



Gang-gang

APRIL 2022

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

APRIL MEETING

Wednesday 13 April 2022

7.30 pm

Normal face-to-face meeting

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

The April meeting will be a normal face-to-face one held at our usual venue but, as noted in the COG COVID Safety Plan available on the COG website (COG-CGGS-Checklist-COVID-19_09Mar22.pdf (canberrabirds.org.au), you will need to wear a mask and also check in using the Check in CBR QR code.

There will be two presentations of roughly equal length.

The first will be by **Geoffrey Dabb** entitled "**Arthur Mattingley, Mathoura, the Murray River, and the Egrets**"

In 1906, Arthur Mattingley of Melbourne, a keen field ornithologist, secretary of the Australasian Ornithologists Union, and an officer of the Department of Trade and Customs, made photographs of a colony of nesting egrets. Returning a few weeks later he found the colony had been devastated by plume hunters. He took photos of that scene too. Those photos received international publicity and played an important part in the worldwide campaign to protect birds and ban the plumes' trade.

Continued Page 2

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

After the very wet last week of February, the weather over the 5 weeks from 23 February became much drier, especially over the final 3 weeks, and also stayed relatively mild. In particular the overnight temperatures have, due to the often-cloudy conditions, rarely dropped below 10°C. It appears that this, aided by the very good food availability, has allowed many of the spring/summer migrant species to delay their final departure from the COG Area of Interest (Aoi), unlike the indications two months ago. My analysis below also confirms my impression that it has again been a relatively quiet period (though as always there is plenty to report), with few "special" birds except for one very unexpected find of the kind I really can't alert readers to keep an eye out for.

As some readers may be aware, on 17 March a probable **Red-backed Button-quail** was found wet and exhausted 100 metres or more from the shore by a kayaker in West Lake in Lake Burley Griffin. The kayaker left the bird on one of the islands. However, an hour later he returned to check the bird, found it alive and decided to take it to ACT Wildlife. By pure chance Kim Farley, the ACT

Continued Page 2



Variegated Fairy-wren (Jervis Bay outing)

Marcus Hellyer

Everyone welcome

APRIL MEETING *continued from Page 1*

The egret colony was located 370 km west of Canberra in what was known as the Mathoura Wetlands. That area is part of what is now the Millewa-Barmah Red Gum Forest. This talk discusses egrets, the Mattingley story, and the Red Gum forest today. The talk is also about a visit to the area in December 2021 to find out whether any breeding egrets can be seen there now.

The second presentation will be by **Lori Gould**, Principal, GrassRoots Environmental, who will provide a “**Latham’s Snipe Project Update**”.

Lori’s presentation will provide an update on the progress of research on Latham’s Snipe, including bird movements within Australia and from Japan, observations, findings and progress. The talk will also include information on the implications of outcomes of the research and where the project is heading into the future.

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

continued from Page 1

eBird co-ordinator, saw it there about 30 minutes later, and was able to alert the carer to its significance. With the care it rallied and by 19 March was active and feeding. Unfortunately, on 21 March it suddenly died. The carer said she suspected an infection from the lake water. Assuming it is endorsed by the COG Rarities Panel (many photos and video were taken to assist with this), it is an unexpected find of a species that is not even listed in the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the Australian Capital Territory on COG’s website. However, to my surprise, the closest it has been recorded in the past 15 months has been from Conjola NP on the South Coast, just over 100 km away as the buttonquail flies. This seems to have been a special spot with one bird (and on one occasion 2 birds) observed there regularly between March and November 2021. Birds have also been reported from a number of locations around Sydney during this period, the most recent being from North Quarry, Penrith Lakes, on 21 March 2022.

It’s amazing to me how over the past few years the rarest species often seem to be those handed in for wildlife care, with unfortunately sufficient details not always being kept to allow their endorsement by the COG Rarities Panel. It is also my experience that COG members and chatline subscribers are not all aware that when you find injured birds you should take them to ACT Wildlife. This is despite their phone number (0432 300 033, a 24/7 hotline) and a link to their website being found on the homepage of the COG website. So, if you do find an injured bird please ring the above number and check their website (<https://actwildlife.net/>) to see how to best care for it before it is either picked up or delivered to one of their voluntary carers. And if you do think it may be rare, or if you cannot identify it, please take some photos to allow possible consideration by the COG Rarities Panel.



Red-backed Button-quail

Manuela Benson (ACT Wildlife)

In respect of the earlier departing spring/summer migrants still present in February there have been no further reports of the **Common Cicadabird** (last reported on 8 February) or the **Horsfield’s Bushlark** (last reported on 15 February). In contrast the **White-winged Triller** was still reported from 4 locations, the most recent being a female photographed at Namadgi NP Visitors Centre on 14 March, quite late for this species still to be present. The last **Rufous Songlark** also left quite late with reports still from 2 locations during the period, the most recent being on 27 March from Naas Road at Apollo Road.

Of the spring/summer migrants which usually move away from the COG AoI during March, the **Dollarbird** was still reported from 9 locations during the period, the most recent being 19 March from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, again quite late for this species. The **Rainbow Bee-eater** was still reported from a remarkable 18 locations and the **Sacred Kingfisher** from 15 locations during the period, and were still being reported up to the time of writing, quite late for both, especially the former.

In contrast, the **Pallid Cuckoo** was reported from just two locations, the latest being by Greg Wood on 9 March on the Centenary Trail from Hall Village to One Tree Hill. However, it was an important breeding record of a juvenile being fed by a **White-eared Honeyeater** (an immature was also reported from the nearby Mulligans Flat on 6 March). The **Horsfield’s Bronze**

-**Cuckoo**, our other inland cuckoo, was still reported from 4 locations, the most recent being by Liam Manderson from Lake George Road, Currawang, on 20 March.

This compares with the coastal migratory cuckoos, with the **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** still being reported from 13 locations up to the time of writing. The **Brush Cuckoo** was reported from 3 locations, most recently from Mulligans Flat by Brian Grinter on 20 March, again late for this species which has usually gone by early March. The related **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, which I've mentioned many times is the least migratory of our local cuckoos, was reported from 21 locations up to the time of writing. Finally, the **Eastern Koel** was still reported from around 30 locations up to the time of writing, but has been noticeably quiet and probably left in the first half of March from my local patch of Chapman/Rivett, similar to other areas from where local birders report Koels to me.

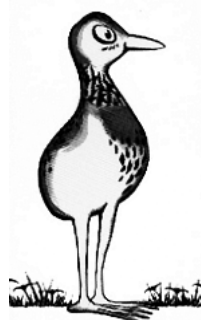
Of the other birds that mostly leave by the end of March/early April, the **White-throated Needletail** has been reported from 7 locations, with a maximum of 10 seen over 2 close together spots in the Brindabellas on 14 March, and the last report being of 5 birds from Point Hut Road, Gordon, on 16 March. So, despite the wet conditions, it has been a very poor summer for both this species and the related **Fork-tailed Swift**, for which there have been only a couple of close together reports of a single bird in January 2022.

Of the other birds that mostly leave by the end of March/early April, the **Leadhen Flycatcher** was still reported from around 27 locations, the **Australian Reed-Warbler** from close to 40 locations, and **Tree** and **Fairy Martins**, from 21 and 5 locations respectively, all up to the time of writing. Again, these are quite late departures, especially for the first and last-named. Of the passage migrants, three **Satin Flycatchers** were still reported from Smokers Gap on 24 February, but with none in the mountains after and, except for a female reported from Wamboin on 28 March, surprisingly none on migratory passage through the ACT. Again, in contrast, the **Rufous Fantail** was still reported from 6 such locations (including 2 together by Jean Casburn at Yarramundi Reach on 5 March) of a total of 14 locations, all the others from the mountains to the southwest of Canberra except for one in Tallaganda NP.



Buller's Albatross (Eden pelagic)

Marcus Hellyer



Australian Ornithological Services P/L

PO Box 385
South Yarra 3141
Victoria

Mob: 04173 10200

enquiries@philipmaher.com

Good birding, good food

2022

The Gulf Country

9 — 26 May 2022

Cairns, Karumba, Burketown,
Mt Isa, Winton

Atherton Tablelands and/or

Iron Range NP

30 May — 12 June 2022

One place has become available
on this long booked-out tour
Good discount available.

Central Australia

21 — 31 August 2022

Alice Springs, West MacDonnell Ranges,
Yulara, Erdunda, Marla

2022 Plains-wanderer Weekends

Check website for available places.

2023 tours

Atherton Tablelands & Iron Range

In two parts May 2023

Pilbara WA

Winter 2023

2023 Plains-wanderer Weekends

07 & 08 October 2023

21 & 22 October 2023

04 & 05 November 2023

18 & 19 November 2023

Contact Patricia Maher for itineraries.

www.philipmaher.com

While the **Latham's Snipe** was reported from 4 locations, it was present to at least 28 March when 2 were observed at West Belconnen Pond. On 16 March Lori Gould posted that one of the two birds fitted with satellite tags at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR this season had finally started its northward migration. She was very excited that it had stopped over at Gwydir wetlands, where previously ACT tagged birds had also stopped from 2017 onwards. Thus, it appears to be an important staging site for ACT **Latham's Snipe** and she proposes to conduct some habitat assessments there in the coming year. The other snipe was still in NSW in the Ballalaba area halfway between Captains Flat and Majors Creek. Lori will be updating us in her presentation at the 13 April meeting.

So, during April please keep an eye out for the above and other spring/summer migrants which are still being reported, but usually leave during April. These include the **Noisy Friarbird** (still reported from well over 80 locations during the period), **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone** (still reported from 12 and over 30 locations, respectively, during the period), and most of the **Rufous Whistlers** and **Grey Fantails** (again fewer than usual large groups of the latter seem to have been reported moving through from mid-March). A number of these last two species will overwinter, as will the **Mistletoebird** and **Superb Parrot**.

Of the species that move from the mountains and higher country into Canberra and its surrounds in autumn/winter, during the period the **White-eared Honeyeater** was reported from around 16 urban/peri-urban locations from the over 50 locations, and the **Golden Whistler** from 17 such locations, about half of the 35 locations. The **Scarlet Robin** was reported from 12 such locations of the 24 total locations during the period, indicating it has started to move back, whereas the **Flame Robin** has been reported from only two such locations of the surprisingly low 13 total locations, all of the others being from west of the Murrumbidgee River.

The **Rose Robin** has been reported from 10 locations in the period, all from west of the Murrumbidgee River, except for a brown, probably immature bird at the ANBG on 15 March. Again, there were no reports of the **Pink Robin** during the period. Surprisingly there has been only a single report of the **Crescent Honeyeater** during the period, 3 birds at Brindabella Road at Blundells Creek Road on 15 March. There has also been only a single report of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** over the period, one bird at Gigerline on 24 March.

On 29 March Philip Veerman observed around 10 **Swift Parrots** from near the Tuggeranong Mens Shed at the southwest end of Soward Way. This is about 2.5 km SSW of the area of NNE Lake Tuggeranong where there were so many seen last autumn/winter, and it will be interesting to see if they visit Canberra in as large numbers this year; my impression from the local ironbarks etc is that they are likely to flower much less this winter.

So please continue to look out for the above species as they move into Canberra and surrounds this autumn/winter.

There have been comparatively few reports of "unusual birds" in the period, and apart from the probable **Red-backed Button-quail** mentioned above, only one worthy of special mention. On 23 February Steve Holliday and Suzi Bond reported 2 **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** from Mt Majura NR, but only 3 other observers were able to locate them up to 27 February. However, Liam Manderson reported at least 15 birds flying out in 3 groups from the known location at the Scott NR Mulloon on 26 February. This is a remarkable number in my experience, noting that the 2018-2019 COG Annual Bird Report (ABR) indicates peaks of 20 or more in 2003-2007. Liam also found 3 birds there on 26 March, and 6 birds were seen when COG visited there in May 2021.

Again, **Plumed Whistling Ducks** were reported only from Trucking Yard Lane Dam with a maximum of 8 reported on 18 March, but no **Freckled Ducks** were reported during the period. In contrast, two **Australian Shelducks** were reported from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR and Parkwood Road, Holt, on 3 and 18 March, respectively, as well as from around 11 locations to the east and northeast of Canberra during the period. **Blue-billed Ducks** were reported from 4 locations in the period, with by far the highest number being the 11 ducks seen at the Morass (Lake Bathurst) on 11 March. **Musk Ducks** were again reported from 7 locations, not including the Sanctuary at Tidbinbilla NR.

Stubble Quail were reported from around 19 locations, probably an indication of lesser calling as the breeding season closes. The **Brown Quail** was reported from around 9 locations, also well down from the 23 in February. The **Painted Button-quail** was reported from around 10 locations in the period, but again no **Little Button-quail** have been reported. A single **Great Crested Grebe** has been reported on two occasions (3 and 10 March) from just the one location, Cotter Dam.

A surprise to me has been the apparent absence of crakes and rails this summer/autumn (probably due to the lack of exposed muddy areas due to the full dams etc), with only the **Australian Spotted Crake** reported from 2 locations so far in 2022, mostly

from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, with a single sighting at Franklin Pond. The **Lewin's Rail** has been reported only from Aranda Snow Gums NR on 11 January, whereas **Buff-banded Rails** were reported from 5 locations during the period.

A female **White-headed Pigeon** was reported from Weston on Facebook on 21 March. No **Diamond Doves** have been reported during the period, and only a single **Peaceful Dove** was reported from the known spot on Cotter Road on 14 March.

No **Banded Lapwings**, **Red-capped Plovers**, **Red-necked Avocets** or **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** were reported during the period. On 4 and 25 March I still found a **Common Sandpiper** at the north end of Lake Tuggeranong at the silt/gross pollutant trap slightly to the west of where Village Creek flows under Drakeford Drive. I have now easily found it on the 3 occasions I have looked for it there, but the question of whether there may be 2 birds is still unresolved. The one at the Isabella Pond was last reported from there on 10 March, and mine now seemed to be a much lighter coloured bird than the one I first observed, and from the photos seemed to be very similar to the Isabella Pond bird.

No **Australian Little Bittern** or **Caspian Tern** was reported during the period, though an **Intermediate Egret** was reported from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR between 25-27 March. ACT eBird co-ordinator Kim Farley has posted that most of the birds reported earlier in the month had turned out to be **Cattle Egrets**. She asked newer eBirders (in particular) to take extra care with IDs for egrets, and to consult field guides, or eBird's Explore Species, or Merlin, when looking at the bird. As a quick guide, is the bird bigger or smaller than an ibis? Check the bill colour(s) and length, and the length of neck. Look at the coloured skin near the eye and bill and compare that to an illustration or photo of each species. Geoffrey Dabb will expand on this in his presentation at our 13 April COG meeting.

A **Barn Owl** was again reported only from suburban Hawker on 4 and 18 March. The **Black-shouldered Kite** was still reported from 17 locations, and the **Nankeen Kestrel** from around 32 locations during the period. While these numbers are up and down a bit, respectively, from February, I understand there are still plenty of mice around, with a **Brown Falcon** seen taking one during the Mulligans Flat woodland survey on 27 March. A **Grey Goshawk** (grey morph) was reported at the ANBG on Facebook on 20 March. On 12 March John Leonard saw 3 **Black Falcons** circling over the Murrumbidgee River at Stoney Creek NR: a male, a female and a young female. He surmised that the female he saw a couple of times in October 2021 must have found a mate and bred successfully.

A single **Azure Kingfisher** has been reported by a number of observers from Cotter Bend over the period, with another bird reported from the Sanctuary at Tidbinbilla NR on 20 March, a new location to my recall.

There have been no reports of **Cockatiel**, **Turquoise Parrots** or **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** during the period. Up to 2 **Little Lorikeets** were reported from the AIS in Bruce from 16-23 March, and up to 4 **Musk Lorikeets** were reported only from Hawker and Cook during the period.

A **Singing Honeyeater** was reported from Franklin Pond on 24 and 27 February, and 2 **Little Friarbirds** were reported from Murrumbateman on 14 March. No **Spiny-cheeked**, **Scarlet** or **Blue-faced Honeyeaters**, **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes**, **Zebra Finches** or **Tawny Grassbirds** were reported during the period.

Michael Robbins forwarded me a photo of an immature **Eastern Whipbird** in a garden in Gleneagles on 9 February; later there was a second visit possibly of the same bird. This is a very rare observation of this species in a Canberra garden, with the 2018-2019 COG ABR not containing any listing for it under the GBS section. Gleneagles is, however, all within 2 km of the Murrumbidgee River, the most likely source.

Of the birds I continued to ask readers to keep a special lookout for in 2022, 3 **Jacky Winters** were reported from the known location Namadgi NP Visitors Centre only on 20 March. A single **Hooded Robin** was reported from the known spot at Naas Rd at Apollo Road only on 9 and 24 March, but 2 birds were reported from the new spot, Booroomba Rocks track and carpark on 12 March. On the same day, 3 birds (a male and 2 females) were reported from Kelly Road, off Monaro Hwy just to the south of the ACT border, a reliable spot for finding them in past years. A male was also photographed at Googong Dam downstream picnic area on 28 March, another new location for this species, at least in recent times. Reporting them from 4 locations in March is very encouraging.

A **Restless Flycatcher** was reported from the known location at Nelanglo TSR on 3 and 4 March, and the new spot at Wollagorang on 26 March. However, most of the attention has been on the 1-2 birds seen at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR and adjacent Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant from 17-28 March. I expect this is another case of this species coming into Canberra and the adjacent peri-urban areas in autumn/winter.

Even though it was the first month of autumn, the still moist conditions have continued to provide a very good and extended breeding season particularly for waterbirds. Apart from the **Pallid Cuckoo** above some highlights in more detail follow:

- As a follow up to his 12 and 31 January reports, Anthony Overs has posted that the breeding in his Hawker garden had continued. On 3 March he noted the **Crested Pigeons** were sitting on the nest for quite some time, and then they weren't. No sign of eggs, and it was hard to tell if the nest had been predated given how messy it was in the shrub concerned. So, they were one for three for successful nests (this is similar to my experience). He had had multiple pairs of **Red-rumped Parrots** visit his bird baths every day. They brought their young with them for a short period before they decided that those kids should be elsewhere. One pair had brought two brand new young to the bath the previous week, which he thought may be evidence of late breeding or indeed of a second brood. He noted that, with an incubation period of 20 days, and young fledging after another four to five weeks, a second brood is highly possible. The resident **Australian King-Parrots** had two very noisy begging young. He had no idea where the nest was, perhaps in The Pinnacle or Kama NRs (he correctly assumed breeding records in "town" are not common). Although he had not kept a close eye on them, the **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** that breed nearby at the primary school entrance appeared to have raised at least one young. Both **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalotes** had raised numerous young, many of which often visited the bird baths. He noted that they were very quick, they sneak in, land on the bath, had a tiny drink, then vanish into the treetops. Calling betrayed their presence.
- On 7 March Anthony noted he had forgotten a few things. **Magpie-larks** had made their nth breeding attempt (he had lost count) and were recently successful, raising two young. Mum brought a young one up to the back door. As she worked over some spiderwebs the youngster made that horrendous grinding begging call. The call came through the screen door and echoed around the family room making the bird sound like it was some sort of enormous beast. Last week, the female **Satin Bowerbird** that visited most days for a bath and the occasional piece of fruit brought two begging dependent young with her. She had spent most of her time this season at the rear of 5 Dungowan St Hawker. The nest was not located (my experience is this species is the most surreptitious breeder, probably because she does so alone). **Rainbow Lorikeets** had been highly successful in the local area. Up until recently the largest group he'd seen in 11 years was about 25 birds, but the past six months saw profuse flowering of eucalypts throughout the suburb and the lorikeets had been all over them. He watched a pair investigate a hollow multiple times in the 'block of flats' tree two doors down from his place but nothing eventuated (for their recent roosting see below).
- On 23 March Helen Cross posted that, since moving to the Lions Youth Haven (and Westwood Farm) on the Kambah Pool Road in September 2020, she had come to realise how much our small woodland birds use thickets of *Eucalyptus blakelyi* saplings for nesting. In that time she had recorded the following species nesting in them: **Diamond Firetail**, **White-throated Gerygone**, **Mistletoebird**, **Willie Wagtail**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** and **Grey Fantail**, and she was sure the **Western Gerygone** does too though she just had not been able to spot a nest yet. She noted it seemed the old-growth hollow-bearing trees aren't the only important trees for nesting, and wondered what other species chatline readers had seen nesting in Blakely's Red Gum sapling thickets. (In my experience from the Campbell park nest workshops, **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones**, and **Weebills** certainly favour younger saplings). She noted, of course, the many old and magnificent Yellow Box, Blakey's Red Gums and other eucalypts on the farm provide nesting sites for many other species, and she had provided records of the following species to Canberra Nature Map: **Brown Falcon**, **Brown Goshawk**, **Dollarbird**, **Tree Martin**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Nankeen Kestrel**, and **Australian Hobby**.
- While Helen's report is over 3 breeding seasons, both are excellent examples of how people can undertake very useful projects by carefully watching birds close to home. Readers may want to think about similar projects; I can certainly vouch for how rewarding they can be (for example, see the **Eastern Koel** below).
- On 13 March Shorty at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR found there were 9 **Royal Spoonbills** including two juveniles begging and being fed by the adults. He noted the juvenile spoonbill begging call sounded a bit like a **Silver Gull**. While there is a reasonable amount of **Royal Spoonbill** breeding information on the BIRD INFO data on the COG website, there are none of feeding dependent young in March (just the 5 observations in January or February).
- By 30 March I had reports of 157 **Eastern Koel** fledglings, including first reports (to my knowledge) for Goulburn, Bungendore and Sutton, as well as a quite small and underweight juvenile taken into care from the community farm at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 29 March. This may increase a bit, particularly when I do a closer check of eBird records, but is unlikely to be more than half of the 365 reported last season. While there have been some other late reports, including of several still being fed by **Red Wattlebirds** last week, there certainly hasn't been the same late

surge as we had then, with my last one being seen on 22 February. So please still keep an ear/eye out for them and I would be very grateful if you can report any observations to me, including ones made earlier in the season.

As may be expected, more reports of mixed feeding flocks (MFF) have come to my attention, so please continue to look out for this autumn phenomenon especially for the unexpected species often quietly feeding in amongst all the activity.

Michael Robbins, who lives under a known flyway on the western side of Kambah, and which, now that Lindsay Hansch has moved from Jerrabomberra, is probably the best location to regularly observe the honeyeater migration, confirmed my impression that the season is off to a slow, low key start. On 28 March he reported there were several smaller groups of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** flying from west to east over Urambi Village and it seemed to him 'with a clear migration intent'. Later that day he saw a medium-sized group doing so. So, please keep an eye out for them, especially after clear cold nights (the cloudy days and still quite warm nights to date haven't been conducive to their movement, but eventually the need to do so overrides the less than perfect conditions), as well as for the **White-naped Honeyeaters** which will join them and become the predominant species later in April. However, there have been reports of many **Silvereyes** as well as **Noisy Friarbirds** migrating.

As part of his breeding report Anthony Overs noted on 12 March that recently the **Rainbow Lorikeets** had been roosting together; they gathered close to dusk flying around in a large group before settling down somewhere in the Ambalindum Street and Goodparla Street area in Hawker (he hadn't been able to get around there to find exactly where). In recent days, he estimated at least 40-50 birds in the swirling flock. To my recall this is the first time I've become aware of this phenomenon in the ACT, although I'm certainly very familiar with some very large roosts in Perth.

The **Common Mynas** roost in my GBS site since early January has still been very active, with a few days ago at least 125 birds leaving from a newish roost site, one of the 5 sites they have used and rotated in and around the GBS site. Most seemed to leave in the direction of the suburbs. The surprise as this column was being finalised is that **Common Starlings** had joined them in their most recently favoured roost tree, with over 80 of these birds leaving it early on 29 March. Other recent **Common Starling** roosts in Chapman (a long-standing one in a large palm tree) and Rivett contained around 200 and 150 birds, respectively

April is the last of the more than 3 months when there is significant bird movement in the COG AoI. So please watch out for the last of the spring/summer migrants mentioned above (in particular for the **White-throated Needle-tail** and **Fork-tailed Swift**), including those that usually leave by the end of April, for the arriving altitudinal migrants, for MFFs and single species flocks, for roost sites and flights, and for any autumn breeding activity. Please also continue to keep a special look out for the **Restless Flycatcher**, **Jacky Winter** and **Hooded Robin**. As usual please ensure that all significant sightings are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

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

Jack Holland



Sooty Oystercatcher (Jervis Bay outing)

Marcus Hellyer

NATURE LODGE OPTICS
62 OWEN ST HUSKISSON 0415516616
108 QUEEN ST BERRY 0488004700
The region's most trusted source for
Binoculars and Spotting Scopes
Free advice and unique guest
accommodation in Jervis Bay..
Proud Official Stockists of
SWAROVSKI - LEICA - ZEISS - STEINER
BUSHNELL - VORTEX - SCHÖEFHAUSEN
www.naturelodge.com.au

COG's cogs - No 9

Sue Lashko's birding journey began in New Zealand at age 11. Her family was lucky enough to be acquainted with one of New Zealand's premier birding experts, Ross McKenzie. He literally wrote the book on New Zealand's birds, *In Search of Birds in New Zealand: how and where to find them*.

Ross would take Sue down to the coast where he taught her how to tell waders apart. Which anyone will tell you is no mean feat. Everything from how to compare relative size, from curlews down to stints; bill size, length, colour and shape; leg colour; plumage patterns; underwings; rump colour, etc. Golden rule – always look for the bird that's different. He even taught her tricks for how to count tens of thousands of birds and get accurate estimates.

Ross also took her out into the forest in search of the threatened Kokako. He taught her not only about birds, but about habitat conservation, plant ID and the impact of feral predators. All the tools to set you up for a lifetime of birding. Once Sue moved to Australia in 1974, birding took a back seat to marriage, children and teaching for the next 25 years.

Sue joined COG in 1999 and has been a regular attendee at meetings and outings ever since. She was a member of the committee for some years and also became the field trips organiser and co-editor of Gang-gang newsletter. The field trips are always a great favourite among members. There are about 15 or so COG members who regularly volunteer to lead field trips, but we're always on the lookout for more people who want to take the plunge and lead a trip. So, if you know a great place to spot a bird and are keen to show people around, feel free to get in touch. Sue will be more than happy to talk you through the process of getting an outing up and running.

Since 2003, Sue has been birding all over the world. Southern and eastern Africa, to South and Central America, as well as Papua New Guinea and South East Asia. She even got as far north as Svalbard one time, home of the doomsday seed vault. At last count, Sue estimates to have seen some 5,000 species.

Apart from birding overseas, Sue enjoys disappearing for 4-6 weeks on camping trips with a few friends to explore one corner of Australia or another. Camping, birds, mammals, reptiles, butterflies, and plenty of plants to enjoy. Who could want more?

Acknowledgements

Nathan Finger and Sue Lashko



Feathers'n'Friends

Birdwatchers & nature lover's accommodation

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

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

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

Discounts available for Birdlife Australia members.

Check our website for comprehensive details, rates, and bookings:

www.feathersnfriends.com.au

Fred & Jeanette Birkbeck

244 Clacherty Road
Julatten QLD 4871

Tel: 07 4094 1665

Email: freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au

Future Field Trips

COG Trips

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

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

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

Changes to trips are notified on the COG chatline <http://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/discussion-email-list/> and trips page of COG website <http://canberrabirds.org.au/category/trips/>.

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

Be Covid safe on COG field trips:

Maintain social distancing of 1.5 metres

Maintain hand hygiene

Wear a mask in shared cars if carpooling (Note: carpooling is voluntary)

DO NOT ATTEND if you have tested positive for Covid, have been a close contact within the past 7 days, or have any Covid, cold or flu symptoms.

Sunday 3 April - Narrabundah Hill - morning outing

Description: This outing has again been timed for the autumn honeyeater migration season, with the northern and western boundaries of the reserve having some of the few currently known local migration routes. We will walk along these two boundaries, depending on conditions and the species seen, possibly along most of the western one, and we will either return by the same or a different path. This will be around 4 km on relatively flat ground. We will also look for other autumn birds such as the **Scarlet Robin** and mixed feeding flocks, or late departing summer migrants such as the gerygones.

Meeting time: This walk will start at **8:30 am** to maximise the opportunity to see the honeyeaters which generally come through late in the morning in early April (we saw over 2500 birds there at a similar timing in 2019).

Meeting place: Meet at the parking area and stile at the northeast end of the reserve, at the corner of Warragamba Avenue and Eucumbene Drive, Duffy. **Please note that the entry to this parking area is a little tricky, and is in fact about 25 metres past (on the Mount Stromlo side) the T-junction with Warragamba Avenue, and for those driving along Eucumbene Drive from Duffy involves a quite tricky 180 degrees turn, so please take care. Please take water and morning tea to have on the track.**

Name of leader and contact details: To participate, please register with Jack Holland by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com – please include your name, mobile number, and emergency contact name and number.

Sunday 10 April – K2C surveys near Bredbo

COG will continue with the K2C surveys that have been running since April 2010. The surveyed properties have healthy populations of many of the rarer woodland birds such as **Diamond Firetail**, **Hooded Robin** and **Speckled Warbler**. We will be visiting the same sites to continue the monitoring and see if we can add to the property lists with spring-summer migrants. The surveys will be undertaken in 'blitz' fashion; that is, observers in small groups will visit a number of sites on one or more properties before regrouping for lunch and a sharing of the survey's findings. Less experienced observers are welcome to join in the survey as each team will have at least one experienced observer. Anyone interested in participating is asked to contact Nicki Taws **before Wednesday 6 April**. Email: ntaws@bigpond.com or 0408 210736.

Friday 15 to Monday 18 April – Easter camp to Round Hill NR

This trip is fully booked with a waiting list.

Sunday 24 April – private property near Gunning – morning outing

Meet at Sutton Primary School in Victoria Street, Sutton, at 7.45am for carpooling. It is a drive of approximately 45 minutes to the farming property which has a beautiful, bird-attracting garden, as well as a variety of habitats on the farm.

Bring morning tea, and wear clothing and shoes suitable for walking through grass.

Register with Sue Lashko at smlashko@gmail.com – provide your name, mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact. If you would like to carpool from Canberra with members from your area, advise me of the name of your suburb and I will try to link you with nearby attendees.

Numbers limited to 20.

Sunday 1 May- Picaree Hill Conservation Area

Location: Dick's Creek Road, New South Wales, about 30 mins drive from Canberra. The general location can be found at - 35.0056 149.1532. Note incorrect road name in March Newsletter

Description: The outing will be to a private conservation area not accessible to the general public. Bird surveys were conducted by the outing's leader in autumn 2003, 2004 and 2005 and twice in spring 2003 and 2004. Our target species will be **Spotted Quail-thrush**, **Superb Lyrebird** and **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren**

Meeting time and place: Meet at the Hall Primary School, Hoskins Street, Hall at 7:15am Standard Time. We will carpool from there in four four-wheel drive vehicles.

Walking distance: A circular route of approximately 5-6 km

Degree of difficulty: The walk will be along vehicle tracks. Easy-medium, the terrain is hilly but general fitness would be adequate. There will be a down-hill section with loose gravel so the use of a walking pole is advised.

End time: We hope to start the walk around 8:00am with the walk taking about 2 ½ to 3 hours

What to bring: Water, morning tea, hat, sunscreen, sturdy shoes, insect repellent.

Numbers: Limited to 16.

Register with Chris Davey chris_davey@aapt.net.au Please provide your name, mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Name of leader and contact details: Chris Davey. MOB 0418 679 847.

Sunday 8 May – Farrer Ridge

Meeting point: There is an entry into the reserve on Sulwood Drive, near the Sainsbury St intersection roundabout. Park on the grass near the reserve fence.

Time: 9am

Walk information : about three hours, three kms.

Bring: sturdy shoes, water, sunscreen, hat.

Farrer Ridge is an odd-shaped reserve, but we will take a wander along some of the tracks and go to the trig for spectacular views across the Tuggeranong Valley. There are some steps, but we'll go slowly.

Please register with Sandra at shirmax2931@gmail.com, with your name and phone number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Sunday 15 May 2022 - Brooks Creek TSR

Description: This will be an exploratory visit as I believe that it will be the first time that COG has had a field trip to this site. The Brooks Creek Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) is rarely visited. It is located between Shingle Hill Way and Brooks Creek, in the rural locality of Gundaroo. A gold rush occurred there in 1861.

eBird hotspots: <https://ebird.org/australia/hotspot/L16413251>

Meeting time and place: Netball Centre, Lyneham at 8.00 am for optional carpooling. Sealed roads all the way. Suggested contribution to drivers from each passenger: \$5.

Walking distance: perhaps 4 km or so

Degree of difficulty: medium, as mostly off-track in open forest

End time (approx.): 12 noon

What to bring: water & morning tea, wear sturdy footwear

Birds and Heritage Tour of Norfolk Island

Return airfares from Sydney to Norfolk Island, 7 nights accommodation, 7 days car hire and escorted touring with Neil Hermes and Michael Hermes

Norfolk Island (3655ha) lies in the south-west Pacific 1400km east of mainland Australia and 1500km south-west of Fiji. An external territory of Australia, Norfolk has strong ecological affinities with New Zealand.

The Norfolk Island Group is a globally important biodiversity hotspot and has been designated as an 'Important Bird Area' by Birdlife International. The group is a breeding site for several 100,000 seabirds including the Masked Booby, Grey Ternlet, White Tern, Sooty Tern, & Wedge-tailed Shearwater. Phillip Island supports one of the largest breeding populations of Red-tailed Tropicbirds in Australia. Norfolk is also home to the endemic & endangered Norfolk Island Green Parakeet, & other endemic birds such as the Norfolk Island Golden Whistler & Norfolk Island scarlet robin.

Join experienced guides Neil and Michael Hermes on a personalised journey through Norfolk Island's history, amazing wildlife and stunning scenery drawing on the knowledge and memories from Neil's time as a Norfolk Island National Parks Officer and Michael's background as an archaeologist.

From AUD \$2,539

Date: 02-09 September 2022 Duration: 8 Days

Inclusions

Return economy airfare to Norfolk Island, meet & greet at Norfolk Island Airport, return airport transfers on Norfolk Island, 7 nights twin share accommodation, 7 days car hire - petrol additional, half day island orientation tour, welcome 'fireside' chat with Neil Hermes and Michael Hermes and 2 course dinner at Bounty Bar and Bistro, Norfolk Island National Park tour with Neil Hermes, guided Kingston cemetery, Polynesian sites and fossils tour with Michael Hermes, Tour covering St Barnabas and Melanesian Mission and 100 acres Acers Reserve with Neil Hermes and Michael Hermes, Tour covering Anson Bay, Captain Cook, WWII and walks with Neil Hermes and Michael Hermes and Norfolk Island shopping bag, map, handy hints & shopping discounts.

Confirm with deposit before 13 December 2021 and save:

- \$250 deposit if booking prior to 13 December 2021, or
- \$1000 if booking after 13 December 2021

Information at neilhermes.com.au or Norfolk Island Travel Centre
norfolkislandtravelcentre.com/event/norfolk-island-wildlife-heritage-tour

Participants must register with the leader, providing their name and mobile phone number, and the

name and mobile phone number of an emergency contact person

Numbers limited: yes, maximum 15

Name of leader and contact details: David McDonald, ph. 0416 231 890, email david [at] dnmcdonald.id.au

Sunday 29 May - The Pinnacle Nature Reserve

Description: Peri-urban Canberra Nature Park reserve with a mixture of vegetation types, including remnant dry sclerophyll (Red Stringybark) forest, grassy box woodland, planted woodland and areas of open grassland. Possible birds include **Scarlet Robin**, **Speckled Warbler**, various thornbills, **Weebill**, **White-throated Treecreeper**, **Golden Whistler**, various honeyeaters, etc.

eBird hotspots: The Pinnacle Nature Reserve

Meeting time and place: 9.00 am at the reserve entrance at the end of Dungowan St, Hawker. On-street parking is available on Dungowan St.

Walking distance: 4-5 km

Degree of difficulty: Easy to medium

End time (approx.): 11.30

What to bring: Water, morning tea

Participants must register with the leader, providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact

Numbers limited: Yes (15)

Name of leader and contact details

John Brannan

Email: johnbrannan@tpg.com.au

Mob.: 0405 331 405

Sunday 5 June - Mt Arawang

Description: Mt Arawang is part of Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve, between Tuggeranong and Weston Creek. We will walk around the base of the hill. It is an easy walk, mainly flat. Seventy species have been

recorded in Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve, including 4 species of raptor, **Speckled Warbler**, **Restless Flycatcher**, and **Golden and Rufous Whistler**.

eBird hotspots: Nearby hotspots include Kambah Horse Paddocks and Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve.

Meeting place: There is space for a few cars near the gate to Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve, on the western side of Namatjira Drive, Chapman, next to Number 204. This is where we will meet. There is also space for a few cars on the eastern side of Namatjira Drive, at the end/beginning of Fisher.

Meeting time: 9am.

Walking distance: 3 kms around the base. If there is interest, we could walk the track over the summit as well.

End time (approx.): 10:30 for the base loop, and an extra 45 mins to an hour to traverse the summit.

What to bring: Water, sunscreen, a hat and sturdy shoes. Wet weather gear if considered necessary.

Name of leader and contact details: Please **register** with the leader, Lia Battisson by email to liabattisson@grapevine.com.au, providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Do so **before 7pm on Friday 3 June 2022** as numbers will be limited to 15.

New Places: March 2022

Sandra Henderson

Namarag Reserve

This is a new ACT reserve, joining Kama and the Lower Molonglo Reserve as part of the Molonglo River Reserve. Long-term COG members visiting Namarag will notice it includes part of what we knew as Finch Central. Namarag includes the area formerly occupied by the old settling ponds. It is still being landscaped, and includes a number of walking tracks. I accessed it via Butters Bridge, from a temporary carpark along John Gorton Drive about 1km from Coppins Crossing.

Some of the tracks overlook the river, and I spent quite a bit of time watching **Dusky Woodswallows** hawking close to the water. The new dam was proving popular with various species wanting a drink. There are several lookouts scattered around the site, and explanatory signs. It is well worth a visit to see what is being done on the site.

Hassett Park, Campbell

This park was appearing in eBird records, so I went to have a look. It is a relatively new suburban park, with no natural bush. There are large areas of mown grass, and when I was there quite a few dog owners were walking or training their dogs (not all of the dogs were on leash, and two ran up to me). I'm not tempted to return, although I note that three years ago a **Buff-banded Rail** was sighted there. The wetland/drainage area appeared to be dry when I was there, despite recent wet weather.

Legacy Park, Campbell

This is not far from Hassett Park, but has quite a lot of natural bush with some large eucalypts. I spent just over 20 minutes there, and listed eight parrot species, including a **Superb Parrot** and a pair of **Gang-gang Cockatoos**. The park was opened on the 75th anniversary of Legacy in 2001, and a descendant of the Gallipoli Lone Pine was planted there in 2006. A walkway from Savage St has stepping stones with the names of various Australian towns, with rock samples from those areas, leading to a memorial. A volunteer group do weed removal and planting.

Canberra Centenary Trail at Mulligans Flat

I accessed the Centenary Trail from next to the locked farm gate at the end of Duke St. I walked only 1.4km along the trail, which does not have a lot of shade at this point, so was rather warm. A few cyclists passed me, but there were no other walkers. This was not a very successful outing (only 11 species seen) but it was a part of Mulligans I've not explored before.

Field Trip Reports

Saturday 26 February – Forde Creek

As always, the annual Forde Creek walk did not fail to provide an unexpected reward. Fourteen members, led by John Harris, walked beside Forde Creek from Linear Park to Horsepark Drive and back, hoping to see a Buff-banded Rail and a crake or two, for which this reedy little creek is justly renowned. Overnight rain, however, had filled the creek, making the many pools too deep for the smaller birds to venture out from the reeds to wade and to forage. Their more common larger cousins were not so deterred, and we saw **Eurasian Coots**, **Dusky Moorhens** and **Australasian Swamphens** in breeding colouring, all with juveniles accompanying them. The unexpected highlight of the walk, however, was a juvenile **Nankeen Night Heron**. Only a few metres away on the opposite bank, the bird was unperturbed and obligingly posed to be photographed in its striped and speckled juvenile plumage. For some, it was a welcome opportunity to tick another bird on their bird bucket list!

All in all, the group saw 47 different species of birds including a **Latham's Snipe** in flight, a flock of 38 **Superb Parrots** and enjoyed good photography opportunities of smaller birds including **Striated Pardalotes**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbills**, **Weebills**, **White-naped Honeyeaters** and a **European Goldfinch**. It was disappointing to see the recent arrival of numbers of **Rock Doves** in the north of Canberra as soon as concrete road overpasses had been built to provide them with nesting and roosting sites. All agreed that it was a most interesting and productive 3 hours. It was encouraging that the group included some first timers who learned to identify birds new to them and were able to add them to their lists.

John Harris



Nankeen Night Heron

Ben Milbourn

Sunday 6 March – Tin Hut Dam, Googong

After November's outing being cancelled due to bad weather, fortunately this trip went ahead under cloudy skies with even a brief appearance by the sun. Most of the 13 participants had not previously visited this location and we were all delighted with the variety of species.



Fantail Cuckoo

Sandra Henderson



Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo

Sandra Henderson

Upon arrival, we were assailed by the calls of **Noisy Friarbirds** and large numbers of **Pied Currawongs**. A wander down to the nearby small dam yielded a pair of **Musk Ducks**, as well as darters and cormorants. As we walked across to the end of Googong Dam, the weed-infested grassy areas and low wattles provided good shelter for **Southern Whiteface**, **Red-browed Finch**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, many **Superb Fairywrens** and even **Australian Reed-Warbler**. In a wooded patch there, a pair of **Eastern Yellow Robins** were making a great fuss, flying about, cocking their tails and giving some quite unusual calls. The reason was soon revealed when a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** showed itself, enjoying a feed of hairy caterpillars.

After retracing our steps back to the first dam, we explored the other side and found a young **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, a very plain bird with just a hint of bronze in the wings and calling softly like a begging fairywren, no doubt its host. Some people also had views of a pair of **Yellow Thornbills** with one young.

It was a good morning for raptors with **Wedge-tailed Eagles**, **Brown Goshawk**, **Nankeen Kestrel** and, at morning tea, a quick flyby by a **Peregrine Falcon**.

Many thanks to Liam Manderson for leading this outing which yielded 51 species.
Sue Lashko

13 March 2022 – Kama Nature Reserve

Twelve members and visitors from Melbourne met on an overcast, but mild morning. Kama NR is now part of the Molonglo River Reserve, along with Lower Molonglo River Reserve and the newer Namarag Special Purpose Reserve. The land bordering the Molonglo from Scrivener Dam to the Molonglo's confluence with the Murrumbidgee is also included in the Molonglo River Reserve.

We walked anticlockwise down to the road that runs parallel to the Molonglo River and back into the Reserve twelve hundred metres further east, a total of 5.4 kms. We enjoyed nice views of the river, which was carrying a large volume of water over the rapids. Our first treat for the morning was a new species for some of our party, a flock of **Superb Parrots** which obliged by sitting up in a dead tree in the near distance before flying off. A **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** was seen feeding young. The first of four raptor species seen was a **Nankeen Kestrel**. Later we saw a **Brown Falcon** and, as we were saying our farewells, two **Wedge-tailed Eagles** being harassed by a **Brown Goshawk**, flew overhead. Other highlights included both species of martin, **Australasian Pipit** and several **Brown-headed Honeyeaters**, among a total of 36 species.

Lia Battisson

Wednesday 17 March - Pine Island to Point Hut

Eight members and guests joined me for this walk along a section of the Murrumbidgee Discovery Track, which goes through grassland and wooded areas. With the river still flowing very strongly, the views were quite spectacular. There were flocks of **Silvereyes** moving through at many points along the track, in company with **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** and pardalotes. At Point Hut, the three **White-faced Heron** youngsters, which Deb and Rod had mentioned in recent eBird lists, were sitting



together on a branch above the water. On the return walk, a very mysterious call had several of the group scrambling downhill, chasing something which was never identified and which moved quickly through undergrowth to the edge of the river. Those of us who remained up on the track managed to identify a distant raptor as a **Peregrine Falcon**.

Sandra Henderson

White-faced Heron

Sandra Henderson

Friday 18 to Monday 21 March – Jervis Bay

Another great production from that nature loving team of Goldie-Walter. It had a little bit of everything. A small amount of drama (lost keys), a bit of humour (at the nightly get together) and a large amount of what we come to expect from this team (birds!!).

After a downpour on Friday night, the weather on the Saturday could have been better, but then it could have been a lot worse. Sunday and Monday were much nicer.

Saturday morning was spent in the forest which was rather quiet and the afternoon was spent in the Botanic Gardens. The afternoon produced some very nice birds including **White-cheeked Honeyeaters** and a **Brown Cuckoo-Dove**.

Sunday was a day in the heath. A loop from Murrays Beach took us through some nice woodlands and heath. There were wonderful ocean views (no seabirds). The heath and woodlands were a lot more productive with **Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters**, **White-cheeked Honeyeaters** and **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** being the standout birds. There were also three raptors overhead (**Peregrine Falcon**, **Brown Goshawk** and **Whistling Kite**) and a Diamond Python with indigestion from a very large bulge in its belly.

The afternoon was also spent in the heath, this time over the border in NSW in the Jervis Bay National Park behind Hyams Beach. Another successful expedition with views of two different **Eastern Bristlebirds** and glimpses by some of **Southern Emu-wrens**.

Monday morning was another visit to heath, this time near the camp, and this time there were good views of the elusive **Southern Emu-wren**.

Evenings were not wasted either. Spotlighting was on the activities list. Two nights were spent wandering around in the dark using Kathy and John's heat-detecting gizmo to find possums, sleeping birds, a **Southern Boobook** and a Bush Rat.

Many thanks to the Goldie-Walter team. A great weekend. I will give them a rating of 9 out of 10. This means that they will have to have another go to get that elusive 10 out of 10 score.

Noel Luff



White-cheeked Honeyeater, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, Brown Gerygone
Marcus Hellyer

Eastern Bristlebird
Tee Tong Teo

Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 March – Eden pelagics

These trips, initially booked for October 2021 but postponed due to Covid restrictions, were again very popular. On both days, the seas were perhaps a little too calm for seabirds, but nevertheless no one was disappointed, especially the Saturday group which delighted in a raft of 27 albatrosses of 3 species sitting quietly on the water, allowing the newcomers to pelagics the chance to see the key features of each. Both the Saturday and Sunday trips produced almost the same suite of albatrosses – **Shy** and **White-capped**, **Black-browed** and **Campbell's**, **Indian Yellow-nosed** and **Buller's** with photos needed to separate the first two pairings. Large numbers of **Flesh-footed** and **Wedge-tailed Shearwater** were occasionally joined by a few **Sooty** and **Short-tailed Shearwaters**. The Saturday group saw a very obliging **White-chinned Petrel** (minus a white chin but identified by its bill colour), while the Sunday group had **Providence Petrel**, and both recorded **Grey-faced Petrel**. While albatrosses are always the stars of the show, the dainty **Wilson's Storm-Petrels** were enjoyed by all. **Pomarine** and **Arctic Jaeger** were seen on Saturday and both groups had wonderful views of **Black-faced Cormorants** on the chip mill wharf on the return to Eden.

Many thanks to Julian Teh for his excellent ID skills of pelagic species, and to the photographers for capturing such wonderful photos.

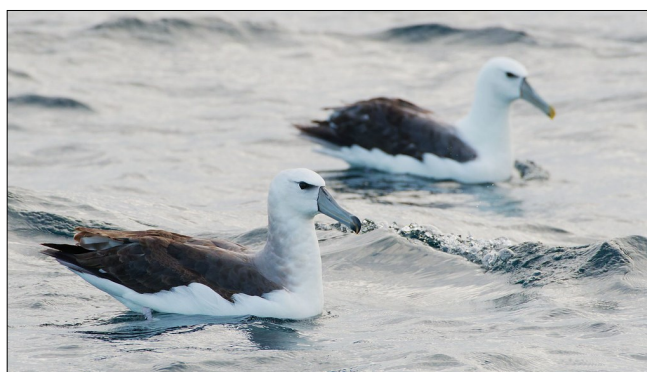
With most people spending extra time in Eden, Lake Curalo boardwalk was a popular birding spot, especially when both **Lewin's** and **Buff-banded Rails** were spotted and the information shared with others.

Sue Lashko



Shy Albatross

Rob Geraghty



Shy Albatross

Rob Geraghty



Yellow-nosed Albatross

Marcus Hellyer



Buller's Albatross

Murray Delahoy



Campbell's Albatross

Lindsay Hansch



Wedge-tailed Shearwater & Flesh-footed Shearwater *Peter Murphy*



Flesh-footed Shearwater

Lindsay Hansch



Wedge-tailed Shearwater

Lindsay Hansch



White-chinned Petrel

Ken Black



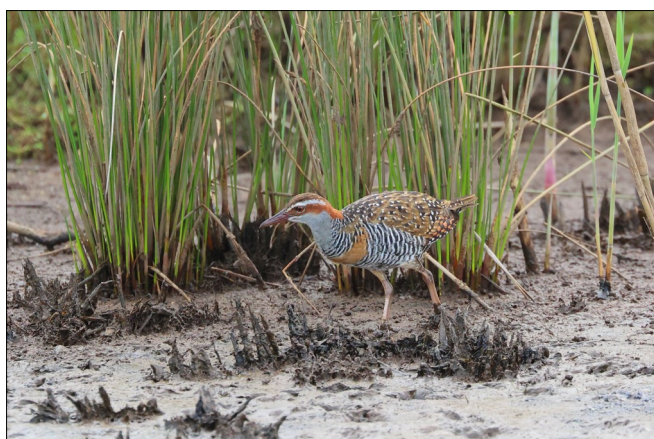
Providence Petrel

Lindsay Hansch



Wilson's Storm Petrel

Peter Murphy



Buff-banded Rail

Marcus Hellyer



Lewin's Rail

Marcus Hellyer

Documenting rare and unusual sightings in eBird.

The how, the what and the why

Seeing an unusual or rare bird is one of birding's many pleasures, and one of the key parts of reporting your special find in eBird is documenting what you saw.

Documentation is a requirement for confirmation of rare or unusual sightings in eBird. Most everyday sightings do not require documentation but, even when not required, documentation is encouraged. A few quick comments about what you saw provides other eBirders and future researchers with useful information - and will also remind you of your birding exploits into the future.

How will I know if my sighting is rare or unusual?

Rare or unusual species are very obvious when you are making your Checklist. Both the eBird app and the eBird website highlight rare sightings with a yellow banner –and brief advice is included about what to add to your record. You won't be able to submit the Checklist until you add documentation!

A species is flagged as 'rare' in eBird if the species is not usually found in an area, or is not usually present at the time of year you are reporting it, or where the count is larger than expected. In the ACT, a few additional species have been flagged to help alert birders to species that can be difficult to identify. This last has been done mainly to help newer birders. A good example of this is the **Pied Cormorant**, which is both uncommon and sometimes mistaken for **Little Pied Cormorant**.

What is meant by "documentation" in eBird?

"Documentation" includes any written comments, photographs, sound recordings or videos you add to your Checklist. Photos or other media are excellent evidence of a sighting, but most people add written comments. These are very, very acceptable and can add information that cannot be provided by a photo. Some wonderful people provide written comments as well as media!

What should I write in my comments?

Do include a description of the bird as you saw it – not what it looks like in your field guide! It is fine to use everyday language to describe your bird. Notes about its behaviour and any calls heard are also very valuable, and do include information about any breeding activity you noticed and/or click on the relevant breeding code.

Overall, you don't need to write a lot – just enough to make it clear what you saw - but writing more than the minimum is very welcome, and for many birders is part of the pleasure of birding.

For more detailed information on the elements of a good bird description see the eBird Help page [How to document your sightings](#).

What shouldn't I write as comments?

"Continuing bird" or "seen in the company of other birders" with no further description of the bird, nor any media, is unlikely to lead to a confirmation of an observation! Please write more!

What is the documentation used for?

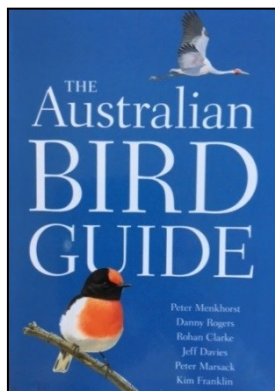
Your documentation provides the evidence to support your unusual or rare sighting. The eBird reviewer uses it to assess and, hopefully, confirm your record. Without documentation of rare sightings you can expect an email from the eBird reviewer requesting more info! Usually, these emails lead to an easy resolution, with the observer adding extra information or updating the ID. If no further information can be provided the record is marked as unconfirmed.

Contact Kim, the **eBird** reviewer for the ACT at kimlouiseFarley@gmail.com

Publications for Sale

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

Below are some of the most popular books and latest publications. We get new books in all the time and sometimes popular books sell out, but they can easily be re-ordered. If you are looking for a particular book, talk to the sales desk team at the meeting, as they can look at ordering it for you or contact Kathy on sales@canberrabirds.org.au



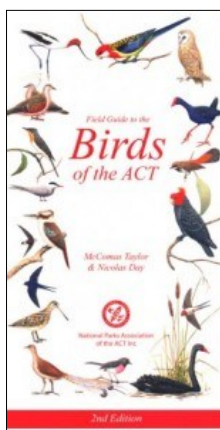
The Australian Bird Guide

2nd edition

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

The most comprehensive field guide to Australian birds ever seen and winner of the 2017 Whitley Medal. The guide features around 4700 colour illustrations, with particular emphasis on providing the fine detail required to identify difficult groups and distinctive plumages. Comprehensive species accounts have been written by a dedicated team of ornithologists to ensure identification details, distribution and status are current and accurate.

Members' price \$38 (RRP \$49.95).

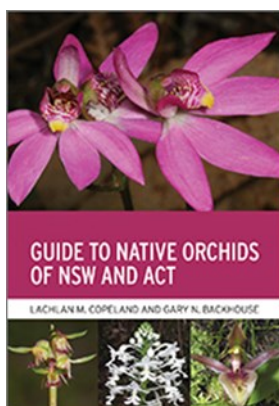


Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT

McComas Taylor & Nicolas Day

This revised second edition illustrates in colour the 217 birds likely to be seen in and around the ACT. It has easy-to-follow descriptions in a compact format. Only local birds are shown making this Field Guide much simpler to use than comprehensive national guides. McComas Taylor has been watching birds in Canberra for over 30 years and has written, broadcast and lectured on the subject. Nicholas Day is widely recognised as one of Australia's foremost wildlife artists.

Members' price: \$20.



Guide to Native Orchids of NSW and ACT

Lachlan Copeland, Gary Backhouse

An essential guide for all orchid enthusiasts, covering the richest area for wild orchids in Australia.

This comprehensive guide describes the 582 species of wild orchids that occur in NSW and the ACT. This region covers the richest area for wild orchids in Australia and includes over 500 species of seasonal ground orchids and 62 species of evergreen tree and rock orchids. Orchids found in this region include the tallest, heaviest, smallest flowered, most numerous flowered and most bizarre orchids in Australia, including elusive underground species.

Members' price: \$35 (RRP \$49.95)

Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

Donations to this fund are tax deductible. Funds are used to support projects that protect and enhance native birds and the environments that sustain them.

COG membership

2021-2022 memberships:

- Individual: \$50
- Family: \$55
- Institution: \$50
- School student (under 18) \$20

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

J May

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for May 2022 edition:

Wednesday 27 April 2022

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

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

or

c/- The Secretary COG,

PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608

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

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

COG information

President: Neil Hermes

0413 828 045

president@canberrabirds.org.au

Treasurer: Prue Watters

cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Secretary: Margaret Robertson

cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Address for correspondence

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

Canberra Bird Notes

Editor: Michael Lenz

michael.lenz.birds@gmail.com

COG website

canberrabirds.org.au

COG Webmaster

Julian Robinson

cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au

COG library

Membership Enquiries & Updates:

membership@canberrabirds.org.au

for change of address or other details.

Gang-gang Newsletter

Editor: Sue Lashko

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

Lay-out Editor: Gail Neumann

Publication Sales

Kathy Walter

sales@canberrabirds.org.au

COG E-mail Discussion List

COG E-mail Discussion List COG has an email discussion list for members and friends: 'CanberraBirds'. Join (subscribe to) the list by following the links on the COG website or by sending an email message to canberrabirds-subscribe@lists.canberrabirds.org.au. The subject line and body of the email can be empty.

To unsubscribe, either permanently or temporarily, send an email message to canberrabirds-unsubscribe@lists.canberrabirds.org.au.

If you wish to re-subscribe after being unsubscribed temporarily, simply follow the 'subscribe' instructions above.

Copyright in *Gang-gang* articles is retained by the articles' authors.

Gang-gang is published on COG's website in PDF format.

ISSN 2208-018X

