

# Gang-gang

November 2009

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

## November meeting

**7:30pm Wednesday 11.11.09**

*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.*

As part of a Year 12 Special Project, **Tobias Hayashi** has been studying Australian albatrosses. His short presentation will be "**Albatrosses off the coasts of NSW and how to identify them**".

**Dr Lisa Doucette**, Zoology, University of New England, Armidale NSW will give the main presentation entitled "**Survival Tactics of the Owlet-Nightjar: One of Australia's Most Unique Birds**".

The **Australian owlet-nightjar** (*Aegotheles cristatus*) is a sedentary, nocturnal, avian insectivore that uses a variety of adaptations to successfully inhabit diverse habitats throughout Australia. Lisa will present results from 3 years of field study on owlet-nightjars in two diverse Australian habitats, the semi-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## What to watch out for this month

Up to the end of September the influx of migrant species continued with reports of the arrival of the first **Mistletoebird** and **Leaden Flycatchers**, but judging from postings on the chat line, and activity in my local patch, the cool wet weather for the first half of October put a dampener on proceedings, with only sightings of a **Rainbow Bee-eater** and a **Dollarbird** as new arrivals in that period. My observations, shared by several other members was that many of the arrived migrants were rather cryptic and hardly called during that time, or at least did not give full calls.

The sudden burst of warmer weather at the beginning of the third week got things moving again, starting with an observation of a **Rufous Fantail** in the ANBG, followed by a flood of reports of **Rainbow Bee-eater** sightings

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Committee News

The new Committee, elected at the COG AGM, is:

**President:** Chris Davey   **Secretary:** Sandra Henderson

**Treasurer:** Lyn Rees

**Committee members:** Jenny Bounds, Sue Lashko, Tony Lawson, Beth Mantle, Dan Mantle, Con Boekel, Matthew Frawley, Lia Battisson, Michael Robbins, David Rees

- Steve Wilson's set of Canberra Bird Notes will be donated to the ACT Heritage Library.
- COG has been asked to provide input to planned plantings of drooping she-oaks.
- Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) will work on a master plan for the Jerrabomberra Wetlands. Chris Davey attended a roundtable on the Wetlands.
- *Birds of Canberra Gardens* is almost ready to go to the printer.

**Everyone welcome**

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(November Meeting—Continued from page 1)

arid desert of central Australia and the comparatively cold, eucalypt woodlands atop the Northern Tablelands of NSW. Energetically, both habitats should be taxing for a small, nocturnal bird, yet owlet-nightjars are successful and abundant at both sites.

Lisa's research revealed that the ability of these birds to exist in different habitats relies inherently on their ecological flexibility. Energy saving behaviours, including selecting rock crevices and tree hollows with ideal thermal microclimates as roost sites, using a variety of foraging tactics that are specific to habitat type, and aggressively defending known territories, allowed owlet-nightjars to efficiently exploit energetically demanding habitats. Owlet-nightjars also possess a unique physiology, including a consistently low metabolic rate and the ability to reduce their body temperature to as low as 18°C and enter torpor (daily hibernation) to save energy during winter.

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(What to watch out for—continued from page 1)

(32 birds in one instance), and reports of the first **Satin Flycatcher**, **Cicadabird**, **Brown Songlark** and **Brush Cuckoo** observations. There were also several reports of the **Channel-billed Cuckoo** and of the **Eastern Koel**, the number of the latter arriving being difficult to determine since their posting on the chat line has been discouraged.

However, the most striking observations towards the end of this week and over the Blitz weekend were the large numbers of **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallows**, many passing high overhead (usually in S/SW direction), but also resting in trees or feeding close to the ground, with some very big flocks of between 300 to 500+ seen. Dismissing the unlikely event that the many observers saw the same birds, as they were seen all over the COG area of concern, it is estimated many thousands may have been passing through, with in one case a very significant proportion of the masked form, which usually forms a much lower percentage in the eastern states.

Whether any will stay to breed is still unclear, as is the question of where they were coming from and moving to. Members familiar with these species inland will know of their nomadic movements, sometimes in huge flocks, and the often frenetic feeding activity when they do land. Certainly this was my experience while on the very dry Canning Stock Route last year, with a variable but often a continuous stream overhead of the masked, moving in the same SW direction, starting from as early as at day break, and then coming upon a group of several hundred on the ground exploiting a food resource.



Photo by Stuart Harris

**Rufous Songlark**  
(*Cincloramphus mathewsi*)

One also wonders why are they moving through the ACT this year considering, at least to my understanding, that drought conditions are not as severe inland as in previous years, and certainly not in the Riverina. Perhaps this is a misconception, with the recent sighting of a **Black Honey-eater** in the ACT and the observation of up to seven **Black-tailed Native Hen** at Norgrove Park/Jerrabomberra wetlands, an indication that things aren't yet quite as bright as they may be.

With the exception of the **Horsfield's Bushlark**, it now appears that all summer migrants one might expect in most years have now arrived in variable numbers. From the E-mail exchanges on the chat line it appears the **Rufous Songlark** is here in very high numbers, with the picture less clear, perhaps due to the cooler weather and slow season, for the **White-winged Triller**, **Sacred Kingfisher** and the **Rainbow Bee-eater**. My impression, supported by my observations in the higher country during the Blitz, is that many species are still moving through and are yet to start

establishing territories in preparation for breeding. Certainly in my local patch in NW Cooleman Ridge/Narrabundah Hill numbers compared with the past 5 years are down and many of the arrivals are not yet calling fully. So please keep an eye out for still arriving migrants, including in your local areas.

Despite the slow start, if the rain keeps up regularly it could be a very good breeding season locally as conditions seem better than they have for a few years. Evidence of breeding is one of the most important activities that can be entered into the COG database, so please make sure you do so, with observations taken over time during a breeding event particularly valuable. Learn more about local breeding and how to find nesting activity and behaviour by joining in the Nest Workshop at Campbell Park on Sunday 15 November.

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This annual event is particularly suitable for newer members, though more experienced birders and repeat customers will also be welcomed.

— Jack Holland

## Field Trip reports

### Oolambeyan National Park — 14-18 September 2009

We managed to time the COG visit to the park perfectly, between a very hot week and a colder period, so we had three sunny, mild days and good birding, before weather conditions changed and 10ml of rain fell on the last afternoon. We explored various habitats in this park in the northern Riverina of NSW, did some bird surveys at monitoring sites where weed and rabbit control is being undertaken, as well as general birding and spotlighting on foot. The spotlighting was very rewarding with **Stubble Quail** with tiny babies, **Little Button-quail**, **Tawny Frogmouth** and **Boobook Owl**.

The early spring wildflowers in the native grasslands were stunning this year, with many different paper daisies in mass flowering. On the birds front, the trip highlights were close views of **Black Honeyeater**, **Crimson Chats** and **Black-eared Cuckoo**, plus a large group (50) of **White-winged Trillers**, flocks of **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallows**, and **Black Falcon**. There were many grassland birds breeding as you would expect and **Brown Songlarks** were particularly abundant, and other birds like **Banded Lapwing** and **Emus** had young. There were also abundant kangaroos of three species (Red, Eastern Grey and Western Grey) around. The bird mix was a little different to the last visit in October 2006 when conditions were much drier, with fewer raptors around, for example. We did not get to see **Plainswanderer** this time; unfortunately, the rain downpour on the last afternoon meant the vehicles could not go out into the paddocks. COG wishes to thank the Ranger, Michelle, for allowing us to visit. All things going well, I am expecting to take a COG group there again in spring 2011, so we can continue to collect data at the bird monitoring sites, and enjoy the birds at this large and interesting park. — **Jenny Bounds**

### October Long Weekend – Holbrook area

COG's long week-end trip was to the Holbrook area on the western slopes of southern NSW. The weather was a bit ordinary at times – wet and very cold – but everything else was fantastic, largely due to the excellent organisation by David McDonald. Our group of 10 stayed 3 nights in the extremely comfortable Glenfalloch shearer's quarters, a property about 20km north east of Holbrook.

On the first day we ventured half an hour to the west to spend some time exploring Nest Hill Nature Reserve. While the drizzle was a little disappointing we came across a lot of birds as soon as we went through the gate. Straight away we could hear **Stubble Quail** calling from the adjoining wheat field however they weren't going to show themselves. It also took us some time to decide the flycatcher call belonged to **Restless Flycatchers**. We then moved into the centre of the forest where we walked some of the tracks finding **Buff-rumped Thornbills** and **Red-capped Robins**. Our lunch stop and afternoon walking was in the southern end of the nearby Livingstone National Park. This was quite different habitat and included a lot of colourful wildflowers.



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**New Plains-wanderer weekend**  
5/6 December 2009

**2010**

**29 Jan to 7 Feb**  
**SW Western Australia**  
bird and mammal tour

**8 to 12 Feb**  
**Christmas Island**

**11 to 28 March**  
**Thailand**  
co-led by Uthai Treesucon

**New Guinea**  
**Postponed to 2011**

**23 June to 7 July**  
**Top End**  
Darwin, Kakadu NP, Katherine,  
Kununurra & Mitchell Plateau

**11 to 15 July**  
**Alice Springs &**  
**MacDonnell Ranges**

**July**  
**New Caledonia**

**4 to 22 September**  
**Strzelecki Track Outback Tour**  
31<sup>st</sup> Strzelecki tour!

**2010 Plains-wanderer Weekends**  
20/21 November 4/5 December 18/19  
December 2010

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

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Sunday's outing was to Benambra National Park to the west of Holbrook. Public access is not normally available to this park, however COG were given permission by NSW National Parks to spend a day birding in there. While crossing half dozen private paddocks (each with its own style of gate) getting to the park boundary we encountered some more **Stubble Quail** on the track as well as lots of both **Brown** and **Rufous Songlarks**. Again, the edge effect gave us our biggest rewards. While walking along the fence line **Hooded Robins**, **Diamond Firetails**, **White-browed Bblers**, **Crested Shrike-tits** and many other species were seen. A Yellow-footed Antechinus was also seen by a fortunate few near the entrance gate. We spent the remainder of the day exploring other areas of the park with many stops in different habitat types. **Painted Button-quail** slowly

crossing the road was particularly exciting for those that were lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time. Orchids were prolific in this Park with around seven species being identified by the group. There were so many wildflowers in bloom in all the areas we visited that it was easy to be amused whenever there was a lull in bird calls.

On our way home on Monday we stopped at Kyeamba Travelling Stock Reserve for a couple of hours followed by another couple of hours at Mates Gully TSR near Tarcutta. These were dynamite birding spots – they are both large blocks with interesting bush and easy access. Highlights included **Cockatiels** and **Brown Quail** in the first and a **Black-eared Cuckoo** and **Varied Sittellas** on a nest in the second.

Overall we saw around 100 species. Other notable birds included **Horsefields**, **Fantail** and **Pallid Cuckoos**, **Fuscous Honeyeaters**, **White-winged Trillers**, **White-browed**, **Masked** and **Dusky Woodswallows**, **Jacky Winter**, **Flame** and **Eastern Yellow Robins**, **Leaden Flycatcher** and **Brown Treecreepers**.

Thanks to David McDonald for organising an interesting, varied and full weekend. — **John Goldie**



**Australian Wood Duck**  
( *Chenonetta jubata* )

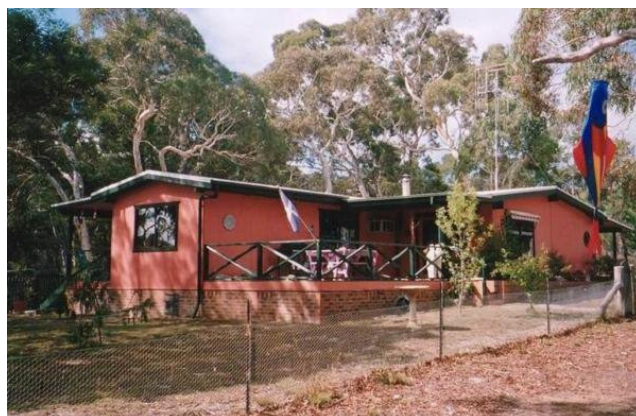
Photo by Dimitris Bertzeletos

## **Moon Cottage**

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## **Mittagong overnight stay — 10 and 11 October 2009**

A very small party of three travelled together to Mittagong stopping at the Cecil Hoskins Reserve on the Wingecarrabee River in mid-afternoon. Despite the overcast conditions we saw or heard 24 species, including **Swamp Harrier** and **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo**. We had very good views of **Striated Thornbill**, which obliged by cavorting for some time within a few metres of where we were standing. The only evidence of breeding was **Brown Thornbill** feeding young.

We then drove on into Mittagong and stopped at Lake Alexandra. All the usual waterbirds were there, as well as **Australasian Grebe**, **Hardhead** and **Little Pied Cormorant**. **Australian Wood Duck** had several young. A walk along the nearby track produced Waratahs in bloom, as were many other spe-

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cies of wildflower. It was a very pleasant walk indeed. 25 species, including **Golden Whistler**, **Satin Bowerbird**, **Eastern Spinebill**, **Laughing Kookaburra** and **Eastern Whipbird** were observed. The only breeding record was an **Australian Magpie** on a nest.

We had sufficient time then to book into our motel and relax for a little while before meeting again at the Spanish restaurant, where we enjoyed a chat over tapas and a glass of wine. We arranged to meet at 8am in the morning and retired to bed at a reasonable hour.

It had rained overnight, but the clouds held off for our walk along the Darch Track on Sunday morning. We spent 45 minutes there and observed 23 species in all, including a **Rock Warbler**, albeit fleeting glimpses. Other highlights included **Red-browed Finch**, **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** and a **Southern Boobook**, sitting quietly in a Casuarina.

At 9am we arrived at the car park at the Box Vale Track and before we left the carpark we had seen about 10 species. As the morning wore on it warmed up to a very nice day. On Welby Dam we saw 12 species, including **Black Swan** and **Musk Duck**. Further along the track we heard a **Pilotbird** and saw **Varied Sittella**, **Olive-backed Oriole** and **Red-browed Treecreeper**, amongst other things. Again, there were many wildflowers in bloom, and we were fortunate to have good views of a koala which one of the locals had located.

It was a most enjoyable weekend. Thank you, Jack, for organising. — **Lia Battisson**

## **Tinderry Nature Reserve, Sunday 18 October 2009**

Fine sunny weather helped to maximise the view of the main Tidbinbilla Range as the 13 participants climbed into the Tinderry Range east of Michelago.

We couldn't have asked for a much better welcome to the car park and start of the walk than the call of a **Wonga Pigeon**. A total of 24 species were recorded, mostly species characteristic of a higher elevation, tall Eucalypt environment. A highlight was excellent views of a male **Flame Robin** on a shrub at ground level. Above the canopy we recorded a **Brown Goshawk**. Other species recorded included **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**, **Crimson Rosellas**, **Fan-tailed Cuckoos**, **White-throated Treecreepers**, good numbers of **Yellow-faced**, **White eared** and **White-naped honey-eaters**, a **Satin Bowerbird** and an estimated **20 Grey Fantails**. Some attractive native plants were flowering including *Grevillea lanigera*.

Another highlight was finding a long straight log on which all 13 participants could sit for morning tea!

— **Ian Anderson**

## **Wednesday Walk — 21 October 2009**

A small group of members and friends met on a cloudless morning for the regular COG walk, this month held on Mount Rogers in Fraser. As we arrived, the booming call of **Common Bronzewing** was evident and we saw three pairs, including one nest building, on the northern side of the reserve. We were fortunate to be joined by a member living near the reserve who contributed her specialised local knowledge, and also took us on a short diversion to view a pair of nesting **Tawny Frogmouths** in a private garden. Migrant species like **Noisy Friarbird** and **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, were seen in good numbers but the one **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** was quite cryptic and difficult to see. Although **Superb Parrots** were reported in the area earlier in the morning we were unable to locate them. We saw a total of 32 species, and recorded six of those breeding. — **Margaret Robertson**

## **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.

## **Sunday 8 November — Tuggeranong Hill NR — Extended morning**

Enjoy a walk on one of the prominent landmarks of the Tuggeranong region and a place that hasn't been the location for a COG field trip for at least a decade - although it is a part of the regular woodland survey. Tuggeranong Hill Nature Reserve contains a variety of habitats and commands some spectacular views of the surrounding region. No target species identified for this outing but we will record everything we observe to provide valuable records for the database.

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An invitation has been extended to the local park care group, who have people keen to join us and impart their hands-on local knowledge of the habitat, birds and rich history, both European and Indigenous, of this unique area. Note that medium fitness is required as this walk will cover some sections of steep terrain. Please bring along your own supplies for morning tea, as well as water and sunscreen.

Meet at 8am at the Callister Crescent entrance in Theodore, which has ample off-street parking. For further information or to register, contact Matthew Frawley on 6155 1358 (work), 6296 1026 (home), or email: [frawley.matthew@gmail.com](mailto:frawley.matthew@gmail.com).

## Sunday 15 November — Campbell Park, Morning Nest workshop

This will be a repeat of the very successful practical nest workshops held over the past six years at Campbell Park. This very informal outing has again been timed to co-incide with the peak of the breeding season. The morning will start with the usual very short presentation including tips on the types of nests built by different species of birds, and how to find nests or nesting behaviour. This will be followed by several hours putting this into practice, looking for signs of nesting etc, which will also allow plenty of opportunity for bird watching.

This workshop is particularly suitable for beginners or those relatively new to birdwatching, though more experienced members and repeat customers are also welcome. Though every year has been different it is expected we won't be walking very far as there is usually a "hot spot" where most of the nesting occurs. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840 A/H or by E-mail on [jack.holland@environment.gov.au](mailto:jack.holland@environment.gov.au).

Meet at 8:00 am at the picnic tables at the far end of the car park. Take Northcott Drive up to the start of the Campbell Park Offices, where you take the right fork and keep to the outside of the very large car park, skirting it until you get to the end. Intending participants might also like to look at the map on the COG web site under the Maps, Forms and Lists button. As usual Jack would appreciate any tips on where the nesting is occurring close to the day.

## Saturday to Sunday 21-22 November — Frogs' Hole Creek, Frogmore — campout on private property

COG has been invited for a fourth visit to observe the birds on this property at Frogmore, 26 km to the NE of Boorowa, and about 2 hours drive from Canberra. This is an undulating bush block of close to 150 ha, with a large number of old eucalypts of several species including Yellow Box, White Box and Apple Box and patches of very old Black Cypress Pine. A large number of plantings have gone in over recent years and quite a lot of re-growth of callitris and other native species is evident since grazing was limited. Over 130 different species have been recorded here, including a number which are close to their eastern limit such as **Cockatiel, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Gilbert's Whistler and Apostle-bird.**



Photo by Frank Antram

**Blue-faced Honeyeater**  
( *Entomyzon cyanotis* )

A total of 75, 80 and 66 bird species were recorded during the COG weekend visits in late April 2005, September 2006 and October 2007. Ten new bird species were added to the property list. Species not usually seen in Canberra included **Peaceful Dove, Little Friarbird, Striped Honeyeater, Black-chinned Honeyeater, Grey-crowned Babbler, Pied Butcherbird and Black-eared Cuckoo.** Other good sightings were **Jacky Winter, Diamond Firetail, Hooded**

and **Red-capped Robin, Southern Whiteface, Brown Treecreeper, Restless Flycatcher, Crested Shrike-Tit, Superb Parrots, White-browed and Masked Woodswallows, an Australian Owlet-nightjar, and a Tawny Frogmouth.** A surprise on one visit was seeing **Spotless Crakes** in the reed beds of the creek. While not every species can be expected this time, there are few places close to Canberra where such an extensive and varied list can be seen within such a small area. This follow up visit is timed a month later than last time and most of the spring migrants should be breeding. We will again be camping overnight at the lovely spot near the creek on a take everything in, take everything out basis. Participants will arrive early afternoon on the Saturday, and it is expected we'll stay until mid Sunday afternoon. Car pooling will be encouraged, so if you're interested please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840 AH or by E-mail on [jack.holland@environment.gov.au](mailto:jack.holland@environment.gov.au)).

## DRAFT PROGRAM – COG 2010 FIELD TRIPS

Date	Place	Type of Event
Sun 17 January	Brindabellas	All day
Sun 7 February	Jerrabomberra wetlands (World Wetlands Day)	Morning
Mon-Thu 15-18 Februry	Ulladulla	Post School Holidays mid-week accommodated
Sun 21 February	Gossan Hill Nature Reserve	Morning
Sat-Mon 6-8 March (8/3 is Canberra Day)	Nangar National Park	Long weekend camp-out
Sun 14 March	Molonglo Reach	Morning boat cruise
Sat 27 March	Gungahlin Hill	Afternoon
Fri-Mon 2-5 April (Easter)	Errinundra National Park	Extended long-weekend campout
Sat 10 April	Brindabellas	Afternoon-evening (owls)
Sun 18 April	Scottsdale surveys	Morning
Sun 2 May	Botanic gardens	Beginners morning
Sat 15 May	Wanniassa Hills Nature Reserve	Morning
Sat 29 May	Kelly Swamp	Community event
12-14 June long weekend	Budderoo National Park	Long weekend camp-out
Sat 19 June	Tidbinbilla	Lyrebird survey
Sun 27 June	Newline	Afternoon
Sun 18 July	Winter birds	Day bus trip
Sun 25 July	Wollongong or Eden	Pelagic day trip
Sat 7 August	Lake Ginninderra	Beginners morning
Sun 22 August	TSRs and Nature Reserves of the Bungendore area	Morning
Sat-Sun 5-6 September	Little Forest near Ulladulla	Stay in nearby campground
Sat-Sun 11-12 September	Private property near Mundoonen NR	Camp-out on private property
Fri-Sun 17-19 September	Monga National Park (4WD only)	Weekend camp-out
Sat-Mon 2-4 October long weekend	Croajingalong	Long weekend camp-out
Sat-Sun 9-10 October	Joint outing with Goulburn Field Naturalists	Overnight accommodated
Sun 17 October	Scottsdale surveys	Morning
Mon-Fri 18-22 October	?	Mid-week camp-out
Sat-Sun 30-31 October	6 <sup>th</sup> Annual Bird Blitz	All day atlassing
Sat 6 November	Private property near Collector	Morning
Sun 14 November	Campbell Park	Nest workshop
Sat-Sun 20-21 November	Bumbalong Valley	Overnight camp-out
Sat 4 December	Yanununbeyan (near Captain's Flat)	Morning

Please forward any comments or suggestions to Matthew Frawley, [frawley.matthew@gmail.com](mailto:frawley.matthew@gmail.com).  
Especially keen in hearing from anyone who would like to lead a trip.



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# Gleanings

*(An occasional column featuring items from the COG Chatline which catch the Editor's interest)*

## Cocoparra National Park — Fivebough Wetlands — Binya State Forest and Oolambeyan National Park

Some extracts from a report by Tobias Hyashi on a recent trip to the Riverina.

I have just returned from a five night camping trip to the Griffith area in the Riverina, based at the camping area, Woolshed Flat, in Cocoparra NP. The weather was mostly fine, partly windy and partly rainy, mostly a light drizzle.

We picked up the usual suspects on the way there, including **Australian Kestrel**, a **Major Mitchell's Cockatoo**, **Superb Parrot** and **Spotted Harrier**.

At Cocoparra, a partial clearing a couple of hundred metres further along the road that runs past the Woolshed camping area proved to be the best place for birding and photography. Our bag during our stay included several **Crimson Chats**, good numbers of **Brown Treecreepers**, **Black-eared Cuckoos** passing through, a pair of **Red-backed Kingfishers**, two **Hooded Robins**, a male **Crested Bellbird**, lots of **Jacky Winters**, 20+ **Budgerigars**, a couple of **Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters**, a large flock of mixed **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallows** (200+ birds), lots of **Southern Whiteface**, **White-browed Babblers**, **Speckled Warblers**, good numbers of **Mulga Parrots**, lots of **White-winged Trillers** and a pair of **Varied Sitella** nesting near the campsite.

At Binya SF (south of the Highway) we found lots of **Yellow Thornbills** (including nesting), several **Mistletoebirds**, a male **Painted Honeyeater**, **White-eared** and **Brown-headed Honeyeaters**, quite a few **Singing Honeyeater**, a party of **Splendid Fairy-wrens** and lots of **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters** and **Red-capped Robins**. Also **Double-barred Finch**, **Little Eagle**, **Cockatiels** mating, **Striped Honeyeater**.

At Fivebough Wetlands, we got **Swamp Harrier**, lots of **Glossy Ibis**, **Little Grassbird**, **Black-tailed Native-Hens**, heaps of **Red-kneed Dotterels**, one **Baillon's Crake**, a group of 11 **Marsh Sandpiper**, several **Whiskered Terns**, **Intermediate Egret** and hundreds of **Australian Shelduck**.

At the MIA State Forest there were views of **Yellow Rosella**, **Tree Martins**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, an immature **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** flying over, a group of **White-breasted Woodswallows** and two **Little Friabirds**. From here we moved on to Tuckerbill Swamp near Leeton, getting a nesting **Banded Lapwing** on a dry paddock opposite the swamp. The woodland just before the swamp was very good, producing a large flock of **Zebra Finches**, two **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos**, and a **Red-backed Kingfisher**. The Swamp itself was very dry but we spotted **Red-necked Stints**, **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers**, and **Marsh Sandpipers**.

Saturday was probably the best day of the trip. We headed out to Oolambeyan NP, a bit over two hours drive from the camping area at Cocoparra. Just after hitting the first stretch of dirt road leading into Oolambeyan, we came across a flock of **Black-faced Woodswallows**, hovering and feeding amongst **White-winged Trillers** and **Australian Pipits**. The open grasslands around the area was chocker block full of **Brown Songlarks**, calling everywhere. South of the Oolambeyan homestead we observed a female **Australian Hobby** hunting [and eventually successfully catching] a juvenile **Blue Bonnet**. Soon after, we were set upon by two **Black Falcons**, soaring above the area. They got very annoyed when a pair of **Wedge-tailed Eagles** flew in, and we had great views of one of the birds dive-bombing the Wedgies. We also had nice views of a **Spotted Harrier**, **Nankeen Kestrel**, two **Black Kites** and a pale morph **Brown Falcon**. This all happened within 300m and half an hour; it was a truly amazing experience, with at least seven raptors viewed. There were also **Nankeen Kestrel**, **Brown Falcon** and **Australian Hobby** nests in the area.

We then hit the paddocks, managing to flush a **Little Button-Quail** (showing very conspicuous white flanks). On our way out, just within the NP border, we hit upon a great little feeding flock. There were 30+ **Crimson Chats**, **White-fronted Chats**, two **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos**, 30+ **Budgerigars**, **Rufous Songlarks**, **Brown Songlarks**, and **Australian Pipits**. The real highlight for me was a male and two female **White-winged Fairy-wrens**.

All in all, an excellent trip. We recorded 148 outside of the ACT border. Four of these were lifers for me.

— Tobias Hayashi



# Australian Birdfair

LEETON NSW, 13-15 NOVEMBER 2009

The Australian Birdfair showcases our native wild birds, and the ecosystems of which they are part and dependent upon.



Australia: The Land of Parrots

**VENUE** Yanco Agricultural Institute, Leeton-Narrandera Road Trunk Road 80, Yanco (8 km south of Leeton). Shady, full equipped facilities including air-conditioned conference and seminar rooms, catering and accommodation.

**EXHIBITORS** An invitation is extended to potential exhibitors wishing to be part of the Australian Birdfair. Please see contact details below.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Flights of Fivebough** The very popular meet and greet BBQ held at Fivebough Wetlands. Enjoy the spectacle of thousands of Glossy Ibis and Whiskered Terns come to roost together with the many thousand of other waterbirds.
- **Birdwatching Tours by TEMP**
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# Wetlands & Waterbirds Conference

MANAGING FOR RESILIENCE

The Wetlands and Waterbirds Conference is organised by Fivebough and Tuckerbill Wetlands Trust, Charles Sturt University and the Waterbird Society.

## PLENARY SPEAKERS

- **Professor Max Finlayson** A wetland ecologist and past-Chair of the Ramsar Wetland Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel and past-President of Wetland International's Supervisory Council.
- **Assoc. Prof. David Paton AM** Graduate of the University of Adelaide (B.Sc. Hons) and Monash University (Ph.D.) has contributed to the understanding and management of Australia's natural environment for three decades.
- **Dr Chris Elphick** Assistant Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, at the University of Connecticut.
- **Dr Iain Taylor** Vertebrate ecologist working mainly on wetlands and waterbirds, with research concentrating on the ecology and conservation of waterbirds in estuarine and inland freshwater wetlands and on the significance of rice fields as a habitat for waterbirds.
- **Dr Ajit Pattanaik** CEO Chilika Development Authority (Ramsar wetlands), India.

Delegates wishing to present papers, contact Dr Iain Taylor  
E [itaylor@csu.edu.au](mailto:itaylor@csu.edu.au)

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W [www.fivebough.org.au/wetlands-and-waterbirds-conference](http://www.fivebough.org.au/wetlands-and-waterbirds-conference)



LEETON NSW, 9-12 NOVEMBER 2009



Images Peter Merritt [www.merittimages.com](http://www.merittimages.com)

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## Woodland Project — Spring surveys report

Thank you to all who braved unseasonably cold weather conditions to get their spring surveys done!!

**Hall/Gold Creek:** Alison Rowell reported that the survey on 1 October on a leasehold near Hall was mainly notable for low numbers of birds, even though the weather was better than some other surveyors had experienced at their sites in the previous week. Both **Gerygones** were heard, as well as a **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, but the highlight was a very good view of a **Painted Button-quail**.

**Mulligan's Flat Nature Reserve:** Jenny Bounds reported that the survey on Sunday 27 September was in 5 degree conditions with some sleet around, but surprisingly there were 49 species of birds, a little down from what might be expected on a good weather day. A **Pied Butcherbird**, breeding **Red-capped Robins**, several sites with **Scarlet Robins**, and a **Painted Button-quail** were highlights. A special thanks from Jenny to everyone in the team who turned out for the survey on a very difficult weather day.

**Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve North:** Nicki Taws reported that her survey was undertaken on a day of fine and relatively calm conditions. Spring migrants were out in force, particularly **White-throated** and **Western Gerygones**, **Horsfield's** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Grey Fantail** and **Mistletoebird**. **Speckled Warblers** were recorded at almost every site. Other highlights were one male **Red-capped Robin**, one male **Superb Parrot** in the most northerly part of the reserve, and one male **Hooded Robin** seen flying into the dense redgum regeneration where they have often nested in previous years.

**Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve South:** David and Kathy Cook did the survey on 21 September, recording a total of 38 species, with the spring migrant species highlights including **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Dusky Woodswallow** and **Grey Fantail**. Only one cuckoo was recorded, **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**. There were no **raptors** at all, very few **honeyeaters**, and no **Noisy Friarbirds**. Apart from **Acacias** in blossom, there was no flowering evident. Two **Speckled Warblers** were at one site, a species not always recorded at Gooroo South. The only breeding records were **Crimson Rosellas** and **Common Starlings** inspecting hollows, a **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** seen leaving a hollow, and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** with dependent young.

**Mt Majura Nature Reserve:** John Goldie and Kathy Walter surveyed their sites over the weekend of 17/18 September. They reported it was pleasing to see some of the small birds that they hadn't seen in the winter survey - **Speckled Warbler** at two of the sites, **Striated** and **Yellow Rumped Thornbills** and **Grey Fantail**. Most notable birds were **Varied Sittellas** and **Brown-headed Honeyeaters**. **Pallid Cuckoo** and **Horsfield Bronze-Cuckoos** were heard calling. Kathy and John noted their concerns about how the future development of the Heritage Village land on the corner of Antill St and the Federal Highway (a unit development) will impact on a number of their sites, as they are quite close.

**Majura Field Range:** Paul Fennell, with four COG surveyors, enjoyed a sunny, but brisk and breezy morning on Monday 28 September. Despite the conditions, the overall result was reasonable, although there were very few highlights.

**Hooded Robin** was noticeably absent from the usual places where they are recorded on some surveys. A **Brown Tree-creeper** was heard calling across the road from one site where they are often heard on the surveys, but investigation could not produce a sighting. There were a few **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones** about, a few **Red-rumped Parrots** appeared to be nesting, **Pallid Cuckoo** and a **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**. This year there appear to be more **Striated** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills** about. A lack of **honeyeaters** was noted, except for one **Red Wattlebird**, an **Eastern Spinebill**, and one **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**. Migrant representation included an **Olive-backed Oriole** and a couple of **Rufous Whistlers**.



Photo by Graeme Chapman

**Pallid Cuckoo**  
( *Cacomantis pallidus* )

**Newline:** Sue Lashko reported on the 29 September survey in fine and calm conditions with Newline looking better than it has for a number of years. There was plenty of breeding activity, the vast majority, unfortunately, from **Common Starlings** and **Mynas**. However, there was also evidence of breeding from **Red-rumped Parrots**, **Noisy Miners**, **Australian Wood Duck**, **White-winged Choughs** and **Welcome Swallows**, the latter nesting in one of the old ammunition



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bunkers. Spring migrants included **Pallid Cuckoo** (at least four), **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, dozens of **Grey Fantails**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Noisy Friarbird** and **Sacred Kingfisher**. The one surprise was a single **Zebra Finch** with a group of **Double-barred Finches**. Raptors included two **Little Eagles**, **Brown Goshawk** and **Australian Kestrel**. Other interesting sightings included a pair of **Rainbow Lorikeets**, a **Brown Treecreeper** and a pair of Southern Whiteface.

**Callum Brae Nature Reserve:** Jenny Bounds, with Sandra Henderson assisting, did the survey on Monday 28 September in reasonably good weather conditions, with 41 species recorded. Highlights were a pair of **Jacky Winter** in full song at one site on the far side of the reserve, **Speckled Warbler**, **Double-barred Finch**, a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** and a **Collared Sparrowhawk** calling around one site.

**Jerrabomberra Nature Reserve:** Jenny Bounds reported 39 species on the survey in the woodland area in fine weather on 20 September. Many spring migrants were back (both **Gerygones**, **Rufous Whistler**), but no **Dusky Woodswallows** or **Sacred Kingfisher** were recorded (they are usually there in early spring). Highlights included several small groups of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** moving across the area, three **Olive-backed Orioles** together, a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** and **Varied Sittella**. Many **rosellas** were inspecting nest hollows as were **Common Starlings**, but no **Common Mynas** were around the woodland. On the way out of the reserve, a **Skylark** was heard over the grassland area and a **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** called from a fence post.

**Kama** (in Molonglo Valley): Chris Davey reported that the survey on 27 September was in trying weather conditions. Even so he had never seen the herb layer looking so good with plenty of plant species in flower, including Golden Moth orchids. Given the conditions, the birds were better than expected. At least three **Superb Parrots** were in the area. Other species of interest were **Olive-backed Oriole**, **White-winged Triller**, **Southern Whiteface** and **Brown Treecreeper**. Interestingly there were no **Tree Martins** around, most unusual for this site at this time of year, maybe influenced by the cold conditions.

**Naas Valley:** David McDonald reported on the survey on Saturday 4 April in the northern part of the Valley, in poor weather conditions with strong wind and sleet - unfortunately this was the only morning he was available. David noted that although good to see it wet underfoot, and with green grass, the impacts of the long drought continue to be felt, with dieback in mature eucalypts and thinning out of eucalyptus regrowth. This is associated with the continuing relatively low abundance of the small insectivorous bird species. The **Red-rumped Parrots** that have bred there throughout the two decades that he has been surveying the area (and probably for hundreds of thousands of years before that!) are still absent. It was great to see some **Speckled Warblers** (thank goodness for briars, considering the loss of native understory plants). **Tree Martins** were back in force in two of the sites, and a **Scared Kingfisher** (*sic*) and some **Dusky Woodswallows** were welcome returning migrants. Also **Pallid** and **Fan-tailed Cuckoos** and a **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** were heard. The only breeding record was of a **Pied Currawong** on nest.



Photo by Rhonda Hansch

**Scared (*sic*) Kingfisher**  
(*Todiramphus sanctus*)

**Tuggeranong Hill:** Lia Battison reported that she managed to get most of the sites done before bad weather set in on Saturday 26 September. **White-winged**

**Choughs** were attending a nest very close to the site they used last year and a **Pied Currawong** was on a nest at Site 5. Neither number of species nor bird numbers are improving on Tuggeranong Hill (which is close to suburbs). Even the pair of **Galahs**, which have been reliably seen each survey at Site 2, were absent. A pair of **Mistletoebirds** and a **Nankeen Kestrel** were recorded between sites.

**Note:** For the information of members, the COG woodland surveys are done four times a year, seasonally, within a set nine days period, which includes two weekends. Site coordinators have flexibility to survey a week either side of that window if they cannot do the survey in the period. In some cases it's possible to work around poor weather and schedule the survey at a good weather time, but not always, especially for a site like Mulligan's Flat which requires an organised team and cannot easily be re-scheduled. However, given that these surveys are being done over a long period of time, many years in fact, a poor weather day should not matter in terms of the overall analysis of data. — **Jenny Bounds**

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY COG EMAIL LIST

Monday, 19 October 2009 was the 10th anniversary of the commencement of the COG Email Discussion List, created by me in 1999. It was initially known as 'cog-l', using the naming convention of the time.

In July 2004 we renamed it CanberraBirds when moving it from the free list management service Topica.com to GOG's own web hosting cum email facility. At that time we had 185 subscribers.

Over the decade, some 25,000 emails have been distributed through the list. They have included discussion topics, requests for information and responses to such requests, reports of bird observations, announcements, etc. In recent years, the number of subscribers has been fairly stable at around 230-250. I know that some people refer to it as 'the chat line' but this is not a correct appellation as, pleasingly, we have little idle chat. Most of the emails sent to the list are of substantive value or interest to subscribers.

Over many years before the list was established, COG had a telephone Hotline. People would leave a message on a (mini-cassette) tape recorder-type answering machine, and a COG volunteer (some of whom are current subscribers to CanberraBirds) would go to the place where the phone and answering machine were located, listen to the reports that had been left, and then record a weekly summary. (My recollection is that McComas Taylor established the Hotline as part of the ACT Birds Atlas project, though I may be wrong on that.) This task was time-consuming, and required careful judgement as to what to include and what to omit. We were indebted to those volunteers for their contributions to the Hotline over the years. The CanberraBirds email list made the Hotline redundant.

Our list has a few simple rules:

Messages sent to the CanberraBirds email list should not:

- be of a purely commercial nature
- contain offensive or inappropriate language
- contain personal attacks - discuss the message, not the messenger
- stray too far from our main topics: the wild birds of the Canberra/ACT region, their habitat & conservation.

Messages, including attachments, should be under 100 kb in size.

Overall, COG's Committee of Management (who set the policies for the list and on whose behalf I manage it) and I have been delighted with the way subscribers have behaved on the list, especially the high level of adherence to these rules. Most subscribers are able to use the facilities for self-management of their subscriptions without difficulty, relieving me of any great burden as list manager. That said, I am always happy to assist any subscriber or potential subscriber who experiences problems in using the list.

The first message in the archive was sent by Harvey Perkins on 24 October 1999 with the subject 'CWE Friday Seminar'.

On 02 November 1999 I sent the following message to the list:

As at today's date, Tuesday 2 November, we have 18 members of the 'Canberra Birding' announcements/discussion list (also called 'cog-l', short for COG-List). All are people whom I have invited to join ...

I should also mention that, in deciding to establish the list, COG's Committee recognised that we are simply testing the waters with it. If the list is not used, that is, if it becomes apparent that it fills no useful function, then we will close it down. I note, however, that during the last two weeks, being the period that a small number of subscribers have been testing the list's functionality, we have had a number of useful, informative contributions.

Well, the list has turned out to be a success, thanks to all subscribers and contributors!

Please remember that the list archive (which is searchable) for the period since July 2004 is available at <http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds> . Anyone interested in the early years of its operation can visit <http://lists.topica.com/lists/canberrabirds/> to see what was discussed in the 1999-2004 period.

Best wishes — **David McDonald**



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## Garden Bird Survey Notes

There have been very few recent chatline postings that are directly GBS-relevant. So I will put in a couple of items from my site, at Carwoola:

- we seemed to be amongst the trendsetters in flocks of 'less common' woodswallows; they were over my site on 21 October 2009;
- the local Tawny Frogmouths seem to be in the process of raising two chicks, despite the attention of a pair of Pied Currawongs (which seem more than usually aggressive this year).

### A matter of altitude

On the recent expedition to Peru it was clear that the birds that were likely to be seen in an area was very much influenced by altitude. I have also been told that the commencement of breeding in some species is influenced by altitude with an extra 100m being equivalent to a lag of 1 week (this matches nicely with a botanical example of the flowering of *Daviesia* being lagged by a week per 100m elevation gain).

This led me to examine a dataset provided by a user of GBS data to see how GBS sites varied by altitude (estimates of elevation obtained via Google Earth). 5% of sites are within a band of elevations from 560m above mean sea level (amsl) to 640m amsl.

Elevation (m)	# sites	Elevation (m)	# sites
<560	13	560 -579	54
580 -599	71	600 -619	83
620 -639	61	640 -659	40
660 - 679	23	680 -699	8
>699	8		

However there are still 25% of sites outside that band and some further research will be done to investigate if these sites are significantly later in breeding (or arrival of migrants) than the main body.

### Charts!!!!!!

We have 81 Charts in Year 28, compared to 72 Charts for the past two years. Thanks to all contributors. Any Charts not in my possession by now will not be able to be included in the Year 28 analysis for the Annual Bird Report (but may be added to the database for later reference).

### A small competition



**Common Myna**  
( *Sturnus tristis* )

Photo by Geoffrey Dabb

A core summary statistic from the GBS is the measure of abundance, designated as 'A'. This has demonstrated the dramatic decline in Common Mynas in recent years. In Year 25 the value of A for this species was 4.95 and in years 26 and 27 it was 3.29 and 2.36 respectively. What will it be for Year 28? I invite people to send me their estimates by email to martinflab@gmail.com. I have put a more complete time series on the chatline. The closest answer will get a valuable prize, to be awarded at the COG Christmas Party.

— Martin Butterfield.

(Whimsy—continued from p 15)

insects, or descend on flowering eucalypts. The honeyeater-like brush-tipped tongue which enables a woodswallow to take nectar was one of the causes of confusion over their origins.

To our ears Masked and White-browed calls are indistinguishable; this might be just us, but more startlingly their mitochondrial DNA cannot be reliably distinguished either!

Fair enough, this is characteristic of species which have only diverged recently, but in such cases we would expect the species to either be still separated geographically, or to readily interbreed when they come back together.

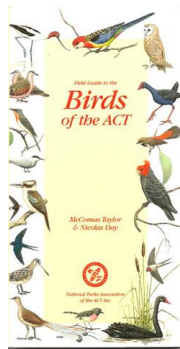
Neither is true of these two species – they often breed in the same tree in fact, but very rarely hybridise. I can think of no sensible explanation for this; more relevantly nor can anyone more qualified than I, as far as I know. (For an excellent discussion of the matter, see Leo Joseph's chapter on it in the recently published *Boom and Bust; bird stories for a dry continent*.)

And if you've not already read this book, please add it to the bedside pile!)

As ever, there is much more to say about these wonderful wanderers, and I suspect we may do just that in a forthcoming Whimsy. Meanwhile, enjoy them while they're here.

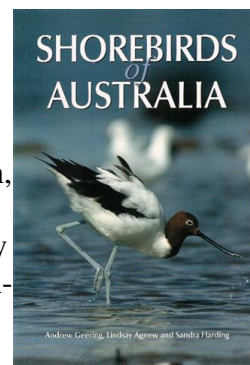
— Ian Fraser (ianf@pcug.org.au)

## COG SALES

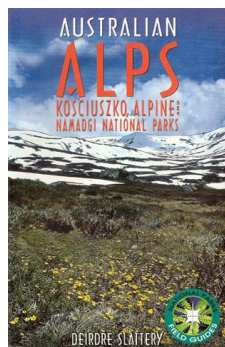


**Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT (Taylor & Day) - \$16.00** — Bird identification in the ACT has just become much easier! Here are all the birds of the ACT in colour, with easy-to-follow text and key biological data, in a compact field format that will fit easily in your pocket.

**Shorebirds of Australia (Geering, Agnew & Harding) \$33.00** — This title brings together 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.



**Birdwatching on the Far South Coast** (see <http://www.thebegavalley.org.au/6224.html>) This spiral bound title is well presented, easy to read and is available from the Sales Desk for \$16.00. The inside front cover provides a quick guide to the towns and localities referred to in the text. All sites have been tried and tested and it is recommended that the guide be used in conjunction with a district map.



**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**

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## Avian Whimsy No 77

### Woodswallows — the original grey nomads

This year, as in other drought years, large flocks of two generally more inland woodswallow species, **Masked** and **White-browed**, have appeared in our region. I'm a huge fan of woodswallows. As a lad, when playing the game of "if you were a ....., what would you be"?, I decided after much consideration that the bird that appealed to me most was a woodswallow (I wasn't going to play favourites and specify which one). I loved the idea of being able to wander the vast dry inland at will – you're allowed some creative licence when playing that game, as I'm sure you'll acknowledge.



Photo by Frank Antram

I also became intrigued with the idea that we didn't really know just what woodswallows actually are. We've long agreed that just swooping out after insects doesn't really make you a swallow, but beyond that their relationships were a mystery. The great Harry Frith, in *Birds in the Australian High Country* in 1969 admitted that 'their nearest relatives are not known'. JD McDonald, who had headed up the Bird Department of the British Natural History Museum, wrote in 1973 in *Birds of Australia* that 'their connections are obscure'. Back in 1907 however a connection between woodswallows and Australian magpies had been suggested by William Pycraft of the British Museum; this was largely ignored, but eventually confirmed and extended to currawongs and butcherbirds by Allan McEvey in 1976. McEvey, from the Museum of Victoria, based his conclusions on skeletal studies (as had Pycraft 69 years previously). In particular he noted, uniquely among Australian passerines, a shared strange extension of a

cheek bone – a 'bifurcated zygomatic process' if you're so inclined. A decade later revolutionary biochemical studies (initiated by Sibley and Arlquist's now famous DNA-DNA hybridisation work) confirmed what we now accept as fact – that woodswallows, currawongs and magpie/butcherbirds are a coherent closely-related group, which we call a Family. (Note that our magpies are currently regarded as another butcherbird.)

For the same reason as the 'swallow' epithet, 'martin' was also widely applied to woodswallow species; for Dusky Woodswallow, the only woodswallow permanently resident – allowing for annual migration – in south-eastern Australia, we went further and honoured it as we did with a few other familiar species, calling it Tommy Martin or Jacky Martin.

And while we're on names, what about *Artamus*, the genus name? It's Greek for a butcher, which might leave me miffed if I was one of its bigger and ostensibly tougher relatives. For instance if I was a butcherbird (*Cracticus*) and proud of my work, or a currawong (*Strepera*) with a reputation to uphold – merited or otherwise – how would I feel about being dismissed, in both cases, as just 'loud-mouthed' or 'noisy'? Originally Linnaeus himself in 1771 named the **White-breasted Woodswallow** (which also occurs through New Guinea and Indonesia to the Philippines, New Caledonia and Fiji), including it in the old-world genus *Lanius*, the shrikes. This is an uncommon word for 'butcher' in Latin, and when the prolific and excellent French ornithologist Louis Vieillot recognised the error and gave woodswallows their own genus in 1817, he showed his respect for the great man by using the Greek equivalent of *Lanius* – ie *Artamus*.



Photo by Geoffrey Dabb

There are six Australian species, and another five (depending on whose taxonomy you use) in the region. All are wanderers to varying degrees, as the Australian children of El Niño must be. Dusky Woodswallows are predictable enough breeding visitors to the south-east to be regarded as migrants (without dipping too deeply into those sometimes muddy verbal waters); the rest are generally nomadic. Probably the most peripatetic of these are the Masked and White-broweds which prompted this Whimsy. They are found across the continent, with Maskeds tending to dominate in the west and White-browed in the east. They are a very curious pair of species indeed, occurring together more often than not, and announcing themselves with their musical chatter from a flock far far above. At times huge numbers may perch in foliage or bare branches and sally out for

(Continued on page 14)



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## NEXT NEWSLETTER

### November deadline

Wednesday 25 November 2009

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

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*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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au) with the subject 'subscribe' without the quotation marks

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