

Gang-gang

December 2008

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

COG Christmas Party
Wed 10 December
Black Mountain
Peninsula
6-8 pm



Sausages, bread, onions, beer, wine and soft drinks will be supplied.

Please bring your own plates, cutlery, glasses, table and chair if possible. Please also bring either a salad or a dessert to share (with serving spoons).

Lucky ticket prize and prizes for the Best Dressed "Bird" junior and senior divisions

Everyone welcome

What to watch out for this month

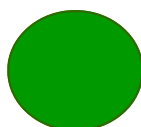
As is usual by the beginning of December the pattern for birds for the spring/summer has been well and truly set, particularly for the migrants. Despite receiving some rain at regular intervals, this has been another year which has clearly been affected by the drought, and most species seen in the last few years appear to be here again, though not necessarily in the same numbers or at the same spots. Mid-November saw some late **Satin Flycatchers** and **Rufous Fantails** in transit to their breeding areas in the wetter parts of the mountains. There seem to be at least two pairs of well separated **Red-backed Kingfishers** this year, again probably breeding. **Sacred Kingfishers** seem to be particularly common this year, more than I have seen for a long time, possibly in the 35 years I've lived in the ACT.

It's also been a good year for seeing **White-winged Trillers** and **Superb Parrots**. Though numbers of the former are down in my local patch, they seem to be common in other areas, in some cases where they have not been previously. While they are still being reported, **Rufous Songlark** numbers seem down, and I have yet to see or hear one this season, despite regularly visiting places they have been since the spring of 2004. There have been a few reports of the **Brown Songlark**, but none yet of the **Singing Bushlark**; both of these are similarly summer migrants but grassland species usually present in much lower numbers than the above. The **Common Koel** has also been quite conspicuous, particularly by its calling and the many reports on the chat line; interestingly while numbers over the past three years are said to be much higher than before, they have been much fewer in Chapman/Rivett.

As is shown by the report on the Nest Workshop at Campbell Park elsewhere in this newsletter, though down somewhat on better seasons, many species are still breeding with reasonable success. Based on the chat line reports it seems to have been a particularly good season for **Tawny Frogmouths**, with young fledging from a number of nests in differing suburbs almost simultaneously in mid-November. Also judging from reports on the chat line it seems to have been a good year for waterfowl breeding, with a variety of dependent young reported. Keep up the very good work and remember to put these important breeding records into the COG database.

Judging from activity round my GBS site the **Pied Currawong** is having a better year. I'm always amazed at how surreptitious a breeder this species is. From their quiet behaviour, including the dismantling of last year's abandoned

Continued page 2



What to watch out for (continued) nest without my noticing, it was clear that the usual pair was nesting in my GBS site. However, it was not until young were being fed that I found the nest, by following where the parents were taking food. It's also interesting to watch the parents saving energy, by keeping quiet and spending a lot of time gliding quietly from the nest to the ground, while they feed their increasingly demanding chicks.

November/December is always the quietest time in my GBS site, mainly due to the birds leaving my garden to breed elsewhere. However, after Xmas/New Year many start to return and look out for species such as the **Dollarbird** which characteristically breeds away from the built up areas but moves into the suburbs after, with in particular juvenile birds (much less brightly coloured including the bills) staying around till early March. This is one species that I feel has definitely declined around Canberra, and I'm lucky to get more than a few sightings per year. Many years ago it was round our area from Australia Day to early March each year. By mid-January for some species, such as the **White-winged Triller** and the **Rufous Songlark**, their brief period here will nearly be over. Records for these species after the end of January are usually very few, so keep an eye out and note when you last see them. Again make sure that valuable records are not lost but are entered into the COG database. — **Jack Holland**

Field Trip reports

Sunday 9 November — Callum Brae

A small group, including new and potential new COG members enjoyed a beautiful sunny morning for this walk, recording 49 species. Highlights were good views of: **Rainbow Lorikeets** inspecting a hollow, a **Red-capped Robin** on a nest (the first time I've recorded this species at Callum Brae), **Striated Pardalotes** displaying, **Dollarbird**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **White-throated Gerygone**, **Speckled Warbler** and **Double-barred Finch**. The resident pair of **Brown Goshawks** were calling around their usual nesting territory, but did not seem to be quite in nesting mode yet. — **Jenny Bounds**

Sunday 16 November — Campbell Park — Nest workshop

While I had expected some differences from previous years, this sixth annual COG nest "workshop" underlined how this year really is different. This year almost all of the nesting activity occurred roughly along the fence line N and S of the horse gate compared with, particularly in the first 4 years, the depression/drainage line half way between this and the car park. Breeding activity at the latter was confined to a **Sacred Kingfisher** (with the bluest back and the orangest flanks I've ever seen) inspecting and entering a nest hollow, plus a pair of **White-throated Gerygones** on/around one of their exquisitely shaped, domed side-entrance nests.

White-winged Trillers abounded either side of the horse gate, with a good number of males found, often flying together, and several females. Eventually in all this activity we spied a pair changing duties on a nest in a somewhat atypical site, and later we found a couple of pairs nest building, one of which was typically on a horizontal dead fork of a branch. **Noisy Friarbirds** also exhibited a range of breeding activity with at first a nest with small young found in a typical wool lined, deep cup but unusually placed close to the top of a sapling. Later we watched a pair building by repeatedly flying 100 m down to the adjacent sheep paddock to obtain wool, and towards the end of the morning we flushed a couple of nearly ready to fledge chicks when we stumbled onto the nest. Again these two nests were in saplings/reveg rather than mature trees. The **Leaden Flycatcher** nest was finally found when the male and female exchanged; again this was somewhat atypical as it was on a small dead branch without the usual covering branch close overhead.



In amongst all this activity were a number of very active **Olive-backed Orioles**, all of which were immatures by their brown bills and eyes. Whether they were this year's or last season's was unclear, probably the latter as they gave the full repertoire of calls and would have needed to have been raised very early in the season. Likewise immature **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrikes** predominated, again probably last year's young. A number of **Dusky Woodswallows** were also only seen in this area, and for the first time no nests or other breeding activity was found, or for the several **Varied Sittellas** seen. A rather lightly barred **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** was also lurking about round the horse gate, occasionally calling, and gave reasonable views, but not as good as the rather quiet but very co-

-operative female **Pallid Cuckoo** seen later.

It was a relatively cool morning with activity lasting much longer than on previous hotter days and so we walked a bit further than usual, first of all to find a pair of calling (probably breeding) **Western Gerygones**, which gave good close views. This was followed by a quiet pair of **Jacky Winters**, again possibly nesting, and somewhat of a surprise as they hadn't been reported from here in the past month or so. Those who stayed behind to check out a quieter part of Campbell Park found a **White-winged Chough** on a bowl-shaped mud nest. Our patience was rewarded as a couple of birds carrying food in their bills finally picked up courage to bring it to the nest which contained two young, and the feeding and switch of the brooding duties revealed several adults were clearly banded. A **Noisy Miner**, sitting on what looked like an old and exposed nest in a rather sick looking sapling as we came back to the cars, rounded off the morning nicely.

A total of 45 species were seen, 13 of which exhibited some type of breeding activity and covering five of the 10 main types of nests. While this is a lower percentage than in some previous years, and numbers of participants was slightly down from the previous very high numbers, everyone thoroughly enjoyed the morning and it is clear why this is now a permanent and popular fixture on COG's calendar. It once again demonstrated how it needs only one of the over 20 pairs of eyes to spot that crucial bit of evidence which defines the breeding activity.

My thanks again to Anthony Overs for helping me lead this workshop, which increasingly has become a practical exercise. My thanks also to Elizabeth Compston for having visited Campbell Park several times beforehand and passed on her observations. Unfortunately we couldn't find her two specials from the previous day, including the **Tawny Frogmouth** and chick on the **White-winged Chough's** nest. Perhaps next time! I look forward to leading once again in 2009. — **Jack Holland**

Sat/Sun 22-23 November — Bumbalong Valley — Camp-out on private property

Unfortunately due to the cold, wet and windy wintry conditions intending participants made a collective decision to cancel this overnight camp-out. Plan B to make it a day trip on Sunday was also thwarted by persistent overnight rain and wind. Another visit to one of my favourite birding places near Canberra will be included on COG's program in the future. — **Jack Holland**

Future Field Trips

The Guidelines for the conduct and advertising of COG field trips are published on the COG web site. Both trip leaders and members/participants should familiarise themselves with these guidelines. In particular, the Registration Form should be completed for each field trip.



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enquiries@philipmaher.com

17 April — 2 May 2009
Vietnam birding tour
co-led by Uthai Treesucon

3 May — 9 May 2009
Thailand Pitta tour
co-led by Uthai Treesucon

12 May — 1 June 2009
Borneo and Peninsula Malaysia
co-led by Dennis Yong

1 — 5 July 2009
Alice Springs
best birds: dusky grasswren & grey
honeyeater, slaty-backed thornbill

8 — 18 July 2009
Gulf Country
best birds: Carpentarian & Kalkadoon
grasswrens, rufous-crowned emu-wren,
spinifexbird, flock bronzewing

13 — 25 June 2009
Top End
Kakadu NP, Katherine, Kununurra
best birds: chestnut rail, white-throated
grasswren, red goshawk, black-banded
fruit-dove, Gouldian finch, chestnut-
quilled rock pigeon

26 June 2009
Mitchell Plateau
best bird: black grasswren Kimberley
honeyeater, yellow-eyed form of
partridge pigeon

4 — 22 September 2010
Strzelecki Track Outback Tour

Tour itineraries, birdlists, checklists
and latest news are on the website.

www.philipmaher.com

Sunday 7 December — Hospital Hill — Extended morning

The last formal COG outing for 2008 will be held in this popular nature reserve to the south of Canberra, and will be a repeat of the highly successful 2006 trip. We will again be parking and using the toilets at Yankee Hat car park, then walking in. Entirely within COG grid cell H25, we'll do a longish circular or figure-of-8 walk following both the road and the creek, lunching on the creek again at the 'historic' c1966 Hospital Creek Hut. We can be flexible about the exact route, which will depend on where the birds are and the weather on the day.

On the previous walk to this area we dipped on the **Turquoise Parrots** that had been seen a week before, but were treated to a **Brush Cuckoo** that sat in full view of the lunching crowd for a considerable time. Other highlights were **Brown Treecreepers** and **Dusky Woodswallow** with dependent young, two **Australian Hobbies**, **Rufous Songlark**, **Brown-headed** and **Fuscous Honeyeaters**, **Satin** and **Leaden Flycatchers**, **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** and for a lucky few, a **Red-browed Treecreeper**.

The walk will be around 11 km and some of it cross country, so you will need to be moderately fit. If you are interested in participating, please contact Julian Robinson (6239 6226 or by E-mail on julian.robinson@internode.on.net). We will meet at the Kambah Village shops at 7:30 am, so we can consolidate cars and get to the Yankee Hut car park well before 9 am.

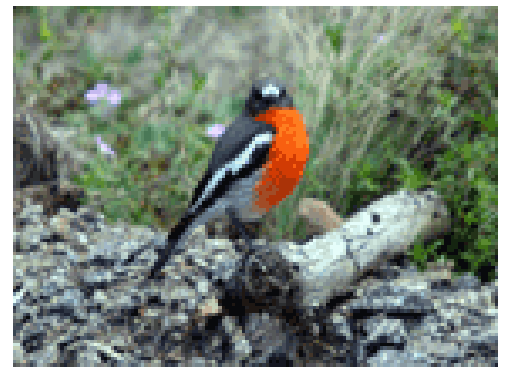
December/January — Wednesday Walks

There will not be a Wednesday walk in December as the standard date would be too likely to interfere with Christmas/vacation plans. For January, a decision will be made early in the month, with a go/no-go depending upon the likely weather and the venue to be determined by where interesting birds have been seen recently. An announcement will be made though the chatline no later than 18 January 2009.

Sunday 18 January 2009 — Brindabellas

This will be COG's traditional annual visit to the Blundells Creek/Warks Roads area of the Brindabellas, which as members know was devastated in the 18 January 2003 bush fires, but is now recovering well. The outing will provide members with an opportunity to see how this area is continuing to regenerate from the fire damage, and also to see what birds have returned here this summer. Meet Bruce Lindenmayer at Uriarra Homestead (cnr Cotter and Uriarra Rds) at 8.30 am. Note there are actually TWO intersections of Cotter and Uriarra Roads, the other one being just up the road from Eucumbene Drive, Duffy! Participants will need to take either road and travel the 15 or so km to Uriarra Homestead at the other end. Following a quick look at the waterbirds on the large dam there, we will car pool, and also do the usual shuffle, leaving some cars at the top of Blundells Creek Rd and some at the bottom so we only need to walk downhill. We expect to see **Flame Robins**, **Satin Flycatchers** and perhaps **Rufous Fantails** and **Pilotbirds**, and hope that more of the wet forest birds will be back, especially **Wonga Pigeon**, **Red-browed Treecreeper** and **Cicadabird**. Could those intending to participate please ring Bruce (6288 5957, mobile 0417 418 759) beforehand as due to the sensitivity of the area and potential parking problems it has been agreed to limit numbers.

Photo by Lindsay Hansch



Flame Robin
(*Petroica phoenicea*)

Sunday 1 February 2009 — Jerrabomberra Wetlands — morning outing

To celebrate World Wetlands Day, there is no better place to visit than Jerrabomberra Wetlands and the adjacent Fyshwick Sewerage Ponds. We will search for ducks, waders, rails and birds of the surrounding bush and grasslands.

Meet in the carpark off Dairy Road at 7.30 am. The outing is expected to finish by 11 am. Bring a scope if you have one, as well as hat, sunscreen and water. Please book with Sue Lashko on 6251 4485 or by email to SMLashko@gmail.com. Should numbers become too large, the group will be divided in two, so if you are prepared to help lead this outing, please contact Sue.

Mon-Thurs 16-19 February — South Durras — midweek

This is I understand COGs first official visit to this delightful area within Murrumbidgee National Park. The Durras area is located on the southern most rim of a geological structure known as the Sydney Basin and has numerous small beaches occurring along the coast where erosion of the cliffs has formed protected bays. In addition to its unique geology Durras also has a series of rolling hills which form part of the coastal Murrumbidgee Range. Nestled in these hills is Durras Lake which is a drowned river valley, where canoeing and kayaking are popular.

If people are so inclined (and depending on the weather) the plan is to make a short morning tea diversion (say 1 hour) to Monga National Park before arriving at South Durras around lunchtime. Proposed accommodation is at South Durras Resort (formerly Beagle Bay Caravan Park) where there are good facilities plus camping, caravan and cabin accommodation options available. Species seen within the resort area include **White-headed Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-dove, Gang-Gang, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Rose Robin, Southern Boobook** and many others.

During our time there we have a choice of canoeing or kayaking (available for hire from various places) on the pristine Durras Lake (where we hope to encounter **Osprey, Sea-eagle, Peregrine Falcon** and those little jewels, the **Azure Kingfishers**), walking the heathland between the forest and the sea, or strolling the Spotted Gum and Ironbark forest trails (some cross country) where many bush birds may be expected. There is also the option of a drive/walk to Durras Mountain for spectacular views and many birding possibilities. We will have a couple of communal dinners/bbqs. Car pooling down to the coast is encouraged.

If you are interested in attending please contact Rod Mackay ph. 6288 3808 (home) or 0407456330 (mobile), or email rodsgaredning@grapevine.com.au. Please note that attendees will need to book their own accommodation, and are encouraged to do so early.

Photo by Geoffrey Dabb



Azure Kingfisher
(*Ceyx azureus*)

Saturday 21 February 2009 — Monga National Park

David McDonald will lead a day outing to this area of wet forest just before the escarpment around 20 km east of Braidwood off the Kings Highway. Target species include the **Red-browed Treecreeper, Black-faced Monarch, Pilotbird, Olive Whistler** and **Bassian Thrush**. Meet at 07.30 am at the Queanbeyan Swimming Pool car park, Campbell Street, Queanbeyan, for car-pooling or, alternatively, meet at 09.00 am at the intersection of the Kings Highway and River Road on the right hand side of the Highway. Allow about 90 minutes for the journey from Canberra. A map and other details are available directly from the leader. Bring lunch and drinks. Comprehensive information about the National Park and its birds is found in the wonderful book, Steller, R (ed.) 2005, *Monga intacta: a celebration of the Monga Forest and its protection*, Robyn Steller, Braidwood, N.S.W. Registration for this trip is essential: please phone David McDonald on 6238 3706, email david.mcdonald@socialresearch.com.au.

COG'S BIRD BLITZ 2008

Not all datasheets from the 25-26 October bird blitz have yet been received – memo to the laggards, please hurry up! – but the state of play to date is most encouraging. We have received 242 hard copy datasheets and 76 electronic ones, for an interim total of 318. There were 84 named participants, accompanied by up to 25 unnamed persons in one case. While the species total still requires some checking, approximately 172 bird species were recorded over the two days. This total includes, pleasingly, **Wonga Pigeon, Superb Lyrebird, Cicadabird, Eastern Whipbird** and **Bassian Thrush**, suggesting that despite the drought, post-fire recovery is taking effect. And thanks to the efforts of members Walter, Goldie, Overs, etc, we recorded a few nightbirds, **Southern Boobook** and **Australian Owlet-nightjar**.

White-fronted Chat, Glossy Ibis, Australian Spotted Crake, Stubble Quail, Olive Whistler, Little Bittern, Swamp Harrier and **White-necked Heron** again proved elusive on the blitz weekend but have been recorded since.

At the November COG meeting, we conducted a lucky draw for book prizes from amongst those participants who had submitted blitz datasheets by that time. Amongst the general participants, the winners were Shaun Bagley, John Chey,

Bill Compston, Matthew Larkin, Bruce Lindenmayer, Alison Mackerras, Nicki Munro, Muriel Story, Kathy Walter and Tony Willis. The “special effort” prize – a special bottle from the Dick Schodde cellar – was drawn from the 31 blitzers who blitzed both days and was won by Stuart Harris. And we presented two books of Penny Olsen’s as a special award to our youthful blitzers, Julian Teh and Tobias Hayashi. Many thanks to Penny and Dick and also to Phyl Goddard, Shirley Kral and Joe Barr for the prizes.

A full blitz report will be published in a future issue of *Canberra Bird Notes*. — **Barbara Allan**

Committee news

- Chris Davey prepared a press release on Superb Parrots.
- There appear to be increasing numbers of Spotted Doves in Canberra. This has become a pest species in some other cities, so COG's committee is considering whether action should be taken.
- The Christmas Party will be on December 10 at the usual place. Please see the notice elsewhere in Gang Gang for more details. There will be a competition for best-dressed "bird" and a raffle.

Other items of interest

COG Forward Plan

COG's Forward Plan is currently being reviewed. We are looking at what has been achieved to date, what still needs to be done, and why we have not made progress. We will also be considering whether other projects should get higher priority. This is your opportunity to put forward some suggestions. Please send them to me at tlawson@homemail.com.au. Any suggestion should reflect COG's core objectives, which are:

- a) To encourage interest in, and develop knowledge of, the birds of the Canberra region;
- b) To promote and co-ordinate the study of birds; and
- c) To promote the conservation of native birds and their habitats.

The greatest constraint to undertaking more projects is the lack of resources. Any proposals should bear this in mind. Obviously we are more likely to support a project for which resources can be identified. For instance, we would like to produce another Atlas of birds found in COG's area of interest. But to do so we need to find someone with similar skills, enthusiasm and application as the co-ordinator of the previous Atlas project. Any suggestions? — **Tony Lawson**

ANPS Mid-week Walk - Wednesday 26 November

The ANPS mid-week walk was to the Tinderries, with stops in the grasslands just outside Michelago; the high point of the road across the range; and a swamp or two on the Eastern side of the range. 42 species were recorded. Highlights were **Brush Cuckoo** (excellent views); **Wonga pigeon** (ditto); **Satin Flycatcher** (on nest), **Rufous Whistler**; **Crested Pigeon** and **Grey Fantail** (the last three all nest building). — **Martin Butterfield**

Photo by Lindsay Hansch



Rufous Whistler
(*Pachycephala rufiventris*)

DRAFT PROGRAM - COG 2009 FIELD TRIPS

| Date | Place | Type of Event |
|---|---|--|
| Sun 18 January | Brindabellas | All day |
| Sun 1 February | Jerrabomberra wetlands | Morning |
| Mon-Thu 16-19 February | Durras (birding by canoe) | Post School Holidays mid-week accommodated |
| Sat 21 February | Monga NP | Day trip |
| Sat-Mon 7-9 March (9/3 is Canberra Day) | Goulburn area (with Goulburn Field Nats) | Long weekend campout |
| Sun 15 March | Molonglo Reach | Morning boat cruise |
| Saturday 4 April | Private property near Mundoonen NR | Extended morning |
| Fri-Mon 10-13 April (Easter) | Weddin Mountains | Extended long weekend camp-out |
| Sun 19 April | Honeyeater migration | Morning |
| Sun 10 May | Botanic gardens | Beginners morning |
| Sun 24 May | Molonglo – Finch central | Morning |
| 6-8 June long weekend | South coast – Moruya & Narooma | Campout |
| Sat 20 June | Tidbinbilla NR | Lyrebird survey |
| Sun 5 July | Local nature park | Morning |
| Sun 19 July | Winter birds | Day bus trip |
| Sun 9 August | Lake Ginninderra | Beginners morning |
| Sun 23 August | Private property on ranges between Braidwood and Bungendore | Morning |
| Sun 30 August | Mt Taylor | Morning |
| Sun 13 September | Aranda Bushland | Morning |
| Sun 20 September | Goorooyaroo NR | Morning |
| Sun 27 September | Tinderry NR | Extended morning |
| Sat-Mon 3-5 October long weekend | Wagga and Albury area | Camp-out |
| Sat-Sun 10-11 October | Mittagong | Camp-out on private property |
| Mon-Fri 19-24 October | Oolambeyan NP | Mid week campout |
| Sat-Sun 24-25 October | Bird Blitz | All day atlassing |
| Sun 8 November | Tuggeranong Hill NR | Extended morning |
| Sun 15 November | Campbell Park | Nest workshop |
| Sat-Sun 21-22 November | Frogmore | Camp-out on private property |
| Sun 6 December | Bungendore TSRs and reserves | Extended morning |

Please forward any comments or suggestions to Anthony Overs, anthony.overs@gmail.com

FOG Visit - Harold Cross, near Braidwood (9:30 am, Sun 13 Dec)

FOG plans a visit to Harold Cross, a 40 acre property at Harold's Cross, near Braidwood. The owner Libby would welcome opinions/advice on documenting and managing it. The property consists of a rocky stretch of Harold's Cross Creek, with black-sallee and ribbon-gum/peppermint woodland, plus a fair bit of native grassland and boggy patches running down to the creek. It's quite high, at about 800+ m. While the emphasis will be on plant identification, help with bird observations will also be welcome.

We plan to arrive at 9.30am at Harold Cross which is about an hour's drive from Canberra/Queanbeyan. There are three ways to get there: a quick (50 minute) but slightly tricky route through the Tallaganda forest via Rossi, which is very scenic and interesting, or more directly via Captain's Flat, and thirdly from Braidwood. Please either bring your lunch/thermos, or buy stuff in Braidwood on the way. For inquiries, to register your interest, and for further information, please contact Janet on 6251 8949 or email activities@fog.org.au.

ANU Projects

COG volunteers again made a major contribution towards the expanding range of research and monitoring projects being undertaken by ANU's Fenner School in October and November.

The third annual **Mulligans Flat / Goorooyarroo Survey** involved two weeks with volunteers undertaking 10 minute bird counts on 48 sites, each involving eight survey points within a polygon. Notable records included populations of **Superb Parrots** at many sites in both reserves, **Red-capped** and **Eastern Yellow Robins** and large populations of **Striated Pardalotes** in most habitats. There is strong evidence that **Superb Parrots** are again breeding in both reserves. Unfortunately, the number and range of small birds (thornbills, fairy-wren, fantails and robins) was low. This may be related to the dominance by **Noisy Miners** in many sites. The large populations of **Common Starlings** close to grazing areas and breeding throughout the reserves, **Indian Mynas** close to the boundaries and vast mobs of Eastern Grey Kangaroos (which have greatly impacted areas of native grass) are matters which will need to be addressed in the near future.

With work now underway in construction of a large pest exclusion enclosure and the proposed reintroduction of birds, reptiles and mammals lost from the area, these two areas of Canberra Nature Park will be wonderful wildlife refuges. I believe COG members will be delighted with the outcome.

The Restoration Study in the Riverina commenced in 2000, but this year has been greatly expanded to now encompass more than 400 survey sites ranging from around Gundagai to west of Deniliquin. This is a world class research and monitoring experiment involving a team of scientists as well as volunteers and close involvement with the catchment management authority, local farmers and landcarers. Due to the size of properties and distances between survey sites in the western part of the study area, COG volunteers worked only on the less remote sites. There were stop-overs at Conargo, Yerong Ck and Gundagai with barbeque presentations to local citizens in each of the three districts. The Restoration Study has already stimulated much interest and involvement in conservation throughout rural communities. Copies of the brochure, *Birds on Farms of the South-West Slopes* which gives more information on the project, have been left on the COG Sales Desk.

Riverina bird populations seemed to have been affected by the drought particularly in the western parts. **Superb Parrots** were quite widespread throughout the more eastern sites with an influx of **Cockatiels** and a few flocks of **Budgerigars**. **Little Ravens** were in large flocks further west along with **Noisy Miners** which dominated many sites to the exclusion of virtually all small birds except those great survivors, **Striated Pardalotes**. There were sporadic flocks of **White-browed Woodswallows**, surprisingly with very few **Masked Woodswallows**. These seemed not to be intimidated by the Noisy Miners. Other interesting species were **Apostlebirds**, **Grey-crowned Babblers** (a few people saw small numbers of **White-browed** and **Chestnut-crowned** as well) and great views of **Crimson** and **White-fronted Chats**.

Many thanks to this year's volunteers: Ian Anderson, Suzi Bond, Jenny Bounds, Peter Fullagar, Kay Hahne, Steve Holliday, Noel Luff, Henry Nix, Martyn Moffat, Terry Munro and Peter Roberts.

Adrian Manning and David Lindenmayer have agreed to talk to COG next year on these projects.

— **Bruce Lindenmayer**

Garden Bird Survey Notes

Some GBS-relevant highlights from the chatline for late October and November include:

- displaying **Satin Bowerbird** in Kambah;
- the Carwoola **Tawny Frogmouth** has produced a chick despite close attention from the nearby **Pied Currawongs** (until they fledged). The Corroboree Park family is now four birds which perch together most obligingly!
- and as a lowlight — **Spotted Doves** in Ainslie.

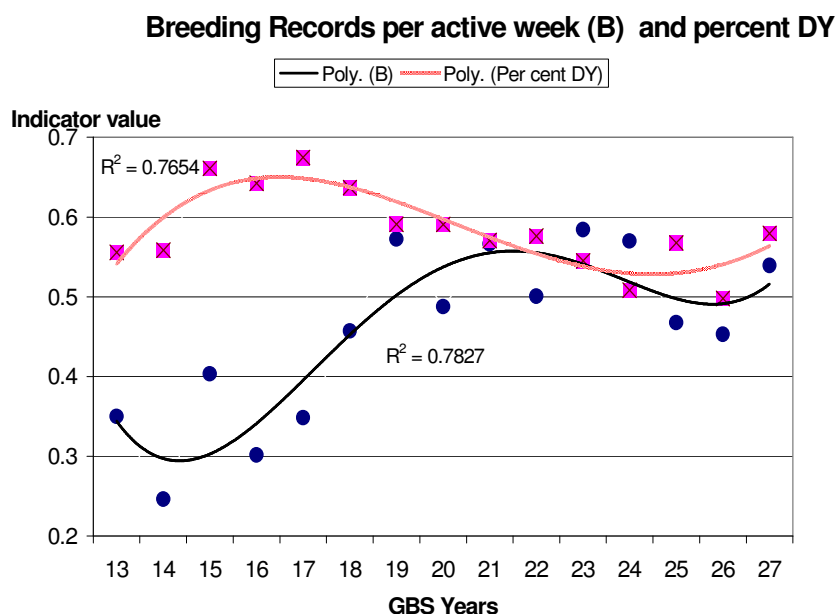
Breeding Records

As I have spent quite a high proportion of my birding time this month pursuing breeding events I have also investigated a little about the breeding records situation for the GBS.

In total there are 6,624 breeding records (ie one line) in the appropriate database table. The species most commonly recorded as breeding are **Australian Magpie** (447 records), **Pied Currawong** (457), **Red Wattlebird** (399); **Magpie-lark** (272) and **Galah** (200).

To enable a comparison of years with different effort I have defined an indicator 'B' given by the number of breeding records as a proportion of active weeks in a GBS year. I have plotted the trend in these data, since the major change in breeding codes introduced in year 13, as a fuzzy line in the attached graph. The trend data has a reasonable correlation coefficient (0.78) and shows an oscillating but broadly increasing tendency with a decline in years 22 - 26.

For this period I have also shown, as a dashed line the trend in the number of dependent young observations (ie one cell with DY) as a proportion of total breeding observations. Again the correlation coefficient is reasonable (0.77) and the tendency generally downwards since year 17.



Applications of GBS data

Information on **Koels** in Canberra has been provided to a researcher at ANU, and a brief note on this species relative to some large honeyeaters posted on the chatline.

Progress on Year 27

I have commenced the analysis of the Year 27 information for Annual Bird Report (ABR) purposes and expect to have finalised the reports by the time you read this. Reference material (common names, scientific names and taxonomic order) has been changed to reflect COG's adoption of the new version of Christidis and Boles.

— **Martin Butterfield**

MUDBRICK COTTAGE

Mallacoota

Our mudbrick cottage (*Blue Wren Cottage*) is available for rental for all those nature lovers out there!!

It is set amongst the trees in Mallacoota, Victoria (approximately 4 hours drive from Canberra). It is only 10 minutes walk to the beach, 5 minutes walk to the golf course and about 15 minutes walk to town. It sleeps 4-6 upstairs and there is a sofa bed downstairs.

It is fully self-contained with a kitchen and laundry.

Contact:

Barbara de Bruine (02) 6258 3531, barbdebruine@hotmail.com, or see <http://www.stayz.com.au/25595>.

PASSIVE SOLAR HOUSE

South Rosedale

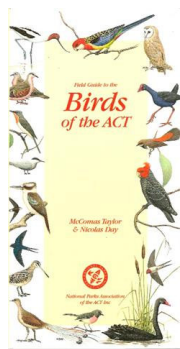
Arupingi is a passive solar house situated in a peaceful bushland setting in South Rosedale.

Birdwatching is possible from the comfort of a chair on the front or back deck, while for the more energetic, Guerrilla Bay and Burrewarra Point are within walking distance. The wetlands at Barling's Beach are only a few kilometres away. Rich birding is available in almost any direction.

Contact Greg or Sallie Ramsay

6286 1564 or
gramsay@actewagl.net.au

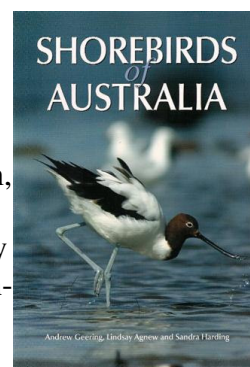
COG SALES



Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT (Taylor & Day) - \$16.00 — Bird identification in the ACT has just become much easier! Here are all the birds of the ACT in colour, with easy-to-follow text and key biological data, in a compact field format that will fit easily in your pocket.

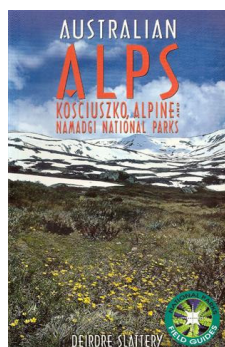
Shorebirds of Australia (Geering, Agnew & Harding) \$33.00 — This title brings to-

gether the latest information about the evolution, ecology and behaviour of shorebirds and how they are distributed in Australia. This is a highly sought after title in the popular "CSIRO Publishing" series.



Field Guide to the Orchids of the Australian

Capital Territory (Jones, Egan and Wood) - \$33.00 — Orchids can be found throughout the ACT, in nature parks, urban reserves and in Namadgi National Park. They can be beautiful or bizarre; some look like ducks or spiders, others grow long beards or have delicately hinged appendages. This guide's handy size makes it suitable for use in the field.



Australian Alps: Kosciuszko, Alpine & Namadgi National Parks (Slattery) - \$16.00 —

This guide is your key to the secrets of the three national parks that stretch over Australia's spectacularly beautiful rooftop - Kosciuszko in New South Wales, Alpine in Victoria and Namadgi in the Australian Capital Territory. Ideal for field trips, this guide will make a wonderful memento as well as a great reference for future trips.

Watching Wildlife (Chris) - \$24.00

Why Don't Woodpeckers Get Headaches? And Other Bird Questions You Know You Want To Ask (O'Connor) - \$13.50

CD: Bird Calls of the ACT (Fullagar & Slater) - \$12.00

LIMITED STOCK: Messent Bird Calendar 2009 - \$8.00

All these items (and more) plus COG T-shirts and Polo shirts are available at the monthly meeting sales desk

News from the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group (CIMAG)

20,000 and still counting

At least 20,082 Indian Mynas have been removed from Canberra suburbs since CIMAG started. This is having a huge impact on total myna numbers. As not all CIMAG members report their captures, and there are many non-CIMAG people who have made their own PeeGees easy-to-make trap, this number could well be around 25,000. This would equate to between 15%-20% of the myna population in Canberra in two and a half years. A quite remarkable and significant result.

MOU with the New Prison

CIMAG has been overwhelmed with requests for traps since starting its eradication program and has sometimes struggled to keep up supply. CIMAG has now signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ACT Correctional Services for the new ACT prison, the Alexander Maconochie Centre, to make up traps for CIMAG. While CIMAG will also continue making up traps for free for people, the new supply of traps from the Maconochie Centre will enable it to meet the many requests for traps more quickly.

Mynas in the Horse Paddocks

The plague of mynas in our Canberra's horse paddocks will be the focus of some trapping research. CIMAG is finalizing details of a pilot project to test the best way of tackling the problem. Myna numbers in the horse paddocks can be very high when horses are given supplementary feed. The mynas worry the horses by sitting on their backs and fouling them. The pilot project, to be carried out in three paddocks is designed to identify the best way to deal with this problem. Initial focus will be in the Illoura Horse Paddocks at Weston Creek, those out at Hall, and the Kaleen or Rose Cottage horse paddocks.

Around the traps – so to speak

CIMAG has given presentations and run trap-building workshops at Kioloa and Sanctuary Point. Very good numbers of people turned up and quite a few traps were made at Sanctuary Point Men's Shed – with almost instant success. Rod Simpson from Hussykisson put his trap to work next day and reported 9 mynas in his trap before the presenters returned to Canberra!

The story at Murrumbateman is also very encouraging. Over a year of trapping on the rural properties, perhaps up to 4 mynas were caught in a week, then numbers dropped off to a trickle of possibly one or two a week - often none. The Murrumbateman Landcare Group then put their traps in the vineyards when the grapes were ripening — within the space of 2-3 days they had captures of 20, and up to 60 over a few weeks. This far exceeded their estimates of the myna population in the whole Murrumbateman area. This has helped them refine their trapping program and might be a lesson for other vineyard regions, such as Mudgee.

CIMAG reaches 500 members

CIMAG membership numbers have now exceeded 500.

January meeting — Members night

As is traditional, for our January meeting we will be having a "Members' Night", with the opportunity for COG members to contribute short presentations (no more than 10 minutes) on a range of bird related topics. So if you have a favourite birding moment for 2008, some special photos to share with members, a birding story to tell, or a poem to read, please contact Jack Holland on 6288 7840 or by email on jack.holland@environment.gov.au.



WONGA

Bawley Point

South Coast of N.S.W.

Two well equipped timber cottages in 50 acres. Damp and dry warm temperate forest, kunzea and rock provide for a diversity of birds and other animals. A short walk down the driveway leads to sand dunes and beaches, sea birds and Hooded Plovers. Close to National Parks, lakes and historic sites.

patricia.walker@bigpond.com

phone 02 6251 3136

www.visitnsw.com.au (follow the links to accommodation and Wonga)

NEW MEMBERS

COG welcomes the following new members:

A Moyal, Cook

M Falk, Ainslie

L Emerton, Griffith

NEXT NEWSLETTER

February deadline

Wednesday 28 January 2009

Please send, articles, advertisements, updates etcetera 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 and welcomed.

COG info

President—Chris Davey, ph 6254 6324

Email: chris_davey@aapt.net.au

Vice President—TBA

Treasurer—Lyn Rees

lynlev@iimetro.com.au

Secretary—Sandra Henderson 6231 0303

cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Address for correspondence

The Secretary

COG, PO Box 301

Civic Square, ACT 2608

Newsletter distribution

Judy Collett and helpers

COG membership

2008-2009 memberships:

- Individuals, families and institutions: \$35
- school students (under 18): \$17.50.

Membership inquiries—

Sandra Henderson ph 6231 0303

membership@canberrabirds.org.au

for changed address or other details

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 website

www.canberrabirds.org.au

Office

COG no longer maintains an office. For all enquiries or access to COG's library phone Barbara Allen on 6254 6520

COG E-mail Discussion List

COG has an email discussion list for members and friends: 'Canberra Birds'. Join the list by following the links on the COG website or by sending an empty email message to canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au with the subject 'subscribe' without the quotation marks

Editor Canberra Bird Notes

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Gang-gang

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