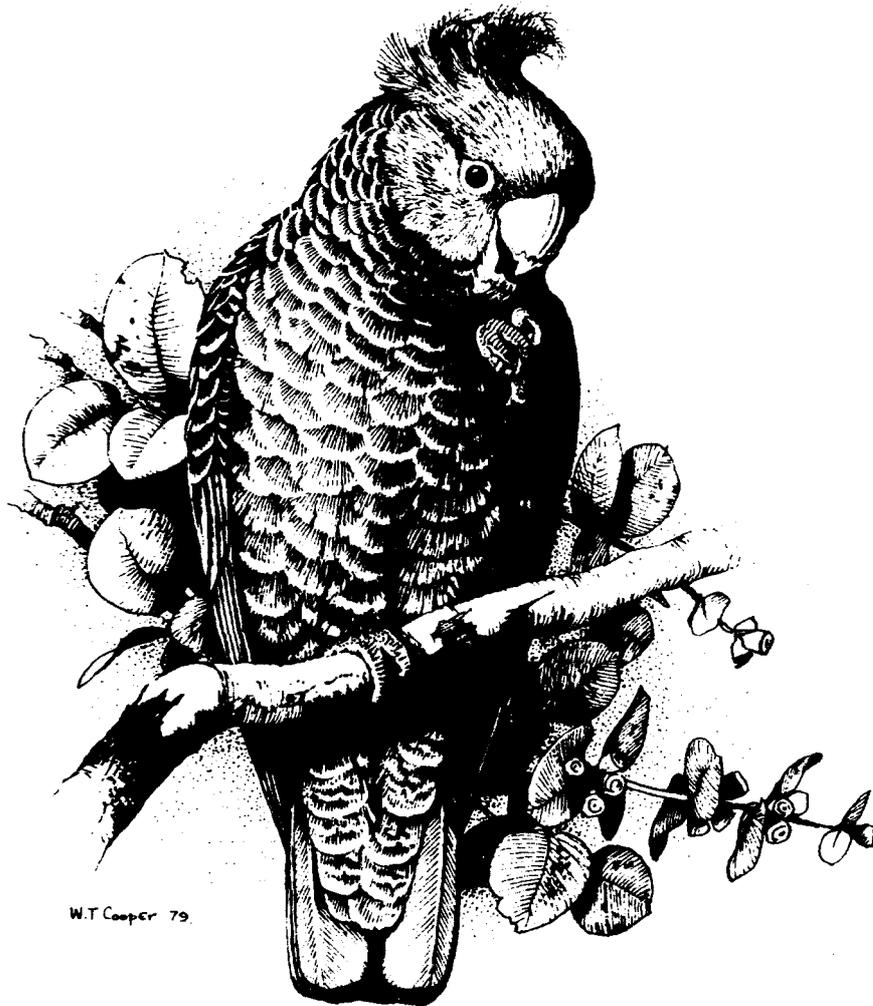


# canberra bird notes

ISSN 0314-8211

Volume 25  
Number 1  
March 2000



Registered by Australia Post – Publication No. NBH 0255

**CANBERRA ORNITHOLOGISTS GROUP INC**

PO Box 301 Civic Square ACT 2608

**2000 Committee**

<b>President</b>	<i>Vacant</i>
<b>Secretary</b>	Hazel Wright
<b>Treasurer</b>	Joan Lipscombe
<b>Members</b>	Barry Baker Alistair Bestow — Day field trips coordinator Jenny Bounds — Field trips; Conservation Council rep Charles Buer — <i>Gang-gang</i> editor  Paul Fennell — Databases management Kay Hahne — Minutes secretary Doug Laing - Conservation Council rep David McDonald Philip Veerman Margo Wade

**Other COG contacts**

<b>Hotline</b>	6247 5530	
<b>Meetings (speakers)</b>	Barbara Allan	6254 6520
<b>Mulligans Flat Survey</b>	Jenny Bounds	6288 7802
<b>Office</b>	6247 4996	
<b>Rarities Panel</b>	Grahame Clark (Chairman), Barry Baker, Jenny Bounds, Mark Clayton and Dick Schodde; Barbara Allan (Secretary) 6254 6520	

The COG office is located at Room 5, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Civic and, depending on the availability of volunteers, is open from 10am-2pm Wed-Fri; 10am-1pm Sat. Please call the office on 6247 4996 to confirm that it is open.

**LIST OF BIRDS OF THE ACT**  
(compiled in the early 1950s, with brief annotations)

*John Cabby*

**Foreword**

*This list was compiled as a typed manuscript by the late John Cabby at some time between July 1952 (which is mentioned in the section on Straw-necked Ibis) and December 1953 (When his paper with Harry Frith on the Superb Parrot, described as 'in press' in John's list of references, appeared in The Emu).*

*Tony Howard found the manuscript some years ago in the library of the CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology at Gungahlin (pamphlet 598.2(944.9) Ca. acquired 4 May 1959). He showed a copy to John, whose initial reaction suggested that, despite his prodigious memory, he had perhaps forgotten about this work of more than forty years before. They agreed it was well worth publishing. John died in September 1998.*

*The birds on the list are arranged according to what was, at the time, a modern classification - that of Wetmore*

*(1951). Nomenclature adopted was generally that of Whittell and Serventy (1948) where applicable. In order to maintain a sense of history we have retained the original order and names of the list, but have included in brackets the currently accepted names (Christidis & Boles 1994), together with the rank they would have on a list arranged according to that taxonomic order. Under the modern classification the number of species drops from 181 to 180, because the Black-backed and White-backed Magpies have been lumped.*

*In preparing the list for publication a few misspellings etc. in the manuscript have been corrected, and for one species (Stone Curlew), where dates were out of chronological order, the correct dates were substituted after reference to John's field notebook, a copy of which is kept with the manuscript.*

*Tony Howard and Harvey Perkins*

**1. Little Grebe** *Podiceps novae-hollandiae* Stephens

[11. Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae* (Stephens)]

A rare bird in the ACT but a common breeding bird on reedy water around the ACT (Lake George, Bungendore Swamp, etc.). Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. Only recent record is of a single bird on a dam at Uriarra, May, 1952 (J.H.C.).

**2. Pelican** *Pelecanus conspicillatus* Temminck

[15. Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus* Temminck]

Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. No recent records. Two were seen on Lake George on 21 Feb 1952 (F. N. Robinson).

**3. Black Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* (Linnaeus)

[14. Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (Linnaeus)]

Occasionally seen in ones or twos along the rivers, generally in the summer months.

**4. Little Black Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* (Brandt)

[13. Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* (Brandt)]

Occasionally seen in small numbers (up to six) along the rivers, generally in the summer months.

**5. Little Pied Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos* (Vieillot)

[12. Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos* (Vieillot)]

Common along the rivers. Their numbers decrease considerably in spring and summer, probably due to their being at a nesting rookery outside the territory. I do not know of their breeding in the ACT. The nearest rookery of which I am aware is at Burrinjuck. Misidentified by Jones as the White-breasted Cormorant *P. fuscescens* (Vieillot).

**6. Plumed Egret** *Egretta intermedia* (Wagler)

[19. Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia* Wagler]

Mathews' List only.

**7. White Egret** *Egretta alba* (Linnaeus)

[18. Great Egret *Ardea alba* Linnaeus]

Lamm and White mention my record of this species (a single bird which spent the winter of 1947 around a dam in Turner and on Sullivan's Creek), but they do not accept it without reserve, and do not add it to their ACT total. A further recent record is of a single bird on the Molonglo at Yarralumla on 27 Dec 1951 (J.H.C.). Two birds were seen on a swamp along the Yass Road, 8 miles from the ACT border on 18 Feb 1952 (J.H.G.).

**8. White-fronted Heron** *Notophoxyx novaehollandiae* (Latham)

[16. White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae* (Latham)]

Common in the summer months and breeds in the ACT. Generally leaves for the winter but occasionally one or two over-winter in the ACT (e.g. winter of 1951).

**9. Pacific Heron** *Notophoxyx pacifica* (Latham)

[17. White-necked Heron *Ardea pacifica* Latham]

One or two birds seen within the ACT every summer. Their numbers increased slightly (up to half-a-dozen) in the 1951-52 summer. Does not breed in the ACT.

**10. Nankeen Night-heron** *Nycticorax caledonicus* (Gmelin)

[20. Nankeen Night Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus* (Gmelin)]

Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' list. Only recent record is of a single bird on Sullivan's Creek on 8 Feb 1952 (J.H.C.).

**11. Bittern** *Botaurus poiciloptilus* (Wagler)[21. Australasian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus* (Wagler)]

Only recent records are of two birds, one on Sullivan's Creek and the other on the Molonglo, both in early spring 1948 (J.H.C.).

**12. White Ibis** *Threskiornis molucca* (Cuvier)[22. Australian White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca* (Cuvier)]**13. Straw-necked Ibis** *Threskiornis spinicollis* (Jameson)[23. Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis* (Jameson)]

Both of these nomadic species are of irregular occurrence in the ACT. From September 1945 (when I came to the ACT) to the late summer of 1949 both species were always present, with the latter more common. Mixed flocks of up to 30 birds (never more than 5 White) were commonly seen along Sullivan's Creek, etc. However all ibis disappeared in the late autumn of 1949 and were not observed again in the ACT until 7 Jan 1950 when about 25 birds appeared, all Straw-necked. This party stayed around for a few weeks, roosting in trees at the rear of the Dept. of Interior, Acton, and then left. No further ibis were observed until 14 **Jul** 1951 when one Straw-necked was seen on Sullivan's Creek. Up to six ibis, all Straw-necked except for one White, were commonly seen around Acton from this date until September. No ibis were observed after September until 26 Dec 1951 when a party of seven, all Straw-necked, were seen at Acton. From 1 to 30 Straw-necked Ibis were seen from this date until I left the ACT in July 1952. Neither species of ibis has been known to breed in the ACT.

**14. Yellow-billed Spoonbill** *Platalea flavipes* Gould[24. Yellow-billed Spoonbill *Platalea flavipes* Gould]

Recorded by Jones (who saw 3 'at long intervals') and on Mathews' List. No recent records.

**15. Black Swan** *Cygnus atratus* (Latham)[4. Black Swan *Cygnus atratus* (Latham)]

Not common in the ACT. From 1 to 4 or 5 birds are occasionally seen in suitable localities. Common and breeds close to the ACT, e.g. Lake George and Bungendore Swamp.

**16. Mountain Duck** *Tadorna tadornoides* (Jardine and Selby)[5. Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides* (Jardine and Selby)]

Uncommon and probably generally absent from the ACT. Not known to breed there. However, breeds annually at Lake George.

**17. Grey Teal** *Anas gibberifrons* Muller[8. Grey Teal *Anas gracilis* Buller]

Fairly common at times. No breeding records for the ACT.

**18. Chestnut Teal** *Anas castanea* (Eyton)  
[9. Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea* (Eyton)]

Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. No recent records.

**19. Black Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha* Forster  
[7. Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* Gmelin]  
Common breeding species.

**20. Pink-eared Duck** *Malacorhynchus membranaceus* (Latham)  
[10. Pink-eared Duck *Malacorhynchus membranaceus* (Latham)]  
Recorded by Jones ('2 seen') and on Mathews' List. No recent records.

**21. Wood Duck** *Chenonetta jubata* (Latham)  
[6. Australian Wood Duck *Chenonetta jubata* (Latham)]  
Common breeding species.

**22. Musk Duck** *Biziura lobata* (Shaw)  
[3. Musk Duck *Biziura lobata* (Shaw)]

Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. No recent records. However, has been seen recently on Lake George (J.H.C.).

**23. Swamp Harrier** *Circus approximans* Peale  
[27. Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans* Peale]

Only occasional in ACT. Recent records as follows: Yarralumla, 1 bird, 3 Sep 1949; same area, 1 bird, 17 Sep 1949; Acton, 3 birds, 9 Oct 1950; Reid, 1 bird, 10 Oct 1951; Dickson, 1 bird, 18 Nov 1951. (J.H.C.).

**24. Grey Goshawk** *Accipiter novaehollandiae* (Gmelin)  
[29. Grey Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae* (Gmelin)]

Occasionally seen along the rivers and in Eucalypt forest. No nests have been found but it probably nests in the ACT. Only the grey phase has been recorded.

**25. Australian Goshawk** *Accipiter fasciatus* (Vigors & Horsfield)  
[28. Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus* (Vigors & Horsfield)]  
A common breeding species of hawk in the ACT.

**26. Collared Sparrow-hawk** *Accipiter cirrocephalus* (Vieillot)  
[30. Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrhocephalus* (Vieillot)]  
Mathews' List only.

**27. Wedge-tailed Eagle** *Uroaëtus audax* (Latham)  
[31. Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax* (Latham)]

Fairly common (or as common as large birds of prey can be) over most of the ACT. Nests in the ACT.

**28. Little Eagle** *Hieraaëtus morphnoides* (Gould)[32. Little Eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides* (Gould)]

First observed Black Mountain 20 May 1951, a single bird (J.H.C., F.N.R.). On 28 Jun 1951 a pair was seen along University Avenue (F.N.R.). Established later that two pairs were present in the ACT during the spring of 1951 - one on Black Mountain and the other at Uriarra Crossing. It is not known whether either pair bred (J.H.C.). Last observed at Sullivan's Creek (a single bird) 8 Feb 1952 (J.H.C.). This is an *unpublished record* [his emphasis] for the ACT.

**29. Whistling Eagle** *Haliastur sphenurus* (Vieillot)[26. Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus* (Vieillot)]

A common breeding species along the rivers.

**30. Black-shouldered Kite** *Elanus notatus* Gould[25. Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus axillaris* (Latham)]

Has been fairly common in the ACT since September 1945. Commonest during 1949. No nests have been found but it probably breeds in the ACT. Copulation has been observed (J.H.C.).

**31. Little Falcon** *Falco longipennis* Swainson[34. Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis* Swainson]

Occasionally seen around the city and country in the ACT. Not known to breed in the ACT but may do so.

**32. Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* Tunstall[35. Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Tunstall]

Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. Recent records: Black Mountain, 1 bird, 20 May 1951. (J.H.C., F.N.R.); Acton, 1 bird, 3 May 1952, (J.H.C.). A pair of peregrines was seen at Lake George on 20 Jan 1952 (J.H.C.).

**33. Brown Hawk** *Falco berigora* Vigors & Horsfield[33. Brown Falcon *Falco berigora* Vigors & Horsfield]

A common breeding species in the ACT.

**34. Nankeen Kestrel** *Falco cenchroides* Vigors & Horsfield[36. Nankeen Kestrel *Falco cenchroides* Vigors & Horsfield]

A common breeding species in the ACT. The kestrels generally leave the ACT in winter but occasionally one or two over-winter there (e.g. winter of 1951).

**35. Stubble Quail** *Coturnix pectoralis* Gould[1. Stubble Quail *Coturnix pectoralis* Gould]

Seen fairly often on the lowlands and heard commonly calling at dusk in the summer months. No breeding records but probably breeds in the ACT.

**36. Brown Quail** *Synoicus ypsilophorus* Bosc [2. Brown Quail *Coturnix ypsilophora* Bosc] Mathews' List only.

**37. Little Quail** *Turnix velox* (Gould)  
[44. Little Button-quail *Turnix velox* (Gould)]  
Rare, but occasionally seen on the lowlands. Possibly breeds in the ACT.

**38. Red-chested Quail** *Turnix pyrrhothorax* (Gould)  
[45. Red-chested Button-quail *Turnix pyrrhothorax* (Gould)]  
Mathews' List only.

**39. Brolga** *Grus rubicunda* (Perry)  
[37. Brolga *Grus rubicunda* (Perry)]  
Mathews' List only.

**40. Lewin Water-Rail** *Rallus pectoralis* Temminck  
[39. Lewin's Rail *Rallus pectoralis* Temminck]  
Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. No other records for ACT. A single bird was seen in swamp near Bungendore (four-and-a-half miles from the ACT border) on 8 Oct 1949 (J.H.C.).

**41. Banded Landrail** *Hypotaenidia philippensis* (Linnaeus)  
[38. Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* (Linnaeus)]  
Mathews' List only.

**42. Dusky Moorhen** *Gallinula tenebrosa* Gould  
[41. Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa* Gould]  
Common enough along Molonglo where it breeds. Extremely rare on Murrumbidgee and other streams without rushy banks.

**43. Eastern Swampphen** *Porphyrio porphyrio* (Linnaeus)  
[40. Purple Swampphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* (Linnaeus)]  
All information on ACT occurrence given in Lamm & White.

**44. Coot** *Fulica atra* Linnaeus  
[42. Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* Linnaeus]  
Mathews' List only.

**45. Bustard** *Eupodotis australis* (J. E. Gray)  
[43. Australian Bustard *Ardeotis australis* (Gray)]  
Recorded by Jones ('one bird seen on 21-6-1920') and on Mathews' List. No other records.

**46. Spur-winged Plover** *Lobibyx novae-hollandiae* (Stephens)[51. Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles* (Boddaert)]

A common breeding bird on the lowlands.

**47. Banded Plover** *Zonifer tricolor* (Vieillot)[50. Banded Lapwing *Vanellus tricolor* (Vieillot)]

Of local but regular occurrence. I know of only two colonies of this species - one on the Canberra airfield (up to 30 birds) and one in a bare field on the Cotter Road (generally two pairs). Breeds at both places. Three birds spent the winter of 1951 on a cricket field at Turner (J.H.C.).

**48. Black-fronted Dotterel** *Charadrius melanops* Vieillot[49. Black-fronted Dotterel *Elseyornis melanops* (Vieillot)]

Migrant. Common along the rivers, etc., where it breeds in the warmer months.

**49. Snipe** *Gallinago hardwickii* (Gray)[46. Latham's Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii* (Gray)]

Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. Only one recent record for ACT - three birds on Sullivan's Creek in November 1948 (J.H.C.). Four birds were seen on Bungendore Swamp 22 Oct 1949 (J.H.C.).

**50. White-headed Stilt.** *Himantopus himantopus*(Linnaeus) [48. Black-winged Stilt. *Himantopus himantopus*

(Linnaeus)] Mathews' List only.

**51. Stone-Curlew** *Burhinus magnirostris* (Latham)[47. Bush Stone-curlew *Burhinus grallarius* (Latham)]

Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. Recent ACT records: Weetangera, one pair, mid-May 1949, (E.F. Riek); same area, 3 birds, 1 Aug 1949, (F.J. Gay); same area, 2 birds. 8 Aug 1949, (F.J.G.); Acton, 2 birds, 30 Apr 1950, (J.H.C.); same area, 3 birds, 11 Dec 1950 (J.H.C.). Possibly breeds in the ACT.

**52. Silver Gull** *Larus novae-hollandiae* Stephens[52. Silver Gull *Larus novaehollandiae* Stephens]

Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. No recent records. Common on Lake George since it filled up.

**53. Peaceful Dove** *Geopelia striata* (Linnaeus)[56. Peaceful Dove *Geopelia striata* (Linnaeus)]

All the information on ACT occurrence is given in Lamm & White and Lamm & Calaby.

**54. Diamond Dove** *Geopelia cuneata* (Latham)[55. Diamond Dove *Geopelia cuneata* (Latham)]

Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. No recent records.

**55. Bronzewing Pigeon** *Phaps chalcoptera* (Latham)

[53. Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera* (Latham)]  
Fairly common on the lowlands. Breeds in the ACT.

**56. Crested Pigeon** *Ocyphaps lophotes* (Temminck)

[54. Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes* (Temminck)]  
All information on ACT occurrence is given in Lamm & White.

**57. Wonga Pigeon** *Leucosarcia melanoleuca* (Latham)

[57. Wonga Pigeon *Leucosarcia melanoleuca* (Latham)]  
This species was observed twice recently in the ACT. On 28 Oct 1951 a pair was observed on the ground in a fire break between pine forest and dry sclerophyll forest at the back of the Cotter picnic ground. When disturbed they flew up into the pines and perched there (J.H.C.). A single bird was observed on the edge of a pine forest up the Paddy's River road, on 24 Jan 1952 (D.L. McIntosh). An *unpublished record* [his emphasis] for the ACT.

**58. Rainbow Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus haematodus* (Linnaeus)

[64. Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus* (Linnaeus)]  
Only records in Lamm & White.

**59. Musk Lorikeet** *Glossopsitta concinna* (Shaw)

[65. Musk Lorikeet *Glossopsitta concinna* (Shaw)]  
Occasionally seen in city Eucalypts.

**60. Little Lorikeet** *Glossopsitta pusilla* (Shaw)

[66. Little Lorikeet *Glossopsitta pusilla* (Shaw)]  
Commonest lorikeet, but still only occasionally seen.

**61. Red-tailed Black-cockatoo** *Calyptorhynchus banksii* (Latham)

[58. Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus banksii* (Latham)]  
Mathews' List only.

**62. Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo** *Calyptorhynchus funereus* (Shaw)

[59 Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus funereus* (Shaw)]  
Occasionally seen in the forested country from the Murrumbidgee westwards. Parties of 10 or more are sometimes seen in the Upper Cotter valley. Nests in the ACT.

**63. Gang Gang** *Callocephalon fimbriatum* (Grant)

[60 Gang-gang Cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum* (Grant)]  
Fairly common in the ACT where flocks of 30 or more are seen fairly often. Present in the city in all months but commoner during the winter. Nests in the ACT.

**64. White Cockatoo** *Kakatoë galerita* (Latham)[62. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita* (Latham)]

Fairly common in the ACT. No nests have been found but it probably nests in the ACT.

**65. Galah** *Kakatoë roseicapilla* (Vieillot)[61. Galah *Cacatua roseicapilla* Vieillot]

A common breeding species.

**66. Quarrion** *Leptolophus hollandicus* (Kerr)[63. Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus* (Kerr)]

Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. No recent records.

**67. Superb Parrot** *Polytelis swainsonii* (Desmarest)[68. Superb Parrot *Polytelis swainsonii* (Desmarest)]

The ACT occurrence of this species is given in Frith and Calaby. Possibly breeds in the ACT.

**69. King Parrot** *Aprosmictus scapularis* (Lichtenstein)[67. Australian King-Parrot *Alisterus scapularis* (Lichtenstein)]

Recorded by Jones ('odd ones come from mountain gullies') and on Mathews' List. No recent records.

**68. Crimson Rosella** *Platycercus elegans* (Gmelin)[69. Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans* (Gmelin)]

A common breeding species.

**70. Eastern Rosella** *Platycercus eximius* (Shaw)[70. Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius* (Shaw)]

A common breeding species.

**71. Red-backed Parrot** *Psephotus haematonotus* (Gould)[71. Red-rumped Parrot *Psephotus haematonotus* (Gould)]

A common breeding species.

**72. Budgerigar** *Melopsittacus undulatus* (Shaw)[72. Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus* (Shaw)]

Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. No recent records.

**73. Pallid Cuckoo** *Cuculus pallidus* (Latham)[73. Pallid Cuckoo *Cuculus pallidus* (Latham)]

Common in spring and summer. The only host bird I have observed in the ACT is the White-plumed Honeyeater.

**74. Fan-tailed Cuckoo** *Cacomantis pyrrhophanus* (Vieillot)

[74. Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis* Latham]

Fairly common in spring and autumn. I do not know of it breeding in the ACT.

**75. Black-eared Cuckoo** *Misocalius osculans* (Gould)

[75. Black-eared Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx osculans* (Gould)]

Only record in Lamm & White.

**76. Horsfield Bronze Cuckoo** *Chalcites basalis* (Horsfield)

[76. Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalis* (Horsfield)]

Recorded by Jones but the record was dismissed by Mathews. Lamm & White imply that Mathews' action was justified. In my opinion this species should be reinstated in the ACT avifauna, and is the commoner of the two bronze-cuckoos. It is commonly observed in Acton in early spring sitting on the topmost sticks of deciduous trees which haven't at that time put on their new leaves, monotonously calling its unmistakable mournful single note.

**77. Golden Bronze Cuckoo** *Chalcites lucidus* (Gmelin)

[77. Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus* (Gmelin)]

Occasionally seen in summer. I do not know of it breeding in the ACT.

**78. Koel** *Eudynamys scolopacea* (Linnaeus)

[78. Common Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea* (Linnaeus)]

Only record in Lamm & White.

**79. Barn Owl** *Tyto alba* (Scopoli)

[81. Barn Owl *Tyto alba* (Scopoli)]

Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. Only recent records: Narrabundah, 1 bird, March 1952 (J.H.C.); Acton, 1 bird, 2 Jun 1952 (J.H.C.). (Both dead on roadside.)

**80. Boobook Owl** *Ninox novaeseelandiae* (Gmelin)

[80. Southern Boobook *Ninox novaeseelandiae* (Gmelin)]

Fairly common although not often seen. Has been seen or heard calling in all months of the year (J.H.C.), so presumably breeds in the ACT.

**81. Barking Owl** *Ninox connivens* (Latham)

[79. Barking Owl *Ninox connivens* (Latham)]

Only record in Lamm & White. These authors saw a single bird by their car headlights at night. I doubt this record personally.

**82. Tawny Frogmouth** *Podargus strigoides* (Latham)

[82. Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides* (Latham)]

Probably fairly common but not often seen. Nests in the ACT.

**83. Spine-tailed Swift** *Hirundapus caudacutus* (Latham)[83. White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus* (Latham)]

A transitory species, observed flying over the Territory only. Has been observed in all months from late December to March.

**84. Fork-tailed Swift** *Apus pacificus* (Latham)[84. Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus* (Latham)]

Only record in Lamm &amp; White.

**85. Kookaburra** *Dacelo gigas* (Boddaert)[85. Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae* (Hermann)]

A common breeding species.

**86. Sacred Kingfisher** *Halcyon sancta* Vigors & Horsfield[86. Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* (Vigors & Horsfield)]

Occasionally seen in summer.

**87. Rainbow Bee-eater** *Merops ornatus* Latham[87. Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus* Latham]

A migratory species, common in summer along the rivers where it breeds.

**88. Dollar bird** *Eurystomus orientalis* (Linnaeus)[88. Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* (Linnaeus)]

A migratory species, fairly common in summer on the lowlands where it breeds.

**89. Superb Lyre Bird** *Menura novae-hollandiae* Latham [89. Superb Lyrebird *Menura novaehollandiae* Latham] Not uncommon breeding species in suitable localities. Observed at Condor Creek, around Mt. Tidbinbilla, Upper Cotter Valley, Mt. Bimberi (J.H.C.). Also on the Goodradigbee slope of the Brindabella Ranges (J.H.C.).

**90. Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* Linnaeus[160. Skylark *Alauda arvensis* Linnaeus]

Recorded by Jones. Other records in Lamm &amp; White. Has apparently not become a permanent resident in the ACT. Introduced.

**91. Horsfield Bush-lark** *Mirafra**javanica* Horsfield [159. Singing Bushlark*Mirafra javanica* Horsfield] Mathews' List

only.

**92. Welcome Swallow** *Hirundo neoxena* Gould[170. Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena* Gould]

A common breeding species. Its numbers decrease in winter but it is always present.

**93. Tree Martin** *Hylochelidon nigricans* (Vieillot)

[171. Tree Martin *Hirundo nigricans* Vieillot]

A migratory species, common in summer when it breeds in the ACT.

**94. Fairy Martin** *Hylochelidon ariel* (Gould)

[172. Fairy Martin *Hirundo ariel* (Gould)]

Much less common than the preceding species. A summer visitor which breeds in the ACT.

**95. Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina novae-hollandiae* (Gmelin)

[143. Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae* (Gmelin)]

A common breeding species. Most individuals leave the ACT for the winter but a few stay on.

**96. Little Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina robusta* (Latham)

[144. White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis* (Gmelin)]

Only records in Lamm & White and Lamm & Calaby.

**97. White-winged Triller** *Lalage sueurii* (Vieillot)

[145. White-winged Triller *Lalage sueurii* (Vieillot)]

A migrant which nests in the ACT in small numbers in summer but apparently does not come every summer. The species nested in the Territory in the 1947-48 and 1948-49 summers. None were seen in the 1949/50 or 1950/51 summers, although a solitary bird was seen about 30 miles north of Canberra on 8 Oct 1949. The bird nested again in the ACT in the 1951/52 summer (J.H.C.).

**98. Oriole** *Oriolus sagittatus* (Latham)

[146. Olive-backed Oriole *Oriolus sagittatus* (Latham)]

A migrant, breeding in the ACT in spring. Several pairs can be found in the city area during the warmer months.

**99. Raven** *Corvus coronoides* Vigors & Horsfield

[154. Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides* Vigors & Horsfield]

The common breeding Corvid.

**100. Crow** *Corvus ceciliae* Mathews

[155. Torresian crow *Corvus orru* Bonaparte]

On both Jones' and Mathews' Lists. Lamm & White claimed to have distinguished it on calls and state that Mathews substantiated his record by shooting specimens. I have yet to be convinced.

**101. Black-backed Magpie** *Gymnorhina tibicen* (Latham)

**102. White-backed Magpie** *Gymnorhina hypoleuca* (Gould)

[151. Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen* (Latham)]

The 'Black-back' is a common breeding species. Occasional 'White-backs' are seen but in my opinion all are atypical and have some tendency towards 'Black-back'. I do not believe there are any true 'White-backs' in the ACT.

**103. Pied Currawong** *Strepera graculina* (Shaw)

[152. Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina* (Shaw)]

A common breeding species. An altitudinal migrant.

**104. Grey Currawong** *Strepera versicolor* (Latham) [153. Grey

Currawong *Strepera versicolor* (Latham)] Fairly uncommon. No nesting records but it probably breeds in the ACT.

**105. Grey Butcher-bird** *Cracticus torquatus* (Latham)

[150. Grey Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus* (Latham)]

An occasional to fairly common breeding species.

**106. White-winged Chough** *Corcorax melanorhamphus* (Vieillot)

[156. White-winged Chough *Corcorax melanorhamphus* (Vieillot)]

A fairly common breeding species.

**107. Grey Jumper** *Struthidea cinerea* Gould

[157. Apostlebird *Struthidea cinerea* Gould]

Only record in Lamm & White.

**108. Magpie-lark** *Grallina cyanoleuca* (Latham)

[139. Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca* (Latham)]

A common breeding species in warmer months.

**109. Satin Bower-bird** *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* (Vieillot)

[158. Satin Bowerbird *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* (Vieillot)]

Of local distribution on the edge of or in clearings in Eucalypt forests at a higher altitude than the Canberra plain (eg. Blundells, Hurdle Creek). No nests or bowers have been found as far as I know but it probably breeds in the ACT as it is present in all months of the year.

**110. Orange-winged Sittella** *Neositta chrysoptera* (Latham)

[132. Varied Sittella *Daphoenositta chrysoptera* (Latham)]

A rather uncommon nomad. A fair number of recent records. No nests have been found but it probably breeds in the ACT.

**111. Brown Tree-creeper** *Climacteris picumnus* Temminck[91. Brown Treecreeper *Climacteris picumnus* Temminck]

Fairly common from the lowlands to the alpine woodland. A nesting species.

**112. White-throated Tree-creeper** *Climacteris leucophaea* (Latham)[90. White-throated Treecreeper *Cormobates leucophaeus* (Latham)] Fairly common but less common and less widely distributed ecologically than the preceding species. No nests have been found but it presumably breeds in the ACT.**113. Grey-crowned Babbler** *Pomatostomus temporalis* (Vigors & Horsfield)[129. Grey-crowned Babbler *Pomatostomus temporalis* (Vigors & Horsfield)]

Only occasional. Generally seen on southern side of Canberra (Cooma Road, etc.) (J.H.C.). No record of nesting.

**114. White-browed Babbler** *Pomatostomus superciliosus* (Vigors & Horsfield)[130. White-browed Babbler *Pomatostomus superciliosus* (Vigors & Horsfield)]

Rare. Seen a few times on the road behind Mt. Stromlo and the back road to Yass (J.H.C.). No nesting records.

**115. Spotted Quail Thrush** *Cinclosoma punctatum* (Shaw)[131. Spotted Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma punctatum* (Shaw)]

Very rare. Only one record: Cotter Valley near Pearce's Creek, 1 bird, June 1949 (J.H.C.).

**118. Ground Thrush** *Oreocincla lunulata* (Latham)[177 Bassian Thrush *Zoothera lunulata* (Latham)]

Seen fairly often in the wet sclerophyll forest end alpine woodland during the summer months. Probably breeds in the ACT.

**117. Blackbird** *Turdus merula* Linnaeus[178 Common Blackbird *Turdus merula* Linnaeus]First observed by a competent observer (Mrs. F.N.R.) in Acton on 26 Aug 1949, a single male bird. This bird was found to have a mate on 24 Sep 1949 (F.N.R.). The pair was seen in this area periodically for months. Three blackbirds were seen and heard in Forrest on 7 Jan 1951 and an old nest found. The nest had obviously been used to rear a brood (J.H.C.). Last record, a single bird in CSIRO grounds on 27 May 1952 (J.H.C.). An *unpublished record* [his emphasis] for the ACT.**116. Thrush** *Turdus ericitorum* Turton[179. Song Thrush *Turdus philemelos* Brehm]

The history of this introduced species, which did not succeed in establishing itself in the ACT, is given in Lamm &amp; White.

**119. White-fronted Chat** *Epthianura albifrons* (Jardine & Selby)[122. White-fronted Chat *Epthianura albifrons* (Jardine & Selby)]

Not very common and usually seen in spring, sometimes in flocks of 50 or more. No breeding records but it may breed in the ACT.

**120. White-throated Flyeater** *Gerygone olivacea* (Gould)[98. White-throated Gerygone *Gerygone olivacea* (Gould)]

Recorded by Barrett and on Mathews' List. There are odd recent records (by D.W. Lamm), all on the lowlands in the summer months.

**121. Brown Weebill** *Smicrornis brevirostris* (Gould)[97. Weebill *Smicrornis brevirostris* (Gould)]

Apparently a fairly abundant tree-top species. Nests in the ACT. Its seasonal movements, if any, not known with certainty but it appears to be present mostly in the summer months.

**122. Eastern Whiteface** *Aphelocephala leucopsis* (Gould)[104. Southern Whiteface *Aphelocephala leucopsis* (Gould)]

Common on the lowlands. No nests have been found but it is present at all seasons and presumably nests in the ACT.

**123. Striated Thornbill** *Acanthiza lineata* Gould [103. Striated Thornbill

*Acanthiza lineata* Gould] This bird has been observed twice, both times in the trees and shrubs around CSIRO. A flock of 10 to 12 birds on 24 Aug 1949 and a flock of 8 or 10 on 10 Sep 1950. (J.H.C.). This is an *unpublished record* [his emphasis] for the ACT.

**124. Little Thornbill** *Acanthiza nana* Vigors & Horsfield[102. Yellow Thornbill *Acanthiza nana* Vigors & Horsfield]

Rare in the ACT. Only recent record: Murrumbidgee, 2 birds, 13 Aug 1949 (D.W. Lamm) (Lamm & Calaby).

**125. Brown Thornbill** *Acanthiza pusilla* (Shaw)[99. Brown Thornbill *Acanthiza pusilla* (Shaw)]

A common breeding species.

**126. Buff-tailed Thornbill** *Acanthiza reguloides* Vigors & Horsfield[100 Buff-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza reguloides* Vigors & Horsfield]

Seen fairly commonly in scrub on the margins of the dry sclerophyll forest. No nests have been found but it probably breeds in the ACT.

**127. Yellow-tailed Thornbill** *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa* (Quoy & Gaimard)[101 Yellow-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa* (Quoy & Gaimard)]

Common breeding species.

**128. White-browed Scrub-wren** *Sericornis frontalis* (Vigors & Horsfield)  
 [95. White-browed Scrubwren *Sericornis frontalis* (Vigors & Horsfield)]  
 A common breeding bird in the scrub along streams, etc.

**129. Speckled Warbler** *Chthonicola sagittata* (Latham)  
 [96. Speckled Warbler *Chthonicola sagittata* (Latham)]  
 Not particularly common but present in all months and breeds in the ACT.

**130. Brown Songlark** *Cincloramphus cruralis* (Vigors & Horsfield)  
 [175. Brown Songlark *Cincloramphus cruralis* (Vigors & Horsfield)]  
 Recorded by Jones ('only seen in spring and summer of wet seasons') and on Mathews' List. The only recent records are the following: back road to Yass, 1 bird, 23 Nov 1947 (D.W. Lamm); near Uriarra Crossing, 1 bird, 22 Oct 1948 (D.W. Lamm).

**131. Rufous Songlark** *Cincloramphus mathewsi* Iredale [174. Rufous Songlark *Cincloramphus mathewsi* Iredale] A migrant which is a fairly common breeding bird in summer. In the 1950/51 summer it was very common.

**132. Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* (Linnaeus)  
 [173. Clamorous Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* (Ehrenberg)]  
 A migrant, breeding commonly on Sullivan's Creek and the Molonglo in spring and summer.

**133. Superb Blue-wren** *Malurus cyaneus*  
 (Latham) [92. Superb Fairy-wren *Malurus cyaneus*  
 Latham] Common breeding species.

**134. Grey Fantail** *Rhipidura fuliginosa* (Sparrrman)  
 [141. Grey Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa* (Sparrrman)]  
 A common breeding species. Most individuals leave the ACT for the winter but a small number stay on in the city area.

**135. Rufous Fantail** *Rhipidura rufifrons* (Latham)  
 [140. Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons* (Latham)]  
 Only records in Lamm and White.

**136. Willie Wagtail** *Rhipidura leucophrys* Latham  
 [142. Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys* (Latham)]  
 A common breeding species.

**137. Leaden Flycatcher** *Myiagra rubecula* (Latham)[137. Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula* (Latham)]

Rare in the ACT but there are quite a number of recent records all in the warmer months. No nests have been found.

**138. Restless Flycatcher** *Seisura inquieta* (Latham)[138. Restless Flycatcher *Myiagra inquieta* (Latham)]

A fairly common breeding species.

**139. Jacky Winter** *Microeca leucophaea* (Latham)[123. Jacky Winter *Microeca fascinans* (Latham)]

Not uncommon. Breeds in the ACT.

**140. Scarlet Robin** *Petroica multicolor* (Gmelin)[124. Scarlet Robin *Petroica multicolor* (Gmelin)]

A common breeding species. An altitudinal migrant.

**141. Red-capped Robin** *Petroica goodenovii* (Vigors & Horsfield)[125. Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii* (Vigors & Horsfield)]

Occasional only, but breeds in the ACT (Barrett; Lamm & Calaby).

**142. Flame Robin** *Petroica phoenicea* Gould[126. Flame Robin *Petroica phoenicea* Gould]

A common breeding species. An altitudinal migrant.

**143. Hooded Robin** *Melanodryas cucullata* (Latham)[127. Hooded Robin *Melanodryas cucullata* (Latham)]

Occasional only, liable to be seen at any time but generally in winter. Not known to breed in the ACT but may do so.

**144. Yellow Robin** *Eopsaltria australis* (Shaw)[128. Eastern Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria australis* (Shaw)]

Occasionally seen in the city but common enough in the Eucalypt forests. Breeds in the ACT.

**145. Golden Whistler** *Pachycephala pectoralis* (Latham)[134. Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis* (Latham)]

Occasionally seen in the city area and lowlands. No nesting records but probably nests in the ACT.

**146. Rufous Whistler** *Pachycephala rufiventris* (Latham)[135. Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris* (Latham)]

A migrant, common in summer. Breeds in the ACT.

**147. Grey Shrike-thrush** *Colluricincla harmonica* (Latham) [136. Grey Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla harmonica* (Latham)] A common breeding species.

**148. Shrike-tit** *Falcunculus frontatus* (Latham) [133. Crested Shrike-tit *Falcunculus frontatus* (Latham)] Recorded by Jones ('one only seen') and on Mathews' List. Rare, but a few have been seen of recent years at various places on the lowlands, including Acton.

**149. Pipit** *Anthus novaeseelandiae* (Gmelin) [161. Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae* (Gmelin)] A common breeding species.

**150. Masked Wood-swallow** *Artamus personatus* (Gould) [147. Masked Woodswallow *Artamus personatus* (Gould)] Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. No recent records.

**151. White-browed Wood-swallow** *Artamus superciliosus* (Gould) [148. White-browed Woodswallow *Artamus superciliosus* (Gould)] Recorded by Jones and on Mathews' List. Not seen in the ACT in my time until 13 Nov 1951 when the ACT lowlands were invaded by an irruption of this species. The birds were common around the city until mid-January 1952 when all departed. Not known to breed in the ACT.

**152. Dusky Wood-swallow** *Artamus cyanopterus* (Latham) [149. Dusky Woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus* (Latham)] A migrant which is a common breeding species in the summer months.

**153. Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* Linnaeus [180. Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* Linnaeus] A common breeding species. Introduced.

**154. White-naped Honeyeater** *Melithreptus lunatus* (Vieillot) [117. White-naped Honeyeater *Melithreptus lunatus* (Vieillot)] Rather uncommon but presumably breeds in the ACT - a family party including juveniles was observed many times in Acton in May 1951 (F.N.R. and family).

**155. Sanguineous Honeyeater** *Myzomela sanguinolenta* (Latham) [155. Scarlet Honeyeater *Myzomela sanguinolenta* (Latham)] Mathews' List only.

**156. Spinebilled Honeyeater** *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris* (Latham) [120. Eastern Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris* (Latham)] Occasionally seen on the lowlands. No nests have been found but probably breeds in the ACT.

**157. Painted Honeyeater** *Grantiella pieta* (Gould) [118. Painted Honeyeater *Grantiella pieta* (Gould)] A regular summer visitor in small numbers to the mistletoe-infested casuarinas along the Murrumbidgee. Nests in the ACT.

**158. Regent Honeyeater** *Zanthoniza phrygia* (Shaw)  
[108. Regent Honeyeater *Xanthomyza phrygia* (Shaw)]  
Of local occurrence, i.e. a few birds can usually be found in Acton and at Pine Island. A flock of 20 were seen in Acton for two days in mid-February 1951 (J.H.C.). Presumably breeds in the ACT.

**159. Lewin Honeyeater** *Meliphaga lewini* Swainson  
[111. Lewin's Honeyeater *Meliphaga lewinii* (Swainson)]  
Occasionally seen in the ACT in the summer months. Not known to nest in the ACT but may do so.

**160. Singing Honeyeater** *Meliphaga virescens* (Vieillot)  
[113. Singing Honeyeater *Lichenostomus virescens* (Vieillot)]  
Occasionally seen in the city and along the rivers in the summer months. No breeding records but may nest in the ACT.

**161. Yellow-faced Honeyeater** *Meliphaga chrysops* (Latham)  
[112. Yellow-faced Honeyeater *Lichenostomus chrysops* (Latham)]  
A migratory species common in the summer, particularly along the Murrumbidgee where it nests.

**162. White-eared Honeyeater** *Meliphaga leucotis* (Latham)  
[114. White-eared Honeyeater *Lichenostomus leucotis* (Latham)]  
Fairly common in the city and in Eucalypt country generally on the lowlands. No breeding records but probably nests in the ACT.

**163. Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** *Meliphaga melanops* (Latham)  
[115. Yellow-tufted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus melanops* (Latham)]  
Apparently small numbers of these birds occur in the southern part of the ACT in the warmer months. First observed on Gudgenby River on 18 Sep 1949. Identity established by examining a specimen killed by a fisherman. This is an *unpublished record* [his emphasis] for the ACT.

**164. White-plumed Honeyeater** *Meliphaga penicillata* (Gould)  
[116. White-plumed Honeyeater *Lichenostomus penicillata* (Gould)]  
A common breeding species.

- 165. Yellow-winged Honeyeater** *Meliornis novae-hollandiae* (Latham)  
[119. New Holland Honeyeater *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae* (Latham)]  
A common breeding species along the rivers, etc.
- 166. Noisy Miner** *Myzantha melanocephala* (Latham)  
[110. Noisy Miner *Manorina melanocephala* (Latham)]  
A common breeding species.
- 167. Red Wattle Bird** *Anthochaera carunculata* (Shaw)  
[105. Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata* (Shaw)]  
Rather uncommon but a regular summer visitor. Nests in the ACT.
- 168. Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** *Acanthagenys rufogularis* Gould  
[106. Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater *Acanthagenys rufogularis* Gould]  
Mathews' List only.
- 169. Blue-faced Honeyeater** *Entomyzon cyanotis* (Latham)  
[109. **Blue-faced** Honeyeater *Entomyzon cyanotis* (Latham)]  
Mathews' List only.
- 170. Noisy Friarbird** *Philemon corniculatus* (Latham)  
[107. Noisy Friarbird *Philemon corniculatus* (Latham)] A  
common breeding species in the warmer months. Migratory.
- 171. Mistletoe bird** *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* (Shaw) [169.  
Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* (Shaw)] A migrant, common in  
appropriate places, eg. in the mistletoe-infested river-oaks along the rivers. Breeds  
in the ACT.
- 172. Spotted Pardalote** *Pardalotus punctatus* (Shaw)  
[93. Spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus punctatus* Shaw]  
Fairly common breeding species.
- 173. Red-tipped Pardalote** *Pardalotus substriatus* Mathews  
[94. Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus* (Gmelin)]  
Common breeding species.
- 174. Silvereye** *Zosterops lateralis* (Latham)  
[176. Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis* (Latham)]  
A common breeding species.
- 175. Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* (Linnaeus)  
[162. House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (Linnaeus)]  
A common breeding species. Introduced.

**176. Diamond Sparrow** *Zonaeginthus guttatus* (Shaw)

[167. Diamond Firetail *Stagonopleura guttata* (Shaw)]

A fairly common breeding species in many localities in the ACT. Can usually be found at Naas, along the Murrumbidgee, etc.

**177. Zebra Finch** *Poephila castanotis* (Gould)

[163. Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata* (Vieillot)]

A breeding species but of very local distribution. A small colony can usually be found in the trees in front of Canberra High School.

**178. Banded Finch** *Poephila bichenovii* (Vigors & Horsfield)

[164. Double-barred Finch *Taeniopygia bichenovii* (Vigors & Horsfield)]

Of regular occurrence locally, and found in all months of the year. No nests have been found but probably breeds in the ACT.

**179. Plum-headed Finch** *Poephila modesta* (Gould)

[165. Plum-headed Finch *Neochmia modesta* (Gould)]

Mathews' List only.

**180. Red-browed Finch** *Estrilda temporalis* (Latham)

[166. Red-browed Finch *Neochmia temporalis* (Latham)]

A common breeding species, notably along the Murrumbidgee and on the forest margins.

**181. Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis* (Linnaeus)

[168. European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* (Linnaeus)]

A common breeding species on the lowlands. Introduced.

Other than the species listed above, a few others have been observed close to the ACT in recent years. These are as follows:

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* (Linnaeus)

[Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* (Linnaeus)]

Bungendore Swamp.

**Blue-winged Shoveler** [Australasian Shoveler] *Anas rhynchotis* Latham

[Australasian Shoveler *Anas rhynchotis* Latham]

Bungendore Swamp and Lake George.

**Spotted Harrier** *Circus assimilis* Jardine & Selby

[Spotted Harrier *Circus assimilis* Jardine & Selby]

Yass Rd, 7 miles from the ACT border.

**Red-capped Dotterel** *Charadrius alexandrinus* Linnaeus

[*C. alexandrinus* is the Kentish Plover - most unlikely... JHC presumably means the Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus* Temminck]

Lake George.

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra novae-hollandiae* Vieillot

[Red-necked Avocet *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae* Vieillot]

Lake George.

**References**

- Barrett, C. (1922). Birds around a homestead. *Emu* 21: 257-261.
- Jones, D.S. (1929). List of birds of Canberra, the Federal Territory. *Emu* 28: 252-254.
- Mathews, G.M. (1943). List of birds of the Australian Capital Territory. Commonwealth Forestry Bureau. Leaf No. 53.
- Whittell, H.M. and Serventy, D.M. (1948a). A Systematic List of the Birds of Western Australia. *Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia Special*
- Lamm, D.W. and White, D. (1950). The changing status of avifauna in the Australian Capital Territory. *Emu* 49: 199-204.
- Lamm, D.W. and Calaby, J.H. (1950). Seasonal variation of bird populations along the Murrumbidgee in the Australian Capital Territory. *Emu* 50: 114-122.
- Wetmore, A. (1951). A revised classification of the birds of the world. *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections Volume 117, Number 4*.
- Frith, H.J. and Calaby, J.H. (in press). The Superb Parrot in southern New South Wales. [published *Emu* 53: 324-330, Dec 1953.]

## THE CALABY LIST - COMMENTS

Steve Wilson

56 Harrington Cct, Kambah, ACT 2902

At the time John's list was written, the distribution of Australian birds was still being worked out and local lists such as this appeared frequently in *The Emu*. John's list was virtually ready for publication and, had this happened, it would have been the first annotated list of birds of the ACT taking in all records published at that time excepting that of Daley (1946) of which he was probably unaware. Earlier authors merely added to, or commented on, previously published lists with the exception of Mathews (1943) who produced a full list with the addition of some coded information regarding status, habitat, etc. Mathews did not mention his sources.

A notebook of records compiled by John Calaby over the period August 1947 to July 1952 with a further note dated 10 May 1954 also exists (and is held by Jo Calaby, John's widow) and provides some background to the list published above. This notebook is not a complete listing of birds seen, but rather records notable species observed, i.e. the common native species are seldom mentioned. He refers to many trips to the Murrumbidgee and to several places in the Brindabella Ranges such as Blundell's Creek, Mt. Franklin and Mt. Coree. Occasionally he records the sightings of other observers.

John's list accurately reflects the state of knowledge of local birdwatchers at that time. It is worth noting that his list comprised 181 species (180 if the two magpies are regarded as one as they are

now) while the latest list (Wilson 1999) covers 280 species. Already, one further species (Red Knot *Calidris canutus*) is awaiting acceptance by the COG Rarities Panel prior to publication and addition to the ACT list.

John Calaby was a close friend of Don Lamm, who spent two periods of several years at the Embassy of the United States of America. It was John who wrote up the results of their survey which was done along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor (Lamm & Calaby 1950). On Don's arrival for his second tour of duty in 1960, the two explored the Canberra region in order to find places where Don could do visual surveys. They settled on the northern part of Lake George, as well as New Chums Road in the Brindabella Ranges. With this friendship in mind, some of the records in John's list are surprising in that they were not recorded by Lamm & White (1950) nor by Lamm, Wilson & Belton (1963) which were updates of the ACT list to those times.

The recently published *Birds of the ACT - Two Centuries of Change* (Wilson 1999) used the first published record of each species and on that basis John's list does not affect the situation. However, had it been published immediately after it was written, it would have been a valuable source of information including some first records.

The status of many of the species on Calaby's list has changed considerably, often as a result of the construction of

the many water features within the suburban boundaries but there are many other causes. Several of the song-bird species have apparently declined in numbers over the intervening years and among these are the Brown Treecreeper, White-fronted Chat, Southern Whiteface, Speckled Warbler, Willie Wagtail, Jacky Winter, Scarlet Robin, Flame Robin, Hooded Robin, Richard's Pipit, Painted Honeyeater, Regent Honeyeater and Zebra Finch. Many of these are found in threatened woodland / grassland areas. This habitat, together with the birds occurring therein, is in decline throughout eastern Australia.

There are references in the list to Bungendore Swamp. This was on the northern side of the King's Highway about 4 km. before Bungendore and in wet seasons covered something like 10 ha. This was a good area for birds and was easily seen from the roadside. The property owner had a lot of trouble with illegal shooters and the swamp was drained, probably in the late 1960s. It is a pity that this action was considered necessary.

Some species in the Calaby list are worthy of comment. Scientific names are not repeated.

**White-breasted Cormorant.** Wrongly identified by Jones (1929) and identified here as the Little Pied Cormorant but there is a slight chance that it could have been the Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax varius*) which is of similar size to the White-breasted Cormorant while the Little Pied Cormorant is much smaller. However, the Pied Cormorant is a rare visitor here and the Little Pied Cormorant is the more likely.

**White Egret** (Great Egret). Lamm & White (1950) considered this the more probable identification than the Plumed Egret (Intermediate Egret) of the Mathews list (Mathews 1943) but did not include it as a new species on the ACT list. The Calaby list adds a further previously unpublished sighting. The species was added to the ACT list by Lamm, Wilson & Belton (1963) mentioning Calaby's sightings without details.

**Bittern** (Australasian Bittern). There are only two previously accepted records of this species in the ACT but John's reports, published here and dating from the spring of 1948, were not mentioned by Lamm & White (1950). Nor do they appear in the Calaby notebook, but over the last six months of 1948 only trips to the Murrumbidgee or beyond are referred to while these records were from Sullivan's Creek and the Molonglo River.

**Swamp Harrier.** These observations, the first on 3 September 1949, were probably too late for inclusion by Lamm and White (1950).

**Grey Goshawk.** Lamm and Calaby recorded this species on 10.8% of their traverses of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor (Lamm & Calaby 1950) but the Calaby notebook records 'Bidgee 3/9/48 Grey Goshawk 4'. It appears to have become less numerous in recent years.

**Little Eagle.** These records predate that of Dunnet (1957).

**Wonga Pigeon.** This was a first ACT record, later published by Lamm, Wilson & Belton (1963).

**King Parrot** (Australian King-Parrot). The comment 'No recent records' indicates a very large growth in numbers over subsequent years.

**Barn Owl.** These are additional early records.

**Barking Owl.** Extra details of the first ACT record are provided and doubt is cast on its accuracy.

**Crow.** This is most likely the form of the Australian Raven which later became the Little Raven. For further discussion see Wilson (1998).

**Grey-crowned and White-browed Babblers.** Both were still present at the time of writing but have since become extinct locally.

**Pied Currawong.** Obviously at the time of writing all birds returned to the higher country to breed as the observation was made 'An altitudinal migrant'. This species has increased in numbers with

the growth of Canberra, breeds in the City and is present there in all months of the year.

**Blackbird** (Common Blackbird). These are interesting first records of the Common Blackbird in the ACT.

**Singing Honeyeater.** While this species was not referred to by Lamm and Calaby (1950) there are three records in the Calaby notebook: 'Bidgee 8/10/47 Singing Honeyeater 8', '8/11/47 near GG's residence Singing Honeyeater 4', and 'November 22/47 Blundell's en route Singing Honeyeater 5'. Presumably this would refer to Blundell's Creek in the Brindabella Ranges. Surprisingly, this was not reported by Lamm, Wilson & Belton (1963) and the first published record is from Angle Crossing on 24 September 1964.

**Yellow-tufted Honeyeater.** This record was published by Lamm, Wilson & Belton (1963).

#### References

- Daley, C. (1946). Nature notes on Canberra. *Victorian Naturalist* 63: 52-53.
- Dunnet, G.M. (1957). Notes on avian predation on young rabbits, *Oryctolagus cuniculus* L. *C.S.I.R.O. Wild Life Research* 2: 66-68.
- Lamm, D.W. and Calaby, J.H. (1950). Seasonal variations of bird populations along the Murrumbidgee in the Australian Capital Territory. *Emu* 50: 114-122
- Lamm, D.W. and White, D. (1950). The changing status of avifauna in the Australian Capital Territory. *Emu* 49: 199-204.
- Lamm, D.W., Wilson, S.J. and Belton, W. (1963). New information on the birds of the Australian Capital Territory. *Emu* 63: 57-65.
- Mathews, G.M. (1943). *List of birds of the Australian Capital Territory*. Leaflet No. 53. Commonwealth Forestry Bureau, Canberra.
- Wilson, S.J. (1998). On the occurrence of the Australian Crow in the Australian Capital Territory. *Canberra Bird Notes* 23: 35-36.
- Wilson, S.J. (1999). *Birds of the ACT - Two centuries of change*. Canberra Ornithologists Group.

*John Henry Calaby died on 19 September 1998 at the age of 75 years. An obituary in The Canberra Times was headed 'A Humble Naturalist' which was particularly apt. He was a self-effacing gentleman and to quote the obituary in The Age (Melbourne) 'He was a pioneer in environmental science; advising on the use of the myxoma virus to control rabbits; studying Australia's wild life from the Numbat to the Kangaroo; and influencing the declaration of the Kakadu National Park'. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Australian fauna and the history of its discovery and description.*

*He was joint author of the 'Proceedings of the 16<sup>th</sup> International Ornithological Congress' which was held in Canberra.*

*The Australian National University conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Science (honoris causa) in 1977 in recognition of his scholarship. He received the Troughton Medal of the Australian Mammal Society in 1983, the Fellowship of the Royal Zoological Society in 1986 and the American Society of Mammologists elevated him to an Honorary Member in 1993. He was awarded the Order of Australia (AO) in 1994.*

## ODD OBS

**Painted Honeyeater Breeding Record near Cowra, NSW**

On 14 November 1999, on a private property about 25km south of Cowra, during an Atlas 2 ha search, I recorded a male Painted Honeyeater feeding one young. This site adjoining the Illunie Range is a Mugga Ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) and Grey Box (*E. microcarpa*) woodland which has been allowed to regenerate undisturbed for over 50 years. The property owner who has lived in the area for over 80 years says that Painted Honeyeaters used to be recorded regularly on the property in small numbers, but he has not had this species there for many years.

When first located, the adult bird was calling loudly from the top of a dead tree, and it later responded to a taped call, doing a display flight up into the air and between two trees. After ten minutes, the adult was observed feeding the young bird which was sitting in a clump of mistletoe. The young NA as possibly about a week to ten days out of the nest and was being fed mistletoe berries. According to Longmore (1991) it is common for the young birds to be fed almost exclusively on the berries. Although the two birds were observed for around half an hour, there did not seem to be a female or other young around.

There is not a lot known about Painted Honeyeaters, especially their movements. They are scarce in numbers and widely nomadic throughout a large range stretching from the Northern Territory to Victoria and, if not calling, can very easily be missed in the canopy of trees. This is the second time in a

month I've recorded this species, as a COG group with me on a field trip saw two in the Capertee Valley in October 1999 - those birds were feeding in mistletoe (*Amyema cambagei*) in River Oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana*) along the Capertee River, another favoured habitat of this species. Through my work with the Regent Honeyeater Operations Group in Capertee Valley, I know that small numbers of Painted Honeyeaters are recorded from time to time in this area.

In the ACT, Painted Honeyeaters are listed under threatened species legislation as 'vulnerable'. There have been only four published records (three single birds and a pair) of this species in the last 30 years, and it has not been recorded at all since 1991. In October/November 1994, there was a group of ten recorded at Jindalee State Forest about 200 km to the north-west of the ACT, and not too far away from the property described above (Bounds, 1995).

Based on research in preparing the submission to have the species listed in the ACT, I came to the view that Painted Honeyeaters are probably more threatened than the Regent Honeyeater, on which much recovery effort is centred in its known enclaves. This is because the Painted Honeyeater is so scarce in numbers, thinly and wide spread across a huge range, mostly on private properties, and cannot be adequately protected through reserves. It will be interesting to see the records which emerge from the current Birds Australia Atlas project.

## References

Bounds J, (1995) Painted Honeyeaters at Jindalee State Forest, *CBN* 19(4): pp. 53-57.

Longmore NW, National Photographic Index of Australian Wildlife (1991), *Honeyeaters and their allies of Australia*, Collins/Angus and Roberston: Sydney, pp. 251-253.

Jenny Bounds

PO Box 403, WODEN, ACT 2606.

## Breeding Emus

Orienteering is a popular sport in the ACT, and participants in it cover large areas of woodland and forest around Canberra that are not usually traversed by bird-watchers — or by anyone else. On 11 July 1999, one runner surprised an Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae*, presumably a male, on a nest containing an estimated eight to nine eggs. The location was in Pierce's Creek pine forest near Laurel Camp Road. When I visited the site on 8 August, I found a disturbed nest with only two intact eggs and a third lying about a metre outside the nest.

This record is unsurprising in light of other Emu records for that general area summarised by Steve Wilson (1999). I have another recent breeding report, of an adult Emu accompanied by two young birds, in Autumn 1998 (5/4/98), by the Cotter-Tharwa road between Laurel Camp Road and the Cotter Reserve (Harvey Perkins pers comm).

The nest I saw was on a disused and grassy vehicle-access track in a relatively open area of medium-sized pines, the precise spot being recorded on my GPS as latitude 35° 22' 22, longitude 148° 55' 02. It is something of a mystery what

had happened to it. The five or six eggs might have been removed by human agency, or by predators. HANZAB notes that foxes 'destroy many nests at or about time of hatching'. On the other hand, according to HANZAB a high proportion of eggs may be infertile, so it is possible that the only fertile eggs had already hatched. While I found only one small crushed fragment of eggshell, it is possible that the rest had been taken by scavengers.

## Reference

Wilson, S. (1999), *Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change*, Canberra: COG.

Geoffrey Dabb

24 Brockman Street, Narrabundah, ACT  
2604

## A Hawking Extravaganza

On Thursday 23 December 1999 I returned to my home in Kambah in the late afternoon. It was a warm day with brooding unsettled conditions and my intention was to sit on the deck with a cold beer and watch for what I hoped would be my first White-throated Needletails for the season. I never saw any needletails but I did witness an extraordinary display of hawking by a number of local birds.

Conditions were seemingly ideal for swarming insects. At 17:45h the temperature was 25°C, but had dropped to 20°C by 18:45h. Though fairly calm at ground level, the sky was a constantly changing patchwork of light and heavy overcast, with localised rainfall evident about 8 km to the south-east near Tuggeranong Hill. I didn't have access to

any other local meteorological information, but WIN National News presented the following details for Sydney: sunset 20:06h, humidity 65%, barometer 1020 and rising. Isobars indicated that the pressure in Canberra was comparable.

Below is a list of the birds I saw within the hour that I watched (17:45h-18:45h). All were seen within a 100m radius of the house. They are listed in the order in which they were seen. Total numbers seen, and the numbers seen hawking (in parentheses) are indicated. Most hawking occurred within the first 20 minutes of the hour.

Noisy Friarbird	<i>Philemon corniculatus</i>	1	(1)
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	4	(2)
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	1	(1)
Pied Currawong	<i>Strepera graculina</i>	4	(1)
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>	4	
Magpie-lark	<i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i>	1	(1)
Galah	<i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i>	4	
Red Wattlebird	<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>	2	(1)
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	1	
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	1	
Australian Magpie	<i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	4	
Australian White Ibis	<i>Threskiornis molucca</i>	2	
Australian Raven	<i>Corvus coronoides</i>	3	

It is impossible to know how many types of insect were present, but of the ones I could see at my level, the most obvious were a Lycid beetle, probably *Metriorrhynchus rhipidius*, and winged adults of the common black and orange sugar ant *Camponotus consobrinus*. I also saw at least two types of butterfly and several small moths. I rarely saw the insects that were taken by birds, so don't know whether there was any preference. It is interesting to note though, that *M "rhipidius* is presumed to be unpalatable as it is the model for a number of mimics From various other beetle families and even a moth. Of the birds on the list, the friarbird, mynas, sparrow, currawongs, magpie- lark, wattlebird, and magpies could be

considered resident in the immediate vicinity. The others are better considered as itinerant in the immediate locale or just passing through. This is of course my subjective assessment, based on daily observations of the local birds. This leads to some interesting figures. Of the local resident birds, six of the seven species seen (86%) were observed hawking for insects. Had the magpies not been so intent on disputing territories they might also have had time to indulge in the feast. Taken as a whole, six of the thirteen species (46%) seen in the one-hour period were observed hawking for insects.

Harvey Perkins

42 Summerland Cct, Kambah, ACT 2902

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 1999

It has been another successful year for COG.

### Committee

The COG Committee has again provided great service for members. 1999 was a very busy year and the Committee was quite stretched to manage all the projects and deal with all the issues. Special thanks to retiring committee member Sue Mathews whose work as committee member and editor of *Gang-gang* is much appreciated. Special thanks to Carol Macleay too who is retiring from the committee in 2000 but will be still be managing COG publications and items for sale. 1999 is my last year as President and I want to thank the members of the 1999 committee and of previous years for all the work they have done to keep COG running.

Joan Lipscome has done great work as Treasurer, and she has a full year ahead of her with the introduction of the GST in July. The turnover of funds, particularly with bird tour money, is now big dollars, with some complex GST ramifications.

COG finances have never been better. We have a healthy reserve of funds, and we are balancing the budget every year despite increasing expenditures on member publications (*Gang-gang* and *Canberra Bird Notes*), hire of Forestry House, COG Office expenses (rent, telephone etc).

All this I might add at absolutely minimal cost to members.

The most pressing business for the Committee is to develop a business plan

to take COG into the future and provide members with even more opportunities to be involved with birding and to play our important role in protecting `_pige n v i r o n m e n t .`

### *We need a competent Office Manager NOW*

Equally pressing is the need to get new people on the Committee to share the increasing amount of administrative work required to keep COG operational. COG desperately needs an Office Manager to assist with the day to day operation of the group. No one has put their hand up as yet for this vital but demanding role.

The 2000 Committee should consider offering a reasonable honorarium (say \$5000 per annum or \$100 a week) to attract a competent person to keep our complex operation organised. We can afford the money, but members of the Committee Executive simply cannot afford the time to oversight the day to day administration requirements.

### Woodland Surveys

The ACT Government Environment Grant of \$5000 for 1998 was increased to almost \$16,000 in 1999. I thank Environment ACT and Minister Brendan Smyth for the confidence they have shown in our group. It is confidence well placed, of course, because COG delivers the goods. The Woodland Project is supervised by Jenny Bounds, Chris Davey and myself. Anthony Overs, the project officer for 1998-99, was succeeded by two project officers for 1999-2000, Alison Rowell and Nicki Taws. Alison is coordinating the

woodland surveys, and Nicki is working to extend the scope of the woodland survey further afield, linking it to the Birds Australia Atlas activities. In 1999-2000 we are expanding the Woodland Survey to a total of 11 sites.

### **Atlas**

Atlas work is proceeding well under the watchful eye of Malcolm Fyfe. Jenny Bounds and Alistair Bestow have been incorporating atlassing into all our field trips, and have been arranging special trips for atlas purposes. Now that Nicki Taws is acting in the role of field extension officer, we hope to have more people atlassing, and more people atlassing on sites which are of environmental importance. Special thanks to the COG 'data team' including Tony Harding, Malcolm Fyfe, Alan Ford, Martyn Moffat and Milton Smith for their continuing work in helping get record sheets into the database. Very special thanks to Bruce Pink (of F1 Solutions) for his continuing brilliant work on the COG database. His contribution is very much appreciated.

### **Garden Bird Surveys**

Thanks to Philip Veerman for his continuing work in maintaining the Garden Bird Survey. This project is still going strong (or even stronger) after 18 years.

The project to produce a book about Canberra Birds is behind schedule, but on track. The outcomes of the first seventeen years of the survey will be presented soon in the form of a full colour book with certain similarities to the COG atlas. There are too many people to thank for their input into this project. As they say, it will all be in the

book, which may make a great present for Christmas 2000.

### **Annual Bird Reports**

The publication of Annual Bird Reports is now up to date. Many thanks are due to the work of Malcolm Fyfe, David Purchase and the team Grahame Clark, Bob Digan, Brendan Lepschi and Ian McMahon. We are looking for new faces on this team. It is fun work, and you learn A LOT about birds.

### **Steve and Nonie Wilson's Book**

The highlight of the year for many of us was the launch of Steve's magnum opus on *Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change*. He had considerable assistance from ace editor Muriel Brookfield, who gave up a trip to Africa to work on the manuscript. and from Grahame Clark, Malcolm Fyfe and David Purchase.

### **Field Trips**

Jenny Bounds (regional, national and international) and Alistair Bestow (local) presented a great array of opportunities for serious birdwatching in 1999 and are continuing on in 2000. In 1999 there were tours to South Africa, and to the Wet Tropics in Queensland. Most importantly, there is an extensive range of local tours with an emphasis on atlassing to ensure COG members get every opportunity to continue birdwatching with a purpose. 2000 offers as much, if not more, than 1999 in this regard. Special thanks to Jenny Bounds for putting so much effort into this aspect of our operations. It is a lot of work, but the rewards for COG members are great, and there is a significant financial contribution to COG finances for the benefit of all members. In 2000-2001

financial year we will be worrying about how to deal with the GST.

### **Bignet**

COG is still an active member of the NSW/ACT Bird Interest Group Network (Bignet) which meets twice a year to discuss matters of mutual interest. These include the Birds Australia Atlas, conservation matters, and birding in general.

### **COG Meetings**

Barbara Allan has again organised a year of the most interesting and entertaining presentations at Forestry House. The reports in *Gang-gang* and on the COG website every month attest to the quality of our presentations. 1999 was no exception.

### **Publications**

#### *Gang-gang*

Sue Mathews and Kathy Walter have done a wonderful job editing and publishing *Gang-gang*. The more recent editions are even more visually interesting and attractive than ever thought possible with such a low-budget black and white production. Sue is giving it away for now, and soon Charles Buer will be taking up the editorial role. In the meantime, Jenny Bounds will be filling in for Sue.

#### *Canberra Bird Notes*

Harvey Perkins and Barbara Allan have taken over from David Purchase in editing *Canberra Bird Notes*. The new management is showing a different approach and it will be interesting to see what directions *CBN* will be taking in the future.

### **Website**

<http://www.canberrabirds.dynamite.com.au>

Mike O'Shaughnessy continues to deserve huge credit for this premier website. Despite his other strong interests, Mos has kept our window to the world wide open and our display in sparkling condition. We hope to make it even more useful in the future.

The website presents information about COG presentations and field trips as reported in *Gang-gang*, together with other useful information about COG and its activities.

### **Revised Constitution**

David McDonald, Joan Lipscome and Geoff Dabb continue to collaborate in improving COG's constitutional and organisational framework. We are navigating our way through the very necessary steps to maintain transparency, probity and accountability in establishing a COG tax-deductible environmental fund. It's not easy, but the team is getting there.

### **COG Administration and the COG Office**

Many thanks to the Committee for its hard work throughout the year. Special thanks are due to Rosemary Ryan for her continuing work in ensuring that COG publications are in the mail, and to Noel Luff (assisted by Pauline Wicksteed) for processing memberships, and again to Cedric Bear in keeping our membership list up to date and providing the mailing labels. Special thanks also to Carol Macleay (and Ann McKenzie) for running the stall at COG meetings, and

to Maria Lukacs for her assistance with the monthly raffle.

The COG Office continues to operate at the Griffin Centre. Gutta Schoefl and a small team of volunteers have been most helpful in organising the office and providing administrative assistance with the mail, telephone messages and finances. Joan Lipscombe and Jenny Bounds and I have worked on coordinating Office administration. Their hard work is not very visible, but should be appreciated by members. However, we do need an Office Manager now, simply because it is not fair to ask anyone to volunteer to do this important organising role which would take the best part of a day a week.

### **For 2000**

#### *COG Business Plan*

A Business Plan will help us refocus on our main game and direct our energies to our highest priorities.

#### *COG Office*

We need an Office Manager now to make us a more efficient and effective volunteer organisation.

#### *COG Environmental Fund*

It has taken a while, but this year this fund should provide us with more opportunities to conserve our environment.

#### **Thanks**

Many thanks to all those people who have helped me through the few short years I have been COG President. **I** would like to name them all, but there is not enough space.

**I** believe it is time someone else provided us with some new ideas, a new approach that will build on the very firm foundations that COG has put in place over the last 25 years.

COG will continue to provide members with the full range of services to which they are justifiably accustomed. Just remember that the incoming Committee and President will need a lot of support!

*Paul Fennell, 10 March 2000*

**OBITUARY - ROSEMARY METCALF  
1949-2000**

Long-time COG member Rosemary Metcalf lost her fierce battle against cancer on the last day of February. She is survived by her mother, Diana, and sister, Amanda, and I can only begin to imagine how hard her loss must be for them.

What can be said when a death seems premature? To say that Rosemary was widely liked and led a quietly happy and productive life seems insufficient.

I only remember Rosemary fondly. I don't recall when I first met her, but it was not long after I became particularly interested in raptors. Her father, Slim, wanted to study birds. Despite evidence to the contrary, he felt he wasn't very mobile, so, from his front-yard in O'Connor, he began keeping notes on a pair of hobbies that nested every year on Black Mountain. Rosemary was an eager co-researcher. After hearing the noisy chattering of fledglings as she cycled to work, and with a bit more detective work, she discovered a pair of sparrowhawks nesting in a suburban pine break. She and Slim spent many years studying both species, and contributed significantly to knowledge of their breeding biology. Rosemary's determination and devotion to her father saw their work written up and published in *Canberra Bird Notes* and it was she who shared their findings in talks at COG meetings. They are a fine example of how much can be achieved by amateurs, on a small scale, without venturing far from their backyards.

Rosemary seemed to lead a serene and happy life, enjoying the simple things like a walk on Black Mountain. Good company, she was always keen to go into the field to work on birds, day or night. As Tony Ross reminisced, 'she had an interest in all things natural and was one of those very observant types.

remember that I looked at her in disbelief when she first mentioned twig dropping by currawongs when sparrowhawks were around, but then felt very sheepish when she took me out one morning and I saw it for myself.'

She enjoyed the occasion we were caught red-handed by rangers. They discovered our esky at the gate and had begun to make their way into the reserve to investigate when they ran into us. Things looked bad for a moment - how do you explain away three hobby chicks in a basket and a dead Galah in an esky? We were removing the hobby chicks temporarily for some water-turnover measurements. And the Galah? We rehabilitated raptors and, so that they had some natural food, often stopped to gather roadkills. It was a hot day and I had taken the esky from the car and left it in the shade by the gate.

Little did they know that one day Rosemary herself had scaled the electricity pylon to get a bird's eye view of her beloved hobby nest and its contents, and to savour the return view to Slim's front-yard. Her determination carried her to the top, past the various armoured guards that generally foil such, highly illegal, activity. Her elation at the experience was palpable.

Beyond the bird world, I know for many years Rosemary was active in the Australia/Vietnam friendship society. She was a dedicated organic gardener and happy in her work at the CSIRO.

As Tony indicated, Rosemary was a wonderfully keen observer and interpreter of nature, and loved discussing the many things observed on

her walks and around her house. A boobook that regularly used a tree in her backyard gave her great pleasure, and the last time that I saw her she told me that it still visited. I'll miss her bright eyes, wry humour and great enthusiasm for the natural world.

Penny Olsen

**Rosemary's published contributions to ornithology** (compiled by Harvey Perkins)

**R. Metcalf**

Observations on aviphagy by Pied Currawongs. (1988). *CBN* 13(2): 32-33.  
 Silvereyes eating flower petals. (1988). *CBN* 13(2): 39.  
 Sunbathing (?) by blackbirds and Pied Currawongs. (1992). *CBN* 17(3): 76.  
 REVIEW. Classic Natural History Prints: Birds of Prey by Joseph Wolf. (1992). *CBN* 17(3): 86-87.

**R. Metcalf and E.C. Metcalf**

Notes on a breeding pair of Collared Sparrowhawks: arrival to hatching. (1986). *CBN* 11(4): 114-120.  
 Its only a hobby - observations on Australian Hobby foliage bathing. (1988). *CBN* 13(1): 24-25.

**E.C. Metcalf and R. Metcalf**

Further notes on Collared Sparrowhawks in a Canberra park. (1988). *CBN* 14(2): 18-21.

**E.C. Metcalf (who was greatly assisted by Rosemary)**

The Australian Magpie - Breeding behaviour. (1980). *CBN* 5(4): 3-6.  
 The gape of the Fuscous Honeyeater. (1981). *CBN* 6(2): 64.  
 Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike: Relations with other birds during nesting. (1981). *CBN* 6(3): 75-76.  
 Collared Sparrowhawk: extracurricular activities. (1981). *CBN* 6(3): 84-85.  
 The nestling and post-fledging of a family of Collared Sparrowhawk. (1982). *CBN* 7(2): 48-53.  
 The gape of the White-plumed Honeyeater. (1983). *CBN* 8(2): 67.  
 Gang-gang Cockatoos. (1984). *CBN* 9(2): 29-30.  
 Notes on currawong - sparrowhawk interactions. (1988). *CBN* 13(2): 30-31.  
 Dollarbirds comings and goings. (1988). *CBN* 13(4): 128-129.  
 Australian Hobby pursues quail in tall grass. *CBN* 14(2): 28-29.

## BOOK REVIEW

***Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change*** by Steve Wilson OAM was published in October 1999 by the Canberra Ornithologists Group.

This book aims to deal in its 99 pages with three aspects of ACT birds: first, the story of local ornithology; secondly, changes in the occurrence of birds in the ACT; thirdly, the present status of birds on the ACT list.

The ornithology story is covered briefly, but comprehensively, in seven pages. As one might expect, it is a reflection of the history of Canberra, beginning with incidental references to birds in early writing, followed by expanding ACT-specific lists from the 1920s, to relatively intensive and methodical recording following the formation of a local ornithological society. This, we learn, the forerunner of the present-day Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG), began life in 1964 at a meeting in the author's living room.

Next, the history of land use and other influences on bird occurrence are dealt with in 4 introductory pages, and then, as appropriate, throughout the species accounts. The findings for the ACT are similar to those from corresponding surveys for many other Australian localities: some unsurprising local extinctions (Emu, Brolga, Australian Bustard, Plains-wanderer, Bush Stone-curlew); some partial or near-total evictions due to urban or rural development (Jacky Winter, Hooded Robin, Singing Bushlark, Southern Whiteface, Diamond Firetail, both

babblers); a few species becoming more abundant (Australian Wood Duck, Australian White Ibis, Silver Gull, Crested Pigeon, Galah); at least one set of observations against the prevailing trend and difficult to characterise (Bell Miner).

Those changes are, in general, presented simply by way of interpretation of the ACT records. While this is a reasonable enough approach, it might not satisfy readers for whom this book will be the only source of information, and who expect it to tell them something more about changes in ACT birds compared to changes elsewhere. Are *all* the ACT's changes just a reflection of changes in the wider region? Is the suggested decline in the Musk Duck, Laughing Kookaburra and Painted Honeyeater an ACT-specific phenomenon or part of a broader trend? These are questions better left, perhaps, for a further edition that can draw on the results of the current round of local and national atlassing activity.

The information about the present status of each species is the heart of this book. In this respect it naturally invites comparison with the 1992 ACT 'Atlas', which covered similar ground and which, with all due acknowledgment, is drawn on heavily in Steve Wilson's book. The Atlas has distribution maps for most species and a standardised format that presents the available information concisely and clearly. Steve Wilson is able to build on the information in the Atlas, although the reader seeking a full picture of what is

known about status and local distribution will need to have recourse to both books. However, what Steve Wilson does, and the Atlas does not, is present a complete ACT bird list, with a reasoned basis for inclusion or exclusion of marginal species.

A welcome feature of the new book is that it deals in systematic order with all species recorded for the ACT. It was an inconvenient feature of the Atlas that it divided those species into four somewhat arbitrary categories: 'major species', 'minor species', a bare list of 'escapees and releasees' (some being possibly also wild birds), and an equally bare list of 'historical species' (some being possibly aviary escapees). Steve Wilson sifts through all these in taxonomic order, admitting to his ACT list 10 out of 25 'escapees and releasees' and all but three of the 43 'historical species' (although it must be added that seven of the remaining 40 are pronounced locally extinct or presumably such). Inevitably, time will call for additions and deletions — perhaps on an annual basis - but a sound foundation has now been laid for this.

As it happens, this new book is not well-timed so far as the local data-collection-and-publishing cycle is concerned. Only about one third of the species entries are able to be updated with any post-1992 Atlas information. The new information, mostly drawn from COG's Annual Bird Reports (ABRs), is generally insufficient to warrant any review of the status of any species as given in the Atlas. Indeed, the June 1999 publication of the ABRs for 95/96 and 96/97 was not able to be taken into account. The many Canberra bird-watchers who saw a Red-necked

Avocet conspicuously in view at Jerrabomberra Wetlands over some days in November 1996 might be surprised to read that since 1988 there have been 'no further sightings' of that species. Those sight records were not published until the 95/96 ABR in June 1999.

However, no complaint can reasonably be made about the book's failure to incorporate post-publication observations. As Steve Wilson illustrates with decade-by-decade cumulative totals, new species and new breeding activity can be expected to continue to be recorded into the indefinite future. Already, a couple of new sightings have been made, and those simply bear out the author's own theme of steadily accumulating information.

Where does the book fit into the ACT's bird literature? Anyone with a particular interest in ACT birds will need this as an authoritative annotated bird list. The historical and environmental notes are also useful independently, the former, particularly, containing information unlikely to be obtainable from any other source. While there will always be calls for ever more information to fill gaps in the state of knowledge about local birds, with this book to complement the Atlas and the Taylor/Day field guide Canberra is notably well-served with a set of high-quality bird-related volumes.

Where does the book fit into the expanding Australian bird literature? Apart from bare bird lists and periodic records-summaries (sometimes called 'bird reports') for specific localities, Australia must now have hundreds of regional 'Birds of offerings. Clearly, these fill a need not met by publications

of national scope. However, they vary greatly in size, style, format, and, it seems, their intended readership. Some have an historical emphasis, some offer aids to field identification, some have detailed information on where to see birds, and some have lengthy species entries on behaviour or relationships. While one might put to one side publications intended only as souvenirs or pictorial compilations, surely there is a case for the more serious 'Birds of to adopt a common style and format, preferably on a common understanding that identification could be left to the field guides. This would increase their appeal and usefulness for the growing number of traveling users whose interest in birds is more than casual. For that purpose, given its conciseness and clarity of presentation, Steve Wilson's book

would be a useful template wherever comparable data was available for other localities to be covered.

This review cannot end without noting that Steve Wilson is not merely a long-time local birdwatcher. His contribution to Canberra area bird study has been immense. A brief note on how he came to produce this book in his 87<sup>th</sup> year, with the help of his wife Nonie, may be found on its back cover. '*Birds of the ACT*' is yet another contribution by Steve, and one that will be long-used and long-appreciated.

*Geoffrey Dabb*  
24 Brockman Street, Narrabundah, ACT  
2604

## COLUMNISTS' CORNER

*The views expressed by our columnists are personal views and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.*

### Out and About

Recently I was talking with a group of birdwatchers about the changes that have occurred to Canberra Ornithologists Group over the last 30 to 40 years from the time it evolved out of the ACT branch of Birds Australia (or the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union as its name was in those days). Looking back at that time there appear to have been quite a few changes in the way we birdwatch now.

Meeting sizes (in percentage terms) seem to have increased - then the meetings averaged around 15 - 20 out of a membership of under 100 whereas these days about 100 out of 400 is the norm. Meetings were also much shorter - just a five minute (rigorously enforced) 'bird of the month' plus the main speaker of less than an hour. After meeting tea and biscuits did appear to involve more of the meeting attenders and go on for longer than it does now but then the meeting itself was normally over by 9.00 pm.

Outings have certainly increased and changed in character. as well as name, to 'field trips'. In those days outings were every two months or longer apart. They were normally also linked with a avifauna survey of a particular area. This was normally for the NSW Parks and Wildlife Service to assist with the creation or preservation of a particular reserve but after the first RAOU Atlas

started they were usually aimed at filling in 'blanks' for that.

One thing that appears to have decreased is the number of projects per member. Most members then seem to have been actively involved in a specific project . For instance there were two area surveys going on (Jim McNaughton at Jerrabomberra Wetlands, Stephen Marchant at Caswell Drive), there were at least seven bird banding sites being operated by different A-Class banders plus the first RAOU Atlas was underway after COG members had helped design and run the pilot South Coast Atlas.

Identification is easier (and dare I say better) now than then. In those days the first Slater had only just been published and there were no recorded calls to bring birds in — which, whether you like it or not, is now standard practice when undertaking surveys. Also the concept of 'fizz' was not well known and most identification was based on 'bird in the hand' characteristics not 'bird in the bush'.

After mulling these issues over (with unmulled wine, I hasten to add, as it was in summer) one of the group suggested that in those days COG was a gathering of birdwatchers who were bird watching and running projects by themselves and just wanted to talk to like-minded people. These days COG is an entertainment organisation catering to a broader clientele which wishes to participate in already set up projects as

part of their leisure time. In other words members are looking to participate in projects not to plan them themselves. The exact phrase used was that COG now provides 'organised twitching'.

With the large growth in expenditure on bird research through government and tertiary institutions perhaps the best role for the amateur these days is as a data collector not analyser. Perhaps COG ought to recognise this and start charging for attendance at its entertainment activities which are not research oriented and channel back the money raised in this way back into research through scholarships or grants? What do others think?

To quote from the *Oxford Dictionary of British Bird Names* the Greek word Halkuon or Alkuon was a fabulous bird said to breed on the sea during the Halcyon days. This was a period of calm lasting for seven days before, and as many after, the shortest day of the year. It was also never seen ashore. This bird is nowadays identified with the kingfisher and the name is reflected in the generic name Halcyon for the Asian and African (and until recently the Australian) forest kingfishers and in the family name Halcyonidae. All very straight forward.

Until I found in a ten year old *British Birds* magazine an article on the Yelkouan Shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*). This is a shearwater that occurs in the Mediterranean Sea and has in the last ten years been recognised as a separate species rather than a sub-species of the Manx Shearwater. It was once known as the Levantine Shearwater. In the Eastern Mediterranean this bird does

not fly well and is prone to settle in flocks on the water far away from its breeding islands when the wind falls. The article goes on to point out that the name Halcyon is still used for the bird in the Levant and this presumably gave rise to the modern Turkish name of Yelkouan. So it appears as if the mythical Halcyon was a shearwater not a kingfisher.

There are a great number of commercial bird tour organisations that send out brochures about their tours and try to persuade me to part with my cash in exchange for the opportunity of seeing 'exciting' birds. One that arrived the other day was from Birding Worldwide. It had an interesting little note pointing out that new species of birds were still being discovered. Only a short while ago in Ecuador a new species of Black and White Antpitta was discovered. Other recently described or rediscovered species include the Red-Shouldered Vanga in Madagascar, the Udzungwa Forest Partridge in Tanzania (a new genus), the Pygmy Frogmouth in the Philippines and in Vietnam both the Golden-winged Laughingthrush and the Black-crowned Barwing. If you want more information try the web pages: [www.itc.nl/~deby/SM?NewSpecies.html](http://www.itc.nl/~deby/SM?NewSpecies.html) [www.sapphire.acnatsci.org/news/ridgely/bird.html](http://www.sapphire.acnatsci.org/news/ridgely/bird.html)

In the last two Out and About columns I mentioned the bad press the mining industry gets from conservationists. At the moment the Queensland Government is allowing the clearing of more than 300,000 hectares of Central Queensland for agriculture each year. Could you imagine the reaction from the public if the mining industry cleared only a third

of that AND promised a restoration program?

And now a success story (of sorts). Between 1984 and 1986, 250 Wild Turkeys were transported from Eastern USA to Ontario Canada because the Wild Turkey population had been badly affected by over hunting and habitat loss. They have now made a dramatic comeback and number over 15,000. The only problem for the turkeys is that hunters are once more allowed to kill 600 birds a year.

*G. tibicen*

### **Species numbers, field guides and thoughts on Washington**

*Just how many bird species was that?*

The Spring 1999 edition of *Natural Heritage*, a Commonwealth government publication, was devoted to Australian birds and their conservation. The foreword, attributed to two senior Commonwealth ministers no less, was titled 'Bringing back the birds' and began with the statement:

Australia has more species of birds than any other continent on earth, with more than 1000 varieties currently gracing our skies, waterways and landscape.

Approaches to the editor by your columnist to get to the reasons for this heart-warming but wildly inaccurate assertion were received with polite but in the end uninformative responses. This is but another example, although a glaring one, of the kind of careless hyperbole that must be creating a quite misleading impression about our birds in that stratum of our public that is sub-expert

but vaguely interested in wild life. The truth is that Australia does not take many prizes for its bird numbers in serious international competition.

According to the current Birds Australia list (by Christidis and Boles) the grand total of Australian bird species is about 800. This includes species for all the Territories and confirmed vagrant species. The first *Directory* volume (by Canberra's own Dick Schodde and Ian Mason) broadly confirms that total so far as the passerines component (about 340) is concerned. (There is a little shaving of the vagrants, more than compensated by the 'splits' outnumbering the 'recombinations')

That total is comparable with those for some temperate regions such as the 'Western Palearctic' (938 species) or North America (north of the US/Mexico border — 820 species). However, it does not bear comparison with those of the national heavyweights: Colombia (a medium-sized South American country — 1695 species) or Indonesia (1534 species). If relative area is considered, Australia can barely compete in the flyweight division. Papua New Guinea has 740 species, and the broader islands region known as 'Papuasia' 873. Nepal, only twice the size of Tasmania, has 801 species. The Central American country Costa Rica, three-quarters the size of Tasmania, has 833 species. The semi-autonomous Indian state of Sikkim in the eastern Himalayas — with 7300 square kilometres being about half the COG area of interest — has 529 species, including an astonishing 356 passerines — more than continental *and* non-continental Australia.

When it comes to bird families, well, OK, Australia does have the most cockatoos (14). However, for parrots-and-cockatoos combined, Australia (55) is behind Indonesia (76) and Brazil (parrots only - 71). Other disappointing rankings:

Honeyeaters — Indonesia 77; Australia 72 (even including the 5 'Australian chats').

Pigeons — Indonesia 94; PNG 50; Australia 3 L

Megapodes — Indonesia 12; PNG 4; Australia 3.

Birds of Paradise — PNG 32; Indonesia 30; Australia 4.

Do you really want to know about kingfishers? (Indonesia 45; PNG 26; Thailand 15; Australia down the list at 10) Or cuckoos? (Indonesia 54; Thailand 26; India 23; PNG 20; South Africa 19; Australia 13).

A better subject to talk about on your holiday in Bali or Bandung would be bowerbirds (Australia 10; PNG 9; Indonesia 9), and Australia streaks away when it comes to the fairywrens /grasswrens (*Maluridae*) (with 20-22 - PNG 5; Indonesia 5).

The above figures are taken from national bird lists where available and a selection of other publications on the respective regions and countries.

#### *Advanced Canberra birding*

When Roger Tory Peterson published his famous field guide to North American Birds in 1934 he introduced a system that 'by means of schematic drawings and little arrows ... taught birdwatchers to look for those few diagnostic marks or patterns that would allow them to name almost every bird they saw'. He later

noted that it had been suggested that: 'The very simplicity of this method ... was a major reason for the spectacular growth of birding'.

In 1990, Peterson welcomed to his by then very popular field guide series a compact volume of some 300 pages by Kenn Kaufman, entitled *A Field Guide to Advanced Birding: Birding Challenges and How to Approach Them*. Peterson explained that he had deliberately kept simple his basic field guide with a possible view to more detailed information being put in another book. 'The level of detail necessary to solve every last problem in [certain difficult] groups has no place in the typical Field Guide, where it would serve only to confuse and discourage most birdwatchers.' The Advanced Birding guide was to begin where other field guides left off. It is mainly text, supplemented by some black and white line drawings.

A comparable approach is to address particularly difficult species on the basis that rarity is what needs attention. This is done, for Europe, by the Harper/Collins series 448-page *Field Guide to the Rare Birds of Britain and Europe*, generously acknowledged by a Peterson review to be 'the natural complement to ours' — meaning the basic Peterson European guide.

An alternative to having two levels of field guide is simply, despite Peterson's undoubted marketing skills, to have a single, much larger book. In effect, that is the approach taken for Australia in the Pizzey and Knight field guide, which is probably twice the size of a basic Peterson guide. Pizzey and Knight

addresses the confusable species problem, if not as fully as some occasions might demand, by its 'similar species' notes. Simpson and Day offers a fair degree of identification detail on many species in its secondary line drawings. In view of this, and of the absence of 'rarities' on anything like a European scale, there is perhaps no pressing need for an Advanced Birding guide for Australia.

However, the level of interest in the Canberra bird-watching community might well justify a low-cost publication or two directed to the local confusables. This would ideally supplement the Taylor/Day guide (excellent, but undeniably basic), and the expertise to compile it is surely available, as demonstrated by the number of presentations at COG meetings devoted to advice on just this kind of thing. A local emphasis would also enable identification tips based on locality, seasonality and historical occurrence to be added to information on the key visual and call differentiators.

Something of this kind was mentioned at a recent semi-social gathering to discuss ways and means of enriching the pages of Canberra Bird Notes. However, it could be done either in CBN or a separate publication.

As to which species should be covered, one might need to look no further initially than the 26 species curiously designated 'Sp' in the COG area Field List 4th edition. This is said to signify 'Special care needed to find and identify'. Without labouring the point, this, by itself, might be regarded as one of your less helpful annotations. Some

readers might reasonably take it to mean: 'if you think you've seen one of these birds around Canberra and you're not an expert, you're probably wrong'. Some further instruction in the required special care the editors have in mind will no doubt be appreciated.

#### *Notes from the Potomac*

The second week of February found your columnist revisiting Washington DC - on non-bird-related matters. Two casual observations may be of interest. The first was of the overwhelming numbers of European Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris*. The Starling was introduced to the US some 30 years after its 1860s releases in Australia, mainly due, according to folklore, to the efforts of a group resolved to introduce to the eastern US all the birds mentioned by Shakespeare. As in Australia its pest status is partly due to its pre-emption of nest sites of native species — in particular of certain woodpeckers and the much-loved Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*. However, its sheer weight of numbers is now dominating the urban scene. I saw thousands wheeling, sparring and clustering around the ornate neoclassical facades of the imposing buildings of Imperial Washington on and about Pennsylvania Avenue and 16th Street. The noise was highly intrusive, and the relative handful of Rock Doves *Columba livia* seemed unable to compete for perching space.

The second observation was made while strolling with the last gaggles of tourists at dusk around the eastern fence of the White House. Large numbers of American Robins *Turdus migratorius* were roosting in the bare upper tree

branches. I counted over one hundred in a group of three trees just inside the White House grounds. The first appearance, usually in March, of this attractive large rusty-breasted thrush is regarded as a sign of spring in parts to the north of Washington, in New York for example, so this wave of migrants did seem a bit early. In North America, where the migration phenomenon is more obvious and probably better monitored than anywhere else, the migrating Robin is said to 'follow closely average temperature of 37 degrees F'. The chilly conditions in Washington suggested that this advance group had made a premature start, only to be halted by cold weather right on President Clinton's doorstep. He was inside, too, but probably didn't notice.

*A. stentoreus*

### **Birding in cyberspace, Australian style**

In the previous issue of *Canberra Bird Notes* I described Birding-Aus, the Australian birders' national internet-based discussion list. For details on how to subscribe, see that issue or the note at the end of this article. So ... what's been happening on the list, in recent months, of particular interest to Canberra birders?

Conventional wisdom — and field guides — have it that swifts and needletails are most likely to be seen in stormy weather, especially feeding on the updrafts associated with stormy weather fronts. Some ask: if this is so, where do they go in fine, calm weather? They are summer migrants to the ACT and southern Australia generally. But only in stormy

weather? A number of correspondents described observing these species in calm weather conditions, with one advising that he sees them virtually daily in the summer period, regardless of the weather. About a dozen White-throated Needletails *Hirundapus caudacutus* were observed by a correspondent in one spot on a 'cool, still, beautiful morning with no cloud, and they flew low and fast over the trees for about half an hour from 8am onwards — wonderful sight.' The researcher managing Canberra's Garden Bird Survey, Philip Veerman, called for someone to analyse COG data to investigate the correlation between weather and needletail observations above Canberra. Any takers?

An explanation for the assumption that swifts and needletails are seen mainly in stormy weather was provided by Mike Tarburton:

many people only ever or mostly look at the sky when there is some thunderstorm activity, and so at that time they notice swifts. Obviously when they are not looking at the sky (cause there is no thunder to attract their attention) they do not see swifts. When I and one or two others are driving looking for swifts we find them anywhere in all types of weather. If you look for them you will find them, regardless of the weather.

So, in summertime, keep your eyes in the sky!

Where did the Jacky Winter get its name from, asked a Birding-Aus subscriber. Well, I've always thought that this is the wrong question; actually we should be asking the birds what their *real* names are. Sadly, though, we are not smart enough to do so. As one sage put it: 'The

universe is full of magical things, patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper.' In the interim, then, we and those delightful members of the robin family that are on the endangered list in the ACT, the Jacky Winters, *Microeca fascinans*, are stuck with the name. Birding-Aus correspondents replied, with one quoting J. D. MacDonald's illustrated dictionary of Australian birds: the name was given to the species in the early days of the NSW colony; perhaps the 'jacky' part refers to the call, but the origin of 'winter' is obscure. Carol Proberts pointed out that one source provides

no less than 10 alternative names for this species, including 'Lesser Fascinating Bird' — apparently a reference to its occasional habit of hovering above the ground to search for prey (fascinating meaning here to 'transfix and hold spellbound'), with the Restless Flycatcher having the honour of being the 'Fascinating Bird'.

Some correspondents use Birding-Aus to report either rare or interesting observations; trip reports are also well received. Canberra-based birder Peter Milburn described a visit to Roses Lagoon on the Federal Highway between Collector and Goulburn. He spent twenty minutes one evening last December at that lovely spot. Milburn reported:

During this time I was blessed with three different flight views of Australian Bittern. Two views were of single birds and one was of two birds... as far as I could tell (from distance between origin) this involved a total of four birds. Clearly, the chances of seeing a bittern here are very good at present. Several times last summer I saw birds foraging in

short vegetation so with a telescope and some patience extremely good views are possible.

From this we may conclude that we can use Birding-Aus to let other birders know about the presence of rare or interesting birds in our local area. (Remember, though, that Canberra region birders also have a local email list, and a telephone hotline, that may be used for reporting birds sightings.)

Canberra is a landlocked city but is blessed with ready access to three different departure points for pelagic (ocean-going) birding trips: Eden, Wollongong and Sydney. In that regard we are probably better served than any other Australian city. An extensive, and sometimes heated, discussion occurred on the list about the roles of the various players on pelagic birding trips. It all started when someone passed on the comment that, although the birding was wonderful on a trip on the 'Sandra K' out of Wollongong: 'those leading [the trip] knew their stuff really well but there was something of a deficit in explaining much to those others on board, what was what and what was going on. The impression they received is that there seemed to be an assumption that those on board already knew everything.'

This really put the fox among the chooks! The upshot of the long subsequent discussion was that the regular pelagic trips do not have 'leaders' as such. The people who organise these trips do so as a service to birders, and for the purpose of researching seabirds. When going on a pelagic trip, we should accept responsibility for boning up on the

species we are likely to see. We should also accept responsibility for asking observers present who are clearly more skilled than we are to assist in species identification. At the same time, we need to remember (it was stressed) that these birders have come along at their own expense for the purpose of monitoring seabird populations, not as trip leaders or trainers in seabird identification. It is clearly a complex issue, and one that elicits strong feelings!

Let us give the final word to Birding-Aus regular John Gamblin. In summer all Canberra birders delight in observations

of the threatened Little Terns when we visit the coast. John writes that someone once saw a lonely little tern on the beach. On closer observation, it was seen to be crying, sobbing its poor little eyes out. The observer was able to approach to within a metre or so. 'What seems to be the matter, little tern?' asked the birder. Between pathetic little sobbings the tern explained that it was an orphaned tern. It gave a huge sigh before stating :`Surely one good tern deserves a mother!'

*T. alba*

Subscribe to Birding-Aus yourself. Details on how to do so are on the web at <http://www.deakin.edu.au/~russwood>, and a comprehensive searchable archive of the messages that have been posted to the list is maintained by Andrew Taylor at <http://www.cse.unsw.edu.au/birding-aus>. To join the Canberra Birding email discussion list, send a blank message to [canberrabirds-subscribe@topica.com](mailto:canberrabirds-subscribe@topica.com), or join online at <http://www.topica.com/lists/canberrabirds>.

## RARITIES PANEL NEWS

At its most recent meeting the Panel was delighted to endorse the ACT's 281st bird species — the Red Knot. According to HANZAB, the Red Knot's summer migratory movement is mostly along coasts, with some inland records. While Red Knots have been recorded from time to time at Lakes Bathurst and George when conditions have been suitable, it has not been reported in the ACT before.

Two Unusual Bird Report Forms for the Red Knot were received by the Panel, based on the observations of six COG members of a wader seen at the Jerrabomberra Sewage Ponds on 7 November 1999. The reports were both consistent and complementary, fully detailed, and were supplemented by sketches. That by Peter Marsack, the well-known HANZAB illustrator, would have been sufficient in itself to have identified the subject bird as a Red Knot. Reasons were advanced to exclude more common wading birds such as the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Sanderling, Grey Plover and Latham's Snipe. Even though none of the observers was an experienced wader-watcher, the quality of the two reports was sufficient to convince the Panel of the veracity of the sighting. Well done, all!

The other sightings almost paled into insignificance by comparison. We had the usual sprinkling of summer koel sightings, both in the north and in the south; a spring southside garden record of a Scarlet Honeyeater, the first since the spring 1995 bird in Botanic Gardens;

Bell Miners on the Queanbeyan River, the first since the overwintering birds in the sculpture garden at the National Gallery in 1998; and two Common Sandpiper tail-bobbing on the Murrumbidgee, the first recorded since 1994. The reporting of another — or the same? - Pied Butcherbird in the same area north of Hall some four months after the original endorsed record (CBN 24(3) 1999, p. 190) is interesting and the Panel encourages all birders travelling north to keep an eye out for it.

A member of the Panel persuaded the remaining members that the red-eyed black bird that had observed him enjoying a cappuccino in the Botanic Gardens cafeteria was in fact a Spangled Drongo and not one of the four red-eyed black White-winged Choughs observing the Panel at its deliberations in the same spot some weeks later. Well, the forked tail was convincing and, after all, it was only a cappuccino he had been drinking, or so he said. No avian drongos have been endorsed by the Panel since ... though there have been anecdotal records of the species since that time. Reports would be welcomed.

A few older endorsed records are included in this listing. Six records are still under Panel consideration or have been received since the Panel's most recent meeting. If you have any questions about your reports, please contact Panel secretary, Barbara Allan, on 6254 6520 (ah).

**RARITIES PANEL ENDORSED LIST NO. 49 (March 2000)**

**Chukar Partridge** *Alectoris chukar* [escapee]

1; Nov 99; WR Wise; Dickson

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

2; 23 Sep 99; B Pennefather; Uriarra Crossing

**Red Knot** *Calidris canutus*

1; 7 Nov 99; M Lucaks, D McDonald, P Marsack, H Perkins, B Rusk, P Veerman; Jerrabomberra Sewage Ponds.

**Common Koel** *Eudynamys scolopacea*

1; 1,22 Dec 99, 18 Jan 00; J Bounds; Weston  
1 female; 22,23 Jan 00; B Allan; Bluetts Forest

**Azure Kingfisher** *Alcedo azurea*

1; 27 Nov 98; D Bourne; Cotter Dam

**Bell Miner** *Manorina melanophrys*

15; 3 May 99; M Brookfield; Queanbeyan River nr Tinderry Crossing

**Scarlet Honeyeater** *Myzomela sanguinolenta*

1 male; 26, 28 Sep 99; J Holland; Chapman

**Spangled Drongo** *Dicrurus bracteatus*

1; 11 Feb 00; B Baker; Australian National Botanic Gardens

**Pied Butcherbird** *Cracticus nigrogularis*

1; 10 Jul 99; R Summerrell; Kaveny's Road nr Barton Highway

Annual COG subscriptions for 2000 are:

Individual, family or institution - \$30

Student (18 or younger) - \$15

*Canberra Bird Notes* is published by the Canberra Ornithologists Group and is edited by Harvey Perkins and Barbara Allan. Major articles of up to 5000 words are welcome on matters of the distribution, identification or behaviour of birds occurring in the Australian Capital Territory and surrounding area. Contributions on these topics should be sent to Harvey Perkins, 42 Summerland Circuit, Kambah ACT 2902, or via email to [harvey.perkins@anu.edu.au](mailto:harvey.perkins@anu.edu.au). Short notes, book reviews and other contributions should be sent to Barbara Allan, 47 Hannaford Street, Page ACT 2614 or via email to [bmallan@dynamite.com.au](mailto:bmallan@dynamite.com.au). If you would like to discuss your proposed article in advance, please feel free to contact Harvey on 6231 8209 or Barbara on 6254 6520.

COG's Annual Bird Reports are incorporated in an appropriate issue of *Canberra Bird Notes*.

*Canberra Bird Notes 25 (1) March 2000*

**CONTENTS**

**Articles**

Foreword *Tony Howard and Harvey Perkins* ..... 1  
List of birds of the ACT  
(compiled in the early 1950s, with brief annotations) *John Calaby*..... 1  
The Calaby list — comments *Steve Wilson* .....23

**Odd Obs**

Painted Honeyeater breeding record near Cowra, NSW *Jenny Bounds* ..... 27  
Breeding Emus *Geoffrey Dabb* ..... 28  
A hawking extravaganza *Harvey Perkins* ..... 28

**President's Report for 1999** *Paul Fennell* ..... 30

**Obituary — Rosemary Metcalf** *Penny Olsen* .....34

**Book Review**

Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change *reviewed by Geoffrey Dabb* ..... 36

**Columnists' Corner**

Out and About *G. tibicen* ..... 39  
Species numbers, field guides and thoughts on Washington *A. stentoreus* ..... 41  
Birding in cyberspace, Australian style *T. alba*.....44

**Rarities Panel News and Endorsed List No. 49** ..... 47