



# Gang-gang

**OCTOBER 2019**

**Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.**

## **OCTOBER MEETING**

**Wednesday 9 October 2019**

**7.30 pm**

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

This month there will be three presentations of roughly equal length.

First **David McDonald** will present on **COG's 2019 member survey: topline findings**.

Earlier this year, COG's Committee of Management invited the members and friends of the association to complete a survey. It aimed to ascertain what parts of COG's activities matter to members and friends, and what the association could usefully change or improve. COG's Committee of Management is really pleased at the feedback it received through the survey, and its findings will be summarised by David on behalf of the Committee.

The second presentation will be by **Claire Taylor**, a PhD student at the Research School of Biology at the ANU (and a Canberra Birds Conservation Fund grant recipient) on "**The effect of the physical and social environment on maternal investment of cuckoos and their hosts**".

Parasitic cuckoos use mimicry to fool hosts into raising the cuckoos' offspring. However, hosts have developed methods

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

Bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (Aoi) seemed to increase significantly at the start of the 4 weeks from 29 August covered by this column. This coincided with a spell of warmer weather as we welcomed spring. However, the weather since then has been rather variable, with some warmer than average days, but also with some cloudy, windy periods. Until mid-September it remained very dry, and while we have had two reasonable falls since, in particular the first one, the drought is far from over, particularly inland. As outlined below, there are signs that this once again will be the dominant determiner of our bird activity over spring and summer, but this has not yet been definitely established.

By far the greatest excitement has been caused by the presence of two very unusual birds for the ACT and surrounds. The first, a male **Northern Shoveler**, was first reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR by Shorty on behalf of Roger Williams on 10 September. This unexpected and spectacular bird stayed put and was subsequently observed by many observers, including from interstate, and often seen associating and

*Continued Page 2*



**Northern Shoveler**

*Geoffrey Dabb*

**Everyone welcome**

to detect these intruders. One such instance of mimicry is that of host eggs, often in shape, size, colour and pattern. Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo eggs look remarkably like that of their host, the Superb Fairy-wren. Despite the cuckoo's best efforts to date, some Superb Fairy-wrens are able to detect cuckoo eggs and abandon the parasitized nest. Claire has compared the shape and size of Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo eggs to those of their hosts and in the context of nest abandonment to shed light on how Superb Fairy-wrens are able to detect these parasitic cuckoo eggs.

The third presentation will be by COG member **Alistair Drake** entitled "**A trip to the Top End of Australia**". Alistair will discuss and show bird photos from a recent trip to the Northern Territory.

### **Notice of the COG Annual General Meeting**

**Wednesday 13 November 2019, 7.30pm**

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc. will be held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 13 November 2019, in the Multi-media Theatre, Canberra Girls Grammar School, corner of Gawler Crescent and Melbourne Avenue, Deakin.

#### **Agenda**

- Opening
- Apologies
- Confirmation of minutes of 2018 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 2019-20
- 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 2018 AGM are available on the website).

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

interacting with the local **Australasian Shovelers**. However, after being present for over a week it moved on, with the eBird Australia map showing it was last reported on 19 September. It is certainly a new species for the COG Aol, as it is not listed in the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the Australian Capital Territory, dated 22 November 2017, on the COG website, or in Steve Wilson's book 'Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change'. 'The Australian Bird Guide' notes that it winters in Thailand, the Philippines and rarely Micronesia, and that it is an infrequent vagrant to Australia, potentially found on almost any large wetland, coastal or inland. Most reports are said to be of a single male in breeding plumage, but that birds in other plumages are more likely to go unnoticed. How it got here and found this particular spot to its liking (at least for a while) is unclear, though I note from the eBird Australia map, a male (perhaps the same bird?) was also observed at the Leeton Sewage Works on 2-3 August.

The second unusual bird was the single **Black-tailed Native-hen** first reported by Bill Graham from the Valley Avenue ponds, close to the Gungahlin Town Centre, on 12 September. This is not a new species but, according to COG's 2017-2018 Annual Bird Report (ABR), a non-breeding vagrant and a very occasional visitor, with a single bird last reported from Lake Bathurst in 2014. This bird again stayed put, often feeding on the open grass in the presence of other gallinules, and was possibly still present up to time of writing. Unlike the above, its presence is almost certainly due to the dry inland, though interestingly

the closest sighting I can find on the eBird Australia map is of 1-2 birds in August from Lake Centenary in Temora, around 150 km away in a straight line.

The spring/summer migrants which had started to return in August, the **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, **Grey Fantail**, **Yellow-faced** and **Fuscous Honeyeaters** and the **Tree Martin**, are by now well established, with reports from many more locations.

This also applies to species for which the number of locations last month was still small. The **Fairy Martin** has now been reported from 17 locations compared with the 5 last month, the **White-naped Honeyeater** from over 30 locations compared with 4, the **Rufous Whistler** from 23 locations, interestingly almost all in the second half of September, compared with 4, the **Australian Reed-Warbler** from over 30 locations compared with 4, and the **Mistletoebird** from 12 locations compared with just 2. However, the **Latham's Snipe** has been reported from only 4 locations (compared with 1 previously), probably a reflection of the paucity of available habitat in the dry conditions.

The **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** has been reported from over 20 locations compared with 6 previously, the **Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo** from 10 locations compared with 2, and the **Pallid Cuckoo** from 9 locations compared with the single one previously. Despite this, these are still relatively low numbers of the latter two species; I would have expected them to be higher due to the dry conditions inland. Food does seem to be available, with Nicki Taws reporting seeing 2 of the former birds enjoying the many succulent Pasture Day-moth hairy caterpillars (*Apina callisto*) crawling around on the ground along the Molonglo River. The coastal species, the **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** was first reported by Shorty from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 6 September, and has been reported from 6 locations since, all in the second half of the month.

Of the species for which there were early reports in August, the **White-throated Gerygone** has now been reported from 19 locations, compared



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Good birding, good food

**South West Western Australia**  
2 to 11 September 2019

**Alice Springs, West MacDonnell  
Ranges, Marla & Yulara**  
12 to 22 September 2019  
Now includes Marla (SA) for  
Chestnut-breasted Whiteface and Yulara  
for Sandhill Grasswren.

**Tasmanian bird and mammal tour**  
Bruny Island, Melaleuca, pelagic.  
1 to 8 February 2020

**Top End birding tour**  
Darwin, Kakadu, Katherine, Kununurra,  
Mitchell Plateau.  
10 to 24 May 2020

**Atherton Tablelands & Iron Range NP**  
1 to 14 June 2020 (2 parts)

**Gulf of Carpentaria birding tour**  
19 June to 6 July 2020  
Now includes Winton for Rusty  
Grasswren.

**New tour**  
**The Pilbara birding tour**  
13 to 22 July 2020

**The Pilbara birding tour**  
24 July to 2 August 2020 FULL

**Alice Springs, West MacDonnell  
Ranges, Marla & Yulara**  
7 to 17 August 2020

Please see itineraries, checklists  
and latest news on our website

[www.philipmaher.com](http://www.philipmaher.com)



Red-necked Avocet

Kym Bradley

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with the single one previously, and the **Western Gerygone** from 15 locations compared with 3 last month. The **White-winged Triller** has also been reported from 19 locations compared with the 3 very early reports in August. The **Rufous Songlark** was also reported early, by Michael Lenz in Lyneham on 8 September, and from a further 5 locations since. The early presence of these last two species reflects a dry inland and suggests that both will be here in good numbers this spring/summer, particularly if it remains dry inland but improves here. This is supported by a very early report of a **Brown Songlark** by Peter Milburn at the Deakin Football Ground on 8 September.

The **Noisy Friarbird**, a species I overlooked for readers to look out for in my previous column, was first reported at the end of August but has since been reported from over 30 locations. Several observers noted that this species arrived later than expected; I didn't observe it in my local patch of NW Chapman/Coolleman Ridge and Narrabundah Hill until 24 September. It is very interesting that the first **Leaden Flycatcher** was reported by David McDonald in Wamboin on 31 August, but there have been no further reports since. The **Sacred Kingfisher** was first reported from Jerrabomberra Wetlands by David Rees on 20 September, but there has been only a single report from there since, as well as from Lake Ginninderra on 23 September. Likewise the **Rainbow Bee-eater** was first reported by Kym Bradley from her patch to the south of Canberra on 19 September, with Shorty reporting one from the Gigerline NR, and Bill Graham from Mulligans Flat NR, on 21 and 22 September, respectively.

The **Superb Parrot** always deserves a special mention, with reports from around 30 locations, about double that in August, with 11 being south of the lake. However, numbers seem still to be small, with by far the most together appearing to be the 24 birds my daughter saw at the Lyons shops on 8 September.

So please keep an eye out for the above and any other returning spring/summer migrant species. During October, watch out for the first arrivals of the last remaining spring migrants, the **Dollarbird**, **Eastern Koel**, **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallows** (already one of the latter reported by Viv Rolland from Scullin on 3 September), and the **Horsfield's Bushlark**, as well as for the passage migrants, the **Satin Flycatcher**, **Rufous Fantail** (also one reported from the Lyrebird Trail at Tidbinbilla by Liam Manderson on 15 September), **Brush Cuckoo** and **Cicadabird**. Also keep a lookout for the **Black-eared Cuckoo** and the **Red-backed Kingfisher** and other species which only come to the COG Aol in the driest of times (and **Painted Honeyeater** – reported from Gundaroo on 25 Sep).

As these arrive, the altitudinal migrants that spend winter in the lower areas leave. This includes the **White-eared Honeyeater** still reported from around 12 urban/peri-urban locations from a total of around 40 in the COG Aol. However, the **Golden Whistler** has still been reported from close to 30 such locations (from a total of about 45), consistent with this species being usually the last to leave. However, it is clearer for the **Scarlet Robin** which was still reported from around 10 urban/peri-urban locations (from a total of about 25) during the period, and more so for the **Flame Robin** which has been reported from just 5 such locations (from a total of 14). The **Rose Robin** has been reported from 7 such locations of a total of 14, consistent with it being a passage migrant through Canberra in early spring. There have been no reports of the **Pink Robin** since 26 July.

There have been reports of a **Crescent Honeyeater** from the ANBG on 13 and 15 September, but otherwise only from the Cottermouth and the Tallaganda State Forest. Similarly there have been reports of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** from the Pinnacle on 1 September, Stoney Creek NR on 3 September, and from Narrabundah Hill on 13 September. The **Bassian Thrush** continued to be reported from the ANBG up to 22 September, but also at the Milapuru agistment centre in Kambah by Mim Philip on 13 September, as well as from 2 locations on the west side of the Murrumbidgee River. The only peri-urban report of the **Restless Flycatcher** was by Alastair Smith at Bibaringa on 29 August. There have been reports of the **Swift Parrot** from 3 locations over the period, of 1 bird at the Hackett Neighbourhood Oval on 11 September by Ash Allnutt, who *inter alia* also reported 2 birds at MacDermott Place, Lake Ginninderra on 16 September. There was a late report from there on 23 September, and also from Wanniasa the following day.

There have been a number of less "unusual" species reported. These include up to 7 **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR from 1-15 September, and up to 2 **Whiskered Terns** seen there by many observers from 8-15 September. Up to 2 **Lewin's Rail** were similarly seen there from 10-21 September, as were up to 2 **Pied Stilt** from 10-21 September. A **Spotless Crake** (uncommon outside of summer according to Bird Info on the COG website) was also seen there between 4 and 15 September, also at the Valley Avenue Ponds from 12-17 September, and at MacDermott Place, Lake Ginninderra on 16 September. Up to 2 **Baillon's Crake** (also uncommon outside of summer) were also reported from the wetlands between 8-23 September, as well as 1 in the Central Basin of Lake Burley Griffin on 14 September.

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A **Barn Owl** was reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 14 September, and there was a late report of one off Allara St, Civic on 24 September. **Musk Lorikeets** have continued to be reported from Watson and Wanniasa, but also from Callum Brae, Higgins and Waramanga. A single **White-headed Pigeon** was reported from 3 locations, Duffy, Symonston and Narrabundah from 15-21 September; posing the question - was it the same bird? Last, but certainly not least, was the report of 2 **Azure Kingfishers** fishing together on the Uriarra Loop Track by Sarah Fieg on 14 September. This species is usually reported as a single bird and posed the questions – were they a breeding pair and are they resident moving along the river?

Compared with August quite a bit of breeding activity has been brought to my attention, much of it being for the expected species given it was the beginning of spring. However, the following are worthy of note:

- On 3 September Kym Bradley highlighted some of the early signs of spring breeding in her patch to the south of Canberra including: **Jacky Winters** collecting items and taking them to their nest site, and **Diamond Firetails** working on a large nest which may have been a roosting nest;
- On 14 September Kym updated her observations; the **Dusky Woodswallows** were now copulating (there were so many there this season, the most she has ever seen). The **Hooded Robins** were also copulating - she was attracting and accepting him now. **Striated Pardalotes** had built a nest inside the entry to a wombat hole as for last season. She was also sure the **Brown Treecreeper** female was sitting on a nest at the same site as last year.
- On 18 September Kym posted that the Cotter **Emus** had 4 chicks on the grounds where the old pub used to be.
- At the end of August there were several posts concerning signs of nesting of the **Grey Butcherbird** in Narrabundah, Kaleen and Mt Rogers. This was in part prompted by my posting that Wilf Hedley had informed me that this species had again built a nest in his backyard in Rivett. This was similar timing to 2017 when he had a rare example of successful double nesting for them, which we wrote up in CBN. Around the same time I found the **Grey Butcherbird** nest for this year on Cooleman Ridge.

As for last year the **Australian Magpie** seems to be having a poor breeding season, at least in my local patch where I know of only 3 nests, one in my GBS site. In support, a presumed non-breeding gathering of at least 30 birds has often been seen nearby.

While flocks of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** have been much less conspicuous on the median strips, etc, the numbers from my count of them at the 3 local evening roosts have in fact increased slightly compared with the August counts.

Please keep up the reports for the last arriving spring/summer migrants, including any unexpected arrivals from the parched inland, for the last departing altitudinal migrants mentioned above, and for increased signs of breeding. As usual please ensure that all significant sightings 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, posting on the COG email Discussion List ("COG chatline") and the eBird Australia database, as well as direct correspondence with 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*

## COG'S BIRD BLITZ 26-27 October 2019

Thanks to all who have already adopted sites across the ACT to survey over the blitz weekend. For the as-yet uncommitted there are many delightful options still available. Who's going to take on one or more of the following: Mt Majura; the Arboretum; Stromlo Forest Park; Stirling Ridge; Newline paddocks; Woodstock NR; Tuggeranong Hill; Booroomba Rocks; Tharwa Sandwash; Cotter Reserve; Tidbinbilla; Yankee Hat; the further reaches of Namadgi NP? Check out the blitz option on the COG website [www.canberrabirds.org.au](http://www.canberrabirds.org.au) for a full list of named sites. Of course you are welcome to survey anywhere in the ACT – the listed sites are merely the most popular ones. And please remember, if you record your sightings via eBird, to "share" them with COG blitz. All offers or questions to [blitz@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:blitz@canberrabirds.org.au).

*Barbara Allan, Blitz coordinator*



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# Field Trip Reports

## Saturday 31 August – Lake Road, Bungendore

For those expecting a view of a water-filled Lake George the outing would have been a disappointment. The Lake was completely dry as was the wetland along Lake Road. The party of seven met at the entrance to Lake Road at 9:00am, car-pooled to Douglas Cottage and walked north along the road returning to the cars at about 10:30.

Despite the dry conditions we managed 20 bird species including **Galah** carrying leaves, an adult **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Eurasian Skylark** and six species of honeyeater: **Noisy Miner**, **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**, **Red Wattlebird**, **Fuscous Honeyeater**, **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Eastern Spinebill**. None of the summer migrants were recorded.

Most of the party then travelled to Trucking Yard Lane, not bothering to check out the Sewage Works which had been scanned earlier in the morning before the start of the outing. At the dam next to the Lane we recorded 18 species including **27 Plumed Whistling-Duck**, **107 Pacific Black Duck** and in the distance **8 Australian Shelduck**.

After a 30 minute stop a few of the group then paid a visit to Bungendore Common where we recorded 16 species including a **Great Egret**, which apparently is a regular. We departed the Common around midday having recorded a total of 46 species for the outing.

Thanks to Lia Battisson for submitting records of sightings to eBird. The various lists can be found at

<https://ebird.org/australia/view/checklist/S59421245>

<https://ebird.org/australia/view/checklist/S59421263>

<https://ebird.org/australia/view/checklist/S59421274>

<https://ebird.org/australia/view/checklist/S59421282>

Chris Davey



Rainbow Lorikeet

Sandra Henderson

## Sunday 8 September – Callum Brae NR

Twenty members and guests spent a very pleasant morning wandering a circuit around Callum Brae. The reserve remains very dry, although there is still water in several of the dams. We managed a very respectable bird list (43 species) despite the number of the migrants yet to arrive. Several of those arriving early heard a **Pallid Cuckoo** calling, and it started again as we left. **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**, **Little Corellas** and **Rainbow Lorikeets** were seen at hollows, an **Australian Raven** was carrying a considerable mouthful of nesting material, and a **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** was seen carrying food. Two **Brown Goshawks**, two **Nankeen Kestrels** and a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** were sighted. Near one of the dams, a **Western Gerygone** was calling, and a wander in that general direction produced **Speckled Warblers**, **Dusky Woodswallows**, a **Grey Shrike-thrush** and a male **Golden Whistler**.

Sandra Henderson

## Saturday 14 September - Bluett's Block

On a warm, sunny morning 30 birders came, keen to see Bluett's Block and hopefully to find **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** and **Red-capped Robin**.

Unfortunately no heathwrens showed themselves, but the **Red-capped Robin** put on a good display. Other birds of note were **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** flying over, probably on return to the mountains, a **Brown Falcon** carrying a reptile with a long tail, **White-naped** and **Brown-headed Honeyeater**, **Speckled Warbler**, **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalote**, **Eastern Yellow Robin**, **White-throated Treecreeper**, several **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, lots of **Grey Fantail**, thornbill of various types and a **Nankeen Kestrel**. An early **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** was heard by several of the group.



Red-capped Robin

*Lindell Emerton*

As usual the block was looking beautiful even though dry and thirsting for rain. There were more orchids seen than earlier in the week and White Heath flowers are beginning to fade.

We were also pleased to welcome visitors from Braidwood and Tumut. Thanks to all who came and who are keen to visit again, and to Lia for keeping the bird list.

Jean Casburn

## Monday 16 to Friday 20 September – Green Cape, Ben Boyd NP

Fourteen members and guests spent a wonderful few days at the Green Cape lighthouse cottages. It was probably the most successful trip I've participated in there, with almost everyone seeing some wonderful birds. The 6am seawatches from the Green Cape lookout each morning proved very productive, with up to four species of albatross seen (**Shy, Black-browed, Yellow-nosed** and **Buller's Albatrosses**), as well as some species rarely seen close to land there, including a **Brown Skua** and a **Northern Giant-Petrel**. There were some good views of **Fluttering Shearwaters**, and regular sightings of **Wedge-tailed** and **Short-tailed Shearwaters**. The **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** family (four individuals) was seen frequently over the cottages and the ocean. During the days we were there a steady procession of Humpback Whales moved past the Cape, and we saw



Seawater, Green Cape

*Graeme Austin*

Common and Bottle-nosed Dolphins, as well as the usual New Zealand Fur Seals lazing in the water off the rocks.

The usual wombats were out and about – very large and very healthy individuals. Both Southern Brown and Long-nosed Bandicoots were seen, and a couple of Echidnas.

Many thanks to Peter and Anthony for sharing their seabird expertise, and all the cooks and helpers for the wonderful evening meals.

Sandra Henderson



COG members at Green Cape

*Ken Black*

As usual we walked the Bittangabee Bay to lighthouse track, with a **Rose Robin** and many **Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters** being the highlights, along with a lengthy observation of a feeding **Superb Lyrebird**. On Pulpit Rock Road the group saw **Eastern Ground Parrots** coming in to drink from puddles on the road, and some members had other sightings of the species. **Southern Emu-Wrens** appeared several times, and **Striated Fieldwrens** were also cooperative. One afternoon a large tern roost on the rocks at the lighthouse included a number of **White-fronted Terns**, as well as **Caspian** and **Crested Terns**.



COG members at Green Cape

*Sandra Henderson*





Green Cape Lighthouse, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, Eastern Ground Parrot, Southern Brown Bandicoot *Ryu Callaway*

Southern Emu-wren, Shy Albatross, Striated Fieldwren, Caspian Tern *Ken Black*



### Wednesday 18 September – Hume

Seven members turned up at Hume to do as much of the usual loop as the building frenzy in the area permitted. The first patch of woodland appeared to be blocked off so we went back towards Tralee Street. As we did so, a pair of **Wedge-tailed Eagles** was seen soaring over the land between Hume and the tip while a flock of white birds, probably **Australian White Ibis**, were even higher over the tip.

The first pond produced an **Australasian Grebe**, 2 **Pacific Black Ducks** and a nice family of **Australian Wood Ducks**, including 5 ducklings, skulking at the base of some reeds. Surprisingly, no Australian Reed-Warblers were calling.

At the large patch of woodland we found quite a lot of action in the tree hollows. A **Striated Pardalote** passed food into a hollow from which a female emerged. A pair of **Galahs** was checking out real estate, as were at least three pairs of **Red-rumped Parrots**. Other potential users of the many hollows in the old trees included **Eastern Rosellas**, **Crimson Rosellas**, **Common Starlings** and **Common Mynas**. However, none of them was seen to be actually inspecting the hollows. Moving up the creek line added little to our list, but along the former railway line was more productive with **White-naped** and **White-eared Honeyeater**, **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Nankeen Kestrel**, and **Brown, Buff-rumped** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**.

The final leg through the horse paddocks added sightings of 4 **Dusky Woodswallows** and a **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**. Two large pure white domestic geese were also seen on a small dam in one of the paddocks. The final two species added were **Mistletoebird** (heard) and finally an **Australasian Pipit** perching on a land sale sign.

Overall we recorded 41 species. A full checklist is at <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59890561>.

Martin Butterfield



### Sunday 22 September 2019 - Sherwood Homestead Complex

Trip leader, David McDonald, was joined by 15 members and friends interested in visiting the Sherwood Homestead Complex, a European settler homestead site located on Uriarra Creek in the Blue Range Hut/Uriarra State Forest area. The homestead was occupied from 1863 to 1922. En route we stopped at the Uriarra East Reserve where 2 **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos** were easily observed and appeared to be courting. There were probable nest sites for **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and **Starlings**. At the dam near Uriarra Village we saw 6 **Australasian** and 1 **Hoary-headed Grebe** as well as 12 **Hardheads** and 4 **Australasian Shovelers**.

After parking near Blue Range Hut we walked the 2.5km to the Sherwood historic site. Notable birds included **Golden** and **Rufous Whistlers**, a female **Red-capped Robin**, **Wonga Pigeon** and a **Fuscous Honeyeater**. Two **Nankeen Kestrels** also appeared to be courting. We lunched in the grounds of the old site surrounded by magnificent daffodils, descendants of the original plantings. Two feral cats and a pig were seen. A huge flock of **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos**, around 80, were observed as we were returning to our cars. A total of 60 birds was recorded.

Prue Watters



Sherwood Homestead gardens, COG members at Blue Range

Tee Tong Teo

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# New Places: September 2019

Sandra Henderson

## Sherwood Historic Site

Where is it: close to Namadgi National Park, off Blue Range Road.

COG walked from Blue Range Hut (about 4km each way) to the site where a homestead was built about 150 years ago. Today there is an information sign, and thousands of daffodils originally planted by Eliza Phillips. If you visit this 'new place' be sure to go in early spring, when the daffodils, jonquils and snowdrops are all in flower. Later in the season there would be lots of shade from the many exotic trees – oaks, elms etc. Just after turning into the road leading to the site, we were treated to a pair of **Nankeen Kestrels** courting, having just had some good views of a female **Red-capped Robin**. Near the homestead site, a group of nine **Satin Bowerbirds** was sighted. The Robin had been so distracting we all failed to notice the hundreds of Golden Moth Orchids (*Diurischryseopsis*) on the other side of the road – but we didn't miss them on the way out.

## Black Mountain woodland walk

Where is it: this loop walk starts and ends at the Caswell Drive carpark.

I joined a couple of other COG members for this walk organised not as a COG outing but a Friends of Black Mountain outing. The weather was a little threatening, and rain started as we finished the walk. The undoubted highlight was good views of a pair of **Varied Sittellas** flying across the track and stopping in a trackside tree. Quite a few parrots, including **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas**, and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**, were investigating hollows or looked to be already settled in hollows. Slightly earlier in the morning I'd walked part of the track and found a variety of honeyeaters, with **Brown-headed Honeyeaters** the most numerous, as well as a pair of **Olive-backed Orioles** and numerous small birds.

## Queanbeyan Lawn Cemetery

Where is it: Lanyon Drive.

This is a spot I'd intended to visit for quite some time. In a half-hour stroll around the perimeter I found 18 species, including **Gang-gang Cockatoo**, a **Satin Bowerbird**, lots of **Red-rumped Parrots** and both Rosella species. I also noticed that next to the cemetery there is an interesting looking bush block signposted as the Queanbeyan Bush Burial site. A visit for another day!

## Gambles Travelling Stock Reserve

Where is it: Sutton Road, between the Federal Highway and Queanbeyan

I see that a couple of COG members have visited this reserve in the past, and I went knowing it would be very dry. However, it had some nice birds! I managed 24 species in just over an hour, including **Pallid Cuckoo**, **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** and **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**. Two **Little Eagles** were circling just beyond the back fence of the reserve.

I know one of next year's outings is to be a day exploring some TSRs, so look out for that when the program of field trips is released, as Gambles will be on the list David M is proposing to visit.



Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

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Self-contained Units,  
Bunk Rooms & Campground

[www.birdwatchers.com.au](http://www.birdwatchers.com.au)

[sootyowl@bigpond.com](mailto:sootyowl@bigpond.com)

Find us on Facebook

Ph: 07 40941263

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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://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/discussion-email-list/> and trips page of COG website <http://canberrabirds.org.au/category/trips/>.

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.

### Saturday 5 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

### Sunday 13 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 9 October**. Email: [ntaws@bigpond.com](mailto:ntaws@bigpond.com) or 0408 210736.

Nicki Taws

### Sunday 20 October – Glendale, Namadgi NP

Meet at 8am at Namadgi Visitor Centre for carpooling. We will drive out to Glendale Depot, and walk around the depot area for a couple of hours. Some of the walking will be off-track, but not difficult. We may also stop at the Glendale picnic area and at the Naas Rd/Apollo Rd intersection, the latter being one of the places **Hooded Robins** are sometimes reported. There is no need to book.

Sandra Henderson



## 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](http://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**

## Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 October – COG Bird Blitz

See notice on Page 5 in this newsletter

## Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 November – Eden pelagics

COG will be running two pelagic trips on the first weekend in November. Cost is not finalised but is likely to be about \$130 per person per day. You need to be in Eden ready to board the boat at 7am (and we are usually back in Eden by 3pm) on the day of your trip.

If you are interested, please let me know at [shirmax2931@gmail.com](mailto:shirmax2931@gmail.com). Note that financial members are given priority, although places may be available to non-members closer to the dates of the outings. Please specify whether you want to do the Saturday or Sunday trip (or both). The boat we use takes 12 passengers each day.

**Both trips are now full but if you wish to go on a waiting list in case of cancellations, contact Sandra.**

Sandra Henderson

## Sunday 10 November — Campbell Park, Morning Nest workshop

This outing will be a repeat of the very popular and practical nest workshops held over the past sixteen 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 is usually 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](mailto: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 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.

## Saturday 16 November - Wandiyali-Environs Conservation Area

This will be a morning visit to a private restoration property near Googong. Meet at 7am in the Jerrabomberra Village (shops) car park near the big roundabout for carpooling.

No need to register.

Ryu Callaway

## Sunday 24 November – Molonglo Gorge

Meet at 8am at the Molonglo Gorge carpark. We will walk along the easy to moderate walking trail adjacent to the Molonglo River until we reach the Blue Tiles picnic area, where we will stop for morning tea. Please bring your own morning tea and some water. We will then retrace our path back to the carpark. Sturdy walking shoes are a must due to some steepish sections and uneven terrain. Birds found here include **Eastern Yellow Robin**, **Red-browed** and **Double-barred Finch**, **Australian King-parrot**, a range of interesting honeyeaters, and there are previous records of **Swift Parrots** for this site. There is no need to book.

Suzi Bond

## Sunday 8 December – Nursery Swamp

This is a half day bushwalk, which starts out with an uphill climb. **Spotted Quail-thrush** have been seen and heard on this uphill section. The track then reaches flatter, though undulating, ground, going through alpine woodland, ultimately reaching the start of the swamp itself. There are always interesting birds to be seen in this higher altitude section, including the possibility of **Olive Whistler**. Meet at Lanyon Marketplace for carpooling at 7:30 in order to climb the hill before it gets too hot. Bring lunch, water, hat, sunblock and sunglasses.

To register, or to obtain further information, please contact the trip leader, David Dedenczuk, at telephone 0417 222 154 or email [David.Dedenczuk@gmail.com](mailto:David.Dedenczuk@gmail.com)



Southern Emu Wren, Green Cape

*Ryu Callaway*



Eastern Ground Parrot, Green Cape

*Ken Black*



### Birdwatchers & nature lover's accommodation

Feathers'n'Friends cottage is fully self-contained with extensive facilities to ensure guests can enjoy short or extended stays.

The secluded lodging is surrounded by tropical rainforest and beautiful gardens with varying habitats and a large variety of birds and wildlife.

Activities in the area include birdwatching at nearby Mt Lewis and other birdwatching locations, as well as Daintree River nature tours and other attractions.

Discounts available for Birdlife Australia members.

Check our website for comprehensive details, rates, and bookings:

**[www.feathersnfriends.com.au](http://www.feathersnfriends.com.au)**

Fred & Jeanette Birkbeck

244 Clacherty Road  
Julatten QLD 4871

Tel: 07 4094 1665

Email: [freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au](mailto:freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au)

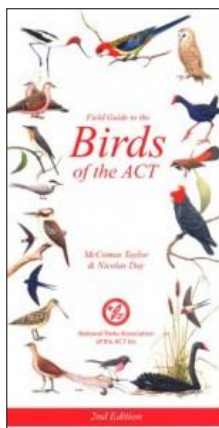
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## Publications for sale

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](mailto:sales@canberrabirds.org.au)

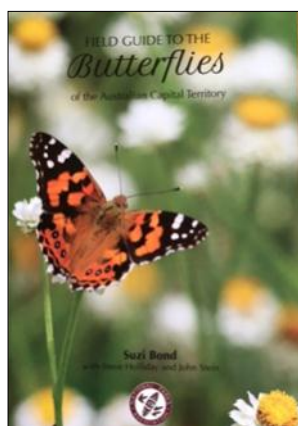


### **Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT**

*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.**



### **Field Guide to the Butterflies of the ACT**

*Suzi Bond, with Steve Holliday and John Stein*

A beautiful book with detailed notes and photographs of the wide range of butterflies found across the Australian Capital Territory.

Dr Suzi Bond is a member of COG and a Visiting Fellow at the ANU where she researches the butterflies found in the ACT. Her research is driven by a fascination for our local butterfly fauna and a desire to better understand their populations and ecology.

With contributions from Steve Holliday and John Stein this book is a must for anyone interested in the butterflies of the ACT.

**Members' Price: \$27.**



### **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 \$37.**



## Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

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

## COG membership

2019-2020 memberships:

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

## New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

J Hurrell  
E Bristow  
J Lawson

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

**Deadline for November 2019 edition:**

**Wednesday 30 October 2019**

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

[gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au)

or

**c/- The Secretary COG,**

**PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608**

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

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

## COG information

**President:** Neil Hermes  
0413 828 045  
[president@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:president@canberrabirds.org.au)

**Treasurer:** Prue Watters  
[cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au)

**Secretary:** Bill Graham  
[cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au)

### Address for correspondence

The Secretary  
COG, PO Box 301  
Civic Square, ACT 2608

### Canberra Bird Notes

Editor: Michael Lenz  
[lenzmj@hotmail.com.au](mailto:lenzmj@hotmail.com.au)

## COG website

[canberrabirds.org.au](http://canberrabirds.org.au)  
**COG Webmaster**  
Julian Robinson  
[cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au)

## COG library

**Membership Enquiries & Updates:**  
[membership@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:membership@canberrabirds.org.au)  
for change of address or other details.

**Gang-gang Newsletter**  
**Editor:** Sue Lashko  
[gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au)

**Lay-out Editor:** Gail Neumann

**Publication Sales**  
Kathy Walter  
[sales@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:sales@canberrabirds.org.au)

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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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