



Gang-gang

NOVEMBER 2021

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

NOVEMBER MEETING

**Wednesday 10 November 2021
7.30pm—virtual meeting**

Please note that, with all schools allowing only students and staff on campus, CGGS will not be available for the November meeting, so it will be held on-line.

Log into via <https://event.webinarjam.com/channel/COGMembersMeeting>.

This link is also available on the Home page of the COG website. Please do this around 10 minutes before the 7:30 pm start of the meeting, so that you can enter your name and email address to join the Webinar.

After the AGM there will only be the one main presentation by **Leo Joseph** of the CSIRO's Australian National Wildlife Collection (ANWC) titled "Let's Talk About Whistlers: A tale of the "golden" whistlers in Australia and a researcher's ups and downs."

Field guides today list three members of the Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis* group in Australia. Things have not always been that way, however, and field guides from not so long ago showed a very different situation. Leo's talk will review this story of how and why we now recognize three species in Australia, how they can be distinguished from each other, and what to expect around

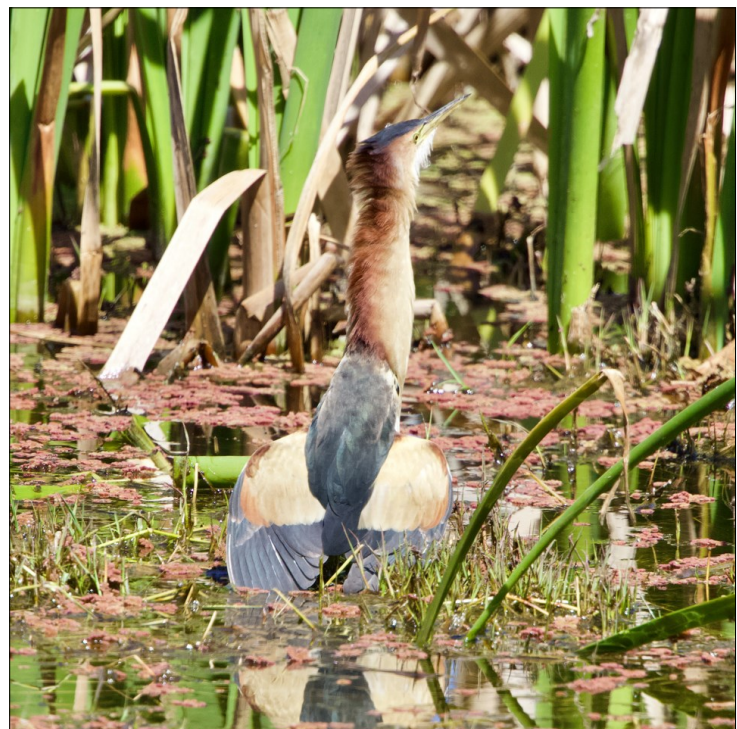
Summary/analysis of the past month and what to watch out for this month

The weather over the 4 weeks from 29 September covered by this column has again been quite variable, with some fine warmer days interspersed with quite a few cooler, often windy days. There were significant rain events at the beginning and middle of the period. As a result, there has been significant plant growth, and everything is lush and green. My impression was that despite the lifting of the COVID local travel restrictions from 1 October, bird activity within the COG Area of Interest (AoI) seemed to be rather muted, perhaps due to the excellent conditions elsewhere. However, as detailed below, there still has been plenty to report, even if there were fewer really "unusual" species observed than there often are in spring. There do seem to have been lower than usual numbers of some of the inland spring/summer migrants reported so far.

Continued Page 2

Victor Braguine

Australian Little Bittern



Everyone welcome

Canberra at various times of the year. The talk will also have some musings about Leo's own journey of research into this group and some of the twists and turns that have coloured that journey.

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

The **Red-backed-Kingfisher** at Campbell Park was regularly reported until 9 October, but there has been only a single observation since, on 21 October. It was not reported over the COG Blitz weekend of 23-24 October, so it appears it may have finally moved on after being there for over a month, often being seen at the single favoured location.

The species which, at least for a time, otherwise seemed to attract most of the interest was the **Australian Little Bittern** at Kelly Swamp. A photo was first posted on the COG chatline by Kym Bradley on 8 October. This showed a bird in flight, clearly showing its buff upperwing coverts. Victor Braguine also posted photographs of one on eBird on the same day, and on 11 October he posted a photograph of two in flight. That day, from looking at his own photos, as well as Victor's and several others, Archer Callaway deduced that there were possibly 3 birds, but subsequently a number of observers only reported a single bird up to 16 October. COG's 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR) lists this as a rare, non-breeding visitor, rarely seen in the COG Aol. It notes there are only 17 records of single birds from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, from November to February, and "it cannot be determined whether this was the same bird seen several times over the period." There is also record of a single bird at Forde Pond in mid-November. The eBird map also shows some further records of single birds at the former location from November 2020 to January 2021, as well as from Commonwealth Park in December 2019. So, it does seem the above sightings are notable for 2 reasons, the first of more than one bird together, and also the first in October.

Of the spring/summer migrant species which had not yet been reported at the time of my October column, there have been no reports of the **Channel-billed Cuckoo**. The only report of the **Horsfield's Bushlark** was of 3 singing birds seen by Michael Lenz at Lake Bathurst on 20 October. The only reports so far of the **Brown Songlark** was the male seen in high display flight at Parkwood by Kim Farley (and later that day by Christine D) on 17 October, and the bird reported at Wollogorang Road by Frank Antram on 22 October.

There have been some reports of the **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallow**, the first of 21 and 1 birds, respectively, by Luke Downey at Kowen Forest on 7 October. The former has then been reported from 4 other locations including 100 and 130 (easily the highest numbers to date) by Luke at nearby Wamboin on 10 and 12 October, and the latter from 3 further locations, with the highest number being 4 birds at the Rendezvous Creek on Boboyan Road in Namadgi NP on 17 October.

Of the other inland species which had only just arrived during September, the **White-winged Triller** has been reported from 25 locations, and the **Rufous Songlark** from 17 locations. In particular, the number of locations for the latter seems down on recent years, so please keep an eye out for the above species, as it does appear numbers of them reaching the COG Aol will be lower this year due to the wet inland conditions.

Of the passage migrants, a male **Satin Flycatcher** was first reported by Brian Hawkins in his Curtin garden on 16 October, with further birds then reported from 5 locations in the Brindabellas and Namadgi NP from 20-24 October. The **Rufous Fantail** was reported from 7 locations, the first being from north of Tallaganda NP by Chris C on 18 October, with another report from near there the next day. Subsequently there were 3 urban/peri-urban reports, the first from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 22 October, and 2 reports from the Brindabellas over the COG Blitz weekend. The **Common Cicadabird** was first reported by Sue Lashko, Kathy Walter and John Goldie from the Coree Campground in the Brindabella NP on 20 October, with a further report of one at Smokers Gap on 23 October.

Following the report of the first **Eastern Koel** calling in Narrabundah on 26 September, as included in my previous column, on 29 September Belinda Moss posted that she had heard a Koel for the last few mornings in Deakin. On 30 September Bron and Daryl King saw a male at MacDermott Pl on Lake Ginninderra. It was silent as it was mobbed by **Noisy Miners**. Following this, reports climbed steadily and by 12 October there were reports from 20 suburbs/locations, about the same number as last

season. Activity seemed to pick up after that, in particular following the over 30 mm rain event on 14 October, and it seemed we might be in for a very similar breeding season to last season's record one.

However, in my local area of Chapman/Rivett I did not hear my first male until 15 October, followed by my first female on 18 October, with the first explosive *whoas/kek keks* given together in my GBS site the following morning. Interestingly, since then I have only occasionally, often distantly, heard a male calling *ko-el*, ie still calling for a mate, suggesting the others may have moved on. Also, and very unusually, I have yet to see one. So I have been wondering if perhaps this season will be different, at least in my area, though this is not supported by the over 60 locations (including Yass, Bungendore and Burra) on eBird on 27 October.

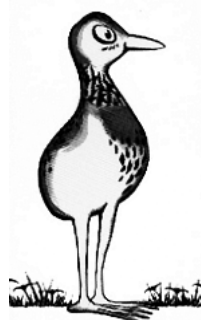
Also, on 25 October Con Boekel reported three **Eastern Koels** at Dryandra Street Woodland in O'Connor, which he believed to be a record number for that location. He also suspected that they were attracted by the significant number of **Red Wattlebirds**. About the same time Christine D noted that there was a lot of **Eastern Koel** activity around her place in Flynn. A female was calling loudly in a call she had seldom heard, and which she was beginning to think may be associated with breeding activity. There were at least three Koels (2 females, 1 male) around, and she saw them in bushes (or large bushy trees) where **Red Wattlebirds** were also entering and leaving. She noted that sadly she would not be able to observe as much of their activity this year as the fig tree outside her window, a favourite spot for observing Koels for many years, has gone.

There have been reports of the **Brush Cuckoo** from 13 locations in the period, 2 of them being from urban/peri-urban spots in and around Canberra, with 2 recent ones in more open rural areas to the east, and the remaining west of the Murrumbidgee River, where they will breed over spring/summer. Of the other local cuckoos, the **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** has been reported from more than 45 locations over the period, and the **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** and the **Pallid Cuckoo** reported from 14 and 39 locations, respectively. These are good numbers for the latter two inland species given the conditions out there.

Of the other species which had arrived in September, but for which there were only a few records, the **Sacred Kingfisher** has been reported from around 75 locations, and is thus well established, as is the **Rainbow Bee-eater** reported from over 40 locations. Despite some concerns about dropping numbers, the **Dollarbird**, has been reported from about 35 locations. The **Leaden Flycatcher** seems to be particularly well established, reported from around 75 locations.

Thus, except for the **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, the **White-throated Needletail** and the related **Fork-tailed Swift**, which are mostly observed after the New Year, all of the spring/summer migrants which might be expected in any season have been reported.

Of the birds that spend winter around Canberra, single **Swift Parrots** were still observed from Fadden and Cook on 30 September and 2 October, respectively. However, the final 2 birds were reported from



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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

Jenke Court Kambah on 9 October, where they have mostly been observed, and which marked the end of a remarkable winter season for this species in Canberra.

Of the species which move into Canberra and its surrounds in autumn/winter and move back to the mountains and other higher areas in spring, the **White-eared Honeyeater**, **Grey Shrike-thrush** and **Golden Whistler** have still been recorded from around 15, 30 and 40 urban/peri-urban locations, respectively. The **Scarlet Robin** was still reported from 10 such locations, indicating that some do stay close to Canberra over late spring/summer, compared with the **Flame Robin** for which single birds, both females, have been reported from only 2 urban/peri-urban locations, the last one on 4 October. All but 4 of the other over 35 rural locations were from west of the Murrumbidgee River.



Rose Robin

Christine D.

The **Rose Robin** has been reported from 7 locations, 5 of them in the Brindabellas and two in Tallaganda State Forest, and none of them urban/peri-urban while in transit. There were again no reports of the **Pink Robin** during the period. The **Crescent Honeyeater** has been reported from 17 locations in the period, all on or west of the Murrumbidgee River, except for one in Tallaganda State Forest. There has again been just a single report of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, a bird recorded at Rendevious Creek in Namadgi NP on 10 October.

Apart from the **Red-backed Kingfisher** and the **Australian Little Bittern** mentioned above, there don't seem to have been any new (for 2021) "Unusual" species reported for the period. However, following the report of 2 **Red-capped Plovers** on the water's edge during a drive along Lake Road on the west side of Lake George by Liam Manderson on 6 October, a number of birders have observed them there, with a maximum of 30 reported there by Ben Ward on 23 October. Five birds were also

reported from Lake Bathurst by Michael Lenz on 20 October, from where he had also reported the species in the first half of 2021. The 2018-2019 ABR reports it as a rare, non-breeding visitor, which prefers mudflats and bare spaces in wetlands, and thus is rarely recorded in the ACT itself.

Liam Manderson also reported 3 **Red-necked Stint** from there on 16 October, with subsequently 2 other observers finding 1 and 2 birds there. This species has only been reported once before in the COG Aol in 2021, the 2 birds by Michael Lenz at Lake Bathurst in March. Again the 2018-2019 ABR lists it as a non-breeding vagrant occasionally seen in summer at the Fyshwick Sewage Ponds, Lake Bathurst or Lake George.

Plumed Whistling Ducks were reported only from the Trucking Yard Lane Dam with a maximum of 8 on 2 October. **Australian Shelducks** were reported from 12 locations to the east and northeast of Canberra during the period, with a maximum of 30 along Lake Road on 23 October. Up to 2 **Blue-billed Ducks** were reported from 3 locations, while up to 3 **Musk Ducks** were reported from 5 locations, not including the Sanctuary at Tidbinbilla NR.

Stubble Quail have started to call and were reported from 8 locations over the period, whereas **Brown Quail** were reported from 15 locations. The **Painted Button-quail** irruption has continued, being reported from an even more remarkable 22 locations, but again **Little Button-quail** have not been reported. After an absence of over 6 months **Great Crested Grebes** returned to the Cotter Dam from the beginning of October, with a maximum of 8 birds reported from there. A bird was also reported from a new location, a farm dam on the west side of Lake George, on 20 October.

Single **White-headed Pigeons** were reported from Symonston and Ainslie on 23 and 24 October, respectively. When the Glendale Depot site became accessible again, the **Diamond Dove** was reported from there on 1 and 4 October, but not since, or with the **Peaceful Dove**, which was not reported from anywhere during the period. **Red-necked Avocet** have been reported by a number of observers only from Lake Road on the west side of Lake George, with an estimated maximum of 100 there on 9 October.

Up to 4 **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** have also been reported from there by a number of observers from 6 October. Based on some detective work by Archer Callaway it has been confirmed that there are in fact 2 different **Common Sandpipers** at either end of Lake Tuggeranong. The known bird from the Isabella Pond was regularly reported and the one from around the Village Creek inflow at the top end of Lake Tuggeranong was less so, though several observers, including Archer, recorded the two birds in close sequence.

Caspian Terns were reported from 3 locations during the period. The first was from Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 30 September, then one was reported flying towards the car near the Model Airplane Club on Monaro Hwy on 8 October, and then 2 birds were reported flying quite high over the water on Cotter Dam on 18 October.

Barn Owls were reported from 3 locations during the period: one was observed flying along a gully chased by **Australian Magpies** at Illoura Horse Paddocks Curtin on 3 October, and 2 individual birds were reported from Stromlo at night on 17 October. The third bird was flushed out of a dense small eucalypt during the day at Sam's Creek Fire Trail in Namadgi NP on 24 October. It sat obligingly nearby for wonderful views. Unexpectedly reports of this species during the period are somewhat lower than in previous months, suggesting a build-up in mice numbers is not occurring. In contrast the **Black-shouldered Kite** was reported from close to 50 locations, and the **Nankeen Kestrel** from around 90 locations, suggesting there are still plenty of mice around for these two species to feed on. A **Spotted Harrier**, which also hunts for small mammals including mice while flying slowly low over paddocks, was reported from 6 locations during the period.

An **Azure Kingfisher** was reported only from Cotter Reserve on 23 October. Single **Little Lorikeets** were again reported from 2 different spots in Watson on 2 and 26 October, while a single **Musk Lorikeet** was reported only from Higgins on 2 October. A single **Scaly-breasted Lorikeet** was reported from Campbell Park on 15 October.

Scarlet Honeyeaters were reported from 5 locations during the period, and the **Little Friarbird** from 2 locations. However, there were no reports of **Singing, Blue-faced** or **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters**. A **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** was last reported from Callum Brae NR on 2 October, and they now seem to have moved on.

Of the birds I have been asking readers to keep a special lookout for continuing into 2021, the **Jacky Winter** has been reported from 4 locations all in the south of the ACT, with up to 2 birds seen by many observers at Namadgi NP Visitors Centre, from where it has been most frequently reported in recent times. Two birds were also reported during the COG woodland survey on the Naas rural lease south of Tharwa on 6 October. Single birds were reported further south from Glendale Depot and Yankee Hut car park and track on 4 and 8 October, respectively. Both are new locations for 2021.

Hooded Robins were reported from 2 locations only, a pair at the known spot at Naas Rd at Apollo Road on 9 October, and a female at Glendale Depot, a new spot at least for 2021, on 24 October. The **Restless Flycatcher** was reported from 3 locations only, a single bird at the known spot of Nelanglo TSR near Gundaroo on 18 October, up to two birds at Glendale depot, also a known location, on 8 and 24 October, and a single bird at nearby Glendale Crossing, a new location, on 10 October. It is very interesting how these three species' distribution within the ACT seems to have shrunk to the south of the Territory.

The excellent conditions are providing a very good breeding season with many reports coming to my attention. Some highlights noted below:

- On 4 October Anthony Overs posted that he leaves some dog hair in an old clothes peg basket in the front yard for birds to collect for nesting materials. In the past, **Superb Fairy-wrens**, **Eastern Spinebills** and **Red Wattlebirds** had collected hair. Two new birds took some hair that day, with a **Willie Wagtail** taking some on two occasions. Most interesting to me was a female **Magpie-lark** also taking some on three occasions; the first time she collected a bit of grass as well as the hair, dunked the whole lot in the bird bath, then took it straight up to the mud nest under construction just across the street (she did the same the next day too). He also noted that day the **Red Wattlebirds** (RWB) were taking some; they were building again after having already successfully raised two young. I found the first RWB fledgling in my area of Chapman/Rivett on 26 September (over 3 weeks earlier than last year), and by 19 October I had recorded at least 12 different ones including 4 separated by several hundred metres in a short dog walk on the afternoon on 6 October. It all points to another possible season where they may have 4 broods, as for last year (and with the same implications?). Together with their local numbers (see below), it is clear to me that fostering well over 350 Koel fledglings last year has had minimum impact on **Red Wattlebird** numbers.
- On 21 October Steve Holliday observed a pair of **Bush Thick-knees** with two small chicks at Mulligans Flat NR, a great example of how this reintroduced species is breeding.

- Christine D posted that her highlight for the COG Blitz weekend's birding was a **Rose Robin** on nest. The attached photo showed a male on the most exquisite lichen covered nest. The BIRD INFO on the COG website shows this is a rare breeding record; interestingly, only one of the ten records is on/leaving the nest, but in January, though there are other records in October. On 27 October Christine updated me that there were now at least two tiny hatchlings in the nest, providing a nest with young record to add to the three (in January and February) in the COG database.
- The very good breeding conditions are underlined by the fact that for the first time I can remember I have more than one **Australian Magpie** nest in my GBS site, in fact four in a roughly straight line of around 170 m. The one used last season was re-furbished but doesn't seem to have been used, whereas it is unclear at what stage two others built and occupied early are (they should at least be feeding young in there). A bird is sitting on the fourth (and easiest to see) nest built quite a bit later. The confusion isn't helped by on several recent occasions 7 birds were disputing overhead, before they all dropped down to the ground to be close but amicably (lots of calling) together in my neighbour's back yard. In amongst all this, **Pied Currawongs** are feeding young in a nest about halfway in between, seemingly unconcerned about the magpies.

In spite of all the breeding activity Rosemary Blemings posted that on Monday 11 October there was much diversity in a mixed feeding flock in the woodlands at Hall. There were at least 5 **Varied Sittellas**, both whistler species calling, a pair of **Leaden Flycatchers**, **White-Throated Treecreeper** calls, **Grey Shrike Thrush** foraging, **Western Gerygone** calls, several thornbill species, **Striated Pardalotes** and honeyeaters too high in canopy to identify.

The greater than for many years **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** inward migration in my Chapman garden I mentioned in my previous column continued during the period, with the waves seeming to refresh each time we had a significant rain event. Interestingly, I have been unable to find a single **White-naped Honeyeater** in amongst them. In addition to the breeding mentioned above, the influx of the many **Red Wattlebirds** has continued, not only being attracted to the still flowering mugga ironbarks. My conservative count of them on Cooleman Ridge during the COG Blitz weekend was 133 birds, by far the highest number of birds of any species.

Michael Lenz has continued to count **Noisy Friarbirds** moving through Lyneham, with a cumulative total of 226 birds moving through Southwell Park on 14 October. Anthony Overs has started a small Citizen Science project examining the movement of **Superb Parrots** between breeding sites in the Molonglo Valley and feeding areas in the Belconnen suburbs. On Friday 9 October they recorded 110 birds, of which 10 were female, so it definitely looked like hollow occupation had commenced.

So please watch out for more of the remaining returning spring/summer migrants mentioned above, for roost sites and flights, and for late spring breeding activity. With the favourable conditions there should be lots of the last-named. Please also continue to keep a special look out for the **Restless Flycatcher**, **Jacky Winter** and **Hooded Robin**. 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 e-mail 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



Restless Flycatcher

David Cook

Committee News

The COG committee met by Zoom on 21 October for its monthly meeting.

The November members' meeting will be COG's Annual General Meeting and will be held by webinar. Please see the notice elsewhere in Gang-gang.

Although we would much prefer to meet in person, the current limits on the number of people allowed to meet indoors make this impossible. The quorum for COG AGMs is 30 but only 25 people are allowed to meet in community or cultural facilities. We are not permitted to meet at CGGS at present.

As outings recommence please note any restrictions and register at least 48 hours in advance. This will make it much easier for the leaders and assist COG to comply with the COVID regulations.

It appears that COG members had an enjoyable and productive weekend during the annual Blitz held on 23 – 24 October. Thank you to Nicki Taws for organising it. We look forward to hearing the results.

We are planning to have the traditional December gathering at Black Mountain Peninsula on 8 December starting at 6pm. However, the details will depend on the rules for outdoor activities at the time. More information will be available in December Gang-gang.

Neil Hermes *President* Alison Mackerras *Minutes Secretary*

Notice of the COG Annual General Meeting for 2021 Wednesday 10 November 2021, 7.30pm

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc. will be held by webinar starting at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 10 November 2021.

The link is <https://event.webinarjam.com/channel/COGMembersMeeting>.

The agenda and call for nominations were included in the October issue of Gang-gang. Nominations close on 31 October.

Financial Reports can be found here – <http://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/>

Please email cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au during the webinar to record your attendance at the AGM.

Please send apologies to cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au.

COG's cogs - No 6

The sixth cog in our behind-the-scenes series is Jack Holland. Jack has been with COG for well over forty years, and in that time has worn many hats. He first joined in February 1977 when the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union began the Atlas project. Today the project is managed by BirdLife Australia.

To the end of 1981, Jack provided regular surveys to the Atlas, which was a massive Australia-wide undertaking. Jack also contributed to the ACT Atlas during 1986-1989, and again to the Birds Australia Atlas in 1998-2001.

Jack was Secretary of COG from 1986-1989, and then President from 2003-2007. At the same time he served as COG's Field Trips Officer, organising and often leading the many COG outings throughout the year. This includes the annual boat trip on the East Basin of Lake Burley Griffin and the adjacent Molonglo Reach, the winter 'mystery' bus tours (with Jenny Bounds), and the springtime nest workshop at Campbell Park.

These days, Jack's formal role in COG is as the speakers' organiser for the monthly meetings and the annual members night. After a lifetime spent in the avian world Jack's built a wide range of contacts amongst local and interstate birders, researchers and students. Jack is also COG's Public Officer.

Jack also continues to write a monthly column for Gang-gang, where he reports new and unusual bird sightings and points out what to look for over the coming month. This reflects a long-time interest in the movement of birds, and helps readers know when to expect the many spring/summer Canberra migrants to arrive and depart, as well as the arrivals and departure of the altitudinal migrants, which move from the mountains to Canberra during autumn and winter.

Since retirement in 2014 Jack has taken on a number of local bird projects. The most notable is co-ordinating the ad-hoc Citizen's Science project on the number of Eastern Koels that come to the ACT each spring and summer. In particular, he has been able to document the significant rise in Koel fledglings being raised by Red Wattlebird hosts over recent years. From this data he has published a yearly summary for Canberra Bird Notes (CBN).

He has also documented and published articles in CBN on the roosts and roost flights around his home in Chapman/Rivett of both the Magpie-lark and the Red-rumped Parrot and is currently drafting a similar paper for the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. These are the culmination of bird movements he has been observing for many years.

Acknowledgements

Nathan Finger and Jack Holland

Julian Robinson for title to this series



Jacky Winter

Julian Robinson



Hooded Robin

Geoffrey Dabb

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 7 November – Tin Hut Dam, Googong

Meet at 8:30am at the Tin Hut carpark (beware the road into the site is unsealed, and can be rough at times). We'll be walking around Tin Hut Dam and in the surrounding woodland. A relatively easy walk, with a formed track for about half the loop, but no defined track on the western side, so it is likely we will have to walk through some grass. Some birds we might see include **Musk Duck, Western Gerygone, Southern Whiteface**, cuckoos and raptors.

End time: ~ 10.30-11am.

Bring: water, sunscreen, hat, sensible footwear.

Numbers limited to 16.

Registration is essential, no later than Friday 5 November. Email: Lkmanderson@hotmail.com with your name, mobile number, and an emergency contact name and number.

Liam Manderson

Sunday 14 November — Campbell Park, Morning Nest workshop

Description: This outing will be a repeat of the very popular and practical nest workshops held over the past eighteen 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.

Walking distance: 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 around 500 m from where we park. Maximum distance = 2.5 km of easy flat walking.

End Time: Between 11 am and 12 pm. Please remember to take morning tea which we will have out in the field.

Meeting time and place: 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.

Numbers limited to 30 (based on the latest ACT Government pathway out of lockdown).

Name of leader and contact details: Registration is essential no later than Friday 12 November. To participate, please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840) or preferably by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com – please include your name and mobile, and your emergency contact name and numbers.

Wednesday 17 November - West Belconnen Pond

Meet: at Percy Begg Circuit, Dunlop at 8.30am

Walk: easy circuit of the pond. This is a bird hotspot with over 160 species sighted. The walk will take a couple of hours.

Bring: hat, sunscreen, water

Leader: Sandra Henderson

Register: email shirmax2931@gmail.com with name and number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Sunday 21 November – Mt Ginini

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

Sunday 28 November – Wamboin White Gum Forest Reserve

Description: This will be COG's first visit to this interesting area on the NSW side of the border, abutting the Kowen pine forest. It is a Brittle Gum forest with tracks built in recent years for the Kowen Trail Runners. The birds are typical of the Southern Highlands Brittle Gum/Red Stringybark Forest ecosystem: not prolific, but nonetheless interesting. **Painted Button-quail** have been observed in similar habitat nearby.

eBird hotspot: <https://ebird.org/australia/hotspot/L3296954>

Meeting time and place: 08:00 am at the Spotlight carpark, Bungendore Road, Queanbeyan, for optional carpooling

Walking distance: 5 km approx.

Degree of difficulty: Easy/moderate

End time (approx.): 11.00 am, with an optional additional visit to a nearby travelling stock reserve

What to bring: Water & morning tea

Registration is required, by email or text to the trip leader, giving name, mobile number, and emergency contact name and mobile number

Name of leader and contact details: David McDonald, email david [at] dnmcdonald.id.au, phone/text 0416 231 890

Numbers limited to 15.

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



Olive Whistler

Tobias Hayashi



Little Raven

Rhonda Hansch



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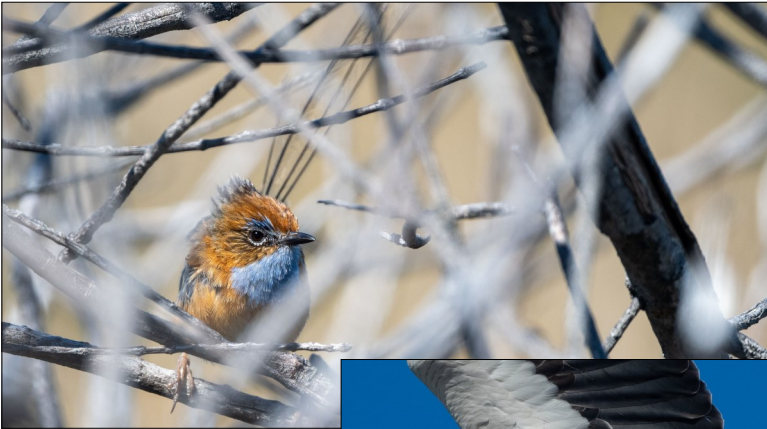
Tel: 07 4094 1665

Email: freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au

Field Trip Reports

All trips from 12 August to 15 October were cancelled, including the trip to Green Cape from 11-15 October and the Eden pelagic on 16 October, due to the ACT Covid lockdown. However, Rob Clay, who lives in Victoria, was able to visit Green Cape on 27-28 September and sent the following photos.

Look at what has survived the horrific 2019-20 fires and is waiting for us on the other side of our Covid lockdowns.



Southern Emu-Wren, White-bellied Sea-eagle,
Eastern Ground Parrot

Rob Clay

Sunday 17 October - Bluetts Block

After what seemed like weeks of rain and wind, finally, a lovely sunny morning dawned with hardly any breeze. Masks and social distancing were adhered to by all, a memory to be grateful for next year when we will not wear masks!

An abundance of birds were heard and viewed for minutes at a time. For newcomers this was particularly good. Thanks to Kathy and John, 36 species including **White-naped, Yellow-faced and White-eared Honeyeaters, Grey Currawong, Leaden Flycatcher** (some in the group estimated at least 6), **Yellow Thornbill, Eastern Spinebill, White-throated Treecreepers, Rainbow Bee-eaters, Wedge-tailed Eagle** and **Brown Goshawk** were recorded. A very pleasing morning for all of us.

Jean Casburn

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.

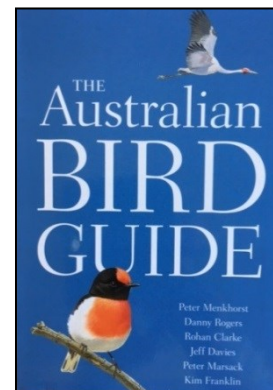
The Australian Bird Guide

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).

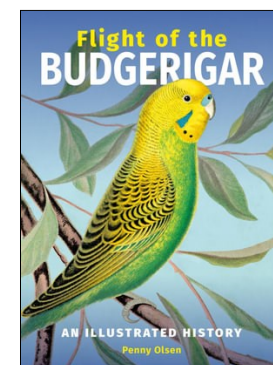


Flight of the Budgerigar: An Illustrated History

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).

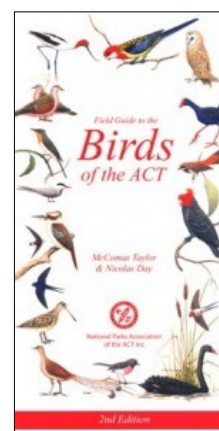


Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT

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.



Woodland Surveys – spring 2021 survey round

compiled by Jenny Bounds

The spring survey round over the last week of September was affected by Covid lockdown restrictions. Some surveys were able to be done within the daily exercise allowed locally prior to 1 October, while some surveys were not possible until the first week of October when more exercise flexibility was allowed. [Not all the woodland locations have reports.]

Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds organised a small, skeleton crew to survey Mulligans Flat and the surveys were done over sessions on consecutive days, 26, 27 and 28 September. Jenny was unable to travel there, and has rarely missed a survey in 26 years. Fifty-four species were recorded, with the usual species expected including early spring migrants. A **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, and an **Australian Owlet Nightjar** were highlights. A big thank you to those who were able to do the surveys.

Gooroo South NR

Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley did the survey on 6 October, in the southern half of Gooroo, on a mild, clear and sunny morning, with light to moderate winds. It was very wet underfoot with plenty of native and introduced forbs in flower, and lots of water in dams and creeks. They recorded a total of 56 species with 43 of those during the 10 minute site counts, about average for the spring survey.

Amongst the interesting species recorded were a pair of **Nankeen Kestrels**, **Speckled Warblers** in a couple of places, a **Brown Goshawk** at site 4, a **Grey Currawong** heard at site 8, and a **Sacred Kingfisher** calling near site 5. There were a reasonable number of summer migrants recorded: **Mistletoebird**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **White-throated** and **Western Gerygones**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Shining and Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos** and **Rufous Whistler**. There was quite a lot of flowering in the Yellow Boxes and quite a few honeyeaters feeding in them, including **Brown-headed**, **White-naped**, **White-plumed** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**. Breeding was noted for **White-winged Choughs** (at least 2 chicks in a nest), **Buff-rumped Thornbills** were feeding chicks in a nest in a hole in a tree stump, and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** were feeding fledglings. **Superb Parrots** were checking out hollows.

Mt Majura NR

Kathy Walter and John Goldie conducted the surveys in their local reserve on 19, 20 and 25 Sept. It was very wet underfoot and they could have done with rubber boots! Lots of Yellow Box was flowering at most sites. Around 30 species were recorded in total over the 9 sites. Unfortunately, only one site had any small birds with **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, **Grey Fantail**, **Mistletoebird** and **Weebills**. No Speckled Warblers were seen at either of the regular sites, but hopefully they were just keeping a low profile and have not gone altogether. Many **Red Wattlebirds**, **Noisy Friarbirds** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were seen at a number of sites.

Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park

Michael Lenz did the spring survey of the 9 sites on the lower eastern slopes of Mt Ainslie on 6 October. Overall conditions were fine with light to moderate wind.

Crimson Rosella and **Noisy Miner** were the most widespread species (each at 8 sites), followed by **Striated Pardalote** (6 sites). Summer migrants were represented with **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Rufous Whistler**, **White-throated** and **Western Gerygone**, **White-winged Triller**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Tree Martin** and **Mistletoebird**, but missing was the **Leaden Flycatcher**. Other species of interest included **Speckled Warbler**, **Varied Sittella**, **Brown Goshawk**, **Black-shouldered Kite**, **Wedge-tailed Eagle** and **Nankeen Kestrel**. **Australian Wood Ducks** and **Pacific Black Ducks** were seen at tree hollows. A group of **White-winged Choughs** had 3 young in the nest. A pair of **Buff-rumped Thornbills** was feeding two almost fully grown fledglings. A total of 54 species (a high number for this survey) was recorded, with 35 species at sites and another 19 in between sites.

Newline

Sue Lashko did the survey on 3 October in perfect conditions, early fog clearing quickly to a still, fine morning. It was a wonderfully quiet morning with just 2 planes taking off, no trucks driving to the quarry and very little traffic on Pialligo Avenue - one benefit of the Covid lockdown! It was definitely a day for gumboots, with some paddocks resembling a swamp, dams

more expansive than ever and lots of ground surface water. Some migrants had arrived including 3 **Sacred Kingfishers**, **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, **White-throated Gerygone**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Dusky Woodswallow** and **Noisy Friarbird**. Parrots and cockatoos dominated with **Rainbow Lorikeets** recorded in six of the nine sites, and 37 **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and 8 **Little Corellas** having a shouting match in one site. Apart from the migrants, other highlights included a **Brown Quail**, 3 **Varied Sittellas** and a flock of 14 **Double-barred Finches**, the biggest flock seen there for many years. A total of 49 species was recorded.

Jerrabomberra West NR

Jenny Bounds did the survey in the second week of October, waiting until ground conditions allowed easy access after rain. There were **Dusky Woodswallows** and **Tree Martins** at the usual sites in the Blakely's Red Gum area, quite a few **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** moving around, **Pallid and Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos**, and the usual early spring migrants contributing to a total of 41 species.

Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson surveyed on Friday 24 September, a very quick whip around to comply with exercise restrictions. There was nothing spectacular to report. Three sites had one **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** each and small numbers were observed elsewhere on the Hill. One site had 10 species and two others had seven each. Breeding observations were **Australian Magpies** feeding young, **Weebills** carrying food, **Rainbow Lorikeets** and **Galahs** by hollows, and an **Australian Raven** sitting on a nest high in a tree, which was swaying wildly in the wind which had sprung up by the end of the morning. In all, 20 species were recorded during the site counts, with a further 9 species seen or heard elsewhere on the Hill, which is less than the average for spring survey.

Naas Sites

Julie McGuiness did the survey on this rural leasehold south of Tharwa on 6 October, a mild, calm clear morning. Substantial rain over the previous week had again left the ground very wet underfoot, dams full, and creek lines and gullies running. As with the previous season's survey, the grassy understorey was still prolific, although the waist-high massed Saffron Thistles at one site had died down and collapsed. As expected, species diversity had increased with the return of some summer migrants such as **White-throated Gerygone**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **Dusky Woodswallow** and **Tree Martin**, and some residents had reappeared, eg **Diamond Firetail**. Forty three species were observed in total, with 29 of these within sites. Breeding was well in evidence, with **White-throated Gerygone**, **Varied Sittella** and **Magpie-lark** seen on nests, as well as **Galah** (nestling seen poking its head out of a hollow) and **Red-rumped Parrot** (two separate pairs seen at hollows). Other species of note were **Jacky Winter** (two separate birds seen), **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** and **Collared Sparrowhawk**.



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New Places: October 2021

Sandra Henderson

Moncrieff Ponds

Where: Harold Blair Cr, and Bronhill St, Moncrieff (obviously a musical area!)

There are two ponds a few hundred metres apart, with a channel between them – there are a couple of places where one can cross from one side to another between them. Both ponds, and the channel between, are very reedy, but there is some open water in each.

I managed to see 30 species, with highlights being the obvious presence of quite a few **Golden-headed Cisticolas**, a lot of splashing as two **Eurasian Coots** had a little disagreement, and an **Australian Wood Duck** family with three youngsters. While several of the Cisticolas sat up on grass stalks, many more were calling from long grass areas. There were also a large number of very active **Australian Reed Warblers**.



Eurasian Coots

Sandra Henderson

Taylor West Pond

Where: Ken Herde Cr, Taylor

This is a pond with a large area of open water, but not a lot of water birds. The three waterhens were present, as was a pair of **Pacific Black Ducks**. Still a new area, with some homes still under construction, so may become more bird-attractive as gardens develop.

Bicentennial Park, Queanbeyan

Where: I parked at the end of Gilmore Place, but you can also enter off Crest Park Parade.

A really interesting park. It's very large, and has two children's playgrounds, but much of the area is native bush. The birdlife was dominated by **Noisy Friarbirds**, and I found only 17 species. For me the highlight was finding three native orchids. Hundreds of Wax Lip Orchid, Late Leopard Orchids, and Tiger Orchids (and I see that many more species have been reported to Canberra Nature Map).

Bicentennial Trail, Hawker

Where: end of Dungowan St, Hawker

With quite a few other birders, I've been undertaking stationary surveys for **Superb Parrots**, as part of the project being run by Anthony Overs. They fly regularly between the Molonglo Valley and Belconnen, passing over the Trail at this point. Apart from counting the Superb Parrots, several of us are keeping bird lists, and I've recorded **Black-shouldered Kite**, **Nankeen Kestrel**, **Satin Bowerbird**, **Brown Goshawk** and many **Rainbow Lorikeets**, among others.

Monash Park

Where: Sturdee Cr, Monash

Just one suburb away. But I had never visited this park. It is frequented by runners, cyclists and dog walkers, but there are some large trees. I have never seen so many **Noisy Friarbirds**, or such aggressive ones. Every single other species was being chased away, and there was not a single small bird to be seen. One **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** was flying with a friarbird holding onto its tail, and two others also in pursuit. I'll have to visit in a different season! Right on the edge of the park a **Pied Currawong** was on a nest, but lying low to avoid being noticed by the bullies.

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 Christie
L Burrows
A Johnston
P Eliason
M Searle
D Meredith

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for December 2021 edition:

Wednesday 24 November 2021

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

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

or

c/- The Secretary COG,

PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608

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

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

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