

Gang-gang

October 2009

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

October meeting

7:30pm Wednesday 14.10.09

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.

The normal meeting will commence with a short DVD prepared by Geoffrey Dabb illustrating the **differences between the Jacky Winter and female Hooded Robin.**

The main presentation will be by **Rob Ma-grath** of the Research School of Biology, ANU on **"Flights of fear & calls to arms: How birds communicate about danger & eavesdrop on others"**

Most birds live dangerous lives. A swooping hawk may mean that death is only a wing beat away. In response to such danger, many birds give alarm calls or other signals that warn when a predator is nearby, and may even communicate about the type of predator or degree of danger. Rob will look at alarm signals in local birds, including **Superb Fairy-wrens, White-browed Scrub-wrens, New Holland Honeyeaters and Crested Pigeons.** What information do their calls contain? As well as paying attention to their own species' alarm calls, it would make sense that individuals listen to alarm calls from other species. Do they do so? And if they do understand other species, how do they know what particular calls mean danger? You'll have the opportunity to hear different calls and find out what they mean.

Everyone welcome

What to watch out for this month

Spring is here, and to echo Beth Mantle, my favourite time of the year. From reports of sightings posted on the COG chat line to the end of the third week of September, all the migrant species I predicted last month have arrived, except for **Mistletoebird**, with **Leaden Flycatcher** only having been reported to the NW of the ACT. One species that again seems to have been very evident so far in September is the threatened **Superb Parrot**, including a further rare record south of the lake/river, as well as hints of breeding. The **Common Koel**, also seems to be an increasingly early visitor, with one report already, and by the third weekend there had been a number of reports of **Rufous Songlark, White-winged Triller** and **Sacred Kingfisher**, as well as a couple of reports of **Rain-bow Bee-eater** (again to the NW of the ACT). These were all significantly earlier than expected. The second weekend of September saw a number of reports

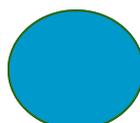
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Notice of COG Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 14 October 2009, in the Multi-media Theatre, Canberra Girls Grammar School, corner of Gawler Cres and Melbourne Ave, Deakin.

Agenda

1. Opening
2. Apologies
3. Confirmation of minutes of 2008 AGM
4. President's report
5. Adoption of president's report
6. Presentation of annual statement of accounts
7. Adoption of annual statement of accounts
8. Appointment of auditor for 2009-2010
9. Election of office-bearers (President, Vice-president, Secretary and Treasurer) and ordinary committee members (a nomination form is included in this issue of Gang Gang, and forms will be available on the night of the AGM)
10. Other matters for which notice has been given.
11. Close of meeting



(Continued from page 1)

of **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallows**; it will be interesting to see whether there is another large influx of these species this spring/summer as for the past few years, or whether they will be observed only moving through, as for last year.

By mid October all of the later arriving spring/summer migrants should be here including **Dollarbird** (one very early report already), **Satin Flycatcher**, **Rufous Fantail**, **Cicadabird** and **Rainbow Bee-eater**. The last four tend to be passage migrants in Canberra itself, and are usually seen “in transit” on their way to the cooler, wetter areas of the mountains, or to softer creek banks south of the ACT to breed. Also keep an eye, or more likely, an ear out for **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, for which reports also seem to be increasing, though in much lower numbers. This will alert you to its presence by its very loud call, but you have to be very sharp to see it as it usually heads off urgently to unknown parts. With the continuing drought, keep an eye out for honeyeaters usually found much more inland. The **Black-tailed Native Hen** recently seen at Norgrove Park may also be drought-related.

Based on impressions from my local area round NW Chapman, many of the spring migrants to date, such as the wave of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** in the second week of the month, seem to be moving through, and are not staying yet to establish territories and to breed. For many this is important; a number of the migrant species stay only long enough to breed and raise young before the outward migration occurs. It will also be interesting to see what kind of a breeding season we’ll have for our more sedentary species. As usual it will be important to both record these events and to make sure they are lodged into the COG database. — **Jack Holland**

Field Trip reports

Sunday 13 September – Aranda Bushland Nature Reserve

Twenty members and friends gathered at the former Aranda shops on a sunny, warmish and slightly breezy day. The group was so large that we split; Horst started first with half the group, and I took the other half a few minutes later (meeting down the track for a morning tea break). We walked slowly up the Aranda Spine and into the Aranda Bushland. The parrots and cockatoos were noticeably visible inspecting hollows, especially **Red-rumped Parrots**, **Crimson Rosellas** and **Galahs**. **Eastern Rosellas**, and **Gang-gang** and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** were also about. **White-throated Treecreepers** were calling, and finally located as they worked their way up the tree trunks and branches. One **Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo** was heard in the distance, but two **Fan-tailed Cuckoos** called persistently above us and one eventually provided us with a good long look. Also heard and seen were the **Grey Shrike-thrush** and **Grey Currawong**, giving us good identification tools of simultaneous sight and song. Both **Golden** and **Rufous Whistlers** were present, males and females showing their striking sexual dimorphism. Two **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrikes** flew over. Unfortunately the **Speckled Warbler** that Horst and I saw and heard singing its sweet song on Thursday was not available on Sunday.

The open, grassy paddock with a dam and a few large trees, located between the bushland and Bindubi Street, provided us with some additional species. Amongst the Eastern Grey Kangaroos were at least 100 **Starlings**, as well as **Magpies**, **Magpie-larks**, a lone **Dusky Woodswallow**, and an overhead flock of 30 **Australian White Ibis**. Both groups saw a combined total of 25 species during the morning, which apparently was enjoyed by all. — **Kay Hahne**

Wednesday Walk, 16 September — Mountain Creek Road

On 16 September, 13 members visited three Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs), Tinkers Creek, Mullion and Cavan on Mountain Creek Road, just to the west of the Murrumbidgee. We recorded 52 species in the three reserves and several more on the roadsides in between.

The highlights began before we left the carpooling location, with nine **White-fronted Chats** recorded at Stromlo Forest Park. The migrants were well represented with **Leaden** and **Restless Flycatchers** at Cavan, **Olive-backed Orioles** common at all three TSRs and both species of **Gerygones** at Tinkers Creek and Mullion. At Mullion, **Western Gerygones** appeared to be chasing **White-fronted Gerygones**, presumably an agonistic behaviour. **Satin Bowerbirds** were recorded at Tinkers Creek (including an active bower) and Cavan (a very attractive blue bird). The most unusual birds seen between TSRs were a **White-necked Heron** and **Rufous Songlark** at the Mullion Dam. — **Martin Butterfield**

Saturday 26 September Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve

Five very brave people joined me on a morning that was unseasonably cold, with very strong winds and showers. The extreme weather conditions posed a challenge to both seeing and hearing birds. It became obvious as the field trip proceeded that not many small or medium birds were active, on a day when they were probably best served in conserving their energy until conditions were again favourable. Despite this, we did hear **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalote**, and **Weebill** in the canopy of trees, and saw **Yellow-rumped** and **Buff-rumped Thornbill** foraging lower down. There were a lot of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** feeding on the ground. Also seen were **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosella**, and the only honeyeater recorded was **Noisy Miner**. On and near the dams were **Pacific Black Duck** and **Australian Wood Duck**. Towards the end of the trip, in a section of dry forest, we were able to observe our one and only breeding record – a **Pied Currawong** on nest. I'm not sure if there has ever been a field trip within the COG area of interest, during spring, that hasn't discovered a breeding record, but this was as close as it gets. A total of 22 species was recorded for the morning. Despite the low number of species seen, it is clear that Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve contains extremely valuable habitat, especially for woodland birds, and that any threat to the connectivity with Mulligan's Flat Nature Reserve, such as urban development between the two, would impact negatively on them. — **Matthew Frawley**

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.

10-11 October — Mittagong revisited — overnight accommodated/camping

This will be a reprise of the COG outing in September 2007, with some differences. We expect to be travelling down round lunchtime on Saturday, staying in Mittagong overnight and returning latish on Sunday afternoon, fitting in waterbirds at the Cecil Hoskins Reserve (if conditions are right) and exploring the Box Vale and other tracks to the north of the town where a range of birds including the **Rock Warbler**, **Pilot Bird** and **Bassian Thrush** are likely to be seen. Another attraction will be the spring wildflowers, this visit is a month later to ensure the Waratah is flowering.

If you are interested in participating please contact Jack Holland on 6288 7840 or jack.holland@environment.gov.au, who will be able to provide further information including the draft programme, how to get there and the range of accommodation available. Participants will need to make their own bookings and it is recommended accommodation is arranged as early as possible as it will be just after tulip time in the Southern Highlands, with advance bookings expected to be significant. There will again be a meal together on Saturday evening in a local restaurant. Participation in either the Saturday or Sunday program will also be possible.

Sunday 18 October Tinderry Nature Reserve extended morning walk

Ian Anderson will lead an extended morning walk to Tinderry Nature Reserve.



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Victoria
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enquiries@philipmaher.com

Plains-wanderer weekends 2009 season

14/15 November, 28/29 November
12/13 December 2009
2/3 January 2010

2010

February 2010

SW Western Australia
Christmas Island
Tasmania

March 2010

Thailand

May /June 2010

New Guinea

June 2010

Top End
Alice Springs

4 —22 September 2010

Strzelecki Track Outback Tour

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

www.philipmaher.com

Meet at 8.00am at the garage at Williamsdale on the Monaro Highway. Some car pooling is possible there before we travel on to Michelago and the walking track off the largely unsealed Michelago to Captain's Flat Road, close to Big Tinderry mountain. **Lyrebirds, Wonga Pigeons and Crested Shrike-tits** have been reported from this area in the past. Participants should bring morning tea and perhaps lunch with them. Food and drinks can be purchased in Williamsdale and Michelago. To book, please contact Ian on 6281 0609 or iananderson@grapevine.com.au.

21 October — Wednesday Mid-week Walk

The October Mid-week Outing is planned for a morning walk to explore Mt Rogers ACT. Meet at the car park on Wickens Place, Fraser ACT 2615 for a 9am start on Wednesday, 21 October.

24-25 October — Sat-Sun Bird Week blitz — All day atlassing — see Page 6

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 coincide with the peak of the breeding season. The morning will start with the usual very short presentation including tips on the types of nests built by different species of birds, and how to find nests or nesting behaviour. This will be followed by several hours putting this into practice, 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).

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.

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 two 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 Apostlebird**.

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 Parrot, White-browed and Masked Woodswallow, Australian Owlet-nightjar, and 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 should aim to 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).

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**
- **Seminars and Lecturers** Music, photography, art and educational seminars for school students. Presenters include Dr Walter Boles, Manager of Collections, Australian Museum; and Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow, specialist in Indigenous Tourism.

CONTACT DETAILS

Tracey Valenzisi, Australian Birdfair Coordinator
 P (02) 6953 2215 M 0407 262 496
 E coordinator@australianbirdfair.org.au
trust@fivebough.org.au
 A PO Box 357, Leeton NSW 2705
 W www.australianbirdfair.org.au



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

CONTACT DETAILS

Conference Convenor
 E temp@tempmanagement.com.au
 W www.fivebough.org.au/wetlands-and-waterbirds-conference



LEETON NSW, 9-12 NOVEMBER 2009



Images Peter Merritt www.merittimages.com

COG'S BIRD BLITZ 2009

Yes, it is on again, on the weekend of 24-25 October - COG's annual effort to record over one spring weekend all species of birds present in the ACT across as wide a variety of habitats as possible; and to record any breeding activity. All COG members are warmly encouraged to participate, so that we can cover as much of the ACT as possible. COG members are encouraged to "adopt" one or more grid cells, and those already adopted will be shown on our website and updated from time to time. But don't be perturbed if your favorite location has been taken - multiple surveyors per grid cell are quite acceptable, though it would be good if you took on at least one unclaimed site as well. Think about giving an unknown area a try - it might prove exciting. In order to claim a grid cell, please put in your bid to Barbara Allan, the blitz organizer, on allanbm@bigpond.net.au or phone her on 6254 6520.

If you are very familiar with a site and regularly survey there, or do Birds Australia-registered two hectare surveys there, you would probably be the best person to survey that site for the blitz if you can. But if last years' sites were boring or unpleasant or bird-free zones, pick somewhere new this time. Or better still, do a two-ha 20-min survey to "cover" the grid cell, then move on to somewhere more interesting. If you are a beginner, probably the easiest way to participate is to do a survey in your local park - but remember only to record the birds whose identity you are absolutely sure of. And if work or family commitments preclude you from doing much at all, be sure to try and do at least a 20-minute, two-ha survey of your own backyard and environs, just to support COG's blitz.

As usual, depending on the weather and Namadgi National Park management, we hope to be able to conduct surveys beyond the locked gates in the Park. The organizer is looking for more 4WDs and competent drivers to tackle the fire trails. Please contact Barbara if you'd like to be involved and/or if you have room in your vehicle to take passengers. Some assistance with fuel costs may be available this year.

All standard Birds Australia survey methods are acceptable - just indicate on the electronic or hard-copy datasheet which one you used:

1. a 20-minute survey over two hectares (rectangle of 100 m x 200 m; or circle or radius 80 m)
2. a survey within 500 m of a central spot, time unlimited but at least 20 minutes
3. a survey within 5 km of a central spot, time unlimited (though please stay within the one grid cell).

Remember to record the abundance of each bird species seen - e.g. 2 Laughing Kookaburra; plus any indication of breeding using the following codes: ih (inspecting hollow); co (copulating); nb (nest building); ny (nest with young); cf (carrying food); dy (dependent young). *Only* record species you are sure about. If you see a bird species on COG's "unusuals" list, take a photo of it, if at all possible; take copious field notes of all the details you observe and any features you didn't see; then either submit a completed "unusual bird report form" (available on the COG website) with your hard-copy datasheet or email it to rarity@canberrabirds.org.au.

Datasheets are available at COG meetings; from the organiser; or from the COG website under "forms" - the COG observation record sheet is the general-use form. This year you may also use COG's electronic input option for your blitz records, using the standard ABA code not a specific blitz one. [This means that any ACT bird record entered over the blitz weekend will be treated as if it were a blitz record]. If you aren't already a user of the online data entry system and would prefer to enter your blitz records this way, please contact Paul Fennell our database manager for details - ptf@grapevine.com.au or 6254 1804. If you use hard-copy datasheets, please mail them to COG blitz records, PO Box 301, Civic Square ACT 2608; deliver them to Barbara; or hand them in at the 12 November COG meeting.

While most of us find the act of going out and recording birds rewarding enough in itself, it is good if we can offer modest incentives such as participation "lucky draw" prizes. If you are prepared to donate books, wine, DVDs, native plants or anything suitable as a blitz prize, the organizer would love to hear from you!

There will be regular blitz updates on the COG website, including "how to" details, and lists of unloved sites awaiting adoption, so do check it out. And join us for a fun weekend of birding for a cause.

— Barbara Allan

Farewell Stephen James Wilson

(10 June 1912 — 13 September 2009)

Steve, who died peacefully on 13 September, will be fondly remembered by many members of COG. In 1964 he played a leading role in the formation of the ACT Branch of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union which, in 1970, became the Canberra Ornithologists Group. He served both these organisations with distinction in many capacities, most notably as Editor of Canberra Bird Notes from April 1975 through to January 1981. He was elected a Life Member of COG in April 1981.

In 1962, before the formation of the ACT Branch of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, he became one of the foundation members of the Bird Banders' Association of Australia which, in 1976, was renamed the Australian Bird Study Association. He was President of that organisation from January 1965 through to January 1966.

One of Steve's major projects was a banding study of the birds of New Chums Road in the Brindabella Range. Together with a small group of other local ornithologists he began this study in April 1961. Steve's work at New Chums Road set the standard for other studies of this type in Australia. Although he had to give up active participation in the study, work at this site continues to this day.

As well as birds, Steve had an interest in other pursuits, most notably gardening, cacti and philately. As with birds, he threw himself wholeheartedly into these pursuits, being rewarded with both national and international recognition.

In 1998, Steve was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his services to ornithology and the community.

Steve was a devout Catholic and a Requiem Mass for the repose of his soul was celebrated in St Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church at Kambah on 17 September. This was a fitting tribute to a man who, together with his wife, was largely responsible for raising \$120,000 for the parish and school by propagating and selling plants from his house and school fetes.

Steve leaves a family of four sons, Kevin, Brian, Brendan and Denis, 18 grandchildren and 36 great-grandchildren. His wife Nonie died in 2006.

A more detailed obituary will be published in the December issue of Canberra Bird Notes.

— David Purchase

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I attended a meeting of the Bird Interest Group Network (BIGNET) at the RSL Club, Mittagong on 19-20 September. The meeting was run by a new group, the Southern Highlands Birds Observation and Conservation Australia (HIBOCA).

I reported on work that is progressing towards a Position Statement on invasive bird species. Richard Hunter (CEO, BOCA) provided an update on discussions between BOCA and Birds Australia (BA) towards a common bird records database. There is agreement in principle, but there is still much work to sort out legal issues.

Both BOCA and BA reported on their unsatisfactory financial situation caused by the world economic situation and by changes in government funding practices.

Cheryl Gole from BA, who is now running the 'Important Bird Areas' (IBA) program, indicated that the project is now past defining IBAs and will soon be entering the monitoring phase. It was noted that part of the NSW/ACT Twitchathon money will go towards providing funds to enable monitoring to start in the more remote IBAs. COG's area of interest covers three IBAs:

- Lake Bathurst, nominated for **Australasian Shoveler** and **Blue-billed Duck**,
- Australian Alps for the **Pilotbird**, and
- South-west Slopes, nominated for the **Swift Parrot** and the **Superb Parrot**.

Discussions are in progress to determine the most appropriate survey techniques for these species.

(Continued on Page 9)

UNDERSTANDING BIRDS

Learn to think like a bird!

An ANU Centre for Continuing Education course with COG member and 'Avian Whimsy' author Ian Fraser



Six two-hour sessions covering evolution, structure, ecology, behaviour, habitats, bird-watching tools and techniques.

For beginners and experienced birders, lots of slides.

Discussion of the issues encouraged! Tuesdays, 6.30pm, 27 October - 1 December.

Also two 3-hour field trips.

For further details and booking, contact the CCE on 6125 2892 or enquiries.cce@anu.edu.au

Committee news

- Jenny Bounds has been involved in discussions with consultants and TAMS officials re the sealing upgrade of the old Gundaroo Road between the two parts of Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve. The current plans will mean the loss of more than 100 trees and most of the roadside verge vegetation which is a high value conservation area, and will impact on connectivity. We are endeavouring to have the current EIS process (which is being driven by road engineering requirements and speed safety issues) delayed, and the matter decoupled from the urban planning process, so that other options for sealing the road with less impact can be identified and fully evaluated
- The new COG outings policy, which meets the requirements of COG's affiliation with BOCA, is now available on the COG website. A revised outings sign-on sheet is also on the website (outings leaders will need to use the new sheet). Follow the links from main COG page (<http://www.canberrabirds.org.au>) to the Trips page for these documents.
- Final drafts of the new edition of *Birds of Canberra Gardens* are being checked.
- The Committee noted the strong support of COG members for the 7.30pm starting time for meetings, and this will remain the start time.

NSW and ACT Twitchathon 2009

31 October – 1 November 2009

This year's Twitchathon aims to raise about \$20,000 to assist in the management of the far western NSW Important Bird Areas. Money is needed to establish a fund that will contribute to the cost of setting up appropriate monitoring sites and methodologies and to establish monitoring regimes at each IBA. In addition the money may be used to provide funds to volunteers to cover the cost of fuel and other essential items, so that they will be prepared to travel out to these locations on a regular basis to survey and monitor the sites. These IBA sites include some of the Paroo River lakes, some of the ephemeral lakes around Tibooburra, and the various reserves of the far west that sample the different habitats of the plains and mountain ranges of the Region that provide habitat for **Bourke's Parrot**, various **Grass-wrens**, **Quail-thrushes** and **Babblers**, not to mention **Freckled Ducks** and migratory shorebirds and indigenous waders like **Inland Dotterals** and **Banded Stilts**.

To join: Contact Pixie at the BASNA Office for your 2009 Twitchathon Kit, Tel: 02 9647 1033, Fax: 02 9647 2030, E-mail: basna@birdsaustralia.com.au

Garden Bird Survey Notes

There have been several chatline postings that are directly GBS-relevant for the last few days of August to mid September:

- **Rose Robin** and **Regent Honeyeater** in Florey;
- many reports of returning migrants;
- dependent young **Brown Thornbills** in Turner; and
- **Superb Parrots** in Kambah (as well as the more expected ones on the north side of the lake).

Earlier or later (???)

During the September mid-week walk there was some discussion on whether things were “earlier than usual”. There are many ways of looking at this, but I decided to compare average arrival dates of migrants in the earliest and latest 10 year periods of the GBS. Using the descriptions in the ABR to define “migrant” I found that:

- four species were more than three weeks earlier in the later period (but three of these species are relatively unusual in the GBS)
- six species were 2-3 weeks earlier;
- 11 species were between one week earlier and one week later (which I see as being “no difference”);
- 10 species were 2-3 weeks later; and
- six species were more than three weeks later (five of these species are relatively unusual in the GBS).

There are a range of possible explanations for this and if anyone wishes to explore them a list of the species in each group can be provided.

Charts!!!!

At present we have a certain 80 Charts in Year 28, compared to 72 Charts for the past 2 years. There may be one or two more depending upon people’s situations. **If you have a year 28 Chart please hand it in before the end of OCTOBER** or it will not 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

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. In mid-October I will 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.**

(Continued from Page 7)

Jerrabomberra Wetlands

Recently there have been reports from contributors to the chat-line of members of the public hunting rabbits with knives and using crossbows around both the Jerrabomberra Wetlands and the Sewage Ponds. May I urge that the offenders are not approached but that all observations of this type of behaviour be reported to the police with as much relevant information as possible.

I have spoken to the Department of Territories and Municipal Services and they have assured me that they will be looking into this inappropriate and dangerous use of the area. — **Chris Davey (President)**

MUDBRICK COTTAGE

Mallacoota

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

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

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

Contact Barbara de Bruine
(02) 6258 3531

barbdebruine@hotmail.com,

or see

<http://www.stayz.com.au/25595>.

PASSIVE SOLAR HOUSE

South Rosedale

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

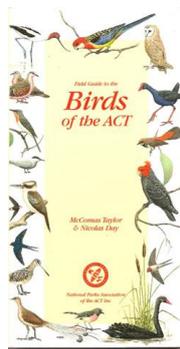
Bird watching is possible from the comfort of a chair on the front or back deck, while for the more energetic, Guerrilla Bay and Burrewarra Point are within walking distance. The wetlands at Barling's Beach are only a few kilometres away. Rich birding is available in almost any direction.

Contact Greg or Sallie Ramsay

6286 1564 or

gramsay@actewagl.net.au

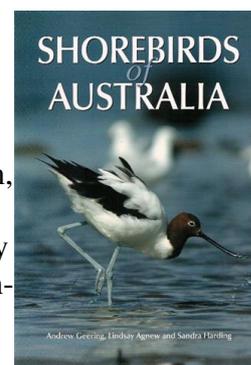
COG SALES



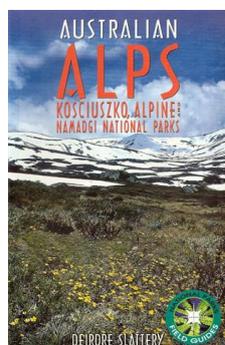
Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT (Taylor & Day) - \$16.00 — Bird identification in the ACT has just become much easier! Here are all the birds of the ACT in colour, with easy-to-follow text and key biological data, in a compact field format that will fit easily in your pocket.

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

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



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

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 accom- modated
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 th Annual Bird Blitz	All day atlasing
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
Especially keen in hearing from anyone who would like to lead a trip.



WONGA

Bawley Point

South Coast of N.S.W.

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

patricia.walker@bigpond.com
phone 02 6251 3136

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

NEW MEMBERS

COG welcomes the following new members:

S Beatty, Holder

C Malam, Fraser

B Walmsley, Richardson

J & B Growder, Chapman

R Browning, Florey

D Ayliffe, Fraser

NEXT NEWSLETTER

November deadline

Wednesday 28 October 2009

Please send, articles, advertisements, updates etcetera to the Editors at gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au or c/- The Secretary COG, PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608

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

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

COG info

President—Chris Davey, ph 6254 6324
Email: chris_davey@aapt.net.au

Vice President— TBA

Treasurer—Lyn Rees
lynlev@iimetro.com.au

Secretary—Sandra Henderson 6231 0303
cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Address for correspondence
The Secretary
COG, PO Box 301
Civic Square, ACT 2608

Newsletter distribution
Judy Collett and helpers

COG membership

2008-2009 memberships:

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

Membership inquiries—

Sandra Henderson ph 6231 0303
membership@canberrabirds.org.au
for changed address or other details

Canberra Birds Conservation Fund
Donations to this fund are tax deductible. Funds are used to support projects that protect and enhance native birds and the environments that sustain them.

COG website

www.canberrabirds.org.au

Office

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

COG E-mail Discussion List

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

Editor Canberra Bird Notes

CBN@canberrabirds.org.au

Gang-gang editors—Sue Lashko and Greg Ramsay

Email: gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au



Gang-gang

If undeliverable, please return to
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PO Box 301, Civic Square ACT 2608

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