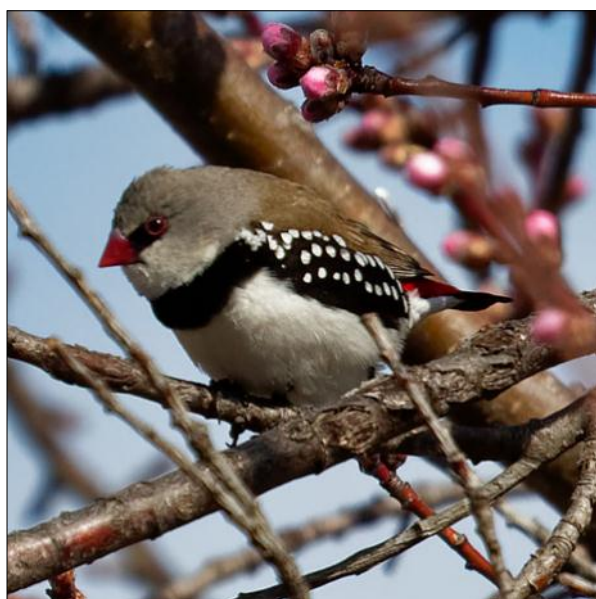
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross

Sue Beatty



Crested Tern

Sandra Henderson



Diamond Firetail

Roman Soroka



Firetails among blossoming shrubs, **Dusky Woodswallows** on the power lines and **Brown Treecreepers** calling in the nearby eucalypts. As we proceeded south along Kelly Road, we encountered a fair variety of woodland birds, including honeyeaters, thornbills and both pardalotes. Raptors seen included **Nankeen Kestrels** and **Wedge-tailed Eagles**. The party enjoyed the bucolic and rustic scenes and each other's company. A total of 43 species was recorded.

David Dedenczuk

Saturday 15 September – Tuggeranong lakes by bike

Despite the forecast windy weather, 4 young, intending and current members met at 8:15am in sunny, calm conditions beside the learn to ride centre at Lake Tuggeranong for the 20km ride around Tuggeranong's lakes. We rode past Isabella Pond where wetlands construction is progressing nicely, dreaming of the birds that could eventually call the site home. Our first stop at Upper Stranger Pond was the most productive of the day. For some reason, the pond had been drained once more, and contained only a small amount of water. A raft of 7 **Hoary-headed Grebes** and a **Great Egret** were highlights, along with **New Holland Honeyeaters** and a **European Goldfinch** which were somewhat unexpected for the site. This was also the only time we were swooped by an **Australian Magpie**, and we weren't even on our bikes at the time!

We then proceeded to Gordon Pond, where it was lovely to see that 5 of 6 fluffball cygnets observed several months ago had been successfully raised to adulthood. The next stop was Point Hut Pond, where an **Australian Pelican** was the most exciting bird. We then rode along the Bicentennial Trail with a good view of the incoming storm, the rolling hills towards Namadgi, and 2 hovering **Nankeen Kestrels**, arriving at Stranger Pond to find the water levels quite high and a group of **Great Cormorants** vigorously fishing.

We arrived back at Lake Tuggeranong and had lunch, by which point a strong gale was blowing. Nevertheless, a flock of 100 **Little Corellas** was sheltering in the trees, and the first **Australasian Darter** of the day was recorded. We all had an enjoyable morning, managing a respectable 57 species in 5 hours, with all lists available on eBird.

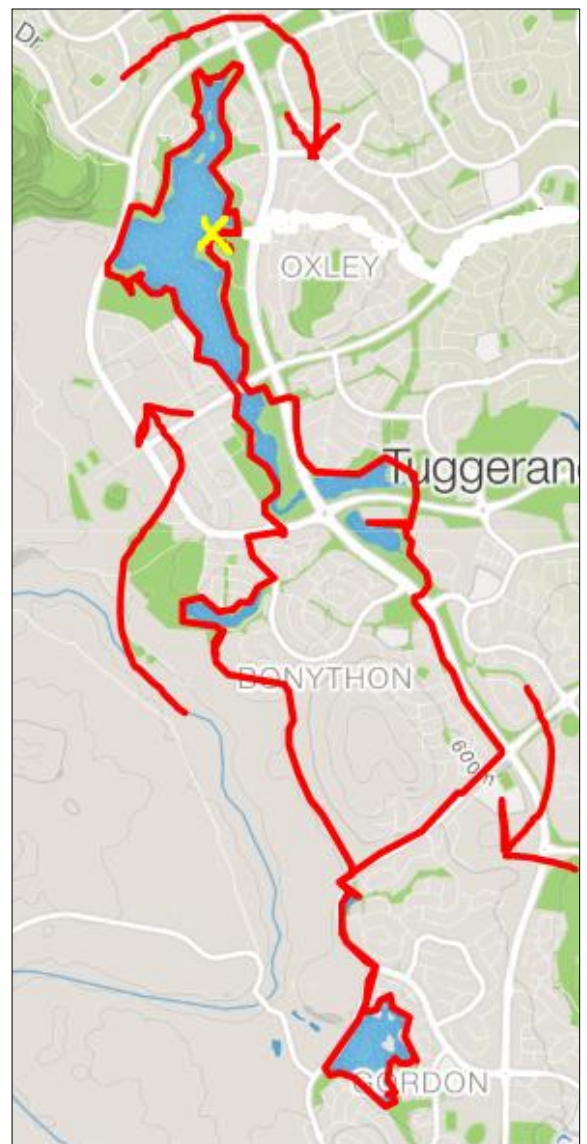
Ryu Callaway



Noisy Miner (left), Red-browed Finch (above) Roman Soroka

Tuggeranong lakes bike route

Ryu Callaway



Wednesday 19 September – Red Hill

Sixteen members gathered at the foot of Red Hill for a lap of the western element of the Nature Reserve. The day was quite warm but a vigorous wind was blowing.

We more or less followed the traditional route for exploring this area but birds were very hard to find. Song was almost entirely absent. We thought this could be due to a number of factors including: the wind causing birds to seek shelter; overgrazing by kangaroos resulting in there being little shelter to be had due to lack of understorey; and the presence of quite a lot of **Noisy Miners** – whose presence may be explained by the lack of understorey.

The greatest diversity of birds was in a small copse of mixed shrubs on the top of the ridge. This included a **Speckled Warbler**, several **Silvereyes**, 2 **Spotted Pardalotes** excavating nest tunnels, a Grey **Shrikethrush** and 2 White-browed Scrubwrens.

Other breeding activity was mainly displayed by larger birds: female **Australian Wood Duck** and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** visiting probable nest sites, and **Crimson Rosella** coming from a nest box, interpreted as occupied nest.

Surprisingly missing from the reserve were thornbills, cuckoos and smaller honeyeaters. In total we recorded 28 species shown in this eBird Checklist <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S48601624>.

Martin Butterfield

Sunday 23 September – Urambi Hills NR

Seven COG members took advantage of the perfect weather to visit this area most had never birded in before. We walked from the Meredith Circuit entrance down to Tuggeranong Creek, and took in the dam close to the creek, as well as stopping for a short break at the bridge over the creek. There were a number of real highlights:

- two **Baillons Crake** at the dam, foraging in the open next to the reeds. One of them flew across the dam, which is the first time most of us have seen this species fly;

- a **Little Eagle** circling over the hill. A report from two days prior in Canberra Nature Map noted that this species is seldom seen at Urambi Hills;

- two **Brown Falcons** flying very close to us, perching nearby, with one calling several times

A total of 48 species was seen, a good result considering the continued very dry conditions.

Sandra Henderson



Baillon's Crake

Tee Tong Teo



Brown Falcon

Lindell Emerton



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Future Field Trips

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>

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.

Sunday 7 October- Harold's Cross near Tallaganda SF

This is a day trip to private property where there is plenty of bird activity and bush walks. A good number of migrants should have arrived by then (eg honeyeaters, whistlers, kingfisher, flycatchers, cuckoos.) There is also a good variety of regular residents, just beginning now to get very busy and vocal. After lunch, we will visit a section of Tallaganda SF.

Meet in the Spotlight carpark at Queanbeyan about 7.50am for carpooling, ready for **departure no later than 8.00am**. It is about a 50 minute drive to the property, with some of it on unsealed roads. If you have a UV hand-held radio, please bring it. Wear sturdy shoes, bring a hat, morning tea and lunch. Libby will provide a cuppa on arrival.

Please register with smlashko@gmail.com

Libby Keen and Sue Lashko

Sunday 14 October – K2C surveys, Bredbo area

COG will continue with the K2C surveys that have been running since April 2010. The surveyed properties have healthy populations of many of the rarer woodland birds such as **Diamond Firetail**, **Hooded Robin** and **Speckled Warbler**. We will be visiting the same sites to continue the monitoring and see if we can add to the property lists with spring-summer migrants. The surveys will be undertaken in 'blitz' fashion; that is, observers in small groups will visit a number of sites on one or more properties before regrouping for lunch and a sharing of the survey's findings. Less experienced observers are welcome to join in the survey as each team will have at least one experienced observer. Anyone interested in participating is asked to contact Nicki Taws **before Wednesday 10 October**. Email: ntaws@bigpond.com or 0408 210736.

Nicki Taws

Wednesday 17 October – Googong Dam

Meet at 9.00am near the boat ramp close to the dam wall. We will explore areas of bush close to the carpark as well as checking the dam for waterfowl and shorebirds. Depending on time and enthusiasm we might also cross the river and explore the Black Wallaby Walking Track.

Martin Butterfield

Saturday 20 October – Percival Hill

Meet at 8.00am on the dam wall of Gungahlin Pond. About a kilometre from the junction of Gundaroo Drive and the Barton Highway, turn into Candlebark Close. Drive to the end of Candlebark and park there, or in one of the little side streets like Platypus or Lyrebird. The dam wall will be obvious from anywhere there and we will meet in the middle.

Percival Hill never disappoints. There are several different habitats which are usually very active in spring. Percival Hill rises from reedy Ginninderra Creek. While much of the eastern slope of Percival Hill is new growth, planted about 20 years ago by Landcare but getting quite mature now, there is a significant old growth stand on its west. Expect well over 30 species on the list.

John Harris

Tuesday 30 October to Sunday 4 November - Balranald Area

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

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

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

Sunday 11 November — Campbell Park, Morning Nest workshop

This outing will be a repeat of the very popular and practical nest workshops held over the past fourteen years. As usual it will be a very informal outing which has been timed to coincide with the peak of the breeding season. The morning will start with the usual very short presentation including tips on the types of nests built by different species of birds, and how to find nests or nesting behaviour. This will be followed by several hours putting this into practice, with participants looking for breeding behaviour, signs of nests, etc. This will also allow plenty of opportunities for bird watching.

The workshop is particularly suitable for beginners or those relatively new to bird watching, though more experienced members and repeat customers are also very welcome. While every year has been different, we often don't walk very far as there usually is a "hot spot" where most of the breeding activity occurs. To participate, please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840) or by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com.

Meet at 8:00 am at the picnic tables at the far end of the car park. Take Northcott Drive up to the start of the Campbell Park Offices, where you take the right fork

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

and keep to the outside of the very large car park, skirting it until you get to the end. Intending participants might also like to look at the Campbell Park map on the COG website under the Maps, Forms and Lists button. Please remember to take morning tea which we will have out in the field.

Sunday 18 November – Wark’s Road, Brindabellas

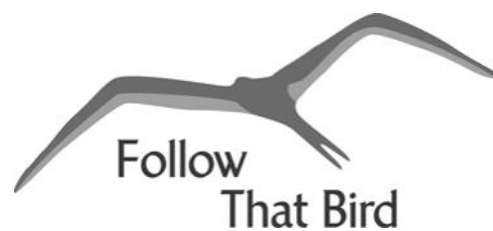
Meet at Stromlo Forest Park at 8:00 am for carpooling. The plan is to drive to the junction of Wark’s Rd and Blundell’s Creek Rd. Possible birds include **Pilotbird**, **Rufous Fantail**, **Eastern Yellow Robin**, **Satin Flycatcher** and **Red-browed Treecreeper**.

We will return to the Bull’s Head picnic area for an early lunch, and a second survey. **Spotted Quail-thrush** and **Superb Lyrebirds** have been reported from this site. We will return to Canberra by mid-afternoon. Bring morning tea, lunch, water and sunprotection. There will be a limit of four vehicles – so please advise David by COB Friday 16 November if your wish to come along.

David Dedenczuk

Sunday 25 November – Wee Jasper

This outing will include a visit to private property, as well as a walk along part of the Hume and Hovell Track. Meet at Hall Primary School, Hoskins St, Hall, at 7.00 am for carpooling. Bring morning tea and lunch. Snakes should be out and about, so take the usual precautions with footwear and clothing, and carry a snake bandage. Please register with Sue Lashko at smlashko@gmail.com



September 2018

Barraba – NSW Birding Hot Spot
\$2575

2-6th Sept *Guide: Christina Port*
Broken Hill & Menindee Lakes
\$4610

11-19th Sept *Guide Christina Port*

November 2018

Cape York

TBA

28 Nov–3rd Dec *Guide: Rob Hynson*

January 2019

King & Flinders Islands
\$4105

22-27 Jan *Guide: TBA*

Birds & Camaraderie

Follow That Bird - Sydney’s Birding Company

Tel +61 2 9973 1865

Website

www.followthatbird.com.au



Welcome Swallow

Roman Soroka

2018 Gang-gang Cockatoo nesting survey

During 2014 a most successful survey on the distribution of the [Gang-gang Cockatoo](#) in the ACT was held to celebrate 50 years of birding activities by the Canberra Ornithologists Group.

A student at the ANU is keen to develop the survey further by examining in more detail the birds' nesting requirements. COG members are asked to help by reporting breeding observations as a sighting on Canberra Nature Map (<https://canberra.naturemapr.org/>).

You will be asked to provide the information online:

Gender of bird observed— male, female or pair

Gang-gang behaviour

Seen entering hollow

Or looking into hollow

Or chewing bark around hollow

Or perched near hollow

Is this a repeat observation at this location?

List other species seen entering or inspecting hollow



Gang-gang Cockatoo in hollow

Chris Davey

A photograph is required for each sighting entered into Canberra Nature Map. The location and date is stripped from the image preferences. Once logged on click 'Add a sighting' on the top banner, then on the dropdown box click on 'Add a sighting'. Transfer your image, enter the abundance, then select 'Bird' then 'Parrot' then 'Callocephalon fimbriatum (Gang-gang Cockatoo)', then supply the requested additional information.

If your camera or smart phone is not GPS enabled or you don't own one of these devices, please contact Michael.Mulvaney@act.gov.au and he will set you up so that you are able to add data.

The aim of the survey is to obtain multiple sightings on the use of a hollow that Gang-gangs have been inspecting. In this way information can be obtained on the hollows that have been successfully used by Gang-gangs for breeding and on those that have been unsuccessful and the reasons why. Therefore, please provide information each time you check the hollow whether Gang-gangs are present or not.

Surprisingly the 2014 survey did not definitely confirm the presence of any nest trees, and there are just three trees known in the Canberra area in which chicks have been reared. Locating further nest trees will help to better understand and conserve this species.

Clicking on the box on Canberra Nature Map that this is a nest site means that only the person reporting the site and the project administrators will know the location of a nest site.

Alternatively, information can be provided via email to chris_davey@aapt.net.au or kathy.eyles@anu.edu.au

Chris Davey

New Places – September

Sandra Henderson

3 – 9 September

Gurney VC Rest Area

Where is it: far end of Lake George, on the Federal Highway just near the Lerida Winery.

Although it's not obvious from the highway, this is a very large rest area, and it's possible to wander a little way into bushy areas around the rest area. I called in on a cold, overcast morning, but still found 16 species, including a group of **White-winged Choughs** building a nest. Small birds included **Superb Fairywrens**, **Silvereyes**, **Brown Thornbills** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**.

10 – 16 September

Rankins Springs

Where is it: not far from Griffith and Cocoparra National Park

When the Lachlan Fold Wildlife Action Group and Riverina Local Land Services advertised a Protecting Parrots day I decided it was a good opportunity to try the birding in Rankins Springs. The event featured a great presentation on **Turquoise Parrots** by Chris Tzaros, but unfortunately the parrots are scarce around Cocoparra National Park and Conaparra State Forest at present.

I started the day with a couple of hours beside the large Common Dam, where highlights were a couple of **Striped Honeyeaters** and a flyover by a **Major Mitchell Cockatoo**. I then took myself to the town TSR, where I found a pair of **Major Mitchell Cockatoos** at a hollow, and a pair of **Cockatiels** coming in to the dam. After the presentations by Chris Tzaros, and Graham Fifield (Greening Australia), we went out to Conaparra SF to a dam usually frequented by Turks and **Glossy Black Cockatoos**, and were shown the nest boxes being installed by Chris in nearby woodland.



Major Mitchell Cockatoo

Sandra Henderson

17 – 23 September

Cowra Japanese Garden

This was one of the sites visited on a bus tour organized by the Geranium and Fuschia Society, and I was one of three COG members on the bus. The **Wood Ducks** on the ornamental pond had seven new ducklings, and were very relaxed about the crowds passing by within a few metres (it was a festival day at the Garden, so many hundreds of visitors were present). Despite the crowds, we found 25 species.

24 – 30 September

John Cory Rd, Hume

Where it is: off Long Gully Rd. A very short stretch of road, past the Recycling Centre, ending at a roundabout.

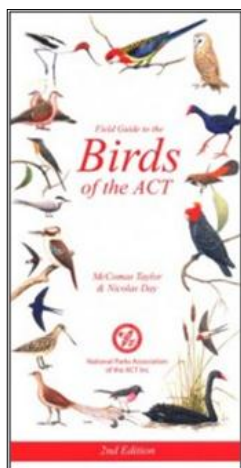
I've called in sometimes to look over the fence at the small dam (currently dry) but it proved to be very birdy on Tuesday 25th. The first thing I noticed was the large number of **Fairy Martins** flying, and even a couple sitting on the road. They are nesting in a culvert just before the roundabout. On the fence alongside the roundabout were **Dusky Woodswallows**, a **European Goldfinch**, a **Willie Wagtail** and several Common Starlings. A **Pallid Cuckoo** was calling in the paddock, and two **Straw-necked Ibis** circled overhead before settling in a close paddock tree.

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



Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT

McComas Taylor & Nicolas Day

This revised second edition illustrates in colour the 217 birds likely to be seen in and around the ACT. It has easy-to-follow descriptions in a compact format. Only local birds are shown making this Field Guide much simpler to use than comprehensive national guides. McComas Taylor has been watching birds in Canberra for over 30 years and has written, broadcast and lectured on the subject. Nicholas Day is widely recognised as one of Australia's foremost wildlife artists.

Members' price: \$20.

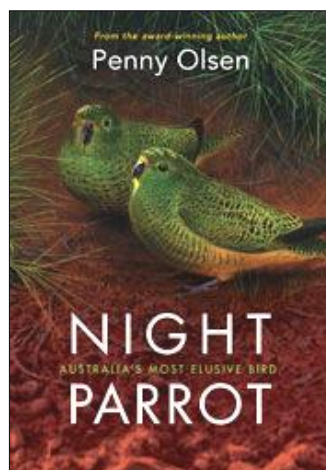


Australasian Eagles and Eagle-like Birds

Stephen Debus

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

Members' price: \$35.



Night Parrot: Australia's Most Elusive Bird

Penny Olsen

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

Members' Price: \$35

Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

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

COG membership

2018-2019 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

J May
V Markovic
M Zawisz
P Morton

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for November 2018 edition:

Wednesday 31 October 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.

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