



Message to COG members

Coronavirus: notification of cancellation of all COG meetings, gatherings and field trips

COG has a large proportion of members in the older demographic, who are potentially at greater risk from coronavirus. Moreover, COG meetings attract visitors, including from overseas/interstate where the virus has already spread in the community. The coming winter months are generally associated with an increase in the background rate of respiratory infections. Lastly, understanding of the magnitude of the risk to everyone of this pandemic is increasing rapidly and official advice changes quickly.

The COG Committee decided on 19 March to cancel our monthly members meetings, then on 25 March to cancel all COG meetings, gatherings and field trips. This is similar to the response of effectively all community groups, and is in line with government announcements. There will be no April meeting this year, or subsequent meetings until further notice, and our program of weekend field trips and Wednesday walks is cancelled indefinitely.

Now may therefore be a time to bird-watch solo or with only a few friends, to bird-watch closer to home, or – if a period of complete lock-down is announced – to spend time with our bird books and photographs. The birds will still be there when activities slowly return towards their previous normality in the months ahead.

The COG Committee will continue to keep developments under active review, and will continue to meet electronically. We will continue to produce Gang-gang and Canberra Bird Notes, and to run the COG website and chatline – so please continue to submit notes and articles, and join chatline conversations. As before, we seek the cooperation of members to minimise community spread of the virus, and ask that all follow the precautions that medical organisations and governments advise.

COG Committee

25 March 2020