



# Gang-gang

**FEBRUARY 2022**

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

## FEBRUARY MEETING

**Wednesday 9 February 2021  
7.30 pm – Virtual meeting**

Please note that, with the current COVID omicron variant outbreak, the February COG meeting will be held on-line. COG members and guests will be able to log into the meeting through the same regular webinar link for COG Members Meetings: <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.

The first presentation will be by the Blitz coordinator **Nicki Taws** who will provide the **preliminary findings of the 2021 annual COG Bird Blitz**.

The main presentation will be by **Ross Crates**, a Postdoctoral Fellow at the ANU's Fenner School of Environment and Society, giving 'An update on Regent Honeyeaters from the Difficult Bird Research Group'.

In the talk Ross will discuss Regent Honeyeater songs and the loss of their song culture, the recent study on population viability analysis and what we will need to do to save Regent Honeyeaters from extinction, as well as the results of Noisy Miner management in some key Regent Honeyeater breeding areas.

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

While not as wet as November, regular rainfall events continued over the 9 weeks from 24 November covered by this column. There has also been some warmer weather between these, and as a result there has been excellent growth, including in the paddocks many of which are still quite green with very rank growth. As detailed below the wetter conditions have led to many of the inland spring/summer migrants leaving the COG Area of Interest (Aoi) over the period, with few individuals remaining in January. The same also applies to the rarer waders attracted to the filling of Lakes George and Bathurst in October/November. However, as may be expected, it has been a very good breeding season, with several examples of species which have not or only rarely bred in the COG Aoi before.

The surprise species over the period was the two **Tawny Grassbirds** first found by Peter Christian and reported by Christine D on 13 January. The birds were seen and heard both from the NSW and ACT side of West Belconnen Pond.



Blue-billed Duck

Lyndon Howe

**Everyone welcome**

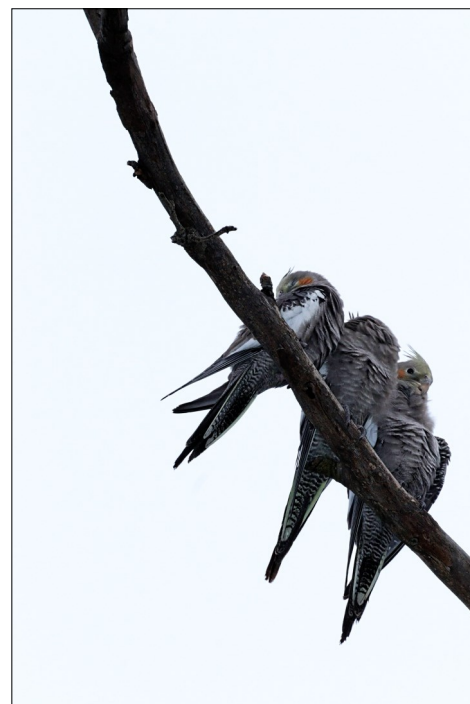
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## Summary/analysis of the past month and what to watch out for this month

Christine noted they would periodically fly up, then land on a new patch of the long grass, then usually disappear from sight. Only around half a dozen others managed to observe and photograph/video them up to 14 January before they seemed to move on, despite many birders looking for them. COG's 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR) lists this species as a rare vagrant, first recorded in the COG Aol in 2016-2017, and with 2 records for that reporting year, both at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, as were all the earlier records. Checking eBird confirms that these are the first records since 11 November 2018.

Another species which created great interest over the period was the **Cockatiels** at Campbell Park. At first these birds proved to be very elusive. Following the first report of two there on 11 November by Christine D, and despite many birders looking for them, there were only 5 other records in early December, until 31 December when Rainer Rehwinkel reported he could repeatedly hear them from the same spot but could not find 2 birds over 20 minutes. He wondered whether it may be worth investigating these birds further for signs of nesting, given their fidelity to the particular site. This proved to be prescient with, after several other observers finding up to 5 birds, on 3 January Patrick Cox posting photographs of up to 6 birds, of which 4 were young, and most importantly including a photo of an adult feeding a young bird.

This breeding event was subsequently confirmed by many other observers, with the last report being of 4 birds on 20 January. In all the excitement the importance of it seems to have been overlooked, in that the BIRD INFO on the COG website shows absolutely no breeding data at all for the **Cockatiel** up to the end of June 2018. I can recall none since, so this represents the first breeding record for the COG Aol (the 2018-2019 ABR lists it as a rare non-breeding visitor). In my view the site fidelity clearly shows they bred in or near Campbell Park rather than having flown in from elsewhere. Very interesting too is that this inland species bred locally during a wet summer, and not a dry one as you might expect.



Cockatiel

Ben Milbourne

A third species which created much interest was the pair of **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** first reported by Willian Tarrant and Scott MacArthur on 24 December, who indicated this was the first time they had seen this species in 35 years of birding there. On 27 December they were found and photographed by 5 further observers feeding in *Allocasuarina* (likely *verticillata*), and on one occasion sleeping there, but they have not been reported since.

Of the rarer spring/summer migrant species there was just a single report of the **Channel-billed Cuckoo** in Cook on 18 December. It certainly hasn't been a good spring/summer to observe this species, with only 2 records to date in the COG Aol. Similarly, despite the wet summer, the only reports for the **White-throated Needletail** have been of 10 over Swinger Hill on 2 December, 10 over Old Mill Rd in Namadgi NP on 1 January, and 7 over Kambah on 7 January. For the related **Fork-tailed Swift** there have been separate reports only for single birds over Sutton and Kowen Forest areas on 16 January. So please keep an eye out for them, as one would expect many more reports in the prevailing wet conditions.

In December the **Horsfield's Bushlark** was reported from 4 locations only, all to the east of the ACT. In contrast it has since been reported from only 2 locations in or close to the ACT border, up to 7 birds at Parkwood Road Wallaroo from 3-12 January, and single birds at West Belconnen Pond from 14-18 January. Likewise, the **Brown Songlark** was reported from 7 locations to the east and northeast of the ACT during December, but from only 3 locations in 2022, single birds from Majura Rd Pialligo on 3 January, Wollorogang Rd on 22 January and Mills Cross Hoskinstown on 24 January. It seems that most of these two species have moved away with the continuing wet conditions.

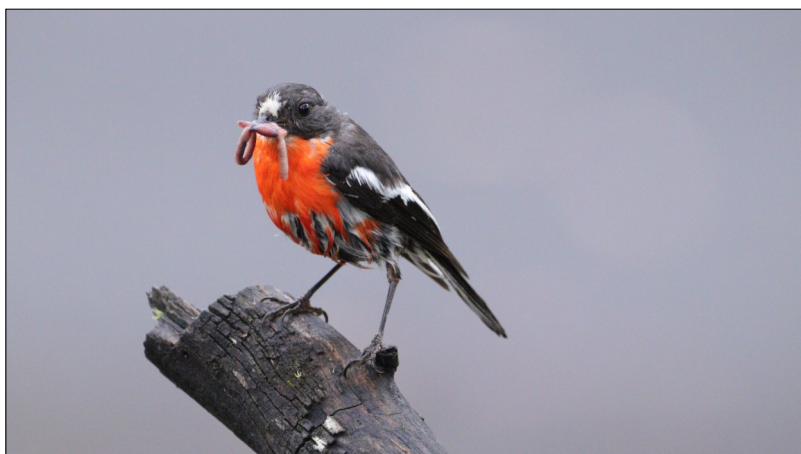
This also seems to apply to **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallows** for which there were no reports at all in December, and with only a report for a single bird of the former on 23 January from Campbell Park. Likewise, the **Pallid Cuckoo** was reported from only around 9 locations in December, but with one breeding record (on 7 December John Layton watched a pair of **White-plumed Honeyeaters** ferrying food to a young **Pallid Cuckoo**). However, from the eBird database there seem to

have been no reports so far in January; both months are very much down from the 39 locations in October. There has been a similar trend for the **White-winged Triller** which was reported from around 22 locations in December, but only 11 in January, so different from a couple of summers ago when it was dry. So please keep an eye out for the above species, as it does appear numbers of some of them still staying the COG Aol are lower in late summer of 2022 due to the wet inland conditions.

However, this doesn't seem as clear for the other inland cuckoo species, the **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, recorded from 14 locations in December, and 12 in January. Also the **Rufous Songlark** was reported from around 25 locations in December, but still from 24 locations so far in January. On 21 January I was surprised to find at least 6 birds in a 500 m stretch on the southwest side of Cooleman Ridge, in particular that some were still giving pretty much their full call as they were chasing each other around, alighting on perches in small trees or diving into the rank grass (they seemed to arrive there in late November).

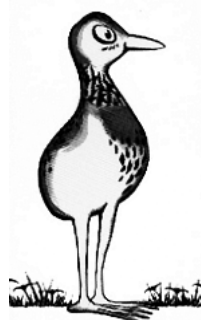
The remaining spring/summer migrants seem all still to be well established in this wet season. This includes the often-elusive **Common Cicadabird** which, while reported from only 3 locations in December, has been reported from 9 locations in January, all in the mountains to the west, except for one in Tallaganda State Forest. The **Eastern Koel** is certainly very well established, as it has been reported from around 110 locations so far in January. This includes several areas in which they were unusually quiet up to early December, such as my local patch of Chapman/Rivett, where they have been very conspicuous since, right up to the time of writing.

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 4 peri-urban (of a total of around 12) locations in January, 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 11 rural locations in January, all but two from west of the Murrumbidgee River. Both are surprisingly low numbers of locations compared with those in late spring.



Flame Robin

Ben Milbourne



## Australian Ornithological Services P/L

PO Box 385  
South Yarra 3141  
Victoria

Mob: 04173 10200

[enquiries@philipmaher.com](mailto:enquiries@philipmaher.com)

Good birding, good food

## 2022

### The Gulf Country

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

### Atherton Tablelands

30 May — 4 June 2022  
Cairns, Chambers Wildlife Lodge &  
Kingfisher Park

### 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, Erdunda, Marla

### 2022 Plains-wanderer Weekends

26 & 27 November 2022  
Check website for other weekends

## 2023 tours

**Atherton Tablelands & Iron Range**  
May 2023

**Atherton Tablelands & Iron Range**  
June 2023

**Pilbara WA**  
July 2023 (filling)

Contact Patricia Maher for itineraries.

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



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The **Rose Robin** has been reported from 4 locations so far in January, all of them in the Brindabellas/Namadgi NP, but again there were no reports of the **Pink Robin** during the period. The **Crescent Honeyeater** has been reported from 9 locations so far in January, all on or west of the Murrumbidgee River, except for one in Tallaganda State Forest. There have been no reports of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** over the period.

On 1 January Michael Lenz posted that the substantial re-filling of Lake George had allowed observers to watch waterbirds on the western shore of the lake from several vantage points, for the first time in many years. He included a summary table of 23 species of waterbirds recorded on 29 and 30 December including 1069 **Australian Shelducks**, 2355 **Grey Teal** and 199 **Hoary-headed Grebe** with 5 nests. Despite this the rarer waders reported there in October/November and at Lake Bathurst seem to have moved on, as noted in the following discussion of the “unusual” birds.

Again, **Plumed Whistling Ducks** were reported only from Trucking Yard Lane Dam with a maximum of 14 on 12 December, and a single **Freckled Duck** was reported only from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 15 January. In contrast **Australian Shelducks** have been reported from 17 locations to the east and northeast of Canberra so far during January, many from either side of Lake George (see also above). **Blue-billed Ducks** were reported from 6 locations in December, and 6 so far in January, while **Musk Ducks** were also reported from 6 locations in December, and 7 locations so far in January, not including the Sanctuary at Tidbinbilla NR.

**Stubble Quail** were reported from an amazing 55 locations in December, and from around 85 locations so far in January; the long grass is clearly favouring their breeding (and calling). In contrast **Brown Quail** were reported from 10 locations in December, and 14 locations so far in January. The **Painted Button-quail** has been reported from 13 locations so far in January, similar to the number in November, but again **Little Button-quail** have not been reported over the period. During January up to 5 **Great Crested Grebes** have been reported from just 2 locations, up to 5 birds at Cotter Dam (including 1 recently fledged young on 2 January) and the Southern Morass of Lake Bathurst.

During the period there was a report of a single **White-headed Pigeon** in Duffy on 3 December and reports of 2 **Peaceful Doves** at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 11 December, as well as one from Bibaringa on 8 January. A **Diamond Dove** was reported by several observers from Yankee Hat car park and track in Namadgi NP between 20-25 January. This is not far from Glendale Depot, the only location from which it was reported in 2021. It continues to amaze me how far south in the COG Aol this bird has recently been found; the nearest location for 2022 so far is west of Albury around 200 km away.

A single **Red-capped Plover** was reported only by Luke Downey from Anderson VC Rest Area on the west side of Lake George on 1 December. Up to 5 **Banded Lapwings** were reported from 2 locations on the west side of Lake George up to early December, with 22 reported from Wollagorang Rd on 24 December, being the most recent record for the COG Aol. It is interesting that these species seemed to have moved away compared with the higher counts in November. This is underlined by no reports of the **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** during the period.



Intermediate Egret

*Victor Braguine*

The **Common Sandpiper** has continued to be reported from Isabella Pond but with a single report from Upper Stranger Pond across Isabella Drive on 15 January. However, there was also a report of a single bird from the small silt trap south of Sea Scouts Hall on the eastern side of Lake Tuggeranong on 21 January. This is around 800 m south of Village Creek inflow at the top end of Lake Tuggeranong from where a bird was reported several times in October, and again raises the question, does a single bird move between these areas, or are there two or more birds?

**Red-necked Avocets** also seem to have moved away, with the only report during the period being 12 birds from Wheatley VC Rest Area on the western side of Lake George on 1 December. There has also been only one report of the **Australian Little Bittern**, one calling at West Belconnen Pond on 11 December. A **Caspian Tern** was reported from Fyshwick turf farm on 2 January. An **Intermediate Egret** was reported by a number of observers from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR from 9-11 January.

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**Barn Owls** were reported from 2 locations during December, and also from suburban Hawker and the Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre in January. This suggests there are still some mice around, supported by the **Black-shouldered Kite** still being reported from over 10 locations in December and 14 spots in January, and the **Nankeen Kestrel** from several locations so far in January. However, during the period a **Spotted Harrier** was reported only from Coppins Crossing Rd on 2 January.

Up to 3 **Azure Kingfishers** have been reported only from Cotter Bend over the period. No **Little** or **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** were reported during the period, though 2 **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from Holt and Hawker on 12 and 23 January respectively.

Up to 3 **Scarlet Honeyeaters** were reported only from the ABNG, mainly in late November, with just 2 records in December and none so far in January. A **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** was reported from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 6 December, and up to 2 **Singing Honeyeaters** have returned to Franklin Pond area from where they were reported between 4-10 January. A **Little Friarbird** was reported from Mt Taylor NR on 29 December. However, there were no reports of the **Blue-faced Honeyeater** or the **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** in the period.

On 18 January Mark Clayton posted that former work colleagues had seen a small flock of **Zebra Finches** at the large pond (not the wetlands) behind Birrale Scout Hall on the corner of Gungahlin Drive and The Valley Way in Gungahlin that morning. Their initial count was at least six (one female and the rest young birds), but there could quite possibly have been a few more. They didn't have their camera gear with them and by the time they returned the birds could not be relocated. Mark noted that there is quite a bit of suitable habitat in the whole general area so it might be worth keeping an eye out for them. However, they have not been reported since.

Of the birds I had been asking readers to keep a special lookout for in 2021, the **Jacky Winter** was reported only from Namadgi NP Visitors Centre, and from a rural lease south of Tharwa in December, and only from the former in January. However, importantly the three birds reported by Tod Spencer at the former on 27 December included a breeding record of an adult and two recently fledged younger ones (very clear from the photos). There were reports of up to 2 **Hooded Robin** from the known spot at the Naas Rd at Apollo Road between 9 and 22 January, but again there has been a breeding report by Kym Bradley at her patch south of Canberra from where she reported one juvenile on 4 December, and another two on 16 January. The **Restless Flycatcher** was reported from 4 locations during December, and from a further 5 spots during January with 3 of them, Mullion, Nelanglo TSR and Glendale Depot, being the same.

The wet conditions have continued to provide a very good breeding season with plenty of reports coming to my attention, particularly in December. Apart from the **Pallid Cuckoo**, **Hoary-headed Grebe**, **Great-crested Grebe**, **Jacky Winter** and **Hooded Robin** events noted above, some highlights follow in more detail below:

- As an example of the excellent breeding conditions on 12 January Anthony Overs posted that it was absolute chaos in his Hawker yard with so many small birds about, and breeding showing no sign of slowing down with the abundant food resources available. **Eastern Spinebills** had just fledged a third distinct brood (based on plumage changes), though he had yet to find an active nest. A pair of **Brown Thornbills** had had two broods, and a pair of **White-browed Scrubwrens** one. One pair of **Superb Fairy-wrens** had just turned up with their second brood of two young, with another two young fledged about three weeks ago. **Silvereyes** all of a sudden seemed to reappear, having doubled their numbers overnight with so many young. Of the larger birds, the **Red Wattlebird** pair had had two broods of two. **Crested Pigeons** lost a second nest, in a different location to that of the first nest, and were now frantically rebuilding in the original location. Families of **Eastern** and **Crimson Rosellas**, and **Red-rumped Parrots** had been visiting the baths in the front yard and the apple tree out the back. A pair of **Australian Ravens** and their two young had been around for quite some time, with one of the adults wailing in the most over-the-top, melodramatic fashion, while the two kids did not stop talking (I've had a very similar experience at my place)!
- Concerning the **Pied Stilt** chicks that had hatched by 23 November, on 26 November Shorty reported that after the heavy overnight rain only one nest had been built high enough, and the other two were under water with no sign of the chicks. Kym Bradley then posted some lovely images indicating that the four chicks were moved by an adult the day before. She had watched the process from a different area to others, and they had gone down on the office side towards Cygnet hide. The parents would fly a little, make some noise a couple of times and the chicks would follow, stopping for a quick snack on the grass area. The same process was followed to get them across the body of water. Kym later posted that one was collecting grass roots, etc, numerous times and taking them back to the nest, she thought maybe to extend the nest sensing the change in weather. Steve Read reported that one nest was still occupied in the rain at 9:30 that morning, and on 27 November Deb and Rod Ralph were able to see (and photograph) 1 egg in



**Pink-eared Duck**

*Ben Milbourne*

the only nest left. However, there are no further comments or records on eBird past 28 November, so the final outcome of both the chicks and the remaining nest is unclear.

- On 22 December Kim Farley followed up her sighting of a couple of days before at the ephemeral wetland next to the Majura Parkway, and with her telescope could confirm two **Pied Stilt** nests with sitting birds there. On 31 December she noted there were still the two occupied nests with sitting birds, but the most advanced breeding information I can find on eBird is Christine D's record of 4 January that there was at least one bird on nest, possibly two, and also a young bird. On 25 January Kim informed me that she had stopped by there a couple of days before and there were no sitting birds at the places where the two nests had been. There were two adult birds stalking about but the distance and heat haze

meant that she couldn't see any potential baby birds. So they may, or may not, have lost their young. However, the above does represent breeding of **Pied Stilts** for the second wet year in a row, following the first breeding records for the ACT last year.

- On 8 December Archer Callaway drew attention to a probable **Pink-eared Duck** nest along the inundated fence line along Lake Rd. From his observations on 4 December Kevin Windle was able to confirm the nest, which appeared to have very small downy ducklings in it. This adds an important nest with young to the recent breeding records for this species. On 5 January Julie Clark saw her fourth **Hardhead** brood of the season. This was the third one at the Valley Ave Ponds, the other being a new brood of 10 chicks at Mulligans Flat, seen on New Year's Day. Again, these are important additions to the recent (2020-2021) breeding records for this species
- Archer also drew my attention to his roost count of 530 **Australian White Ibis** on the islands in Gungahlin Pond on 15 November. This included some nests with young, noting that there is limited breeding information for this species in the BIRD INFO on the COG website. Archer also noted 48 **Little Pied Cormorants** with recently fledged young, and 75 **Little Black Cormorants** with occupied nests, so this is another important breeding site of the few for these species in the ACT.
- Last, but certainly not least the **Eastern Koel** is having another very good breeding season with, at the time of writing, 54 fledglings of which I am aware, slightly below last season at this time. This includes one at Murrumbateman and 11 fledglings in my local patch of Chapman/Rivett, the earliest by far that I have had this many, and quite unexpected given how quiet Koels were when most of the eggs would have had to be laid in the second half of November. It remains to be seen whether the record fledgling numbers of last year will be reached. Recalling that the bulk of these were reported from 1 February, please keep an ear/eye out for them and I would be very grateful if you can report any observations to me.

On the evening of 25 January Archer Callaway observed a group of about 30 **Red Wattlebirds** moving through at Shepherds Lookout. He noted it was an odd time of year to see this (perhaps they were escaping from attention of the Koels?). Since early January **Common Mynas** have again been roosting in my neighbour's ornamental pears, gathering beforehand in another neighbour's gum from where at least 70 birds have been counted as they fly into the roost site. Given how few I see during the day they must be coming in from a very wide catchment.

So please watch out for the last of the spring/summer migrants mentioned above, particularly the inland ones and the **White-throated Needletail** and the **Fork-tailed Swift**, and for any late summer breeding activity. Please also continue to keep a special look out for the **Restless Flycatcher**, **Jacky Winter** and



**Eastern Koel**

*Shorty*



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**Hooded Robin;** the continued 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.

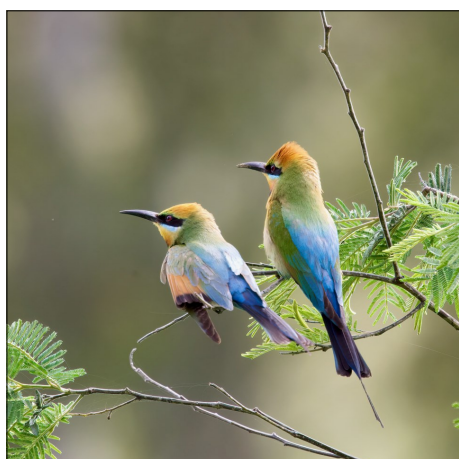
Finally, to all readers, please keep safe and comply with the remaining health restrictions while birding during the lifted COVID restrictions but still rampaging disease.

*Jack Holland*

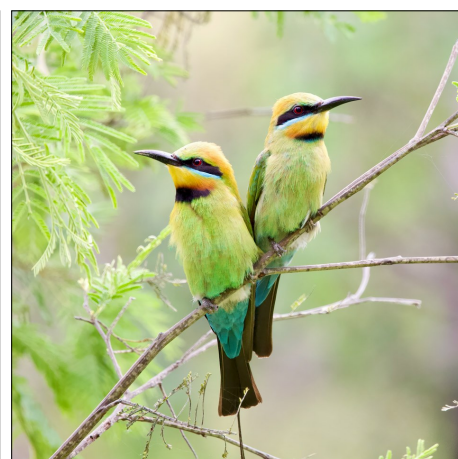
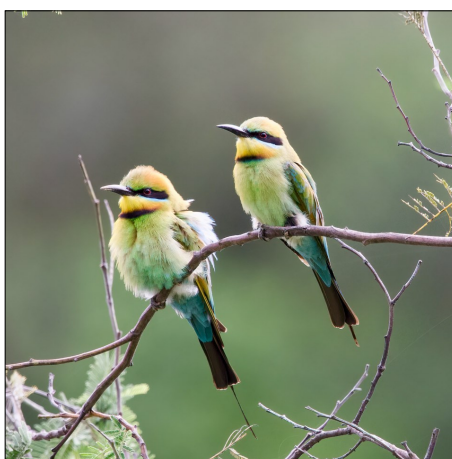
## Woodland Bird Monitoring Project

### Site coordinator needed for Majura Training Area (MTA) sites

COG undertakes quarterly surveys at the MTA, (Dept of Defence managed land), as part of its long-term woodland bird monitoring program. We are seeking someone to take on the role of site coordinator for MTA (as Paul Fennell intends to step down, after many years in this role). There are 8 sites, which are dispersed across the large MTA, accessed by vehicle on a network of gravel roads, most of which are well maintained. Most sites are close to and easily accessed from gravel roads (park and walk in 50-100 metres), and one is accessed from a dirt sub-track. Someone with a large 4-wheel drive vehicle is required, and also good bird recognition skills. Due to the size of the area, two people are needed to cover the sites over about 3-4 hours; the second person is available to continue assisting with the surveys. When the quarterly surveys come up, there is an arrangement for the site coordinator to contact the MTA for a suitable date to survey (when no firing on the range!). Please contact Jenny Bounds if you might be interested in discussing this role: ph 62887802.



**Rainbow Bee-eater** (Tharwa Sandwash)



*Victor Braguine*

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## Committee News

The COG committee The COG committee met by Zoom on 20 January for the first meeting of 2022.

Given the ongoing levels of COVID infection in the ACT community, the committee has decided that the February members' meeting will be held virtually. The committee will continue to assess the situation ahead of each month's meeting. Check the website, chatline and Gang-gang for information.

The committee's submission to the Review of the *Murrumbidgee River Corridor Management Plan 1998* can be viewed here – <http://canberrabirds.org.au/conservation-2/cog-conservation-strategy/>

The committee is also preparing a submission about the proposed development of part of Bluetts Block – see [https://www.planning.act.gov.au/development\\_applications/da\\_assessment/environmental\\_assessment/exemption\\_from\\_requiring\\_an\\_eis\\_s211/denman-prospect-2-estate](https://www.planning.act.gov.au/development_applications/da_assessment/environmental_assessment/exemption_from_requiring_an_eis_s211/denman-prospect-2-estate). Submissions are due by 10 February 2022 and COG members may wish to make their own submissions.

Neil Hermes *President*      Alison Mackerras *Minutes Secretary*

## COG's cogs - No 7

A new year means it's time to meet a new cog, and to start 2022 we get to meet former COG president, Paul Fennell.

Paul is another long-time COG member, having joined the group in the early 1990s. He caught the birding bug after taking part in a bird observation course conducted by McComas Taylor. Like so many people who join COG, Paul thought it would be a casual way to see some birds and meet some like-minded people, but he was quickly drawn deeper into the group. Maybe foolishly he agreed to be Vice-President of the COG Committee in 1993. Three short years later he was running the show.

Since then, Paul has taken on a variety of roles within the group. He took over management of the general bird database in 1997, as well the Woodland Survey Database, starting an arrangement that went on for over 20 years.

Part of this role was to ensure that the required information for each Annual Bird Report (ABR) was compiled for the authors of the various species reports. In the beginning, this information was in a simple format, where sighting details were printed out on reams of paper that were presented to each author, who then interpreted the print-out to create a report on the status of each species for that year. Gradually, though, the ABR evolved into its present form.

In 2007 Paul took over as editor of the ABR and started contributing as an author on a number of species including swifts, kingfishers, robins, whistlers, flycatchers, larks, pipits and swallows.

Paul also took the lead in compiling the first edition of the *Birds of Canberra Gardens* that was published in 2000. The proceeds from sales provided a significant contribution to COG's income over the following years. He was also editor of the second edition in 2009, now sadly out of print.

From 1998 to the present, Paul has contributed to the COG Woodland bird survey by taking on ownership of the survey sites at the Majura Firing Range.

In 2019, Paul's outstanding contribution to COG was recognised when he was awarded the Steve Wilson Medal.

### *Acknowledgements*

Nathan Finger and Paul Fennell



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# Future Field Trips

## COG Trips

Each participant must sign a COG Field Trip Registration Form at the start of each trip and before proceeding on the trip which acknowledges the participant's responsibilities (wording follows). An Emergency Contact Name and Number are required.

"I declare that I am capable of undertaking the trip having discussed with the Trip Leader any limitations I have (e.g. medications, physical), assessed the risks to myself and my property, and ensured that I am adequately equipped.

I will follow the instructions of the Field Trip Leader, and advise them before moving away from the group."

Changes to trips are notified on the COG chatline <http://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/discussion-email-list/> and trips page of COG website <http://canberrabirds.org.au/category/trips/>.

A reminder that COG has a long-standing policy to give preference to members for field trips that can accommodate only a limited number of people.

Be Covid safe on COG field trips:

Maintain social distancing of 1.5 metres

Maintain hand hygiene

Wear a mask in shared cars if carpooling (Note: carpooling is voluntary)

Do NOT attend if you have tested positive for Covid, have been a close contact within the past 7 days, or have any Covid, cold or flu symptoms.

### 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 (masks required when sharing a car). Contribution to drivers: \$10. Note: carpooling is voluntary.

**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](mailto: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.

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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](mailto: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.

### Wednesday 16 February - Honeysuckle Creek

We'll explore the old Tracking Station area as well as the campground. **Meet** at the Tracking Station site at 8.30am. To get to Honeysuckle Creek, drive out on Naas Rd from Tharwa, and turn right onto Apollo Rd.

**Bring:** hat, sunscreen, sturdy shoes. This will be an easy outing, with a bit of history thrown in!

**Please register** with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com) with your name and mobile number, and name and number for an emergency contact.

### Sunday 20 February – Mt Ginini

**This trip replaces the November trip which was cancelled due to wet weather.**

**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](mailto:chowchilla29@yahoo.com)

### Saturday 26 February – Forde Creek and ponds

**This has been a good spot for rails and crakes in previous years.**

**Directions:** Turn off Horse Park Road into Mulligans Flat Road between Forde and Bonner. (Ignore any signs to Mulligans Flat itself. Go into the actual, new Mulligans Flat Road). Turn right into Handbury Way. Immediately to your right is the smallish Linear Park. We will meet there at 8.00am. Park in a street there somewhere. The Creek is flowing at present but there can be too much flow if it rains heavily the previous day. Depending on the amount of action in Forde Creek, we will investigate other nearby urban wetlands. That decision will be made on the day so any further directions will be provided then.

**Register** with John Harris at [john170840@gmail.com](mailto:john170840@gmail.com) with your name, mobile number and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact, no later than Thursday 24 February.

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## Sunday 6 March – Tin Hut Dam, Googong

**This trip replaces the November trip which was cancelled due to Covid.**

**Meet** at 7.30am in the Spotlight carpark in Queanbeyan to organise carpooling (which is voluntary); masks should be worn in shared cars. The road to Tin Hut Dam is unsealed, and is rough in some sections. We'll be walking around Tin Hut Dam and in the surrounding woodland. It is 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, morning tea, sunscreen, hat, sensible footwear.

**Numbers** limited to 16.

**Registration** is essential, no later than Friday 4 March. Email: [Lkmanderson@hotmail.com](mailto:Lkmanderson@hotmail.com) with your name, mobile number, and an emergency contact name and number.

Liam Manderson

## Sunday 13 March – Kama Nature Reserve

**Description:** Kama Nature Reserve is on the western side of William Hovell Drive. The walk down to the Molonglo River is an easy walk, sloping gently downhill on the way there and uphill on the way back. Sixty-two species have been recorded there in the month of March, including **Speckled Warbler, Western Gerygone** and **Brown Falcon**.

**eBird hotspots:** Kama Nature Reserve

**Meeting place:** meet in the carpark of Hawker College opposite 38 Murranji St, Hawker (note there are 2 other carparks). From there we will carpool, with masks to be worn in shared cars. The reason for this is that the Kama car park is on the opposite side of the road to the reserve, is very small and dangerous to approach. There is 'no right turn' when travelling from the southeast (city).

**Meeting time:** 8:15am.

**Walking distance:** 5.4 kms

**End time (approx.):** 11:30am

**What to bring:** Water and morning tea, sunscreen, hat and sturdy shoes.

**Name of leader and contact details:** Please **register** with the leader, Lia Battisson by email to [liabattisson@grapevine.com.au](mailto:liabattisson@grapevine.com.au), providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Register **before 7pm on Friday 11 March 2022**. Numbers will be limited to 15.

## Friday 18 to Monday 21 March - Jervis Bay extended weekend

**This trip is fully booked.**

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](mailto:walter.goldie@gmail.com) to register your interest or for more information.

## Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 March – Eden pelagics

**Both trips are fully booked, with a waiting list. We hope to run more pelagic trips in October.**

## Sunday 3 April - Narrabundah Hill - morning outing

**Description:** This outing has again been timed for the autumn honeyeater migration season, with the northern and western boundaries of the reserve having some of the few currently known local migration routes. We will walk along these two boundaries, depending on conditions and the species seen, possibly along most of the western one, and we will either return by the same or a different path. This will be around 4 km on relatively flat ground. We will also look for other autumn birds such as the **Scarlet Robin** and mixed feeding flocks, or late departing summer migrants such as the gerygones.

**Meeting time:** This walk will start at **8:30 am** to maximise the opportunity to see the honeyeaters which generally come through late in the morning in early April (we saw over 2500 birds there at a similar timing in 2019).

**Meeting place:** Meet at the parking area and stile at the northeast end of the reserve, at the corner of Warragamba Avenue and Eucumbene Drive, Duffy. **Please note that the entry to this parking area is a little tricky, and is in fact about 25 metres**



## 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](http://neilhermes.com.au) or Norfolk Island Travel Centre  
[norfolkislandtravelcentre.com/event/norfolk-island-wildlife-heritage-tour](http://norfolkislandtravelcentre.com/event/norfolk-island-wildlife-heritage-tour)

past (on the Mount Stromlo side) the T-junction with Warragamba Avenue, and for those driving along Eucumbene Drive from Duffy involves a quite tricky 180 degrees turn, so please take care. Please take water and morning tea to have on the track.

**Name of leader and contact details:** To participate, please register with Jack Holland by email on [jandaholland@bigpond.com](mailto:jandaholland@bigpond.com) – please include your name, mobile number, and emergency contact name and number.

## Friday 15 to Monday 18 April – Easter camp to Round Hill NR

Advance notice that the Easter camp will be at Round Hill NR west of Lake Cargelligo. Note that this is a remote locality and there are no facilities so campers will need to take everything they need, including water.

**Numbers** limited to 16.

**Register** with Sue Lashko at [smlashko@gmail.com](mailto:smlashko@gmail.com) with your name, mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.



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

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Tel: 07 4094 1665

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

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# Field Trip Reports

## Sunday 28 November 2021 - Wamboin Brittle Gum Forest Reserve

David McDonald led 12 COG members in exploring this remnant Brittle Gum forest on the NSW side of the border at Wamboin, abutting the Kowen pine forest. Many of its tracks, with the recent rain, were running drainage lines, making it interesting underfoot both for birdwatchers and the Wamboin Trail Runners we met at frequent intervals.



COG members at Poppet Trig *Sandra Henderson*

During our 6.5km circuit walk up to and down from the Poppet Hill trig (at a chilly 900 metres), we observed 42 bird species. Highlights were good views of an active **Brush Cuckoo**, a pair of **Flame Robins**, a pair of **Sacred Kingfishers**, two **Satin Bowerbirds**, as well as four thornbill species (**Buff-rumped**, **Brown**, **Yellow** and **Striated**), six honeyeaters (**Yellow-faced**, **Brown-headed**, **New Holland**, **White-eared**, **Red Wattlebird**, **Eastern Spinebill**), five parrot species (**Galah**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**, **Australian King Parrot**, and **Eastern** and **Crimson Rosellas**) and two other cuckoos (**Horsfield's Bronze-** and **Fan-tailed**). We were rarely without the company

of vocal **Striated Pardalotes**, with Sandra Henderson, who intrepidly recorded our observations, noting 35. Other highlights were the wildflowers of course, including two orchid species.

Julie McGuiness

## Sunday 5 December 2021 - Rendezvous Creek

Eleven COGites rendezvoused at Rendezvous Creek car park on this cloudy morning, a dry one squeezed between the many wet days of November and December! The car park is on the Bobeyan Road in Namadgi National Park, some 7 km south of the Glendale picnic area. From there the delightful 2.5 km loop walk took us along mountain streams, beautiful Silurian granite boulders, woodland, forest, open grassy areas, and views to the Gudgenby area, to paraphrase the National Park map's description. Although a short walk, the fascinating landscape and wildflowers, along with the birding, meant that we spent more than two hours on the track. During that time 34 bird species were observed. They included five honeyeater species (**Yellow-faced**, **Fuscous**, **White-eared**, **White-naped**, and **Brown-headed**), and four of the ACT's five thornbill species (**Buff-rumped**, **Brown**, **Yellow-rumped**, and **Striated**). On the way home, some of the participants stopped off at the Glendale Depot where, over a period of 100 minutes, they observed 33 species including the **Rufous Whistler**, **Southern Whiteface**, **Diamond Firetail**, and **Red-browed Finch**. Many thanks to Sandra Henderson for organising and leading this field trip.

David McDonald



COG members at Rendezvous Creek

*Pat Duggan*

## Sunday 12 December 2021 - Capital Hill

A small group enjoyed a walk through the surprisingly extensive gardens around Parliament House. A flyover by a group of **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** was a nice start. Although we saw no unexpected species, we did manage 28 species and a couple of breeding records. The **Silver Gulls** which bred in the gardens last season were thwarted this year by netting over the pond gardens, but were in good numbers on the lawns.

Sandra Henderson

## Wednesday 15 December 2021 - Percival Hill

Sixteen members joined me for the December Wednesday Walk at Percival Hill. The highlight of the morning was a **Little Eagle**. A good range of woodland birds was observed. Several **Little Black Cormorants** and **Australian White Ibis**, flying to or from Gungahlin Pond, also added to our list of 30 species for the morning. A very quick look at the Pond before we went into Percival Hill revealed 29 **Black Swan**, and at least 60 **Australian White Ibis** at the island roost site.

Sandra Henderson





Nankeen Kestrel, Red-rumped Parrot, Leaden Flycatcher, Wood Duck, COG Members at Shepherds Lookout

Tee Tong Teo

## Sunday 16 January 2022 – Strathnairn to Shepherds Lookout

Due to road closures caused by fallen trees and bad road conditions the scheduled outing to Blundells Creek and Warks Roads was cancelled. Instead, the newly opened track from Strathnairn to the road leading to Shepherds Lookout was explored by 15 COG members and friends.

The 3.4 km, grade 3 track passes through the Ginninderry Conservation Corridor with lovely views of the Murrumbidgee River and the Brindabella Ranges beyond. With appropriate car shuffling it is possible to walk the track one way but we chose to walk the track there and back. The track passes through four vegetation type: grassland, open woodland, Callitris woodland and Burgan scrub, and two well-vegetated dams. For further details of the route see <https://www.ginninderry.org/strathnairn-to-shepherds-lookout-walking-track>

Sue Lashko and Chris Davey had walked the track a few days previously and recorded 34 bird species heading west and 35 species on the return for a total of 41 species. On the COG outing 46 species were recorded there and 19 species recorded on the return to give a total of 48 species or 54 species for the two outings.

During the COG outing we reported a **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, a **Brown Goshawk** and a **Nankeen Kestrel** with an **Australian Hobby** reported on the first visit. Surprisingly neither quail species was recorded, neither was the **Rufous Songlark** nor the **White-winged Triller** and honeyeaters were few and far between although the **Noisy Friarbird** dominated with no **Noisy Miner** recorded. Of the small species, **Yellow-rumped**, **Buff-rumped** and **Brown Thornbill**, **Weebill**, **Superb Fairy-wren**, **Double-barred Finch** and **Speckled Warbler** were all recorded.

For eBird lists of the COG outing see <https://ebird.org/australia/checklist/S100816515> and <https://ebird.org/australia/checklist/S100817298>.

Many thanks to Sue Lashko for arranging the outing and to Sandra Henderson for compiling the lists.

Chris Davey



### Glendale Depot, Wednesday 19 January

Nineteen members and guests joined me for a wander around Glendale Depot. The surprise bird of the outing was a **Latham's Snipe**, flushed not far from the depot compound. As is the case with many grassland areas at present, **Stubble Quail** were calling in good numbers, and several flushed as we walked through the grass. Two **Southern Whiteface** in a dead shrub near the dam were sighted by most of the group, and as we walked along a short section of the Brandy Flat track a number of **Australasian Pipits** came and perched on the nearby rocks. One of the target birds for the outing was the **Restless Flycatcher**, which had not been obvious around the gate when we set off. However, by the time we returned, Gregory located the bird which posed nicely. Also near the gate was a **Diamond Firetail** carrying grass, a **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, and the usual **Rufous Songlarks**. A **Dusky Woodswallow** feeding a couple of speckled fledglings was a nice ending to the morning.

Sandra Henderson



### Sunday 23 January – private property past Hoskinstown

It is always a pleasure to be invited to bird on private property that has not been farmed for some time, in this case, several decades. This property owned by COG member Peter Smith is close to Tallaganda National Park and, although the 2019-2020 fires caused the demise of quite a number of mature trees, many are recovering and the understorey is quite luxuriant after two wet years. Peter introduced us to the property with a quick slide show of the fire as it burnt towards his house (which survived), as well as the immediate aftermath with just burnt tree trunks and ash-covered ground devoid of understorey remaining.

Twelve members and visitors then enjoyed a slow wander through the property, hearing but not seeing **Superb Lyrebird**, and **Fan-tailed** and **Brush Cuckoos**, as well as **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, the latter heard by only one person. Six species of honeyeater were recorded, including **New Holland Honeyeaters** feeding in a beautiful patch of flowering Banksias. **Australian King Parrots** and a **Sacred Kingfisher** gave splendid views, but scrubwrens, fairywrens and thornbills were more challenging to see in the dense understorey. A total of 36 species was recorded.

Thanks to Peter for hosting us and John Brannan for assisting.  
Sue Lashko



New Holland Honeyeater, King Parrot, White-throated Treecreeper  
R. Mahesh Iyer



kingfisher park  
birdwatchers lodge

Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

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## January visit to Hobart (Nipaluna), Tasmania (Lutruwita)

In January 2022 I had the pleasure of revisiting my home state with my (fairly) newly-acquired bird ears and eyes (thanks COG). I visited many Tasmanian spots well-known to me, and looked at, listened to and contemplated those places in a way that I hadn't previously. I now hear elements of the same avian soundscape that greeted the ears of my forebears.

Hobart is quickly changing from the town that I've known since living there as a child with my Mum in the 1960s. What once were quiet rustic country roads are now busy with late model luxury cars and SUVs. It seems that there has been an influx of Mainlander and international interest and money. Moreover, I soon discovered that it is not only Mainland human beings that are thronging to the island, but also Mainland birds. I was amazed to see so many **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**, **Laughing Kookaburras** and **Rainbow Lorikeets** in places where I did not encounter them previously. **Kelp Gulls** too are flourishing, though I don't know where they've come from. These Australian native invaders, are adding to the already very healthy populations of exotic starlings, blackbirds, sparrows and **Spotted Doves** that have become well established in Tasmania, following 19<sup>th</sup> Century introduction by British acclimatisers.

This worrying trend notwithstanding, I did encounter many of Tasmania's lovely native birds. On the first morning, I could hear a **Brush Bronzewing** from the damp rivulet gully adjacent to my accommodation in South Hobart. In the same location, I could hear **Black Currawongs**, a bird that, for me, always evokes the Tasmanian highlands. These days, I know what a **Grey (Clinking) Currawong** sounds like, and I could hear these currawongs too, though it took me a few days to be able to differentiate the two currawong species by sight – both Tasmanian races being black.

I visited the iconic lagoons, forest and woodlands in and near to Hobart. Both Orielton and Gould's Lagoons have many significant birds, though care should be taken not to disturb the waders and one should not enter their habitat and only admire them from a distance. Great birds can be seen at woodland locations such as the Tinderbox Hills Track and the Risdon Brook Circuit. I finally took a photograph of a **Brush Bronzewing** at the latter location. One can find wet forest species, such as **Scrubtit** and **Pink Robin** on the lovely, but steep tracks on the eastern side of kunyani (Mt Wellington). On dusk, and at night, one can encounter nocturnal species, such as **Morepork** and **Tawny Frogmouth** at Hobart's lovely Waterworks Reserve. When visiting my ancestor 'Kitty' Hawkes' grave at the Hobart Cemetery, a **Swamp Harrier** landed nearby!

A highlight for me was a visit to the fantastic Inala property, and the three-hour tour there. What a joy, and how informative the Inala folk are. Thanks to the Inala team, I got to see a white morph **Grey Goshawk** and **Forty-spotted Pardalotes**. I cannot recommend this place and their conservation work highly enough.

In the short time that I was there, I completed 38 ebird lists and saw 106 species, testament to Hobart's still flourishing birdlife and helped by effective intel provided by Tasmanian birders. Conservationists, including Birdlife Tasmania, are doing great work in caring for Tasmanian birds, in a time of increasing challenge. I recommend cleaning your boots, gaiters and other equipment of any Mainland seeds or mud, donning a good N95 mask for the plane journey, and paying a visit to this nearby Garden of Eden.

David Dedenczuk



Brush Bronzewing, Scrubtit, Green Rosella

David Dedenczuk



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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](mailto: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.**

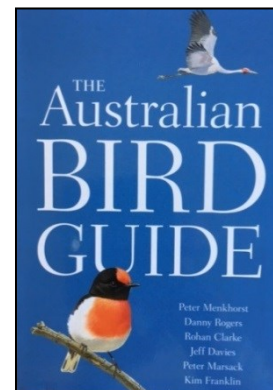
### The Australian Bird Guide

2<sup>nd</sup> 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).**

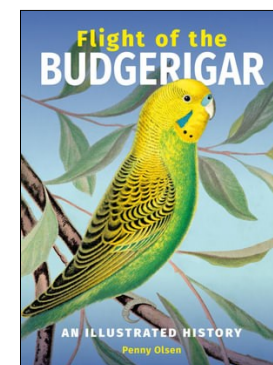


### Flight of the Budgerigar: An Illustrated History

*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).**

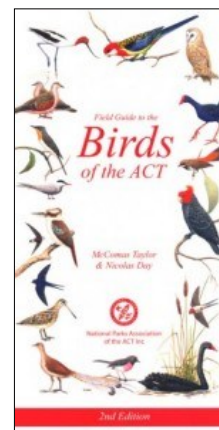


### Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT

*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.**





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# New Places: December 2021— January 2022

Sandra Henderson

## Private property on East Tallagandra Lane, Sutton

I visited this property with Sue, Lia and Bill, and it will probably be the location for a COG outing in the future. Over two and a half hours we listed 42 species, walking around a variety of habitat types. Highlights were a **Brush Cuckoo**, a **Horsfield's Bronze -Cuckoo**, good numbers of **White-throated Gerygones** and several **Leaden Flycatchers**.

## Mt Taylor Reserve – Pearce entry

I normally walk a loop on the Sulwood Drive side of Mt Taylor. A reported sighting of **Glossy Black Cockatoos** on the far side of the reserve prompted me to explore the area. I walked in from Parkhill St, where a track between the houses leads up to the start of the Summit Track (Zig Zag track according to some signs).

A walk through casuarinas revealed a few chewed cones, but no Glossies, although other birders were more successful. The track has recently been rebuilt, and there were quite a few walkers. There are many steps, but it is not a difficult walk, and the views are quite spectacular, so well worth the effort.

## Strathnairn to Shepherd's Lookout walking track

**Where:** the track starts next to the Link building and carpark. This is a new walking track, and COG had an outing there in mid-January. It's well worth a look.

The group managed to find 46 species on the walk out to the lookout. As we gathered at the carpark before the outing, a pair of **Nankeen Kestrels** sat in a tree across the road, giving us great views. A small dam along the track had a family of **Australasian Grebes**, a family of **Pacific Black Ducks**, and some **Australian Wood Ducks**. A large number of **Striated Pardalotes** were seen and heard, and hopefully everyone now knows those calls!

## Private property on Forbes Creek Rd, bordering Tallaganda National Park.

Another COG outing, to a member's property with a range of habitats, and which was affected by the bushfires two years ago. Peter started by showing us some photos and video of the fires, which approached to within metres of the house – very dramatic footage.

We spent over three hours wandering through the bush, listing 34 species. In some areas banksias are numerous, and had attracted **Eastern Spinebills**, and **New Holland**, **White-naped** and **White-eared Honeyeaters**. A **Common Bronzewing** was booming close by, and a **Brush Cuckoo** flew overhead. A **Superb Lyrebird** was heard near the house. We've already indicated a desire to return next spring to have another look around!

Sandra Henderson

This quote spotted at Tidbinbilla Sanctuary recently:

"I hope you love birds too. It is economical. It saves going to heaven." Emily Dickinson (1830-1886).

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## Woodland Surveys – late spring/early summer 2021 survey round

compiled by Jenny Bounds

The spring/early summer of 2021 had significantly higher rainfall than usual, with weeds and introduced grasses a problem for accessing some sites.

### Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds and the team completed the survey on Sunday 5 December. With no lockdown restrictions this survey, it was good to have an almost full team and be able to gather afterwards for morning tea, a chat and the usual ginger cake, and the weather was kind with a rainless morning, although cool and partly cloudy. Native grasses and forbs were abundant reflecting the good rainfall season, especially November rain.

A total of 57 species was recorded, a good number for a December survey. Highlights included: a **Bush Stone-Curlew** on the track outside the large dam fenced area, which then flew off; 3 sightings of **Common Bronzewing** (uncommon there); **Varied Sittella** with single birds at 2 sites; and 6 **Superb Parrots** on the western ridge. There were two sightings of **Grey Currawongs** in quite different locations, one a pair with 2 dependent young, suggesting there may be 2 pairs around the Sanctuary (the recent analysis of COG's long-term woodland data shows a declining trend for **Grey Currawong**, a consistent every year decline). There were plenty of active **Noisy Friarbirds** (and one nest observed), the usual spring migrants, but no cuckoos and no robins recorded. Two **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** were seen in several places or flying over, possibly the same birds, and a large flock of **Australian White Ibis** (27 birds) was moving around. There were a couple of records of **Striated Thornbills** with dependent young, and **Eurasian Coot** with young on the large dam. There were quite a few small birds moving around the northern end of the west ridge, where there is a survey site which is remote from the other sites and usually fairly quiet. **Grey Fantails**, **Weebills**, **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, **Striated Pardalotes**, **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Sacred Kingfishers** and **Leaden Flycatcher** were recorded there.

### Gooroo South NR

Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley did the last woodland survey for the year on 6 December. Conditions were fine, mild and partly cloudy with a variable breeze. It was boggy in places with gently flowing water in creek lines. Plant life was prolific with the usual mix of native and exotic forbs and grasses flowering. A total of 38 bird species was recorded during our ten minute counts and 54 overall.

Interesting records during site counts included a surprise **Rufous Fantail** at site 9, a **Stubble Quail** calling at site 1, **Brown Quail** heard at site 3, and 2 **Wedge-tailed Eagles** over site 5. Incidental records included **Diamond Firetail** (heard), **Speckled Warbler** and **Brown Goshawk**. Fewer species of summer migrants were around than usual for December; these included a very vocal **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Noisy Friarbirds**, **Mistletoebird**, **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones** and **Leaden Flycatcher**. Just a single **Rufous Whistler** was seen, with none heard. Breeding records included an **Eastern Rosella** nest in a spout in a fallen dead tree with 4 eggs visible, an active **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** nest and **Brown-headed Honeyeaters** with recently fledged young.

### Mt Majura NR

Kathy Walter, John Goldie and Duncan McCaskill, with observer Peter Miller, conducted the surveys over 29-30 November. The ground was extremely wet underfoot after recent rains and the grass was thigh high in places. Lots of native forbs were flowering. A total of 32 species was recorded for the surveys. Of note, plenty of **Noisy Friarbirds** and **Red Wattlebirds** were moving around all sites and **Sacred Kingfisher** was observed at 2 sites. Smaller birds found at 2 of the sites included **Speckled Warbler**, **Weebill**, and **Buff-rumped**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Brown Thornbills**, along with **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Grey Fantail** and **Superb Fairywrens**. The absolute highlight of the survey was a **Painted Button-quail** heard at one of the sites and one heard in between sites in a different area.

### Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park

Michael Lenz did the survey of the lower eastern slopes of Mt Ainslie on 1 Dec under fine, warm conditions with only light wind. The ground vegetation was very dense and tall, but unfortunately included many areas with St John's Wort and stands of thistles (4 species).

Interestingly, the **Rufous Whistler** was the most widespread species (at 6 sites; and another 7 records outside the sites), followed by **Crimson Rosella**, **Noisy Miner** and **Spotted Pardalote** (each at 5 sites), the usual more common species. Records of interest were **Tree Martin**, **Double-barred Finch**, **Dollarbird** (all not at sites), **White-winged Triller** (2 at sites, and others be-

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tween sites), both species of **Gerygone**, **Speckled Warbler**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Mistletoebird**, and **Brown Goshawk**. Breeding records were a pair of **Australian Wood Ducks** inspecting tree hollow, 2 **Noisy Friarbird** fledglings and a pair of **Dusky Woodswallows** with 2 eggs in the nest. Total species number was 52, with 35 at sites and an additional 17 species between sites.

### Newline

Sue Lashko surveyed on 30 November, and said this was definitely the most challenging Newline survey she had undertaken, even though weather conditions were ideal with pleasant temperatures, clear skies and no wind. Grass was chest-height throughout, some head high, and the weeds growth was phenomenal, with thistles, hawthorn, boxthorn and blackberry spreading throughout, now that there is no grazing/management. High-stepping over vegetation for 3 hours was hard work!

Summer migrants included **Horsfield's** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Western** and **White-throated Geygone**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Dollarbird** and very vocal **Rufous Songlarks**, and, surprisingly for **Newline**, **Eastern Koel** and **White-winged Triller**. Just two **Rainbow Lorikeets** were recorded. **House Sparrows** were recorded in 4 sites, especially in blackberry patches. The only raptor for the morning was a hapless **Collared Sparrowhawk** being mobbed by every nearby black-and-white bird. **Noisy Friarbirds** and native finches were absent. The 45 species recorded is lower than the normal summer tally, but may have been a related to the, at times, tall and impenetrable ground vegetation/weed cover.

### Red Hill NR

Harvey Perkins surveyed on Sunday 12 December, in calm, pleasant conditions following several very wet and blustery days. In total, 24 species were recorded within sites, and a further 6 between sites. This is slightly below average for a summer survey, as were the total individual numbers. The only sign of any breeding was a couple of young **Red Wattlebirds**. The highlight was a new species record: a small party of **Brown-headed Honeyeaters** at site 1 - the 100th species for the Red Hill surveys. The wet spring had resulted in strong growth, the understorey averaging about 0.5-1m in height across the reserve and, together with sapling growth and regeneration, is making many sites almost unrecognisable. Harvey said he had never seen such diverse understorey flowering, or such heavy flowering on the eucalypts, in the 23 years of surveys there. Harvey is looking for someone to assist him with surveying, to replace his long-time helper. Email Harvey at: [hdpphd@gmail.com](mailto:hdpphd@gmail.com).

### Jerrabomberra West NR

Jenny Bounds did the survey in the third week of December, having to delay until the ground had dried out and vehicle access was possible through the grasslands. There were many of the usual species around, and nothing unusual, including **Dusky Woodswallow** and **Tree Martin** in the Blakely's Red Gum area, quite a few **Noisy Friarbirds**, only a couple of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** moving around, and **Varied Sittella** and **Mistletoebird** heard. Most records were heard off sites. No cuckoos, raptors or trillers were recorded. As expected with the wet spring season, there were a lot of weeds (thistles) and grass growth. The total of 33 species was a little lower than the usual number for this time of year.

### Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson surveyed on Wednesday 8 December. It was overcast, with rain threatening throughout the morning. Lia noted the changes in vegetation in many of the sites over the last 14 years; undergrowth has become very dense in some sites, to the point where they are un-recognisable. It seemed that it was a very active morning, but the species tally was only average. Breeding records were **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, **Australian Magpie** and **Pied Currawong** feeding young, begging **Rainbow Lorikeet** and a **Satin Bowerbird** hopping about and calling by a dense pile of twigs in dense undergrowth. Other highlights were two **Common Bronzewing**s and an **Olive-backed Oriole** in the 10 minute counts at sites, and a **Collared Sparrowhawk** between sites. A total of 20 species was observed during the surveys, and an additional 15 between sites.

### Naas Sites

Julie McGuinness did the survey on this rural leasehold south of Tharwa on 3 December on a warm, calm and clear morning. Substantial rain over the previous week had left the ground very wet underfoot, dams were full, and creek lines and gullies were running. As with the previous two surveys, the grassy understorey was still prolific, with high thistles around site 2 again impeding, although not stopping, access to this site. Species diversity and numbers of birds were rather lower than expected and the only breeding evidence was a juvenile **Australasian Grebe** on one of the dams. A total of 34 species was observed (compared with 43 species observed in the spring survey), 26 in sites and 21 between sites. Species of note were **Jacky Winter** (2), **White-throated** and **Western Gerygones**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **Rufous Songlark**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Tree Martin** and **Collared Sparrowhawk**.



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## COG membership

2021-2022 memberships:

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

## New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

M. Tuttle  
M. Pearce  
A. Jay  
B. Milbourne  
A. Linsell  
K. Reithmuller

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

**Deadline for March 2022 edition:**

**Wednesday 23 February 2022**

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

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

or

**c/- The Secretary COG,**

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

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

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

## COG information

**President:** Neil Hermes

0413 828 045

[president@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:president@canberrabirds.org.au)

**Treasurer:** Prue Watters

[cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au)

**Secretary:** Margaret Robertson

[cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au)

### Address for correspondence

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

### Canberra Bird Notes

Editor: Michael Lenz

[michael.lenz.birds@gmail.com](mailto:michael.lenz.birds@gmail.com)

## COG website

[canberrabirds.org.au](http://canberrabirds.org.au)

### COG Webmaster

Julian Robinson

[cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au)

### COG library

### Membership Enquiries & Updates:

[membership@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:membership@canberrabirds.org.au)

for change of address or other details.

### Gang-gang Newsletter

**Editor:** Sue Lashko

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

**Lay-out Editor:** Gail Neumann

### Publication Sales

Kathy Walter

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

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