



# Gang-gang

July 2018

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

## JULY MEETING

Wednesday 11 July 2018

7.30 pm

*Canberra Girls Grammar School,  
Multi-media centre, corner Gawler Cres and  
Melbourne Ave, Deakin*

The first speaker will be **Jack Holland**, presenting the **Brown and Stubble Quail** as the birds of the Month.

The main presentation will be by **Heather McGinness**, Senior Research Scientist at CSIRO Land and Water, on **"Waterbird recruitment and movements: New information for water and wetland managers"**.

River floodplain wetlands provide critical waterbird habitats. However, the quality and availability of these sites are influenced by our water and vegetation management decisions. Protecting and maintaining suitable feeding and nesting habitats both between and during rain and flood events is essential to maximise waterbird recruitment, maintain populations, and conserve biodiversity. This requires careful management of both vegetation and water regimes at a range of scales.

The use of valuable 'environmental water' within Australia's Murray-Darling Basin has often been focused on supporting completion of large colonial waterbird breeding events at key nesting sites.

*Continued Page 2*

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

June had typical winter weather for the month with regular but very light falls of rain up to the winter solstice. Starting on the shortest day of the year we had a series of very frosty mornings and clear still days. The overall effect has been that conditions have remained dry and general bird activity in the COG area of interest (AoI) has been very quiet unless, as has happened to me several times in my local spot of Cooleman Ridge, you happen upon a mixed feeding flock (MFF). These have significantly boosted the number of species on my survey list and, as often happens, contained several unexpected species. One feature has been that they have been very mobile, moving through the landscape very quickly, probably reflecting the amount of available food.

Otherwise the main interest over this period has been reports of further species which I hadn't alerted readers to look out for in my June column. The most noteworthy of these was the **Yellow-plumed Honeyeater**, first

*Continued Page 2*



Yellow-plumed Honeyeater

*Alistair Smith*

Everyone welcome

However, managers and policy-makers are becoming increasingly conscious of the need to also manage feeding and stopover sites at Basin scales. Appropriately managing environmental water placement is critical to facilitating the recruitment of juvenile birds into waterbird populations. Yet we lack basic knowledge of how water flows interact with other factors such as bird movements, predation, weather extremes and food abundance to influence recruitment. We also lack knowledge of the movements of adults and young during and between breeding events – where do they go, and why? Filling these knowledge gaps is key to improving the efficiency of environmental water management – applying water to the right places at the right times – and ensuring the success of future breeding events and waterbird recruitment.

The Waterbird Theme of the Murray-Darling Basin Environmental Water Knowledge and Research Project (<http://ewkr.com.au/>) has begun filling these knowledge gaps. Over the past 18 months, the MDB EWKR project has deployed over 80 nest monitoring cameras at colonial breeding sites and has fitted GPS satellite transmitters to approximately 40 Straw-necked Ibis, 15 Royal Spoonbills and five Australian White Ibis. The transmitters record hourly GPS location fixes between 7 am and 7 pm, and a midnight fix. The trackers have an accuracy of about 10 metres, and are solar-charged and able to transmit for at least two years. While still in progress, preliminary results from this work have already advanced our knowledge of previously poorly understood ibis and spoonbill movement and population patterns and trends in Australia. By quantifying survival rates, movements and their drivers, the research is assisting managers to identify key waterbird habitats and gain a better understanding of the scales at which habitats and environmental flows are required to support waterbird recruitment.

The MDB EWKR Waterbird Theme is a collaboration between the CSIRO, University of NSW and University of Canberra, funded by the Australian Government's Commonwealth Environmental Water Office through the former Murray-Darling Freshwater Research Centre (La Trobe University).



**Brown Gerygone**  
Julian Robinson

## Summary/analysis of the past month and what to watch out for this month —continued from Page 1

reported on 7 June by Steve Holliday in the Hall area, but which had been observed a week or so beforehand and belatedly posted on Birdline. Steve and Alastair Smith were following up the very unexpected report of this species, which is very much a Mallee specialist. From all reports it has never been observed in the ACT or anywhere near (the nearest site reported on eBird is the Mates Gully TSR at Tarcutta). It is not included in Steve Wilson's book *Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change*, and the COG Rarities Panel has not had a record of it presented to it from 1984 onwards. Why this bird, like the Watson **Apostlebird** (which has been regularly reported over June), would be so far out of its usual range is unclear.

While many have looked for it, only a lucky few seem to have been able to find this quite cryptic and mobile bird since. It was last reported by Cedric Bear on the turnoff to Hall from the Barton Highway closer towards Gold Creek on 26 June. This is in contrast with the other "unusual" species reported in June, the up to four **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** first reported by Sarah and Grace Fieg at the National Library, also on 7 June, and which have been observed and reported by many birders since. The 2016-2017 Annual Bird Report (ABR) notes it is a non-breeding vagrant/escapee that occasionally strays from coastal areas in the Illawarra region or escapes from local aviaries. The fact that they have been observed free-flying for over a fortnight would support the former origin.

The other coastal bird usually found in the ACT in winter, the **Brown Gerygone**, has continued to be reported from the ANBG's rainforest gully area as I predicted it might in my June column. Again, a maximum of four have been reported there, with the most recent report being of three birds on 17 June, perhaps reflecting that birders have lost interest.

Of the spring/summer migrant species reported in my previous column as still present during May, there has been a further report during June of the **Tree Martin**, with two birds at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 11 June. There have also been further reports of the **Western Gerygone**, with a single bird being reported from the Hall TSR on 7 June, and single birds from Mt Ainslie NR on 19 and 22 June. However, there have been no confirmed reports of the **Noisy Friarbird** since 23 April.

The only reports of the **Rufous Whistler** in June were of one bird at the Norwood Park Crematorium on 6 June, and two birds at the Hall TSR on 11 June. In contrast the **Grey Fantail** and **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** were still being reported up to the time of writing this column, so it might be expected some of these two species will overwinter as usual. Likewise, the **Mistletoebird** has been reported from at least

eight locations during June, the most recent being on 26 June at the Mt Majura NR. The **Superb Parrot** has also been reported from a similar number of locations, the maximum being 11 at Spence on 2 June, and the most recent being one bird at the Dickson wetlands on 27 June.

The **Dusky Woodswallow** has been reported from four locations in June, but mainly from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, including 28 birds there on 11 June, and with the most recent report being three birds there on 26 June. This confirms that some of this species will likely overwinter in 2018, in contrast to recent winters. The **Olive-backed Oriole** has been reported from around six locations, most recently two in Symonston on 26 June. So please keep an eye out for the species mentioned above, as well as any other spring/summer migrants during winter.

Of the altitudinal migrants that move from the mountains to spend the winter in Canberra, the **Flame Robin** now seems to have moved into the open areas around Canberra, with observations from around ten such locations, and with Jenny Bounds reporting 13 (8 coloured males) seen in two groups adjacent to the open areas along the grasslands edge at the Jerrabomberra West NR. The current eaten-down, very bare paddocks with exposed rocks and grass stalks are ideal habitat for this species, and I have been able to find them at Coleman Ridge much closer to home than in recent winters. The **Rose Robin** has been reported from four locations in June with Ryu Callaway reporting a male making a fleeting appearance in his Fadden GBS site on the morning of 11 June. There have been no reports of the **Pink Robin** for well over a year.

The **Crescent Honeyeater** has only been reported in two urban spots during June, the ANBG where it may often be found in winter (a maximum of four birds were observed there on 18 June) and a single bird in Wanniasa on 12 June. It may possibly be one of the rare winters I don't record it in my Chapman GBS site. The only urban sighting of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** is of a single bird in Kambah, also on 12 June. There have been no more reports of the **Swift Parrot** since 9 April. The Tuggeranong **Restless Flycatcher** reported by Marnix Zwankhuisen on 27 April has remained in the area. On 14 June Marnix reported it in the South Point (formerly Tuggeranong Hyperdome) shopping centre underground car park.

Kumiko and Yumi Callaway photographed an **Olive Whistler** at the Tharwa Sandwash on 11 June (see page 4). This is not a complete surprise as the 2016-2017 ABR notes it is a bird of the ranges, though altitudinal migration occurs. At the same spot Sandra Henderson found two (possibly three) **Hooded Robins** on 5 June. She noted it's been years since she'd seen any there, and that eBird has none there for the last five years. We looked for but didn't find it for the 27 May COG bus trip, so for me it was a pleasing find as it can only be reliably found at a handful of spots these days. Also pleasing is a number of sightings of the **White-fronted Chat** at the Edgeworth Pond in Coombs, with a maximum of 23 seen there on 17 June by Ash Allnutt.

Mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) have continued to be reported during June but could not always be reliably found when expected in woodland surveys towards the end of the month. This is consistent with them starting to break up when the breeding season starts. While July is the middle month of winter, some of the early breeders such as the **Yellow-rumped Thornbills**, a common constituent of MFFs, will begin nesting preparations. The **Australian Raven** is also a very early breeder. So, keep an eye out for any signs. The only breeding that has come to my attention



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in June has been a begging young **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** still being fed by its parent in Rivett on 16 June. This and related species are often still observed feeding young as late as early in winter.

In respect of single species flocks, on 24 June Ryu Callaway reported that he had viewed incredible video footage taken by his mother Kumiko and sister Yumi of a flock of over a thousand **Little Corellas** feeding on the property south of Jerrabomberra West Grasslands NR before flying off towards Symonston around 10 am. From the footage, he estimated well over 1500 birds. He noted this could account for the large northbound flocks he regularly sees over Narrabundah, as also reported in my June column. Interestingly there have been very few **Little Corellas** in my local area around Chapman in June, perhaps an indication that smaller flocks have joined up together to form this super one. Of other notable reports of large single species flocks, Martin Butterfield estimated (counted off a photograph) 212 **House Sparrows** in a tree at the Trucking Yard Lane, Bungendore on 3 June. He noted this was the second time in the past few months he had seen a very large flock of this species at that site.

So please watch out for any overwintering spring/summer migrants, for the remaining arriving altitudinal migrants, for MFFs and single species flocks, for roost sites and flights, and for any commencement of breeding activity. As usual please ensure that all significant observations are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

Once again my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to my two main data sources, postings on the COG E-mail Discussion List ("COG chat line") and the eBird Australia database, as well as some direct correspondence to me. As always I am very grateful to all involved for publishing this information without which it would not be possible to put this column together.

Jack Holland



**Olive Whistler, Tharwa Sandwash**

*Yumi Callaway*



**Crescent Honeyeater**

*Lindsay Hansch*



**White-fronted Chat**

*David Cook*



**Restless Flycatcher**

*Lindsay Hansch*

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# Field Trip Reports

## Sunday 3 June – Hall and Wallaroo Road properties

On a mild winter's morning, eight intrepid birdwatchers commenced their expedition from the children's playground in Hall and walked towards the horse paddocks near the corner of Hoskins and Gibbes Sts. Along the way, the vociferous calls of the **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalote** were heard but the birds were not easily seen by all. A total of 22 species was encountered including **Red-rumped Parrots**, **Golden Whistler**, **Weebill**, **Grey Shrike-thrush**, as well as a multitude of **Noisy Miners** (already gathering nest-building material!), **Common Mynas** and **Common Starlings**.

The second part of the expedition entailed driving along Wallaroo Rd (where eight species were seen including **Australian Wood Ducks**, **Brown Falcon**, **White-faced Heron**, **Australasian Grebe** and **Wedge-tailed Eagle**) to visit two neighbouring properties in Wallaroo. We stopped at a delightful and quiet acreage on McCarthy Rd where a group of thornbills (**Buff-rumped**, **Brown**, **Yellow** and **Striated**) flitted through the garden. A welcome lesson on how to distinguish these tiny and fast-moving birds was very much appreciated.

Shortly thereafter, we walked along the Murrumbidgee River, weaving its way through the two properties, where 32 species were detected including a **Wedge-Tailed Eagle**, 12 **Satin Bowerbirds**, seven **Eastern Spinebills**, **White-eared Honeyeater**, **Grey** and **Pied Butcherbird**, **Golden Whistler**, nine **White-winged Choughs**, four **Silvereyes**, two **European Goldfinches**, 16 **Red-browed Finches** and a large flock of **Common Starlings** (estimated at around 300).

After a pleasant stroll, we enjoyed a hearty lunch provided by the property owner. A good part of the afternoon was spent with great food and company. Thanks to both property owners for their generosity.

Filomena Barzi



Spotted pardalote

Roger Curnow



White-eared honeyeater

David Cook

## Wednesday 20 June - Watson

Twenty-three members and guests gathered on Antill Street to explore Justice Robert Hope Park. While gathering, a good range of parrots and cockatoos were observed although the hoped-for **Superb Parrots** didn't appear. The first of several pairs of **Rainbow Lorikeets** flew over, indicating how this species is expanding its footprint in the ACT.

As we headed off we soon encountered a **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** which was thought to be a little late (although reference to the Annual Bird Report indicates some birds do over-winter). Jumping in time, a second bird of this species was encountered later in the outing at the Mary Kitson Playground. Small birds were few in number with a group of **Weebills** and another of **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** being the



Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

Harvey Perkins



exceptions. While the Justice Robert Hope Park has good tree cover there was very little shrub layer.

In total we recorded 22 species in this part of the walk (see list at <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S46671309>).

We emerged from the park on to the open area under the powerlines and headed for the wetlands hoping to find the **Apostlebird** and the **Buff-banded Rail**. The former was not located during the walk but as soon as we arrived at the pond a **Buff-banded Rail** was seen grazing on the side of the pond away from the street. Very soon after, a second of this species was seen on the street side of the pond. A few other common waterbirds were on the pond and a **Grey Currawong** was perched in a nearby tree.

We decided to tour a part of the suburb in a hunt for the **Apostlebird** but it remained elusive. The second Cuckoo-shrike was found in this area, together with two **Eastern Spinebills** - as with several honeyeater species these are more common in the urban area in the colder seasons.

20 species were seen in this part of the outing, <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S46671310>, giving a modest overall list of 29 species for the day.

Martin Butterfield

## Saturday 23 June - Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve-Superb Lyrebird survey

The fifteenth annual survey of the **Superb Lyrebird** was run under perfect conditions with a cool morning, no wind and clear skies. The survey is designed to provide an index of population numbers within the Reserve since the 2003 bushfires.

Eighteen COG members and friends were assembled at the car park by 8.00 am and after breaking up into teams we soon started to survey the five main walking trails. In addition, because of the number of volunteers, it was possible to survey the Lyrebird trail. The trail is not part of the original five because it was not until sometime after the 2003 fire that the trail was reopened.

Taking a minimum count, 25 individual **Superb Lyrebirds** were recorded within the Reserve (Gibraltar Rocks-1 (1), Devil's Gap-1 (0), Fishing Gap-3 (5), Ashbrook-4 (0), Camel Back-16 (20)). Figures in brackets are numbers reported last year. The total for this year was one less than in 2017 - see Figure 1 on page 7. Nine birds were recorded from the Lyrebird/Cascades trail of which seven were also recorded from the Camel Back trail, leaving two sightings allocated to the Lyrebird/Cascades trail and not included in the totals.

During the survey 29 bird species were recorded, with the number seen depending very much on the trail walked: Gibraltar Rocks-20, Devil's Gap-18, Fishing Gap-9, Ashbrook-18 and Camel Back-11, with 12 species reported from the Lyrebird trail. There was a decrease in the total number of



Buff-banded Rail, Watson

Ian McMahon



Bassian Thrush

Geoffrey Dabb

species from 35 last year, with a decrease from all trails apart from a greater number from the Ashbrook trail.

There were two species reported from the six trails, **Superb Lyrebird** and **White-throated Treecreeper**. The **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** was recorded from all trails apart from Devil's Gap, the **Crimson Rosella** from Camel Back, the **Striated Thornbill** from Gibraltar Rocks and the **White-browed Scrub-wren**, **Brown Thornbill**, **Australian Raven** and **Eastern Yellow Robin** from Fishing Gap.

Species seen from one track only included the **Pied** and **Grey Currawong**, **Bassian Thrush**, **Eastern Spinebill**, **Weebill**, **Brown-headed Honeyeater**, **Golden Whistler** and **Grey Fantail**.

Many thanks to the participants and to the authorities for waiving the entry fees.

Chris Davey and Peter Fullagar

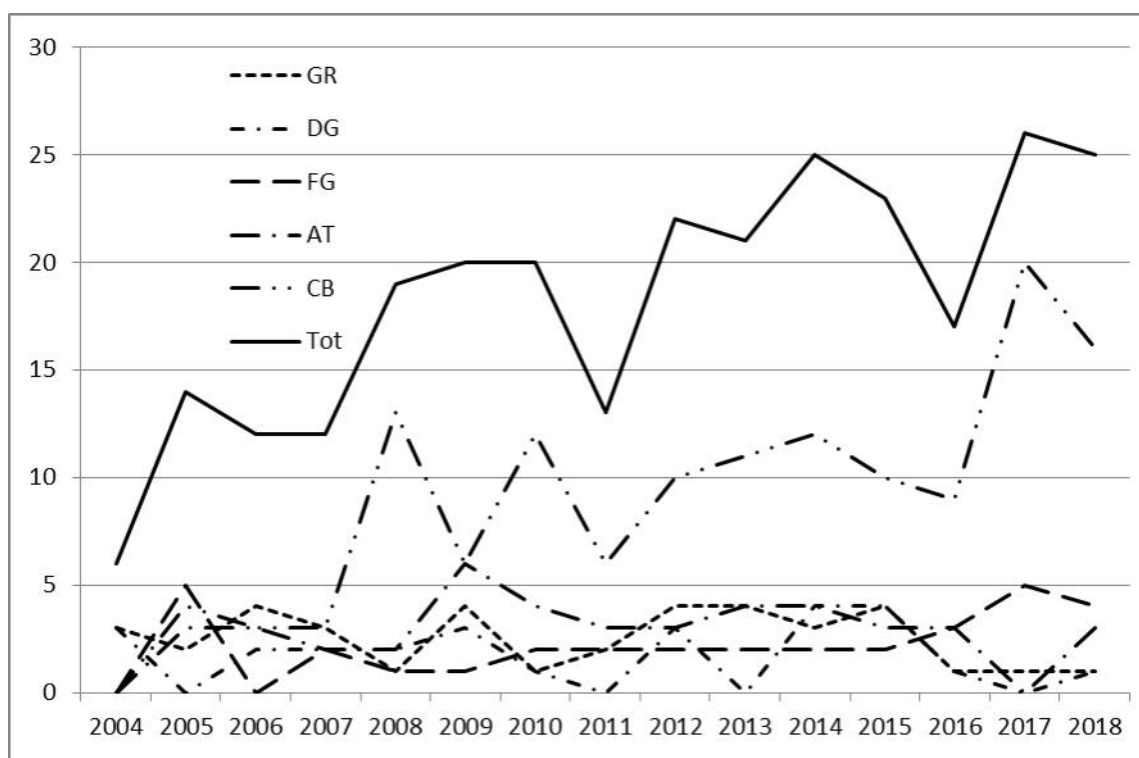


Figure 1. Numbers of Superb Lyrebirds recorded from walking trails at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, 2004-2018. GR-Gibraltar Rocks, DG-Devils Gap, FG-Fishing Gap, AT- Ashbrook Trail, CB-Camel Back, Tot- Total number of birds.

## Roost Census

The concerted survey effort of Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Little Corella roost sites around Canberra will be held over the weekend of **6-9 July**. A list of sites is available at [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xWS5vhRnuil7AzyED6HklIB\\_6dISVwDj4OJBzuRDItU/](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xWS5vhRnuil7AzyED6HklIB_6dISVwDj4OJBzuRDItU/)

Please advise your availability to survey a site to [roostcensus@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:roostcensus@canberrabirds.org.au)

Thank you.

Ryu Callaway

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## A Physical Piece of GBS History

At the June meeting of COG, I brought in an “historical item of interest” which has been residing in my home since 1998. “Does it have a name?” asked Jenny Bounds. “Not really, I just call it my Roller”. (However it is much more robust than but not as colourful as the Lilac-breasted variety.) This handy gadget was the brainchild of Philip Veerman, who wanted some kind of aid to help him with data entry from the many Garden Bird Charts handed in each year since 1981. Philip says that in creating the Roller, the hardest part was sourcing two wheels of the right diameter to support the barrel to have the circumference that would match the 74cm high chart. The GBS chart is 50cm x 74cm, so it is large and rather awkward from which to transcribe data. Philip designed the tool and commissioned a COG member with carpentry skills to build the Roller for him in about 1992, and it has worked like a charm ever since. That member moved away to the NSW south coast near Merimbula (Myrtle Mountain) just a couple of weeks after constructing this device but unfortunately we can’t yet recall his name.



The metal drum, covered in corrugated cardboard, is 49 cm in length with a circumference of 99 cm. Overall, the device is 62 cm long, 23 cm deep and 42 cm high. *Kay Hahne*

When I retired in 1998 after working as an Admin Officer for 20 years at University of Canberra, I said I would like to help with data entry. Philip was then the co-ordinator and he brought me the Roller, and was very helpful in getting me started with the data entry. I first worked on 10 years backlog of breeding records only, as the GBS breeding records had not ever been put on any computerised system before then. Once that was accomplished, I did full charts. After Philip, Martin Butterfield took over as co-ordinator. During his time, another new computer entry system was developed with input from Martin, Anne Hall and me. We tested the new system and suggested changes for improvement to assist data entry. That made things more user-friendly, as did a new computer at home with a much wider screen. Next came



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Duncan McCaskill as GBS co-ordinator, and he continues to this day. All of this time, I used the Roller to great advantage. A completed chart was placed on the rolling drum and fastened by two pieces of elastic (the only thing that ever had to be renewed). The top of a chart showing the Month, Starting Date and Week Number was glued to a wooden crossbar at the top of the drum. Thus, you could align each chart exactly and show one row at a time just below this template. I held a 30cm ruler in my left hand to guide me through the 52 weeks, as my right fingers plied the keypad (there are advantages of being a touch typist). A gooseneck lamp, a large desk and away I went! Philip states that the standard of data entry was high with very few errors by those of us who did input. The ABRs were often issued much later in the early years, largely because the GBS input and output systems were so very tedious. This device was one of several steps over the years that helped us become far more efficient. See Veerman (2006).

When yet another computer data entry version was established, Duncan could not get it to work on my computer, so I took that as an omen that allowed me to say "I want to stop now". I felt I had done my bit over 16 years, my last typed entries being for the 2013-2014 records. I did enjoy it, in spite of the many hours it took over several months from July till the last few dribbled in during December. Thanks to Anne Hall who was helping me at the time. It was interesting to note such things as the timing of spring arrivals – e.g. who heard the first Pallid Cuckoo, and to see how some birds such as Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos dispersed after the 2003 Canberra fires. By the way, I have been keeping a chart every year at the same address since its inception!



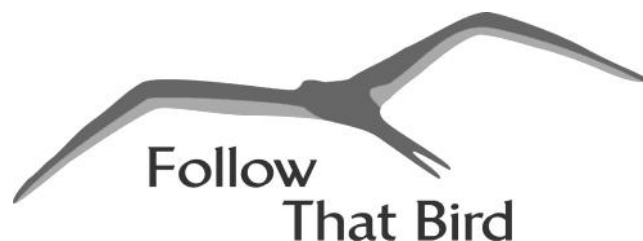
Kay seated at the Roller  
Horst Hahne

Would anyone be interested in housing this well-built device? It's a COG historical treasure I think --- from the era before everything became digital and do-it-yourself.

I still have some blank charts at home and am happy to receive completed ones and hand out new ones to anyone in the Aranda/Belconnen area, and I will pass them to Barbara Allan who is now doing data entry. Please ring first as we are away from time to time.

(Kay Hahne ph. 6251 1792 5 Gingana Street Aranda ACT)  
Kay Hahne and Philip Veerman

Reference: Veerman, P.A. (2006), *Canberra Birds: A Report on the first 21 years of the Garden Bird Survey*.



September 2018

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### RENEW YOUR COG MEMBERSHIP

Now is the time to renew your COG membership. Fees remain the same for this year at \$40 for an individual and \$45 for family membership.

The simplest way, and the COG preferred method to do this, is to complete and submit the online membership renewal form (<http://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/joining-cog-and-renewing/>) and pay using electronic funds transfer. You can still also renew in person at a meeting or you can send your renewal by mail with a cheque.

As mentioned previously, *Gang-gang* is available only in electronic form from July 2018. If you still receive Canberra Bird Notes by mail, please consider whether this is necessary. As has been pointed out in recent annual financial reports, the costs of providing direct member services exceed the amount collected in subscription fees, so every member who elects to read the electronic versions instead of receiving a print copy reduces costs to COG.

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# Woodland Surveys—winter survey round

Compiled by Jenny Bounds

(Part 1)

## Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds and a smaller than usual team (others were away) did most of the survey sites on Sunday 24 June, a cold frosty start with early fog, clearing to a fine sunny morning. A few sites were surveyed by Jenny Bounds in the week prior in cold but fine, sunny conditions. Small bird abundance was down overall with few mixed flocks encountered; the best site, site 19 on the central ridge, had a good mixed group which included **Varied Sittellas**, **Brown-headed Honeyeaters**, a couple of **White-naped Honeyeaters** and one **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**. There were sightings of **Speckled Warbler**, **Scarlet Robin** and the normal winter species, **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Golden Whistler**. One **Mistletoebird** was recorded at site 23. A **Little Raven** was heard on the eastern side of the reserve. Some dam levels were very low, including the large dam with only one **Eurasian Coot** and one **Black-fronted Dotterel**, and a few **Welcome Swallows** flying around. Total species count 38, on the low side, but not the lowest winter count for these surveys.

## Goorooyarroo NR (south)

Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley did the winter survey on 17 June, in decidedly cold conditions. There was very little bird activity at several sites, but they eventually recorded 37 species with 23 of these recorded during the 10-minute site counts. Besides the challenging weather, the new extension of the woodland sanctuary fence meant some revising of the normal route, as over half of the sites are now outside the predator-proof fence. Only a couple of mixed flocks were encountered; these included **Brown**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, **Speckled Warblers**, pardalotes, **Golden Whistlers**, **Scarlet Robins**, **Weebills** and a good range of honeyeaters in small numbers (**White-naped**, **Brown-headed**, **Fuscous**, **White-plumed**, **White-eared** and **Yellow-faced**). The only raptor recorded was a **Wedge-tailed Eagle**. A **Red-browed Finch** with a mixed flock was a good record for the reserve. Other fauna included two Wallaroos at site 2 and a Swamp Wallaby, with Common Froglet and Verreaux's Tree Frog heard calling.

## Mt Majura NR

Kathy Walter and John Goldie did the Mt Majura sites over a couple of days in mid-June, with the majority of sites surveyed 14 June. Road noise seemed particularly noticeable from the Federal Highway. Numbers of birds were low with very few small birds seen apart from a small mixed feeding flock at the last minute in one of the northern sites. A total of 29 species was seen over all sites. Despite being very quiet there were still a couple of highlights. One site had two groups of **White-winged Choughs** on opposite sides of the one site; eight members in one group and 17 in the other. It was unclear if they were all part of the one family because they were moving away from each other. Numbers of **Common Bronzings** were relatively high, with five seen in one site, and recorded in four of the nine sites. **Willie Wagtail** is a bird rarely recorded in the sites, but one was spotted in a site near Antill St. The small mixed flock produced a single **Speckled Warbler**, a couple of **Striated** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, a male and a female **Scarlet Robin** and a male **Golden Whistler**.

## Newline

Sue Lashko surveyed on Sunday 10 June. Despite the beautiful, clear and still morning, the Newline paddocks were a depressing sight with dry, thigh-high lovegrass covering most of the area and the rest largely bare. Rabbits are in plague proportions. Fortunately, the morning was livened up with two mixed flocks, the largest of which contained **Brown**, **Buff-rumped** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills**, a female **Golden Whistler**, **White-browed Scrubwrens**, **Superb Fairy-wrens**, **Silvereyes** and a female **Scarlet Robin**. Elsewhere, a pair each of **Speckled Warbler** and **Southern Whiteface** were welcome sights. Parrots were in abundance, as were **Noisy Miners**. The only raptor for the morning was a **Nankeen Kestrel**. A total of 38 species was recorded for the morning.

## Symonston area sites

Sandra Henderson surveyed Callum Brae NR on 11 June, a beautiful morning, with good bird activity. 38 species were seen in total. It was pleasing to see that work by Parks and Conservation has at last made the second survey marker visible, after many years buried about ten metres in a blackberry clump. Not a single **Flame Robin** was seen, which is unusual for a winter survey. At the site near a favourite dam, one of the box trees had plenty of lerps, and ten **King Parrots** were having a feast. At the same dam an estimated 15 **Red Wattlebirds** were drinking on the edge and flying low to dip into the water and bathe. Two mixed flocks were encountered, neither in a survey site. Up along the quarry fence the group included at least one **Speckled Warbler**, a couple of **Scarlet Robins**, and some **Weebills** and thornbills. Closer to Narrabundah Lane a flock of **Buff-rumped** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** was making its way along the dry gully. On the drive along Long Gully Road and Mugga

Lane before the surveys, Sandra saw a number of road-kill kangaroos - with species taking advantage of this easy feast being a fox, a **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, several **Australian Ravens**, an **Australian Magpie** and a **Grey Butcherbird**.

Isaacs Ridge NR was surveyed on 11 June. The shallow dam close to the survey sites remained dry. 26 species were seen for the morning, including a low flyover by one of the Mt Mugga Mugga **Wedge-tailed Eagles**. **Common Bronzewing**s are regulars in the area, although seldom in the three designated survey plots, and three of them put in an appearance. The third survey site, along the deep gully, had the only mixed flock of the morning, with **Speckled Warbler**, **Scarlet Robin** and various thornbills. Site 2 was quieter than usual, but a male **Mistletoebird** was moving between clumps of mistletoe.

### Jerrabomberra West NR

Jenny Bounds and Alison Russell-French did the survey on Tuesday morning 19 June, not optimum weather, cold with a varying breeze. Small birds were rather scarce and they did not come across any mixed feeding flocks as is usual in winter, but did see a couple of small groups of **Weebills** and one **Striated Pardalote** in the woodland. Total species count of 23 was at the low end for winter. There were, however, a lot of **Eastern Rosellas** around, and very large flocks of **Galahs** and **Little Corellas** including one flock of corellas of around 300 birds feeding in and flying around the paddocks on adjacent leaseholds. A flock of about 130 **Galahs** flew over. The highlight was 13 **Flame Robins** (8 coloured males, 5 brown birds), seen in two groups adjacent to the open areas along the grasslands edge and Woden leasehold edge further into the woodland area. A few **Flame Robins** do come into that general area in winter, not every year, and not in those numbers before. This year it may be influenced by the very low levels of ground/grass biomass (very dry seasonal conditions). An interesting record was three **White-naped Honeyeaters** at site 1, in Blakelys Red Gum woodland near the edge of the grasslands. A pair of **Common Bronzewing**s was at the same site.

### Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson surveyed on Wednesday 13 June. The day started out foggy, but after the first two sites the sun was shining. Later in the morning it drizzled for five minutes, but overall it was cool and still. Site 3 was the most productive, with ten species and the numbers of **Common Mynas** and **Common Starlings** well down on previous counts there. Apart from two **Brown Thornbills** and three **Weebills**, no small birds were observed in sites. However, three small mixed feeding flocks between sites, composed of different species in each, boosted the overall species count to 32, with 17 in sites. Highlights, although they were all on transects between sites, were a **Scarlet Robin**, **Rufous Whistler** and two **Speckled Warblers**.



Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

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## Hard-copy of the *Gang-gang* newsletter ceased from 1 July 2018

The June 2018 issue was the final print version of the *Gang-gang* newsletter.

For more information see the short item on the topic in the April issue.

## Wanted - for Woodland Survey Majura Field Firing Range

We are seeking someone with a 4 wheel-drive vehicle to assist Paul Fennell with the COG Woodland Surveys on the Defence Range. Surveys are done four times a year, on a week day morning (often Monday or Tuesday), depending on training activities on the Range. COG has eight sites widely dispersed, which are accessed by vehicle on mostly good gravel roads (low range 4WD is NOT needed).

Local birding knowledge would be helpful to participate in the surveys.

Please contact Paul Fennell to discuss ([ptf@grapevine.com.au](mailto:ptf@grapevine.com.au) or 6254 1804).



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## Future Field Trips

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

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

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

Changes to trips are notified on the COG chatline

<http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds/2012-03/index.html>

and trips page of the COG website.

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

### Saturday 14 July - Cooma Cottage and Yass Gorge

Meet for carpooling at Hall Recreation Reserve, Gladstone St, Hall (on LHS from Canberra) at 8.00 am. We will visit the grounds and gardens of Cooma Cottage on the Yass Valley Way, Marchmont. It is a National Trust property of 100 acres which has Yass River frontage. Later we will visit Yass Gorge. Bring morning tea and lunch, warm clothes and suitable footwear. Easy walking.

Registration essential. Contact Bill Graham at [cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au) or on 0466 874 723.

### Wednesday 18 July – Mt Ainslie

The July Wednesday Walk will explore the lower slopes of Mount Ainslie. Meet at 9.00 am at the intersection of Phillip Avenue and Kellaway St on the border of Ainslie and Hackett.

### Sunday 22 July - Rowes Lagoon and Collector TSR

Meet for carpooling at Bywong St, Sutton, in the Sutton Primary School car park at 9.00 am. The circuit of Rowes Lagoon is 3.5 km and takes almost 2 hours. Collector TSR is on the Breadalbane Road north of Collector. Bring morning tea and lunch. Wear strong boots with gaiters or rubber boots as it is tiger snake habitat.

Registration essential. Contact Bill Graham at [cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au) or on 0466 874 723.

### Saturday 4 August – Lake Ginninderra beginners outing

This is the second of our bird walks for 2018 that is aimed specifically at beginners. Meet Anthony Overs (bookings essential on 0419 202 155 or [anthony.overs@gmail.com](mailto:anthony.overs@gmail.com)) at 8.30am in the car park at the western end of Diddams Close on Ginninderra Peninsula (also known as Diddams Close Park). We will walk the shores of the peninsula around to the eastern side, then back to the car park along Diddams Close. We should be able to view several species of waterbirds up close, focusing on the identification features of the common species such as the various ducks, "waterhens" and cormorants. A variety of bush birds are also likely to be seen. Bring your binoculars and field guide.

### Sunday 12 August - the birding highlights of western Palerang

On this field trip we will visit various TSRs, nature reserves and other delights in western Palerang, i.e. the Wamboin, Bywong, Bungendore and nearby areas. This will be a morning outing, but you may care to bring your lunch and remain in the area, independently, in the afternoon, or lunch at any of Bungendore's fine eateries.

Meet in the Spotlight (Queanbeyan) carpark at 8.00 am for carpooling, or in the carpark of the Mick Sherd Oval in Bungendore's Gibraltar Street opposite the Post Office at 8.40 am. Suggested contribution to drivers from each passenger: \$10.

Registration for this trip is not required. It will be co-led by David McDonald and Martin Butterfield. For information please contact David on 0416 231 890 or email [palerang18@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:palerang18@canberrabirds.org.au).

### Sunday 26 August – Mt Taylor Nature Reserve

Meet at 8am at the Waldock Street car park in Chifley. This walk is a repeat of last year where we explored the lower slopes of the north-west area of Mt Taylor Nature Reserve, an important component of Canberra Nature Park. Bring water, sunscreen and morning tea. Numbers are not limited so no requirement to register. Contact Matthew Frawley at [frawley.matthew@gmail](mailto:frawley.matthew@gmail) if you have any questions.

### Tuesday 28 to Friday 31 August – Wonga at Bawley Point

A visit to Wonga at Bawley Point in early spring is usually a very enjoyable and productive experience for birdwatchers and this will be our fourth visit. As usual, Margaret, our local guide will check out some hot spots in advance.

Some target species are **Black-faced Monarchs**, **Rufous Fantails**, **Scarlet Honeyeaters** (reliable), **Hooded Plovers** and **Cicadabirds**. On this occasion we plan to extend our visit to the ANU Kioloa campus to include the temperate rainforest situated on the escarpment frequented by **Topknot Pigeons**.

As usual this visit is limited to 14 persons to be accommodated in two comfortable self-contained cottages with limited camping opportunities specially permitted and approved for COG members. Registrations are invited from Wonga regulars and others perhaps with interests in social activities such as cards, scrabble and bridge, to be played warmed by a log fire with a glass of red.

Further enquiries to leader Terry Bell at email [terrybellbird@gmail.com](mailto:terrybellbird@gmail.com) (preferred) or on 0427 292 298.

### Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 September – Eden pelagics

COG has booked the weekend of September 1 and 2 for two one-day pelagic trips. The outings leave from Eden Harbour at 7am, and return mid-afternoon. Each trip can accommodate 12 people, and the cost per person per trip will be \$130. Organising travel and accommodation will be each individual's responsibility.

Bookings will only be confirmed when full payment is received. **Payment must be made by 31 July**. These trips need to be fully subscribed to ensure COG does not make a loss, and as is the case with all paid trips, preference is given to COG members. Once you've booked and paid, no refunds can be given unless a replacement can be found. No places will be made available to non-members unless the trips are not fully subscribed by COG members by end of July.

As with all boating activities the trip will be weather dependent and rough seas could lead to the cancellation or postponement of the trip.

Please book with Sandra Henderson ([shirmax2931@gmail.com](mailto:shirmax2931@gmail.com)) as soon as possible, and indicate which day you prefer (Saturday or Sunday). Payment by direct deposit to COG's bank account is preferred – details will be sent to those who express interest. These trips often fill up fast, so if interested please book early. Please note that because our March trip was cancelled because of bad weather, some places are already taken by people who had booked on that trip.

## Nature Lodge Optics

Nature Lodge Optics, a family owned business based in Huskisson, Jervis Bay, has been supplying quality binoculars to customers in the Canberra region since 2007.

Originally established in the UK in 1946, the owners established a branch in Australia several years ago and have become the region's leading independent binocular store.

Open 7 Days, the store always has over 100 pairs of binoculars in stock with a particular emphasis on Birdwatching products.



Major brands such as Steiner, Zeiss, Bushnell, Nikon & Pentax are represented together with smaller hi-tech brands like Weaver, Vortex, Forest Optics, Visionary and Vanguard.

A selection of Spotting Scopes, Night Vision & Tripods are always available.

As a family business and NOT a franchise the owners Daniel and Joanna Payne will always be happy to source the specialist or unusual products that individual customers require having established a global network of suppliers.

The store also specialises in polarised eyewear with brands such as Maui Jim, RayBan & Oakley to name just a few.

The helpful and informative website [www.binoculars4u.com.au](http://www.binoculars4u.com.au) is regularly updated but is no substitute for personal service and recommendation which is always on hand.

**We welcome customers new  
and old to call us on  
02 4441 7770**

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# New Places – June

Sandra Henderson

28 May – 3 June

Hall – corner of Gladstone and Victoria Streets, across from the sportsground

I have visited the Recreation Reserve in the past, but I have never taken the time to explore the adjoining woodland areas at the back and side of the reserve. The creekline (Halls Creek) at the back of the mown area is currently dry along most of its length, so it's possible to walk across the gully into the woodland (the alternative is to go back onto Victoria Street and across bridge). There are some rough tracks, and the vegetation in the gully provided plenty of cover for **White-browed Scrubwrens**, with various thornbills higher up. There are mown paths in the area of reserve further down Gladstone St. I managed 23 species in these woodland areas before the COG outing started at 9am.



White-browed Scrubwren

Julian Robinson

4-10 June

Mount Arawang (Coolleman Ridge Nature Reserve)

Mount Arawang is in the southern-most part of Coolleman Ridge, on Namatjira Drive in Chapman. There is an entry near the first house if approaching on Namatjira Drive from Tuggeranong Parkway. There is a track around the hill, so it's not a very long walk. I walked clockwise around the hill. Along the first section of track there was little of note, but then I turned onto the Dry Dam Firetrail. This starts with a short but very steep section, so it was useful that I could see a number of **Satin Bowerbirds** crossing the track – I had to stop and watch and catch my breath! Once the track levelled out I came upon a group of bowerbirds, with one blue bird and quite a few green birds. Some were obviously young males because at least one green bird was bringing decorations (yellowing leaves) to the bower. There were no blue items at all. The blue male tried, unsuccessfully, to chase away some of the green birds. At one point four green birds and the blue male were all within a couple of metres of the bower. This looks like a good spot to visit again.



Satin Bowerbird, Mt Arawang

Sandra Henderson

11-17 June

Kambah, around Vansittart Crescent

I had noticed lots of shrubbery around the townhouses and many footpaths leading off the streets in this part of Kambah, so went for a wander. This is a nice leafy area of the suburb, so a pleasant walk. A large group of **Silvereyes** was moving around between the buildings, and a small mixed group of thornbills and **Weebills** was also quite active. A very large box tree on the corner of Vansittart and Ragless had a host of small birds, but also a couple of **Red Wattlebirds**, then a **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** flew out and in several times. Lower in the same tree a male **Golden Whistler** also appeared to be chasing insects. I've not previously seen a **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** in the suburbs.



Yellow-tufted honeyeater

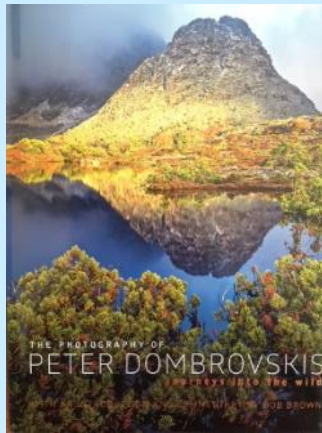
Sandra Henderson



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## Publications for sale

### NEW PUBLICATION



#### **Journeys into the Wild**

**The Photography of Peter Dombrovskis**

**Introduction and commentary by Bob Brown**

"Journeys into the Wild" is a poetic escape to a fragile and breathtaking wilderness, with celebrated photographer Peter Dombrovskis as our guide. In 2003, Dombrovskis was inducted into the International Photography Hall of Fame, the first Australian and one of only 77 people to be accorded this honour worldwide.

Bob Brown and Peter Dombrovskis forged their friendship in the battle to save the Gordon and Franklin Rivers. During the campaign, Peter would take one of the most famous photographs in Australian history, "Morning Mist, Rock Island Bend, Franklin River". In this book, Brown introduces Dombrovskis' work and provides commentary on some of his favourite images, reproduced here in full colour with stunning clarity.

From sweeping vistas of Tasmania to close-ups of a leaf's skeleton or a spider's web, these photographs are at once a paean to the wild and a plea to conserve it for future generations.

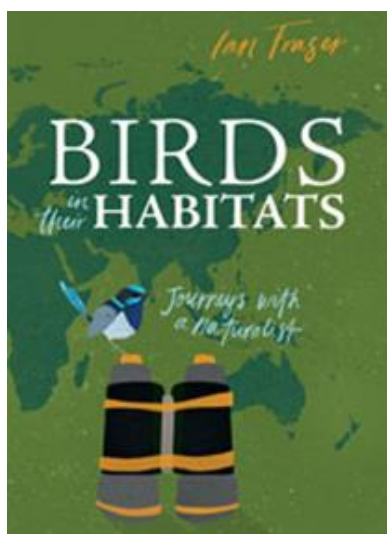
**Members' price: \$28**

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## Publications for sale

COG provides a range of bird watching related publications for sale to members at discounted prices (around 10-30% off RRP).

Below are highlighted a sample of popular publications available from the sales desk at COG meetings. We get new books in all the time and sometimes popular books sell out, but they can easily be re-ordered. If you are looking for a particular book, talk to the sales desk team at the meeting, as they can look at ordering it for you or contact Kathy on [sales@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:sales@canberrabirds.org.au)

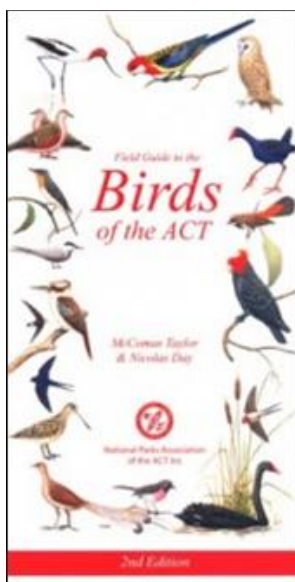


### **Birds in their Habitats: Journeys with a Naturalist**

*Ian Fraser*

Everywhere we go there are birds, and they all have mysteries to be unravelled. These mysteries include the way they look, from bizarre to apparently mundane, why they live where they live, and the things they do, many of which are far too incredible ever to be imagined as fiction. *Birds in Their Habitats* is a collection of stories and experiences, which introduce fascinating aspects of birdlife, ecology and behaviour. Informed by a wealth of historical and contemporary research, Ian Fraser takes the reader on a journey through four continents. This is a book of discovery of birds and the places they live. And with humour and personal insight, it is a book about the sometimes strange world of the people who spend a life absorbed in birds.

**Members' price: \$33.**



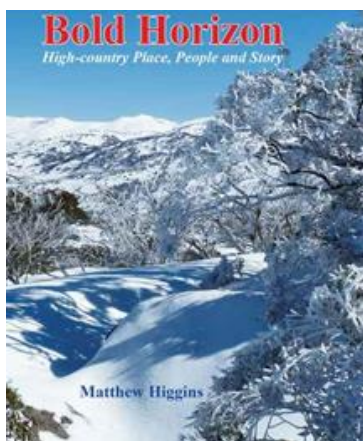
### **Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT**

*McComas Taylor & Nicolas Day*

This revised second edition illustrates in colour the 217 birds likely to be seen in and around the ACT. It has easy-to-follow descriptions in a compact format. Only local birds are shown making this Field Guide much simpler to use than comprehensive national guides.

McComas Taylor has been watching birds in Canberra for over 30 years and has written, broadcast and lectured on the subject. Nicholas Day is widely recognised as one of Australia's foremost wildlife artists.

**Members' price: \$20**



### **Bold Horizon: High-country Place, People and Story**

*Matthew Higgins*

The book traces the mountain experience in a rich variety of ways. Firstly, he talks of his own times in the alps as a bushwalker, cross-country skier, historian and oral-history interviewer. The central themes of place, people and story are interwoven with concerns about environmental impact and climate change. An extensive collection of beautiful images helps to tell the magnificent mountain story.

**Members' price: \$22.**

## 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 membership

2018-2019 memberships:

- Singles: \$40
- Family: \$45
- Institution: \$40
- School student (under 18): \$20

## New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

G Gall

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

**Deadline for August 2018 edition:**

**Wednesday 25 July 2018**

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

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

or

**c/- The Secretary COG,**

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

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

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

## COG information

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0413 828 045  
[president@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:president@canberrabirds.org.au)

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

**Secretary:**  
Bill Graham  
[cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au)

### Address for correspondence

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

**Canberra Bird Notes**  
Editor: Michael Lenz  
[lenzmj@homemail.com.au](mailto:lenzmj@homemail.com.au)

## COG website

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

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

## COG library

**Membership Enquiries & Updates:**  
[membership@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:membership@canberrabirds.org.au)  
for change of address or other details.

**Gang-gang Newsletter**  
**Editor:** Sue Lashko  
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Kathy Walter  
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## COG E-mail Discussion List

*COG E-mail Discussion List*  
COG has an email discussion list for members and friends: 'CanberraBirds'.

Join (subscribe to) the list by following the links on the COG website or by sending an email message to [canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au). The subject line and body of the email can be empty.

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