

canberra bird notes

ISSN 0314-8211

Volume 39
COG 50th Anniversary Issue
December 2014
Printed January 2015



Registered by Australia Post 100001304

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<http://canberrabirds.org.au/>

CANBERRA BIRD NOTES 39, COG 50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE, DECEMBER 2014

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FOREWORD

2014 has been a very significant year for the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG). We celebrated our 50th Anniversary, a major landmark for any voluntary organisation, with a program of important activities that reflected our half century, COG's history, and our future directions.

We marked our 50th anniversary through:

- **The Gang-gang Bird of the Year project** – the Gang-gang is the first bird selected for this concept which we hope to extend to other birds in the future. The Gang-gang is the COG logo and the project was designed to engage the community in reporting sightings (or absence of sightings) of Gang-gangs and build our rather sketchy knowledge base on this iconic bird.
- **A Public Forum “Landscapes for Birds Forum”** – the Forum was opened by Mick Gentleman, newly elected ACT Planning Minister and aimed to improve public awareness of the need for landscape scale conservation and restoration and enhancement and was targeted at the broader public to raise awareness about these important issues.
- **A Photographic Competition**, opened by Nicole Lawder, MLA, of photographs by COG members designed to stimulate and increase public interest in our regional birds. Over 300 visitors viewed the display of great photographs and the Competition was won by Julian Robinson.
- **A Series of Short Talks** – these were reminiscences by Members about COG over its 50 years to reflect on its achievements, its history, and stories that brought a very human face to COG. These talks also served to highlight the important role it has achieved as a well-respected organisation within the community.
- **Inauguration of the Steve Wilson Medal** – The Steve Wilson Medal is an annual award in honour of the contribution made by Steve Wilson, one of the founding fathers of COG. The Medal recognises meritorious contribution by an individual through voluntary service to COG. The inaugural award to two recipients announced at the Gala Dinner on 22 November 2014, was made to Jenny Bounds and Grahame Clark.
- **A mini guide on the birds of Canberra** – The guide was produced as an information brochure for the general public to inform them about birds in Canberra, provide photographs of familiar birds, and a map to show where they can be found.
- **Beginners Walks** – To encourage members of the public to experience the pleasure of watching and identifying birds in their natural habitats a series of beginners' walks were conducted by COG member Tony Lawson at the Australian National Botanic Gardens.



**Gala Dinner: Guest speaker,
Dr Bob Brown and COG president,
Alison Russell-French**

• **A Gala Dinner** – was held on 22 November 2014 at Gold Creek Station, Hall, to wrap up the year of celebrations. The Guest Speaker, Dr Bob Brown former Senator and Leader of the Greens provided an inspirational talk and the event was a resounding success.

These activities highlight the major events that celebrated our 50th Anniversary but COG members through their ongoing commitment to the organisation demonstrated how vibrant and successful it is now and is likely to be into the future. All COG members can be proud of the profile that the 50th Anniversary celebrations generated for COG within the community and in government circles where COG was officially recognised in the ACT Legislative Assembly for its work.

This Special Edition of the Canberra Bird Notes, another initiative designed to capture for posterity the COG Anniversary Year, captures the essence of our 50th Anniversary and I commend it to all members. Particular thanks are due to Michael Lenz, editor of the CBN, and Neil Hermes, Chair of the 50th Anniversary Subcommittee, for all their hard work in bringing this edition together.

Alison Russell-French
President

EDITOR'S NOTE

My thanks extend to all contributors to this Anniversary Issue: to Neil Hermes for the idea of a special issue, to the authors for their excellent response to requests from us to write articles; to Julian Robinson for designing the cover page; to Janette Lenz for valuable editorial input and to Margaret Hermes and Stuart Rae who took many photos of all features of the Gala Dinner. A selection of those photos is shown in this issue.

Enjoy reading about COG, its rich history and diverse achievements!

Michael Lenz
January 2015



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2013-14

This Report covers the period November 2013 to October 2014 encompassing COGs 50th anniversary year. We have marked this very significant event in a number of ways that reflect the breadth and diversity of COG, its members and the activities done under the COG banner. Many COG members have been very active in supporting COG during this time and I would like to extend a very sincere thank-you to all those who have contributed over the year to make our celebrations such a success.

COG Committee

COG has been very well-served by a dedicated and enthusiastic Committee and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 11 members of the 2013-14 Committee for all their efforts. The Executive consisted of Alison Russell-French, President, Neil Hermes, Vice-president and coordinator of the COG 50th celebration, Sandra Henderson, Secretary and responsible for COG membership and running the Raffle each month, Noel Luff, Treasurer, Chris Davey, manager of COG Surveys and leader of the COG 50th project on Gang-gangs, Jenny Bounds, COG Conservation Officer and organizer of the COG 50th Conservation Forum, Sue Lashko, editor of Gang-gang, meeting-room organizer, and Outings Officer, Julian Robinson, responsible for development of the new Website, Lia Battisson and Sandra who both assisted with the Treasurer's responsibilities whilst he was absent and took on tea arrangements after members meetings, and Bruce Lindenmayer and Stuart Rae who have been stalwarts in their support across regular COG business and as well as the COG 50th arrangements with Bruce arranging the Spring ANU/COG Mulligans Flat/Goorooyaroo surveys and Stuart for organising production of a range of 50th Anniversary brochures.

As well as Committee members, we have been well served by a number of other members who have provided invaluable service to COG: Jack Holland who is responsible for the members' meetings speakers program, Michael Lenz for Canberra Bird Notes, Paul Fennell for managing the COG database, Duncan McCaskill for the Garden Bird Survey, Barbara Allan for the Bird Blitz and the Rarities Panel, Nicki Taws who is the COG Records Officer, and Kathy Walter and John Goldie for managing the sales desk.

COG Membership

There are currently 270 members of COG with 63 new members joining during the year. As with any organisation we always have a loss of members including those who can no longer participate in COG activities, those who move away from Canberra, those who pursue other

priorities, and some new members who find COG isn't what they were looking for. However to all our continuing members you are a vital part of our organisation and your support for COG is very much appreciated.

COG 50th Anniversary

The major focus for COG in 2014 has been the commemoration of its 50th Anniversary. This was celebrated with an Anniversary Program that included events designed to both acknowledge this significant anniversary and showcase COG to the community as an effective and professional organisation. Particular thanks are due to Neil Hermes for all the work he has done in coordinating the 50th Anniversary year.

The Program of special events included:

Bird of the Year Project- The Gang-gang Cockatoo

A 12 month long project to find out more about the COG emblem was initiated in March 2014. To date (October 20th) there have been over 3200 sightings reported from the COG area of interest with contributions from members of the public and COG. The interest in this project has exceeded expectations and has been greatly assisted by the on-line data entry portal developed by Atlas of Living Australia for the project. This on-line facility is currently receiving over 90% of all sightings. Many thanks to Chris Davey the Project Manager and Kathy Eyles the Communications Officer for this very successful project.

COG Photographic Competition

The COG Photographic Competition was held from 30 June to 5 July at the Legislative Assembly Exhibition Room. 15 members exhibited 48 photos of 29 local species. The Competition was opened by Nicole Lawder, MLA and over 300 visitors viewed the display. Visitors were encouraged to vote for their favourite photo and the one that attracted most votes was by Julian Robinson of a pair of Satin Bowerbirds at a bower. Charlie Davis's photo of Rosellas in the Fog was the runner-up and Kathy Walter was the winner of the lucky draw prize. Congratulations to all who entered the competition and to the winners. We have received suggestions that this might become an annual COG event and the Committee will consider this option.

COG Landscapes for Birds Forum

The *Landscapes for Birds Forum* was held on 5 July with the aim of improving public awareness of the need for landscape scale conservation and restoration and enhancement. The Forum, which was held at the Legislative Assembly Reception Room, attracted a mixed audience of around 75 people most of whom were not COG members. This was seen to be a success as the aim in holding the Forum was to engage with the broader public on the issues addressed at the Forum. Various studies, research, community/landholder engagement and on-the-ground work in the ACT and nearby NSW were the topics addressed by the guest speakers. Mick Gentleman, newly elected ACT Planning Minister, opened the Forum. I would like to thank all those who presented at the Forum but particular thanks go to Jenny Bounds for the organisation of the Forum.

COG 50th Anniversary Short Talks

As part of the COG 50th Anniversary, Neil Hermes arranged for a number of COG members to present short talks about COG over its 50 years. Speakers reminisced about COG's early

days (Neil Hermes and Richard Schodde), the strong conservation agenda that COG has pursued (Jenny Bounds), COG's contribution to ANU Research programs (Bruce Lindenmayer) the history of COG bird banding (Mark Clayton), the history of COG bird song tapes and CD (Chris Davey), the history of COG's waterbird surveys – Lake George and Lake Bathurst (Michael Lenz), and the history of COG's bird blitz (Barbara Allan). It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on COG and its achievements, its history, and appreciate the important role it has as a well-respected organisation within the community.

Steve Wilson Medal

The COG Committee resolved to inaugurate an annual award in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary, the Steve Wilson Medal, to honour the contribution made by Steve Wilson, one of the founding fathers of COG. The award recognises meritorious contribution by an individual to COG and is open to any COG member or ex-member. The recognised service will have been voluntary service to COG, not service to birds. A Committee has been established to consider any nominations made for the award. The inaugural award was made to two recipients, Jenny Bounds and Grahame Clark, and was announced at the Gala Dinner on 22 November 2014.

Special Edition of the Canberra Bird Notes

A special edition of the Canberra Bird Notes that captures the COG Anniversary Year will be published in January 2015. The edition will feature all of the significant aspects of this important celebratory year

Mini Guide

A mini guide on the birds of Canberra has been produced to inform the general public about birds in Canberra. The guide provides photographs of familiar birds and a map to show where they can be found. The guide will be available at the ACT Information Centre for people visiting Canberra as well as being part of COG's information publications.

Beginners Walks

A series of Beginners Walks was run by Tony Lawson at the Australian National Botanic Gardens as part of the COG celebrations. These were aimed to encourage members of the public to experience the pleasure of watching and identifying birds in their natural habitats. From May onwards, a total of 5 Saturday walks were conducted with about 10-12 people attending each walk. Particular thanks to Tony for conducting the tours on behalf of COG.

COG Gala Dinner

The final event to celebrate COG's 50th Anniversary was the Gala Dinner held on 22 November 2014 at Gold Creek Station, Hall. The Guest Speaker for the event was former Senator and Leader of the Greens, Dr Bob Brown. The evening was a great success and Dr Brown's address a particular highlight, focusing on the importance of conservation and his efforts to engage the younger demographic in conservation work. The event wound up a year of special activities and all COG members can be proud of the profile that the 50th Anniversary celebrations generated for COG within the community and in government circles where COG was officially recognised for its work in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

Conservation

Conservation of our birds remains an important focus; however, in recent years we have prioritised our involvement in issues, and work more in collaboration with the Conservation Council ACT Region and other groups on major matters. Jenny Bounds continues in her role as COG Conservation Officer, with assistance from other Committee members. As a Vice-President of the Conservation Council ACT Region, Jenny also represents COG in that forum. In recognition for the contribution that the Council's work on cat containment in the ACT will have for COG interests, COG contributed \$5,000 to the Council's project on ACT cat containment and community engagement.

Conservation issues we have engaged in include:

- input to the ACT's Nature Conservation Bill 2014, a revision of the legislation protecting threatened species and communities and other conservation related matters – coordinated by the Conservation Council,
- comments on the ACT Environmental Offsets policy,
- comments on the ACT Trails Strategy 2014-24 (about recreation use in parks and reserves),
- comments on Superb Parrot habitat improvement plans (part of the planning for impacts from further urban development in Throsby, Gungahlin),
- with other groups and the Conservation Council, raised concerns and sought more information about a proposal to re-locate the RSPCA to a site bordering Callum Brae NR in Symonston, and
- provided input to a range of other matters/projects coordinated by the Conservation Council, including proposal for ACT wide, phased-in cat containment, urban development in West Belconnen and various publications to improve the community's awareness of environmental matters.

Woodland Bird Monitoring Project

The COG Woodland Bird Monitoring Project has been running since 1998 and quarterly surveys continue (142 monitoring points/15 locations of grassy woodlands across the ACT). Ten years or more of data will be reached for all sites in 2015/16, when a major data analysis can proceed. Jenny Bounds coordinates the project, with Chris Davey, Nicki Taws and Alison Rowell providing support. Alison Rowell continues to have a key role as consultant to the project. Thanks to all involved, including the site coordinators and Helen Mason (data entry), in this important long-term project for COG. As usual results are incorporated into the Annual Bird Report published in CBN.

Woodland and Wetlands Trust

COG also has representation on the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust which was established to enhance management in and undertake fund-raising for Mulligans Flat and Jerrabomberra Wetlands Reserves. I chair the Trust Committee and Jenny Bounds sits on the Mulligans Flat Management Committee and is an alternate on the Trust Committee.

Bush Stone-curlew reintroduction at Mulligans Flat

This year, COG partnered with the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust to reintroduce Bush Stone-curlews to the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary. The birds were released in October 2014. A number of COG members have been involved in the project in various capacities: Chris Davey, Jenny Bounds, Kathy Eyles and Mark Clayton (banding the birds). COG has not only provided financial help but members have also been involved in the daily feeding of the birds held in captivity between their arrival in June and their release in October. In addition, and with help from COG members, tracking of the birds movements is now in progress. We anxiously await the outcome of this interesting project. COG has committed \$5,000 per annum funding in 2014 and 2015 to the project, and expects a further group of birds will be released in 2015.

Surveys and record management

The 12 month period to November 2014 has again been a busy one for the bird surveys conducted by members. Two new surveys were initiated in 2014, the COG 50th Bird of the Year project (Refer to the 50th Anniversary item above) and the reintroduction of the Bush Stone-curlew project (see above).

Superb Parrot Survey

A fifth survey of possible breeding habitat for the threatened Superb Parrot in the ACT was completed with help from COG members. A report titled 'Distribution, abundance and breeding status of the Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*) during the 2013-14 breeding season, Throsby Ridge, ACT' was again compiled by Chris Davey and provided to the ACT Government with a copy placed in the COG library.

Superb Lyrebird Survey

The survey, to document the recovery after the 2003 bushfire at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, was held for the 11th year as usual on the third weekend in June with results published in the COG newsletter and provided to the ACT Government.

Garden Bird Survey

This survey is now in its 34th year with over 70 sites surveyed. As usual, results are incorporated into the Annual Bird Report published in CBN. Thanks to the many contributors and to Duncan McCaskill for managing the survey and for data analysis. Kay Hahne and Anne Hall once again continued with the difficult task of entering the GBS data.

Mulligans Flat/Goorooyaroo Survey

The Spring surveys run by the Fenner School, ANU, has again involved 6-8 COG members in data collection. These surveys have now been running for 9 years and help to contribute to the woodland restoration project conducted by the ANU. COG members have also been involved in surveys at Jervis Bay and in surveys at Cowra and around Canberra for the Stewardship Project. Many thanks to Bruce Lindenmayer for coordinating the COG contribution to these important surveys.

The COG Blitz

The Blitz was run for the 9th year, as usual over the last weekend in October, with Barbara Allan yet again managing the survey. Our thanks to Barbara for the considerable work

involved in this most valuable and enjoyable survey. The results of the weekend's efforts were published in Canberra Bird Notes 39 (2).

Waterbird surveys at Lake George and Lake Bathurst

On behalf of COG, Michael Lenz is continuing surveys at two lakes within COG's area of interest (Lake George since 1979 and Lake Bathurst since 1980). In 2013-14 Julianne Kamprad and Peter Milburn assisted at various times. The lakes continue to be a refuge for waterbirds and the on-going surveys provide significant data.

Jerrabomberra Wetlands Bird Survey

The quarterly survey of the Reserve organised by Chris Davey was initiated in July 2012 with four surveys (January, April, July and October 2014) conducted over the reporting period and involving 12 COG members and Friends of the Wetlands. The surveys are run on behalf of the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Management Committee who report to the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust. Unfortunately the Fyshwick Sewage Ponds were closed to the public for renovations over the period although special permission was obtained for access for the October survey. Special thanks to Michael Maconachie (COG member and Reserve Ranger) for participating in all of the surveys.

Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C) Bird Surveys

Nicki Taws has again been responsible for running the COG contributions to the K2C bird survey in April and again in October covering 23 properties in the area between Williamsdale and Bredbo. On both occasions 15 COG members contributed their time and expertise. Always a most enjoyable outing, it was finished off with a BBQ at the Bush Heritage property 'Scottsdale'.

Lord Howe Island Bird Survey

The second survey was run over the week 7-14th September with a report to the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage currently being prepared. In addition to the coordinators (Peter Fullagar and Chris Davey), who participated last year, David and Kathy Cook, Christine Ledger, Michael Robbins and Gail Neumann all put in a sterling effort to complete the survey. We await confirmation for the 2015 survey.

Silver Gull Breeding Survey

On behalf of COG, Peter Fullagar and Chris Davey again surveyed the breeding colony on Spinnaker Island, Lake Burley Griffin. The colony has continued to expand with a maximum of 465 active nests found and 867 eggs. A report has been provided to the National Capital Authority.

Records Management

Essential support for the COG database is provided through the Records Management Team and the Rarities Panel. I would like to acknowledge the role of Paul Fennell (Database Manager) with much support from Steve Wallace. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions provided by the Records Officer, Nicki Taws, and to Tony Harding, Helen Mason and others responsible for data entry. The Rarities Panel consisting of Richard Allen, Jenny Bounds, Grahame Clark, Dick Schodde, Nicki Taws and Barbara Allan (Secretary) have continued the important role of verifying unusual observations. During the year David

McDonald, assisted by Mark Clayton, Nicki Taws and Richard Schodde, revised the COG Annotated Check List.

The COG website

Julian Robinson has done a fantastic job in getting the new COG website up and running. The website went on line on 1st March 2014, three years after serious efforts began to replace our original site. Using new technology, the new site is designed to be easy on the eye, 'cleaner' and easier to use, while providing new facilities and better access to fast changing information. Part of the justification for the new site was that much of the content can now be entered and updated by non-expert members who are directly responsible for each area, rather than one or two overworked website specialists.

Another objective was to make the website a first port of call for members seeking information about COG's activities such as the Gang-gang surveys and other 50th anniversary happenings, for which it has been very successful. General reaction from members and non-members has been very positive, while the first few months' operation has shown the design to be robust and reliable. A number of improvements are planned to be implemented gradually over the next year or two.

The new website would appear from web statistics to be hugely appreciated and used by an audience far beyond COG's membership. Member usage of the site has more than doubled and the photo gallery continues to be the area that receives the highest proportion of visitors. However the site's different construction hides the photos from search engines so the site no longer appears when people google on bird names. We may want to look at this in the future as there may be a larger actual increase in use of the new site than we are currently able to detect.

2014 COG Field Trips Outings

2014 has been another busy year with 35 weekend outings. There has been the usual mix of morning and day outings, as well as camping or accommodated trips over 2 to 4 days. Our annual boat trip in February and bus trip in late winter continue to be popular. The 2 pelagic tours from Eden in September were again over-subscribed so next year there will be 3 pelagic tours.

I would like to thank Sue Lashko for her great efforts in managing the field trip outings and all leaders for suggesting a venue and volunteering to lead. Most of our leaders put their hands up every year to lead one or more outings. The COG field trips programme would not exist without your generosity of time and enthusiasm for birds. Particular thanks to Anthony Overs who has again led two beginners' outings as these are an excellent way to attract members of the public to COG, as well as improving the ID skills of existing members. Jack Holland's nest workshop at Campbell Park continues to attract large numbers of COG members and nesting birds! Well done to new leaders, with John Harris and Julie Clark introducing us to some little known birding sites in Gungahlin, Duncan McCaskill leading birding by bike at Mulligans Flat, Jean Casburn introducing us to Guthega in summer as well as Narrabundah Hill and Michael Lenz to TSR 48 near Gundaroo.

Members were surveyed mid-year to gather feedback on the current programme and changes for the future. There was a high level of satisfaction with the current programme, as well as considerable interest in mid-week trips so three will be offered in 2015.

Thank you to Martin Butterfield for again coordinating the very successful Wednesday walks.

The draft 2015 programme is in the November Gang-gang and leaders are sought for several outings. I encourage you to get involved and take us to your favourite birding spot.

Communications and Publications

Gang-gang

Many thanks are also due to Sue Lashko and Gail Neumann for their excellent efforts in the editing and publishing of our newsletter and to Dianne Davey for its distribution. Gang-gang is a great source of information to members with its wide range of articles and news about the birds of Canberra and the surrounding region. We are always looking for members to write occasional columns on bird related topics - a favourite species or family, a recent trip or some other item of interest to members. Please let Sue Lashko know if you would like to exercise your writing skills and add to the interesting contributions in Gang-gang.

Canberra Bird Notes.

Three issues of CBN were produced over the year. Two general issues were edited by Michael Lenz. The remaining issue consists of the Annual Bird Report, produced and edited by Paul Fennell and Steve Wallace and a team of dedicated COG members who write up the species accounts. I would like to thank all those COG members involved in the production of the Canberra Bird Notes.

Monthly meetings

I would like to thank Jack Holland for arranging another very interesting program of speakers for 2014 for our COG monthly meetings. The monthly meetings took a slightly different format this year with the COG 50th Anniversary series of short talks (Refer to the report on the 50th Anniversary above).

Highlights in the longer talks we have heard over the year include Dean Ingwersen and his presentation on the Regent Honeyeater at the AGM last year, Laura Johnson's presentation on how the Eastern Koel has duped naïve Red Wattlebirds, Geoffrey Dabb's on the bird of the year (Gang-gang), Andrew Cockburn's presentation on Fairy Wrens, Michael Lenz on Roost Flights, David Lindenmayer's talk on 17 years of ANU-COG co-operation on bird research and Matt Herring on the Australasian Bittern in rice fields.

This last talk inspired both COG members and the COG Committee to contribute to the crowd source funding that Matt had initiated and it is great to see that it was successful in reaching the funding goal. \$2,500 was agreed to be contributed on behalf of COG by the Committee. This project is a great example of how working with landowners can bring benefits to birds.

John Young's presentation on the Rediscovery of the Night Parrot in conjunction with ACT Eremaea ebird was another particular highlight in the year.

Canberra Birds Conservation Fund (CBCF)

The Canberra Birds Conservation Fund was established to receive tax-deductible donations and to expend the funds received on activities that contribute towards achieving COG's environmental objectives, namely:

To encourage interest in, and develop knowledge of, the birds of the Canberra region,

To promote and co-ordinate the study of birds, and

To promote the conservation of native birds and their habitats.

One grant was made during the year: to Dr Virginia Abernathy of the Australian National University to support her research titled "Investigating the rate of coevolution between the Pacific Koel and its hosts". As a consequence, the Fund is in the unusual position of having money available to allocate to worthwhile projects, but no applications are currently before it. Members of COG, and others, are invited to contact the Fund if you have proposals that, if supported, would help to attain COG's environmental objectives.

Conclusion

2013-14 has been a particularly significant year for COG with the celebration of our 50th Anniversary. I wish again to thank all those who have worked so hard in so many ways to provide what has been a stand-out year and I also express my sincere appreciation to those who have assisted me in my role as President over the year.

I would like to pay particular tribute to two of our Committee members who are leaving the Committee this year – our Secretary Sandra Henderson who has been Committee Secretary for 9 years and Noel Luff, our Treasurer for a number of years. Both have given fantastic service to COG in these positions and we all thank them very much for their dedication. Not surprisingly the reason they have given for standing down now is to go and do more birdwatching. Good luck to both of them in this and everything else.

Alison Russell-French

SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROJECTS IN CELEBRATION OF COG's 50th ANNIVERSARY

Neil Hermes and Jenny Bounds compiled the reports on Special Events.

COG 2014 BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

During the 2014 anniversary year COG held a photography exhibition to showcase the great work of COG's bird photographers, celebrate the beauty and diversity of Canberra birds, create an interest in Canberra birds and promote COG.

The exhibition was held in the Legislative Assembly Building in Canberra City and ran for a week from Monday 30 June to Friday 4 July 2014. It was opened by Nicole Lawder MLA Shadow Environment spokesperson.



Opening of the COG 2014 Photographic exhibition by MLA Nicole Lawder.

The competition was open to members of COG. Almost 50 photos were entered depicting 29 species. The 15 photographers choose subjects from Owlet Nightjars to Swamphearts. The most commonly entered species was the Gang-gang Cockatoo, but Eastern Spinebills, Black Swans, Nankeen Kestrels and Tawny Frogmouths were well represented.

Members of the public were invited to lodge a voting slip for their favourite photo via the voting box. Over 200 votes were registered. First and runner up prizes were awarded to the "Canberra's Most Popular Bird Photo 2014" as voted by the public. First prize went to Julian Robinson for his intimate photo of a pair of Satin Bowerbirds at the bower and second went to Charles Davis for a painting-like photo of a group of Rosellas in a foggy mountain gully.

The success of the exhibition as judged by the media attention, photographers' interest and visitor engagement has encouraged the 2015 COG committee to look at the possibility of future exhibitions.



First Prize: Satin Bowerbirds (*Julian Robinson*)



Second Prize: Rosellas in the fog (*Charles Davis*)



Runner-up: Striated Thornbills (*Julian Robinson*)



Runner-up: Black-shouldered Kite (*Geoffrey Dabb*)



Runner-up: 'Branch with eye' – Tawny Frogmouth (*Stuart Rae*)



Runner-up: Australian Raven (*Julian Robinson*)

PUBLIC FORUM – LANDSCAPES FOR BIRDS –CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THEIR HABITATS

As part of COGs 50th Anniversary year events, this public Forum in July 2014 aimed to improve awareness of the need for landscape scale conservation and restoration/enhancement of habitats for birds. Increasingly, there is a call for an ecosystem approach or whole of landscape approach, and a critical focus on connectivity of core habitats, so birds (and other animals) can move across the landscape, particularly against a background of a changing climate.



In celebration of Canberra Ornithologists Group's 50th anniversary

Landscapes for Birds – conserving and enhancing their habitats

Program - Saturday 5 July 2014

1.30 pm - Welcome and introduction: Alison Russell-French, President, Canberra Ornithologists Group

Opening Remarks: Mick Gentleman, Member Legislative Assembly (ACT)

1.45pm Dr Veronica Doerr **The Landscape Revolution Needs YOU**

2.15 Dr Adrian Manning **Integrating Research and Restoration: the Mulligans Flat – Goorooyarroo Woodland Experiment**

2.45 Chris Davey **A citizen science survey of the Gang-gang Cockatoo**

3.10 Afternoon Tea break

3.30 Rainer Rehwinkel **Kosciuszko to Coast – a Landscape Connectivity Partnership**

4.00 Nicki Taws **Doing it for the birds: Revegetation as habitat**

The Forum, held at the ACT Legislative Assembly Reception Room, attracted a mixed, public audience of around 75 people, and it was pleasing that most were not members of our group. Public participation/engagement was an important aim of the Forum. Various studies, research, community/landholder engagement and on the ground work in the ACT and nearby NSW were the topics of the guest speakers. Mick Gentleman, MLA, and ACT Planning Minister, opened the Forum. Jenny Bounds coordinated the Forum arrangements.

Dr Veronica Doerr, (CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences) began the Forum with a presentation about the importance of the whole of the landscape for birds (and biodiversity), in terms of core sites and corridors for movement, including paddock trees as stepping stones. Dr Adrian Manning (ANU) then spoke about the Mulligans Flat – Goorooyarroo Woodland Experiment which aims to restore a large woodland landscape and re-introduce locally extinct species. Rainer Rehwinkel, (Chair of the Kosciuszko to Coast - K2C - project, and threatened species officer at NSW Office of Environment and Heritage), spoke about the Landscape Connectivity Partnership and local NSW projects for birds. Nicki Taws (representing Greening Australia) then brought on-ground work into focus with a presentation about the Birdwatch project in re-vegetation sites in the local region. Finally, Chris Davey (COG) gave a progress report on the citizen science survey of the Gang-gang Cockatoo which COG is undertaking over its 50th anniversary year.



Neil Hermes spreading the word about COG, local birds and the environment on Public Radio (Queanbeyan FM 96.7) as part of the effort in the Anniversary year to raise COG's public profile.

CANBERRA ORNITHOLOGISTS GROUP GALA DINNER

The final event to celebrate COG's 50th Anniversary was a Gala Dinner held on 22 November 2014 at Gold Creek Station, Hall. The Guest Speaker for the event was former Senator and Leader of the Greens, Dr Bob Brown. Over 120 members enjoyed a night of reminiscing and sharing stories of COG's first 50 years. Highlights were of course an address by Dr Bob Brown and the awarding of the inaugural Steve Wilson Medals. Jack Holland's table won the trivia quiz. The night's MC was President Alison Russell-French.

Eleven previous and current COG Presidents attended the Gala Dinner:



(left to right) Paul Fennel, Jack Holland, Alistair Drake, Chris Davey, Grahame Clark, Henry Nix, Richard Schodde, Bruce Lindenmayer, Jenny Bounds, Neil Hermes, Alison Russell-French (current President).

List of ACT RAOU Branch Chairmen (until 1969) and then COG Presidents:

1966	Warren Hitchcock	1986	Peter Roberts
1966	Steve Marchant	1988	Neil Hermes
1969	Gerry Van Tets	1990	Malcolm Fyfe
1973	Grahame Clark	1991	Bruce Lindenmayer
1975	Frank Crome	1994	Jenny Bounds
1976	Richard Schodde	1996	Paul Fennel
1979	Henry Nix	2000	Barry Baker
1981	John Penhallurick	2003	Jack Holland
1982	Alistair Drake	2008	Chris Davey
1984	Bryan Fitzgerald	2013	Alison Russell-French

The COG 2014 Committee photographed at the Gala Dinner in November 2014:



(left to right) front: Lia Battisson (Member), Sandra Henderson (Secretary), Alison Russell-French (President), Chris Davey (Member); back: Noel Luff (Treasurer), Jenny Bounds (member), Bruce Lindenmayer (Member), Neil Hermes (Vice-President), Stuart Rae (Member). Sue Lashko (Member) absent.



The moment immediately after the presentation of the Steve Wilson Medals: (left to right): Neil Hermes, Jenny Bounds, Grahame Clark, guest speaker Dr Bob Brown, Alison Russell-French and Paul Thomas.

STEVE WILSON MEDAL

As part of COGs 2014 50th year celebrations an award was created to recognise individual contributions to COG. It was decided to annually award the Steve Wilson Medal to a person who had made an outstanding and sustained contribution to the activities of the Group. An Award Committee consisting of two long term COG members Bruce Lindenmayer and Neil Hermes and the current President Alison Russell-French was established. The Award committee had the unenviable task of selecting the first Awardee. COG has been fortunate that many people have made outstanding contributions to the Group over the past 50 years. Many members were considered to be highly worthy of the award. In the end it was decided to award two inaugural medals. These went to Jenny Bounds and Grahame Clark.



The award has been made in the name of one of the founders of COG, Steve Wilson.

The following notes are based on a longer obituary written by David Purchase (see *Canberra Bird Notes* 34 (2009) 197-203).

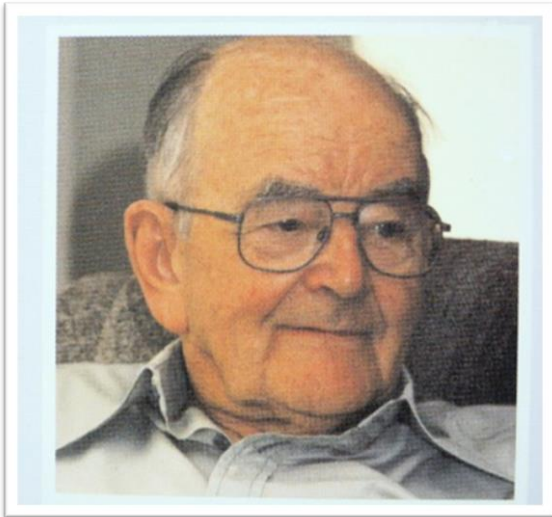


Photo reproduced from:
Steve Wilson (1999) *Birds of the ACT*,
Canberra Ornithologists group

Stephen James (Steve) Wilson OAM 1912-2009

Steve and his family moved to Canberra in 1959 with the Department of the Navy.

Before coming to Canberra, Steve, together with two of his sons, had begun to get seriously involved in bird watching. This interest continued in Canberra where he soon got to know the few bird watchers that were in the city in those days. He became interested in bird banding and enrolled in the Australian Bird Banding Scheme in September 1960. He took to this activity with great enthusiasm and started experimenting with the use of mist nets which at that time were largely unknown in Australia. He soon became competent in their use.

In 1962, he became a foundation member of the Bird Banders' Association of Australia (now the Australian Bird Study Association) and, as well as being a long-serving committee member, was its president in 1965-66.

Steve is one of the founding fathers of the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG). In May 1964, eight local bird watchers attended a meeting at Steve and Nonie's home at Narrabundah. As a result of this meeting a formal gathering attended by 27 Royal Australian Ornithologists Union members and visitors was held on 3 June 1964 in the CSIRO conference room at Black Mountain. At this gathering it was agreed a letter should be forwarded to the Council of the RAOU recommending the formation of an official branch in the ACT. This was accepted by the RAOU and the ACT Branch of the RAOU was formed. This was the forerunner of COG which came into existence when the Branch was discontinued and replaced by COG on 15 April 1970.

Until his later years, Steve always played an active and leading role in the activities of both COG and its predecessor the local branch of the RAOU. Although he was never officially president or chairman he served in these roles on one or two occasions. He was also on the committees of both groups and was editor of *Canberra Bird Notes* from April 1975 through to January 1981. In January 1980, in this latter role, he was largely responsible for changing the format of the publication to that which we know today.

As well as his involvement in writing the guide on the use of mist nets, Steve contributed, either as sole author or co-author, 68 papers and short notes to *Canberra Bird Notes*. He was also a contributor to the *Australian Bird Bander* (now called *Corella*), *Emu* and various other journals and publications. He also made important contributions to a number of books. The idea of a handbook on the birds of the ACT an official project of CSIRO but the professional zoologists employed there had limited knowledge of the local passerines and Steve was asked if he would fill this gap and contribute to the book. The result was that Steve wrote the majority of the accounts of passerine species plus some of the cuckoos – an impressive total of 70 species. The book was published in 1969 with the title *Birds in the Australian High*



Steve Wilson, Nonie Wilson and Charles, Prince of Wales, at the Australian National Botanic Gardens, April 1966 (Photo by Sir David Checketts; courtesy of Denis Wilson).

Steve passed away in 2009.

Country. For many years it was the definitive work on the birds of our region. Revised editions were produced in 1976 and 1984. The history of the project is discussed by Temple Watts (1979; CBN 4(8):2-6 and Wilson (2002; CBN 27(3) 124-125).

The publication which gave Steve and his family the greatest pride was *Birds of the ACT – Two Centuries of Change* published by COG in 1999.

One of his greatest achievements was the encouragement which he gave to young people who wanted to become involved in his bird banding studies. Providing they were willing to rise early, so that the nets could be erected before dawn, and to learn, they were welcome to join him on his trips. He was immensely proud that six of these assistants went on to become professional zoologists.

In 1981 Steve was made a Life Member of COG for his contribution to Canberra ornithology (Hermes (1981) CBN 6: 88) and in 1998 was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his services to ornithology and the community.

Joint inaugural Steve Wilson Medal Recipients 2014



JENNY BOUNDS

Jenny Bounds has filled many COG roles, including President from 1993 to 1995 and Vice-president for a total of 8 years. Jenny managed the field trips program for around ten years, mostly in the 1990s, has been on the COG Rarities Panel since 1997, and has been most actively involved in bird conservation issues in the last decade or so. Jenny has served continuously on the COG Committee for some 25 years.

Among the achievements Jenny recalls are: when President, getting a small grant to develop a new COG database in Access software, which laid the foundation for the current databases; researching and nominating on behalf of COG a number of bird species for listing as vulnerable in the ACT including the Little Eagle, the first jurisdiction to recognise the decline of that species; collaborating with others to achieve cat containment for new suburbs abutting conservation areas (Mulligans Flat - Forde and Bonner were the

first declared areas); working with the ACT Parks Service on bird and woodland walks brochures for Mulligans Flat, working with Penny Olsen on the Pocket Guide 'The Birds of Canberra', working with Louise Muir and artist Frances McMahon on the 'Birds of the Aust. National Botanic Gardens' brochure; and coordinating two public seminars to promote the conservation of woodland birds and their habitats, one in 2005 attracting more than 200 participants.

GRAHAME CLARK

Grahame Clark was the organisation's second Secretary/Treasurer, a position he held from 1969 to 1971 during the period of transition from RAOU Branch to Canberra Ornithologist Group. He was the fourth President from 1973-1975. He was continuously involved in various formal and informal committee positions including Records and Assistant Secretary for two decades.

He was a RAOU representative for COG and was subsequently on the RAOU council. In 1977 Grahame was the Canberra regional representative for the first RAOU atlas. This involved being responsible for all data collection and validation from Western and Southern NSW and the ACT. This role was subsequently taken by Cedric Bear.

Grahame suggested the name of Canberra Ornithologists Group when the RAOU Branch was dissolved in 1970. At the time there was a lot of committee discussion and suggestions among others were Canberra Field Ornithologists Group (like NSWFOC), Canberra Bird Observers Club (like BOC), or Canberra Bird Watchers. Canberra Ornithologists Group was decided because of the easy acronym and it didn't seem to indicate a connection to any other groups at the time.

ATTENDEES AT THE GALA DINNER



Table “Finch”: (*l. to r.*) Terry Munro, Terry Bell, Barbara van der Linden



Table “Raven”: (*l. from top*): Kay Hahne, Nick Nicholls; (*r. from top*): Janette and Michael Lenz, Horst Hahne.



Table “Falcon”: (*l. from top*) Mark Clayton, Julian Teh, Rosemary Schodde; (*r.*) Richard Schodde.



Table “Oriole”: (*l. from top*) Dianne Tracy, Elsa and Paul Fennell; (*r. from top*) Stuart Rae, Harvey Perkins, Karen Betts.



Table “Cuckoo”: (*l. from top*) Ethel Luff, Lindsay and Rhonda Hansch; (*r. from top*) Noel Luff, Martyn and Pat Moffat.



Table “Magpie”: (*l. to r.*) Julie McGuinness, Jane Green, Sandra Henderson, Kathy Walter, Peter Battisson.



Table “Pigeon”: (*l. from top*) Margaret Considine, Simon Bennett, Trevor Lipscombe; (*r. from top*) David and Kathy Cook, Joan Lipscombe.



Table “Robin”: (*l. to r. from top*) Ann Gordon Smith and Bruce Lindenmayer, Andrea and Jack Holland, Robert Skliwa and Erin Brown.



Table “Pipit”: (*l. from top*) Cecily Dignan, Tina Bromhead, Megan Mears; (*r. from top*) Matthew Frawley, Alex Smythe.



Table “Crake”: (*l. from top*) Tony and Charmian Lawson; (*r. from top*) Bill Robertson, Inge Zumstein.



Table “Heron”: (*l. from top*) Erinna Clark, David Purchase, McComas Taylor; (*r. from top*) Mark Vassallo, Grahame Clark, Alistair Drake.



Table “Snipe”: (*l. from top*) David Landon and Jeannie Gray, Greg Ramsay; (*r. from top*) Charles Buer and Margaret McJannett, Sallie Ramsay.



Table “Swift”: (*l. from top*) Duncan McCaskill, Marnix and Lisa Zwankhuisen; (*r. from top*) Stuart Harris, Steve and Helen Stephinson.



Chris Davey and Neil Hermes checking the responses to the post-dinner Trivia they had designed.



Across Tables: Larry O'Loughlin, Clare Henderson, Dr Bob Brown, Kathy Eyles, Ian Baird, Elizabeth Moore.



At the Bar: (l. to r.) Jan Morgan, Greg Ramsay, Alison Russell-French, Nick Nicholls.

THE BIRD OF THE YEAR PROJECT: CITIZEN SCIENCE SURVEY OF THE GANG-GANG COCKATOO

CHRIS DAVEY^A AND KATHY EYLES^B

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One of the projects undertaken by COG to celebrate the 50th Anniversary was a Bird of the Year project on the Gang-gang Cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*). Members of the public were asked to become involved in the project by recording any sightings of Gang-gangs from the COG area of Interest; an area between Yass and Goulburn in the north to Bredbo in the south.

The Gang-gang holds a special significance to the ACT as the faunal emblem of the Territory and proudly appears as the logo of both COG and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. It is also a species that local and visiting birders like to see. However, despite this, little is known about the bird's abundance or seasonal movements within the area, what food it eats at different times of the year, what nest sites it uses, or its breeding success.

The aims of the project were to

- Expand on our knowledge of the Gang-gang within the COG area of interest
- Involve the membership and general public in a citizen-science based project on birds
- Promote the activities of COG

The Gang-gang survey was launched on 13 March 2014 at Corroboree Park, Ainslie by Canberra naturalist, Ian Fraser, and will run for 12-18 months depending on participation rate. At the time of writing (16 December) records have been received for over 10 months with more than 4000 observations from over 330 observers.

From the start of the project it was realised that to get the public involved good communications were essential, so in late February, Kathy Eyles was appointed to act as Communications Officer for the project. In addition to the project benefiting from Kathy's communication expertise, she will be able to use experiences gained from the citizen-science project towards her Ph.D. exploring how urban people value nature. With the help of Stuart Rae a leaflet was produced titled 'Have you seen this Bird- Gang-gang Cockatoo' which was then widely distributed. The leaflet outlined the aims of the project, how to contribute and how to submit observations. In mid-May Kathy submitted a successful ACT Environment Grant application for \$6,035 to assist with the data recording, analysis and reporting on the results of the survey

The survey was in two parts. First, general ad hoc observations on the location and behaviours of Gang-gangs throughout the period could be provided on a specifically designed form. Second, four periods, each of seven days, were set aside to gather more detailed daily activities. This part known as the '*Muster*' count was based on the COG Garden Bird Survey protocol and was designed to obtain records of days when birds were not observed. For each of the designated seven days, observers were required to record the largest number of Gang-gangs observed each day within a 100m radius of a site of the observers choosing, usually a garden or work place. The four periods were 19-25 February, 21-27 May, 21-27 August and 20-26 November.



Gang-gang Cockatoo emerging from its nesting hollow (*Chris Davey*)

Before the start of the project Chris Davey approached Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) to produce an on-line records input portal so that members of the public could input their ad hoc observations directly via the portal to the ALA database. The entry page to the portal could be accessed directly or through the COG website. The portal was provided free of charge and proved to be very popular with over 85% of all observations entered on-line. In addition to the portal, observations could be provided on a paper form which was made available for printing from the COG website, in the COG newsletter or available at monthly COG meetings.

The Muster forms were available one month before the due Muster period and were available from the COG website, the newsletter or at monthly meetings. In addition, thanks to Julian Robinson, a form was made available on-line via the COG website.

To ensure that the COG Discussion List (chat-line) was not inundated with queries and observations from the general public about Gang-gangs a specific email address, known as 'ggquery' was set up to which survey queries could be addressed.

The data verification process, checking and determining geo-coordinates for survey observations, created a significant workload. Although it was possible to provide coordinates by clicking on a map provided with the ALA portal, virtually all other coordinates needed to be determined from site descriptions; usually through Google Maps. Data verification has been possible with the help of Steve Wallace, Anne Carrick and Michael Robbins. A report on the findings of the survey will be produced at the end of the survey.

In addition to monthly progress reports in the COG newsletter and on the web, a progress report was provided to the BIGNET meeting of bird clubs held in Canberra over the weekend 12-13 April. Presentations about the survey were given to the ACT Park Care and Landcare Coordinators on 3 June, at the K2C Landholders Connectivity Forum on 20 June, at the 'Landscapes for Birds- conserving and enhancing their habitats' Forum held at the ACT Legislative Assembly on 5 July and at the CSIRO's Inspiring Australia stand at Floriade on

30 September. The project team also engaged the ACT Rangers working in the Murrumbidgee corridor, at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and Namadgi National Park, and interested schools and scout groups.

A most successful public engagement was the ‘imagining Gang-gangs’ Student Art Competition and Exhibition with 80 student artworks on show between 26-30 November at the M16 Artspace, Griffith. Students were invited to use the art medium of choice and produced ceramic 3D works, drawings, paintings, collage and sculptures about the Gang-gang Cockatoo. A prize of \$250 was donated by bankmecu to each of the winners of the junior and senior section, as voted by visitors to the exhibition. A selection of student artworks will be displayed at the Civic Library over the summer school holidays in January 2015.

Throughout the year of the survey there has been significant media coverage with newspaper articles and features, radio interviews and stories on ABC 666 and a feature on ABC TV news and the 7.30 report. This coverage has greatly assisted with community awareness and interest in the survey, as well as keeping the public up-to-date with survey progress and timing of the Muster count events.



Lara Hedley from Campbell High School with her winning senior artwork from *Imagining Gang-gangs* .



The winning junior entry from Dan Leivesley from North Ainslie Primary School.



**Imagining Gang-gangs - Prize ceremony at bankmecu in Civic:
(l. to r.) Kathy Eyles, Dan Leivesley, Lara Hedley, Jo O'Sullivan (bankmecu).**

ARTICLES ON COG's HISTORY

THE FORMATION AND OPERATIONS OF THE ACT BRANCH OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION (1964 TO 1970)

DAVID PURCHASE

5 Orchard Place, Melba ACT 2615

Many members of the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) are unfamiliar with the Group's history, particularly the period when it was the ACT Branch of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (now Birdlife Australia). What follows has been gleaned mainly from records held by COG, plus my own records and recollections (although I was not in Australia for much of the period from December 1962 to April 1966). These are supplemented from the records and recollections of the late John Calaby, the late Stephen Marchant, and the late Steve Wilson.

Preamble

Although Canberra was established in 1908 as the nation's capital, its development had been desultory up until 1957. By then it had a population of about 39,000 people and was a semi-rural town with a disorganised scattering of suburbs over what was largely grassland on the sides of the Molonglo River and its flood plain. Much of the grassland was still being used for grazing sheep and cattle. Its role as the nation's capital was considered to be an embarrassment by many people. In the period after World War II the city was championed by Prime Minister Robert Menzies and under his leadership the development of Canberra became rapid. In 1957, with passing by parliament of the bill creating the National Capital Development Commission, decisive steps were taken by the Australian government to plan, develop and construct Canberra as a modern city capable of accommodating the headquarters of all major Commonwealth departments and their staff which, up to then, were largely accommodated in Melbourne. The following years saw major changes in the landscape as the open spaces were replaced by the roads, buildings and suburbs of a developing city. Associated with this development was an increased planting of trees and other vegetation in parks and gardens. Plans were also underway for the creation of a lake which would occupy the flood plain of the Molonglo River. As the landscape changed so has the bird population which has changed mainly from birds inhabiting grassland and scattered trees, to birds of suburbia with its gardens, parks and lakes.

Prior to the late 1940s there were few resident bird watchers, and the little information that was published on the birds of the region was based on spasmodic observations. What is known about this period has been summarised by Hermes (1982a, 1982b, 1982c), Lepshi (1988, 1989), Veerman (1986) and White (1998).

The ACT Branch of the RAOU was born into this changing environment enabling it, and its successor the Canberra Ornithologists Group, to document the effect of these changes on the bird population.

Events leading up to the formation of the ACT Branch of the RAOU

The main part of this history begins on an evening in May 1964, when a meeting was held at 2 Scott Street, Narrabundah (the home of the late Steve and Nonie Wilson), to discuss the possibility of starting an ornithological group in Canberra.

In that year signs of the city as we know it today were appearing, the population had grown to 84,522, Lake Burley Griffin filled, Pied Currawongs were still largely winter visitors, and the first traffic lights were installed. The street lights were still being switched off at 10 pm except on Saturday when they were switched off at 11 pm! The development of the Woden Valley had begun the previous year, but the land now covered by the urban areas of Weston Creek, Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Gungahlin was still being used for grazing. The surrounding countryside in both the ACT and NSW was still mainly grassland with scattered trees and used for grazing. Since then this landscape has been dramatically changed by the development of numerous small rural sub-divisions. On a financial note, decimal currency had not yet been introduced and the basic wage was £15/15/- (\$31.50) a week, you could buy a 3-bedroom house in Chisholm Street, Ainslie, for £5,900 (\$11,800), a new Morris Mini 850 for £763 (\$1,526), and a year's subscription to the RAOU (including the *Emu*) for £2 (\$4).

A major catalyst for the formation of the ACT Branch of the RAOU was the establishment in Canberra in 1949 of the CSIRO Wildlife Survey Section with the brief to 'concentrate on rabbit control and then move onto other economic pests and general wildlife survey' (Schedvin 1987). The staff recruited by the CSIRO for the section included a number of zoologists with an interest in ornithology who soon began to take a leading role in bird studies in the ACT. This role was strengthened in 1953 when the Australian Bird-Banding Scheme was launched by the Wildlife Survey Section.

When discussing the events leading up to the formation of the ACT Branch of the RAOU the significant roles played by several people operating in a non-professional capacity in the 1940s and 1950s cannot be overlooked: John Calaby, who arrived in Canberra in 1945 and joined the staff of the CSIRO Division of Entomology (John transferred to the Wildlife Survey Section in 1949); Don Lamm, an American diplomat, who was stationed at the Embassy of the USA from 1948 to 1952, and again from 1960 to 1964; and David White a school student (son of the late Sir Harold White who was National Librarian); were busy making lists of the birds of the ACT (Lamm and Calaby 1950, Lamm and White 1950). In 1959 they were joined by Steve Wilson and his sons who arrived from Melbourne (with the transfer of the Department of the Navy), and in 1960 by Bill Belton, another American diplomat, who was stationed in Canberra until 1963 (Lamm and Wilson 1966, Lamm, Wilson and Belton 1963).

Mention also needs to be made of Betty Temple Watts, who in 1958, while she was still living in Melbourne, was persuaded by Robert Carrick of the CSIRO Wildlife Survey Section to do the illustrations for a book on the birds of the ACT (Temple Watts 1979). This book was eventually published in 1969 as *'Birds in the Australian High Country'* (Frith 1969) and gave a major boost to bird-watching in the ACT.

Stephen Marchant, who was to play a leading role in the affairs of the ACT Branch, arrived in Canberra in 1963 and joined the staff of what was then the Bureau of Mineral Resources. Stephen brought with him a wealth of experience as an amateur ornithologist which he first gained as a student in England and then put to practice in various exotic locations including Ecuador, Egypt, Nigeria, and Iraq, while pursuing his profession as a geologist. One of

Stephen's main interests was nest recording and in 1964, with the support of the RAOU Council, he established the RAOU Nest Record Scheme which during its early years he operated from his home in Canberra (Anon 1964).

There appears to be no written record of the meeting held at the home of Steve and Nonie Wilson, but those known to be present were Graeme Chapman, Warren Hitchcock, Don Lamm, Stephen Marchant, John McKean, and Steve Wilson. There were possibly about another three people present (S. Marchant and S.J. Wilson pers. comm.).

The inaugural meeting

As a result of the meeting at the Wilson home a formal meeting was held on 3 June 1964 in the CSIRO conference room at Black Mountain. At this meeting, which was attended by 27 RAOU members and visitors, it was agreed unanimously that a letter should be forwarded to the Council of the RAOU recommending the formation of an official branch in the ACT. A copy of the minutes of this meeting is in Appendix 1 and a list of the people attending the meeting is in Appendix 2.

The formation of the ACT Branch was formally announced in the Report of the Hon. General Secretary of the RAOU (Gellibrand 1965):

'Undoubtedly the most important event of the year (9 October 1963 to 30 October 1964) was the creation of a new Branch of the Union. In July (sic.) a general meeting of Canberra members resolved unanimously to seek the formation of a Branch in the Australian Capital Territory. Council endorsed the request and thus the A.C.T. Branch came into being. Messrs. Graeme Chapman and Ian Grant were appointed Hon. Branch Secretary and State Member respectively until the election of officers by this Congress. We offer our congratulations and best wishes to the foundation members of this new Branch.'

There is some confusion as to who were the State Representatives for the ACT. The list of RAOU office bearers published on the inside of the front covers of *Emu* from volume 64(2) (March 1965) through to volume 66(2) (October 1966) show Ian Grant and Stephen Marchant as State Representatives for the ACT. This agrees with the handwritten amendment to the minutes of the inaugural meeting (see Appendix 1) but not the statement by Gellibrand which lists only Ian Grant as State Member (I have assumed that State Member and State Representative are synonymous).

The first Branch Report for the ACT was published in 1967 (Chapman 1967):

'Following an inaugural meeting held on June 3, 1964, when 27 members and others interested decided that regular monthly meetings should be conducted, a request was forwarded to Council that a branch of the R.A.O.U. be formed in the A.C.T. Our request was granted and the year which followed has been an active and successful one.'

Regular monthly meetings have been held in the C.S.I.R.O. Lecture Theatre with an average attendance of 35. Members have been asked to record their observations in a book provided at meetings with the ultimate aim of using the information in a projected Handlist to the Birds of the A.C.T. Five new records for the A.C.T. were made during the year and already the draft for the list has been prepared.'

The only current field project at present in operation is a survey of the wintering Pied Currawongs around Canberra.

Since April 1965, a Monthly Newsletter has been circulated amongst members and local T.V., radio and newspapers, resulting in some publicity for the branch and several new members have joined the R.A.O.U. during the year.

A list of R.A.O.U. members in the A.C.T. and surrounding districts has been published and circulated amongst members, the total now standing at 53.

A committee has been elected to conduct the affairs of the branch and this now meets regularly each month. Plans are in hand to widen the scope of activities other than regular monthly meetings and we are looking forward to another progressive year.

*G. CHAPMAN,
Branch Secretary*

Officers of the Local Branch

At the inaugural meeting it was agreed that a committee consisting of a Branch Chairman, Branch Secretary, and four other members should be elected to manage the affairs of the ACT Branch (see Appendix 1).

Warren Hitchcock was elected as Branch Chairman, Graeme Chapman as Branch Secretary (he had been Branch Secretary for NSW before coming to Canberra), and Ian Grant, Stephen Marchant, Richard Schodde, and Steve Wilson filled the other four positions. The role of treasurer was undertaken by the Branch Secretary.

Unfortunately, because of the demands of his work, Warren Hitchcock was frequently absent from Canberra and during these periods Stephen Marchant became Acting Chairman. At the Annual General Meeting in June 1965, Warren resigned as Chairman and Stephen formally took over the position. Stephen remained Chairman until his departure from Canberra in May 1969. Jerry van Tets was elected to replace Stephen as Chairman at the Annual General Meeting of the local branch on 11 June 1969 (Anon. 1969a). He remained in that position until the formation of the Canberra Ornithologists Group on 15 April 1970.

Graeme Chapman remained as Branch Secretary until 1969 when he stepped down. Grahame Clark was elected to replace him as Branch Secretary at the Annual General Meeting on 11 June 1969 (Anon. 1969a) and remained in that position until the formation of the Canberra Ornithologists Group.

Originally the committee consisted of six members, but at the committee meeting held on 20 October 1965 it was decided there was a need to elect another two or three.

At the committee meeting held on 16 February 1966, it was agreed that an Assistant Secretary should be elected to function during the absence of the Branch Secretary and Hugh Oldham was immediately co-opted to that position. He remained as Assistant Secretary for at least 12 months.

Members who served on the committee and the years during which they served (as indicated by the incomplete set of minutes held in the COG records) were: Bob Ashman (1965-67), Ian Betts (1968-69), Ken Campbell (1965-67), Graeme Chapman (1964-69), Grahame Clark (1969-70), Tony d'Andria (1969-70), Joe Forshaw (1967-70), Peter Fullagar (1966-70), Ian Grant (1964-67), Warren Hitchcock (1964-65), Gerald Horey (1969-70), Stephen Marchant (1964-69), John McKean (1965-67), Hugh Oldham (1965-67), David Peters (1969-70), David Purchase (1967-70), Richard Schodde (1964-66), Ederic Slater (1967-70), Bruce Stinear (1965-66), Jerry van Tets (1966-70), and Steve Wilson (1964-70). The total number of people on the committee appears to have varied between six and ten. However, some of the variation reflects the fact that people were at times brought onto the committee in between Annual General Meetings. The only person to serve on the committee for the life of the ACT Branch of the RAOU was Steve Wilson.

Committee meetings were at first held at irregular periods in members' homes, but from 16 June 1965 they were held in the CSIRO Conference Room at Black Mountain on the third Wednesday of each month. At some stage this practice was discontinued and meetings once again reverted to member's homes.

Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings of the ACT Branch were normally held on the second Wednesday of each month, except for January and, in 1967, 1968, and 1969, December, when no meetings were held. The meetings were held in the lecture theatre of the CSIRO Division of Entomology at Black Mountain, starting at 8 p.m. However, on two occasions, because of building alterations (March and April 1967), the venue was changed to the lecture theatre of the CSIRO Division of Land Research at Black Mountain (A.C.T. monthly newsletters for February and March 1967). Refreshments were served after the meetings. The Annual General Meeting was held each June.

At each meeting, those present were asked to sign an attendance book. An examination of this book shows that the number of people attending meetings varied from 16 to 54. The average attendance was 35 in 1964 (25-54), 33 in 1965 (25-42), 28 in 1966 (16-48), 21 in 1967 (17-28), 23 in 1968 (17-29), 23 in 1969 (16-29), and 22 at the two meetings held in 1970 (21-22).

Most meetings had a guest speaker, although as can be seen from the following exact from the monthly newsletter for May 1987, it often proved difficult to arrange speakers:

'In past years we have drawn very heavily on C.S.I.R.O. members for our lecturers, but this situation will become gradually more difficult as research is usually a slow process. Firstly, any member who feels that he would like to lecture on any subject connected with ornithology, please contact the Secretary. We make this invitation every year but rarely have any takers. Consequently, the committee has discussed the possible necessity for less frequent meetings or perhaps gatherings of a different sort. Anyone with ideas on this subject should pass them on to a committee member so that they can be considered. A final decision will not have to be made by the committee until sometime in June.'

The results of this request appear not to have been made public. However, meetings continued to be held.

The meeting which attracted the largest number of people was held on 8 July 1964. This was the first meeting after the inaugural meeting and the attendance book shows that 24 RAOU members and 30 visitors were present to hear Steve Wilson present a 'Bird of the Month' on the Eastern Spinebill, and Starker Leopold to give a talk titled 'How weather controls the breeding of birds in arid America'. Starker Leopold was Professor of Zoology, University of California, Berkely, USA, and was spending five months at the Division of Wildlife Research (formerly the Wildlife Survey Section) to undertake a study of the food of Wedge-tailed Eagles. Of the 54 attending, 21 were from the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research.

At least once a year films were shown instead of having a guest speaker. On one other occasion, following the Annual General Meeting on 12 June 1968, a 'brains trust' was organised in which a panel consisting of Graeme Chapman, Peter Fullagar, Jerry van Tets, and Steve Wilson, answered, or attempted to answer, questions asked by the audience. This proved a popular sport in which the spectators could participate and was repeated at the next Annual General Meeting on 11 June 1969 (which was the last as the ACT Branch of the RAOU), but the members of the panel do not appear to have been recorded.

Finances

Finances of the ACT Branch of the RAOU were always in a parlous state. Subscriptions from members were sent to the RAOU in Melbourne. No portion of these subscriptions was returned to the local branch. This meant its only source of income were profits from the charge made at meetings for the provision of refreshments (tea, coffee and biscuits), a small charge made to non-RAOU members for the newsletter, and donations.

The Treasurer's Report tabled at the committee meeting held on 17 November 1965 showed that a small profit of £7.17.3 was made for the year 1964/65.

This lack of finance greatly hampered the activities of the branch. Many of the typing and printing tasks which are necessary to the running of any organisation were done by members, or as 'foreign orders' (i.e. they were done unofficially) in various government departments in which members worked.

Projects

From its beginning members of the Canberra branch were involved in a number of cooperative projects. These included an enquiry into the status and habits of the Pied Currawong in the Canberra city area (Marchant 1965), and a survey of the birds of the Gudgenby - Naas valleys (Marchant 1968). There were also a number of projects by individuals including a survey of the birds of the Molonglo River flats at the east end of Lake Burley Griffin (Brown and Gibson 1966), daily bird counts in a garden in Downer (Judge 1966), and a study of the birds in the Caswell Drive area from 1964 to 1968 (Marchant 1973).

There were also a number of long-term studies involving bird-banding being undertaken in the Brindabella Range and the Canberra Botanic Gardens. All had started before the ACT Branch of the RAOU came into existence and were being undertaken largely under the aegis of Steve Wilson. These studies were often a recruiting ground for new members of the local branch.

Perhaps the most important project was the compilation of the bird report. This is the foundation on which the COG Database, as we know it today, has been developed (Fennell

2014). This is a major source of data which can be used to document the changes which are occurring in the bird population of the ACT and surrounding area. It is also an important source of data for many other studies.

Publications

Annual Reports

Three annual reports were produced as separate publications by the ACT Branch of the RAOU. These reports were typewritten and roneoed onto foolscap paper.

The first report covering the period 1 July 1964 to 30 June 1965 was produced on 3 December 1965. It contained three articles:

Introduction, by S. Marchant.
Systematic Notes, by S.J. Wilson.
Pied Currawong Enquiry, by S. Marchant

The second report covering the period 1 July 1965 to 30 June 1966 was produced on 5 October 1966. It contained six articles:

Introduction, by S. Marchant.
Systematic Notes, by S. J. Wilson.
Report on Bird Survey of the Molonglo River Flats (east end of Lake Burley Griffin),
by R. Brown and R. Gibson.
Daily Bird-Counts in Downer, by D. Judge.
Pheasants in the A.C.T., by S. Marchant.
A.C.T. Swallow Enquiry, by S. Marchant.

The third report covering the period 1 July 1966 to 30 June 1967 was produced on 31 January 1968. It contained five items:

Introduction, by S. Marchant.
Systematic Notes, by S. J. Wilson.
Survey of Molonglo River Flats, by R. Gibson.
Birds of Mt. Pleasant, Canberra, by Ian Grant.
Gudgenby Survey - 1966/67, by S. Marchant.

After its introduction in 1968, annual reports were published in *Canberra Bird Notes* and ceased to be produced as separate publications.

Monthly newsletters

A monthly newsletter (usually two roneoed foolscap pages) was produced from April 1965 through to June 1967. In the June 1967 newsletter it was announced that the newsletter would be discontinued:

'At the last committee meeting a general review of the activities of the A.C.T. Branch was made and it was decided that this will be the last issue of the Monthly Newsletter. It was decided instead to supply everyone with a small printed programme in card form for handy reference to the coming year's activities and our rather meagre finances

would then be directed towards making the Annual Bird Report a more worthwhile effort.

Previous subscribers to the Newsletter will be asked to continue their one dollar donation in return for which they will receive a yearly programme, the Annual Bird Report and still remain on our mailing list.'

The ACT Branch was being troubled by the need to conserve its funds, but at the same time it had to maintain contact with the local RAOU members and other interested persons. In April 1968 a newsletter was dispatched with the Annual Report for 1966-67. It contained the following statement:

'It is nearly a year now since the last issue of the Monthly Newsletter appeared and since then it has become increasingly apparent to the Committee that the regular issue of a news bulletin to keep members aware of current activities is an essential part of any successful organization. Consequently, from the beginning of the next year (July) a regular Newsletter will be circulated once again. The reason for the termination of the Monthly Newsletter last year was partly a financial one, whereby the Committee thought it preferable to have as much finance as possible, available for our publications fund. We were thus able during the year to produce 'A Pocket List of Australian Birds' which is mentioned in this Newsletter.

The frequency of the Newsletter in the coming year will depend largely on the financial support of local members. The majority of full R.A.O.U. members receive the Newsletter free (the Branch receives no part of the subscriptions sent to Melbourne) and we must rely on non-member subscribers to the Newsletter (who pay \$1 per year) and those who have been generous enough to donate, either at monthly meetings or otherwise, to produce the Newsletter.

We should like to emphasise that because of your generosity in the past, we have been able to establish a 'publications' fund which has now grown, through small profits made both on the Handlist of Birds of the A.C.T. and the Australian Pocket-List, to a size where we can consider publishing small lists such as the two just mentioned without having to use outside capital. It is not intended to draw on the publications fund to finance the general running of Branch affairs, but rather, to let it grow to a size which, we hope, will be sufficient to finance larger publications, especially those dealing with the local region.'

The reintroduction of a monthly newsletter was superseded by the production of *Canberra Bird Notes*.

Canberra Bird Notes

The decision to start production of *Canberra Bird Notes* was made at a committee meeting held on 16 July 1968:

'It was agreed to replace the Monthly Newsletter by a quarterly publication to be called Canberra Bird Notes. Subscriptions from all recipients (including R.A.O.U. members) to be \$1.00 per annum. S.M. (Stephen Marchant) suggested that the Annual Bird Report could be included in a future issue and that an announcement to that effect

should be put in the first issue. G.C. and D.P. (Graeme Chapman and David Purchase) agreed to act as joint editors, the first issue would appear towards the end of July.'

The development and progress of the Canberra Bird Notes is covered later in this issue (see Hermes et al. 2014, 71-74).

A Field-List of the Birds of Canberra and District

A pocket-sized book (c. 19 x10 cm) with a cover and 16 pages which listed, in tabular form, all bird species known to occur in the ACT as well as Lakes George and Bathurst. It provided information, on a weekly basis, as to when the species was known to be present. It also showed the localities and habitats in which they were likely to be seen. it was a useful book in view of the limited knowledge available at the time.

This was a major project and took 18 months to bring to fruition. The proposal to produce this list was discussed at the first committee meeting of the ACT Branch which was held on 17 July 1964:

'The proposed Working List of the Birds and District was submitted in sample form by the Secretary (Graeme Chapman) and it was agreed that an area map be added making seven pages in all, to be reproduced by the multilith process.'

I have been unable to locate copies of the minutes for the committee meetings held between 17 July 1964 and 15 March 1965. However, the minutes of the committee meeting held on 15 March 1965 show that by then, efforts were being made to find ways of financing the publication of the list:

'A.C.T. Bird List. SM (Stephen Marchant) had not yet received an answer from the Canberra Times as to whether they would sponsor publication of the list. He was about to approach Verity Hewitt and Cheshire's (Canberra bookshops) as they had sponsored similar publications.'

The above efforts proved fruitless and the minutes of committee meeting held on 27 April 1965 show that an effort was then made to get the government to publish the list:

'A.C.T. Bird List. SM is now in contact with a Mr. Black at Dept. of Interior and he will know within a few days whether they will publish it or not.'

This also proved fruitless as is shown by the minutes of the committee meeting held on 1 June 1965:

'A.C.T. Bird List. SM said the Dept. of Interior had finally decided that they required something of more popular appeal and could not print our list.'

However, the same minutes reveal other ways of getting the list published were being explored:

'SJW (Steve Wilson) said that Dr. Carrick (a Senior Principle Research Scientist with the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research) had recently indicated that funds may possibly be available from the Royal Society. SM has already a quote of £85 from Union Offset and would confer with Dr. Carrick on the correct approach to the Royal

Society. WBH (Warren Hitchcock) suggested that the list should be made attractive in appearance with perhaps a line drawing of a familiar bird on the front cover. RS (Richard Schodde) said that the CSIRO Div. of Land Research illustrator, Mr. Bill White, had offered his services free of charge for any art work required. CGS (Graeme Chapman) produced a typical bird list of U.S.A. origin and it was agreed that the format of the A.C.T. list should follow the same size.'

The minutes of the committee meeting held on 16 June 1965 suggest that some changes may have been made to the format of the list and another quote for its printing had been obtained:

'Bird List Mr. Marchant reported that a firm quote of not more than £65 plus tax had been received for printing 500 copies of the list in the form suggested by Don Lamm and including a line drawing on the front cover and possibly an A.C.T. map.'

The minutes of committee meeting held on 21 July 1965 show that by then the Royal Society of Canberra had been approached. They also provide an insight to the parlous state of the branch's funds:

'A.C.T. Bird List. Mr. Marchant said that Dr. Carrick had submitted a letter to the Royal Society on our behalf but they had deferred a decision until next month. They had queried our finances; however he thinks it is possible that we shall get 2/3 of our need.'

It was resolved to forward a letter via Dr. Carrick to the Royal Society making the following points:-

- 1. We have only £9 in kitty.*
- 2. We collect no local fees.*
- 3. Tea money our only means of finance.*
- 4. The R.A.O.U. allocates no central funds to branches.'*

The topic was not discussed in the minutes of the committee meetings held on 18 August and 15 September 1965, other than to note 'As the Committee of the Royal Society has not yet met, discussion on this matter was deferred.'

The minutes of the committee meeting held on 20 October 1965 show that efforts to obtain support for the publication of the Field List finally met with success:

'A.C.T. Bird Handlist. Mr. Marchant said that Dr. Carrick had advised him personally that the last committee meeting of the Royal Society had decided to donate half the cost of publication up to a sum of £35. No official letter has been received yet.'

'It was decided to announce in the next Newsletter that the donations received to date were insufficient and that another £35 is needed.'

'It was decided that the Handlist should sell for 3/- or 30c per copy assuming that the cost of printing remains at £70 for 500.'

By the next committee meeting, which was held on 17 November 1965, things had begun to move as can be seen from the following extracts from the minutes of that meeting:

'A.C.T. Bird Handlist. Mr. Marchant had the draft ready to go to the printer. He produced the original of the map which was to reproduced and after some discussion it was agreed that the heights of the more prominent features should be inserted.'

'SM said that the list would definitely be prepared over the Christmas period so it was agreed to launch the sale at the February meeting.'

The minutes of committee meeting held on 15 December 1965 show that the Field List had at last made it to the printers:

'A.C.T. Bird List. S. Marchant advised that the list was in the printer's hands and that they had promised to complete it before Xmas. He would pass on to the printer tomorrow the drawing of a Pied Currawong kindly done by Dr. van Tets.'

He also tabled a cheque for £35 received from the Secretary of the Royal Society.'

The minutes of the committee meetings do not disclose the source of the money that needed to be added to the £35 received from the Royal Society in order to pay the printer. However, the minutes of the committee meeting held on 16 February 1966 indicate that, even by then, the publication of the Field List had proved to be a profitable venture:

'PUBLICATIONS. H. Oldham gave details of the Field List, revealing a very satisfactory position to date. Although proceeds of sales have not been received from local booksellers, estimated receipts were given as \$71.13.'

Complimentary copies sent to RAOU and the Bird Bander. The printer has been paid in full for the Field List. S. Marchant proposed that a letter should be sent to the Royal Society accompanied by a refund \$5.31. This was agreed to by the meeting.'

The sales were so good that at the committee meeting held on 20 April 1966, two months after the Field List first went on sale, the suggestion was made that it should be reprinted:

'PUBLICATIONS. Mr. Oldham reported that no further had been heard from the B.O.C. regarding the sale of our 'Handlist'. He produced a copy of a balance sheet listing sales of our 'Handlist' and suggested that, as only approx. 100 copies were still available a reprinting may be necessary. It was decided that the recoverable copies should be collected from the Tourist Bureau and that a decision regarding reprinting be made at the May Committee Meeting.'

The following extract from the minutes of the committee meeting held on 18 May 1966 provide information on how successful was the venture into publishing made by the ACT Branch:

'PUBLICATIONS. Mr. Oldham produced a further progress report on the sale of the Field-List which disclosed sales valued at approx. \$67 with an additional \$37 owing, leaving just over 100 copies in stock.'

I have been unable to locate copies of the minutes of committee meetings held between 18 May and 21 September 1966, but at some stage a decision had been made to reprint the Field

List because the following statement appears in the minutes for the committee meeting held on 21 September 1966:

'PUBLICATIONS: The printer has taken much longer than he quoted for reprinting the Field-list, but it is now promised for 23rd September.'

The reprinted Field List became available in October. A third reprint was contemplated at the committee meeting held on 16 July 1968:

'Canberra Bird List The need to reprint was discussed. G.C. advised that no money would be available for at least twelve months for reprinting because of the more urgent need to print further copies of the Aust. Pocket List. It was agreed that there would be an increased sale during Congress and that sufficient copies are still available in local bookshops to cope with it.'

A third reprint of the Field List was never published. However, second and third editions were later published by the Canberra Ornithologists Group.

A Pocket List of Australian Birds

A pocket-sized book (c. 17.5 x 9.5 cm) with a cover and 20 pages. It was intended to simplify the recording of observations and listed all the bird species of continental Australia and offshore waters. There were five columns alongside the list of species which could be used to tally the species seen in particular localities, or on particular days.

The cover of first edition tells us it was prepared by Peter Fullagar, and was printed by Queanbeyan Age Print. It does not have a publication date or a publisher's imprint. However, on the explanatory notes on the back cover it suggests that completed lists could be returned to the Secretary of the ACT Branch. Later editions have the COG imprint.

Little information about the publication of this list is contained in the records held by COG. The probable reason is that many records for the period have not been retained.

Another reason is that Peter Fullagar prepared the list independently of the ACT Branch. When it was finished he arranged for it to be printed and the ACT Branch of the RAOU paid the costs (Fullagar pers. comm.). Peter brought the idea with him from England where similar lists had been in use for a number of years.

The only reference to a publication date is contained on the imprint page of the third edition of the Pocket List which says it was first published in 1966. This, however, appears to be an error as in the Newsletter of the ACT Branch of the RAOU dated April 1968 it says:

'Now available! A POCKET LIST OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS. Recently published by the A.C.T. Branch'

This suggests it was published in 1968, not 1966. This is supported by the fact that it was reviewed in the March 1968 issue of the *Australian Bird Bander* (Lane 1968), and the May 1968 issue of the *Emu* (Hyett 1968). Neither review provides a publication date, but the one by Hyett says 'recently published'.

The only mention of the Pocket List in the minutes of committee meetings which are in the COG records are for the meetings held on 26 February 1968 and 16 July 1968:

'A Pocket List of Australian Birds. GSC (Graeme Chapman) agreed to advertise this in the coming newsletter. J. Calaby to be approached to review it in the Canberra Times. SM (Stephen Marchant) said he had circulated the local bookshops and sold quite a few and has written to the major ornithological societies.'

'Canberra Bird List The need to re-print was discussed. G.C. (Graeme Chapman) advised that no money would be available for at least twelve months for reprinting because of the more urgent need to print further copies of the Aust. Pocket List.'

'Pocket List of Aust. Birds Only about 200 copies remain unsold of the first printing ...'

These also suggest that it was published in early 1968 or late 1967. There are no records to indicate that it was reprinted although a second edition was published in June 1974.

RAOU 67th Annual Congress

When the ACT Branch accepted the offer to host the 1968 annual congress of the RAOU an effort was made by the branch to create a more 'scientific' event than had been the practice in recent years. The Annual General Meeting was held in the main auditorium of the Academy of Sciences (the Shine Dome) on 12 October 1968 and officially opened by Her Excellency, Lady Casey, wife of the then Governor-General. Associated with the meeting was an exhibition, also held in the Academy of Sciences, of Australian bird art comprising the work of 19 contemporary and early artists and photographers. That evening a barbecue was held at 'Gungahlin' the headquarters of the then CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research followed by a film 'The Coolart Story' by W.A. Davis (Coolart is an historic mansion on the Mornington Peninsula, south-east of Melbourne, with extensive wetlands which have been developed as a reserve for waterbirds). The following three days were devoted to seminars in the mornings and the presentation of scientific papers in the afternoons. These covered a variety of subjects and were held in the lecture theatres of the Institute of Anatomy (now the National Sound and Film Archive) and the then CSIRO Division of Land Research at Black Mountain. For those who did not wish to attend the afternoon sessions inspections were arranged of the Canberra Botanic Gardens and the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research. The high daily attendances at the afternoon lectures rather than the outings attested to the popularity of a more 'scientific' approach to the congress.

The 'camp-out' which followed the Annual General Meeting and the three days of seminars and lectures, was held at the Round Hill Fauna Reserve. It lasted for ten days from 16 October to 27 October 1968 and was attended by 35 people. Rather than being simply an opportunity for participants to list and watch birds, it was planned to undertake a 'systematic' survey of the reserve (Anon. 1968a). A detailed report of the 'camp-out' was intended to be printed (Anon. 1968b), but I have been unable to locate a copy.

A report on the congress, but not the 'camp-out', was published in *Emu* (Anon. 1969b). As an aid to those attending, two quarto-size roneoed books, each with grey light-weight cardboard covers labelled 'RAOU 67th Annual Congress Canberra' were distributed: one book of 22 pages, contained the various annual reports of the RAOU for 1967-68, a list of the 75 members registered to attend, and details of each of the 52 works of art displayed at the associated exhibition; and a second book of 33 pages contained a full list of the seminars and

papers, together with summaries, which were presented during the three days following the Annual General Meeting. It was probably the first time that such publications had been prepared for an Annual Congress of the RAOU.

This congress and associated 'camp-out' proved to be highly successful and set the pattern followed by the RAOU for future annual congresses.

Relationship with the RAOU

In the 1960s the affairs of the RAOU were causing a great deal of dissatisfaction - among other things the financial reporting was in a mess, membership lists were woefully inaccurate, and production and distribution of the *Emu* was falling behind. It was also failing to provide a leadership role in Australian ornithology. It is beyond the scope of this paper, or indeed the capabilities of its author, to go into the details of the many things which were wrong with the RAOU and the way in which they were eventually resolved. These are well documented by Libby Robin in chapter 8 of her book *The Flight of the Emu: A Hundred Years of Australian Ornithology 1901-2001* (Robin 2001). This chapter is titled 'The 1968 Revolution: Confrontation and Change at the RAOU' and gives a good account of the problems and eventual reorganisation of the Union. Anyone wishing to gain an insight into what had become the decline and subsequent renewal of the RAOU should read this chapter.

Under the leadership of Stephen Marchant, the ACT branch played a leading role in calls for change. On 25 June 1966 it sent a letter to the council of the RAOU criticising the management of the organisation and suggesting ways in which it could be reformed. This letter, plus support from other quarters, eventually led to the appointment of a reform committee. The reforms recommended by this committee were approved in 1969 and set the RAOU off on a new course.

The end of the ACT Branch of the RAOU and the beginning of the Canberra Ornithologists Group

Under the revised Articles of Association which came with the reorganisation of the RAOU, branches were abolished. The Canberra Ornithologists Group then applied for affiliation which was allowed under the new articles. This was granted and Canberra Ornithologists Group became the first group to become affiliated with the newly reformed RAOU (Anon. 1970). This independence proved to be of great financial advantage to the group as it could raise funds for its own use. It also enabled the development of policies which best suited the operations of a local group.

Finally, I would like to quote, in full, the editorial of the April 1970 issue of *Canberra Bird Notes* (volume 1, number 7) written by its editor Tony d'Andria:

"'The old order changeth' Thus spoke the legendary King Arthur before his death" But what has this to do with us? This month I am handing over to Dr. G.F. van Tets, A.C.T. Branch Chairman, to explain changes in the Branch's status and name. Dr. van Tets writes:'

"In the new RAOU Articles of Association State and Territory branches are to be abolished. There is a provision for the formation of local RAOU groups, but under rules which do not meet our local conditions and procedures. While fully supporting the adoption of the new articles as part of the reform of the Union, and in anticipation of these articles it is proposed that:-

'At its meeting of April 15, 1970, the A.C.T. Branch of the RAOU changes its status and name, with no change in aims, activities or administration, to the Canberra Ornithologists Group, which will then apply to the RAOU for affiliation.'

After all that, there is nothing I can add except the firm assurance that our journal's colour-change was purely coincidental.'

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Accepted 29 October 2014

Appendix 1

ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION A.C.T. BRANCH

Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting held on 3rd June, 1964

Acting Chairman: Mr. W.B. Hitchcock.

Acting Secretary: Mr. G.S. Chapman.

Attendance: 17 members and 7 visitors.

The Chairman addressed the meeting pointing out the increasing membership in the A.C.T. and the need to form an active branch was evident. The meeting had been called to see if this could be done.

Mr. S.J. Wilson moved, seconded by Mr. G.S. Chapman, that a letter should be forwarded to Council in Melbourne recommending the formation of an official branch in the A.C.T.

Mr. Hitchcock, as a member of the Council, said he would move a motion adopting the proposal and felt sure it would be carried.

It was agreed that a committee of 6 should be elected to manage the affairs of the A.C.T. Branch. The following members were elected:

	<u>Nominated</u>	<u>Seconded</u>
Mr. G.S. Chapman (Secretary)	S.J. Wilson	I. Rowley
Mr. Ian Grant	S.J. Wilson	I. Smith
Mr. S. Marchant	S.J. Wilson	I. Grant
Mr. W.B. Hitchcock (<i>Chairman</i>)*	S.J. Wilson	S. Marchant
Mr. R. Schodde	G.S. Chapman	W.B. Hitchcock
Mr. S.J. Wilson	W.B. Hitchcock	D. Lamm

Messrs. *Marchant**, Chapman and Grant were delegated as representatives on Council. Mr. Marchant spoke on the nest record scheme being instituted by the R.A.O.U.

Mr. Ratcliffe suggested that the committee should investigate the formation of a photographic collection.

Mr. Slater and Mr. Chapman showed some colour slides and supper was served at 10.20 p.m.

* The minutes were typewritten except for the words shown in italics which had been added in handwriting.

Appendix 2

PERSONS PRESENT AT INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE ACT BRANCH OF THE RAOU HELD ON 3 JUNE 1964*

The names were obtained from the attendance book which was kept for all meetings up until 4 October 1972. The occupations relate to the time of the meeting.

W.B. Hitchcock	[<i>Secretary, Australian Bird-Banding Scheme, CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research</i>]
Betty Temple-Watts	[<i>Illustrator "Birds in the Australian High Country"</i>]
Hal Temple-Watts	[<i>Chief Petroleum Technologist, Bureau of Mineral Resources</i>]
Ian Rowley	[<i>Senior Research Scientist, CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research</i>]
Ian Grant	[<i>Squadron Leader, RAAF</i>]
Steve Wilson	[<i>Executive Officer, Department of Navy</i>]
Denis Wilson	[<i>High School Student</i>]
Stephen Marchant	[<i>Geologist, Bureau of Mineral Resources</i>]
J.H. Calaby	[<i>Senior Research Scientist, CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research</i>]
Max Murn	[<i>Public Servant, Department of Navy</i>]
F.N. Ratcliffe	[<i>Assistant Chief, CSIRO Division of Entomology</i>]
Ian Smith	
Meredith Clarke	[<i>Experimental Officer, CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research</i>]
Tony Wolfe	[<i>Technical Officer, CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research</i>]
Graeme Chapman	[<i>Technical Assistant, CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research</i>]
G.N. Meyer	[<i>Psychologist, Department of Navy</i>]
Bob Evans	[<i>Psychologist, Department of Navy</i>]
Graeme Smith	[<i>Student, Australian National University</i>]
K.G. Simpson	[<i>Technical Assistant, CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research</i>]
Edric Slater	[<i>Photographer, CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research</i>]
Don Lamm	[<i>First Secretary, USA Embassy</i>]
Harold Bults	[<i>Technical Assistant, CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research</i>]
Peter Davidson	[<i>High School Student</i>]
W. Martin	[<i>Public Servant</i>]
D. Havenstein	[<i>Technical Officer, CSIRO Division of Entomology</i>]
D. Coulson	(22.7.93. G. Chapman thinks he may have been a forester).
J. Feeham	[<i>Technical Assistant, CSIRO Division of Entomology</i>]

* Note that the minutes say a total of 24 persons attended whereas the above list contains 27 names.

WHY I WASN'T AT COG'S FIRST MEETING IN JUNE 1964 – RECOLLECTIONS OF A WOULD-BE ORNITHOLOGIST IN EARLY CANBERRA

RICHARD SCHODDE

6/14 Hartigan Street, Garran, ACT 2605.

I came to Canberra in April 1960, as a raw honours graduate in systematic botany from the University of Adelaide, to join the New Guinea survey unit of CSIRO's Division of Land Research. But I was even then as much a tuned-in ornithologist as a botanist, and had been the secretary of the South Australian Ornithological Association in Adelaide for several years in the late 1950s.

What was Canberra like then for birds? More to point, what was Canberra like at all? There was no lake and no Woden, let alone Tuggeranong, Belconnen or Gungahlin. Commonwealth Avenue was a narrow two-way road that crossed the Molonglo on a narrow bridge that caused huge traffic jams for ten minutes around half past eight in the morning and five o'clock late afternoon. The countryside began at the edge of Deakin and Narrabundah in the west and south, and Ainslie and Lynham in the east and north. In Civic, the cloisters of East and West Row were there, and the shops along the west side of Bunda Street; but malls were a mirage of the future. The block where David Jones now is was vacant land, and in the silver wattles there you could always find Yellow Thornbills. Today they have gone from inner Canberra except a street in Yarralumla with has their other favoured habitat – casuarinas – as a street tree.

I was billeted at the then Hotel Acton in Acton. At night you could hear the melancholy cadences of calling Banded Lapwings out on the Molonglo flood plain, which is all lake today. On my first Saturday in Canberra in April 1960, I walked around the Turner Oval – now the north side of the ANU – twitching. I listed 43 species, including Double-barred Finches and both species of currawong. At that time Pieds were post-breeding visitors to Canberra. For me, both the Grey Currawong and Double-barred Finches were new species. As a botanist at the time, I was a novice in avian taxonomy and followed the 1926 RAOU checklist with its three species of magpies and four of Grey Currawongs. As a bird bander then, I had connections with Warren Hitchcock, secretary of the Australian Bird Banding Scheme at CSIRO's Wildlife Survey Section at Gungahlin. Few if any of you will have known him. He worked as secretary of the scheme and looked after the early bird collections until 1969, when he retired due to ill health. He had been badly burned in a car accident in the Northern Territory in the late 1950s and never really recovered – each year he would have to go to hospital for skin grafts on his legs.

It was through Warren that I got to know Steve Wilson within a year of my arrival. Steve had three banding projects going, one at Lake George focused on silvereyes, another on anything that moved at New Chum's road in the Brindabellas, and a third more desultory in eucalypt woodland on Mt Pleasant at the back of Campbell. The last was my introduction to banding with him, his sons and his irrepressible dog Snowball. One warm sunny Saturday afternoon, when nothing should have been moving, I can remember a whole group of Brown Treecreepers and several Diamond Firetails going into the nets. Banding with Steve was exhilarating but non-stop, setting not just a net or two but over a dozen at times. He and his understanding wife Noni provided a focus for birders in those early days.

So did the expanding wildlife work at CSIRO. In 1962, Harry Frith became head of the Wildlife Survey Section, and within months had raised it to a CSIRO Division known as CSIRO Wildlife Research. Say what you will about Harry, but he was a good organiser and had drive. With support from the incumbent Chief Executive Fred White, Frith turned his Division into Australia's hub of ecological research into Australia's higher vertebrate fauna. Birds figured strongly, and Harry brought in a raft of new staff: Wayne Braithwaite, Gerry van Tets, Peter Fullagar, and a bevy of young turks: John McKean, Ken Simpson and Graeme Chapman among others. We all got together in one way or another. Going on weekend bird camps out to the Riverina mallee was one of them. Another was at regular meetings of our research institute, the Institute for Alcoholic Research. This was serious business. The venue was John McKean's room at Gorman House, which always seemed to be hung with dozens of pairs of socks from weeks of washing. There we consumed considerable quantities of amber fluid of diverse brands, expounding profoundly on the faults and virtues of each amid boasting about how many birds we had seen lately. McKean was the leader of the twitching push. My own "ticks" from work in New Guinea were not allowed; the competition was restricted to Australian species alone, the forerunner of McKean's 600 club and his house journal, *Cosmic Flashes*. Neil Hermes later produced a classic send-up of that series.

The young turks stayed on through the 1960s but then dispersed through the 70 and 80s. Simpson went back to the education system in Victoria and began to write field guides. Chapman became the CSIRO Wildlife Research photographer until the end of the 1980s when he went freelance. McKean's more turbulent career took him to Darwin with CSIRO, then to the Northern Territory wildlife service and finally retirement in north Queensland and then the USA where he died in the early 90s from a cerebral haemorrhage.

Yet another stalwart who joined Canberra's ornithological ranks in the early 1960s was Stephen Marchant, working at the then Bureau of Mineral Resources. Stephen linked in early with Steve Wilson and the two of them trapped, banded and even collected Little Grassbirds and reed warblers in the rushes that then edged the small bay between the Yacht Club and Hotel Canberra. Lake Burley Griffin was newly filled by the mid 1960s, and its edges were nowhere near as well manicured as they are today. Many of you may never have met him; he retired and moved to Moruya in the late 1970s. Marchant was a snowy-maned, pipe-smoking Englishman, with a cheerful, out-going manner. He took on editorship of the *Emu* at the beginning of the 1970s and played a pivotal, but often unsung role in professionalising the RAOU, setting up the *Handbook of Australian New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*, and involving it in supporting the 16th International Ornithological Congress in Canberra.

Such was the milieu that started COG in 1964. There were simply too many bird people around for it not to click; and that it took so long – about two years after the influx of the young turks – is surprising. Gerry van Tets and Peter Fullagar, an inseparable pair of gumboot ornithologists, were prominent in getting COG moving, as was a van Tets pelican on the early issues of *Canberra Bird Notes*. If you were ever having a conversation with others to which Gerry was party – whether about music, politics, sport, holidays, work – yes – and even birds – Gerry would find a way of turning the topic to pelicans and cormorants. For him those birds were the benchmark for judging every past and present happening on earth. At this time I was pretty much on the fringe of COG, outside of CSIRO Wildlife Research in another Division and still a botanist and away each year on 3-4 month field surveys in different parts of Papua New Guinea. I gave an occasional talk on New Guinean birds at meetings, but that was about all.

New Guinea was why I missed the first and several other early COG meetings in 1964 - I was packing for work on Bougainville in the Solomons. So I want to vary this talk with some reminiscences about the work that kept me away then. Bougainville is the largest island in the Solomons group, and at the northwest end of that chain of islands in the southwest Pacific, not very distant from New Britain and the southeast tail of New Guinea. It is tropical and covered in rainforest, except where the local people have cleared subsistence gardens and locally in the centre of the island where there is now a large copper mine. Bougainville is a large island, nearly 200 km long and about 50 km wide, and has a spine of active volcanoes rising to around 2500 m, higher than Mt. Kosziusko. While I was there, we had an average of two small eruptions a week, with accompanying earthquakes. Our camps were either under canvas or in village huts on stilts, in which all joints were bound with rattan, not nailed. There we slept on hammock-like sheets of canvas strung between poles – they are actually quite comfortable. If an earthquake hit in the night, it would simply shake the hut and bed gently from side-to-side and literally rock us to sleep. If it came by day, we would know in advance, because suddenly the sounds of birds singing would stop and the forest would grow deafeningly quiet. Then the ground, trees and their foliage would begin to shiver - as though a good wind was blowing when it was not. A most eerie feeling. Earthquakes lasted less than 5 minutes, and the explosion of an eruption could be heard occasionally in the background.

Life in Papua New Guinea was quiet and peaceful in those days, in the *taim bilong masta* under Australian administration. Mostly everything worked, if slowly. For our survey, my party held down camps in forest from sea-level to about 800 m altitude at the south end of the island, out of Buin. In the rainforests of New Guinea and the Solomons, climate is much the same year round at any one level. So the main environmental drivers of biodiversification are the differences between levels – altitude. Thus in New Guinea, the environment on the coast is of hot, humid jungle and at 3500 m altitude and above along the top of the central cordillera it is of bare, alpine grassland. It is too cold there to grow trees; and where the cordillera approaches 5000 m altitude in Indonesian West Papua, permanent snow and small glaciers take over.

So on Bougainville, we focused not on setting survey camps at different points around the coast, but at different altitudinal levels up a mountain side. From the coast up to around 700 metres on the foot-slopes of the volcanic spine, we could get fairly easy vehicular and carrier transport for our gear. But on the uninhabited, densely forested mountain sides above we were stymied. At the south end of Bougainville, the volcanic spine ends in a 2000 m high mountain, Mt Takuan, with a fringing crater lake, Lake Loloru, at some 1500 m. The rim of the crater had platforms of level ground on top and access to fresh water not far below – potential campsites except that they were covered in a dense low *Pandanus* forest of a then undescribed species with enormous fruits 60-70 cm in diameter.

The survey had a helicopter available for transport for limited periods, so a decision was made. From a camp we had already put in at 800 m at the foot of the crater-lake massif, we would climb to the rim of the crater lake, four hours stiff walk away, and hand-clear a helipad which would also serve as a camp-site. Then we could use the chopper to freight in our camp for a week, giving us the chance to obtain samples Bougainville's higher altitude biota. So on day 1 we set out at dawn, got to the crater rim just before mid-day, cleared the camp-site and returned to base camp, arriving exhausted just on dark. But the signs were ominous, leading me to prepare a back-up plan. We had picked what we thought would be a period of clear weather, because for most of the year Bougainville's volcanic spine is blanketed by cloud;

and our helicopter could not fly in cloud. Day 1 had been clear when we started, and was still clear when we reached the crater rim, but then almost immediately the cloud came down. And so it was next day when the helicopter came to move the camp. On a sunny morning, I went in with the first load of gear, which included our collecting equipment and mist nets. No sooner had we unloaded the equipment than the cloud began to close in; and the next load never made it. We heard the helicopter return and circle, but it could not find us in the mist and, we knew, that would abort its mission.

Plan B swung into action. The two of us who came up with the first load, myself and a native assistant, cut and strung furred net lines, then walked down the mountain back to base camp with any of the first-load equipment that we could carry. For the next four days we made forced treks to the crater rim, unfurled the nets and collected plants and birds through the middle hours, and then returned to base camp in the dark. It was tiring work but the results, though rather meagre because biodiversity drops off with altitude, were worth the effort. In birds, we collected an endemic subspecies of the Eurasian Little Grebe and the first record of the Rose-breasted Pygmy-Parrot for Bougainville. Pygmy parrots, endemic to New Guinea and the Melanesian archipelagos immediately to its east, are seriously tiny parrots, about the size of a Yellow-tailed Thornbill. The grebes were common on the lake and breeding, their clattering trills ringing across the waters. Another species in the shrubberies around the lake was the Island Thrush, a sister species of Eurasian Blackbird. It ranges from the Philippines and Greater Sundas to islands in the southwest Pacific, and was present on Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands until exterminated by rats. Why it never established itself in Australia is just one of those questions.

We recorded and collected *c.* 77% of the 95 or so species of birds known from Bougainville in our three months there in 1964. The bird fauna is not large, and is derived from New Guinea. Most of its species are New Guinean, and those that are not have New Guinean species as their closest relatives. Yet Bougainville is an island, and many of the species reaching it are represented by distinct subspecies that have diverged there in isolation, with the potential themselves to speciate fully in the future. Like the New Guinean, the bird fauna of Bougainville and the rest of the Solomons is Australasian in character. The main families present are parrots (and even one corella-like cockatoo), honeyeaters, pigeons, cuckoo-shrikes, whistlers, monarch flycatchers, kingfishers, frogmouths and megapodes (one species). Most of the raptors are goshawks related to the Australasian brown or grey goshawk groups. There are Eurasian species present – the Little Grebe, Wreathed Hornbill, Oriental Hobby, Common Kingfisher, mynahs and Island Thrush – but they are much the minority.

To conclude, I want to make two observations about how I see COG as having grown over my 50 years of association with it. First, it has retained the feeling of good will and harmony among its members that it had from the start. In any voluntary organisation, where diversity of opinion and approach is open to all, there are bound to be polarizing issues and power plays involving both for individuals and groups. Personal enmities and ambition held back linkages between and within the Bird Observers' Club and RAOU in Melbourne for years. That COG has so successfully avoided such disturbance is a tribute to the balance, forbearance, sociality and common sense of you, its members. Secondly, COG should take great pride in the manner in which it has come to represent the interests of our birds in Canberra, the ACT and the surrounding region. This manner is not the vociferous carping that comes from the anti-kangaroo cull lobby, something that makes any objective biologist cringe. On the contrary, it comes from respect for scientifically-gathered data put together in a logically-argued case or package of information, and presented firmly and politely to the

appropriate quarters of government and press where necessary. This approach, I believe, has evolved from the sympathetic association between professional biologist and amateur bird enthusiast, from COG's founding to this day. In Australia, it is an association that I sense is unique to Canberra, still helped by CSIRO and the presence of two universities in a small Australian city. It has already given us regional atlases, and urban and other surveys that are executed to a high professional standard by any benchmark. This association is precious, and if we can keep it, I foresee fruitful service from COG for the ACT's birds through the next 50 years.

Accepted 20 October 2014

BIRD BANDING IN THE ACT – THE EARLY YEARS AND MY INVOLVEMENT

MARK CLAYTON

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I need to provide a bit of background to set the scene for my involvement. In the early 1960's Canberra was, surprisingly, not all that big. Both my parents were artists, both commercial and as what people consider artists to be - painters. My parents had transferred here from Sydney for my father's job at the Federal Government's original AIS – the Australian Information Service - where his talents as an artist were in demand. Somewhere along the line someone asked him if he would teach Jo Calaby, wife of John Calaby from the CSIRO, to paint, to which, luckily for me, my father obviously, but probably reluctantly, agreed. While talking with Jo my father mentioned I was interested in birds and Jo suggested I go along to the then Canberra branch of the RAOU meetings held in the lecture theatre at CSIRO Entomology on Black Mountain. I was probably around 13 or 14 years old at the time.

I can't remember who took me to my first meeting, possibly my mother, but here I met a couple of other young, keen birders in Barry Baker, Robin Brown and Robert Gibson. I can't remember what that night's talk was about but I was totally overawed by those present. Famous names, to me at the time anyway, like John Calaby, Harry Frith, John McKean, Gerry van Tets, Tony D'Andria, Ian Rowley, Graeme Chapman and of course two very enthusiastic and experienced amateurs in Steve Wilson and Stephen Marchant, plus many others that I have obviously forgotten. Talking with Barry and the others someone mentioned that Steve was a bird bander and was always keen to have help along on the banding trips and would I be interested in joining. Silly question, a bit like asking if the Pope is a Catholic!

My first trip was to Lee's Creek Road in the Brindabella Ranges. One small problem had to be overcome – Steve would meet the young crew outside the Prime Minister's Lodge at 2 a.m. and everyone had to be dropped off to save Steve from driving all over Canberra picking people up. I would be interested to see what would happen if we tried this as a rendezvous point in this day and age. This meant that I had to get my father out of bed to drive me to meet the rest of the team. I am pretty sure I went to bed fully clothed and didn't sleep a wink that night due to the anticipation and excitement. Again I can't remember who was on that first trip but to me it was a revelation and a sensational day. I was never actually shown how to get a bird out of a mist net, obviously a very important part of mist netting. In those days the nets were made in the UK by a company called Gundry's and who, if I remember correctly, primarily made fishing nets with mist nets as a small side operation. The Gundry nets were much kinder on the birds so a bad tangle was quite rare; today we generally use nets made in Japan that can be quite coarse and often lead to difficult extractions. We had a bumper crop of birds and I went in head first. The first bird I ever took out of a mist net was a White-browed Scrubwren and I didn't have a clue what it was. Things in the hand can look so different to a bird in the wild – I knew scrubwrens from some of the thicker scrub on the O'Connor Ridge, just behind where I lived but in the hand, well !! From then on just about every Thursday night we would ring Steve, or his wife Nonie, to see if banding was on, where to and what time to meet.

Over the next year or so I met other young birders such as Peter Davidson, Neil Hermes, Ian Betts, Doug McKerrow and of course two of Steve's sons, Brendan and Denis Wilson (who incidentally were responsible for talking Steve into bringing mist nets into Australia), and banded at some, that to me were rather "exotic" locations. New Chum's Road, again in the Brindabella Ranges, the Australian National Botanic Gardens, which at that time were not open to the public, and in a far better condition than they are today, and at Lake George along Lake Road. The properties along the lake's edges were infested with Blackberry, a great place for many small birds, especially when in fruit. Later in my banding career when most of us had our driving licences we went to a lot of these places without Steve. I remember on one occasion banding at Lake George in the Blackberry fruiting season. I had a bright orange Valiant car at the time and the bonnet was used as the banding table. Silvereyes' purple coloured droppings and orange cars just don't go together!! There are two other sites that I have banded at but can't remember With Steve being present, we also went to Tianjara Falls, in Morton National Park, and Kianga Creek just beside the highway to the north of Narooma. Denis Wilson assures me that Steve and his family pioneered the use of the Tianjara site, along with another well-known birder at the time, Bill Belton, who was the Charge D'affaires at the American Embassy in Canberra. The site was set up to hopefully re-trap birds from Point Hut and another site on the Murrumbidgee River, Pine Island. They caught lots of honeyeaters but no re-traps. Denis has vivid memories of successfully predicting that they would see a Rock Warbler there amongst the sandstone outcrops, and then rejoicing, as only a teenager does, when he removed one from a net.

A highlight of each year was banding during the annual honeyeater migration through Point Hut Crossing. We would arrive just on dawn on a frosty morning and set 8 – 10 nets in the "tea tree" scrub on the eastern bank of the Murrumbidgee River. Each bander was issued with two strings of 100 bands, one for Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and the other for White-napes. Anything else and you had to go and get a band for that species. Sticks were gathered and a group of people stood on a small rocky outcrop above the nets where you could watch the birds gathering in the tops of some of the casuarinas downstream while the rest of us crouched by "our" net. Once there were sufficient birds in the trees they would head across the river to cries of "here they come" from those on the outcrop. Once above the net site sticks were thrown into the air – they probably resembled a bird of prey - and clapping made the birds rapidly drop into the tea tree. It is an amazing feeling to have hundreds of birds literally whizzing past your ears. Over the years we banded around 21,000 birds and managed to get 6 recoveries – not a very cost effective exercise!! Ultimately we stopped banding at Point Hut as we had so few returns. It is thought that the birds moved to the coast and then followed the flowering of *Banksia ericifolia* "north". When the banding scheme was transferred from CSIRO to the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, Kim Lowe, the then head of the banding scheme briefly tried to resurrect banding at Point Hut but with the same result. However we must have scared one bird as it turned up in Cooma a few days after banding, totally in the wrong direction!

A regular on all the visits to the Brindabella banding sites was Steve's beloved small black Heinz 57 dog, "Snowball". Snowball would sit on the back parcel shelf of Steve's Holden but suffered from one rather bad habit – he had very bad and very smelly flatulence – at least we always blamed him as none of the banding team ever owned up - not really a good thing if you were prone to car sickness as some of us were. He was as anxious as everyone else to get to the site and was generally the first out of the car. For the next few hours we could hear him barking at every wallaby or wombat he could find, often way down in the Bendora valley. He was always back in time for the trip home and slept quite happily all the way back. The

Wilson family were Roman Catholic and so was Snowball. He had been taught that he was not allowed to eat meat on Friday and we all took great delight in feeding him our bread crusts, only to stop him dead in his tracks by saying “it’s Friday Snowball”, waiting a few seconds then saying “it’s Saturday”. You didn’t want your fingers in the way when you said Saturday!

Talking food, one thing we all learnt very early on was what sandwiches to take on a trip. Barry’s father was the manager of the Canberra Rex Hotel and the kitchen there supplied Barry with “fairy bread” sandwiches that Barry would always try and swap. We discovered that he didn’t like baked beans so we all resorted to bringing baked bean sandwiches on our banding trips.

In all the years I have now been banding I have only twice ever intentionally let birds go without a band. The first of these was at New Chum’s Road. We regularly banded four of the red robin species at the site – Rose, Pink, Flame and Scarlet. On one round I took a bird from a net and declared to those present I think this is a female Red-capped Robin. This was met with laughter and derision by those present – I won’t mention any names but some initials that spring to mind among others were BB, NH and possibly TS. In those days we banded at the nets as we went so we didn’t put birds in bags like we now do to take back to a central processing point. I hung on to this bird for a few minutes protesting that I was positive of my identification but they finally convinced me I was wrong and let it go. What did we have in the very next net further down the track – a full plumaged adult male Red-capped Robin! Vindication!!! The second time was with a bander in Newcastle where we caught a juvenile Mangrove Gerygone. I knew what it was from my association at the time with the ANWC at CSIRO but as it was his site, he had the right to say he wasn’t sure so we let it go.

This young group created a few problems for the banding scheme and whichever Government department was responsible for issuing banding permits, probably the Department of the Interior, as at the time none of us, apart from Steve, officially had a banding licence. This resulted in David Purchase, the jovial Secretary of the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes while it was still at CSIRO, to bring in a new licence category – a B class to cover whatever mischief we were getting up to. Tony Stokes being a year or so older than me was issued with permit B (now A400), I had B (A404) Barry was B (A420) and Neil was B (A520). Tony was the first of us to get a driving licence and a car, an FC Holden. We were off and running!! I remember one trip coming back from one of the Brindabella sites when Tony drove through a rather deep puddle, whereupon his car promptly broke down. None of us had any mechanical knowledge so Tony walked from Wark’s Road all the way to Uriarra Homestead to get help while the rest of us guarded our precious mode of transport.

One thing that Steve was especially proud of amongst his young banding crew was that, from memory, at least eight of us ended up with jobs in the environment. Peter Davidson was the biologist for the then Department of Aviation, Tony Stokes worked for ANPWS and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Barry Baker and Simon Bennett worked with what is now the Federal Department of the Environment in all its different guises – Barry ultimately became head of the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes – and later worked at the Australian Antarctic Division, Neil worked with just about any Australian and state wildlife department you care to name. Mike Fleming is with NSWNPWS, Stephen Garnett was with the Queensland Department of Environment, is now at Darwin University and is better known for his three Action Plans for Australian Birds, and I ended up at CSIRO

Division of Wildlife Research. I think we all owe Steve an enormous debt of gratitude for his guidance over the years. I am sure that without him, many of us would not be where we are today. One honour that I am particularly proud of is the fact that I am now the Honorary Regional Organiser for the ACT, for the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes. I have taken on this role after it was previously held by Steve for many years.

There were several other amateur banders operating in the ACT at the time. Max Murn, and his son, Rod, operated a site at Blundell's Creek. They were also the first banders to band at the honeyeater migration sites along the Murrumbidgee River. Ian Grant banded at Bushranger's Creek which was taken over by John McKean when Grant stopped banding. These sites are all in the Brindabella Ranges and reasonably close together along with New Chums and Lee's Creek roads. I don't recall ever meeting any of these gentlemen but am sure I must have, except for McKean who became my supervisor, when I started at CSIRO in 1970. At about this time I was less involved with the local banding and became involved with banding for some of the CSIRO projects such as waterfowl and quail being undertaken by Harry Frith, Wayne Braithwaite and John McKean.

In the early 1970's New Chum's Road was taken over by Barry Baker and David Stewart along with Sonia Tidemann. In more recent times Alex Drew and Micah Davies from CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences have resurrected the site.

Many other names from the early years that people may recognise are, Graham Clark, Cedric Bear, Stuart Davey, Mike Chuk, Terry Gourley, and the late Gerald Horey – my apologies to anyone I have left out. Many are still COG members but I don't think any are still active in the banding world.

One other person must be mentioned in relation to the work done by Steve and that is Don Lamm, another staff member from the American Embassy. It was at Don's urging that Steve wrote up the results of his banding and other studies, something that kept Steve busy for many years after he stopped banding. It was also Don who introduced Steve to John Calaby and as they say, the rest was history. This led to Steve contributing substantially to *Birds in the Australian High Country*, edited by Harry Frith.

As I mentioned previously the other enthusiastic and extremely knowledgeable amateur in Canberra at the time was Stephan Marchant, probably best remembered as the Chief Editor of Volumes 1 and 2 of the *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*. Stephen was also a bander and when he retired he moved to a block of land near Moruya where he initiated a colour banding study of the breeding birds on his property. This concluded in 1984 and 22 years later years his daughter, Sarah, and her husband, Michael Guppy, together with Anthony Overs and Peter Fullagar, have replicated Steve's original study. COG members may remember the talk Michael gave at a meeting where he presented details of nest predation. I have enjoyed a small role in this study.

Stephen was also running the Nest Record Scheme at the time and several, especially Barry and I, from the banding team, if not out banding, would help Steve find and check the contents of nests. I didn't always have the not so glorious body I now possess, indeed I was the proverbial bean pole way back then and my specialty was climbing tall thin saplings checking species such as the Gerygones. Much of this work was done in the area now known as the Aranda Bushland. Unfortunately some of this site was lost to the Gungahlin Drive Extension.

To finish, one thing that I have found disappointing in recent times is the lack of interest shown by the young people of today. As can be seen from the list of people above, there were quite a few young people in their early teens interested in becoming banders. Not all the above did get a licence but they still came banding – even Denis Wilson sometimes drops in to The Charcoal Tank site at West Wyalong that we have been running for over 28 years! Earlier this year Tony Stokes put in a surprise, but most welcome, appearance at Charcoal Tank. Today most of the present banding crew started in their 30's or above. Only three young people have been involved at some stage in recent times. Tobias Hayashi started to come out but was interrupted by his time with family in Japan. Tobias as we all know has now moved on to other things, especially his photography for which he has become quite renowned, but he is still most welcome to join us. That only leaves Julian Teh who is now as regular as his school and other activities permit, and at the time of writing, I have been contacted by a young 15 year old girl, Jaslyn Allnut, who appears very keen to ultimately get her full banding licence. Of course there are Richard Allen's two sons, Mark and Brett, but that is keeping it in the family.

If people are seriously interested in getting a banding licence then I and the team I operate with, are only too happy to train you up. All we ask for is a serious commitment to the process.

I thank Barry Baker, Neil Hermes, Tony Stoke and Denis Wilson for providing some of the history of New Chums Road and other banding sites, and Sarah Guppy for providing information on the Moruya work of her father, Stephen Marchant. Obviously a huge thank you is also due to the late, great Steve and Nonie Wilson for their friendship and help over the years; without it I would not have been in a position to write this article.

Accepted 25 November 2014



New Chums Road, relaxing after the banding effort: (l. to r.) Barry Baker, Gerald Horey, Sandra Wilson, Nonie Wilson and Steve Wilson (*Photo courtesy of Denis Wilson*)

COMING THROUGH COG AND BIRD BANDING IN THE 1960s AND 1970s

TONY STOKES

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The Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) was born and grew to fledging through the tumultuous 1960s-1970s when organisations such as the Australian Bird Banding Association (now, Australian Bird Study Association) and the Australian Conservation Foundation were also established and the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (RAOU) was radically altered. Leading Canberra ornithologists such as ‘amateurs’, Steve Marchant and Steve Wilson, united with professionals at the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research under its Chief, Harry Frith, in a hive of ‘birdo’ activity resulting in COG’s 1964 birth.

I joined COG in 1967 aged 18 and was rapt in the ‘birdo’ and conservation happenings of the time. My involvement was initiated by weekday walks from my home in Campbell, through the Mount Pleasant bush to work at the Russell Offices, there then being no Northcott Drive. At the office my boss was Steve Wilson and, as they say, the rest is history. I expand below on those heady days in excerpts from my partially completed memoir, ‘*Whatever will be, I’ll see*’

“One day at work I overheard ... Steve Wilson, mention weekend plans involving a bird banding trip. Steve was a pleasant, gregarious 54 year old and a few days later I told him of my interest in birds and asked whether I could go with him some time. “Sure” he said, and left it at that. Weeks passed with me on tenterhooks wondering whether, when and if I would be invited. Eventually, frustrated shortly before Christmas 1966, I asked him again. This time Steve said “yes” and invited me on a trip in January. I was beside myself with expectation....On 27th January 1967 I finally went bird banding with the Steve Wilson family. Steve and Nonie took their two sons, Brendan and Denis, of a similar age to me and other teenagers, Barry Baker, Mark Clayton, Ian Betts and Doug McKerrow. Like me, they were attracted by Steve’s outgoing friendly and authoritative personality. He was an excellent mentor.

In addition, Steve took up H. Elliott McClure, an American ornithologist who founded and operated with USA military funding the Migratory Animal Pathological Survey (MAPS), a South-East Asian bird banding scheme analysing the movements of birds and their role as disease vectors. I was astonished by the finger grooves he had worn in his old World War 2 military binoculars. We met in the wee hours of the morning at Steve’s house, 2 Scott Street, Narrabundah, and by 2am were driving over dirt roads to the Brindabella Mountains past Coppin’s Crossing and Uriarra Forestry Settlement. Swerving past wandering kangaroos, wallabies and wombats we eventually arrived at about 4.30am at New Chums Road, a 6km sinewy logging track linking Lees Creek and Bendora Dam roads. Since logging ceased a decade before it was rarely used except by bander vehicles, and had become heavily overgrown with bushes¹.

¹ For description, see ‘*A banding project in the Brindabella Ranges*’, Australian Bird Bander, Vol. 9, No. 2, 27-33.

A fire was lit in the standard bush clearing and jobs assigned to teams with experienced leaders. Before dawn and by torchlight we erected 28 nets over an hour in designated sites along a 3 km length of the road. By 5.30 we were gathered back at the fire for breakfast as the pre-dawn light revealed our setting amongst beautiful tall ribbon gums in wet sclerophyll forest. The dawn chorus was commencing with the peep-peep-peep of Yellow Robins, or 'Yellow Bobs' as we called them, and followed by an amazing variety and richness of song. Those around the fire called out name after name of birds that I had read about but never seen. McClure was also ticking off 'lifers' as the morning progressed. Steve conducted the team like a finely-tuned orchestra with banter, beratings, teaching and laughter. It was exhilarating to be present. I tingled in excitement and expectation.

From dawn we walked at regular intervals along the track inspecting the nets. Extracting birds was a delicate process in which newcomers were carefully tutored. Though a newcomer usually only watched and listened on their first trip, I did get to hold a bird in a net for a brief minute. It was the start of my long career as a bander. A bird can be easily injured if mishandled and it did not help my confidence that a number of species, especially honeyeaters, shed many feathers into my hands when held. 'Shock-moult' is probably a defence against predators and whilst it can affect survival, a high proportion of the birds were later re-captured. On the day we caught twenty eight birds, a typical number. They were mainly small, lower canopy and understorey, species such as White-browed scrub-wrens, Brown Thornbills, and Yellow-faced honeyeaters. A larger, beautiful Eastern Whipbird created a minor fuss. Though commonly heard foraging in the mountain underbrush, it is rarely seen and not often captured. Larger species tend to bounce off nets or easily disentangle themselves. Each bird was carefully identified and weighed and its characteristics noted to determine sex and age and anything unusual. By 9am the numbers being caught had diminished significantly as the flush of early morning feeding activity declined, and the nets were dismantled at 11am. To complete the day's survey, before leaving we recorded species that were seen or heard but not caught. Driving home I knew that this was a passion I could follow. It responded to my curiosity and could provide a stimulating interest and friendships. It was a breath of fresh air outside my dreary, suburban office and life.



Banding a goshawk with Tony Stokes (right) recording, Doug McKerrow, looking on, Barry Baker taking photo and Mark Clayton holding the bird.

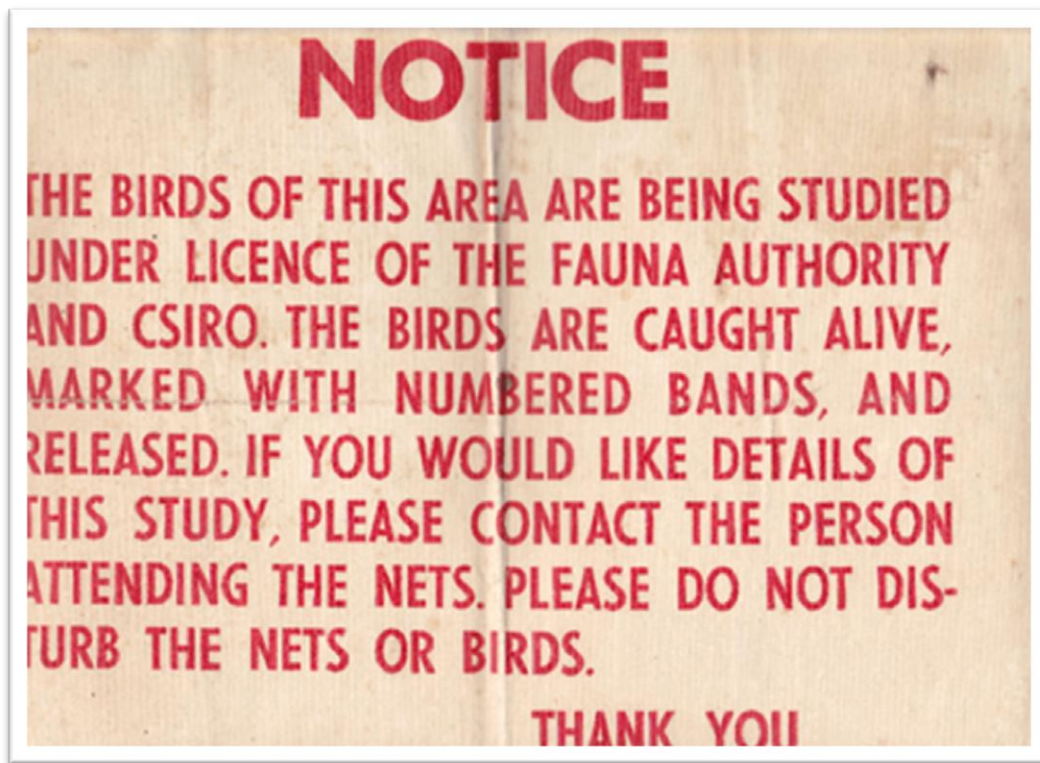
Sometime in 1967 Mum and Dad moved from leasing 74 Vasey Crescent, Campbell, to buying a small four bedroom Government house at 16 Badgery Street, Macquarie, in the satellite town of Belconnen, which was just being developed. My banding friend, Mark Clayton, aged about 17, and I had fun roaming through Black Mountain's forest and nearby farmland looking for rare birds and their nests. We were thoroughly excited to find our first Olive-backed Oriole nest, a rare species to us, and pulled the drooping branch down to check its contents. Once I illegally collected and attempted to blow two eggs to start a collection. However, I felt so guilty that I never did it again. But I did start a collection of bird nests, taken after the chicks had flown. They were stored in shirt boxes and displayed later at talks I gave. I also started buying bird books and magazines and eventually had a comprehensive library on Australian ornithology.

In August (1967) I turned 19 and ...after jackarooing ... went back to bird-banding, going bush with the Wilsons and their young team on as many weekends as possible, and paid four years membership with the Australian Bird Banders Association, as well as buying all back issues of their journal; another sign of commitment to a 'birdo' future. Steve operated a roster of visits to sites at Lake George, Lake Bathurst, Coppin's Crossing and in the Brindabella Ranges, New Chums Road and Lees Creek Road.

Every weekend was a new adventure and by the year's end I was well into a lifelong passion. By then I also often led the team because Steve's back was troubling him and I was the only one of his band of teenagers old enough to have a driver's licence. Importantly, I also had a car. So, in the early morning hours three or four kids and myself, amidst great discussion and frivolity, drove out 50 to 80 km into the bush on obscure mountain trails, occasionally bouncing wombats, rabbits or wallabies off the car or drifting too fast around corners. At times we'd break down on the bush road but always managed to walk or push ourselves out, or to catch a lift to the nearest house 30km away, Uriarra Homestead. There we'd ring Steve to come and tow us home. They were great times and I revelled in the responsibility, feeling that I was both learning something and contributing to the store of human knowledge...

In January (1969) I sent a short observation about a cuckoo nestling host to Stephen Marchant for publication in 'The Emu', journal of the RAOU. He was a fastidious man and in the end, after some correspondence and rightly no doubt, he decided not to publish it. On the other hand, the 'Canberra Times' editor published a letter of mine on 1 April urging bird identification classes for 'sporting shooters'. Then, in the September 1969 I published a paper on a western warbler and wasp nesting association in 'Canberra Bird Notes' I started banding in the open forest on Mount Pleasant behind the Russell Offices where I worked. A major highway now runs through the forest, but back then many people enjoyed walking in and through it on the way to work, and neighbourhood kids played in its open forest along small usually-dry water courses.

Though I tended my nets closely, on one occasion someone found one and tore it down. When I reported this to Dave Purchase, the red-haired dynamo secretary of Australian Bird and Bat Banding Office in the CSIRO's Division of Wildlife Research, he printed signs to erect near the nets and there was no more vandalism (see next page).

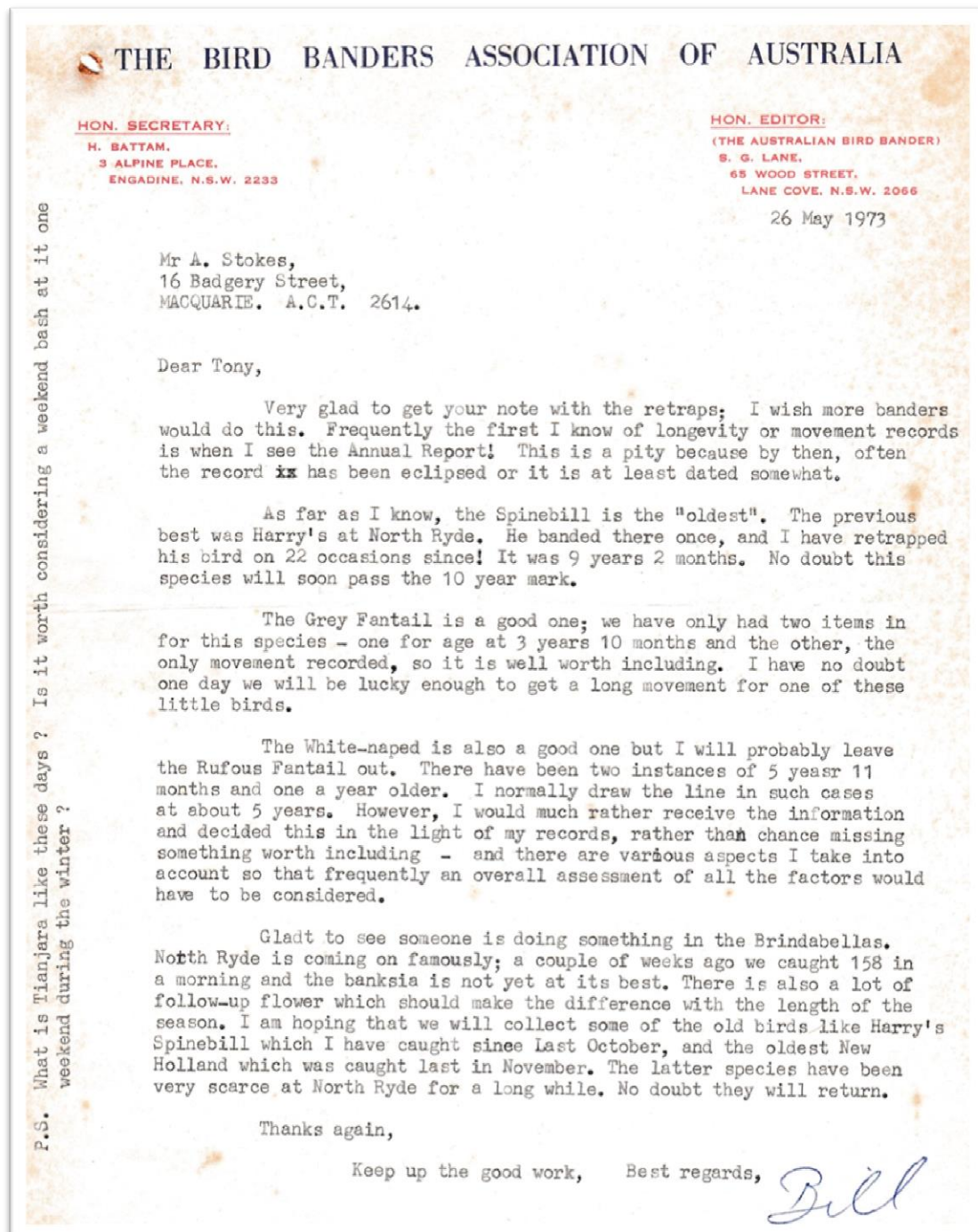


The Division's offices in the then rural area of Gungahlin, ACT, comprised study paddocks with fascinating Australian mammals and birds, and offices with stimulating staff and an excellent wildlife library. Every visit lured me....

In the first month of the 1970s I was ... going bird-banding as much as possible... (and now) I even did so on the first day of the new decade, arriving at 4.30am hung-over and feeling sorry for myself after a New Year's Eve party. In the next 4+ hours I caught 10 birds of 7 species and went home contentedly to bed.

I also submitted records of re-trapped birds for entry in 'Recovery Round-up' in the 'Australian Bird Bander'. Its crusty, loveable rogue-of-an-editor, S.G. (Bill) Lane was a banding fanatic and a marvelous mentor to new banders around Sydney where he lived and throughout New South Wales. When not banding he was a colonel in the Citizen Military Force and ran his banding trips and the journal with a jovial military precision. His attention to detail was legendary. I especially remember the speed with which he replied to my letters (example following page) ... The research and educational value of bird-banding is used to justify catching the birds but to us youngsters it was the thrill of the chase more than anything. On each trip there was the lure of the unknown. Would we catch a record of some description, like a rare bird, or one outside its normal range, or one already with a band revealing that it had come from somewhere else, or that it was an 'oldie', perhaps even the oldest recorded to date for the species? As it was early in the history of Australian banding, now and then we would catch something 'significant' which would spur us to band again as soon as possible, and on each occasion around the banding table and the evening campfire we would banter about our adventures and the records we were achieving. We also competed with each other in the speed with which we erected nets in the pre-dawn light of the bush, in our inventiveness with erecting them despite broken and/or missing gear, and in the proficiency with which we disentangled birds.

Inevitably and not infrequently of course, some birds would escape from the bander's hand. But, provided the misadventure was not spotted by 'the boss', Steve Wilson, the secret remained with us young banders. However, if Steve spotted it he would 'bawl us out' and give us another lesson on how to correctly hold birds. Despite such 'competitions' we did try not to hurt the birds whilst untangling, processing and releasing them as quickly and carefully as possible. Although such things did contribute to meaningful and happy weekends, nowadays strict rules and codes of practice govern banding and our cavalier antics would bring severe reprimand and/or licence removal.



Bill Lane's reply about our bird retraps at Tianjara Falls, NSW (26 May 1973).

In early 1970 I wrote two papers on how to identify the five 'red' robins. After incorporating comments from Steve Wilson and others they were duly published in 'Canberra Bird Notes' and prepared but [CBN] did not publish a narrative about a pair of Mudlarks raising four broods of chicks in one season from their nest in a regal old gum tree in our back yard. I listed three other papers to write about Yellow-tailed Thornbill, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and White-throated Warbler observations, and later combined them in an article titled 'Some nesting notes'.

In early April 1970 snow fell heavily in Canberra and the weather was inclement for two weeks. Soon afterwards, we were banding hundreds of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters ('yeflas' we called them) and other species on migration as they moved along the Murrumbidgee River at Point Hut Crossing. They flew low in a jerking uncertain manner above small bushes, nervous to be in the open away from their usual forests. As each flock of 30 to 100 individuals passed over the nets, we clapped noisily and threw sticks in the air causing them to dive instantly into the bushes and our waiting nets. Some almost collapsed under the weight of birds. It was great fun and on occasions, a 'special' bird like a Little Falcon would be caught as it careered into a net in hot pursuit of prey. Though thousands of 'yeflas' were thus banded, few were ever recovered, but one was recorded having flown to Grafton. It has taken many years for the story of the seemingly nomadic, but predictable, movements of the species on the coast and tablelands to be elucidated.

In the summer breeding season my notebook was also filling with observations of nesting birds. Mark Clayton and I would compete with each other and with Barry Baker to see who could find the most, and most interesting nests, and complete the most number of cards for the newly-instituted RAOU Nest Record Scheme.

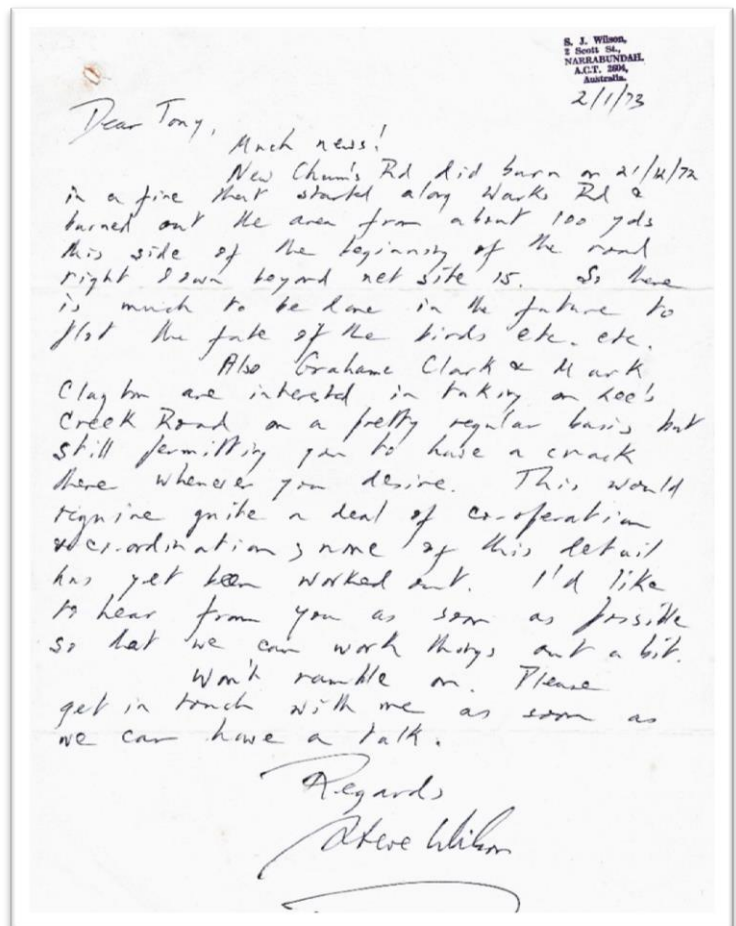
In the early 1970s through Penny Woollard (later Olsen) at CSIRO Wildlife Research I met Jerry Olsen. Jerry was a dedicated falconer from the USA and for a few years I fell under the spell of raptors, accompanying him and his team on often hair-raising excursions to find, band and research them, including dangerous climbs to difficult to reach nests. In mid-1971 I built a bal-chatri hawk trap and baiting it with white mice, drove around rural roads dropping the trap by the road when I saw a hawk and parking further along in the hope that it would land on it and be caught in a slip loop. Usually the trap was either not noticed or ignored by the birds; however a nankeen kestrel did land once but promptly flew off uncaught on my approach. Clearly there were problems with design, technique and the inactivity of the mice. I was also spending a lot of time and money driving fruitlessly around roads, so eventually gave up.

On 12 February 1972, I drove in the early morning to Bateman's Bay and, '...went out on a fishing trawler to a little island called Tollgate...to catch and mark seabirds (shearwaters and White-faced Storm-Petrels). Since most of the work (is) done at night, I lazed around...all day occasionally going for a swim or looking at lazy penguins which preferred to stay in the burrows rather than go out and get something to eat. At about 6pm we had a meal and in the last hour of sunlight ascended a precipitous cliff by a winding narrow path and found at the top about an acre of rolling, thickly-grassed land. It was pot-holed completely with mutton-bird (shearwater) burrows and to walk anywhere was to have the ground collapse beneath the feet. We went around on our hands and knees catching any birds that were in them and then had a rest and watched dusk descend over the mainland from our perch 300 feet above the water. After sunset with the sky getting ever darker, the birds began to come in for the night.

They were full of fish from the days' hunting and while superb in flight, when they hit the tussocks they just sat there exhausted for 10 or more minutes. Our job was to find them before they found there (sic) burrows and band them. They usually land no more than 10 feet from the entrance which is phenomenal considering the darkness of the night but when you chase them they can't take off...They have to flap ... to the edge of the cliff and launch themselves over and the big wings come into play to give them their majesty. So we went chasing these birds by torchlight and keeping a wary eye on the edge of the cliff. They bite and scratch like mad and my hands were red raw by midnight and I didn't feel like catching any more. Neither did anyone else, so we cautiously made our way down the track by torchlight, a step either side and they would have been scraping us with a tissue on the rocks 200 feet below...When I hit the sleeping bag and was rocked to sleep by the rhythm of the waves with a fantastic starlit night and a cool breeze, it all seemed worth it'....

In early 1973 I was a seasonal ranger in Kosciusko National Park when Steve Wilson wrote (see on right) to say that on 21 December 1972 a forest fire (called the Wark's Road Fire by Forestry staff) had burnt much of the Brindabella Range and many of our netting sites at New Chums and there was 'much to be done...to plot the fate of the birds'. After returning to Canberra, on 10-11 February I took a troop of young banders to New Chums Road to survey the damage, erect nets and band birds. On the first day we caught 9 birds and on the second, 13. They comprised the 'usual' species - White-browed Scrub wrens, Southern

Yellow Robin, Eastern Spinebill, Silvereye, Rufous Fantail, White-naped Honeyeater, Brown Thornbill and White-throated Treecreeper (see on next page extract from field note book from New Chums Road trip, Feb. 1973). I did not band at New Chums again for a year, however, in checking the banding data a while later I noticed an increase in the number of Flame Robins caught after the fire and in 1976 published a paper about it in the 'Australian Bird Bander'.



021-93418	WBS Wren	AM	8.	NCR	10.2.73	16g.
021-92595	SV Robin	A	17.			20g.
030-77239	White-throat T'creep	AM	1.			24g.
020-99303	WBS Wren	AM	12			16g.
020-99308	WBS Wren	A.M.	10			17g.
022-00611	"	A.M.	8.			14g.
021-12313	"	A.F.	12			15g.
012-44247	E. Spinebill	A.F.	12.22			10g.
021-99898	W.B.S. Wren	A.F.	15A.			16g.
021-99900	WBS Wren	A.M.	15.	11.2.73		15g.
012-54647	E. Silvereye	A	16.			13g.
022-00668	WBS Wren	AM	6.			18g.
022-00642	WBS Wren	AM	3.			19g.
030-77239	White-throat T'creep	AM	1.			(not trapped)
030-65618	"	AF	2.			(banded 5.11.72)
012-87869	Brown T'bill	A	8			
010-87869	Brown T'bill	A	8			10g.
011-32393	Rufous Fantail	A	12			13g.
021-13594	White-nape Heator	A	20.			15g.
021-14412	WBS Wren	AM	4.			8g.
012-38001	Brown T'bill	A	12			16g.
022-00639	WBS Wren	AM	10			(20 Ret.)

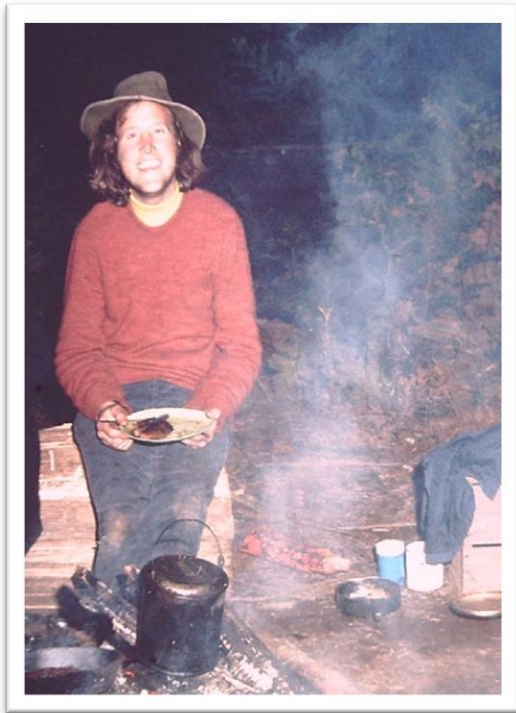
Bird-banding field notebook page from New Chums Road (February 1973).



The author, Tony Stokes, banding an Australian Hobby at Point Hut Crossing, ACT (April 1970)

In 1970 I commenced science at the Australian National University and there found other birdo friends in students such as Neil Hermes, Steve Garnett, Mike Fleming, Simon Bennett, Mike Chuck, Jocelyn Dexter, Stuart Davey and Sonia Tidemann.

In 1974 a Brindabella Banding Group was formed to coordinate activities with Dave Stewart as initial organizer, and up to 1982 it circulated 18 newsletters with many articles by Steve Wilson, Dave Purchase and others recording and analyzing our activities. Over the years, I and many other young COG protégées, unassumingly tutored by Steve, Dave and various CSIRO Wildlife staff progressed into rewarding careers in wildlife research and conservation. Yes, COG and the birding world in general have been good to me.



Neil Hermes (left), Jocelyn Dexter and Barry Baker (right) at a Brindabella Range banding campfire (1975).



Tony Stokes, Mark Clayton and Neil Hermes at the Charcoal Tank, NSW, banding camp (March 2014).

Accepted 19 December 2014

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CANBERRA BIRD NOTES

NEIL HERMES^A, MICHAEL LENZ^B AND DAVID PURCHASE^C

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In 1968 the ACT branch of the RAOU decided to replace its *Monthly Newsletter* with the *Canberra Bird Notes*.

The Canberra Bird Notes (CBN) were designated “*as a newsletter for members of the Canberra branch of the R.A.O.U. and other interested persons.... It is intended purely as an informal medium of communication and does not constitute a recognised journal.*” [CBN No.1, July 1968].

It is not clear when CBN became a 'journal'. This was possibly in 1975 when the format changed, although there was no 'official' change - it just sort of drifted into acquiring the status of a 'journal'.

The first issue appeared in July 1968 and consisted of 12 pages (16.8 mm x 20.5 mm) made up by folding six sheets of foolscap paper in half. It was typewritten and roneoed onto pale gold bond paper. The first page had, in the top left corner, a drawing by Jerry van Tets of a flying pelican (this was also used on COG's first headed writing paper) (Fig. 1). The contents included an editorial, an account of a field outing by 13 members and friends to the Pulletop Fauna Reserve, accounts of recent meetings, details of coming meetings, a notice of the RAOU Congress which was to be held in Canberra later that year, an article on Crested Pigeons and Feral Pigeons in Canberra, a review of 'Birds of Australia' by Stanley Breeden and Peter Slater, and some RAOU notices. It was decided that the numbering of issues would be consecutive, without volumes.

The choice of pale gold as the paper colour was a result of getting the first issues roneoed as a 'foreign order' by a cooperative staff member of the CSIRO Regional Administrative Office who was known to the editors. It was done, however, on condition it would be roneoed onto pale gold paper of which the office had an excess quantity. Since then pale gold, or a similar colour has been an identifying feature of at least the cover of CBN (see Fig. 1). There was an exception in 1970 when two issues were produced on pink paper. It was purely coincidental that the editorial in the first of these issues announced the change of name and status of the ACT Branch of the RAOU to the Canberra Ornithologists Group. The change in colour had nothing to do with the name change, it was simply that the printers who were then producing CBN had run out of pale gold paper and would be unable to get fresh supplies for several weeks.

“It will be our policy to keep the contents predominantly local in flavour. However, by ‘local’ we consider it reasonable that the south-eastern corner of N.S.W. as well as the A.C.T. should be included. In addition we shall print short notes, etc. of a more general nature which may otherwise go unpublished in our more established ornithological journals.” [CBN No.2, November 1968].

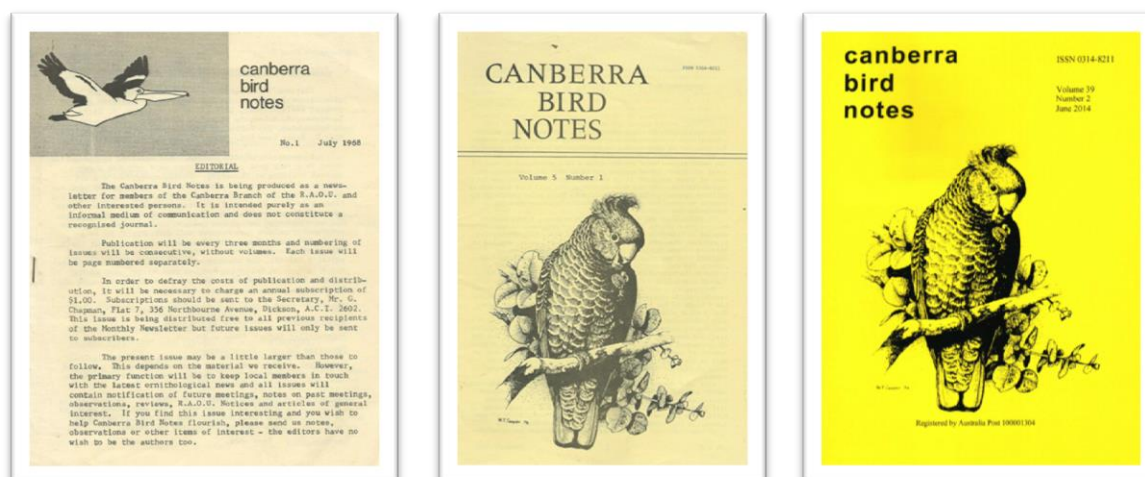


Figure 1. Examples of the cover pages of Canberra Bird Notes: the first issue (left) with the Australian Pelican design by Gerry van Tets; from Volume 5 onwards (1980) the Gang-gang Cockatoo illustration (centre), generously donated by one of our foremost bird artists W.T. Cooper, has adorned all issues of CBN; in 2013 the cover went glossy yellow (right).

However, as the current COG website [<http://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/canberra-bird-notes/>] states:

“Despite the disclaimer, much of the content is good citizen science mixed with a diverse range of personal insights into many aspects of bird biology, ecology and behaviour.”

There were a couple of exceptions with contributions covering areas well beyond the local sphere, including a report on birds seen during a trip to the Galapagos Islands or material intended clearly for a recognised Australian ornithological journal such as a listing of 12 new subspecies of Australian birds (Schodde 1980). Hence the CBN offered a suitable vehicle at the time to get information quickly into the public domain.

Apart from articles and short notes on diverse topics, the latter often appearing under the heading “Odd obs”, the Annual Bird Report (ABR) – a yearly summary on the occurrence and status of the avifauna of the ACT and the wider Area of COG’s Interest - became an increasingly prominent feature of CBN (for details see Fennell 2014, this issue) and since 1977 occupies a stand-alone issue of every volume.

Since 1976 a regular feature has been comments and discussion on a wide range of topics written under a pen name. From 1990 two columnists contribute to the CBN, one focussed on “birding in cyberspace”, the other preparing opinion pieces on any topic he (or she) fancies (see *D bracteatus* 2014, this issue).

Although letters to the editor were encouraged, this opportunity was rarely taken up by the readership. The more notable is the first (and visionary) letter to the editor, sent in by our COG member Mark Clayton:

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

The Indian Myna, I feel, would not be a welcome addition to Canberra's avifauna. Although initially they would probably start vying with sparrows and starlings for nesting sites in old buildings, sooner or later they would begin to challenge native species for the use of hollow limbs. Near Sydney I have observed Mynas evicting such large and formidable birds as Galahs from nesting hollows, and have even observed them taking over starling nests.

Mynas are not dirty or particularly noisy birds, indeed they are quite good-looking, but with the impact already made by starlings on our native species, particularly parrots and treecreepers, why add to it with another threat?

Yours, etc.

O'Connor

Mark Clayton

Editor's Note

Thanks to Mark Clayton for inaugurating our new Letters feature. Readers are invited to send in views and comments about topics of ornithological interest, for inclusion on this page. Please keep your letters short and to the point.

To date 15 editors have consecutively prepared 39 volumes of CBN (Table 1). A number of editors teamed up with assistant editors. For example, Steve Wilson had the support of Barry Baker; David Purchase; and Grahame Clark, and David Purchase worked for all his years as editor with Grahame Clark. A team of many other COG members have been and are involved with each issue from the production to the distribution of each issue. This is especially true for the ABRs (see Fennell 2014, this issue). The COG community is very grateful for the involvement for CBN of so many past and present members.

Accessing information contained in these volumes was made easier with indexes of articles and bird names for groups of volumes, prepared by Kay Anway (now Kay Hahne), Neil Hermes, David Purchase and Grahame Clark, in the end covering volumes 1 to 29 (1968 to 1995) (see Hahne 2014, this issue). For later years no volunteers for this rather daunting task were found. Once COG had established its own website new options opened up. Firstly, current issues were placed on the website at the time of publication and hence could be viewed by anyone. Then Alastair Smith scanned every page of the 5,100 pages of earlier volumes of CBN. This was a major undertaking (the CBN readership is most grateful!) Now all CBN volumes are available with a few key strokes on the computer as full-text searchable PDFs at: <http://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/canberra-bird-notes/>.

Table 1: Editors of 39 volumes of the Canberra Bird Notes.

Editors	Period
Graeme Chapman and David Purchase	Jul 1968 – Apr 1969
Graeme Chapman	Jul 1969
Anthony H. d’Andria	Sep 1969 – Jan 1973
Gerry F. van Tets	Apr 1973 – Jan 1974
Steve Wilson	Jan 1975 – Apr 1978
Barry Baker (acting)	Jul 1978 – Oct 1978
Steve Wilson	Jan 1979 – Mar 1981
Neil Hermes	Jun 1981 – Dec 1982
Peter Davidson	Mar 1983 – Dec 1985
Richard Gregory-Smith	Mar 1986
Philip Veerman	Jun 1986 – Dec 1988
David Purchase	Mar 1989 – Oct 1998
Harvey Perkins and Barbara Allan	Mar 1999 – Dec 2006
Barbara Allan	Mar 2007 – Jun 2007
Anthony Overs	Dec 2007 – Jun 2010
Beth Mantle	Dec 2010 – Jun 2011
Michael Lenz	Dec 2011 - current

The print version of CBN is in black and white (apart from the yellow cover), but the electronic version contains the photos in full colour.

We still have so much to learn about all aspects of the biology and status of our local birds. Canberra’s environment is constantly changing with urbanisation reaching further and further into the natural and rural surroundings of the city, construction of new artificial wetlands, improvements in the management of some of our reserves, climate change, feral pests, weeds and many more factors impact on our birds. There is so much to observe and record. We sincerely hope the COG membership and the wider readership of CBN will keep contributing to the journal.

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Accepted 15 December 2014

CBN INDEXING IN THE “GOOD OLD DAYS”

KAY HAHNE

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I joined COG as Kay Anway soon after I arrived from the USA in 1974. For the first meeting I got a lift with young Simon Bennett, so that I could find my own way the next time. We met in the Plant Industry Building at CSIRO, when Henry Nix let us in and locked up after us. Soon I was helping Delia Johnson with the coffee, tea and biscuits after the meetings. She also was my partner in our waterbird surveys around Lake Burley Griffin (our patch was from the Yacht Club at Lotus Bay to the YMCA Sailing Club). After one of our meetings Barry Baker and Grahame Clarke strode purposely over to me and asked “will you be Secretary?” I looked over my shoulder, but no, they meant me. As I was a typist at the CCAE I said I would type up any minutes or notes, which I did. Once people know you are a good typist, certain things come your way.

The next really big job in the very early 1980s was catching up on a backlog of indexing for the Canberra Bird Notes. Mark Clayton gleefully handed over two cardboard boxes of 6 x 8 index cards. Alphabetically listed, a bird's name was on top of each card. I continued going through back copies which I checked out from the CSIRO Library and wrote by hand on the card the Volume, Issue Number and page number where there was a reference to a particular bird, e.g. 3(2):19. Once this was finally compiled after many hours spent at the kitchen bench, I took it to work to type it out on my nifty IBM electric typewriter. This wonderous machine had “golfballs” with different typefaces such as Courier, or Gothic, and even Italics, so I could put the scientific names in italics instead of underlining them. Of course you had to stop and change the “golfball” attachment each time you needed italics. Little by little I got it done during lunch hours and quiet moments. It looked pretty neat when I finished, if I do say so myself. That was back before the time of personal computers on our desks or at home – but I think we made fewer mistakes back then. Yes, those were the “good old days”.

I can't lay my hands on that index copy at the moment. I know it is somewhere, for I kept that and some older 1970s copies of CBN when I gave Jack Holland 20 years' worth of my CBNs and Gang-Gangs after his were destroyed in the 2003 Canberra bushfires.

Accepted 3 November 2014

THE ANNUAL BIRD REPORT: A BRIEF HISTORY

PAUL FENNELL

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Is the COG Annual Bird Report the most boring publication ever written? To some people it must go close, but to others (one wonders how many?) it is a valuable reference eagerly sought after to provide detailed information on the abundance and distribution of birds in our area. This story is about the evolution, over the past 50 years, of the ABR from simple beginnings to the complex data rich report of today.

COG is probably unique in that all our Annual Bird Reports are available on

line, so anyone can look them up under the Canberra Bird Notes tab in the Publications section of the COG website. They started with the Systematic List compiled by Steve Wilson for the ACT Branch RAOU Annual Report of 1965. Most of the entries were short notes more along the lines of an annotated bird list, rather than the more comprehensive statistical analysis which has gradually evolved over the past 50 years.

The early reports were by a single author, with a limited number of persons contributing data. For the first report, the major data contributors were B Baker, M Clayton and S Marchant. Stephen Marchant, an avid and skilled bird-watching Englishman was keen to have COG follow in the English County bird watching tradition of publishing annually a report of bird activity in the region. And thus our ABR came into being. Steve Wilson wrote the first few, and in 1974-78 Grahame Clark took up the challenge. The reports of the 70s included general discussion of abundance of species, and in the Systematic List, dates of sightings. By 1977 contributors for each sighting were acknowledged, generally by a code consisting of their initials. For many years there was a very strong emphasis on Water Bird Surveys of Lakes George and Bathurst, as well as the Canberra urban lakes as they developed. The reports had detailed tables of sightings, by month, for each body of water, taking up the majority of space in the reports. The question of what exactly was the COG Area of Interest for reporting purposes first became an issue during this period. At this time it was the ACT and Lakes George and Bathurst, together with some parts of the South Coast because a lot of Canberrans reported sightings from there. Over the years this area gradually expanded (and the South Coast dropped) as will be seen below.

In 1977-78 Michael Lenz joined Grahame Clark as editor, and in this year there was the first appearance of place name codes (LBG for Lake Burley Griffin). From 1978 to 1981 Michael Lenz was the editor and during this period the process of evolution continued. The iconic

SYSTEMATIC NOTES 1964-5 by S.J.Wilson

Since the A.C.T. Branch of the R.A.O.U. started, an "Observations' Book" has been circulated at each monthly meeting. This has resulted in many interesting records, the addition of several new species to the A.C.T. list, and one new species to the Southern Tablelands list. For the purpose of an annual bird report, however, many common species have not been mentioned in the "Observations' Book" and it has been necessary also to use private notes and the records of the R.A.O.U. Nest Record Scheme for the following account. This emphasises the need for regular records of the occurrence even of common birds, so that the changes in the avifauna may be recognised.

Typical entries of the first ABR

Gang Gang. Common in winter 1964 in Forrest, but much less so in winter 1965.

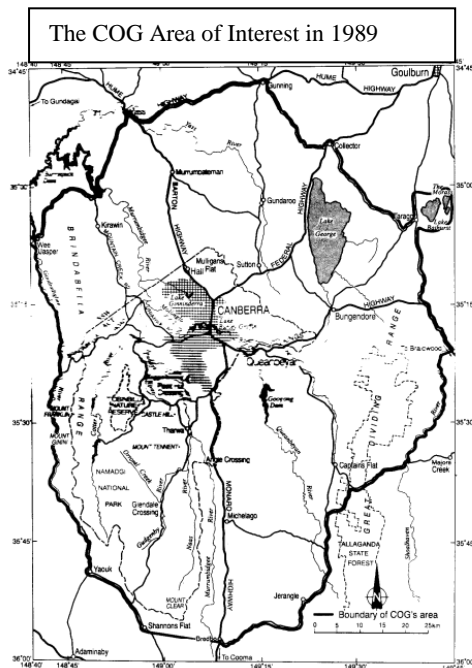
White Cockatoo. Appears to breed chiefly in the Ranges: large flocks formed after breeding.

Major Mitchell Cockatoo. Two near Gungahlin May 7, 1965. There have been several recent sightings, too frequent for escapees.

Galah. Common in city area, breeding. Large flocks formed after breeding, e.g. 300 in Yarralumla area and Narrabundah.

Cockatiel. Two August 6, 1964, two February 13, 1965, possibly escapees.

Gang-gang illustration by Bill Cooper appeared on the cover of all Canberra Bird Notes, the extension of place name codes, the inclusion of a meteorological summary for the year, and the inclusion of numbers seen with the date of the sighting.



McComas Taylor was editor from 1981 to 1986, and as the workload expanded, he was joined by Chris Davey, John Gibson, Brendan Lepschi and once again, Michael Lenz. The Garden Bird Survey started to be reported in this period. Histograms showing monthly abundance of certain species were introduced, as was the use of variables A, F, W, R and B for GBS entries. A map of Canberra and District appeared for the first time, but it was illustrative rather than defining any particular area of interest. The grid system based on the COG Atlas was introduced in 1989 and in 1990-91 a map of the current COG Area of Interest with a grid overlay appeared, which in later years had an x in grid squares with sightings for that year. Now the x has been replaced by the number of sightings for species in the grid square.

1998 was the last year the ABR was written by a small authorship team, comprising Philip Veerman, Ian Baird, Michael Lenz and Brendan Lepschi. From then on the approach has been to have an editor to pull the publication together, and a team of up to 10 writers to deal with specific groups of birds. Ian McMahon has been writing up the Cockatoos and Parrots species continuously since the 1988-89 edition. Other authors of long standing have been Grahame Clark, David Purchase, Robert Digan, Chris Davey, Barbara Allan, David McDonald and Harvey Perkins. Their knowledge of their species, and their understanding of the more recent history, has enabled them to report on their species with insight and illumination.

Since 1990 the editors of the ABR have been Malcolm Fyfe, Harvey Perkins, Barbara Allan and Paul Fennell.

The important turning points in the development of the ABR are most closely connected with the availability of data, and the ability to manipulate it and derive meaningful statistics that explain the abundance and distribution of species over time.

The COG Atlas was one such turning point. Throughout the years those involved in the writing of the ABR had been calling for more accurate and systematic recording of bird sightings. The COG Atlas, based on an earlier RAOU national atlas, brought a systematic method of data collection and reporting that provided masses of data for analysis. At the same time, the development of personal computers and associated data management and analysis software enabled the analysis and presentation of statistics that were invaluable to the authors of bird reports.

The most recent turning point has been the ability for observers to input their data online, and be able to comply with the most recent data standard: to indicate precisely the geographical point where the sightings were taken. All sightings in the COG (and other) database have GPS coordinates attached.

Throughout the 90's it was my job as manager of the COG Database to print out a report that itemised every sighting of every species in the general database for the current bird year. This printout ran to nearly 500 pages. Similar reports were printed for the Garden Bird Survey. Each author was given the printouts from their species which they then distilled into one or two paragraphs for each species.

In more recent years, the power of computing has increased considerably, both in the ability to crunch numbers, and to present the information using more sophisticated publishing software. Steve Wallace has applied some highly sophisticated analytical techniques to COG data to enable the presentation of a broad array of statistics in tabular and graphical form that paints the picture for each species. The information is no longer presented to the ABR authors on paper, but the old Report, together with a large suite of statistics is presented to each author on an 8 gigabyte thumb drive.

Over the years the intention of the editors and authors of the ABR has been quite consistent: to endeavour to tell the story of each species as accurately and straightforwardly as possible. Whether the paper copy of the ABR will continue to be published in its current form is an interesting question, and COG is quietly exploring how much of the information now available to each ABR author may be made available online to all those who may wish to explore the comings and goings of individual species or groups of birds.

Accepted 24 October 2014

THE CANBERRA BIRD NOTES COLUMNISTS

D bracteatus

In its early days Canberra Bird Notes (CBN) as well as reporting observations and containing many lists of birds also filled the role of a newsletter. The editorial and a section labelled something like 'COG Activities' regularly informed the membership of what was going on.

In January 1976 a column was introduced, authored by 'G. Tibicen', a name suggested by the communicative ability of the Australian Magpie (hereinafter 'GT') and titled 'Out and About'. Its purpose was -

'... to provide an information service for our readers. The information provided will cover places to stay, requests for information, advance warning of future projects – in fact anything that might be interesting in general but not important enough to warrant an individual article.'

Except for an absence 1985 to 1989, GT contributed a stream of entertaining and informative paragraphs up until March 2000. The introduction of 'Gang-gang' in 1982 made it unnecessary for CBN to cover newsletter matters. Thereafter 'Out and About' tended to deal with publications, events and other developments further afield, and to become more opinionated, offering a typical columnist viewpoint.

GT had firm views on matters affecting bird welfare, and hence doubts about some aspects of twitching, tagging and mist-netting for example. A misunderstanding over a bird-banding comment led to a gracious apology by GT - but also to the insertion of a disclaimer:

The views expressed in 'Out and about' do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

(Curiously, the scanning process that has brought us CBN online has rendered this in the March 1997 issue as: '... do not necessarily reflect the Welts or policy of [COG]')

Today, the disclaimer is contained in a general editorial note, and expressed to apply, as it should, to all authors.

In 1990 the editors decided to enlist two more columnists, negotiating with them suitable noms de plume in the GT tradition. As GT was still contributing there was a rough demarcation with GT continuing as before, T alba covering the burgeoning field of the internet and digital communication, and A stentoreus writing mildly opinionated, somewhat bookish essays on any topic that seemed of interest.

Coincidentally both the later pseudonyms were overtaken by taxonomic revision, T alba choosing to become T javanica, and A stentoreus electing to adopt just 'Stentoreus', to keep the association with the loud-voiced Greek herald of the Trojan war.

No doubt there will be different views on the desirability of the column format in CBN. Some will like it, others might not. Surely there needs to be a place where an opinion or two, even a minority one, or a lonely one, can be found, particularly as the editorial and the letters space no longer seem to be a vehicle for that kind of thing. Moreover, a function of the discursive column is that it shares – or should share – information that might not otherwise be readily

available to most readers. T javanica's unique contributions certainly fall in that category, with a never-ending flow of birdy gleanings from cyberspace.

GT's pen gave us many gems, a particularly delightful one being the new piece of ornithojargon 'furgling' (see CBN for December 1989, and, if you want to know more, Emu 2013: 113 p211). As for Stentoreus, it was good to see her or his researches on the origin of 'Regent Honeyeater' listed among the many learned sources in Ian Fraser and Jeannie Gray's excellent book on Australian Bird Names.

Accepted 1 November 2014

THE SONGS AND CALLS OF CANBERRA BIRDS - CASSETTE AND COMPACT DISC

CHRIS DAVEY

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The story of the production of a cassette tape 'Bird Songs of Canberra' (Davey 1988) and, subsequently, a compact disc 'Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT- The Calls and Songs' (Fullagar & Slater 2004) begins in the early 1980s when Sir Frederick White, the former Chairman of CSIRO became interested in recording bird sounds in his retirement. He was particularly interested in the vocal dialects of the Olive Whistler and was a very keen supporter of the Handbook of Australia, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds (HANZAB) project and so recorded many calls of the local species for the project.

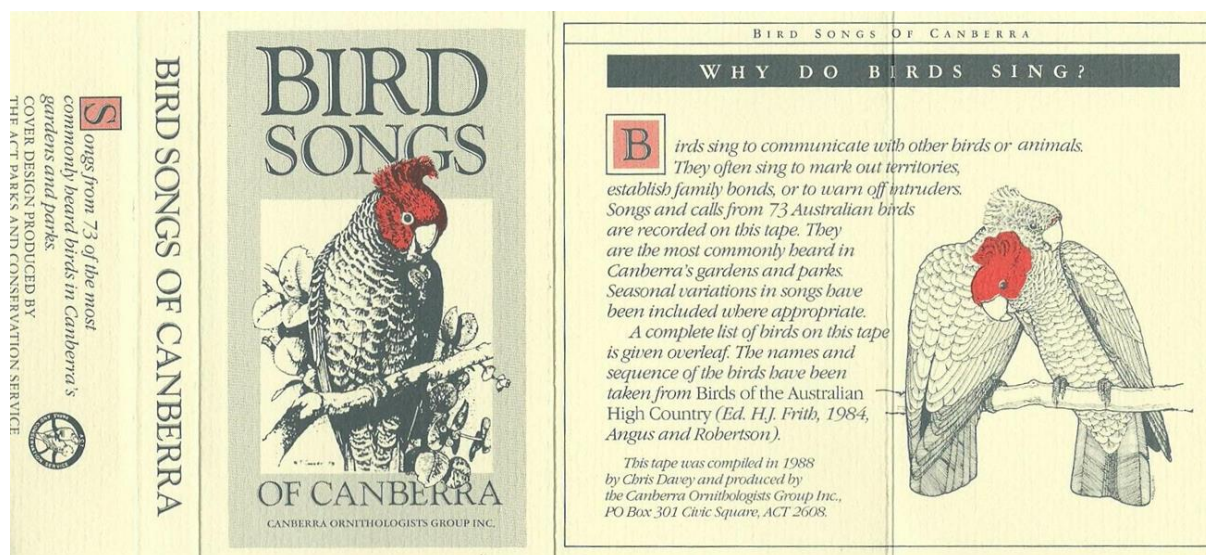
During the mid-1980s Fred moved from Canberra to Melbourne to be nearer his family and he donated his entire sound library to the Australian National Wildlife Collection (ANWC) held at CSIRO, Gungahlin on the condition that it was made available to the public. Given that most of the calls had been recorded locally he was particularly keen that this was done through the Canberra Ornithologists Group. At this time cassette tape recorders were easily available and there were members of COG who were actively engaged in recording bird sounds. At the time it was becoming obvious to me that I needed to get a much better handle on the vocal repertoire of our local birds and being in the room when Fred first raised the issue I put my hand up to produce a cassette tape commercially available through COG.

Bird Songs of Canberra

By the mid-1980s there were numerous cassettes of bird calls available for purchase in Australia but none specifically covered the Canberra region. With some encouragement I took on this task. Species were selected based on the results of the COG Garden Bird Survey. Local regional calls only were considered. It was hoped to produce a tape that could be used as a teaching tool, concentrating on as many species as possible. Those calls with the highest quality were chosen but in many cases good recordings were not available but for completeness were included. It was hoped that this would encourage better recordings that could be used in a future more elaborate edition. When known the sex of the bird in each of the recordings and the type of call it was giving was to be detailed. The species names were taken from the 'Birds in the Australian High Country' (H.J. Frith (Ed), revised edition, 1884). The tape contained 91 recordings from 73 species. Various COG members supplied their recordings and in the end the contributors and the number of recordings were as follows; Fred White (43), Ederic Slater (17), Henry Nix (8), Norman Robinson (6), Peter Fullagar (6) John Penhallurick (6), and single recordings from Alastair Drake, Graeme Chapman, Brian Fitzgerald, S. Russell and F. James. Much thought was given to providing a voiced introduction for each species. Bernard (Bunny) Fennessy was a work colleague in CSIRO and I was aware of his association with book reading for the blind. He readily agreed to provide this service. Needing a quiet room I set Bunny up with a table, chair, microphone, tape recorder and a list of bird names in one of the rooms in the CSIRO Animal House situated at the Gungahlin Homestead. Bunny patiently read the 73 names only to subsequently find that the echo in the empty room made the recordings unusable!

All recordings, either on reel-to-reel tapes or cassettes, were listened to and those sections deemed as suitable were edited to a master tape, with equipment lent to me by Ed Slater. This

process took over two years to complete and enthusiasm was beginning to fade on my part with no end in sight. Luckily, McComas Taylor came to the rescue and before long he had arranged ACT Parks and Conservation to design and fund the insert of the cassette and had arranged for Bunny to again record the bird names but this time to a master tape recorded at the studios of the local 2XX radio station in Civic.



A final master tape was then produced by me splicing together, one by one, the announced names of each species off one tape with the respective calls off the other. In these days the transcription of tape recordings was fraught with loss of quality when copying so it was avoided as much as possible and if absolutely necessary great care had to be taken to minimise the losses. The final master tape was then sent to a commercial production company in Melbourne where cassette tapes ready for sale were produced. It was finally available for sale in mid-1988. I cannot remember the number of tapes produced but the originals run quickly sold out and to date there are few remaining from the second run produced a few years later.

Inevitably time passed and in early 2000 it was decided to revisit the COG bird tape. By this time computers with appropriate software for high quality sound transcription and editing were becoming available and compact discs were now the favoured means of distributing sound recordings. Peter Fullagar and Ederic Slater agreed to take on the job of producing a CD to replace the Canberra bird cassette. By this time the quality of recordings of bird calls was much improved and recordings were available from a wider range of species. Again, only local recordings were chosen and the names were based on the now popular *Field Guide to the birds of the ACT* (Taylor and Day 1993). Peter and Ederic compiled, edited and produced version 1 of the CD and this was made commercially available in 2004. Virtually all of the 80 species were taken from the private collections of Peter and Ederic with their original material already included within the ANWC sound library. Voice over was by Peter and 100 CD copies of version 1 were produced by Peter on his Macintosh computer and printer. Version 2, which was a virtual re-run of version 1, was produced commercially in February 2006.

Summary

We have come a long way since the production of the COG tape and CD. It is now easy to obtain bird calls and songs from the Internet and the use of various Apps are the way to go. Many of the calls from the tape and CD are now on the COG website and most were originally recorded by members of COG. The day of the cassette tape and CD has passed.

On reflection, the tape was in its day innovative. At the time there were some bird calls tapes commercially available but none covered our region adequately. The day of a comprehensive coverage of almost all Australian species was still a long way off. The Bird Observers Club of Australia (BOCA) finally completed a set of 14 cassettes that covered the Birds of Australia by 1999 (Buckingham and Jackson 1983–1999) and these were replaced by a much revised digital edition compiled and edited by Howard Plowright on 10 CDs by 2007 (Plowright 2001–2007)

The production of the tape and CD was a profitable enterprise for COG with no financial gain to any of those involved in the production. If either has in any way increased members understanding and appreciation of bird sounds then all the effort has been worthwhile.

Accepted 23 October 2014

CANBERRA BIRDS WEBSITE – A SHORT HISTORY

DAVID COOK
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Way back last century (about 1997), the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) was dragged kicking and screaming into the 21st Century – the Internet had arrived big time in our lives and we needed to get on board or be left behind at the station tearfully waving good-bye (probably with a sodden hanky).

But how did we do it, and who in Hell did we get to do this thankless task?

Luckily, esteemed COG member and data-junky Paul Fennell, recognising the need for such a facility, asked a couple of upstart programmers and COG members, Mike O'Shaughnessy and me, what we thought of the proposal. Neither of us knew a great deal about web design (some might argue I still don't!), but we knew our way around a computer and we were both consultant programmers, so it couldn't be too hard, could it? Anyway, a scheme was hatched.

Although my involvement was minimal in those early days, Mike jumped in feet first and built a pretty nifty web site from scratch in pretty quick order. It looked good too, did all the right things, and was festooned with numerous new-fangled digital photographs (many of them Mike's), featured our Bill Cooper-created Gang-gang logo, and a particularly nice panorama of Canberra showcasing the lake and a few of her iconic public buildings – it looked, felt and smelt quintessentially Canberran, we had arrived! It even had a winking Tawny Frogmouth, if you knew where to look!

Mike continued as Webmaster for several years until I took over just after the turn of the century (yes, that long ago!) and I continued running the show until this year when the baton was gratefully passed on to new eager hands. Over this period we added a lot of stuff to the website for the benefit of our members and visitors alike. Perhaps the innovation with the most impact was the Photo Gallery. We'd all been watching birds for years, and a few very capable COG members, such as Geoffrey Dabb and Graham 'Steve' Stephinson, were particularly adept at taking stunning bird portraits with film cameras, but it was an exclusive field. The advent of digital camera technology brought bird photography to the masses. Our Photo Gallery has grown with the digital camera – those early cameras were so primitive compared with today's technology, yet many thousands of people per month were drawn to our website, initially in search of iconic Australian birds but with many staying for a good look through the site. We even garnered a few new members from these casual searches.

Our day-to-day activities were all there, such as COG Monthly Meeting info, including Guest Speakers and a summary of their broad-ranging topics, COG Committee news and contacts, Conservation activities and reports, Publications, Sales Desk items and Trips info – all trip

details or reports could now be perused since 1998. Questions like “What birds were seen at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands in 1998?” could now be answered at a click of the mouse, no mean feat!

We now have online access to all of our old *Gang-gang* newsletters since 2003. Prior to this we had print-only versions of GG, and an accompanying webpage if you were lucky, and before that zilch.

In 2008, COG member Alastair Smith single-handedly scanned and edited more than 5,000 pages from all print-only editions of our Canberra Bird Notes (CBN) journal since Volume 1, No. 1 was published in July 1968 - these are now available for all to enjoy, and being in full-text PDF format are completely searchable. They’re a great read and a wealth of gold nuggets is contained in these early editions! Good job Alastair!

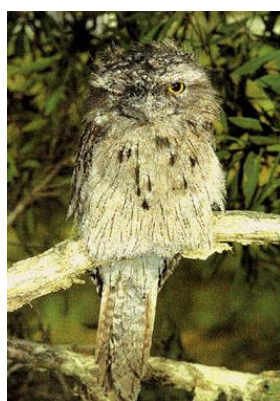
The present

In COG’s 50th year we now have a new website, with which you’ll all be familiar. Despite a lengthy gestation period the baby did arrive (kicking and screaming, just like its foster parents), fully-developed and ready to fly. Big thanks have to go to Julian Robinson who was inspirational in getting this up and, ...er, flying and who continues to be the lynchpin holding it all together. Well done Julian!

The future

Well, what of the future. Who knows what awaits us in the world of the Internet. No doubt you’ll carry it around, maybe as a phone, maybe as a watch and possibly even on the sleeve of your jacket, or embedded in your glasses, but rest assured it’ll be ubiquitous. Canberra Birds will be there too – whispering in your ear what that strange bird call is (if there are many birds left!), telling you where it is, how many there are, what their sexes are, taking a photo (maybe even a holographic one) and in all probability filing a report to the COG Atlas on your behalf.

Congratulations COG on achieving your 50th year – can’t wait for those holograms!



Tawny Frogmouth (Mike O’Shaughnessy)

Disclaimer: Any similarity between the events mentioned in this article and actual reality is purely coincidental.

Accepted 1 November 2014

THE CanberraBirds EMAIL LIST, ITS PREDECESSORS AND ITS FUTURE

DAVID MCDONALD

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Ever since the ACT Branch of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union was formed in 1964 (and became the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) in 1970) members have developed techniques for recording and sharing their bird observations. In the early days of the organisation, this was largely done by passing around an observations book at meetings into which people made notes of interesting observations. This, and other early recording strategies, is documented in Davey and Battisson 2013 and Davey 2013.

Fast forward half a century and we find that we are living in a world in which digital technologies have massively changed the ways that we communicate, store and retrieve information. COG's founders could never have imagined, back in 1964, that a birder might see an unusual species at the National Botanic Gardens and immediately take out their mobile digital device (a.k.a. mobile phone) and send a text message containing information about the observation to a group of people whom they know are interested in such rarities. People observing the bird would record their observations on the spot, using BirdLog on their own mobile digital devices. This would cause the observation to be immediately available to birders and researchers across the world via the eBird servers operating at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York. Those data would then be downloaded into the national birding database managed by BirdLife Australia in Melbourne and subsequently transferred to COG's databases to be available for writing up the Annual Bird Report, and also transferred to the Atlas of Living Australia in Canberra from where they become available to the public at large. Prior to all that happening, however, one of the recipients of the text message might share its contents as an email posted to canberrabirds@canberrabirds.org.au.

CanberraBirds is COG's email-based discussion and announcement list. Some people refer to it as COG's 'chat line' but I find that appellation inappropriate. The purpose of the list is not 'chat'. Rather, its purpose is the sharing of substantive information about the birds and birding in the Canberra region.

COG's website describes the list in the following terms:

COG has an email announcement and discussion list for members and friends of COG: 'Canberra Birds'. While it is recognised that some COG members do not have access to email, and some who have access prefer not to use it for birding matters, the list is a resource for those members and friends of COG who choose to use it. It complements other communication channels such as Gang-gang, Canberra Bird Notes and monthly meetings.

The discussion list is displayed on the website Home Page as a scrolling list of the five most recent posts. Clicking on the titles of these posts will take you to the archive of all posts.

What may it be used for?

Well, just about anything you choose to share with others related to COG and birding in the Canberra region! Interesting birding observations; requests for information

(what's the bird I heard at Campbell Park with an eight-note ascending call?); quick feedback on Good Ideas; news from the Committee in advance of receiving it at a monthly meeting or via Gang-gang; comments on birding books or articles you have read; and so on.

So long as the list is not abused, everything posted to it will be automatically delivered to all subscribers. Your privacy is ensured; only the list maintainer will have access to the list of email addresses of people who have subscribed.

The COG Hotline

I established the list in 1999 as, by then, the use of email had become widespread. Prior to doing so, I discussed the proposal informally with a number of other COG members and, in particular, with the stalwarts of the organisation who operated the COG Hotline. You don't remember the COG Hotline? It was established in the early 1980s, launched at Government House by the then Governor-General Sir Ninian Stephen (himself a keen birder). He telephoned the first-ever message to the Hotline! It initially comprised a telephone answering machine installed in the study of COG member Ian (now McComas) Taylor with its own, dedicated telephone line paid for by COG. The answering machine and telephone line was subsequently moved to Environment Centre in Kingsley Street, Civic, where it remained for the rest of the Hotline's life. If a COG member had an interesting observation to report, or a question to ask, they would phone (02) 6247 5530 and leave a message on the answering machine. One of a small, dedicated band of COG volunteers would, once or twice a week, go through the tape and make notes of what had been reported. (I am advised that it usually contained a fairly high noise to signal ratio!) The volunteer would then record a brief message summarising the information that had been left on the Hotline over that period. During the 1997-1999 period one of the Hotline volunteers, Ian Fraser, posted a twice-weekly summary of Hotline reports to the national email discussion list, [Birding-Aus](#). I understand that the volunteer Hotline operators were, in order, McComas Taylor, Richard Thomas, Ian Fraser and Ian McMahon – apologies if I have missed anyone!

Although I was not one of the Hotline maintainers, by 1999 I formed the view that email had attained sufficient reach that COG could usefully established an email-based announcement and discussion list. Conscious that this would probably make the Hotline redundant, I discussed the proposal with the operators of the Hotline. I was pleasantly surprised to hear that most were more than happy to be relieved of the responsibility, recognising that email was a more efficient way of achieving the Hotline's goals. We all had lingering concerns, however, over what we now call the digital divide: discriminating against people who do not have internet access.

1999: 'cog-l' established

During the second half of 1999 I put a formal submission to COG's Committee of Management seeking approval to establish the email-based list on behalf of COG. This was approved and I established it using what was then the largest free email list resource, [topica.com](#). In accordance with the protocol applicable at the time, the discussion list was called 'cog-l': the 'l' stood for 'list'. I created cog-l on 19 October 1999 and provided the following description:

An unmoderated announcement and discussion list for members and friends of the Canberra Ornithologists Group.

Our focus is the enjoyment, study and conservation of the wild native birds of the Canberra, ACT, Australia region.

On 24 October 1999 Harvey Perkins sent the first email distributed via the list. Its subject was 'CWE Friday Seminar-29/10'.

2004: canberrabirds established

Five years later, with some 10,000 emails having been distributed via cog-l, and 250 subscribers, the list was having problems:

- Topica.com continued to provide the list free but was including advertisements in each email.
- The list was being blacklisted by some government agencies and internet service providers owing to its (unjustified) reputation of facilitating spamming.
- The archive was clumsy and a better alternative was available.
- COG had moved its own web hosting resources to [Quadra Hosting](#) and it seems sensible to consolidate all its internet resources and activities on that single platform.

In early July 2004 the new list went live, with the new name—its current one—CanberraBirds. Over the intervening decade the list has operated effectively, providing a worthwhile medium for communication between members and friends of COG. It remains an unmoderated list, meaning that anything posted to the list is automatically distributed to all the subscribers. With just a tiny number of exceptions, subscribers have applied a high level of email etiquette, only a handful having to be reminded of the simple list rules about avoiding offensive or disparaging language, and generally respecting other subscribers.

One important change that has occurred in recent years has followed the widespread availability of digital cameras including those incorporated into mobile phones. This has meant that increasingly subscribers are sharing their bird photographs, either directly as email attachments or by means of hyperlinks in emails to internet-based image repositories such as [Flickr](#). A small number of subscribers have felt that this has reduced the list's usefulness as it facilitates people being lazy, simply sharing photographs and asking for identifications, rather than interrogating their field guides to identify their observations themselves. It has been seen by them as 'dumbing down' the list's contents. Most subscribers, however, do not take this view, feeling that the list still operates effectively, with content that they find of interest.

In recent years the number of subscribers has been stable at approximately 290. Over the last decade emails distributed via the list have been publicly [archived](#) with the generous support of Dr Andrew Taylor from the University of New South Wales. Approximately 250 emails are distributed each month over the list—some 40,000 in total since its inception!

One disappointment I have had with the list is that we have never been able to attract any volunteers to enter into COG's Atlas database reports of bird observations posted to the list but not recorded elsewhere. A consequence is that subscribers who send interesting observations to the CanberraBirds list should also ensure that they enter them into the online COG Atlas, otherwise the observations are lost.

What is the future of the CanberraBirds email announcement and discussion list?

Frankly I do not know! While I have found quite satisfying the task of maintaining the list over the last 15 years, on behalf of COG's members and friends, I am increasingly moving towards the view that this technology is superseded by internet-based forums. An example is the world's largest of its type, [Bird Forum](http://www.birdforum.net/) <http://www.birdforum.net/>. This type of resource provides far more flexibility as a communication channel than does email, enabling managers to partition contributions into categories such as requests for information, announcements from the COG Committee, rare bird alerts, trip reports, conservation and biodiversity matters, photographs, technical ornithological topics—and even 'chat' about birds! Forums also facilitate interfaces with social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

On the other hand, many members and friends of COG seem content with CanberraBirds as it is. In this rapidly changing world, 15 years seems a long time to use a single technology. Perhaps the time has come to reconsider how COG uses contemporary internet resources, while retaining the many strengths of the CanberraBirds email announcement and discussion list, and its predecessor?

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- Davey, C. and Battison, L. (2013) A piece of COG's history: adding old records to the COG database. *Canberra Bird Notes* 38: 104-105.
- Davey, C. (2013) A piece of COG's history: post script – “Adding old records to the COG database”. *Canberra Bird Notes* 38: 188.

To join the *CanberraBirds* email announcement and discussion list, send an email message with the word 'subscribe' in the subject line to canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au.

The list's searchable archive is at <http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds>.

Accepted 9 November 2014

50 YEARS OF COG IN CONSERVATION

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In its first two decades, COG had no formal position or structure dealing with conservation. However, various members of COG with particular expertise, from the professional ranks at the then CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research and in academic institutions, were involved or consulted to provide expert comment and appraisal of government plans and actions impacting on bird habitats. At the time, there was no Federal Department of the Environment, and no ACT Government until the mid-1980s. Instead the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) dealt with planning and environmental impact matters over Canberra as the city expanded.

COG's conservation focus has from the early days been on local/regional issues and bird-related matters, where the expertise of its members and a professional approach in addressing environmental impacts on bird habitats is most relevant. Even today, the core of COG's conservation advocacy has this focus, for which the COG databases built up over the years have become very important tools in underpinning advocacy efforts. From the late 1980s into the 1990s, politicians and government departments increasingly sought COG's views on a variety of issues, and conservation matters were becoming increasingly important for the COG Committee (See CBN 14 (1) March 1989 President's Report – N Hermes; CBN 17 (1) March 1992 President's report – B Lindenmayer)

During the 1980s, various COG members took on more formal roles as conservation officer or were drafted on to subcommittees set up to deal with the increasing volume of conservation related matters. Into the 1990s and beyond, from the time of the Mulligans Flat campaign, COG entered into a more collaborative phase, joining with the Conservation Council ACT Region (then the Conservation Council for the SE Region and Canberra) and other groups to progress major conservation campaigns, and to better share knowledge and resources. The partnership with the Conservation Council has been very successful for the last 25 years, and continues.

When the ACT gained self-government, the President's report of 1989 commented in light of this, what would COG's future role in conservation be – a more political role/broader environmental issues or strictly focus on bird related matters? While in the second half of its history, COG has certainly undertaken more conservation advocacy at the political level and in public forums (e.g. meetings with politicians and bureaucrats on important issues), especially in collaboration with the Conservation Council, the core work has been letters and submissions on plans and environmental impact reports etc. using COG members' professional expertise/knowledge and COG survey data, particularly its long-term data such as the Woodland monitoring project and waterbird surveys.

Since 2009, COG has been proactive in initiating surveys on Superb Parrots, following increasing observations of these birds around northern Canberra in 2005/06 and the prospect of former pine forest land in the Molonglo Valley and the last remaining capable land in Gungahlin coming on stream for urban development. This has been important to inform Strategic Environmental Assessments in those areas, aiming to get the best possible outcome (or at least to best inform the assessment) in terms of protecting bird habitats.

Over the years as urban Canberra has developed, the clearing and fragmentation of bird habitats on the fertile lowlands (woodlands and grasslands) has seen the decline and loss of woodland birds particularly. This is illustrated by the flagship species Hooded Robin, which has now all but disappeared from peri-urban woodlands including the largest reserves (Mulligans Flat/Goorooyarroo), and the Little Eagle which has had a dramatic decline in breeding pairs.

It has not been possible here to cover all of the issues where COG has responded on impacts affecting the habitats of our birds. However, a read through the annual President's reports (published in CBN) gives a good summary of what has been on the COG agenda over the years.

Snapshots and Campaigns

“...this year saw us deluged with papers on development projects...” “...the Jerrabomberra issue is far from finalised and ACT Parks and Conservation has warned that they are going to be looking to COG for a major input shortly.” – from the President's report by Malcolm Fyfe (CBN March 1990 (15 (1))).

Jerrabomberra Wetlands

COG has had a long standing interest and input, beginning with studies undertaken in the 1970s showing the importance of the wetlands for local and migratory species. Formed in 1964 when a dam on the Molonglo River created Lake Burley Griffin, the wetlands would not have occurred if Griffin's original plan for a larger east basin had gone ahead. COG was active in the Jerrabomberra Advisory Group in 1986 to review conservation values and determine management requirements – Gerry van Tets and others. It was gazetted as a nature reserve in 1990. The wetlands are now being developed in a partnership between the Capital Woodlands and Wetlands Conservation Association (or Trust) and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. COG is represented on the CWWCA.

Lake Tuggeranong

The October 1985 CBN (10 (4)) is an interesting read about the proposed town centre and artificial lake proposed there. The area was mainly open grasslands with a creek and silt trap, but interesting birds turned up there including crakes and rails and Singing Bushlarks in season. Two options were proposed, a lake of 70 hectares (with some islands for birds) or a series of ponds and weirs, each about 7 ha. COG advocated for the smaller ponds and bird habitat landscaping with a buffer from houses. This was rejected by the NCDC which wanted a large lake and medium density housing near lake edge, with strong commercial pressures to build the town centre on the lake. History has shown that COG's option could have mitigated the ongoing pollution problems in the large lake, and the ACT Government is now retrofitting chains of ponds within the drainage lines of the urban lakes. These have been very successful in Belconnen in attracting crakes, rails and bitterns (and birdwatchers) in recent years.

1992 President's report – a sample of conservation issues on the agenda

- Opposition to a motorised bike track in woodland near Mt Stromlo – Malcolm Fyfe led this - the track was relocated;
- appraisal of the latest plan for Jerrabomberra wetlands;

- the potential impact of a proposed international motor racing complex Molonglo River gorge – this did not go ahead;
- proposal for major rock concert adjacent to Ingalba NR near Temora – this was a favourite COG campout area and relationships had been established with nearby landowners; the proposal was withdrawn; (an interesting example of COG involvement in issues beyond its core brief);
- with Namadgi National Park, 52% of the ACT was now protected – alpine and wet forests - concern that lowland woodlands & grasslands were not adequately protected.

Mulligans Flat

In 1991/92, COGs attention turned to woodlands conservation and Mulligans Flat - “a splendid piece of bird habitat... threatened by urban development in Gungahlin” (1992 President’s report – CBN Dec 1992 17 (4))

In 1992, a successful community campaign led by the Conservation Council resulted in the reserve being declared in 1993. A Joint submission by the Council with COG and other groups was prepared, and politicians were lobbied. At that time, the ACT Territory Plan was to develop all the flatlands, only leaving the dry forest ridges. Only the retention of the central quartz ridge (apparently due to its geological heritage values or inability to easily develop) had been proposed.

The decision broke the mold of planning suburbs on all the flat land with only some ridges retained. Mulligans Flat preserved the grasslands and woodlands and the eco-tones between them as well as the dry forests on the ridges. This was a significant step, before woodlands/grasslands were recognised in ACT legislation as threatened communities, and the support of then Environment Minister, Bill Wood was an important factor. Also important was the data collected by COG over the ACT Atlas study in the 1980s, which I am proud to say I contributed substantially to with my survey partner Brendan Lepski.

This campaign demonstrated key principles for future conservation efforts (reported in CBN 17 (4))

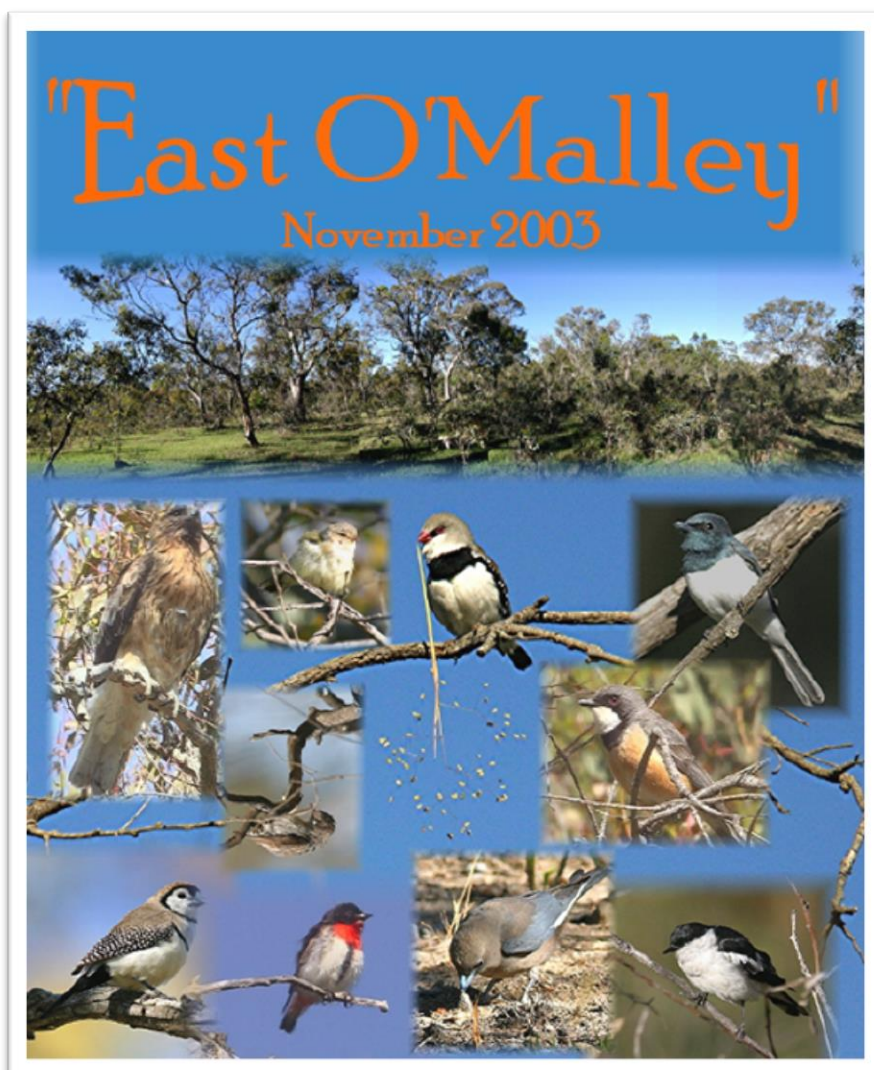
- A multi-group approach with pooling of resources;
- a well written submission with photos;
- lobbying of politicians;
- involvement with the Conservation Council “absolutely vital”.

East O’Malley

In 2002, the ACT proposed the sale and bulldozing of 27 ha of grassy woodland, for premium housing, worth \$17 million in land sales revenue. This small patch of woodland supported an amazing diversity of rare and threatened birds, including Little Eagle breeding, Varied Sittella and Diamond Firetail, and was a very popular, inner-urban birding site. The Conservation Council, with support of other groups like COG, ran a community campaign and got very good media coverage. This included a community event on site, advertised as a “walk in endangered woodland”, with groups of people taken on a site tour. Several hundred people attended. The battle for East O’Malley was lost: it was too far down the development track with various environmental approvals done, and worth too much money. Today it may be more difficult to develop a site like this, and offset sites would have to be offered. I can remember a site visit with politicians and government officials very late in the campaign.



Walk in endangered woodland- the East O'Malley campaign 2003 (*Jenny Bounds*)



Woodland birds at East O'Malley (*Geoffrey Dabb*)

We knew from the stern faces that the development would most likely go ahead; a large flock of Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoos flew low over us that morning almost deafening us with their calls, a seemingly last protest at the loss of this woodland patch.

Molonglo Valley

Long known as a hot spot for raptors with 12 breeding species recorded, COG turned its attention to this area following the Government's decision to urbanise the former pine forest and rural lands. This was another campaign over 2009/12 involving the Conservation Council with COG and other groups. COG put in a detailed submission to the Strategic Environmental Assessment and campaigned for protection of the central Molonglo area and the river corridor with good buffers from housing.

There were 3 areas proposed:

- East Molonglo – north of Weston Creek, which is under urban development now;
- Central Molonglo near Belconnen, rural grazing land and Kama Nature Reserve;
- West Molonglo north of Shepherd's Lookout – originally for broad acre use, subsequently residential development has been planned.

A positive outcome was a decision to conserve the Central Molonglo in perpetuity; this was strongly supported by the National Capital Authority, and the ACT Government eventually agreed, after proposing an initial moratorium on the land. The original proposal had a deep lake on the Molonglo River downstream of Scrivener Dam which would have drowned the river corridor; there was strident opposition to this and it did not go ahead.

The view of most environmental experts is that housing in East Molonglo is too close to the river and that recreational use in the proposed river park will put a lot of pressure on the natural values. There will certainly be bird winners and losers with the changes in the landscape. COG remains concerned about an appropriate buffer area on the southern boundary of Kama NR where eventually housing will abut.

Gungahlin – Throsby

COGs most recent conservation campaign, again in collaboration with the Conservation Council, saw new urban/reserve boundaries and several new reserves finalised for Gungahlin in 2013. A key issue for COG was the future of the narrow neck of land between Mulligans Flat and Goorooyarroo nature reserves, where a proposed urban area and associated fire mitigation would have impacted significantly on the natural values of the reserve, and a Superb Parrot breeding colony on Throsby Ridge.

COG's position was that there should be no development east of Horse Park Drive and lobbied the Commonwealth's decision makers. While much of the neck (as well as other land in Gungahlin, e.g. Kinlyside near Hall) will go into the reserve, a much reduced suburb of Throsby will be built on the eastern side of Horse Park Drive, only 100 metres from Superb Parrot breeding trees. COG remains concerned about the breeding colony's long-term future and the impacts which close urban influence will bring, including nest hollow competitors such as the Common Myna which will be drawn closer with the urban edge.

However, COG remains optimistic about the future of a much enlarged reserves area including proposals for an extended Sanctuary at Mulligans Flat, and a visitors/education centre, the Woodland Learning Centre in Throsby, as the gateway to this nationally important patch of endangered woodland and grassland which is now protected thanks to the community's efforts.

Cat containment in the ACT

In 1998, COG joined with the Conservation Council and others to propose cat containment for the new suburbs of Forde and Bonner, next to Mulligans Flat. This was accepted and a number of new developments abutting conservation areas now have cat containment laws. Social research has shown that there is broad support in the ACT community for this, and it has also been a positive for land sales in the designated suburbs. There is currently discussion with the ACT Government about a phased-in retrofit of cat containment across Canberra, which COG supports, and some hope this will become a reality.

Threatened species nominations

COG has submitted a number of species for ACT listing since 1998. Ten species have been accepted:

- Regent Honeyeater, Swift Parrot, Superb Parrot, Painted Honeyeater, Brown Treecreeper, Hooded Robin (1998)
- Varied Sittella and White-winged Triller (2002)
- Little Eagle (2006)
- Glossy Black Cockatoo (2009)
- Scarlet Robin (2013 – under consideration)

The Future – some observations

Economic drivers are still a significant challenge in advocating to protect bird habitats. With the ACT starting to run out of urban capable/greenfields sites, COG remains concerned about the future of the Central Molonglo land, a large area very close to Belconnen, with a Superb Parrot breeding colony and one of the few breeding pairs of Little Eagle. The feeling is that the government planners might try to reverse the decision to conserve the land.

The Federal Liberal/National Government's plans to devolve the Commonwealth's environmental powers to the States and Territories, which assists in achieving some balance between protecting threatened species/communities and development is very worrying. The ACT Government will become the developer and environmental regulator, and the Commonwealth seems disinterested in auditing and ensuring compliance with their laws.

COG Conservation Officers Rollcall

Jenny Bounds (2005 – to date)

Julie McGuinness (2002-2005)

Doug Laing (1998-99), Jo Vandermark (1988-1992), Phillip Veerman (1984-85),

Chris Davey (1983-84), David Pfanner (1980-82).

In the 1980s/90s, the following worked on conservation issues for various periods or on conservation subcommittees: John Gibson, Murray Dow, Jim Hone, Bill Handke, Michael Rowe, John Webster, Bruce Lindenmayer, Ian Fraser, Warren Martin, Anthony Overs, Tony Lawson, Malcolm Fyfe.

COG representatives on the Conservation Council in the last two decades include: David Pfanner, Jack Holland, Bruce Lindenmayer, John Avery, Julie McGuinness, Jenny Bounds .

Accepted 20 October 2014

FIRST ATLAS OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS, THE NSW SOUTH COAST PILOT ATLAS PROJECT 1973-74 AND COG

NEIL HERMES

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In 1973 COG was instrumental in the start up of large scale bird mapping in Australia. While the project was initiated and operated by the RAOU, COG members played significant roles. A pilot project, initially headed by COG member Gerald Horey and a team of volunteers conducted the first trial for mapping bird distribution across the continent. The area selected was on the NSW south coast.

The pilot project led directly to the first national bird atlas which began in 1977. Again, whilst an RAOU project, COG members were central in data collection. COG members Graeme Clark and Cedric Bear were Regional Organisers managing the collection of all data from the western and northern half of NSW.

The Pilot Atlas was published in 1979 and The Atlas of Australian Birds in 1984.

The idea of an Australian bird atlas based on data collected by volunteer atlassers was first mooted in 1972. It was the first significant step in harnessing the skills and expertise of amateur birdwatchers in a “citizen science” (although this expression was not used at the time) project in Australia. Because of the daunting scale of the task and to test its feasibility, it was decided to try a Pilot Atlas. The area selected needed to replicate the challenges of a national project. It needed to be large, with varied topography and sufficiently remote from human population centres.

The area selected was in southern NSW from Sussex Inlet to Bermagui and inland to Lake George.

An active COG member, Gerald Horey, managed the project until October 1973 and the project management then transferred to Sydney based John Broadbent. COG member Barry Baker continued to manage the Canberra input.

Between March 1973 to September 1974, 168 volunteers, many from COG, surveyed an area of 13,600 square kilometres divided into 169 grid squares. A total of 45,000 records were made of 287 species. Much of it was into difficult terrain in days before GPS, mobile phones and good maps.

Organiser Gerald Horey was from the UK, a statistician by profession and worked for the Bureau of Statistics. He was a banding colleague of Steve Wilson. In the 1970s, with assistants including Terry Gourlay, Simon Bennett and Barry Baker, Gerald had a particular interest in honeyeater migration. He was instrumental in many searches to discover where all the autumn honeyeaters in Canberra were headed. There were many road and walking excursions to the Braidwood and Tianjara regions to try to understand the migration. Groups of birders would leapfrog one another chasing flocks from forest patch to forest patch mapping numbers and directions. It was exhausting. A side show was watching the resident falcons sampling the passing selection of honeyeaters. On one occasion Gerald purchased, at great expense all the 100,000-map sheets covering the region, only to have them stolen from his car.

Gerald retired and moved to Moruya where he continued his interest in birds and worked with Steve Marchant. He died in 2000.

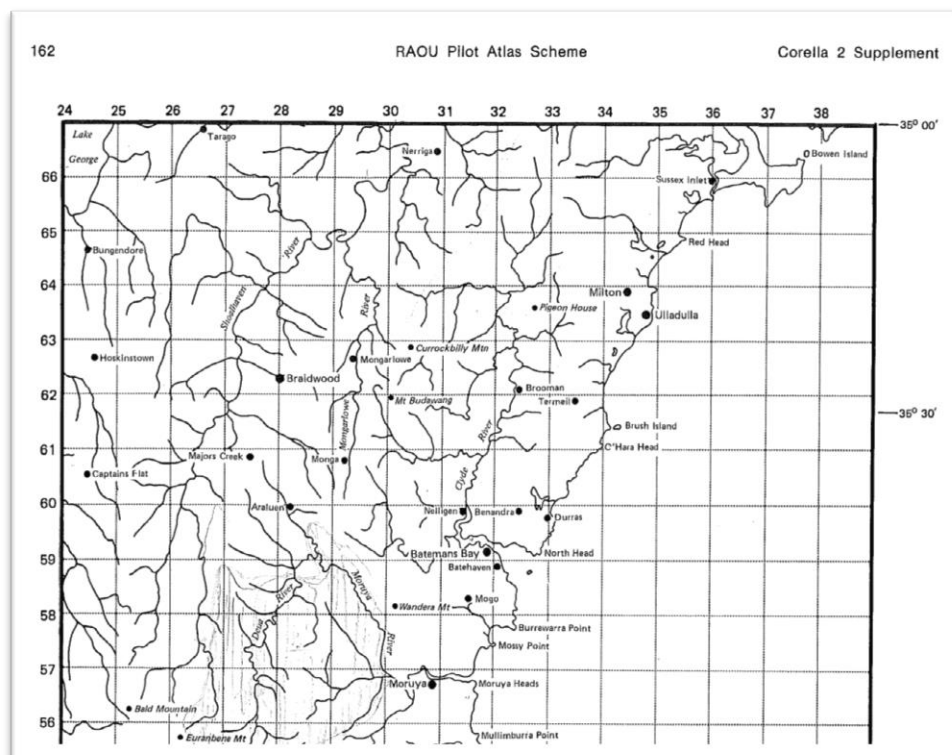
Other COG members then took up the work of the local data collection for the Atlas of Australian Birds. Local was only a relative term since the COG area of responsibility was southern, western and inland northern NSW. Over a five-year period the COG Regional Organisers were Graeme Clark followed by Cedric Bear with Sub Regional Organisers Barry Baker, Rodney Cox, Robert Digan, Neil Hermes, Trisha and Philip Maher, Neil Macfarlane, John Penhallurick and Mike Doyle. Simon Bennett left Canberra and joined the atlas project on the RAOU staff in Melbourne.

Fieldwork began on 1 January 1977 and ended five years later on 31 December 1981. Data were received from every single one-degree block of the Australian continent, Tasmania and adjacent islands, with 3000 atlassers completing 90,000 survey sheets producing 2.7 million records (sightings) of 716 bird species.

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Corella 2, Supplement.

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The area covered by the RAOU Pilot Atlas Scheme. (Note Lake George in the top left corner.)

Accepted 26 November 2014

THE ACT BIRD ATLAS: LOOKING BACK

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I was resting with my back against a tree way up on a hillside above Corin Dam. The sun was still warm, slanting down through the trees – it was late afternoon in October 1986. The ash forest spread out at my feet, the surface of the dam below – with mile upon mile of rolling hills beyond in perfect solitude. I was feeling pretty good. I had ticked off twenty or so species in a remote block, the Atlas project was going well. In fact everything was going pretty well. I can remember thinking, ‘Well, so far so good’. It was the day of my thirtieth birthday. Now I am close to double that age, it is a good a time to stop and reflect.

COG and I had cut our teeth on a number of small surveys and research projects. I had dived into the Garden Bird Survey when it was launched in the early 1980s, and with the publication of the RAOU’s first Atlas of Australian Birds, I wanted to try something more ambitious. I was also fired up by a visit to the RSPB in Britain at about that same time and was very impressed by the Atlas of Breeding Birds of Britain. In short, I was going to find out everything I could about the birds of the ACT.

I had great support from the COG committee and especially from Henry Nix. I felt that Henry was always there with a few words of advice and encouragement. He had the experience and the gravitas, and I felt that with him behind me, I could not go far wrong. Bryan Fitzgerald was President and although I caused him anxiety—he never knew what I was going to do next—he was a great ally and supporter. I had rattled Bryan by suggesting that COG needed to buy a computer. This was in the days of DOS and ‘Windows-compatible’ machines. COG’s first computer was a Sanyo with a 5.5 inch drive. It cost \$3000 as I recall – no wonder Bryan was nervous. But I am getting ahead of myself.



COG's first computer. A Sanyo 'PC compatible' - note twin 5.5 inch floppy disk drive.

In those days, COG had a good working relationship with the NCDC, the local planning authority before self-government. We worked closely with David Shorthouse and a fellow called Gary. We thought we were on to a good deal, because the NCDC would pay us to undertake bird surveys (Birds of Prey, the Murrumbidgee Corridor, etc). I received a part-time income, COG raised money more easily than with chook-raffles, the NCDC received professional consultancy reports for the fraction of the cost of employing 'real' professional consultants.

With the backing of the COG committee I approached the NCDC with a proposal to map the distribution of all the birds in the ACT over a three-year period. They agreed to fund it one year at a time. I can't remember the exact figures, but I think they paid COG about \$40,000 per year, about half of which went to me as project manager, and COG kept the balance. I thought I was in clover!

The planning began in 1984 or 85. I decided to use a grid of 2.5 minute cells (about 4x5km). This would make our data compatible with data collected for the RAOU atlas, but don't think anything ever came of that. On this basis, I divided the ACT up into 165 cells. This covered the entire territory except for a tiny remote sliver of a square kilometer or so down by Mt Clear and one or two other little slivers elsewhere around the edge. I ruled up the grid onto a 1:100 000 map of the ACT and pinned this map to a sheet of canite.

We needed a logo. In those days designing and printing anything other than words and letters on a computer was rather tricky. However, I heard that across the University, hidden in a secret room, was a new kind of computer with a Scottish name—a 'Macintosh'. I talked my way in, and lo and bold, this wondrous device could be used to create and print squiggly lines and circles. Before long we had our own logo.

In terms of data collection, my idea was to make the process as simple and as user-friendly as possible (although that term had not yet been invented). I designed a data sheet with every species in the ACT listed in alphabetical order. All an observer had to do was add in their name, date, the cell number and tick off the species if it was present in the cell. I remember having a moderately warm discussion with a COG friend who was certain that the birds should be listed in taxonomic order. My argument was that most folk knew the alphabetical order better than they knew taxonomic order.

Before we could launch, I put together a hundred or so atlassing kits in a clear plastic sleeves. Each kit contained a set of photocopied maps, a block of 20 data sheets made up into a pad with a stiff backing board and a set of instructions. For collecting the sheets, I knocked up a 'letter box' out of half-inch chipboard and painted it red and stuck a large version of the logo on the front.

I can't remember exactly when we launched: I think it may have been 1 July 1986. It was a Wednesday night at a regular COG meeting in the old Forestry lecture theatre at ANU. I can remember there was quite a buzz of excitement as I introduced the project and spoke about what I hoped to achieve. The idea was that 'easy' squares near the city would be surveyed every month, say thirty six times in all, and the more remote squares would be surveyed once in each month, that is, twelve times, over the three-year project. By the end of the evening three-quarters of the squares had been adopted.

One crusty old bugger—I don't remember who, but he must have been a retired academic—came storming up after the meeting roaring that I had planned it all wrong. Of course I should have been using some other grid system, not latitude and longitude! Thanks pal. One of the many things I learned during the atlas is that if you stick your neck out, you have to be prepared to have your head bitten off occasionally.

Atlassing was always a joy for me. I loved nothing better than setting off in my little Suzuki 4WD for some remote corner or other and coming home with a sheaf of new data-sheets. The first Wednesday of the month was like Christmas, the 'letterbox' would be stuffed with completed data-sheets after every COG meeting. The data poured in, and using paid data-entry folk – mainly students sitting in my office at home—we kept the data up to date. Very soon, I could print out simple maps with a * showing presence and a – showing absence in each cell. I remember one day seeing Henry showing the first of these little maps (I think it was the Flame Robin) to a number of other senior COG members. This gave me quite a surge of pride and satisfaction.

If there was one thing I enjoyed more than atlassing, it was atlassing with a big COG group. To tackle the less accessible squares in the Upper Cotter and along the Naas River, we organised convoys of four or five vehicles. Feeling like royalty, I would get the keys to the gates of the National Park from the rangers and we would make a full day of it. Once in, we would fan out and cover the wildest and most remote territory in the ACT. I particularly remember great adventures with Philip Veerman along the Naas, and Isobel Crawford up to Creamy Flat way above the Cotter.



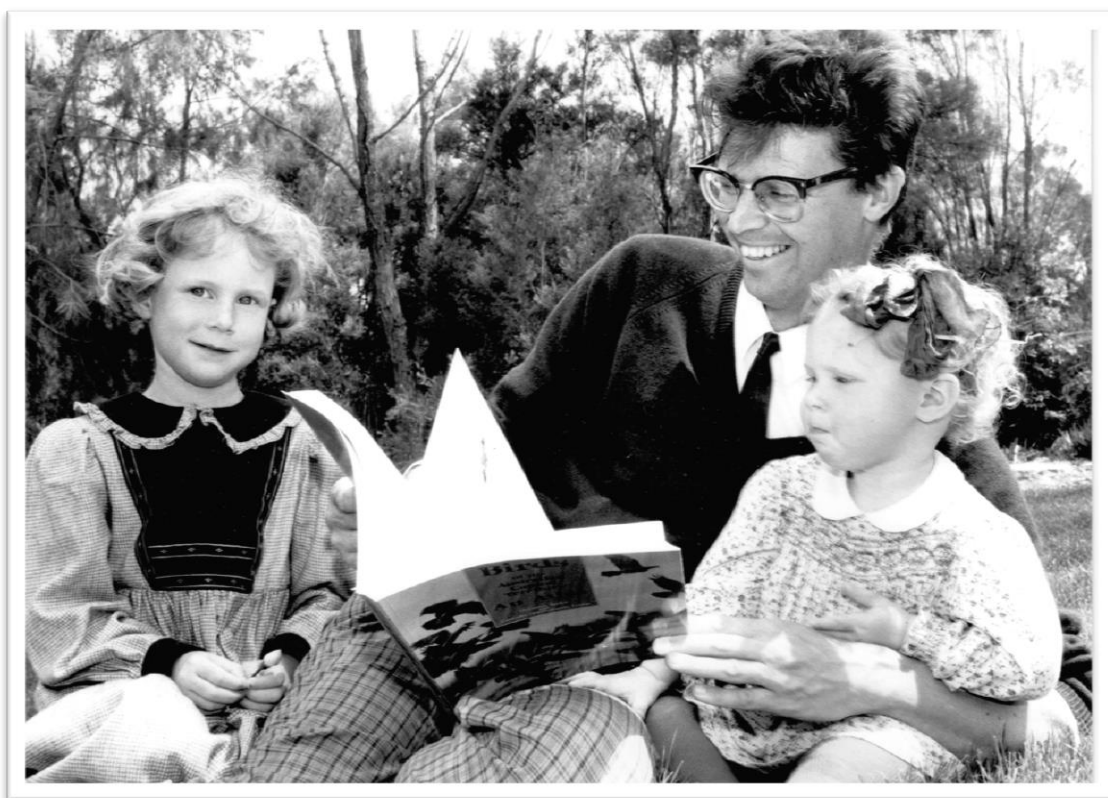
An Atlassing event at Cotter Hut. Left to right: Bryan Fitzgerald, Alastair Morrison, McComas Taylor

Looking back on those days, other names that immediately spring to mind are Coral and Murray Dow who would go anywhere, anytime. Two irrepressible schoolboys, Nick Mayo and Warren Martin, hiked most of the Brindabellas at night recording owls. Bryan Fitzgerald and Alastair Morrison combed their squares out at Kowen forest until they were certain they had found every last species. A shy Indian couple adopted a square out in Belconnen. So

many great friends! In all I think we had over 300 contributors, was it 7000 data sheets? Was it 200,000 records? I don't remember the exact numbers now.

Once the data was in I started analysis and writing. We plotted out the distribution for each species using spline-smoothing software developed by Michael Hutchinson at CRES under Henry's direction. I always thought this was a much better way of representing distribution than the dots in red or white that most other atlas projects have adopted. I was always a bit disappointed that our methodology was never picked up by other projects. Data collection took three years—the write up took another three years. One by one the species entries were written. COG members 'sponsored' individual species, and we purchased the right to reproduce the line drawings of birds from the RAOU Atlas. The wonderful Muriel Brookfield edited the whole text from start to finish and must have deleted dozens of occurrences of the word 'ubiquitous' and saved me from countless other embarrassments.

Then something sad happened. With the passage of time, the COG committee changed, and I felt I no longer had the trust, autonomy and support I had enjoyed earlier. As the end of the project approached, I was still young, naïve and egotistical enough to think that as I had initiated it, planned it, found the funding, managed it and written it, I should have my name on the front of it. The new committee thought differently and I was heartbroken. After six years of work I could see 'my' atlas slipping away from me in front of my eyes. Poor Bruce Lindenmayer, who had to negotiate between me and the committee, had a terrible job. How foolish I was. In the end, a compromise was reached and the Atlas appeared under joint names: 'Taylor and COG'. Things were so bad that Bruce even phoned my wife to make sure I was still coming to the launch. Of course I went to the launch, and there was a lovely picture in the Canberra Times of me flipping through the finished book with two little daughters and a son in the background, now a doctor, health-worker and teacher respectively.



Atlas launch 1992. MComas Taylor with daughters Annie and Eleanor.

The Atlas was widely hailed and sold well. Ian Warden even said in his review that he would write an ode to it if he could. But the damage had been done, and that was the end of my involvement with COG. I had found out everything I wanted to know about birds of the ACT and although still watch every bird I see, that was my last big bird research project.

Thirty years on, so many of those wonderful friends from Atlas days are birdwatching in loftier habitats: Murray, Bryan, Alastair, Doug Ross, Ian Mason and so many others. What great times we had together. Looking back for almost the first time in the thirty years since it was finished, would I do it all again? No. Maybe. **Yes!**

Accepted 20 November 2014

COG EXCURSIONS TO MOLONGLO REACH TO SURVEY NESTING DARTERS AND CORMORANTS



For the last 10 years or more Jack Holland has organised and led an annual COG excursion to Molonglo Reach to survey nesting Darters and Comorants from the deck of a quiet electric boat. The area is not readily accessible and many of the nests in the trees are not visible from land.

The above photo shows the participants in the trip on 16 February 2014. Jack is at the back (in front of the boat's skipper, see arrow).

THE HISTORY OF COG's WATERBIRD SURVEYS – LAKE GEORGE AND LAKE BATHURST

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1. Introduction

Two natural lakes are located in the north-eastern part of COG's Area of Interest (AOI): Lake George and Lake Bathurst (Fig. 1). They represent wetlands of significance for diverse waterbirds well beyond the local area and will often attract many thousands of birds.

The Waterbird Survey of the lakes organised since 1979 by the author (Lenz), with participation from many others whose names are acknowledged at the end of this paper, is the longest running continuous survey undertaken by COG covering 35 of COG's 50 year history. Data is entered into COG's database and recorded in summary species statements in each Annual Bird Report and provides a vital source of long-term information on waterbirds in our region. This paper gives an overview and history of the survey and some general results only.

The first European to see Lake Bathurst was surveyor, explorer and settler James Meehan in April 1818 (Abell 1995). Lake George was 'discovered' by convict Joseph Wild in August 1820, although Aboriginal people lived around the lake for more than 20 000 years (Barrow 2012).

For both lakes, early European visitors attested to the abundance of waterbirds, most famously Governor Macquarie, who, when visiting Lake George in late 1820, noted in his diary "...when we came to the South end of the lake it was covered with innumerable flocks of black swans, ducks and sea gulls...." (Barrow 2012). There are similar subsequent accounts for Lake George and of the easy hunting of waterfowl (Barrow 2012). Ramsay (1866) describes the plants and birdlife of Lake Bathurst in some detail and Cambage (1921 in Abell 1995) wrote "...The quantity of ducks and other wild water fowl on the lake and marshes are beyond description."

However, it seems that apart from earlier general descriptions of an abundance of waterbirds on the lakes, it is only in recent times that the waterbirds were studied in more detail. Various aspects of the biology of some waterbirds in south-eastern Australia, including at the two lakes, were investigated by staff of the then CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research: several species of ducks (Frith 1959), Grey Teal (Frith 1962), Australian Shelduck (McKean and Braithwaite 1976), Black Swan (Braithwaite 1982), Australian Pelican (Vestjens 1977) and Silver Gull (Murray and Carrick 1964).

² Unless stated otherwise, all photos in this article are by the author.

2. The first waterbird survey at Lake George by Donald W. Lamm and Steve Wilson and his sons

Actual counts of all waterbirds on a significant readily accessible part of Lake George were carried out by Donald W. Lamm (1964), a visitor to Canberra, with the assistance of Steve Wilson and his sons over a three-year period (1961 to 1963). They counted the birds on the NW part of the lake from Geary's Gap to the northern end (Fig. 2). They drove along the Federal Highway and stopped at many points along the way and walked around the northern tip of the lake. Key findings were that conditions locally (water level) and farther inland (availability of water) influenced the numbers of ducks and waders at Lake George. Most species appeared to be nomadic and only *"relatively few species showed a completely seasonal pattern of movement"* (Lamm 1964).



Figure 1. Google Earth view of Lake George (left) and Lake Bathurst (right top) in 2013. Both lakes are only partially filled.

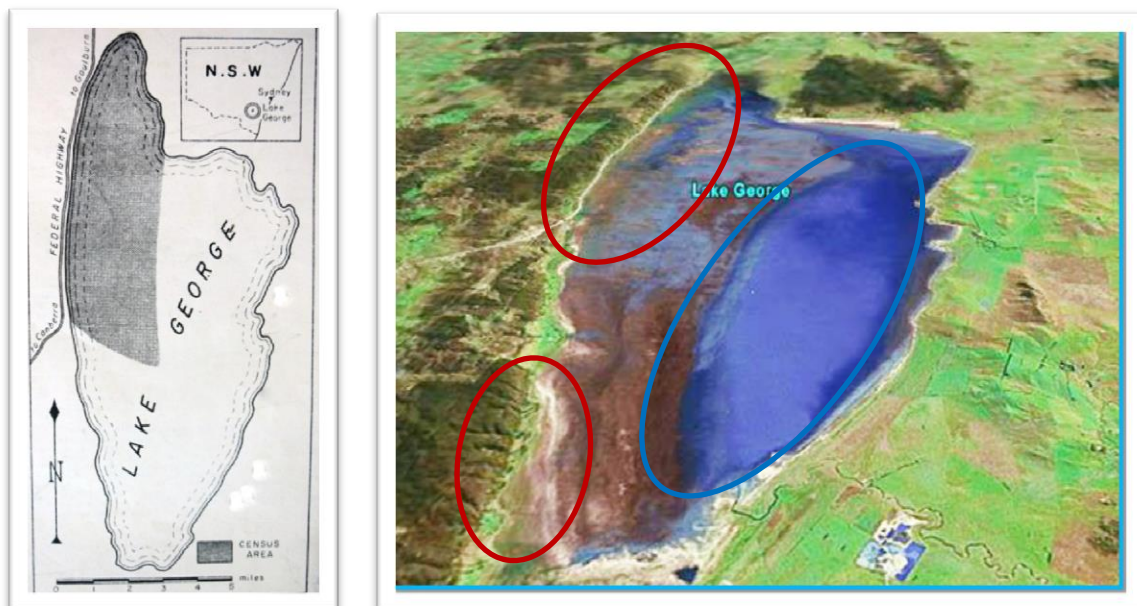
3. The beginning and timing of COG's waterbird surveys

I arrived in Canberra in 1977. At that time the water level at Lake George was high and many birds could easily be seen from the Federal Highway. The study by Lamm (1964) provided a good model for starting regular surveys. A proposal to COG to resume surveys of the waterbirds on Lake George was accepted.

In June 1979 the surveys at Lake George, covering both the NW and SW sections of the lake (Fig. 3), commenced. Henry Nix of COG suggested including *"the most interesting"* Lake Bathurst in regular surveys as well. These surveys started in September 1980. I have organised the surveys on both lakes on behalf of COG ever since. Many COG members have been involved in these surveys (see below).

Over time, Lake George was visited on a monthly basis (bi-monthly only for a short initial period) from June 1979 to June 1981, November 1984 to March 1986 and March 1989 to June 2001. In the intervening periods the lake had either dried up completely or the water had receded too far to the eastern shore that the remaining area under water could no longer be surveyed from the West.

After 2001 surveys were interrupted for two main reasons. The upgrade to the Federal Highway meant it was no longer possible to stop on the side of the road to scan the lake. Likewise, access to the northern tip was now impeded. The lake also dried up for a number of the following years, although a partial refill in 2005 with water more restricted to the eastern half of the lake (see Fig. 3) was missed. In early 2010 Nicki Taws, records officer of COG, received a message from a member of the Taylors Creek community on the eastern side of the lake: “*Water is back, birds are back*”. The members of that community provided access to large parts of the eastern shore, commencing in April 2010.



Figures 2 (left) and 3 (right). The area of Lake George covered in Lamm’s surveys (left) and the areas covered in COG’s surveys (right) on the western side (the two smaller red rings on left) and along the eastern part of the lake (blue larger ring on right). The latter area became accessible only in 2010. Fig. 2 is taken from Lamm (1964) *Emu* 64, p. 114; Fig. 3 (showing the lake in 2005) from P. De Decker and E. Truswell (ANU): Lake George – Weereewa. The Ancient Story. *Talk at Geoscience Australia, June 2011*.

Lake Bathurst has been visited regularly since September 1980 up to now (bimonthly to April 1982, monthly ever since). The main lake may be dry for periods, but often the Southern Morass will hold water for longer. In dry periods the visits were less regular, and a greater emphasis was then placed on the birds of the land surrounding the lake, notably snow gum remnants and the former gravel pits near Tarago.

4. Main characteristics of both lakes

4.1 Lake George

Lake George is the largest inland lake in NSW with a length of 24 km and a maximum width of 10 km, covering about 15 000 ha when full and to a maximum depth of 4 m (Braithwaite 1982; Barrow 2012). The water has a fairly high salt content (1600 to 4600 mg/L; Braithwaite 1982). The soils of Lake George are mainly clays and silts. The lake is very exposed to wind. As a result of these physiographic factors the water is turbid. This in turn affects the aquatic vegetation.

Algae, *Spirogyra* spp., are an important element of the aquatic flora. Blooms can result in the formation of large floating mats, on which waterbirds feed. Diverse marsh vegetation dominates at the northern and southern end of the lake (Lamm 1964) and at all creeks that run into the lake (six in total). Southern Cane Grass (*Eragrostis australasica*) is the main element at the northern swamp. It is one of the most easterly occurrences of this plant in Australia. Areas of the lake bed that become exposed are soon covered by the naturalised weed *Atriplex prostrata*. The seeds are an important food source especially for Grey Teals (*Anas gracilis*), and become available in large volumes to the birds with re-flooding of lake bed. Another important food plant, growing on exposed mud and in very shallow water is the Round-leafed Wilsonia (*Wilsonia rotundifolia*); its small leaves (see Fig. 8) are stripped off by Black Swans (*Cygnus atratus*) and Grey Teal, often leaving the leaves at the growing tip intact.

The large size of the lake and difficulties of access pose many limitations on the ability to effectively survey the waterbirds. However, when the lake is well filled waterbirds tend to concentrate along the shore line and especially at the northern and southern end of the lake. Generally, not too many birds are present on the open water. Hence, despite the above mentioned restrictions, often a significant portion of the waterbirds could be surveyed. For many years now water at Lake George, if present at all, has covered only the eastern half (Fig. 3), the deepest part of the lake bed. Under these conditions, as e.g. shown in Figs. 3 and 4, since 2010 with access to the eastern shore it has been possible for the first time to count all waterfowl, with the exception of small waders.



Figure 4. View of Lake George - completely dry, seen from the West (left) and partially filled, seen from the East (right).

4.2 Lake Bathurst

When full, Lake Bathurst covers an area of 1350 ha, i.e. about a tenth of the area of Lake George. Its depth can extend to 7 m. Over the survey period the lake was full mainly in the early years. Mostly water is restricted to a major “East Basin”, a smaller “West Basin” and a

couple of smaller pools with varying tracts of dry land in between (Fig. 5). Water is retained for longest in the East Basin. Adjacent to the lake are two smaller wetlands, the Southern and Northern Morass (Fig. 5). After heavy rains the Southern Morass overflows into the Northern Morass, and in turn its overflow runs into Lake Bathurst, although this is a rare event and occurred over the survey period only a couple of times.

Due to the smaller size of Lake Bathurst and the Morass all waterbirds can be counted on a single survey. While birds are recorded separately for the main sections of the wetland system, they are treated as a single population. Birds move freely between the various areas.



Figure 5. *Google Earth* view of Lake Bathurst at low water level (with the East and West Basin) and the Morass (with the Northern and Southern part).

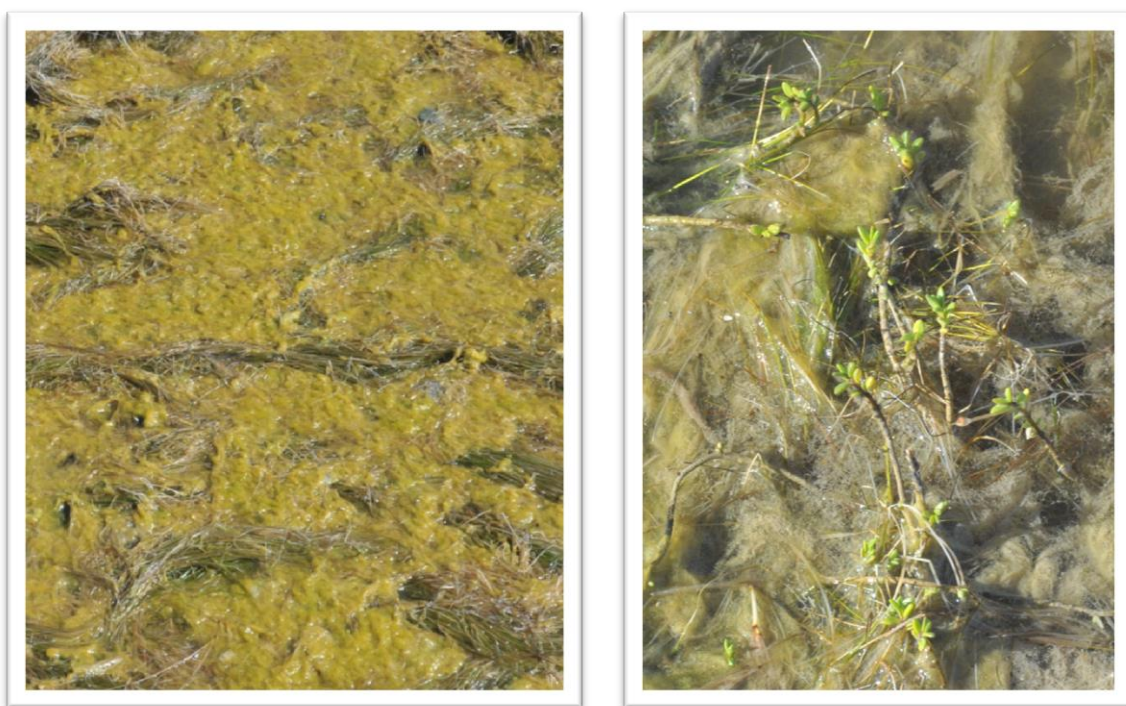


Figure 6. The East Basin of Lake Bathurst viewed from the North (left) and the Southern Morass viewed from the East (right).

The Morass contains freshwater while that in Lake Bathurst is brackish, albeit with a lower salt concentration than in Lake George, at 700-2900 mg/L (Braithwaite 1982; Abell 1995). The lake bed is composed of sand and gravel. Hills surrounding the lake ensure that the lake is less exposed to wind than Lake George. The water is clear and as a result the aquatic vegetation is very different to that of Lake George.

Milfoil (*Myriophyllum propinquum*) forms dense stands at higher water levels. As water levels recede and salinity increases widgeon grass, *Ruppia* sp., (Figs. 7 and 9) will dominate the underwater vegetation. Extensive algal mats develop especially once the water becomes shallower (Fig. 7). Adding to the food supply for ducks and swans are the small leaves of the Round-leaved Wilsonia, an abundant plant growing under ephemeral conditions at both lakes (Fig. 8).

The water vegetation is a key element in the ecology of this lake and of great importance to waterbirds (as the basis for a complex food chain in the lake, for grazing and nest material; see Figs. 7 to 9). Wave and wind action result in the accumulation of large volumes of these water plants, notably along the eastern shore (see also Ramsay 1866). The decaying plant material provides important feeding sites for various birds, notably for waders and White-fronted Chats (*Ephianura albifrons*), and contributes to a rise in the shoreline. In the end, sheets of this dry plant material are rolled up by the wind, torn and blown over a wider area, thus contributing nutrients to surrounding ground (see Figs. 10 and 11).



Figures 7 (left) and 8 (right): *Ruppia* grass and dense algal mats (left) and the small leaves of Round-leaved Wilsonia (*Wilsonia rotundifolia*) growing on wet ground and in shallow water (right) are main sources of food for Black Swans, Grey Teals and other ducks.



Figure 9. Abandoned (due to falling water level) Black Swan nest at Lake Bathurst, illustrating the size of the circular area (radius 5 to 6 m) surrounding it that the birds have stripped of *Ruppia* grass for the construction of the nest.



Figures 10 (left) and 11 (right). When the water level of Lake Bathurst falls and the underwater vegetation becomes exposed and dries up, the predominantly westerly winds roll up this vegetation layer on the eastern shore and distribute the fragments across surrounding ground.

5. Overview of the waterbirds recorded from the two lakes

The waterbird fauna is very similar at both lakes (Table 1). The higher number of species at Lake Bathurst is mainly due to more wader species recorded there. At Lake George key areas for waders, most notable the northern part of the lake, are simply not visited often enough or are no longer accessible. The difference is relative rather than fundamental. The cane grass swamp in the North used to be the home to the Australasian Bittern (*Botaurus piciloptilus*); no suitable habitat for this species is available at Lake Bathurst. Breeding for the bittern was likely but could not be confirmed. Longer periods of drought and cattle grazing have heavily impacted on this most interesting cane grass swamp. It was also a key area for crakes and rails.

Table 1. Number of waterbird species recorded at Lake George and Lake Bathurst during the waterbird surveys.

Group	No. species (<i>breeding</i>)	
	Lake George	Lake Bathurst
Ducks, Swans	12 (4)	12 (8)
Grebes	3 (1)	3 (1)
Cormorants	5 (1)	5
Pelicans	1 (1)	1
Hérons, Egrets, Bittern	8 (1?)	7
Ibises	3	3
Spoonbills	2	2
Crakes, Rails	5	5
Waders	22 (3)	32 (4)
Gulls, Terns	3	5 (1)
Total	64 (10)	75 (14)

A few more species breed at Lake Bathurst than at Lake George. This is due to the fact that Lake Bathurst, when at high water levels, contains many islands which provide nesting sites safe from fox predation. Only a few species breed at times in larger numbers [Black Swan on both lakes; Silver Gull (*Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*) and Hoary-headed Grebe (*Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*) at Lake Bathurst]. For most other species breeding is restricted to a few pairs at any given time.

Tables 2 and 3 give examples of maximum numbers of birds recorded for selected species. In many cases similar maxima may also have been reached at other times, but only one example is given. However, the figures clearly indicate the significance that both lakes can have for waterbirds.

Table 2: Maximum numbers of selected species of waterbirds recorded at Lake George during COG's surveys.

Species	Max. no.	Date	Species	Max. no.	Date
Freckled Duck	1 330	Dec 12	Australasian Bittern	5	Jan 90
Black Swan	2 500	Oct 92	Straw-necked Ibis	350	Jan 81
Australian Shelduck	2 000	Dec 95	Royal Spoonbill	84	Apr 90
Pink-eared Duck	18 000	Dec 14	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	40	Jan 90
Australasian Shoveler	1 670	Apr 89	Eurasian Coot	20 000	Jan 13
Grey Teal	12 000	Apr 13	Red-necked Avocet	1 180	Jul 13
Chestnut Teal	2 000	Jun 11	Double-banded Plover	89	May 89
Hardhead	3 000	Sep 12	Red-capped Plover	400	Apr 91
Great Crested Grebe	67	Aug 79	Red-kneed Dotterel	130	Apr 89
Australian Pelican	1 150	May 80	Latham's Snipe	64	Sep 97
White-faced Heron	266	Feb. 91	Silver Gull	1 800	Apr 89

Table 3. Maximum numbers of selected species of waterbirds recorded at Lake Bathurst during COG's surveys.

Species	Max. no.	Date	Species	Max. no.	Date
Musk Duck	220	Oct 91	Black-winged Stilt	1 374	Oct 14
Freckled Duck	470	Apr 86	Pacific Golden Plover	57	Mar 99
Black Swan	5 850	Oct 94	Red-capped Plover	605	Aug 82
Australian Shelduck	1 455	Dec 95	Double-banded Plover	182	Jul 87
Pink-eared Duck	4 500	Jul 13	Red-kneed Dotterel	130	Apr 89
Australasian Shoveler	5 620	Feb 96	Banded Lapwing	158	Jan 07
Grey Teal	6 500	Apr 13	Masked Lapwing	550	Apr 82
Chestnut Teal	1 165	Jun 11	Marsh Sandpiper	41	Feb 89
Blue-billed Duck	310	Aug 85	Red-necked Stint	935	Jan 96
Great Crested Grebe	65	Dec 90	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	4 480	Dec 95
Hoary-headed Grebe	3 420	Mar 92	Curlew Sandpiper	200	Oct 96
Eurasian Coot	16 000	Dec 12	Whiskered Tern	490	Oct 13

As a rule it is impossible to predict when a given species is present or maximum numbers are going to be reached. The presence or absence of species at the lakes is the result of a complex interaction between (1) *conditions at both local lakes* (water level, time since filling, food availability etc.) and (2) *conditions in wetlands many hundreds of kilometres away in inland Australia* (with water and suitable conditions for breeding, or falling dry).

The coming and going of wetlands is the main driver for movement of waterbirds in Australia. Lake George and Lake Bathurst are critical rest and refuge sites for waterbirds. The lakes are at their most significant when they hold water but inland wetlands are dry (see also Lamm 1964).

6. Lack of any conservation status for Lake George and Lake Bathurst

Both lakes are considered to be areas of important environmental, scenic and heritage value and acknowledged as refuge areas for waterbirds during inland droughts (NSW CALM 1994; Environment Australia 2001). However, neither lake has been given any specific protection status - but not for lack of trying.

In 1994 the NSW Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) proposed to establish a reserve trust to manage the crown lands at Lake George and to establish reserves especially for the northern and southern ends of the lake. Unfortunately, the project did not go beyond the proposal stage.

In 1995 Chris Davey and Peter Fullagar prepared, on behalf of COG, a submission to National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW to nominate both lakes as Wetlands of International Importance under the RAMSAR Convention. The submission was not even acknowledged.

In 2006 Chris Davey, on behalf of COG, proposed to Birdlife Australia to nominate Lake Bathurst as Important Bird Area (IBA). This application was successful, but it conveys no protection status to the lake. The Lake Bathurst IBA “*regularly supports significant numbers of near threatened Blue-billed Ducks and over 1% of the world population of Australasian*

Shovelers. It is an important drought refuge, sometimes supporting over 1% of the world populations of Freckled Ducks [see Fig. 12], Black Swans, Chestnut Teals and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers” (Wikipedia 2014). It also represents a key inland resting area for the New Zealand Double-banded Plover (*Charadrius bicinctus*).



Figure 12. An example of the significance of the lakes as refuge sites: In late 2012 around 1500 (combined across both lakes) Freckled Ducks (*Stricktonetta naevosa*) were present. This was a nationally significant concentration. Inland wetlands that are favoured by this species must have dried up. Although the species appeared at the time at many other sites in eastern Australia, including the ACT, nowhere were numbers that high. The species is threatened in Victoria and vulnerable in New South Wales (Davey and Fullagar 1995; Lenz and Kamprad 2013).

In 2008 the Wetlands Management Program of the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority identified Lake Bathurst as “*Wetland of National Importance*” and was to provide funding for weed control. The South American weed Serrated Tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) took hold on several properties around the lake during prolonged years of local drought. Only in a few cases was the weed managed by landholders; elsewhere it got out of hand and is now forming dense stands (Fig. 13). This has significantly reduced the habitat of open, sparsely vegetated ground that is preferred by Banded Lapwings (*Vanellus tricolor*), Pacific Golden Plovers (*Pluvialis fulva*), White-fronted Chats and Australasian Pipits (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*). However, up to now, only very limited funding has been made available for Serrated Tussock control. Wetter seasons in recent years had a patchy impact on the weed where rain filled some low-lying flat areas. But as these areas dry up the weed will re-sprout. There is now a massive seed bank of this grass around Lake Bathurst. Wetter conditions over the last few years have also seen the emergence of thistles.



Figure 13. The weed Serrated Tussock (close-up on left) is now covering large tracts of the Lake Bathurst basin (right).

7. Conclusion

Despite the lack of progress in achieving some conservation status for these Lakes, I believe the continuous monitoring and collection of survey data at these lakes of national significance is vital. As some members reach an age where such dedicated long-term commitments are less achievable, it is to be hoped that younger members will be able to continue surveying these lakes well into the future.

Acknowledgements

Without the active participation of many COG and non-COG members alike the waterbird surveys would not have been so successful. I extend my sincere thanks to all. In the list below the names of those in bold indicate the participants who have been involved in surveys for prolonged periods. My special thanks go to **Peter Milburn** who has shared and is sharing the survey load at Lake Bathurst extensively.

R. Allan, C. D. Alliston, M. Andrew, A. Atkins, D. Ayliffe, I. Baird, G. Barwell, L. Beardsell, S. Beatty, **R. Bennett**, B. Blaylock, W.J.L. Brooke, M. Brooker, P. Christian, G. Claridge, M. Clayton, C. & R. Cornes, **I. Crawford**, J. Cusbert, D. Dempster, N. & R. Dengler, R. Digan, **H. M. Doyle**, **A. Drake**, G. Duggan, A. Eacott, J. Ebar-Hard, E. Edwards, A. Etheridge, **M. Frawley**, P.J. Fullagar, **M. Fyfe**, **J. Grant**, T. Green, J. Holland, **T. Howard**, D. Johnson, **J. Kamprad**, T. Knutsson, E. Lebindinsky, **B. Lepschi**, M. Lewis, J. Lawrence, **J. Leonard**, B. Lindenmayer, D. Lindenmayer, N. Luff, **D. Mantle**, R. Martin, R. McDonald, **R. Mason**, D.B. McCorquodale, R. Metcalf, **P. Milburn**, P. & M. Minogue, J. Morris, K. & L. Morris, **H. Nix**, W. Osborne, J. Payne, S. Pell, J. Penhallurick, **D. Pfanner**, **H. Prendergast**, V. Read, N. Reckord, C. Reid, J. Roberts, **A.D. Ross**, A. Rowell, M. Scrivener, J. Seymour, R. Schodde, A. Summerville, **J. Vandermark**, K. Windle, I. Woolcock, A. & H. Wright, M. & E. Wright, and C. Zanetti.

Most sites around Lake George and Lake Bathurst are only accessible through private property. Permission to enter sites is confirmed with the owners and managers each time that we go out. We greatly appreciate their support. Access to these lands is a key prerequisite enabling these surveys.

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Accepted 1 November 2014

BRIEF HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

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Abstract: *In 1981 the Canberra Ornithologists Group started the Garden Bird Survey to collect systematic data on Canberra's suburban birds. It was the first of many large scale methodical surveys of Canberra birds and now ranks highly among projects done in many other places in terms of extent and usability of data and duration of coverage. It continues today with 33 years of data. The GBS has grown to a database of over 1.5 million pieces of data, from 325 contributors and covering 89,495 observer weeks of records (2014). Interpretation of the data makes a significant contribution to our information on local bird populations. The data has contributed to many research projects and articles and has been the basis of two separate styles of books on ACT Birds.*

Origin of the Garden Bird Survey

As has been discussed elsewhere in this Anniversary issue, from its earliest days a major focus of the Canberra Ornithologists Group has been to collect data about the region's birds. The first Group meetings in the 1960s had an observation book which was handed around to record sightings. Within a few years these records were recorded in the then new Annual Bird Report (1st ABR 1968-69) a COG publication which continues and has evolved considerably to this day (see also Fennell 2014, this issue).

One of the authors (Hermes) worked on the ABR in the early 1980s. By this time, the volume of data on common birds was significant but little of it had been recorded in a methodical manner. It was difficult to establish trends or identify the significance of the data. At the time Hermes (1977) had also completed a study which compared different bird census techniques on Black Mountain. He could demonstrate that, irrespective of the technique used, and as long as the observations were collected in a systematic way, surveys of Canberra birds produced useful and repeatable information. Henry Nix had been regularly recording birds in his Canberra garden from 1970. Using a weekly calendar grid design that was carried forward onto the GBS chart, he recorded broad estimates of abundance of bird species observed at any time during the week.

At the time, COG members had learnt valuable lessons from the 1973/74 Pilot RAOU Atlas Project (see Hermes 2014, this issue), particularly the merits of harnessing the effort of large numbers of volunteer observers (168 observers made 45,000 records of 287 species over 20 months) (Disney 1979). This demonstrated the potential value in large scale, long term bird studies conducted by amateurs. The key was to have simple repeatable data collection. The expression "Citizen Science" had not been coined but the idea had caught on.

As a consequence of all these influences and in an effort to start collecting information for the 1981-82 ABR on a more methodical basis, the COG Committee supported the commencement of the Garden Bird Survey (GBS). Hermes was responsible for defining the survey methodology and designing the GBS chart (Hermes 1981). Even at the start, Hermes stated that "*common birds are more important than the occasional rare record*".

The vision

After the first year, the COG President (Drake 1983) stated that “1982 has been a year of consolidation and steady growth for COG”. He highlighted “the return of so many well-kept record charts at the end of the first year of our GBS”. The Records Officer (Taylor 1983) stated that “The GBS is a new concept in Australian ornithology. This is the first time that a large number of people have been involved in an intensive urban observation program of this kind”. In hindsight this is incorrect, as the Garden Bird Survey performed in Brisbane but only published much later (Woodall 1995) preceded ours by two years. However, the Queensland study was only for one year. In his forward looking message Taylor wrote: “These systematic observations enable us to describe the bird population of Canberra more accurately than ever before. We can now measure the annual population fluctuations and describe geographical distribution of our local birds. This year we have established population indices for many species, thus laying the foundation for measurement of long-term changes in our bird population”.

Features of the GBS

The GBS calendar is deceptively simple. Initially contributors were to record only the maximum number of any particular species observed at any one time during a week. They were asked to record any bird seen within 100 metres of their house.

The year had to be divided into comparable units of time. The calendar was set to be constant for all observers and all years and to use the July to June year. Weeks were set by dates rather than days. The start dates for each week are listed on the top of each chart. This results in the GBS year running from 3 July to 2 July of the next year. The calendar month in which the first day of the week occurs, determines to which GBS month the week belongs.

Discrepancies in the abilities of individual observers and their interpretation of the survey method are averaged out over time and over the number of observers.

A feature of the method is it focuses on equally recording all species noted to occur, it is not a collection of the unusual, thus is an area where errors or biases are either less significant, averaged away or unlikely.

While the GBS produces much data there are biases, inconsistencies and limitations to its interpretation. However, these are quantifiable or largely able to be accounted for depending on the study. Its strength is the spatial and temporal spread of the data and its volume.

Results up to 2014

Up until and including the 2013-14 year the GBS has recorded 1.5 million pieces of information on 243 species, on 2,177 charts and covering 89,495 observer weeks of records. The average number of species seen per year is 145 which is significant considering the 280 species listed by Wilson (1999) as having occurred in the ACT. More than 325 contributors have participated in at least one year of observations and 411 sites have been registered.

The GBS data has contributed to many research projects, articles and several books. One of the authors (Veerman) published in 2002 “Canberra Birds A report on the first 18 years of the Garden Bird Survey”. This report had a revised edition to include the first 21 years of data, in 2003 and in 2006 (Veerman 2003, 2006). In 2000 COG and the ACT Department of Urban Services published “Birds of Canberra Gardens” edited by Paul Fennell. It featured

many colour photos and a different layout, and was designed more for a general public audience. This book was revised with 27 years of data (Fennell 2009).

In addition to the books published by Veerman, data from the Garden Bird Survey has been accessed by users at various times reflecting the unique time series offered by the survey results. The most significant known usage has been in the study of Common Mynas in the Canberra area, starting with work by Tidemann (e.g. 2001) and extended by Grarock et al (2012, 2013, 2014). Other examples of research using GBS data include Barratt (1998) Davey and Nicholls (2009) and Ikin et al. (2013a, b).

A number of articles have appeared in the Canberra Bird Notes and in COG's Gang-Gang Newsletter using GBS data to illustrate issues relating to specific birds of the area. *Ad hoc* reports have also been posted to the COG Chatline addressing questions raised by members of that group. Data from the GBS have also been loaded to the *Atlas of Living Australia*.

People

What makes the GBS valuable has been the regular contributions from hundreds of observers over the past 30 plus years: An extraordinary effort. What will make it even more valuable is continued data collection in the years to come. Behind the scenes the processing and analysis of the GBS data also involves many different individuals with skills in data entry and program writing.

The main leadership strength of the GBS has been its coordinators (some dates are approximate):

Neil Hermes	1981-82
McComas Taylor	1983-1989
Ian Baird	1990-1993
Philip Veerman	1994-2002
David Rosalky	2004-2006
Martin Butterfield	2004- 2005, 2007-2012
Duncan McCaskill	2013-current

They have been assisted or deputised at various times by Grahame Elliott, Mark Clayton and Paul Fennell.

GBS evolution

The critical value of the data collected by the GBS is that it is repeatable and comparable. It was not envisaged when the original chart was designed and survey methods were set that there would be any changes. However, over the years some changes were required.

Version One of the chart designed by Hermes was issued from April 1981. It was used for Years 1 to 6. It was hand drawn and the design was basic. There were only 27 species printed on the chart since it was hoped the chart might be used in other cities. Therefore two now prominent species in Canberra, Common Blackbird and Pied Currawong were not included on the list. Version Two of the chart was designed by McComas Taylor and improved on the appearance and clarity but retained the same instructions. It was issued about June 1985 and was used for Years 5 to 12.

Version Three of the chart and later versions were designed by Veerman and Kirk Rockett using a computer design package which improved appearance. It was issued in June 1993 and used for Years 13 to 17. It had 50 species printed on the chart.

The main area of misunderstanding on the first two versions of the chart was the direction to record all birds within one hundred metres of the house and underline those outside that area or not dependant on the garden area. Initially this was to allow the observer to keep a record of species, for their own interest, such as Pelicans (which were clearly not using the garden) but exclude them from the GBS data set. However, these instructions were seen as ambiguous. To overcome this, Version Three allowed observers to survey an area *equivalent* to a 100 metre radius (3.1 hectares) from house/work and include only observations from within *or over* this area. For some sites this enabled a large more diverse habitat to be surveyed and for all sites more opportunity to record overflying species. Versions Four and Five of the chart were minimally altered and designed by Veerman. Several later versions of the chart only had minor formatting changes. The current version was printed in June 2010 and retains the same instructions as Version Three.

Data management

The management of the data is and has always been a major enterprise. Data input and calculation of output for the ABR is now vastly quicker than it was in the early years. It is currently held in a custom built Microsoft Access data base with custom built input interfaces. This was developed by Graeme Deaker to suit the framework plan from Veerman. Veerman and Martin Butterfield built many queries and reports to easily select data to answer whatever question was asked of it. A reference copy of the database is held by the GBS Coordinator, currently Duncan McCaskill.

However the first two years (1981–82 and 1982–83) of GBS ABR statistical analyses began by copying all the charts and cutting the copies into strips of paper for each record. Years 1 and 2 had about 2257 and 2620 strips of paper respectively. In May 1984 COG purchased a Sanyo 550, 16-bit computer, to handle the GBS (and other) data from Year 3. McComas Taylor wrote a basic code program that allowed entry of the count data from the intact chart.

Systems evolved with technology developments and many have contributed over the years to the evolution. Paul Fennell assisted by designing a run time version input system on MS Access. Kay Hahne entered all the breeding data from the first ten years as well as the great bulk of the count and breeding data from Years 18 onward. Later she was assisted by Anne Hall and others. Veerman typed in all the count data for Years 1 and 2 from the charts and transferred and proof read the data from the early system to the Access database. Chris Comer and Ian Baird mapped the location of all the GBS sites. Many other COG members have taken over new roles in more recent years.

An undated internal review of the GBS process was undertaken during 2007-08 (Butterfield et al.). Minor recommendations were made to changes in counting rules, improvement to database design, data management and analysis. This process uncovered many data input errors which were subsequently corrected. As a result of the review Martin Butterfield had a major role to play with the redesigning of the database, queries and input program which was produced under contract by Sandy Hayman from Absolute Access. The new and much improved system became operational for the input of the 2008-09 observations.

Subsequently, Duncan McCaskill has been able to use his computing skills to further improve the system.

The future

For the continuity of usefulness of the data it is hoped that those who have collected data in the past continue to do so. This is critical for longitudinal studies such as GBS. It is also important that new sites come on-line, particularly from newly developing suburbs e.g. in Molonglo and Gungahlin (see also Ikin et al 2013a). While small in number rural sites were not included in the GBS analysis for the first many years, as it was considered that trends there would be different. Recently, however, the divisions have blurred and now the GBS is extending out somewhat more into COGs Area of Interest (AOI). More sites could be added which will continue to provide valuable insights into bird behavior and abundance.

The authors believe that given the use of electronic data collection in current COG studies it will only be a matter of time before an appropriate new technology evolves to allow the electronic recording of GBS data. There will inevitably be interfaces with other bird management systems and personal databases.

As it increases in value the management of access to the database will be an area of growing challenge. The database is now a significant asset of COG.

The Garden Bird Survey has also been used for regularly visited locations other than houses and gardens. The methodology has been used from the first year for rural sites and work places and anywhere that people spend considerable time. So long as consistent methods are applied, these will work equally well. For the circumstances of the Canberra study the name Garden Bird Survey now has built up quite a tradition and is still probably appropriate even if it does include non-garden sites and species that are not really using gardens at all but observed simply travelling over the area. Note that various other studies have and are specifically looking at the issue of how birds use garden areas.

This is a brief synopsis mainly of the early history of GBS. It is intended that the authors will prepare a fuller review of the GBS for a future edition of CBN. Much of this article comes from information previously published (Veerman 2002, 2006)

Acknowledgements

This article has benefitted from comments and information provided by Martin Butterfield, Chris Davey and Duncan McCaskill of COG. Karen Ikin (Fenner School of Environment & Society, ANU) kindly provided a list of published studies making reference to or using GBS data.

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Accepted 16 January 2015

WOODLAND BIRD MONITORING SURVEY

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This long-term, and now important COG project, had modest beginnings. Back in the mid 1990s when Mulligans Flat was about to become a nature reserve, I thought it would be a good idea to start ongoing surveys there. I had a connection to Mulligans as it had been my ACT Atlas survey site (with Brendon Lepschi) in the 1980s. So I went to the COG projects sub-committee, they agreed, and with some help from Chris Davey, we set up 24 monitoring points at Mulligans Flat, 50 metre radius plots, in different representative structures/habitats such as woodland, dry forest, and open woodland/grassland.

To select the sites, we had a vegetation map and did something like ‘pin the tail on the donkey’ to randomly select areas in the particular habitat, then verified them on the ground and had marker posts put in. We are now into our 21st year of surveys there, and two COG members have been on the team with me since the very first survey – Bruce Lindenmayer and Martyn Moffat. There is quite a list of members who have contributed over the years at Mulligans surveys, early on Mark Clayton, Horst and Kay Hahne who put in 15 years from the first survey until 2010, and Jack Holland who joined in 1997 and is still on the team.

After the ACT Government declared grassy woodlands an endangered ecological community and issued an Action Plan, COG decided to widen the survey to include sites in more high conservation value grassy woodland locations. Part of the reason for the survey is to monitor declining and threatened birds in Yellow Box/Red Gum grassy woodlands. Five new locations joined Mulligans in 1998 - Mt Majura NR, Red Hill NR, Goorooyaroo NR south (then a leasehold) Symonston (now includes Callum Brae NR) and Castle Hill (a leasehold near Tharwa). These are referred to as the foundation locations.

Over the years, other locations were added to the project, which has grown to 142 sites/monitoring points at 15 current locations. The other locations are: Majura Field Firing Range (1998-99, and from 2004); Hall/Gold Creek (leasehold), Newline and Tuggeranong Hill NR (all 2000); Lambrigg (a leasehold 2001 to March 2004 - discontinued); Mt Ainslie/Campbell Park (2003); Goorooyaroo NR south (2004); Naas Valley leasehold (2004); Kama NR in the Molonglo Valley (October 2005); and Jerrabomberra West NR (December 2006).

A number of sites (generally 9 plots of 50 m radius), in habitat structures of low, medium and high complexity, are surveyed at each location. Each site is surveyed for 10 minutes with all birds seen or heard recorded, and other birds outside the plot in the same habitat within a 100 m radius also being recorded. Surveys are done each season in March, June, September, and late November/early December. Alison Rowell and I have set up most of the sites, with assistance from ACT Parks Service at some locations and some of the COG site coordinators. I have surveyed several of the locations for a time including Gooroo south, Newline, Callum Brae/Symonston, and then handed them to others. At one point I had responsibility for surveys at three locations, but that is now two, more than enough (Mulligans and Jerrabomberra West – a patch of woodland at the back of the grasslands reserve on the Monaro Hwy, with a great view of the ACT Correctional Facility).



Kama woodland in Central Molonglo – Brown Treecreeper habitat (*Jenny Bounds*)

The Woodland Survey data has been analysed over the years to determine trends, by ANU based bio-Statistician, Ross Cunningham. These are all reported in CBN and reports appear on the COG website. The reports have been written up by various people, myself, Nicki Taws and Alison Rowell, and one in 2003 by Barry Baker.

An early analysis of data collected from December 1998 to December 2005, was reported by Bounds *et al.* (2007). This period included the spring of 2005 which produced good rainfall in the Canberra region, after four years of below average annual rainfall, adding a good breeding year within a fairly dry decade and some interesting results.

The results from analyses have also been included in summary form in two of Birds Australia's publications of 'The State of Australia's Birds', in 2005 (P Olsen et al., Supplement to *Wingspan* 15 (4)) and 2008 (P Olsen, Supplement to *Wingspan* 18 (4)).

A major analysis of data covering 10 years of surveys at the six foundation locations, from December 1998 to December 2008, was undertaken in 2009 (Bounds *et al.* 2010). Data for that analysis was drawn from 66 sites.

We decided to have a look at habitat relationships with bird abundance in the spring/summer 2009/10. As part of the woodland project, we had undertaken a simple assessment of habitat (based on vegetation structure) at each of the sites when they were set up. Alison Rowell developed the habitat assessment/index based on contemporary models, as part of a consultancy role in the project. An analysis by the statistician was then undertaken in 2011 on the changes in bird occupancy between 2003 and 2010, modelled against a habitat index.

The greatest changes were a decrease in cover of eucalypt regeneration, shrub cover and logs and branches, and an increase in mistletoes and native ground cover.

As a pilot exercise, additional analyses were undertaken to identify a key habitat variable that was the best single predictor of change in bird occupancy between the two years for nine bird species. Four species, Striated Thornbill, Buff-rumped Thornbill, White-plumed Honeyeater and Scarlet Robin decreased significantly with this habitat change. The Noisy Miner increased significantly. The predictor was 'decrease in scrub cover'. This analysis provided a direct relationship between changes in bird occupancy and change in habitat (the likely effect of the drought) at the site level (Taws *et al.* 2012).

As well as undertaking our own analyses of the data, COG has provided project data to the ACT Government for the monitoring of ACT listed threatened species. COG has also provided access to the woodland data for other research projects, including a recently completed ANU PhD study by Laura Rayner, on woodland birds. Trends from the various data analyses have underpinned some COG nominations of bird species for listing in the ACT.

The next major analysis of project data is likely to occur in 2016, as there will be ten years or more data at all project locations by the end of 2015.

This COG data base is regarded as one of the most robust, long-term bird data sets in Australia. One of the reasons for the project's success is the commitment of the site coordinators who do the surveys, most of whom have been involved from the time their location was first surveyed. In particular, thanks are due to the current site coordinators: Alison Rowell, Nicki Taws, Steve Holliday, Paul Fennell, Kathy Walter and John Goldie, Michael Lenz, Sue Lashko, Harvey Perkins, Sandra Henderson, Lia Battisson, David McDonald, Julie McGuinness, and Chris Davey. Geoffrey Dabb put in 9 years as site coordinator from 1998 to 2007 at the Symonston sites. There are also others who have assisted these site coordinators. Thank you everyone, it has been a very satisfying project to be involved in.

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Accepted 10 October 2014

COG'S BIRD BLITZ

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Unlike many of the other papers in this issue of *Canberra Bird Notes*, this one refers to a relatively recent COG event. The “bird blitz” was first held on the last weekend in October 2005 and has been repeated each year since at the same time.

The blitz is an annual effort to record over one weekend all species of birds present in the ACT across as wide a variety of habitats as possible; and to record any breeding activity. All COG members are warmly encouraged to participate, in order to cover as much of the ACT as possible. Members “adopt” one or more locations and carry out one of the standard BirdLife Australia surveys there.

One might reasonably ask, why another survey? After all, COG already runs a number of regular surveys: the quarterly Woodland Survey; the monthly Waterbird Survey; the weekly Garden Bird Survey. As well, some members participate in local surveys conducted by the Fenner School at the ANU; by Greening Australia; by Kosciuszko-to-Coast; and other specific projects such as the Superb Parrot survey. Apart from the Garden Bird Survey, however, which attracts about 80 participants annually, these surveys tend not to involve the broader COG membership.

It was in an attempt to meet this perceived lacuna that in the early 2000s I began mentally canvassing what could be done. The highlight of many COGites’ birding careers had been the ACT Bird Atlas, run on behalf of COG by McComas Taylor from 1986-89. While special arrangements were made for surveys in remote parts, the majority of participants in the Atlas “adopted” a grid cell voluntarily (or were gently persuaded to do so) and could record sightings from multiple trips to their cell within each calendar month on a single hard-copy datasheet. McComas was generous in his feedback, always notifying the observer who recorded the highest number of species per cell each month, and politely querying dubious records. I recall commenting on one of my Lake Ginninderra records of a Horsfield’s Bronze-cuckoo in winter “It’s back early!” to which McComas parried, “Did it have a suntan?” The resulting volume, *Birds of the Australian Capital Territory: an Atlas*, was a volume in which all participants could take pride, as well as find valuable information.

But the Atlas had been a major undertaking, and one not easily replicated. Other surveys seemed to offer more promising leads. The New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service celebrated the International Year of the Mountains with a biodiversity “blitz” to document the living organisms using part of Kosciuszko National Park (see Davey 2002). Nine COG members participated, surveying birds in a variety of habitats over a 24-hour period in January 2002. A second, post-fire, survey was conducted in March 2003 (Fyfe 2003). The comparisons between the two survey results, particularly given the dramatic changes wrought by the devastating bushfires in the interim, were thought-provoking.

So, armed with the kernel of an idea, I approached the COG Committee in 2005 with a proposal to conduct a bird “blitz” of our own on the last weekend in October. The timing was intended to accommodate the majority of, if not all, returning migratory species and to pick up a good proportion of resident breeding records. The fact that the last weekend in October

clashed with half of Canberra's school fetes, Fitz's Challenge bike event, and sundry other minor impediments did not deter us. It was, as I envisaged it, an opportunity to reach out to COG's broader membership and offer them the opportunity to be involved in a useful exercise to supplement the regular surveys and ad hoc records.

The COG Committee went along with the proposal, I suspect largely with the thought of filling in another weekend on the field trips calendar rather than in any expectation of a positive outcome.

And so, on the weekend of 29-30 October 2005, COG's first bird blitz took place. And it rained. Fortunately not consistently, so the majority of blitzers were able to conduct their surveys. We managed to receive 254 datasheets, cover 66 per cent of the ACT grid cells, involve up to 100 members including at least 17 persons who had not submitted datasheets before, record 157 bird species with 67 of them showing some indication of breeding.

The lessons I drew from that first blitz were many. Firstly, the attempt to include the general public was not a success. Bird walks were arranged at both the Botanic Gardens and at Tidbinbilla, though the latter were washed out. The leaders of the Garden walks reported it was simply too difficult to try and help non-birders to locate birds and work out their identifying features and at the same time make a reasonable attempt to record all the species present. So this feature was dropped for future blitzes. Secondly, it proved that members who were broadly allergic to counting birds, as opposed to simply looking at them, would do so when encouraged, and for a cause. Thirdly, it was worth leaping over the administrative hurdles to gain access behind locked gates in Namadgi National Park, as COG's records were boosted considerably by the surveys there. And finally, prizes proved popular both with donors and recipients. While I suspect most blitzers would have surveyed without that added inducement, they have now become an integral part of the blitz.

And so the blitz was repeated in 2006, and in every successive year. As I write in November 2014, we have just completed our tenth blitz and an eleventh is scheduled for 2015.

There have been modest changes over the years. In time, the limitations of the 20-minute 2-ha survey for newish birders became obvious. While more experienced birders can make a fair effort at complete coverage in such a timeframe, others perhaps cannot. So blitzers were encouraged where appropriate to move to a "within 500m" survey and to spend sufficient time to do it thoroughly.

In the early years of the blitz, data was collected only on paper. But as COG's online data entry system developed, more and more blitzers chose to enter their own records. Now about one-third of all "datasheets" are processed this way. For the foreseeable future, however, it seems unlikely COG will be able to dispense with paper records entirely.

Another innovation in 2013 was the offering of "training classes". Despite rather detailed instructions on COG's website and in the newsletter, a few folk managed to get little details wrong. So Michael Robbins suggested offering training classes for new blitzers, and volunteered to lead them, assisted by a few others. The clientele was both birders new to Canberra and hence needing a little assistance in handling our data collection system, and folk new to birding, where the emphasis was on only recording species of whose identification they were certain. The take-up rate was quite dramatic, with 35 individuals subsequently submitting datasheets for the first time and for the most part, well.

Unfortunately very few of these individuals continued with data submission during the year, or returned for the 2014 blitz, suggesting that perhaps COG needs to develop more tailored mentoring strategies.

After ten years of blitzes, it is perhaps timely to consider whether the exercise is worthwhile. At one level, it certainly is. About a tenth of all COG's records each year come from that one weekend. Locations not often surveyed are covered, and breeding records are boosted. A few new surveyors are added to the ranks of regulars each year. The data are closely vetted, queried where necessary (mostly for input errors) and feedback is provided.

Perhaps the most useful aspect of the blitz is the across-the-ACT approach. Ad hoc records simply do not pick up trends in the same way. For example in 2009, flocks of White-browed and Masked Woodswallows appeared right on cue, everywhere. They were recorded in 16 widely dispersed grid cells. The COG chatline positively lit up with comments about them – and the blitz documented their arrival. The Channel-billed Cuckoo which passed through in blitz 2010 was shown to be in all probability a single bird, being recorded at appropriate time intervals from Hawker in the north through Duffy and on to Chapman in the south.



Blitzers Lindsay Hansch, Elizabeth Moore, Tony Willis and Ian Anderson hard at work at the Cotter Hut, 25 October 2014

The blitz can be categorised as a “citizen science” endeavour and, as such, attracts questions as to the reliability of the data so gathered. Aspects of the data collection process are, it must be admitted, less than perfect. Many new birders use neither a GPS nor other means of

pinpointing their position, leaving it to the data enterer to assign coordinates, sometimes based on rather imprecise descriptions. There is also a suspicion that few birders, save perhaps the golfers amongst them, can accurately assess the extent of 2-ha or 500m, and probably err on the generous side. More importantly there are sins of omission and commission. The former are undoubtedly more common, with many birders appending notes to their records to the effect that they could not recognise and hence record all species seen – the “little brown jobs” effect. Sins of commission, or misidentification, are harder to pinpoint, except for the very obvious input errors, such as the Pied Cormorants over the Brindabellas. Overall, however, I believe the error rate is acceptably low.

In one respect, the blitz has evolved in a way I had not envisaged. I had expected blitzers to choose one or more favoured sites and continue to survey them year after year. Instead, they have largely voted for variety, trying different sites or helpfully covering unadopted ones. Inevitably a few popular sites, such as Jerrabomberra Wetlands, receive more than their fair share of attention. In the long run, it all adds to a more complete across-the-ACT picture of our avifauna and, as the years pass, a better longitudinal record of what birds are present in what numbers and where on the last weekend in October. With your continued help, COG members, this picture will become clearer.

Accepted 20 November 2014

THE CANBERRA ORNITHOLOGISTS GROUP ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Prepared on behalf of COG by
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The 2014 Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the ACT was prepared, as a project marking COG's 50th anniversary year, to update the previous checklist, published by COG in 2009. It reflects contemporary scholarship about bird taxonomy and nomenclature, as well as including additions to the checklist that have occurred in recent years, and changes in status. Another innovation is that the checklist includes an appendix which defines the key terms employed.

A significant change is that, based on a decision by COG's Committee, the taxonomy and nomenclature applied is the Working List developed by Birdlife Australia which is, in turn, largely compatible with contemporary international thinking in this area. The ACT list will be updated whenever the Birdlife Australia Working List introduces changes that affect the ACT's avifauna. A COG project for 2015 will be to produce an Annotated Checklist of the Birds of COG's Area of Interest, a geographical area that includes the ACT but extends well beyond it, and that contains bird habitats not found in the ACT.

The 2014 Annotated Checklist was prepared by a subcommittee, appointed by COG's Committee, the members of which were David McDonald (convenor), Mark Clayton and Nicki Taws. Dr Richard Schodde provided valuable guidance at the early part of the process.



The Canberra Ornithologists Group Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the Australian Capital Territory

The 'Status' column reflects the likelihood that an experienced birder would record the species during a day of bird observing, at the right time of year, in the appropriate habitat.

Species marked * are classified by the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) as 'unusual' birds in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Please submit an Unusual Bird Report form for these species and for any species not included in this checklist. The Checklist identifies threatened species, i.e. those declared Endangered or Vulnerable in the ACT or NSW. For more detailed information on the status of the birds of the ACT please see COG's *Annual Bird Report*, online at canberrabirds.org.au/publications/canberra-bird-notes/.

The taxonomy and nomenclature used for this checklist is Birdlife Australia's Working List of Australian Birds, version 1.1: birdlife.org.au/conservation/science/taxonomy.

This version is dated 17 December 2014. It has 293 species on the main list.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
001	Emu	<i>Dromaius novaehollandiae</i>	Rare, breeding resident.
009	Stubble Quail	<i>Coturnix pectoralis</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
011	Brown Quail	<i>Coturnix ypsilophora</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
903	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	Rare breeding resident/escapee. An introduced species.
205	Plumed Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna eytoni</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
217	Musk Duck	<i>Biziura lobata</i>	Rare, breeding resident.
214	Freckled Duck	<i>Stictonetta naevosa</i>	Uncommon, non-breeding visitor. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
203	Black Swan	<i>Cygnus atratus</i>	Common, breeding resident.
207	Australian Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadornoides</i>	Rare, breeding visitor.
202	Australian Wood Duck	<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
213	Pink-eared Duck	<i>Malacorhynchus membranaceus</i>	Uncommon, non-breeding visitor.
212	Australasian Shoveler	<i>Anas rhynchos</i>	Uncommon, breeding visitor.
211	Grey Teal	<i>Anas gracilis</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
210	Chestnut Teal	<i>Anas castanea</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
948	Northern Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Rare, breeding resident. An introduced species.
208	Pacific Black Duck	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
215	Hardhead	<i>Aythya australis</i>	Common, breeding visitor.
216	Blue-billed Duck	<i>Oxyura australis</i>	Rare, breeding resident. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
061	Australasian Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus novaehollandiae</i>	Common, breeding resident.
062	Hoary-headed Grebe	<i>Poliocephalus poliocephalus</i>	Common, breeding resident.
060	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	Rare, breeding visitor.
957	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	Very common, breeding resident. An introduced species.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
028	White-headed Pigeon	<i>Columba leucomela</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
989	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident. An introduced species.
033	Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
034	Common Bronzewing	<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	Common, breeding resident.
035	Brush Bronzewing	<i>Phaps elegans</i>	Rare, breeding resident.
043	Crested Pigeon	<i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
031	Diamond Dove	<i>Geopelia cuneata</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor/escapee.
030	Peaceful Dove	<i>Geopelia striata</i>	Rare, non-breeding resident.
032	Bar-shouldered Dove	<i>Geopelia humeralis</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
044	Wonga Pigeon	<i>Leucosarcia melanoleuca</i>	Rare, breeding resident.
023	Superb Fruit-Dove	<i>Ptilinopus superbus</i>	Non-breeding vagrant. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
313	Tawny Frogmouth	<i>Podargus strigoides</i>	Common, breeding resident.
330	White-throated Nightjar *	<i>Eurostopodus mystacalis</i>	Rare, breeding summer visitor.
331	Spotted Nightjar *	<i>Eurostopodus argus</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
317	Australian Owlet-nightjar	<i>Aegotheles cristatus</i>	Common, breeding resident.
334	White-throated Needletail	<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	Uncommon, non-breeding summer migrant.
335	Fork-tailed Swift	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	Rare, non-breeding summer migrant.
101	Australian Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
100	Little Pied Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo melanoleucos</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
096	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Common, breeding resident.
097	Little Black Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
099	Pied Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
106	Australian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i>	Common, non-breeding visitor.
183	Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>	Non-breeding vagrant. Declared Endangered in NSW.
197	Australasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>	Non-breeding vagrant. Declared Endangered in NSW.
195	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	Rare, breeding visitor.
189	White-necked Heron	<i>Ardea pacifica</i>	Uncommon, breeding visitor.
187	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Uncommon, non-breeding visitor.
186	Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
977	Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	Uncommon, non-breeding visitor.
188	White-faced Heron	<i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>	Common, breeding resident.
185	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
192	Nankeen Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>	Uncommon, breeding visitor.
178	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
179	Australian White Ibis	<i>Threskiornis molucca</i>	Common, breeding resident.
180	Straw-necked Ibis	<i>Threskiornis spinicollis</i>	Common, non-breeding visitor.
181	Royal Spoonbill	<i>Platalea regia</i>	Uncommon, breeding visitor.
182	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	<i>Platalea flavipes</i>	Uncommon, non-breeding visitor.
241	Osprey *	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Non-breeding vagrant. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
232	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus axillaris</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
233	Letter-winged Kite	<i>Elanus scriptus</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
226	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	Uncommon, non-breeding visitor.
228	Whistling Kite	<i>Haliastur sphenurus</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
229	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
221	Brown Goshawk	<i>Accipiter fasciatus</i>	Common, breeding resident.
222	Collared Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter cirrocephalus</i>	Common, breeding resident/summer migrant.
220	Grey Goshawk	<i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
218	Spotted Harrier	<i>Circus assimilis</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
219	Swamp Harrier	<i>Circus approximans</i>	Rare, breeding resident.
224	Wedge-tailed Eagle	<i>Aquila audax</i>	Common, breeding resident.
225	Little Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus morphnoides</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident. Declared Vulnerable in the ACT and NSW.
240	Nankeen Kestrel	<i>Falco cenchroides</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
239	Brown Falcon	<i>Falco berigora</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
235	Australian Hobby	<i>Falco longipennis</i>	Common, breeding resident/summer migrant.
236	Grey Falcon	<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>	Non-breeding vagrant. Declared Endangered in NSW.
238	Black Falcon	<i>Falco subniger</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
237	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
177	Brolga	<i>Grus rubicunda</i>	Extinct. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
058	Purple Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
045	Lewin's Rail	<i>Lewinia pectoralis</i>	Rare, breeding visitor.
046	Buff-banded Rail	<i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant.
050	Baillon's Crake	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>	Rare, non-breeding summer migrant.
049	Australian Spotted Crake	<i>Porzana fluminea</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant.
051	Spotless Crake	<i>Porzana tabuensis</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant.
055	Black-tailed Native-hen	<i>Tribonyx ventralis</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
056	Dusky Moorhen	<i>Gallinula tenebrosa</i>	Common, breeding resident.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
059	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
176	Australian Bustard	<i>Ardeotis australis</i>	Extinct. Declared Endangered in NSW.
174	Bush Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus grallarius</i>	Extinct. Declared Endangered in NSW.
146	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus leucocephalus</i>	Uncommon, non-breeding visitor.
148	Red-necked Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra novaehollandiae</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
137	Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
143	Red-capped Plover	<i>Charadrius ruficapillus</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
140	Double-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius bicinctus</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
144	Black-fronted Dotterel	<i>Elseyaornis melanops</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
132	Red-kneed Dotterel	<i>Erythronyctes alba</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant.
135	Banded Lapwing *	<i>Vanellus tricolor</i>	Rare, breeding visitor.
133	Masked Lapwing	<i>Vanellus miles</i>	Common, breeding resident.
020	Plains-wanderer	<i>Pedionomus torquatus</i>	Extinct. Declared Endangered in NSW.
170	Australian Painted Snipe *	<i>Rostratula australis</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor. Declared Endangered in NSW.
168	Latham's Snipe	<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	Common, non-breeding summer migrant.
153	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
149	Eastern Curlew	<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
157	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Rare, non-breeding summer migrant.
158	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
159	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
154	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
129	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
164	Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
162	Red-necked Stint	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
965	Long-toed Stint	<i>Calidris subminuta</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
978	Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
163	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	Uncommon, non-breeding summer migrant.
161	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
014	Painted Button-quail	<i>Turnix varius</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
019	Red-chested Button-quail	<i>Turnix pyrrhotorax</i>	Breeding vagrant.
018	Little Button-quail *	<i>Turnix velox</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
111	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
112	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
110	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
125	Silver Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae</i>	Common, breeding resident.
265	Glossy Black-Cockatoo	<i>Calyptrorhynchus lathamii</i>	Rare, breeding visitor. Declared Vulnerable in the ACT and NSW.
267	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	<i>Calyptrorhynchus funereus</i>	Common, breeding resident.
268	Gang-gang Cockatoo	<i>Callocephalon fimbriatum</i>	Common, breeding resident/altitudinal migrant. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
270	Major Mitchell's Cockatoo	<i>Lophochroa leadbeateri</i>	Non-breeding escapee. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
273	Galah	<i>Eolophus roseicapillus</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
272	Long-billed Corella	<i>Cacatua tenuirostris</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident/escapee.
271	Little Corella	<i>Cacatua sanguinea</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
269	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
274	Cockatiel	<i>Nymphicus hollandicus</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor/escapee.

BirdLife Australia species number	English name	Scientific name	Status
254	Rainbow Lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
256	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus</i>	Non-breeding vagrant/escapee.
258	Musk Lorikeet	<i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
260	Little Lorikeet	<i>Glossopsitta pusilla</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
259	Purple-crowned Lorikeet	<i>Glossopsitta porphyrocephala</i>	Non-breeding vagrant. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
281	Australian King-Parrot	<i>Alisterus scapularis</i>	Common, breeding resident.
277	Superb Parrot	<i>Polytelis swainsonii</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant. Declared Vulnerable in the ACT and NSW.
282	Crimson Rosella	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
288	Eastern Rosella	<i>Platycercus eximius</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
309	Swift Parrot	<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Rare, non-breeding winter migrant. Declared Vulnerable in the ACT and Endangered in NSW.
295	Red-rumped Parrot	<i>Psephotus haematonotus</i>	Common, breeding resident.
310	Budgerigar	<i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor/escapee.
306	Blue-winged Parrot	<i>Neophema chrysostoma</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
302	Turquoise Parrot *	<i>Neophema pulchella</i>	Non-breeding vagrant/escapee. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
347	Eastern Koel	<i>Eudynamys orientalis</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
348	Channel-billed Cuckoo	<i>Scythrops novaehollandiae</i>	Rare, non-breeding summer migrant.
342	Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chalcites basalis</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
341	Black-eared Cuckoo *	<i>Chalcites osculans</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
344	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chalcites lucidus</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
338	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
339	Brush Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis variolosus</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant.
337	Pallid Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis pallidus</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
248	Powerful Owl	<i>Ninox strenua</i>	Rare, breeding resident. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
246	Barking Owl *	<i>Ninox connivens</i>	Non-breeding vagrant. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
242	Southern Boobook	<i>Ninox novaeseelandiae</i>	Common, breeding resident.
250	Masked Owl	<i>Tyto novaehollandiae</i>	Non-breeding vagrant. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
249	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
319	Azure Kingfisher *	<i>Ceyx azureus</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
322	Laughing Kookaburra	<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	Common, breeding resident.
325	Red-backed Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus pyrrhopygius</i>	Breeding vagrant.
326	Sacred Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
329	Rainbow Bee-eater	<i>Merops ornatus</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
318	Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant.
350	Superb Lyrebird	<i>Menura novaehollandiae</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
558	White-throated Treecreeper	<i>Cormobates leucophaea</i>	Common, breeding resident.
560	Red-browed Treecreeper	<i>Climacteris erythroptis</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
555	Brown Treecreeper	<i>Climacteris picumnus</i>	Rare, breeding resident. Eastern sub-species declared Vulnerable in the ACT and NSW.
679	Satin Bowerbird	<i>Ptilonorhynchus violaceus</i>	Common, breeding resident.
529	Superb Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
506	Pilotbird	<i>Pycnoptilus floccosus</i>	Rare, breeding resident.
488	White-browed Scrubwren	<i>Sericornis frontalis</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
498	Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	<i>Hylacola pyrrhopygia</i>	Rare, non-breeding resident.
504	Speckled Warbler	<i>Chthonicola sagittata</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
465	Weebill	<i>Smicrornis brevirostris</i>	Common, breeding resident.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
454	Brown Gerygone	<i>Gerygone mouki</i>	Rare, winter visitor.
463	Western Gerygone	<i>Gerygone fusca</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
453	White-throated Gerygone	<i>Gerygone olivacea</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
470	Striated Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza lineata</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
471	Yellow Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza nana</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
486	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza chrysorrhoa</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
481	Chestnut-rumped Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza uropygialis</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
484	Buff-rumped Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza reguloides</i>	Common, breeding resident.
475	Brown Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
466	Southern Whiteface	<i>Aphelocephala leucopsis</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
565	Spotted Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>	Very common, breeding resident/migrant.
976	Striated Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus striatus</i>	Very common, breeding resident/migrant.
591	Eastern Spinebill	<i>Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris</i>	Common, breeding resident.
605	Lewin's Honeyeater	<i>Meliphaga lewinii</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
614	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus chrysops</i>	Very common, breeding resident/summer migrant.
608	Singing Honeyeater *	<i>Lichenostomus virescens</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
617	White-eared Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus leucotis</i>	Common, breeding resident/altitudinal migrant.
619	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus melanops</i>	Rare, breeding resident.
613	Fuscous Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus fuscus</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident/autumn migrant.
625	White-plumed Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus penicillatus</i>	Common, breeding resident.
594	White-fronted Honeyeater *	<i>Purnella albifrons</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
633	Bell Miner	<i>Manorina melanophrys</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.

BirdLife Australia species number	English name	Scientific name	Status
634	Noisy Miner	<i>Manorina melanocephala</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
640	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater *	<i>Acanthagenys rufogularis</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
712	Little Wattlebird	<i>Anthochaera chrysoptera</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
603	Regent Honeyeater	<i>Anthochaera phrygia</i>	Rare, breeding visitor. Declared Endangered in both ACT and NSW.
638	Red Wattlebird	<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>	Very common, breeding resident/autumn migrant.
449	Crimson Chat *	<i>Epthianura tricolor</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
448	White-fronted Chat	<i>Epthianura albifrons</i>	Rare, breeding resident. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
589	Black Honeyeater *	<i>Sugomel niger</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
586	Scarlet Honeyeater	<i>Myzomela sanguinolenta</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
593	Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	<i>Glyciphila melanops</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
630	Crescent Honeyeater	<i>Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident/altitudinal migrant.
631	New Holland Honeyeater	<i>Phylidonyris novaehollandiae</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
580	Black-chinned Honeyeater *	<i>Melithreptus gularis</i>	Non-breeding vagrant. Eastern sub-species declared Vulnerable in NSW.
583	Brown-headed Honeyeater	<i>Melithreptus brevirostris</i>	Common, breeding resident.
578	White-naped Honeyeater	<i>Melithreptus lunatus</i>	Very common, breeding resident/summer migrant.
641	Blue-faced Honeyeater *	<i>Entomyzon cyanotis</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
645	Noisy Friarbird	<i>Philemon corniculatus</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
646	Little Friarbird	<i>Philemon citreogularis</i>	Rare, breeding summer migrant.
585	Striped Honeyeater	<i>Plectorhyncha lanceolata</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
598	Painted Honeyeater	<i>Grantiella picta</i>	Rare, breeding visitor. Declared Vulnerable in the ACT and NSW.
443	Grey-crowned Babbler *	<i>Pomatostomus temporalis</i>	Non-breeding vagrant. Eastern sub-species declared Vulnerable in NSW.
445	White-browed Babbler *	<i>Pomatostomus superciliosus</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
436	Spotted Quail-thrush	<i>Cinclosoma punctatum</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
421	Eastern Whipbird	<i>Psophodes olivaceus</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
549	Varied Sittella	<i>Daphoenositta chrysoptera</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident. Declared Vulnerable in the ACT and NSW.
424	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	Common, breeding resident/summer migrant.
425	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina papuensis</i>	Rare, non-breeding autumn migrant.
429	Cicadabird	<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	Rare, breeding summer migrant.
430	White-winged Triller	<i>Lalage tricolor</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant. Declared Vulnerable in the ACT.
416	Crested Shrike-tit	<i>Falcunculus frontatus</i>	Rare, breeding resident.
405	Olive Whistler	<i>Pachycephala olivacea</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident/altitudinal migrant. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
398	Golden Whistler	<i>Pachycephala pectoralis</i>	Common, breeding resident/altitudinal migrant.
401	Rufous Whistler	<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
408	Grey Shrike-thrush	<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>	Common, breeding resident.
432	Australasian Figbird *	<i>Sphecotheres vieilloti</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
671	Olive-backed Oriole	<i>Oriolus sagittatus</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
544	Masked Woodswallow	<i>Artamus personatus</i>	Rare, breeding summer migrant.
545	White-browed Woodswallow	<i>Artamus superciliosus</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant.
547	Dusky Woodswallow	<i>Artamus cyanopterus</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
702	Grey Butcherbird	<i>Cracticus torquatus</i>	Common, breeding resident.
700	Pied Butcherbird	<i>Cracticus nigrogularis</i>	Rare, non-breeding visitor.
705	Australian Magpie	<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
694	Pied Currawong	<i>Strepera graculina</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
697	Grey Currawong	<i>Strepera versicolor</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
673	Spangled Drongo	<i>Dicrurus bracteatus</i>	Non breeding vagrant.
362	Rufous Fantail	<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant.
361	Grey Fantail	<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>	Common, breeding resident/summer migrant.
364	Willie Wagtail	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
930	Australian Raven	<i>Corvus coronoides</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
954	Little Raven	<i>Corvus mellori</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident/winter migrant.
365	Leaden Flycatcher	<i>Myiagra rubecula</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
366	Satin Flycatcher	<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant.
728	Restless Flycatcher	<i>Myiagra inquieta</i>	Rare, breeding resident.
373	Black-faced Monarch	<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
415	Magpie-lark	<i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
693	White-winged Chough	<i>Corcorax melanorhamphos</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
675	Apostlebird	<i>Struthidea cinerea</i>	Non-breeding vagrant.
377	Jacky Winter	<i>Microeca fascinans</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
380	Scarlet Robin	<i>Petroica multicolor</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident/altitudinal migrant. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
381	Red-capped Robin	<i>Petroica goodenovii</i>	Uncommon, breeding visitor.
382	Flame Robin	<i>Petroica phoenicea</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident/altitudinal migrant. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
384	Rose Robin	<i>Petroica rosea</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant.
383	Pink Robin	<i>Petroica rodinogaster</i>	Rare, non-breeding winter migrant. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
385	Hooded Robin	<i>Melanodryas cucullata</i>	Rare, breeding resident. South-eastern sub-species declared Vulnerable in the ACT and NSW.
392	Eastern Yellow Robin	<i>Eopsaltria australis</i>	Common, breeding resident.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
648	Horsfield's Bushlark	<i>Mirafrja javanica</i>	Rare, breeding summer migrant.
993	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Common, breeding resident. An introduced species.
525	Golden-headed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola exilis</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
524	Australian Reed-Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus australis</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
522	Little Grassbird	<i>Megalurus gramineus</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
509	Rufous Songlark	<i>Cincloramphus mathewsi</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
508	Brown Songlark	<i>Cincloramphus cruralis</i>	Rare, breeding summer migrant.
574	Silvereeye	<i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	Very common, breeding resident/migrant.
358	White-backed Swallow	<i>Cheramoeca leucosterna</i>	Breeding vagrant.
357	Welcome Swallow	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	Very common, breeding resident.
360	Fairy Martin	<i>Petrochelidon ariel</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant.
359	Tree Martin	<i>Petrochelidon nigricans</i>	Uncommon, breeding summer migrant.
990	Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	Non-breeding vagrant. An introduced species.
779	Bassian Thrush	<i>Zoothera lunulata</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident/altitudinal migrant.
991	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Common, breeding resident. An introduced species.
992	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Extinct. An introduced species.
999	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Very common, breeding resident. An introduced species.
998	Common Myna	<i>Sturnus tristis</i>	Very common, breeding resident. An introduced species.
564	Mistletoebird	<i>Dicaeum hirundinaceum</i>	Common, breeding summer migrant.
653	Zebra Finch	<i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>	Rare, breeding visitor/escapee.
655	Double-barred Finch	<i>Taeniopygia bichenovii</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident.
661	Plum-headed Finch	<i>Neochmia modesta</i>	Non-breeding vagrant/escapee.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
662	Red-browed Finch	<i>Neochmia temporalis</i>	Common, breeding resident.
652	Diamond Firetail	<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident. Declared Vulnerable in NSW.
995	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Common, breeding resident. An introduced species.
994	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Extinct. An introduced species.
647	Australian Pipit	<i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>	Common, breeding resident.
996	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Common, breeding resident. An introduced species.
997	Common Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Uncommon, breeding resident. An introduced species.

Supplementary List

Species reported as having been observed in the ACT but not currently regarded as being on the ACT Bird List

The species listed in this Supplement include those that are regarded as escapees or released and for which there is no established population in the ACT; species probably reported in error; records of doubtful validity; records not properly documented and therefore not accepted; and accidental occurrences beyond the normal range (e.g. sea birds).

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English Name</i>	<i>Scientific Name</i>	<i>Status</i>
012	King Quail	<i>Excalfactoria chinensis</i>	Escapee or released.
902	Domestic Chicken	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	Feral or wandering domestic birds occasionally reported.
950	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Escapee or released.
199	Magpie Goose	<i>Anseranas semipalmata</i>	Semi-captive population at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve (TNR), plus a 2003 record from Brindabella Station, presumably a stray from the TNR population.
198	Cape Barren Goose	<i>Cereopsis novaehollandiae</i>	Escapee or released. Formerly a semi-captive population at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, now extirpated.
2502	Domestic (Greylag) Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	Escapee or released.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
906	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	One 2011 report, unendorsed, possibly in error.
2501	Muscovy Duck	<i>Cairina moschata</i>	Escapee or released.
940	Barbary Dove	<i>Streptopelia risoria</i>	Escapee or released.
065	White-faced Storm-Petrel	<i>Pelagodroma marina</i>	Accidental.
069	Wedge-tailed Shearwater	<i>Ardena pacifica</i>	Accidental.
230	Square-tailed Kite	<i>Lophoictinia isura</i>	Probably reported in error.
223	Red Goshawk	<i>Erythroriorchis radiatus</i>	Doubtful record.
155	Grey-tailed Tattler	<i>Tringa brevipes</i>	Record not properly documented.
167	Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	Doubtful record.
173	Australian Pratincole	<i>Stiltia isabella</i>	Probably reported in error.
933	Long-tailed Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	Accidental; remains found in a Peregrine Falcon nest in 1994.
953	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Reported in October 2013, not presented for appraisal.
264	Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo	<i>Calyptrorhynchus banksii</i>	Probably reported in error.
280	Red-winged Parrot	<i>Aprosmictus erythropterus</i>	Escapee or released.
279	Princess Parrot	<i>Polytelis alexandrae</i>	Escapee or released.
286	Pale-headed Rosella	<i>Platycercus adscitus</i>	Escapee or released.
291	Australian Ringneck	<i>Barnardius zonarius</i>	Escapee or released.
290	Red-capped Parrot	<i>Purpureicephalus spurius</i>	Escapee or released.
297	Blue Bonnet	<i>Northiella haematogaster</i>	Escapee or released.
307	Elegant Parrot	<i>Neophema elegans</i>	Doubtful record.
- -	Peach-faced Lovebird	<i>Agapornis roseicollis</i>	Escapee or released.
- -	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Escapee or released.

<i>BirdLife Australia species number</i>	<i>English name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>
--	Yellow-crowned Parakeet	<i>Cyanoramphus auriceps</i>	Escapee or released.
635	Yellow-throated Miner	<i>Manorina flavigula</i>	Record not properly documented.
680	Spotted Bowerbird	<i>Ptilonorhynchus maculatus</i>	Escapee or released.
692	Torresian Crow	<i>Corvus orru</i>	Probably reported in error.
650	Beautiful Firetail	<i>Stagonopleura bella</i>	Escapee or released.
983	Nutmeg Mannikin	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	Escapee or released.
657	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	<i>Lonchura castaneothorax</i>	Escapee or released.
806	Java Sparrow	<i>Lonchura oryzivora</i>	Escapee or released.
--	Canary	<i>Serinus canarius</i>	Escapee or released.

Appendix
The Canberra Ornithologists Group Annotated Checklist
of the Birds of the Australian Capital Territory

Definitions of key terms

Term	Definition
Degree of commonness/rarity	The 'Status' column on the Annotated Checklist reflects the likelihood that an experienced birder would record the species during a day of bird observing, at the right time of year, in the appropriate habitat. This entails a number of parameters, with the consequence that no single quantitative measure (such as reporting rate) is sufficient to define the categories used, namely very common, common, uncommon and rare. These statuses have been determined by the Checklist review committee using a variety of quantitative and spatial data sources, along with the committee members' own judgments.
Visitor	A species not resident in the ACT, its normal range encompasses this region but it does not show a pattern of regular seasonal movements to and from the ACT.
Vagrant	A species not resident in the ACT, the ACT is not part of its usual range or habitat, and it does not show a pattern of regular seasonal movements to and from the ACT. A species with fewer than ten probably independent occurrences recorded in the ACT.
Accidental	A species far outside of its normal range.
Migrant	A species that moves between the ACT and other locations, usually on a regular annual cycle, usually breeding in one location but not in the other.
Summer migrant	A species that spends the warmer part of most years in the ACT, generally arriving in spring and departing in autumn.
Winter migrant	A species that spends the cooler part of most years in the ACT, generally arriving in autumn and departing in spring.
Altitudinal migrant	A species that generally breeds at high altitudes in summer and moves to lower altitudes in winter.
Resident	A species that resides permanently in the ACT, observed all year round.
Extinct	A species for which there is no reasonable doubt that the last member of the species in the ACT has died, and no records since 1980.
Breeding	A species that has been reported to have bred in the ACT or to have exhibited some form of breeding behaviour falling under one or more of these categories: displaying, inspecting hollow, nest building, copulating, carrying faecal sac, carrying food, dependent young, on or leaving nest, nest with eggs, nest with young.

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Canberra Bird Notes

Canberra Bird Notes is published three times a year by the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc. and is edited by Michael Lenz. Major articles of up to 5000 words are welcome on matters relating to the status, distribution, behaviour or identification of birds in the Australian Capital Territory and surrounding region. Please discuss any proposed major contribution in advance. Shorter notes, book reviews and other contributions are also encouraged. All contributions should be sent to CBN@canberrabirds.org.au or to michael.lenz.birds@gmail.com.

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The printing of this issue was partly sponsored by Instant Colour Press