

Gang-gang

June 2010

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

JUNE MEETING

7:30pm Wednesday 09.06.10

Canberra Girls Grammar School corner Gawler Cres and Melbourne Ave, Deakin. The meetings are held in the Multi-media Theatre at the School. Enter off Gawler Crescent using the school road signposted as Gabriel Drive. If that car-park is full, enter using Chapel Drive.

The meeting will begin with **Adrian Manning** from the Fenner School of Environment and Society outlining the new **Mulligans Flat — Goorooyarroo Woodland Experiment**, a research partnership between the Australian National University and the ACT Government. The aim of the project is to understand how to improve critically endangered box-gum grassy woodlands for biodiversity. COG members have played a key role in undertaking bird surveys for the experiment. He will also describe the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary. The Sanctuary consists of a predator-proof fence that will allow the reintroduction of locally extinct species. The aim is for the Woodland Experiment and the Sanctuary to become an 'outdoor laboratory' for research and learning about woodland restoration.

Adrian's presentation will be followed by **Damian Farine** and **Peter Milburn** who will give a short talk on their banding studies at Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve.

Everyone welcome

What to watch out for this month

May is typically a transitional month for bird activity in the ACT - the last of the summer migrants head north whilst other species move down from the Brindabella Ranges to the woodlands, paddocks and suburbs around Canberra. Watching out for the migrating flocks of **honeyeaters** is something many COG members enjoy every Canberra autumn, particularly as one can add to the records without leaving the garden. Backyard birding is certainly a special buzz as every observation is your own and is probably enjoyed by more COG members than any other type of nature-watching. Certainly our garden birders, on the chatline, had noticed that the northward and coastal push by many of our honeyeaters had slowed down significantly by the second week of the month. However, these trends are often highly localized and I saw many more honeyeaters moving over Duffy and several sites along the foothills of the Brindabellas during this second week of May than earlier in the autumn, including large numbers of **White-naped Honeyeaters**; this species was actually still present in reasonable numbers by the end of the month although **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** appeared to have mostly departed.

Other late staying summer migrants include reports of singing **Western Gerygone** (also reported in April) and **Rufous Whistler** from Mulligans Flat, **Olive-backed Orioles** from several suburban sites, and flocks of **Dusky Woodswallows** still present mid-month. However, it is not unusual for small numbers of **Dusky Woodswallows** to stay through the winter. Similarly, a few **Fan-tailed Cuckoos** are still to be seen and some may stay through the winter but, as they have largely stopped calling, a true reflection of the numbers overwintering is hard to estimate. More intriguingly, a **Brush Cuckoo** 'call' was heard in Deakin mid-month; this would be an extremely late report for this scarce summer visitor and there is some debate as to whether this could be an **Olive-backed Oriole** using mimicry (though this is an interesting record either way). Another very late record was of three **Superb Parrots** at Mulligans Flat in mid-May.

Other interesting parrots recorded in May include a **Musk Lorikeet** in Deakin and several records of **Swift Parrots**.

It was clear that most of our coastal or northward-bound migrants had departed by the end of May and a lot of our winter visitors, such as the very scarce **Swift Parrots**, had returned. Unlike the **Swift Parrots** and a few **Silvereyes**, most of

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

our winter visitors haven't traveled from as far as Tasmania. Indeed, most have only moved a short distance down the Brindabella Ranges, or perhaps from further south in the 'Australian Alps' (are we really using this term now?). These local altitudinal migrants include the much-loved *Petroica* Robins (**Flame**, **Scarlet**, **Rose** and, very rarely, **Pink Robins**). Reports of **Scarlet** and **Flame Robins** have built up through the month with good numbers of **Flame Robins** now back in their usual haunts, such as those reported from Finch Central (off Coppins Crossing Road), Narrabundah Hill and the Chapman horse paddocks, Tharwa Sandwash and Tidbinbilla. Several **Rose Robins** have also been sighted at the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) and O'Connor Ridge. The observer at this latter site was able to enjoy watching a male **Rose Robin** as part of a particularly diverse mixed feeding flock. These winter feeding flocks often contain various **thornbills**, **Weebill**, **Grey Fantails**, and maybe a **Speckled Warbler**, **Scarlet Robin**, **White-throated Treecreeper** or **White-browed Scrubwren** or two; it is always worth closely checking mixed flocks as there is occasionally something a little more unexpected tagging along. Mixed feeding flocks will become more noticeable through June and always improve a cold winter morning's walk, otherwise our woodlands can seem very empty in winter.

Other garden birds to look out for in June include **Eastern Spinebills**, **White-eared Honeyeaters**, **King Parrots** and **Gang-gangs**. Small numbers of these birds, particularly the two parrots, are present and breed in our suburbs and around the Territory's lower woodlands, but their numbers all greatly increase across the Autumn-Winter months as birds move down from the ranges. Small flocks of **Gang-gangs** have been reported widely on the chatline; indeed, they have been around my house most mornings for the last month. As such, I thought they would be easy to find for friends who were visiting from Darwin late in the month. I should have known better - birding is never this easy!

The **Gang-gangs** didn't show at home that morning, so we tried the Botanic Gardens. No luck. We tried some spots in Deakin, Yarralumla, and Duffy. Again, no luck. With only a few hours before their homeward flight we headed out to the Fyshwick Ponds to look for **Blue-billed Duck** and then onto Newline Quarry for **Brown Treecreeper**. Thankfully, these birds performed immediately. As we were leaving Newline, we bumped into another local birder who mentioned that he had seen a lot of **Gang-gangs** recently at the Australian National University (ANU). So with 50 minutes before their flight, we decided on a quick run out to ANU – one lap of the campus, no luck, second lap, no luck, third lap almost complete and bingo! Five birds feeding low in a roadside tree! My friends were able to walk to within a metre of these most stunning cockatoos and spend five minutes watching one cheeky male continually steal the other birds' feeding spots. It was hard to drag them away for their flight!



One of the ANU Gang-gangs (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*) that showed up at the very last minute
(photo by Micha Jackson)



Immature Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*)
Note the dull spotting along the sides of the breast and the bright yellow gape patch

Photo by Micha Jackson
Narrabundah Hill—23/05/10

We actually started our day's birding on Narrabundah Hill in Duffy (also Jack's local spot). Among the highlights here were several young **Diamond Firetails**, including one bird begging loudly and being fed by adult birds. It is certainly still worth looking out for evidence of the apparently successful late breeding season spurred by the March rains and follow-up showers in April and May. **White-fronted Chats** also seem to have bred successfully late in the season; I saw young birds chasing adults along Cotter Road late in the month and other observers reported them along Warks Road mid-month. I wonder how many of the 20 birds seen at the Stromlo Forest stronghold were immature birds?

A final few birds to look out for in June include **Bassian Thrush** and **Crescent Honeyeater** in the ANBG, singing **Superb Lyrebirds** in the Brindabella Ranges and Namadgi National Park (don't forget the Tidbinbilla Survey of this winter breeder on 19 June) or perhaps even a **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** visiting gardens or woodlands along the Murrumbidgee River.

— Daniel Mantle

Field Trip reports

Sunday 16 May — Wanniasa Hills Reserve

Fifteen people turned up for this walk in Wanniasa Hills reserve on a beautiful morning weatherwise, and the birds didn't disappoint. One of the highlights occurred only a couple of minutes into the walk, when everyone got a good look at a **Wedgetail Eagle** sitting quietly about 20 metres from the group, low in a tree. It flew off after a few minutes, but was visible at several points during the walk. There were good numbers of **Red Wattlebirds**, **Weebills**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills**. **Two Rainbow Lorikeets** were an unexpected find, although we know they frequent nearby Farrer Ridge. The real highlight was a **Peregrine Falcon**, a first for a number of people on the outing, which, like the eagle, wasn't in a hurry to leave.

This was a new birding location for many people, but one they now want to come back to, for the varied vegetation, great views, and good birds. With my carpark birds before we started off, the list for the morning was 22 species.

— Sandra Henderson

Wednesday 19 May – Mid-week walk — Australian National Botanic Gardens

19 Members and guests assembled at the Australian National Botanic Gardens. By the time the facilitator arrived the usual car-park list had been compiled, including **Gang-gang Cockatoo**, a target bird for our guest from Coffs Harbour. Unfortunately it was the only observation of this species on the day.

Australian King-parrots were well in evidence, both visually and aurally. We wrote down a good set of **Honeyeaters** including **Red Wattlebird** (groups of up to four interacting all through the gardens, **New Holland Honeyeaters** and **Eastern Spinebills** dining furiously wherever there were flowering plants and **White-eared** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** up towards the canopy. The hoped for **Crescent Honeyeaters** were not visible on this side of Black Mountain.

We achieved (eventually) good views of a male **Rose Robin**, just coming into pink colouration. Several **Satin Bowerbirds** were seen in several locations including the Rainforest Gully and by the old bower near Tom's seat.

All up a very pleasant Autumn morning recording 29 species.

The venue for next month's walk is yet to be decided, depending on further research by a member of the group. An announcement (or two) will be made on the chatline when this is done, and an announcement will also be made at the next Monthly Meeting.

— Martin Butterfield



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Victoria
Tel: 03 9820 4223
Mob: 04173 10200

enquiries@philipmaher.com

2010: Celebrating 30 years of Plains-wanderers

23 June to 7 July

Top End

Darwin, Kakadu NP, Katherine,
Kununurra & optional Mitchell Plateau flight

11 to 15 July

Alice Springs &
MacDonnell Ranges

22 to 28 August

New Caledonian birds, butterflies and
flora tour

4 to 22 September

Strzelecki Track Outback Tour
31st Strzelecki tour!

Plains-wanderer Weekends:

6/7 & 20/21 November
4/5 & 18/19 December 2010

Proposed tours 2011: Laos, Malaysia, New Guinea

**Tour itineraries, bird lists, checklists
and latest news are on the website**

www.philipmaher.com

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.

Saturday 12 to Monday 14 June — Booderee National Park campout

The Queen's Birthday weekend campout will be held at Green Patch camp ground in Booderee National Park (Jervis Bay, south of Nowra). Possibles include: **Eastern Bristlebird**, **Ground Parrot** and **Southern Emu-wren**. Booderee National Park protects a very varied set of habitats so we should be able to work up a good list of sightings by taking some of the park's walks. We will aim to visit the Park's botanic garden, the abandoned site for a nuclear power station, and a ruined lighthouse with magnificent views along coastal cliffs. Depending on the weather, the itinerary will include a spotlight walk.

The leader is Con Boekel who was associated with the management of the park for five years. Con knows the area well and will share some of his interesting park management insights over the weekend. Participants will be expected to book their own accommodation and to arrange for their own catering. They are also reminded that June is in winter and that we can't guarantee the weather.

Places are limited. First in, first served; definite bookings only please. More detailed information will be sent to participants on registration. As Con will be away until late May please register with Sue Lashko by email to smlashko@gmail.com or phone 62514485.

Saturday 19 June — Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve- Superb Lyrebird survey.

Since the January 2003 bushfires, Peter Fullagar and Chris Davey have been monitoring the return of the **Superb Lyrebird** to an area of the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. They wish to get an idea of the present distribution within the reserve and are asking COG members to join them for a morning's survey. They are calling for expressions of interest to join them at 8.30am to walk the trails and to record the location of calling birds. Depending on the trails walked, the survey should take about three hours.

This outing will be a repeat of the very successful surveys conducted at this time of the year since 2004. If interested and for further details please contact Chris Davey on 62546324 (h), email chris_davey@aapt.net.au. Please note that if the weather is inappropriate on the Saturday we would try to run the survey the following day.

Saturday 26 June — Newline

This morning outing will be to woodland near the airport. Meet at 8am at the entrance to the road into Newline Quarry (look for a yellow sign) on the south side of Pialligo Avenue, about 1km east of the intersection with Glenora Drive (UBD map 71). This is a very busy road so take care when turning off Pialligo Ave. We should see a selection of woodland birds including **Brown Treecreeper**, **Jacky Winter** and **Southern Whiteface**. This is an easy walk but does involve some climbing over gates and through fences. Registration is not required. Leader: Sue Lashko, ph 62514485.

Sunday July 18th — Winter birding by bus.

Each autumn/winter a number of bird species come down from the mountains and higher areas around Canberra to spend the colder parts of the year in the suburbs or surrounding areas. Examples of these are two species of red-breasted **robins** (**Scarlet** and **Flame**) plus two species which are much less common (**Rose** and **Pink**), a number of species of **honeyeater** including the **White-eared**, **Fuscous**, **Brown-headed**, **Crescent** and the **Eastern Spinebill**, and the **Golden Whistler**. Several other species such as the **Dusky Woodswallow**, the **Grey Fantail** and the **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** will overwinter in the ACT in small numbers. The aim of this outing is to learn about them and to try to observe as many of these species within the ACT in the one day.

As is best suited for these types of outings, transport will be by two 12-seater buses. This involves a total of 24 people, and a decision has been made not to allow tag-a-long vehicles, otherwise the outing becomes logistically very unwieldy.

The point of departure will be the National Library car park at 8 am. This is quite central, close to where some species are expected to be, and where the parking is free. It will run until mid afternoon so that the buses can be returned late

that afternoon, so please bring morning tea and lunch. Costs will be about \$20 per person, including the COG admin fee, subject to filling both buses. This will be payable on boarding the bus. To book please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840 AH or by E-mail on jack.holland@environment.gov.au).

We will be visiting several spots in the ACT where these species are likely to be present. The exact itinerary will not be determined until very close to the day, and will depend on recent reports of where these birds are, though there will be an attempt to stay within the ACT boundaries.

NOTE: Cancellations at short notice which cannot be filled from await list may have to pay the full fare if a loss to COG results.

Sunday 25 July **– Eden Pelagic**

A pelagic birdwatching trip for COG members will be run from Eden Har-

bour on Sunday 25 July. We will travel to the edge of the continental shelf in search of seabirds, cetaceans and seals. At this time of year we may encounter several species of **albatross, petrels, giant-petrels, prions, skuas, storm-petrels and terns.**

We will meet at Eden Harbour at 6.45 am for a 7 am departure. We aim to return to dock by 3pm, thus leaving enough time to drive back to Canberra on Sunday afternoon. Organising travel and accommodation will be each individual's responsibility but no doubt there will be opportunities for car-pooling and an informal get-together for dinner/drinks in Eden on the Saturday evening.

As with all boating activities the trip will be weather dependent and rough seas could lead to the cancellation or postponement of the trip. Seasickness pills or other remedies are recommended for those prone to seasickness.

All participants should bring water, lunch, and sunscreen. More detailed instructions will be available closer to the day.

The cost will be \$100 AUD per person.

NOTE: This trip is now fully booked with a waiting list. However, should enough interest be noted, running trips on both the Saturday & Sunday (24/25th July) is still an option. To book the Saturday date we would need to confirm with the charter company shortly. A Saturday trip would involve the same costs and duration as noted above. Please book a place on this outing with Daniel Mantle (0413 554 500 or danmantle@hotmail.com), who will be happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you. The Saturday trip will be restricted to 12 participants and filled on a first reply basis.

Oolambeyan National Park - mid week in early September

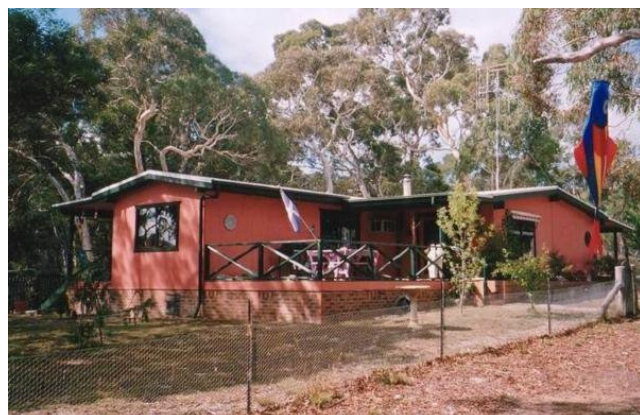
Expressions of interest are sought in a four nights, weekday field trip to this interesting national park in the northern Riverina (south of Carathool on the Sturt Highway) where COG has had several previous visits. Details/arrangements with the Ranger in charge can't be confirmed for a couple of months, however, dates will probably be Monday 13 to Friday 17 September and the group will be limited to six. Accommodation is in the homestead in shared bunk bedrooms,

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with use of cooking/bathroom facilities, and bring own bedding and food. As part of the visit, we expect to do some bird surveys (2 ha searches) at several monitoring sites in different habitats established on our visit last year. This adds to the interest of the stay and is easily incorporated into our general birdwatching program. A good range of birds occurs in the park (including **Plainswanderer**) and it is accessible to standard vehicles (short distance on dirt roads), except after rain. One participant with a 4 wheel drive vehicle is sought. Contact Jenny Bounds, ph 62887802 after 15 June to discuss.

Birds Australia Discovery Centre — Course update

An Introduction to Australian Plant Identification - special course for Birdwatchers

Dates: Over two Saturdays, 24 and 31 July 2010 – each session 9am to 1pm

Venue: Education Centre, Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, St Ives. Cost \$59

The course will appeal to those who wish to start or improve their knowledge of plants and identification skills or want to refresh those skills.

Practical workshops — great opportunities for those who would like to take their birding to another level

Field Survey Techniques — An introduction to behavioural studies using time/energy budgets and how to interpret results, including field techniques, point counts and incorporating GPS use. August 14- 15. Venue: TBA. Cost: free

An Introduction to Bird Banding – Country — September. Venue: Munghorn Gap (near Mudgee) Cost: free

An Introduction to Working with Seabirds — SOSSEA will introduce participants to banding and morphology (measurement) work with seabirds. 25 September 25th. Venue: Wollongong. Cost: free

For full details and registration requirements email basna@birdsaustralia.com.au or call Pixie on 02 9647 1033.

Call for bird surveyors

The Cowra Woodland Birds Program was established in 2000 under BASNA with the aim of helping to reverse the decline of woodland birds in the Cowra district. Birders are well aware of the plight of our native woodlands and their associated birds.

Our major on-going project is quarterly bird surveys. The first six years of data were analysed in a recent report – see <http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/our-projects/cowra-woodland-birds.html>. To improve our understanding of the trends in woodland bird populations, the report recommended continuing the surveys and increasing the number of sites of better-quality bird habitat. Thus, we have selected about 20 more sites for future surveys.

We now need a small number of extra volunteers to help with surveys. Perhaps some old faces will show up again but newcomers are welcome. A survey weekend usually involves:

- a team of two or three birders (one needs to be competent at woodland bird identification and GPS if possible)
- Friday night briefing for allocation of sites, maps and other information
- Saturday and Sunday morning surveys at about four sites per morning
- Saturday night social event with the other surveyors

Remaining survey weekends for 2010 are 16-18 July and 15-17 October.

Being a voluntary effort, surveyors have to meet all of their own costs. You don't have to commit to every survey weekend but we do need two to three more teams for each survey. To register your interest, please contact Malcolm Fyfe mfyfe@tpg.com.au

News from the committee

- Beth Mantle will be taking over the task of editing Canberra Bird Notes, and Roy Harvey will be managing the Sales Desk.
- A reminder that 2010-2011 subscriptions are due June 30. Subscriptions remain at \$35. Subscriptions can be paid by mail, by electronic transfer, or at a COG meeting. An application form with details of payment options can be found at page 9 and on the web-site (see the Gang-Gang page).
- COG will be helping to monitor gull breeding on Spinnaker Island in Lake Burley Griffin, where some habitat restoration is to be undertaken.
- The recent Woodlands Report, and COG's submission on the Molonglo development are available on the website.
- BOCA will be hosting a symposium on biodiversity in association with the Leeton Birdfair in September this year. COG has been asked for suggestions.
- COG bird route brochures are now available at the Canberra Visitor Centre and at the Botanic Gardens.

— Sandra Henderson (Secretary)

Workshop on recording bird calls

For all those interested in learning about how to go about recording bird sounds there will be a workshop on Saturday 17 July. COG is now in possession of two sets of recording gear that can be made available to members interested in collecting material for the new CD that COG is hoping to produce.

The workshop will be held at 1/11 Joy Cummings Place, Belconnen, starting at 09:00 and will last for a couple of hours. The workshop will start with a session on how to operate the equipment. We will then go outside to try and put into practice some of what we have learnt. All those interested please contact Chris Davey by email: chris_davey@aapt.net.au or tel: 62546324.

Bird Queensland Raffle

Proceeds to be used for the conservation research on the endangered **Bristlebird**



Prize: Original Oil Painting by Peter Slater — Value \$3,500

Closing Date: 24 August 2010

Drawing Date: 7 September 2010

National Threatened Species Day

Ticket Price: \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00

Winner will be notified by mail or phone. The result will be published in Birds Queensland Newsletter and via the web-site www.birdsqueensland.org.au.

To arrange the purchase of tickets please contact Marion Grover
marion.grover@gmail.com.

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Garden Bird Survey Notes

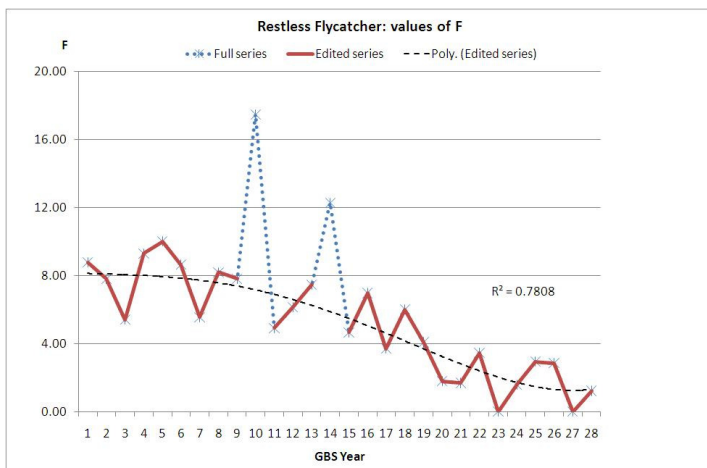
There have been several recent chatline postings that are directly GBS-relevant:

- **Eastern Yellow Robin** at Carwoola;
- **Red-browed Finches** fledging in O'Connor;
- **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** in Ainslie;
- **Olive-backed Oriole** (and migrating **Red Wattlebirds**) in Deakin;
- **Yellow Thornbill** in Scullin.

Restless (and moving on?)

In last month's column I mentioned a sighting of **Restless Flycatcher** together with a comment that the species appeared to have declined in the GBS since about Year 15 of the survey. I have now had time to investigate the observations of the species in more depth.

The species has never been common: in the peak year (10, 1990-91) it was ranked 84th of 130 species, in terms of the value of abundance (A). The value of this statistic has varied considerably over the years and there is no significant trend in the data.



As might be expected there is less variability in the value of F (the proportion of sites at which the species is recorded). Even so there appear to have been irruptions of the species in 1990-91 and 1994-95 giving high values of F which prevent a significant trend being observed. However, deleting those values (as outliers) from the series shows a trend of gradually decreasing observations since about Year 7.

The location of observations appears to have been spread fairly widely across the region up to the drop after Year 15 as shown in the table below.

Table: Proportion of active sites reporting Restless Flycatcher

Obs Year	GUNG'N -HALL	BELC'N	NORTH CANB	SOUTH CANB	WEST' CREEK	WODEN	KAMBAH	OTHER TUGG'NG	QUE'YAN	Other NSW
<16	71.4	45.9	29.8	4.2	23.5	12.2	86.7	60.0	50.0	0.0
16+	0.0	24.4	0.0	0.0	20.0	12.0	0.0	7.7	0.0	33.3

I have highlighted the SSDs with higher numbers of active sites and which show a marked decrease in observations of Restless Flycatchers after Year 15 (1995 – 96). There are too few observations in Gungahlin-Hall to assess the change.

— Martin Butterfield.

CANBERRA ORNITHOLOGISTS GROUP INC
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL / APPLICATION
2010-2011



INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

1. Membership fees are set at **\$35** for 2010-2011 and are due 1 July 2010 for most existing members - check your *Gang-gang/ CBN* label to confirm when your membership expires, and to find your membership number.

2. You can pay by **cash or cheque** at the meetings or by **cheque/money order** through the post – do not send cash.
Mail your payment to:

The Secretary
Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc
PO Box 301
CNVIC SQUARE ACT 2608

3. **Electronic fund transfer (EFT)** is only available to renewing members. If you pay your subscription by EFT please notify Sandra Henderson at conoffice@canberrabirds.org.au with details, and ensure you let us know of any changes in contact details. Ensure your initials, surname and/or COG number are on the transfer – if we cannot identify your payment you could be struck off as a non-renewer.

Transfer funds to:

Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc
St George Bank
A/C number 050111462
BSB 112-908

COG membership number (check mailing label) Title Name

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Telephone Home Work Mobile Email address

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*Family memberships: List names of all family members covered by membership

--

☐ Individual - \$35

☐ Institution - \$35

☐ * Family - \$35

☐ Student (18yrs or under) - \$17.50

☐ Canberra Birds Conservation Fund Donation \$

Total \$ *(office use only)*

Please mark boxes if you are you Interested In any of the following COG activities

Atlassing/Surveys ☐ Data entry ☐

Administration/Office ☐ Leading outings ☐

Publicity/Exhibition ☐ Youth education ☐

Publications ☐ Conservation ☐

If you would prefer to read either or both of the following COG publications on the COG website in lieu of receiving a printed copy, please tick the appropriate box(es) and you will be notified by email when it is uploaded to the web:

☐ *Gang-gang*

☐ *Canberra Bird Notes (CBN)*

Revised 30 April 2010

COG SALES



Birds of
Canberra
Gardens



Birds of Canberra Gardens (\$20.00 for book only or \$25.00 with ***Bird Calls of the ACT*** CD included - members prices only)

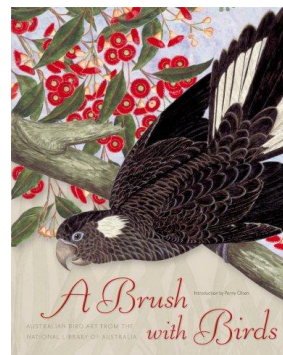
Nearly 230 bird species have been recorded in and around Canberra suburban gardens over the past 27 years in the COG Garden Bird Survey. The life and times of most of these birds are described in this book, illustrated with brilliant photographs and abundance graphs. *Birds of Canberra Gardens* describes the abundance and distribution of birds and discusses how and where to find them throughout the year. It also provides some ideas on how your garden may be made more attractive to native birds. *Birds of Canberra Gardens* is an excellent introduction to the birds of Canberra.

It demonstrates graphically the delights of nature that are available to us here in Canberra, as long as we open our eyes and ears.

Boom & Bust: Bird Stories for a Dry Country Edited by Libby Robin, Robert Heinsohn and Leo Joseph - \$27.00 for members.

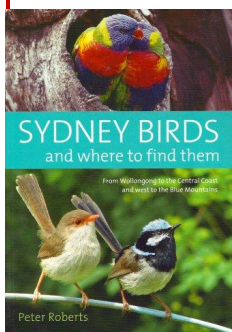
A Brush With Birds with Introduction by Penny Olsen (\$23.00 for members).

The paintings of Australian birds in *A Brush with Birds* are by artists whose work is represented in the National Library of Australia. They span the years from first settlement to the 1970s, telling us about the times as well as the birds, and showing how the style of bird art has evolved. This book is lavishly illustrated with vibrant and luscious art and it includes the stories of the artists behind the paintings. Enter the colourful world of birds such as the King Parrot, the Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, the Satin Bower Bird and the Red Goshawk, and be inspired by their beauty.



Owls: Frogmouths and Nightjars of Australia by David Hollands (\$55.00 for members)

The Owls of Australia: A Field Guide to Australian Night Birds by Stephen Debus, illustrated by Jeff Davies, photographs by David Hollands (\$20.00 for members)



Sydney Birds and Where to Find Them by Peter Roberts (25.00 for members)

Covering the Sydney Region from Wollongong to the Central Coast and West to the Blue Mountains, *Sydney Birds and Where to Find Them* features the 30 top bird-watching localities in and around Sydney. These birding hot spots stretch from Tuggerah Lakes on the Central Coast to Lake Illawarra near Wollongong and from the Blue Mountains in the west to some surprisingly accessible sites tucked away in the heart of the city. Each locality entry lists the key species to look out for, including rare and seasonal visitors. It describes how to access the location, both by public transport and road, and what amenities to expect; maps are featured wherever necessary. The main section gives precise details about where to look for certain birds. There is also a handy list of Sydney birds, each entry providing information on the best spots to find it, its rarity, and helpful tips about its habits and haunts, such as where it roosts or nests. This invaluable guide will take you to some beautiful places, many of which you may never otherwise discover.

Also titles from CSIRO Publishing's Australian Natural History series (\$27.00 each for members):

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Avian Whimsy #82 — Ones of a Kind — Part 2

The story so far: Last month we headed off to boldly go, well not quite where no-one has gone before, but trekking nonetheless; however in our case, the stars that were our goal were birds. More specifically, our goal was all of the very special birds – yes, a tautology I know – which are the sole representatives of their entire families. We headed off in search of 28 of them, but for reasons I shall explain that number has crept up (or perhaps down) a little as we fly across the Atlantic to Europe to continue our quest.

A month is a long time in birding, and I have learnt a little more in the interim. For instance it has been pointed out to me that no less an authority than Wikipedia defines ‘monotypic’ (which is how I have been describing these one-species families) differently for animals and plants. My usage is good for plants, but for animals I am urged to use the term only for a taxon (any taxonomic unit, but Family in our case) which has ‘only one immediately subordinate taxon’. In simpler terms that means that a monotypic family is one which has only one genus, although that genus may have several species. Nonetheless I am going to persist in the usage, as I think we all know what I mean.

Harvey has also drawn my attention to the *International Ornithological Congress’ World Bird List* (IOC), of at least equal authority to the *Handbook of the Birds of the World List* (HBW), which I was generally using as a guide. Inevitably there are some minor discrepancies; for instance IOC would disqualify **Osprey**, as foreshadowed last time, by dividing it into two species (though allowing it to keep its own family), but when we saw it, it was still valid!

However, we’re about to land at Heathrow, so time to switch off the brain for the next hour or so... A quick whizz down to the vast wetlands of the Norfolk Broads will allow us to add **Bearded Reedling** (still just a **Tit** when I saw it some decades back). Across to the Alps now for the gloriously scarlet-winged **Wallcreeper** and, as long as it’s summer, to lower elevations for the fabulous **Hoopoe**, surely one of the Great Birds. (And if it’s winter we’ll catch up to it when we fly south to Africa.) However... this is another that IOC would deprive us of, by dividing it into three species, giving full status to the African and Madagascan species; they already have good support for that too.

And while thinking of Africa, let’s do it! I’d recommend Uganda; **Ostrich**, the magnificently shuffle-mincing **Secretarybird** and brooding **Hamerkop** are widespread in many sub-Saharan lands, but the swamps of western Uganda are perhaps the most accessible haunt of the wildly improbable great **Shoebill**. (IOC though would respectfully withhold **Ostrich** from our quest, by dividing it into two species, separating out **Somali Ostrich**.) A quick hop to the east coast, and some local Kenyan or Tanzanian knowledge will find us **Crab Plover**, looking like a **Beach Stone-curlew** dressed as a stilt. Before we leave the far-from-Dark Continent, we must cross the Mozambique Channel to Madagascar, surely near the top of any biologist’s wish list. The prize here is the strange and wonderful big **Cuckoo-roller**, which IOC (but not HBW) elevates to the same lofty perch as the **Hoatzin** we marvelled over in Peru – the sole member of an entire Order!

North again, and in the United Arab Emirates in spring we may find small flocks, if we’re lucky, of **Hypocolius**, passing through between their wintering grounds in Saudi Arabia and their breeding range in Iran, Iraq and Pakistan – none of which are perhaps good birding options just now. East to the Himalayas for the near-mythical **Ibisbill**, where you may have to be prepared for some serious high altitude searching in the high shingly river valleys where they breed, though in winter some oblige by descending into north-west India.

For the last stage of our quest we may shed our cold climate woollies to fly south to north-central Indonesia, starting in Borneo. We have two targets here in the steamy lowland rainforests, starting with the romantically named **Bornean Bristlehead**, a rare and beautiful redhead which lurks high in the canopy. Having finally got a glimpse of it, we can now look down for the quail-thrush-like **Rail-babbler**, working the ground litter. Were it not for the IOC our job would now be done, but to be certain we must make another hop east, still in Indonesia, to the mountains of Sulawesi where the **Hylocitrea**, or **Yellow-flanked Whistler** continues to puzzle the taxonomists, who can’t decide if it’s a whistler, or wax-wing, or something different all together. We’ll opt for the latter.

It’s only a short stage now to Darwin and home, to marvel at our adventures, and perhaps ponder on the odd ways of birders. Don’t let your passport expire though; bird evolution doesn’t proceed that rapidly, but taxonomists’ understanding of it does, and the definitive list of Monotypic Marvels is yet to be written.

— Ian Fraser (ianf@pcug.org.au)



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July deadline

Wednesday 24 June 2010

Please send, articles, advertisements, updates etcetera to the Editors at
gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au
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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.

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