



Gang-gang

DECEMBER 2021

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

JANUARY MEETING

**COG MEMBERS' NIGHT, 7:30 pm,
12 January 2022**

The traditional COG Members' Night will again be held as a face-to-face meeting at:

**VENUE – St James Uniting Church Hall,
off Gillies St, Curtin**

With the ACT government relaxing the restrictions to 1 person per 2 sq m, this will allow 72 attendees to be present. Attendees will need to keep their social distance.

Members and guests will also need to sign-in on arrival using the 'Check In CBR' app and the QR code displayed at the entrances to St James premises.

COG will keep a written record of names and contact details of all attendees who do not have this app on their phone.

Tea, coffee, biscuits will be available afterwards.

There will be the usual monthly raffle.

Parking and entry details:

There is parking for at least 30 cars in the car park off Gillies Street, and further parking in Gillies St itself, or across the road at the Curtin shops.

Please use the entrance on the Eastern side next to the Good Shepherd Anglican Church and by going under the Chocolate Bear Playgroup sign.

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COG Christmas Get-together

**Black Mountain Peninsula
(John Cardiff Close)**

6.00 pm Wednesday 8 December 2021

The COG get-together will be held under the ACT COVID-safe protocols, so we will need to sign-in on arrival and keep our social distance.

COG will provide hand sanitiser. Please stay at home if feeling unwell or you have any flu-like symptoms.

Members may bring a salad or a dessert, plus serving spoons, to share. If you are not comfortable sharing salad or dessert, please bring your own food.

Sausages, bread, onions, beer, wine and non-alcoholic drinks provided.

So please bring plates, cutlery, glasses, table and chairs

There will be the usual monthly raffle.

Wear your favourite bird shirt.



Everyone welcome

The program

A program will be drawn up allowing COG members to contribute short presentations (about 10-15 minutes long) on a range of bird related topics.

So if you have a favourite birding moment for 2021, some special photos to share with members, a birding story to tell, or anything that you think might be of interest to other members, please:

Contact Jack Holland by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com as soon as possible.

Members who have not presented to COG before are especially encouraged.

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

The weather over the 4 weeks from 27 October covered by this column has been very wet, especially in the first half, with near record rainfall for November already (over 135 mm at my place in Chapman), and just a few warmer sunny days at the start and interspersed between the rain. From the notes I keep, the impression is of reasonable bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (Aoi) in first half of November, and much quieter in the second half. As detailed below, there has still been plenty to report, in particular some of the rarer waders attracted to the filling of Lakes George and Bathurst. While most are present, there do seem to have been lower than usual numbers of some of the inland spring/summer migrants.

Of the species which had not yet been reported at the time of my November column, there has been just a single report of the **Channel-billed Cuckoo** by Michael Lenz on 27 October from Lake Road on the south-west corner of Lake George. He heard it calling several times from the escarpment. So it seems that we may have to wait for at least another year before numbers of this species, predicted by some as the next “Koel”, rise significantly.

There have been reports of **White-throated Needletail** at four locations, the first single birds at Bonner, the Gungahlin Town Centre and CSIRO (Crace), all on 13 November by Timothée Bonnet, and then of 4 birds by Nicki Taws seen flying around over the new reserve Namarag along the Molonglo River between Whitlam and Denman Prospect on 21 November. However, there have been no reports yet of the related **Fork-tailed Swift**. While these two species are mostly observed after the New Year, please keep an eye out for them in the current very wet conditions.

The **Horsfield's Bushlark** has been reported from 3 locations only, Parkwood Road, east Lake George (where a maximum of 3 birds were reported on 10 November), and in the Wollogorang Road/Lagoon area north-east of Collector. The **Brown Songlark** was reported from 6 locations to the north-east of Canberra, from west and east Lake George (a maximum of 2 at the latter), Lake Bathurst, and again from the Wollogorang Road/Lagoon area.

There have reports of **White-browed Woodswallow** from just 2 locations, at Parkwood (a single bird on 6 November) and also at Whiskers Creek, Carwoola, where Liam Manderson saw 60 birds on 30 October. This species has not been reported since 6 November, and I expect the very wet conditions may have caused it to move on. The same seems to apply to the **Masked Woodswallow**, reported from 4 locations (single birds at the Uriarra TSR and Campbell Park, as



White-browed Woodswallow

David Cook

well as 10 birds at Weston Park and from Whiskers Creek, Carwoola), with the most recent report on 2 November.

Of the other inland species, the **White-winged Triller** and the **Rufous Songlark** have each been reported from around 25 locations. Again, the number of locations for these seems to be down on recent years. This also applies to the **Pallid Cuckoo**, reported from around 14 locations, well down from the 39 locations in October. However, this doesn't seem as clear for the other inland cuckoo species, with the **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, recorded from 17 locations (14 in October). So please keep an eye out for the above species, as it does appear numbers of some of them reaching the COG Aol are lower this year due to the wet inland conditions.

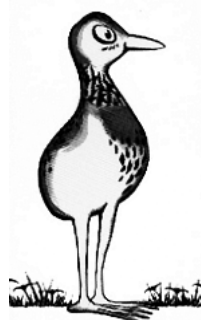
On the other hand, the remaining spring/summer migrants seem all to be well established in this wet season. This includes the often-elusive **Common Cicadabird**, which has been reported from 4 locations, all in the mountains to the west except for one in Tallaganda State Forest.

The spring/summer migrant species which has been an enigma, at least for me, is the **Eastern Koel**. While it has been reported from around 80 locations on the eBird Australia map, and a number of observers have noted that they have been conspicuous as usual in their local areas, some observers very familiar with them in Kaleen, North Lyneham, Cook and O'Connor have noticed very few so far this season. This is also the experience in my local patch of Chapman and Rivett, which over the past seven seasons have been very much "preferred" Koel areas. In fact, I have still yet to see one, or have even been close to one calling during the period. Over the past week I have hardly heard one at all, mostly *koeling* suggesting few, if any, females are present. So, time will tell what is going on locally. The first fledgling may be expected in 1-2 weeks' time, so please keep an ear/eye out for them.



Masked Woodswallow

Geoffrey Dabb



Australian Ornithological Services P/L

PO Box 385
South Yarra 3141
Victoria

Mob: 04173 10200

enquiries@philipmaher.com

Good birding, good food

2022

Wet Season Iron Range NP

18 — 24 January 2022
Prior 2 tours full

The Gulf Country

9 — 26 May 2022
Cairns, Karumba, Burketown,
Mt Isa, Winton

Atherton Tablelands

30 May — 4 June 2022

Top End

22 June — 5 July 2022
Darwin, Kakadu, Katherine, Kununurra,
Mitchell Plateau charters 6 July 2022

Central Australia

21 — 31 August 2022
Alice Springs, West MacDonnell Ranges,
Yulara, Eildunda, Marla

2023 tours

Atherton Tablelands & Iron Range

May 2023

Atherton Tablelands & Iron Range

June 2023

Pilbara WA

July 2023

Contact Patricia Maher for itineraries.

www.philipmaher.com

Except for the **Fork-tailed Swift**, all of the spring/summer migrants which might be expected in any season have now been reported. Again, please keep an eye/ear out for the above, as well as any unexpected arrivals.

Of the species which move into Canberra and its surrounds in autumn/winter and move back to the mountains, the **Scarlet Robin** was still reported from 8 peri-urban (of a total of around 30) locations, again showing that some do stay close to Canberra over late spring/summer. This compares with the **Flame Robin** which has been reported only from around 30 rural locations, all but two from west of the Murrumbidgee River.

The **Rose Robin** has been reported from 5 locations, all of them in the Brindabellas/Namadgi NP. Not surprisingly, there were again no reports of the **Pink Robin** during the period. The **Crescent Honeyeater** has been reported from 9 locations in the period, all on or west of the Murrumbidgee River, except for one in the Tallaganda State Forest. There has again been just a single report of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, a bird recorded at the Colinton Rest Area on the Monaro Hwy in the south of the COG Aol on 30 October. The **Swift Parrots** have definitely moved on, with no reports during the period.

In the period there were three “Unusual” species reported for the first time in the COG Aol for 2021 which were only seen by a single observer(s). The first was Michael Lenz’s report of a **Little Curlew** at Lake Bathurst on 20 Oct. He noted the bird took off from a flooded grassland, flew a wide circle, then returned, but landed again at a great distance. All the time it was calling: *kui-kui-kui*. COG’s 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR) lists it as a non-breeding vagrant and notes: ‘A most unusual sighting in COG Aol, with just 1 record in 2017 and 4 records in the 1990s’. The rarity of this species is underlined by the eBird Australia map showing only one other sighting in NSW during 2021, many hundreds of kilometres away in the Richmond Valley near the Qld border in October.

On 17 November Michael and Frank Antram observed a **Marsh Sandpiper**, also at Lake Bathurst. They noted possibly 2 (the same or another bird seen later at a different location) loosely associating with **Pied Stilts**, noting an elegant wader with a long, thin, straight dark bill looking surprisingly small alongside them. COG’s 2018-2019 ABR also notes this as a non-breeding vagrant, recorded in most years in the past, but none since 2015.

The third (and more of a surprise given the wet inland conditions) was of two **Cockatiels** flying, calling and perching at Campbell Park, as reported by Christine D on 11 November. Many birders subsequently looked for these (listed in the 2018-2019 ABR as a rare, non-breeding visitor/escapee) without luck. The nearest record of this species in 2021 is at Cootamundra about 125 km to the north-west, though the eBird Australia map reveals sightings from over 20 locations in the ACT in the previous five years, as late as on 30 December 2020.

There have been two “Unusual” species reported for the first time in 2021 in the ACT during the period, unfortunately again only seen by the single observer. The first of these was the **Australasian Bittern** seen in flight not far over Kim Farley’s head on 7 November at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR). After careful consideration/research she ruled out the other possibility, an immature **Nankeen Night Heron**, which was the final conclusion of the other possible bittern seen by Bron and Daryl King at the Melba Wetlands on 10 November. The former species, listed in the 2018-2019 ABR as a non-breeding vagrant, was also observed 3 times within the COG Aol during November by Frank Antram at Wet Lagoon Breadalbane, and was also reported from Rows Lagoon in January.

The second was the female **Turquoise Parrot** seen by Christine D and Suzi Bond at Tidbinbilla NR on 1 November. This species, listed in the 2018-2019 ABR as a non-breeding vagrant/escapee, had been reported in the COG Aol from Cuumbeun NR in March, but both the 2018-2019 ABR and the eBird Australia map indicate that the previous sightings were in October 2018, mainly at JWNR, but also one at the western foreshores of Googong Dam.

Again, **Plumed Whistling Ducks** were reported only from Trucking Yard Lane dam with a maximum of 16 on 8 November. **Freckled Ducks** have been reported only from the eastern side of Lake George, where Michael Lenz reported 34 ducks on 10 November. In contrast **Australian Shelducks** were reported from 18 locations to the east and north-east of Canberra during the period. Up to 3 **Blue-billed Ducks** were reported from 3 locations (Upper Stranger Pond, Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, and the farm dam on Lake Rd near Bungendore), while **Musk Ducks** were reported from 5 locations, not including the Sanctuary at Tidbinbilla NR, the maximum being 6 ducks at Rows Lagoon on 20 November.

Stubble Quail were reported from 19 locations over the period, the increase in locations no doubt helped by them calling, whereas **Brown Quail** were reported from 12 locations. The **Painted Button-quail** has been reported from 12 locations (down from 22 in October), but again **Little Button-quail** have not been reported. **Great Crested Grebes** have been reported from 4

locations, single birds at Lake Bathurst and West Belconnen Pond, with 6 birds at Wyelba and Cavan (south of Yass), and a maximum of 10 birds on the Cotter Dam.

There have been no reports of **White-headed Pigeons** or **Peaceful Doves** during the period and the only **Diamond Dove** report I am aware of was the one endorsed by the COG Rarities Panel of a bird photographed feeding on a dirt road behind locked gates with no public access in the northern part of the ACT.

A total count of 62 **Red-capped Plovers** were reported from Lake Bathurst by Michael Lenz and Frank Antram on 17 November, with 13 also reported along Lake Road on the south-west side of Lake George on 7 November. A single bird was reported further north of here, as well as 2 birds on the Federal Highway at Wollogorang Rd on 14 November. Michael and Frank also counted a total of 105 **Banded Lapwings** at Lake Bathurst on 17 November, a very high count for this species which has only been reported from around there, Lake George and the Wollogorang area during 2021. The 2018-2019 ABR lists this as a rare, breeding visitor, occasionally sighted in the ACT in short grasses, but mostly at Lake Bathurst.

Michael Lenz and Frank Antram also reported 5 **Red-necked Stint** from Lake Bathurst on 17 November, the only record of this species during the period. The same day they also counted 53 **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers**, again the only report of this species in the period. The **Common Sandpiper** has continued to be reported from Isabella Pond but with only a single report from around the Village Creek inflow at the top end of Lake Tuggeranong on 28 October. On 4 November Archer Callaway indicated that further detective work, especially by Lia Battisson, suggested that it may be more likely the single bird moving, with them failing to locate them simultaneously one evening, and some consistency in the timings of its arrival/departure from the Lake Tuggeranong spot observed by Lia, who had visited almost daily over a week. In that case, he noted seeing it in both spots in quick succession was an incredible fluke in timing on his part.

On 6 November Murray Delahoy counted 100 **Red-necked Avocet** from Lake Road on the western side of Lake George, but there has been only one subsequent report of a single bird at Bungendore Sewage Treatment Plant on 19 November, an indication of how mobile this species can be compared with the **Pied Stilt**. The latter species has been reported from 6 locations, with Kim Farley reporting 250 birds from the Morass on 30 October, and Michael Lenz and Frank Antram 245 from Lake Bathurst on 17 November. Single **Caspian Terns** were reported from JWNR and adjacent Fyshwick Sewage Ponds on 28 October.

The **Australian Little Bittern** was last reported from JWNR on 7 November. In my November column, I concluded that this species had only previously been seen in the COG Aol



Pied Stilt - on nest Lyndon Howe; with eggs Rob Geraghty; with chicks Shorty

between November and February. Unfortunately, this was the result of my misreading of the information in COG's 2018-2019 ABR and then checking the eBird Australia Map only for sightings from 1 July 2019. From this I mistakenly concluded that the JWNR sightings were the first from October. However, on reading Kim Farley's article in the latest issue of CBN of one in her garden in Cook in October 2014, she also mentioned sightings in June and July 2014 in Mackellar. I then found them on eBird and also further records in October 2012 and June 2018 from JWNR. While the late spring/summer and only winter records pattern is interesting, all except October 2021 seem to be of single birds.

The only report of a **Barn Owl** was one by Danny McCreddie who noticed a dead one on the median strip of Majura Parkway about 1 km north of the exit to Ikea on 8 November. Michael Lenz and Frank Antram then flushed one from long grass, which then flew back behind them to some trees and a shed, at Lake Bathurst on 17 November. This suggests a build up in mice numbers has not occurred this spring. In contrast the **Black-shouldered Kite** was still reported from over 35 locations, and the **Nankeen Kestrel** from around 80 locations, suggesting there are still plenty of mice around for these two species to feed on (see also the separate report of the Nest Workshop). However, a **Spotted Harrier** was reported from only 3 locations during the period.

An **Azure Kingfisher** was only reported from JWNR and the Cotter Reserve at the Cotter Bend on 6 and 14 November, respectively. No **Little Lorikeets** were reported during the period, while a single **Musk Lorikeet** was reported only from Watson on 27 October. Two **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** were reported from Kambah on 10 November.

Up to 3 **Scarlet Honeyeaters**, including at least one male, were reported only from the ABNG, where they have been regularly heard or seen over the period. A **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** was reported from Stony Creek NR by a number of observers from 8-12 November, and a **Singing Honeyeater** was reported from Bonner, from where it has been most recently observed, on 16 November. A **Blue-faced Honeyeater** was reported from Parkwood Rd on 30 October. However, there were no reports of the **Little Friarbird** or the **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** in the period.

Of the birds I have been asking readers to keep a special lookout for in 2021, the **Jacky Winter** has been reported only from Namadgi NP Visitors Centre, with up to 2 birds seen there during the period. The only report of the **Hooded Robin** was of a male at the known spot at Naas Rd at Apollo Road on 31 October. The **Restless Flycatcher** was reported from 3 locations only, all known spots, with single birds at Glendale depot and at Naas Rd at Apollo Road on 31 October and 20 November, respectively. Up to 2 birds have been reported from Nelanglo TSR near Gundaroo, where on 27 October Kim Farley noted a bird on a gorgeous little nest on a narrow horizontal branch. The outcome of this relatively rare breeding event is not clear; around the end of October Michael Lenz noted the pair were very secretive, but he only reported a single bird on 18 November.

The very wet conditions are providing a very good breeding season for waterbirds, though the very heavy rain in the first half of November many have impacted the bush bird breeding season (see separate report of the Nest Workshop). Apart from the **Restless Flycatcher** noted above some highlights follow:

- On 29 October Shorty posted that **Pied Stilt** were nesting again at JWNR this year, following their first breeding in the ACT there last season. His photo showed one clearly on a nest. Over time more nests were built and on 12 November Rob Geraghty noted that there were now four birds nesting in a loose group. The one in his photo contained two green eggs. The first hatchlings were observed on 22 November with Christine D noting that as she watched, it was quite lovely to hear the competing calls of the Stilts, a male Koel and a Brown Quail. By 23 November 4 chicks had hatched.
- As an indication of the extent of waterbird breeding on 19 November Martin Butterfield posted a summary of the range of breeding activity on the Lake Rd dam which he noted was vast - he thought he had never seen it more extensive. There were flotillas of **Pacific Black Duck** and **Grey Teal** ducklings; 2 **Eurasian Coot** nests and another bird carrying the makings; and 2 **Australasian Grebes** on nests.
- On 1 November David McDonald posted a photo of a **White-necked Heron** nest on private property in Wamboin, noting that the landowner advised that she had now seen three nestlings



White-necked Heron

David McDonald

being fed by their parents. On 20 November he noted that two nestlings seem to be doing well, as per the attached photo. So hopefully this rare breeding event in COG's AoI will be successful.

- On 31 October Danny McCreddie discovered a **(Striated) Pardalote** nest in the packets of cow manure, which were on pallets, wrapped in plastic, on a high section of the shelving at Bunnings Gungahlin. He told the young staff members about it and they stood and watched the birds come and go. It appeared the birds had torn the plastic and tunnelled into a packet. The staff said they did not need to access the pallet for a while so would leave them be, so hopefully the breeding event has been successful.
- On 9 November Julian Robinson posted that a friend sent him the attached photo of a presumed juvenile **Musk Lorikeet** in Holt taken in the rain the day before. His friend noted that it seemed to be a young bird which couldn't fly as every time it left a branch or the fence it fluttered to the ground. It would then very painstakingly climb up to height again, doing this maybe 3 times. Accompanying it was definitely an adult bird, that looked exactly the same and was the same size, that could fly quite well. It flew over to the other bird a couple of times but mostly stayed in the branches of a tree above it. One time the "adult" flew over and groomed the "young" bird around the head. Julian asked if it was an adult **Musk Lorikeet** with a juvenile that was a feeble flyer, and its appearance matched the Australian Bird Guide points for a juvenile [brown bill, no blue, duller facial red (and probably no bronze on the mantle)]; how strongly does this suggest a local breeding event, which if so would be the first recorded in the ACT? Unfortunately, he elicited very little response to his question, possibly because like the writer few local birders have experience with the breeding of this species. It is important that this possible breeding COG AoI breeding record be resolved. While the BIRD INFO on the COG website indicates there are no breeding records for the **Musk Lorikeet**, unfortunately it is not easy to interrogate the eBird Australia database for any breeding records since 2017. However, a chatline post with photos by Danny McCreddie on 23 January 2021 that he saw three **Musk Lorikeets** at Gold Creek near the plant nursery, with one making begging noises, would appear to be an earlier record.
- An indication of how the rain may have affected the breeding season is that of the four **Australian Magpie** nests in my GBS site, only one seems to have been successful. A chick is still being fed in there, though a couple of days ago another quite advanced fledgling suddenly appeared underneath the tree of one of the other nests. The **Pied Currawongs** from the nest I can see from my study window are also only feeding the single fledgling.



Musk Lorikeet

Another indication of a delayed breeding season is that the **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** in my Chapman garden etc I mentioned in my previous two columns continued to be present throughout the period, again with the waves seeming to refresh each time we had a significant rain event. Interestingly, I still have been unable to find a single **White-naped Honeyeater** in amongst them. However, **Red Wattlebirds** numbers have declined significantly from the very high ones in October.

So please watch out for more of the later returning spring/summer migrants mentioned above, particularly the inland ones, and for early summer breeding activity. Hopefully the weather will dry out to allow this to pick up again. Please also continue to keep a special look out for the **Restless Flycatcher**, **Jacky Winter** and **Hooded Robin**, the low number of reports, especially for the latter two, is disheartening. 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.

Finally, to all readers, please keep safe and please comply with the remaining health restrictions while birding locally during the lifted COVID restrictions.

Jack Holland

Committee News

The COG committee met by Zoom on 18 November for the first meeting of the 2021-22 committee. The committee welcomed two new members, Margaret Robertson and Clare Henderson.

Committee members are:

President: Neil Hermes

Vice-President: Steve Read

Secretary: Margaret Robertson

Treasurer: Prue Watters

General Members: Jenny Bounds, Brittany Brockett, Chris Davey, Kathy Eyles, Bill Graham, Clare Henderson, Alison Mackerras and Anthony Nicholls.

The December members' meeting will be COG's Annual BBQ at Black Mountain Peninsula. Please see the notice elsewhere in Gang-gang. The committee looks forward to seeing you.

Jack Holland is planning the January members' night which will be held at St James' Uniting Church, Curtin as usual. Please check the website and chat-line for up-to-date details as Gang-gang isn't published in January.

The Woodlands Bird Surveys have been running for more than 20 years with a dedicated group of surveyors recording birds four times each year at 142 sites across 15 locations. An analysis of the data has just been released and can be found here – <http://canberrabirds.org.au/conservation-2/woodland-birds/cog-woodland-bird-monitoring-project/>. Jenny Bounds is the driving force behind the survey, co-ordinating the surveys and leading the analysis team. The surveyors are among COG's most hard-working members – truly some of COG's Cogs.

The committee intends to make a submission to the Review of the *Murrumbidgee River Corridor Management Plan 1998* (see <https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/act-parks/murrumbidgee>). The consultation period ends on 17 December. COG members may wish to read the documents and make their own submissions.

Neil Hermes *President*

Alison Mackerras *Minutes Secretary*

Birding in an Age of Extinctions

COG member Martin Painter is probably not known to many members, but I met him earlier this year on a far North Queensland birding tour. He mentioned he'd just written a book about some of his birding adventures.

Birding in an Age of Extinctions gives a very personal view of birding in an astonishing range of locations all over the world. The introduction provides the background to how someone manages to combine a busy international academic career in public administration with accumulating a life list of over 6000 species in the past 20 years. This is not a "how to" guide, nor is it a field guide or travel diary. It is a fascinating look at birds, birding and birders, and the text is accompanied by many photographs of birds rare and not-so-rare, and of people and places.

Australian birding, even Canberra birding, is well represented. Some of those tales I could identify with - the very early morning small plane/helicopter flight up to the Mitchell Plateau to see the **Black Grasswrens** cavorting, and the trip to Melaleuca to see **Orange-bellied Parrots**. Many others are tales of seeing ordinary and extraordinary birds in Madagascar, the Pantanal, the Himalayas, Sulawesi, Canada, Ethiopia and many other places I will never visit. The tales of encounters with birds in exotic, demanding and sometimes magical locations are beautifully told, and there is no glossing over of some of the less enticing places and people along the way.

A lot of thought has gone into linking birding experiences with issues of conservation, economics and the environment. The good and the bad of bird tourism is discussed. You only have to look at each issue of the Birdlife magazine each quarter to get

an idea of how many bird guides/guiding companies are out there, and how many accommodation businesses have chosen to cater specifically for birdwatchers. There is well-researched information on the history of birding as a pastime, from the time when shooting a bird was the only way to get a good look at it, to the development of binoculars and field guides, opening up birding to a much wider audience. Some of us fall into the "listers" category - always searching for the next new bird to add to the list. Others are more into "slow birding", and some of us move between the two categories. It seems Martin, while acknowledging he'll still be doing some travelling, is also finding joy in watching the small birds in the suburbs of Canberra.

A copy of *Birding in an Age of Extinctions* will be the raffle prize at the COG Christmas gathering on December 8, so remember to bring a small amount of cash to buy a raffle ticket (tickets \$2 each, or 3 for \$5).

Martin Painter. *Birding in an Age of Extinctions*. Whittles Publishing, Scotland, 2021

Sandra Henderson

The Steve Wilson Medal 2021

Nominations are open for the Steve Wilson Medal 2021

The award is made to an outstanding COG member or ex COG member who has:

- served in a voluntary capacity
- contributed in a professional way for many years (e.g. over 5 years) on any of :
 - committee
 - executive member
 - in another regular role of COGand supporting the aims of COG.

It is not a long service award and is not an award for services to ornithology in general but services to birds through COG.

The award may be made annually by the Award Committee. The Award was invoked by the COG Committee in 2014 during the celebrations of COGs 50th year. The 2021 SWM committee is Neil Hermes, Sue Lashko and Jack Holland.

Nominations for this year's award may be made in writing to the:

Steve Wilson Medal Committee
COG
PO Box 301
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608



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.

Be Covid safe on COG field trips:
Maintain social distancing of 1.5 metres
Maintain hand hygiene

Do NOT attend if you have any cold or flu symptoms.

Sunday 5 December - Rendezvous Creek

Meet at Rendezvous Creek carpark (a few kms past Glendale Depot and picnic area) on Boboyan Road at 9.00am. The walk will take a couple of hours. There have been over 90 species seen along the track.

Distance: 2.7km loop walk. There are some steps but it's not a particularly steep track. There may be some wet spots, so sturdy shoes are a must. I will check the track a few days before the walk to ensure it is OK.

Numbers limited to 12 participants.

Bring: Water, sunscreen, hat.

Register with Sandra at shirmax2931@gmail.com, with your name, number, and name and number of an emergency contact

Sunday 12 December - Capital Hill

Meet at 8.30am in carpark on Federation Mall (the carpark nearest to new Parliament House, as you approach the House. I will be there early).

The walk - we will walk through the Parliament House gardens. It's a very easy walk of about 1.5km, and will take 1-2 hours. Over 60 species have been seen in the gardens.

Bring: water, sunscreen, hat

Register with Sandra at shirmax2931@gmail.com, with your name, number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Wednesday 15 December - Percival Hill Nature Reserve, Nicholls

Meet: at the end of Lindwall Pl, Nicholls at 8.30am

Walk: I am not familiar with this nature reserve, but it was suggested by a member on the November Wednesday Walk, so must be manageable in a couple of hours.

Bring: hat, sunscreen, water

Leader: Lia Battisson

Register: email liabattisson@grapevine.com.au with name and number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Information about the Reserve is at the following website:

<https://www.environment.act.gov.au/parks-conservation/parks-and-reserves/find-a-park/canberra-nature-park/percival-hill-nature-reserve>

2022 field trips

Sunday 16 January – Blundells Creek Rd/Warks Rd

We will begin the 2022 field trip programme as we did before the 2003 fires with a visit to the Brindabellas. Depending on the temperature, we may do a car shuffle and then walk down Blundells Creek Road and along Warks Road, a length of about 4-5 km.

Meet at the corner of Uriarra and Cotter Roads (near the Uriarra Homestead dam) at 7.30am.

Bring morning tea and lunch, water, sunscreen and hat. We should finish by about 2pm.

Register with Sue Lashko at smlashko@gmail.com with your name, mobile number, and name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Sunday 23 January – private property near Hoskinstown

Description: Mixed-eucalypt forest, including post-burn regeneration; garden around house. A range of forest species expected including **Eastern Yellow Robin**, **White-throated Treecreeper**, **thornbill species**, **Australian King Parrot**, **rosellas**, **Wonga Pigeon** and **Laughing Kookaburra**.

Meeting time and place: 8.00 am, Spotlight car park, Queanbeyan for carpooling.

Walking distance: 4 km

Degree of difficulty: medium

End time (approx.): 12.00pm

What to bring: water, morning tea, hat, sunscreen, sturdy shoes

Registration: participants must register with the leader at least 36 hours in advance, providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact

Numbers limited: maximum of 16

Name of leaders and contact details: Peter Smith 0427 879 774 smith.peter899@gmail.com
(assisted by John Brannan)

Sunday 30 January – Jerrabomberra Wetlands – World Wetlands Day

To celebrate World Wetlands Day, during this morning outing we will visit Kelly Swamp and Jerrabomberra Creek. Depending on numbers, the group may be divided into two, so a volunteer to lead a possible second group would be appreciated.

Bring hat, sunscreen, water and, if you have one, a telescope.

Meet at 7.30am in the carpark at the end of Dairy Road, Fyshwick.

Register with Sue Lashko at smlashko@gmail.com with your name, mobile number, and name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

NB: this walk is flat and is wheelchair-friendly.

Sunday 6 February – Pejar and Crookwell

Location: Pejar Dam, Jean Todkill Park Dam (Crookwell)

Description: Both dams are hotspots for raptors; Pejar has had 11 species and Jean Todkill 10 including **Little Eagle**, **Black Kite** and **Spotted Harrier**. Many waterbirds are present with highlights being **Great-crested Grebes**, **Musk Duck**, **Blue-billed Duck** and **Whiskered Tern**. **Fairy Martins** occur on St Stephens Road.

Meeting time and place: Netball Centre Lyneham at 7.30 am for carpooling.

Walking distance: Pejar Dam (St Stephens Road 0.5 km, main picnic area 1 km, North Arm 1 km) and Jean Todkill Park Dam 1 km.

Degree of difficulty: easy

End time: 4.30 pm at Lyneham

What to bring: water, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, sunscreen, water, sturdy shoes, hat. A scope would be useful.

Participants must **register** with the leader at least 36 hours in advance, providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact

Numbers limited to 16.

Name of leader and contact details: Bill Graham at 0466874723 or graham.br63@grapevine.com.au

Sunday 13 February – Molonglo Reach boat trip

Description: This outing/cruise will be on the upper parts of Lake Burley Griffin (East Basin) and the adjacent Molonglo Reach, where late summer/early autumn is historically the peak time for breeding of darters as well as three species of cormorant. The area also has a variety of waterbirds, and a range of land birds can be seen on the banks.

We will again be travelling in the electric boat “MV Gull” which allows both a quiet approach as well as access to areas difficult to get to from the land.

Meeting time: The boat will depart at 8:00 am and the trip will last about 2 hours and will cost \$20, payable in cash on boarding.

Meeting place: Kingston Boat Harbour at Trevillian Quay. Participants will need to leave their cars in Eastlake Parade, where there is free all-day weekend street parking, or in the Glass Works/Bus Depot Markets car park and walk across Eastlake Parade and down Trevillian Quay. Once you have crossed the canal keep going straight ahead for around 50 m till you reach a gap between the buildings. Turn right and Wharf 6 and the boat should be clearly visible after 20 m once when you reach the harbour.

Name of leader and contact details: To participate, please contact Jack Holland by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com – please include your name and mobile number, and an emergency contact name and number. A maximum of 20 passengers will be allowed by the current COVID-19 restrictions, so please book early.

Sunday 20 February – Mt Ginini

This trip replaces the November trip which was cancelled due to wet weather. Those registered for the November trip will have first priority but need to contact Suzi Bond immediately to confirm attendance.

Description: This walk is in Snow Gum forest with a shrub layer interspersed with subalpine wildflowers with good views across the ACT. We will set off from the carpark and stop for lunch at either Stockyard Spur or Pryor’s Hut (depending on our progress on the day), and then retrace our steps back to the carpark. Previous highlight species include **Gang-gang Cockatoo, Olive Whistler, Flame Robin, Spotted Quail-thrush, Grey Currawong** and **Little Raven**. We might also encounter some interesting non-avian montane specialists - butterflies like Macleay’s Swallowtail and Forest Brown, and reptiles like Mountain Dragon and Blotched Bluetongue.

Please note there are no facilities available on this walk; the nearest toilets are at Bull’s Head picnic area. In the event of rain, this walk will be cancelled.

eBird hotspots: Namadgi National Park–Mt Ginini, Stockyard Gap

Meeting time and place: 9 am at the Mount Gingera Walk Trail Head carpark.

Walking distance: Approximately 9.7 km (return)

Degree of difficulty: Medium; track is an undulating vehicle track with some steeper sections.

End time (approx.): 3 pm

What to bring: This is a remote location with no mobile reception. Ensure you bring sufficient water and food (including lunch), rain and sun protection, and warm clothing. Even if it is forecast to be sunny and warm, weather in the mountains can change quickly and you need to be prepared.

Participants must register with the leader, providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Numbers limited: Yes, limited to 10 people.

Name of leader and contact details: Suzi Bond, chowchilla29@yahoo.com

Birds and Heritage Tour of Norfolk Island

Return airfares from Sydney to Norfolk Island, 7 nights accommodation, 7 days car hire and escorted touring with Neil Hermes and Michael Hermes

Norfolk Island (3655ha) lies in the south-west Pacific 1400km east of mainland Australia and 1500km south-west of Fiji. An external territory of Australia, Norfolk has strong ecological affinities with New Zealand.

The Norfolk Island Group is a globally important biodiversity hotspot and has been designated as an 'Important Bird Area' by Birdlife International. The group is a breeding site for several 100,000 seabirds including the Masked Booby, Grey Ternlet, White Tern, Sooty Tern, & Wedge-tailed Shearwater. Phillip Island supports one of the largest breeding populations of Red-tailed Tropicbirds in Australia. Norfolk is also home to the endemic & endangered Norfolk Island Green Parakeet, & other endemic birds such as the Norfolk Island Golden Whistler & Norfolk Island scarlet robin.

Join experienced guides Neil and Michael Hermes on a personalised journey through Norfolk Island's history, amazing wildlife and stunning scenery drawing on the knowledge and memories from Neil's time as a Norfolk Island National Parks Officer and Michael's background as an archaeologist.

From AUD \$2,539

Date: 02-09 September 2022 Duration: 8 Days

Inclusions

Return economy airfare to Norfolk Island, meet & greet at Norfolk Island Airport, return airport transfers on Norfolk Island, 7 nights twin share accommodation, 7 days car hire - petrol additional, half day island orientation tour, welcome 'fireside' chat with Neil Hermes and Michael Hermes and 2 course dinner at Bounty Bar and Bistro, Norfolk Island National Park tour with Neil Hermes, guided Kingston cemetery, Polynesian sites and fossils tour with Michael Hermes, Tour covering St Barnabas and Melanesian Mission and 100 acres Acers Reserve with Neil Hermes and Michael Hermes, Tour covering Anson Bay, Captain Cook, WWII and walks with Neil Hermes and Michael Hermes and Norfolk Island shopping bag, map, handy hints & shopping discounts.

Confirm with deposit before 13 December 2021 and save:

- \$250 deposit if booking prior to 13 December 2021, or
- \$1000 if booking after 13 December 2021

Information at neilhermes.com.au or Norfolk Island Travel Centre
norfolkislandtravelcentre.com/event/norfolk-island-wildlife-heritage-tour

Saturday 26 February – Forde Creek

Forde Creek is a small reedy watercourse, largely in its original state, and therefore a habitat for small waterbirds - crakes, rails etc. Although they are elusive, this is a likely place to see some, if we are lucky. We will **meet** in Linear Park in Forde at 8.00 am. Access via Mulligans Flat Road and Handbury Way roundabout.

Register with John Harris at john170840@gmail.com with your name, mobile number and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Friday 18 to Monday 21 March - Jervis Bay extended weekend

Advance notice as campsites need to be booked well in advance.

We will camp at Green Patch campground in Booderee National Park, about 4 hours drive from Canberra. All sites are unpowered and they have various sizes, some suitable for caravans or campervans. Further information about making a booking will be sent to you once you register for the trip. We will be birding a number of different habitats in Booderee with target species being **Sooty Owl, Southern Emu Wren, Eastern Bristlebird and Tawny-crowned Honeyeater**. Numbers will be limited to 20, so first in!! Cost of campsites are from \$51 per night depending on the size. Members will also need to pay the Park Use fees of \$26 per vehicle for 4 days. Please contact Kathy or John at walter.goldie@gmail.com to register your interest or for more information.



Nanken Kestrel, Lake Road

Marcus Hellyer

Future Field Trips 2022

2022`

	Date	Venue	Duration	Leader
Jan	Sun 16	Uriarra/Warks Road	to mid-afternoon	Sue Lashko
	Wed 19	Wednesday Walk		
	Sun 23	private property near Tallaganda	morning	Peter Smith
	Sun 30	Jerrabomberra Wetlands (World Wetlands Day)	morning	Sue Lashko
Feb	Sun 6	Pejar/Crookwell	to mid-afternoon	Bill Graham
	Sun 13	Molonglo boat trip	morning	Jack Holland
	Wed 16	Wednesday Walk		
	Sun 20	Mt Ginini	day	Suzi Bond
	Sat 26	Forde Creek	morning	John Harris
Mar	Sun 6	Tin Hut, Googong	morning	Liam Manderson
	Sun 13	Kama NR	morning	Lia Battisson
	Wed 16	Wednesday Walk		
	Fri 18-Mon 21	Green Patch	long weekend camping	Kathy & John
Apr	Sat 26/Sun 27	Eden pelagic	2 x 1 day outings	Sue Lashko, Julian Teh
	Sun 3	Narrabundah Hill	morning	Jack Holland
	Sun 10	K2C	morning	Nicki Taws
	Fri 15-Mon 18	Round Hill	long weekend camping	Sue Lashko
	Wed 20	Wednesday Walk		
May	Sun 24	private property near Gunning	morning	Sue Lashko
	Sun 1	venue to be decided	morning	Chris Davey
	Sun 8	Farrer Ridge	morning	Sandra Henderson
	Sun 15	Brooks Creek TSR	morning	David McDonald
	Wed 18	Wednesday Walk		
	Sat 21	ANBG beginners	morning	Anthony Overs
	Sun 29	The Pinnacle	morning	John Brannan
	Sun 5	Mt Arawang	morning	Lia Battisson
Jun	Sun 12	Superb Lyrebird survey	morning	Chris Davey
	Wed 15	Wednesday Walk		
	Sun 19	McQuoids Hill	morning	Sandra Henderson
	Sun 26	venue required		leader required

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 7 November – Lake Road near Bungendore

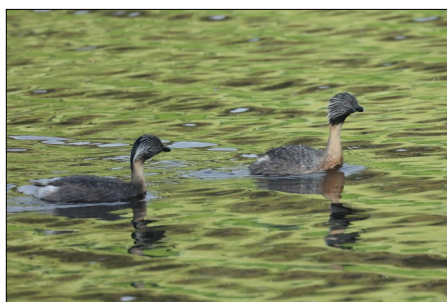
The programmed trip to Tin Hut had been cancelled several days earlier due to the closure of Googong Dam after very wet weather, so the location was changed to Lake Road. A wet Saturday and an indifferent forecast for Sunday obviously deterred many people as just 4 arrived for an exploration of Lake Road.

Our first stop at an overflowing farm dam yielded many waterbirds, including 7 species of duck including a pair of **Blue-billed Ducks**, and **Grey Teal** with ducklings. **Hoary-headed** and **Australasian Grebes** were present, the latter on a nest. There were 3 occupied **Eurasian Coot** nests and another pair with recently fledged young. A **Latham's Snipe** and **Yellow-billed Spoonbill** were also present.

As we drove further along the road, we stopped several times as interesting birds appeared. Raptors put on a good show with **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Brown Goshawk**, **Peregrine Falcon** and **Nankeen Kestrel** sighted. A **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** was heard and then seen, as was a very unusual **Flame Robin** with a yellow wash on its breast (see photo).

Our final stop at the northern end of Lake Road allowed clear views to the edge of Lake George where we found **Australian Shelduck**, 13 **Red-capped Plover** and a **Cattle Egret**.

Sue Lashko



Hoary-headed Grebe, Plumed Whistling Duck, Flame Robin

Marcus Hellyer

Sunday 14 November — Campbell Park, Morning Nest Workshop

Twenty-two members and guests joined Sue Lashko and me for the nineteenth running of this annual event. Sue had kindly again offered to help lead when numbers intending to come had reached 30 by mid-week, but the two previous very rainy days and the forecast of cold, windy conditions led a number of people to withdraw, assisted by further light rain. The smaller than usual numbers did allow us to stay as a single group, and we started off in sunshine. While the wind did pick up it was never too strong (or cold), and the main issue was the very wet underfoot conditions, with large puddles and water flowing across the tracks in a number of places, and with the long grass also very damp.

Again, the emailing of the notes beforehand allowed me to largely dispense with the short spiel at the start, and we soon headed off towards the horse gate, where the main activity had been noted during the reccie a couple of days before. Before we started we all could already see **Australian Magpies** feeding young in a nest above the car park. Like those around my home in Chapman, the breeding for many of this species seems to be delayed, perhaps interrupted by the wet conditions, as usually by mid-November most young are well fledged.

Thanks to Lia, our first highlight on the way was a fledged **Tawny Frogmouth** sitting close to an adult on a branch where there had been a nest a few weeks before. A few metres on the other side was another adult posing as a stick, possibly the female due to its larger size. It was still there on our return though the fledgling had moved under the other adult (Tawny Frogmouth expert Stuart Rae has indicated that single chicks are quite common this wet year). Nearby we found a **Noisy Miner** nest with 3 quite advanced young being fed, with all participants having good views compared with those in the rather obscured nest in the car park earlier.

We moved to and over the horse gate where we first saw **Common Mynas** entering a hollow. However, despite quite a bit of activity there the only confirmed breeding was a pair of **Willie Wagtails** building a nest which was around 25% complete compared with just being started during my reccie a few days earlier. We saw several strongly calling male **White-winged Trillers** and followed them closely, but unusually they did not lead us to a nest. We also heard and then saw a **White-throated Gerygone**, but again breeding activity could not be confirmed, nor for those observed later. Most of us saw only briefly three **Varied Sittellas**, but though we searched for a possible nest in a vertical dead fork in a number of likely spots, again we could not confirm breeding.

We then moved to the large dam area to view a number of known breeding events, the first of which was another pair of **Willie Wagtails** feeding two fledged young. The next of these was a **White-faced Heron's** nest, where three well advanced chicks were still on/above during the week, but it was empty when we first looked. However, a bird nearby then flew back onto the nest and stayed there while we were around for some time; we then also saw another in a small tree over the dam, which also stayed put, so both were likely recent fledglings. The only previous nest we have found in one of these workshops was near the car park in 2011, but unfortunately it was no longer occupied.

We then looked for the well-known (and photographed) **Nankeen Kestrel** breeding event and found two fledglings still sitting on the spout which contained the nest hollow in which they were reared. Soon a parent come in with food, after which one flew rather clumsily much closer to us and proceeded to tackle eating a mouse with some difficulty, and with lots of cameras clicking. For many this was the highlight of the morning, and certainly a first Kestrel breeding for this workshop.



Nankeen Kestrel

Leanne Aust

The “Kestrel” tree contained a number of hollows some of which were being examined and entered by up to 6 **Rainbow Lorikeets** in and around the tree, which was also a first for this workshop. On one occasion they disputed some hollows with three **Eastern Rosellas**. In fact, much of the breeding activity seen during the morning was of hollow-nesting species; we had earlier seen **Red-rumped Parrots** (of which there were many around the dam) and **Galahs** entering or inspecting them. **Common Starlings** were also taking food to a hollow in a dead tree adjacent to the dam, and a **Striated Pardalote** was also entering one.

The dam was also the only spot we heard the **Western Gerygone**, but only Sue was able to make it across to the other side and confirm a pair with their dome-shaped nest in a small sapling. The trees around the dam also contained a couple of old mud nests, one of which was about **Magpie-lark** size (we saw one briefly nearby), while the other was a bit larger and could have been a **White-winged Chough's**, though we did not observe this species during the morning.

While having morning tea nearby we found a pair of **Grey Fantails** just starting to build a nest; interestingly the ponytail, while still incomplete, was the most prominent feature. After this the weather started coming over and a decision was made to have an early finish and head back to the cars before it rained (it didn't). Another reason was that activity seemed to have quietened considerably, much more so than at the same time on my mid-week reccie.

So, it was a rather different morning from usual, with some different breeding, a feature being some species having nearly completed the breeding cycle, and others only just starting or yet to start. The heavy rain so far in November may have been responsible for this. The latter include the **Rufous Whistler**, so prominent chasing each other mid-week, but which most of us only heard. In contrast the **Noisy Friarbird** was very vocal and pairs were chasing each other, but no nests were found.

We only saw single **Dusky Woodswallows** and just one **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, the latter right at the end, for the morning, and an **Olive-backed Oriole** was heard only by a few. Again, there were no **Mistletoebird**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Sacred Kingfisher** (present mid-week) and **Dollarbird** (said to be breeding in the “Kestrel” tree) heard or seen. The very wet conditions did mean we saw three common duck species, as well as an **Australasian Grebe** in breeding plumage on the big dam (but no nest). Those of us familiar with the “fear, fear, fear” call identified a distant **Brush Cuckoo**, also a first for this workshop.

Participants continue to enjoy this very popular outing. A total of 45 species was seen, around the same as the also wet outing last year and the 3 previous dry years before that. Fifteen species were recorded breeding at some level, around average for the past few years, though unusually hollow nesters accounted for more than half of them. In all we found 5 of

the 10 main nest types. However, compared with previous years, much of the breeding activity was taking place around the very full big dam. A factor for this may have been that for the first time **Noisy Miners** were present well past the horse gate, and particularly north of it right up to the edge of the grassland.

My sincere thanks again to Sue Lashko for helping lead the group, and to Lia Battisson for doing the eBird list, always a very difficult task with so many observers.

Jack Holland

Wednesday 17 November - West Belconnen Pond

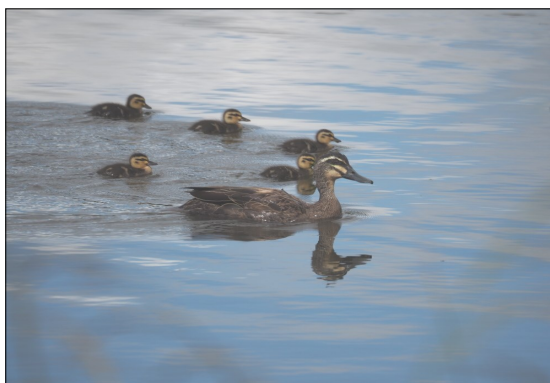
Eighteen COG members gathered for the Wednesday walk on a very pleasant morning. We managed to see 40 species in total. The highlights were a **Royal Spoonbill**, a **White-necked Heron** flying away, a **Sacred Kingfisher** and two male **White-winged Trillers**. Breeding behaviour was noted for **Black Swans**, **Eurasian Coots**, **Australian Reed Warblers**, **Pied Currawongs**, **Magpie-larks**, **White-plumed Honeyeaters** and **Pacific Black Ducks**.

Sandra Henderson



Australian Reed Warbler

Ian McMahon



Pacific Black Duck

Matthew Larken

Sunday 21 November – Mt Ginini

Due to bad weather, this outing was postponed until 20 February 2022. See notice under **Future Field Trips** page 12.



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Publications for Sale

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

Below are some of the most popular books and latest publications. 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, contact Kathy on sales@canberrabirds.org.au to see if she can order it for you. **If you wish to order from existing stock, delivery could be made at the COG Christmas BBQ on 8 December.**

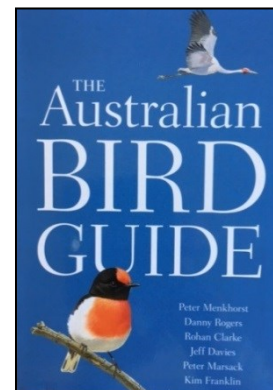
The Australian Bird Guide

2nd edition

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

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

Members' price \$38 (RRP \$49.95).

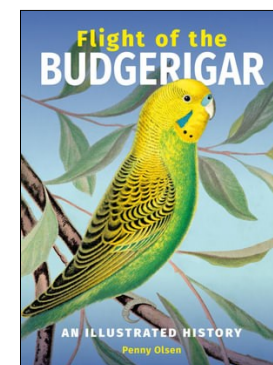


Flight of the Budgerigar: An Illustrated History

Penny Olsen

Budgerigars take flight in fascinating photographic history of the iconic Australian bird. Taking the reader from the Dreamtime to the colonial live bird trade, the competitive culture of the showroom and today's thriving wild flocks, Flight of the Budgerigar is the authoritative history of the Budgerigar, written by respected ornithologist Dr Penny Olsen, and lavishly illustrated in full colour.

Members' price: \$35 (RRP \$49.95).

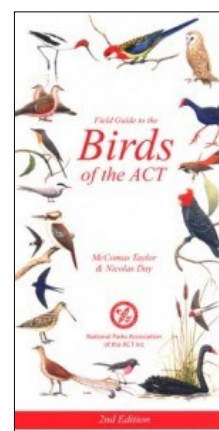


Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT

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.



New Places: November 2021

Sandra Henderson

Bills Park, Conargo

Where – the tiny village of Conargo, next to the primary school and just down the road from the old Conargo Pub (where there are signs that rebuilding is finally underway).

The Park is a small free camp area, with toilet facilities, and it backs onto Billabong Creek. It is named after two people called Bill – Bill Bull and Bill Lamb. There were small birds in the small group of trees, and a **Black Kite** and **Black-shouldered Kite** circling above. Walking towards the creek I could hear a **Sacred Kingfisher**, a **Western Gerygone**, a **Peaceful Dove**, and a **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** among the early chorus. When I have more time I'll be exploring the area close to Billabong Creek further.

Molonglo River Reserve – Woodland Track

Where – just beyond Edgeworth Pond in Coombs. I walked from Edgeworth Pond.

This is an out-and-back track (1.8km each way) through grassland to a lightly wooded area high above the Molonglo. The highlight of my visit was seeing two **Brown Falcons** in a tree eating what appeared to be a starling. There were plenty of **Golden-headed Cisticolas**, a single **Superb Parrot** which flew out of one of the large eucalypts, and a number of **Little Pied Cormorants** flew over. I realised in the first few metres that the tall grass either side of the track would make the walk slightly challenging. With the track only about 30cm wide, and grass taller than myself bending over the track from both sides, there were a couple of times I had to stop and work out where the track was. It was also very wet in places – at one point a boardwalk section was under water, and in many places water was running down the track. There is a nice information board near the ruins of an old cottage (eight children lived with their parents in the two-room cottage!), although, beware – there is a large ants' nest right in front of the sign. There is a large Apple Box which is probably close to 450 years old at one of the two bridges.



Brown Falcon

Sandra Henderson

Melba Wetlands

Where – Copland Drive, just near the BMX Track.

An interesting series of quite new ponds alongside Ginninderra Creek. It's well worth a look. I managed 38 species in an hour. These included a **Sacred Kingfisher**, a **Little Grassbird**, a **Dusky Moorhen** with a chick and a **Little Pied Cormorant**.

Queanbeyan – two small parks

I visited the Urban Bush Reserve (there is bush either side of the street), and Garryowen Park, both on Nimmitabel Street, very close together. The former is a tiny area, with some nice wildflowers (lots of trigger plants and Dianella) with some paths winding through. Garryowen Park has small patches of vegetation, separated by mown expanses, and an impressive grassy knoll in the centre. Neither had many birds, but I did find a **Pied Currawong** nest with two large chicks in it.

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Black-shouldered Kites nesting at Kama Nature Reserve

A pair of **Black-shouldered Kites** nested in Kama NR this spring, with Lia first noticing a bird on the nest on 29 August. For the remainder of lockdown, Sue monitored the nest while doing her daily exercise.



According to HANZAB, the female incubates the eggs so presumably it was she who was on the nest on 1 September. However, on 7 September, one adult (Bird A) was on the nest when the other adult (Bird B) landed in a dead tree nearby, clutching a mouse. After about 10 minutes, Bird A left the nest and joined Bird B on the same branch. Bird B clearly had no intention of sharing the mouse and jumped to another branch and proceeded to eat it over about 10 minutes. It (Bird B) then flew to the nest and sat on the nest, while Bird A went hunting. So, both female and male birds were incubating the eggs on 7 September.

It was difficult to ascertain when the eggs hatched because of the height and position of the nest. However, by 24 September, the bird on the nest appeared to be sitting higher, so possibly the chicks had hatched by then. By 11 October, 2 chicks were visible, stretching their wings and preening.

Meanwhile, Andrew had begun filming the nest and on 22 October he sighted 4 chicks. On 25 October, he reported that “three chicks flew and landed and flew again. There was also interaction with the parents who flew through the tree next to the nest to lead them off. You will see in one photo the parent is flying past the nest with two chicks still in it. This is the pass in which the second chick took flight. The chicks flew quite a distance down towards the river and back again landing in separate trees a couple of hundred metres from the nest. They were clumsy at first with the tail and legs down but soon got the hang of it. They each followed a parent on their first flight. One of them later flew back to the nesting tree on its own without an escorting parent. There was a lot of verbal communication between the parents and the young ones the whole time. The youngest one did not fly and I estimated that it had two or three more days before it fledged. I did not go back for that.”

On 30 October, Lia reported that the nest was empty and there has been no sign of the birds since.

Andrew Bourne, Lia Battisson, Sue Lashko

Photos by *Andrew Bourne*



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

2020-2021 memberships:

- Individual: \$50
- Family: \$55
- Institution: \$50
- School student (under 18) \$20

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

A Bourne
K Denigan
J Harris
P Hely

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for February 2022 edition:

Wednesday 26 January 2022

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

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

or

c/- The Secretary COG,

PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608

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

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

COG information

President: Neil Hermes

0413 828 045

president@canberrabirds.org.au

Treasurer: Prue Watters

cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Secretary: Margaret Robertson

cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Address for correspondence

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

Canberra Bird Notes

Editor: Michael Lenz

michael.lenz.birds@gmail.com

COG website

canberrabirds.org.au

COG Webmaster

Julian Robinson

cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au

COG library

Membership Enquiries & Updates:

membership@canberrabirds.org.au

for change of address or other details.

Gang-gang Newsletter

Editor: Sue Lashko

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

Lay-out Editor: Gail Neumann

Publication Sales

Kathy Walter

sales@canberrabirds.org.au

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