



Gang-gang

NOVEMBER 2019

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

NOVEMBER MEETING

Wednesday 13 November 2019

7.30 pm

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

Annual General Meeting

Following the AGM there will be a single presentation by well-known author and Honorary Professor at the ANU **Dr Penny Olsen** on **"The Night Parrot: Still Australia's Most Elusive Bird"**.

For over a century the Night Parrot has been the Holy Grail of the bird world, attracting all manner of interest, but with no confirmed sightings of a living bird and speculation as to the species' continued existence. Following the discovery of a living bird in 2013, how much have things changed? Make sure you come along to hear Penny tell this remarkable story.

**COG Members' Night 15 January 2020 –
Please note the later date**

The COG committee has agreed to hold the traditional January COG Members' Night on **Wednesday 15 January**, partly to allow

Continued Page 2

Everyone welcome

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

The weather has often been warm with temperatures well above average for the time of the year during the 5 weeks from 25 September covered by this column. It has also remained very dry, with some very windy days after the couple of small rain events more than cancelling out any benefits from them. The drought is really starting to take its grip. It is this feature which has had the most effect on bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (Aoi). As outlined below, this has been very significant compared with the very quiet winter period, continuing the sharp increase in September.

Probably the greatest excitement has been caused by the presence of a **Common Sandpiper** at the Isabella Pond, first reported from there by Sandra Henderson on 7 October. It has subsequently been seen by many observers, though not always reliably due to its habit of avoiding open areas, preferring narrow and often steep shorelines. Ever since I first saw this species over 40 years ago on rocks and on boats in the Swan River near Perth I've been amused about the name of this often solitary species, with it not being associated with sand, nor, at least in Australia, being very common.

Continued Page 2



Common Sandpiper

Sandra Henderson

MEETINGS *continued from Page 1*

more members to attend due to the second Wednesday in the month falling on 8 January, which is very close to the New Year.

Due to the unavailability of our usual meeting venue it will again be held in the **St James Uniting Church Hall, off Gillies St, Curtin**, from 7:30 pm.

Further details will be in the December *Gang-gang* but a program is being drawn up now to allow COG members to contribute short presentations (about 10-15 minutes long) on a range of bird related topics. So if you have a favourite birding moment for 2019, some special photos to share with members, a birding story to tell, or anything that you think might be of interest to other members, please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840 A/H), or by E-mail on jandaholland@bigpond.com) as soon as possible. Members who have not presented to COG before are particularly encouraged.

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

However, as noted below once it finds suitable habitat it tends to stay there, and it was still being reported up to the time of writing.

Surprisingly the species is not listed among those covered in COG's 2017-2018 Annual Bird Report (ABR), but the Bird Info data on the COG web site lists it as a rare, non-breeding summer migrant, and indicates a small number of sightings were last reported in 2009, with peak reports around 1994 and 2004-2006. The last was when it was a regular on the rocks at Uriarra Crossing (in 2004-2005 it was present from at least 22 October to 26 March) as written up for Canberra Bird Notes (CBN) by Harvey Perkins. It may possibly be considered an inland species as the distribution map in the *Australian Bird Guide* shows beside the entire eastern coast there is also a broad but less dense distribution band through the inland, and it possibly has come down to the ACT due to the lack of suitable habitat currently out there. This is supported by the eBird Australia map showing the only other truly inland recent NSW report being from the Putta Bucca Wetlands at Mudgee on 21 October.

Another species which definitely has come from the inland and one I didn't alert readers to look out for in my October column is the **Painted Honeyeater**. On 25 September Michael Lenz first reported a male passing through, except for stopping briefly and singing in a clump of trees, near Gundaroo. While he suggested to look out/listen for this species in the ACT, it wasn't until 27 October during the COG Blitz that Ryu Callaway reported at least 2 birds in mistletoe at the back of the Namadgi Visitors Centre near the gate to the track up Mt Tennant. Others have since reported mostly a single bird there. The 2017-2018 ABR (no records that year) indicates this rare, breeding visitor has turned up most years since 2003 with peak records in 2003 and 2014. Interestingly the closest recent reports on the eBird Australia map are from Albury-Wodonga and to the west and south-west of there, about 175 km in a direct line, with sightings also at Leeton, Ungarie and the Blue Mountains.

Other inland species which I didn't alert readers to keep an eye out for include a pair of **Cockatiels** in a patch of remnant woodland surrounded by treeless grazing land (and thus unlikely to be aviary escapees) reported on 27 October near Lade Vale (near Gunning) by Marnix Zwankhuizen. Another was the **Banded Lapwings** first reported by Shorty just before the Yankee Hat carpark on 8 October. These birds moved round a bit and sometimes were difficult to locate, but a maximum of 14 birds were seen in the general area to 13 October, with 2 subsequently reported from Hoskinstown on 26 October. Earlier Martin Butterfield had posted that a friend on the Hoskinstown Plain had reported that they had again overwintered there, and he thought they had started breeding.

The third species was a **Crimson Chat** in non-breeding plumage, reported on 12 October by Liam and Tony Manderson in a small woodland area on the Old Boboyan Rd while looking for the above species. This bird proved more difficult to re-locate and was only seen by a few observers, though Liam did find it again there a week later. The 2017-2018 ABR reports it as a very rare vagrant from inland districts for which the first definite record for the ACT was in 2004 at Yerrabi Pond, with none subsequently until 28 records that year, all from Campbell Park. To me both species are most unexpected in the higher country well in the south of the ACT. Another species which I did alert readers to look out for was the juvenile **Black-eared**

Cuckoo, photographed by Kym Bradley in her patch to the south of Canberra on 22 October.

Of the spring/summer migrants whose presence had not been well established by 25 September, the **Latham's Snipe** has now been reported from 10 locations over the period, possibly still a reflection of the paucity of available habitat in the dry conditions. While observers have noted the **White-winged Triller** seems to be everywhere (and reported from well over 70 locations on the eBird Australia map), the **Rufous Songlark** has been reported from only around 20, quite a bit fewer than I would have expected in a dry year (it has still not been reported from Narrabundah Hill, one of its strongholds a few years ago). Likewise the inland species the **Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo** and the **Pallid Cuckoo** have only been reported from around 20 locations, both certainly not as conspicuous as I would have expected in a dry year.

In contrast the inland species, the **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallows** were first observed over the Cotter Dam by Liam Manderson on 30 September and have been reported from over 25 and 15 locations since, with a mixed flock of over 200 reported overhead and with many observed down the Boboyan Rd in the Namadgi NR. Despite the early September observation the **Brown Songlark** has been further reported only recently on 27 October, at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands by Alastair Smith and by Richard Allen at the Curtin horse paddocks. The first report of the **Horsfield's Bushlark** was by Michael Lenz in a paddock near the West Belconnen Pond on 29 October.

While not inland species the **Leaden Flycatcher** was also slow to come to the COG Aol this season, with the second report coming to my attention only on 30 September. However, it is now well established and reported from around 40 locations, interestingly none north of about Mulligans Flat. The **Sacred Kingfisher** and the **Rainbow Bee-eater** are similarly well



Painted Honeyeater

Roger Williams



Australian Ornithological Services P/L

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Good birding, good food

Top End birding tour

10 to 24 May 2020
Darwin, Kakadu, Katherine, Kununurra,
Mitchell Plateau.

Atherton Tablelands 1 to 5 June & Iron Range NP 5 to 14 June 2020

Gulf of Carpentaria birding tour

19 June to 6 July 2020
Cairns to Mt Isa via Karumba. The tour
now includes Winton for rusty
grasswren.

The Pilbara birding tour (NW WA)

13 to 22 July 2020
Karratha, Karijini NP, Tom Price,
Newman

The Pilbara birding tour (NW WA)

24 July to 2 August 2020
Karratha, Karijini NP, Tom Price,
Newman

Alice Springs, West MacDonnell Ranges, Marla & Yulara

7 to 17 August 2020

Adelaide to Nullarbor Plain

5 to 20 September 2020

Plains-wanderer Weekends 2020

24 & 25 October 2020
14 & 15 November 2020
28 & 29 November 2020

Please see itineraries, checklists
and latest news on our website

www.philipmaher.com

established being reported from over 40 and 25 locations, respectively. However, the **Dollarbird** seems to have been slow to come to the COG Aol, not being reported until 16 October from Campbell Park and Narrabundah Hill, but now with reports from around 20 locations.

The **Eastern Koel** was also slightly slow to arrive, with the first report I'm aware of being by Tyrie Starrs of one calling in Wanniasa on 5 October. Next, and the first bird actually seen, was a female first heard loudly calling *kek kek kek* and then photographed in Narrabundah by Geoffrey Dabb on 11 October. Further birds were then reported from 15 October, and at the time of writing it had been reported from over 25 locations, including further females both seen and heard. So despite similarly dry conditions to last year it does not appear there will be a delayed start to the breeding season, either due to the late arrival of the species, or females, in districts. There has only been a single report of a **Channel-billed Cuckoo** on 27 September (by Yarden Oren in Watson), who noted a large light bird with large bill flying over with the typical raucous call.



Channel-billed Cuckoo, Pied Currawong

Harvey Perkins

Of the passage migrants on their way to breed in the mountains the **Brush Cuckoo** was first reported from Rendevous Creek in the Namadgi NP by Kim Lamour on 14 October, with a further report near here on 15 October. However, it has been reported from only a further 4 locations since, all over the COG Blitz weekend of 26-27 October, with 3 being from Canberra peri-urban locations. The same applies to the **Rufous Fantail** which has only been reported from three locations, two of them peri-urban, during or after the COG Blitz weekend. The **Satin Flycatcher** was first reported from the known site at the Warks/Blundells Creek Roads in the Brindbellas on 22 October, and then from there and from Bulls Head and the Boboyan Homestead during the COG blitz weekend. However, since that there have been reports of them presumably as passage migrants from three locations in woodland to the west of Canberra. There have been no reports to date of the **Cicadabird**.

So please keep an eye out for the above late returning spring/summer migrant species, or species which only come to the COG Aol in the very dry years such as the **Red-backed Kingfisher** and perhaps **Pied** and **Black Honeyeaters**.

Of the altitudinal migrants that spend winter in the lower areas the **White-eared Honeyeater** was still reported from around 8 peri-urban locations over the period, and the **Golden Whistler** from around 20 such locations, consistent with this species being usually the last to leave. However, **Scarlet** and **Flame Robins** have been reported from very few such locations during the period, an indication that they have largely moved away from Canberra in this dry spring. Likewise the **Rose Robin** has only been reported from the Warks/Blundells Creek Roads in the Brindbellas, first on 22 October, consistent with it being a passage migrant through Canberra in early spring. There have been no reports of the **Pink Robin** since late July.

The **Crescent Honeyeater** has been reported from the Warks/Blundells Creek Roads as well as from Casuarina Sands, but there have been no reports of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** since 13 September. The **Bassian Thrush** was last reported from the ANBG on 3 October, with reports from two locations in the Brindbellas during the COG Blitz weekend. The only peri-urban report of the **Restless Flycatcher** was by Alastair Smith at Bibaringa on 11 October, but there have been two reports of the **Swift Parrot**, from the National Gallery and High Court on 30 September, and from Watson on 18 October.

Again there have been a number of less "unusual" species reported. These include up to 5 **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) from 18 to 27 October and 1-2 **Red-necked Avocets** were reported from there on 26 September. Up to two **Pied Stilts** have also been reported there from 10 October, as well as two from near Bungendore on 13 October, and a lone bird has been present at the Isabella Pond from 7 October. **Whiskered Terns** continue to have been reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, as well as from Lake Burley Griffin itself, and the **Lewin's Rail** was last reported from the JWNR on 10 October. A **Glossy Ibis** was reported there on 27 September and two were also present there from 10-20 October.

A **Black Falcon** was reported from there on 26 September, as well as from Bibaringa on 3 October, the Stoney Creek NR on 4 October and the Kings Highway east of Queanbeyan on 6 October. Anthony Overs reported a **Barn Owl** in Hawker on 1

October. There have been further reports of **Little Friarbirds** with 1-2 birds at the JWNR from 11-21 October, as well as from Garran on 14 October, Bibaringa on 17 October and Fadden Pines on 24 October. A **Scaly-breasted Lorikeet** was reported from Scullin on 22 October, and **Musk Lorikeets** have continued to have been reported from Watson and Callum Brae, as well as from Yerrabi Pond.

Despite the dry conditions quite a bit of breeding activity has been brought to my attention. While much was for the expected species given the time of year, the following are a few highlights:

- On 29 September Rod MacKay reported two **Australian Darter** nests on either side of the Molonglo River just downstream from Tuggeranong Parkway bridge, each with a bird on. He also noted several **Little Pied Cormorants** in the nest building process, with birds at the nest breaking off sprigs of willow from the branches above them, while other birds were flying in with longer sticks, landing in the tree above the other birds before handing these down to the "builder" below.
- There were at least four nests on one side and three on the other, either finished or under construction. While this is a known site and likely the major one in the ACT at present, it does clearly illustrate how long the breeding season is for these species, with dependent young found well into May.
- On 30 September Kym Bradley posted that the **Brown Treecreeper** female sitting on the nest at the same site as last year was feeding young. During the K2C surveys on 13 October there were several further breeding examples of this vulnerable species.
- There have been several reports of **Tawny Frogmouths** fledging early compared with the nests I've been watching on Cooleman Ridge/Narrabundah Hill, including the very photogenic trio Geoffrey Dabb posted on the COG chat line. These had fledged mid-month after having been reared in an old **Australian Magpie** nest in Narrabundah.

On 27 October Duncan McCaskill posted a lovely image of a male **Scarlet Robin** feeding a dependant young on the Centenary Trail along the northern ACT border. He noted this vulnerable species was currently few and far between in the woodlands (see above), so it was good to find a pair that had successfully bred.

In respect of roost flights Michael Lenz has again been counting **Noisy Friarbirds** roost flights at Lyneham Ridge and the Majura Saddle, now for the third year. After a slow start and fluctuating numbers, he counted a 110 on 5 October. Despite my interest in roost flights I continue to find this a remarkable phenomenon for this species. While flocks of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** are certainly much less conspicuous on the median strips etc, the numbers from my count of them at the roost in the Chapman horse paddocks were largely unchanged at 265 on 22 October. Very interesting is that the bulk of them continue to come in very late after the sun has set.

Speaking of large flocks, over 150 **Superb Parrots** were estimated to be feeding on a bare paddock in Gungahlin in late September following their initial discovery by Danny McCreddie. Hopefully this will mean a good breeding year for them in the ACT. The eBird Australia maps shows reports for them from about 30 locations over the 5-week period. This is about the same as for September, though only 6 are southside.

Please keep up the reports for the last arriving spring/summer migrants, including any unexpected arrivals from the parched inland, for the last departing altitudinal migrants mentioned above, and for increased signs of breeding. As usual please ensure that all significant sightings 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, posting on the COG e-mail Discussion List ("COG chat line") and the eBird Australia database, as well as direct correspondence with 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

Field Trip Reports

Saturday 5 October – Percival Hill

The annual October Percival Hill walk once again rewarded the ten enthusiastic walkers with a dramatic sighting, this time a **Southern Boobook**, creating a great commotion, hassled by **Australian Magpies**, **Red Wattlebirds** and **Magpie-larks**. Thirty species were observed on Percival Hill, plus another ten on Gungahlin Pond while we were gathering on the dam wall before ascending the hill. The highlight on the Pond was a female **Musk Duck** quite close to the wall. Other highlights on Percival Hill were **Striated Pardalotes** entering nesting holes in the old growth forest on the western side. Also active around the larger nesting holes were **Eastern** and **Crimson Rosellas**, and a nesting **Australian Magpie** driving off **Kookaburras** possibly thinking about predating. **Golden Whistlers** were particularly active, as were several species of thornbill. All in all, a successful and interesting walk.

John Harris



Southern Boobook

Duncan McCaskill

Wednesday 9 October – Gambles TSR

11 members gathered at Gambles TSR on Sutton Rd. The entry to the Reserve is a bit tricky as the gateway is narrow and hard to see from a road with 100kph speed limit. It is however well worth a visit. While the understory has been overgrazed in much of the Reserve, there are many magnificent eucalypts which were proving good habitat for a wide range of bush birds. As we set off, early sightings included **White-plumed**, **White-eared**, **White-naped** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**. **Red Wattlebirds** and **Noisy Friarbirds** were seen and heard. Also heard were several **Rufous Whistlers** and **White-throated Gerygones**. Less common species included a single **White-browed Woodswallow** overflying the group and at least two **Mistletoebirds**. Breeding was happening. A **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** was constructing a nest in a eucalypt and a **Collared Sparrowhawk** was occupying a nest. **White-throated Treecreepers** were seen investigating a hollow. In total we recorded 44 species at this (quite small) site. A full list is at <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S60654749>

7 of us then moved to the Molonglo Gorge area, walking up the Kowen Forest out-road hoping to find **Spotted Quailthrush** recently reported from that area. We failed in that objective but added a few species to our list including **Wedge-tailed Eagles**. One was initially seen being beaten up by an **Australian Magpie** and subsequently two soaring birds were sighted. **Buff-rumped Thornbill** and **Weebill** were added to our day list with 19 species in total <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S60655741> here and a respectable 46 species for the day.

Martin Butterfield



Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 20 October – Glendale, Namadgi NP

A small number of members joined me for the outing to Glendale Depot, where the main targets were the Restless Flycatcher and the various woodswallows. We were accompanied by two ladies who accidentally signed up with us instead of the group they'd intended to go to the rock art site with. By the time it became apparent they were with the wrong group it was too late for them to go back and join the other group - I



Yellow-rumped Thornbill at nest

Tee Tong Teo

hope they had a pleasant morning and learnt something about the birds!

The pair of **Sacred Kingfishers** which nest near the Depot each year were ticked off, and the **Pallid Cuckoo** posed nicely. A **Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo** came to investigate, and all three woodswallows species (**Dusky Woodswallow**, **White-browed Woodswallow**, **Masked Woodswallow**) were feeding on the ground around the rock outcrops near the depot buildings. The **Restless Flycatcher** appeared only briefly. Throughout the site **Fuscous Honeyeaters** were calling, and we were pleased to see several **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** nests. A couple of male **Flame Robins** impressed our accidental birding companions, and we observed one female carrying food. A very successful outing, in glorious weather.

Sandra Henderson



Flame Robin

Tee Tong Teo

**Feathers'n'Friends**

Birdwatchers & nature lover's accommodation

Feathers'n'Friends cottage is fully self-contained with extensive facilities to ensure guests can enjoy short or extended stays.

The secluded lodging is surrounded by tropical rainforest and beautiful gardens with varying habitats and a large variety of birds and wildlife.

Activities in the area include birdwatching at nearby Mt Lewis and other birdwatching locations, as well as Daintree River nature tours and other attractions.

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New Places: October 2019

Sandra Henderson

John Knight Memorial Park

Where is it – close to Lake Ginninderra and the Belconnen Town Centre.

Several people put in eBird lists from this park, so I visited at the start of October. There are several pools, some large trees, and grassy areas. The usual ducks and waterhens are all present, and a number of **Little Black Cormorants** were fishing in one of the ponds. The most notable observation was a **White-winged Chough** being attacked by three **Australian Magpies**. The Chough was on the ground, on its back. When I stood right next to it the Magpies departed. I lifted the Chough onto its feet, where it stood trembling for some time before walking off slowly.

Bungonia National Park – Green Track

This was an Australian Native Plant Society outing. The park, unsurprisingly, is very dry. The Green Track passes close to several of the lookouts, so it's an interesting walk.

There is plenty of evidence of **Superb Lyrebird** presence, with many scratched areas beside the track. At one point one of the birds was seen, and at least one was calling some distance away. Around the carpark a group of **White-winged Choughs** was foraging, and the first of quite a few **White-throated Gerygones** was calling, as was a **Jacky Winter**. Two **Fan-tailed Cuckoos** were seen, with one posing nicely. Throughout the walk we could hear **Spotted Pardalotes** high above, as well as several **Rufous Whistlers**.

McCann Road, Lake Wyangan (Griffith, NSW)

Although I've visited the Lake itself in the past, I've more recently been watching eBirders put up interesting lists from McCann Road.

The first bird heard when I stopped at a track leading into the woodland beside the road was a **Painted Honeyeater** – and there were at least four birds calling in the area. The other specialties I was looking for were the Black and Pied Honeyeaters, and it took no time at all to find **Black Honeyeaters** in a sapling close to the road. The Pied Honeyeaters eluded me, perhaps because I was not prepared for the clouds of mosquitoes, which persuaded me back out on to the road. There I watched **Australian Ringnecks** and **Greater Bluebonnets** snacking in the almond orchard on the other side of the road, with many **Crested Pigeons** and several **Common Bronzewing**s lazing in the shade under the nut trees. A walk along the road produced groups of **Grey-crowned Babblers** and **Apostlebirds**.

Oxley Hill

Where is it – right in the middle of the Tuggeranong suburb of Oxley. There is a parking area in McKibbin Place.

There are quite a few scattered old trees, but unfortunately **Starlings** and **Common Mynas** are taking full advantage of the hollows. In one tree I saw a **Crimson Rosella** approach a hollow several times, only to be driven off by the mynas. There are a number of tracks, and there were a few walkers and dog walkers on the hill. There does not appear to be any permanent water, but the hill is surrounded by residential streets, so no doubt some water is available in gardens. There were a few bush birds around – my list included a **Grey Shrikethrush**, a **Rufous Whistler**, both pardalotes, **Weebills**, and a **Black-faced Cuckooshrike**. The most unexpected sighting was a female **Flame Robin**, perhaps just passing through.

Future Field Trips

COG 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://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/discussion-email-list/> and trips page of COG website <http://canberrabirds.org.au/category/trips/>.

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.

Sunday 10 November — Campbell Park, Morning Nest workshop

This outing will be a repeat of the very popular and practical nest workshops held over the past sixteen years. As usual it will be a very informal outing which has 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, with participants looking for breeding behaviour, signs of nests, etc. This will also allow plenty of opportunities for bird watching.

The workshop is particularly suitable for beginners or those relatively new to bird watching, though more experienced members and repeat customers are also very welcome. While every year has been different, we often don't walk very far as there is usually is a "hot spot" where most of the breeding activity occurs.

To participate, please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840) or by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com.

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 Campbell Park map on the COG website under the Maps, Forms and Lists button. Please remember to take morning tea which we will have out in the field.

Wednesday 13 November – Molonglo River

The Wednesday walk for November will be along the Molonglo, starting from Kirkpatrick St Weston at **8.30am** (near the RSPCA as shown on the COG Website

Saturday 16 November - Wandiyali-Environs Conservation Area

This will be a morning visit to a private restoration property near Googong. Meet at 7am in the Jerrabomberra Village (shops) car park near the big roundabout for carpooling.

No need to register.

Ryu Callaway

Sunday 24 November – Molonglo Gorge

Meet at 8am at the Molonglo Gorge carpark. We will walk along the easy to moderate walking trail adjacent to the Molonglo River until we reach the Blue Tiles picnic area, where we will stop for morning tea. Please bring your own morning tea and some water. We will then retrace our path back to the carpark. Sturdy walking shoes are a must due to some steepish sections and uneven terrain. Birds found here include **Eastern Yellow Robin**, **Red-browed** and **Double-barred Finch**, **Australian King-parrot**, a range of interesting honeyeaters, and there are previous records of **Swift Parrots** for this site. There is no need to book.

Suzi Bond

Sunday 8 December – Nursery Swamp

This is a half day bushwalk, which starts out with an uphill climb. **Spotted Quail-thrush** have been seen and heard on this uphill section. The track then reaches flatter, though undulating, ground, going through alpine woodland, ultimately reaching the start of the swamp itself. There are always interesting birds to be seen in this higher altitude section, including the possibility of **Olive Whistler**. Meet at Lanyon Marketplace for carpooling at 7:30 in order to climb the hill before it gets too hot. Bring lunch, water, hat, sunblock and sunglasses.

To register, or to obtain further information, please contact the trip leader, David Dedenczuk, at telephone 0417 222 154 or email David.Dedenczuk@gmail.com

Notice of the COG Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 13 November 2019, 7.30pm

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc. will be held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 13 November 2019, in the Multi-media Theatre, Canberra Girls Grammar School, corner of Gawler Crescent and Melbourne Avenue, Deakin.

Agenda

1. Opening
2. Apologies
3. Confirmation of minutes of 2018 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 2019-20
9. Election of office-bearers (President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer) and ordinary committee members
10. Other matters for which notice has been given
11. Close of meeting.

Details of proposed changes to the COG Rules, as well as the financial statements for 2018-2019 and minutes of the 2017-2018 meeting are available at <http://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/>

A **COG Committee Nomination Form** is attached to this newsletter.

Woodland Surveys- spring 2019 survey round

compiled by Jenny Bounds

Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds and a full team surveyed on Sunday 29 September, in fine, still conditions, a little overcast and cool early, but becoming sunnier during the morning. The reserve was very dry with little grass cover and just a small pool of water in the first dam (which does not get run off). Many migrant species were back, both gerygones were calling at most sites, as well as a few **Rufous Whistlers** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**, **Olive-Backed Orioles**, **Grey Fantails** and **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** had come in (5 around the Woolshed at one point). Three **Cuckoo** species were recorded, **Brush**, **Fan-tailed** and **Pallid**, but no bronze-cuckoos. A few sites reported mixed flocks moving through. There were quite a few records of single **Superb Parrots** across the reserve (and several birds around the Forde entry), a **Grey Currawong** on the western ridge, a male **Golden Whistler** at site 4 and a **Little Raven**. No Scarlet Robins, Mistletoebirds or Leaden Flycatchers were recorded. An interesting record was a female **Chestnut Teal** on one of the dams. The total species count of 49 was low compared with normal spring totals.

Mt Majura NR

Duncan McCaskill did the surveys on Thursday and Friday mornings in the last week of September. Most sites were fairly quiet with few or no small birds. Site 5 was the highlight with a flock of 4 very noisy and hyperactive **Brown Thornbills** chasing each other around, with a couple of **Speckled Warblers**, **Golden Whistlers** and a **Grey Shrike-thrush** near them. **Superb Fairy-wrens** and a **Mistletoebird** were off site. A couple of sites had small flocks of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** passing through. A couple of **Superb Parrots** flew over one site. **Galahs** appeared to be nesting at site 1, **Striated Pardalotes** at site 6 and **Gang-gang Cockatoos** were very interested in a hollow between sites.

Majura Training Area (formerly Majura Field Firing Range)

Paul Fennell and Barbara Allan surveyed on 2 October, driving to the dispersed sites. The weather was just about perfect for bird observation, pleasantly warm with no breeze until the last site around 11 am. The area is starting to show signs of the dry weather and grassy areas are overgrazed, but most of the trees looked in pretty good nick, and the remnants of the grass were still on the greenish side.

A total of 35 species was recorded, with 6 different species in between sites, one **Superb Parrot** amongst this. **Honeyeaters** were scarce; a few **Brown-headed** were heard, a few **Red Wattlebirds** and **Noisy Miners** were recorded at a few sites, and one **White-eared Honeyeater** was recorded. The usual range of parrots were around in reasonable numbers, including: **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**, **Galah**, **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas**, and some **Red-rumped Parrots**, with one female appearing to be assiduously enlarging a nest hollow. Some little brown birds were observed, although not in great numbers, and many of the spring migrants were around most sites, including **White-throated** and **Western Gerygone**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Tree Martin**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Pallid** and **Fan-tailed Cuckoos** and a few **Grey Fantails**.

The highlight of the morning was two **Wedge-tailed Eagles** being harassed by **Australian Ravens**. The eagles had not been observed for the past year or so. Other raptors included one **Little Eagle** and two **Nankeen Kestrels**.

Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park

The woodland survey of the eastern lower slopes of Mt Ainslie was carried out by Michael Lenz and Robin Hide on 23 September. The morning was cool with light to moderate wind. Showers started only after the survey was finished. Song activity was rather suppressed, which meant checking any Gerygone to ascertain whether the short song phrases really belonged to a **Western Gerygone** or a restrained **White-throated Gerygone**. The most widespread species were **Crimson Rosella** and **Noisy Miner** (8x), **Australian Magpie** (7x), **Galah** and **Grey Fantail** (5x). Several species of small bush birds were present only in small numbers or absent. Of note were a mixed flock of **Rufous** and **Golden Whistlers**, **Olive-backed Orioles** (2), **Dusky Woodswallows** (5), 2 male **White-winged Trillers** feeding in grassland, **Tree Martins** (5), and **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone**. Breeding activity included a pair of **White-throated Treecreepers** collecting nesting material and a **Noisy Miner** with a completed nest.

Newline

The spring survey was carried out by Sue Lashko on 27 September in perfect conditions on a mild, sunny morning. The paddocks were very dry, with water in only one dam. Many of the migrants were evident including **White-throated Gerygone**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Grey Fantail**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, **Tree Martin**, **Pallid Cuckoo** and **Shining Bronze-cuckoo**. There was no clear evidence of breeding (apart from **Common Starlings**) but parrots were lurking around hollows, including a pair of **Galahs** nibbling at the bark at the entrance to a hollow, and a male **Red-rumped Parrot** feeding a female sitting at the entrance to another hollow. One site had a perched **White-faced Heron** being mercilessly harassed by many very vocal **Noisy Miners** yet, when an **Australian Hobby** landed in the same site, just three miners flew in to investigate, then quietly left. A **Brown Goshawk** and **Nankeen Kestrel** were also recorded. A total of 41 species was recorded, similar to the last two spring surveys.

Jerrabomberra West NR

Jenny Bounds and Alison Russell-French did the survey in the woodland patch on 2 October, in fine and mild weather. The reserve is very dry and grass/forb growth scant in the woodland (just a tinge of green due to the rain spell a few weeks ago). They ended up with a reasonable total of 40 species, the same as spring 2018 which was also in a dryish spell. There were a few highlights, including a **Tree Martin** near site 1 in the Blakely's Red Gum patch, a pair of **Olive-backed Orioles** courting, with a series of different calls including some mimicry of other birds, pairs of **Dusky Woodswallows** in the usual Blakely's Red Gum areas, including nest building in site 1, and three **Southern Whiteface** seen on the open rocky slope leading into the woodland patch.

There were small groups of migratory **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** moving through, small groups of **Thornbills** (**Yellow-rumped**, **Striated** and **Buff-rumped**), a few **Grey Fantails**, several groups of **Superb Fairy-wrens**, and a **Speckled Warbler** (site 5). In fact, site 5 had a good total of 12 species recorded within the 50 metres radius plot, and another 5 species just outside the 50 metres plot - there were two eucalypts (a Red Box and a Blakely's Red Gum) flowering there which may be relevant to the number of birds recorded. Only one **White-throated Gerygone** was heard briefly, and a couple of **Rufous Whistlers** were heard. Rosellas of both kinds were numerous, and there were a few **Little Corellas**, but only a couple of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** (a species usually abundant there). Two **Cuckoos** were around, a **Pallid** and a **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**. On the way in and out through the grasslands, a pair each of **White-faced Herons** and **Nankeen Kestrels** were recorded. A **Brown Falcon** was the only other raptor, recorded flying through. There were no White-winged Trillers in the usual spots in spring, possibly a reflection of the seasonal conditions.

Symonston area (Callum Brae NR)

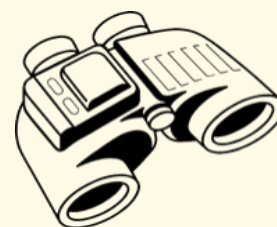
Sandra Henderson surveyed in Callum Brae NR on Monday 30 September, initially in cool, breezy conditions, but warmer later in the morning. The reserve was very dry, although there was some water in all but one of the dams. Highlights included **Leaden Flycatcher**, an **Olive-backed Oriole** doing a creditable job of mimicking calls of rosellas and other birds, and two **Western Gerygones** together in a sapling. There were good numbers of **White-throated Gerygones** in the woodland along the farm fence, and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and **Little Corellas** nesting in adjacent trees.

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02 4441 7770**

Strangely, there were no Dusky Woodswallows, which is unusual for Callum Brae in spring. A total of 47 species was recorded.

Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson did the spring survey on 25 September. It was a cool, clear, still morning, with an occasional light breeze. A steady stream of flocks of up to 40 **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** flew over in a WSW direction and some of them spent time in six out of seven of the sites, accompanied in one instance by a **White-naped Honeyeater**. Other honeyeaters observed were **Red Wattlebirds** and one lone **Noisy Friarbird**. The highlight of the morning was a pair of **Nankeen Kestrels** copulating at site 3. Other breeding observations included an **Australian Magpie** nest with young, an **Australian Raven** carrying sticks and a pair of **Rainbow Lorikeets** sitting by a hollow. Site 3 was the most active, with just nine species. In all, 21 species were recorded during the survey periods, with a further 8 species seen or heard elsewhere on the Hill.

Naas Valley leasehold

Julie McGuinness surveyed on 22 Sept, on a beautiful, clear and mostly calm morning that followed rain on the previous day and evening. A reasonable range of species was seen, mostly in pairs, with few in any numbers. The vegetation on the rural property was green, but very close-cropped by stock and native grazers. Two wombats out and about during daylight was an unusual sight.

Notable sightings were returning migrants, both **Gerygones** (mostly **Western**), **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters**, **Dusky Woodswallows** (a pair seen driving **Crimson Rosellas** from their nosing around a hollow), **Striated Pardalotes**, **Rufous Whistlers** (on nest, outside survey sites), one each of **White-winged Triller** and **Olive-backed Oriole**, and a couple of **Tree Martins**. The only other breeding record was **Red-rumped Parrots** on nest in a hollow. It was good to also see a small party of **White-winged Choughs**, a previously regular species which has not been observed for a while; and a pair of **Varied Sitellas** and **Jacky Winters**. Some usual suspects were missing, including White-plumed Honeyeaters, Superb Fairy-wrens and Diamond Firetails. In general, small ground foraging birds in any numbers seemed absent in this dry period.

Gooroo NR South

Steve Holliday, Prue Buckley, and David and Kathy Cook surveyed on 6 October, a cool and cloudy start but warmed up during the morning, with increasing wind. As has been the case on recent surveys the reserve was looking dry and overgrazed, with dams either empty or with low water levels. There was little in the way of spring wildflowers. They recorded 54 species during the morning, with 47 of those during the 10 minute counts. Nothing unusual but it was pleasing to find **Speckled Warblers** in a couple of places as they have been scarce in recent surveys. There was a very vocal **Brown Goshawk** at site 7, a bird seen high overhead later may have been the same individual. Other raptors seen were **Wedge-tailed Eagle** and **Nankeen Kestrel**. There were reasonable numbers of small birds such as thornbills (4 species), pardalotes, **Grey Fantails**, **Weebills** and **Superb Fairy-wrens**. Summer migrants included **Sacred Kingfisher**, a **Mistletoebird**, **Pallid** and **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos**, **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones**, **Rufous Whistlers** and **Dusky Woodswallows**. Small numbers of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** and **Noisy Friarbirds** were seen passing through. **Masked/White-browed Woodswallows** were heard at one stage, but not able to be seen to identify. All breeding records were of parrots inspecting or coming out of hollows, species involved were **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**, **Little Corella**, **Superb Parrots** and **Eastern** and **Crimson Rosellas**.

Rural leasehold near Tharwa

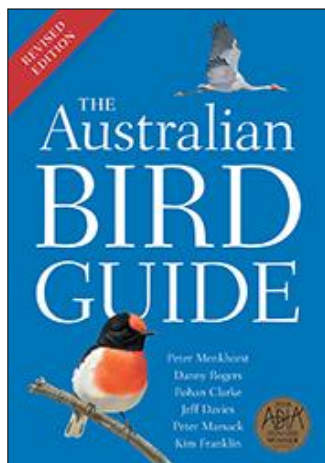
David McDonald conducted the spring survey on 4 October, a warm, dry day. As with all the woodland areas in the ACT and its surrounds, the property was severely affected by the drought, with most of the shrub layer gone, the grass grazed down to the ground by kangaroos, most of the red gum regrowth dead, and the tree foliage thinning out. Nonetheless, 31 species were observed during the Survey. Highlights included large numbers of very vocal **White-winged Trillers** (a species classified as vulnerable in the ACT) and a single **Diamond Firetail** (classified as vulnerable in NSW). A highly unusual record was a small flock of **Little Corellas**. Disappointingly for David, there was no sign of the **Brown Treecreeper**, and he is hoping this deep drought does not mean that it has become locally extinct as, over the decades, this property has been one of its strongholds.

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

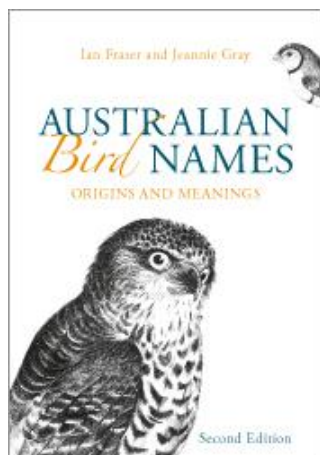


The Australian Bird Guide_ Revised Edition

Peter Menkhorst, Danny Rogers, Rohan Clarke, Jeff Davies, Peter Marsack, Kim Franklin

This Revised Edition includes updated maps, artwork and species accounts, reflecting current knowledge of the biology and distribution of Australia's birds. It features around 4700 specially commissioned colour illustrations of over 900 species, with particular emphasis on providing the fine detail required to identify difficult groups and distinctive plumages. Comprehensive species accounts have been written by a dedicated team of ornithologists to ensure identification details, distribution and status are current and accurate. A new easier-to-use index is also included.

Members' price: \$38. RRP 49.99



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Ian Fraser and Jeannie Gray

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Birds of Prey of Australia

Stephen Debus

Raptors are popular and iconic birds, and are important ecologically, with some species listed as threatened. Yet they are among the most difficult birds to identify. This fully updated third edition contains two sections: a field guide with distribution maps, detailed illustrations and information on identification; and a handbook which includes an overview of the current knowledge about raptors, including their biology, ecology and behaviour.

Member's price \$32. RRP \$44.99

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L Jokinen
P Ingle
J Higgins
B Hawkins

NEXT NEWSLETTER

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Wednesday 27 November 2019

Please send articles, advertisements, updates etc. 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.

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Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

COG Committee Nomination Form

I hereby nominate.....for the position * of
.....(*Positions: President, Vice-President, Secretary,
Treasurer, General Members) on the 2020 COG Committee.

(Name):.....

(Signature):.....

I second the nomination.

(Name):.....

(Signature):.....

I accept the nomination.

(Name):.....

(Signature):.....

Nomination forms may be submitted any time up to immediately before the AGM at the November meeting.
Nominations can be submitted by mail to COG at PO Box 301, Civic Square, ACT 2608.

All nominees and nominators must be financial members of COG.

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