



Gang-gang

June 2023

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

JUNE MEETING

Wednesday 14 June 2023

7.30 pm

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

The June meeting will be a normal face-to-face one held at our usual venue. Attendees should heed social distancing and good hygiene practice etc, and use their common sense and stay home if they have COVID symptoms. Mask wearing is recommended.

Emmeline Norris - Monitoring woodland birds and other fauna to validate and refine urban habitat models and track biodiversity responses to change.

Shoshana Rapley - Curlews in the capital, and next stop: Victoria

The short presentation will be by **Emmeline Norris** from the Conservation Research Unit, ACT Government on “**Monitoring woodland birds and other fauna to validate and refine urban habitat models and track biodiversity responses to change.**”

Building on the recent talk by Melissa Snape about the Connecting Nature, Connecting People initiative and the ACT Urban Habitat and Connectivity project, this presentation introduces the Canberra Urban Biodiversity

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

The weather for the 5 weeks from 26 April to 30 May inclusive covered by this column was again in 2 parts. The long stable high at the end of the last period was soon replaced by a very significant rain event at the end of April, with a further but much less substantial rain event at the end of the first week of May. Since then, it has been mainly clear and dry with the first frosts, light initially but then with some more substantial ones. My analysis below suggests the highest bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (AoI) was during and shortly after this wet period, with activity dropping noticeably as it dried out and nights became colder. With a few exceptions, only the spring/summer migrants of which some overwinter seemed still to be present towards the end of the period. Some of the autumn/winter altitudinal migrants have still been slow to arrive.

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Swift Parrot

Victor Braguine

Everyone welcome

Surveys (CUBS) project. CUBS aim to involve the community in collecting structured biodiversity data in urban areas. This data is crucial for two purposes: (1) validating and refining urban habitat and connectivity spatial models and (2) monitoring biodiversity responses to changes like ecological restoration or urban development that impact habitat suitability and ecological connectivity. Specifically, this presentation will emphasize the models and monitoring opportunities for small woodland birds.

The main presentation will be by **Shoshana Rapley**, a Ph D candidate at the ANU, on “**Curlews in the capital, and next stop: Victoria.**”

Bush Stone-curlews (*Burhinus grallarius*; warabin or mulyara in Ngunnawal) used to be found across most of the Australian continent but have declined across their southern distribution. They are now rare and threatened across most of south-eastern Australia. In 2014, with support from COG, a project commenced at Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary to reintroduce the species after their ACT extirpation in the 1970s. So how are they faring nearly a decade on? In this talk, Shoshana will give an update on the population. The project has now expanded to include priority areas in Victoria, where curlews were recently uplisted to critically endangered. Shoshana will give COG a first look into this study and its next steps.

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

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During the period there were 3 species which attracted special attention, the first being the **Spangled Drongo** at the ANBG. This immature or sub adult in that it had a brown rather than red eye, but still had a few spangles on the breast, was first reported there by Kim Farley (and photographed by Simon Pelling) on 2 May, with subsequently another 7 birders reporting it on eBird to 4 May. COG's 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR) lists it as a non-breeding vagrant, a coastal species not often recorded in the ACT. The eBird map shows reports from 6 different locations since 1 January 2018, with the most recent one from Isaacs Ridge NR on 20 August 2021.

Again, the question arises, why was it there and where did it go to? The search for it may have led to the discovery there of the **Brown Gerygone**, first photographed by Brian Grinter on 4 May, and subsequently reported/photographed by another 10 eBirders to 6 May, with many noting how active it was and thus difficult to identify correctly, especially as it was often in the company of **Brown Thornbills**. This species, listed in the 2018-2019 ABR as a rare winter visitor from the coastal forests, has a very unusual distribution pattern in that it tends to come to the ACT in autumn/winter. When present it has traditionally been found in the rainforest gully of the ANBG, from where it was last reported on 14 September 2018, though there have been reports since from the Tallaganda SF area, most recently on 7 January 2023.

The third species was the **Swift Parrot** in Watson, 12 of which were first reported by Kathy Walter and John Goldie from near Justice Robert Hope Park on 4 May. Between 6-14 May they were subsequently reported from there and other spots in Watson by many birders, with a maximum of 45 birds estimated on 12 May. Up to 9 birds were also reported from the Hackett water tank in Mt Majura NR between 10-13 May. However, the first and last reports for the period were 3 and then 2 birds from Duffy St Ainslie on 29 April and 20 May, respectively. So, it appears these very mobile birds have moved on, again to unknown parts, noting that the closest other sightings during the period were from north of Wollongong nearly 200 km to the northeast.

Of the early leaving spring/summer migrants, there was an unexpected late observation of a pair of **Rufous Songlarks** by Peter Morris on Majura Road, Pialligo on 12 May. Confirmation was assisted by the very good description, in particular the diagnostic “obvious chestnut rump and upper tail coverts” and the larger male than female. Surprisingly the birds were calling; my experience is that this usually ceases after breeding. This species does overwinter in small numbers, and I have observed them on several occasions but always as silent birds skulking away in low bushes and only clearly identifiable by their rufous rumps.

Of the spring/summer migrants still reported in the previous period there have been no further reports of the **White-winged Triller** (last reported on 28 March), **Dollarbird** (last report on 18 April), **Rainbow Bee-eater** (last report on 25 April), and the **Sacred Kingfisher** (last report on 31 March).

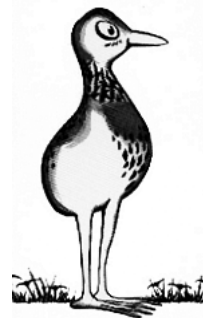
Likewise, there have been no further reports of the **Pallid Cuckoo** (last report on 1 April), the **Eastern Koel** (last report of a juvenile on 17 April), and the **Brush Cuckoo** (last report on 3 April). However, there were still reports of the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, the least migratory local cuckoo, from 9 locations. There was a very late report of an immature **Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo** with still quite short side barring by Michael Lenz at West Belconnen Pond on 26 May. Surprisingly (as in my experience these birds are usually quiet after the breeding season) the bird was calling frequently and, interestingly, attracted up to 11 **Superb Fairy-wrens** and 2 **White-plumed Honeyeaters**. The latest report otherwise was on 22 April, but the very good description including the diagnostic rufous sides to the upper tail allowed it to be clearly distinguished from the more likely (in late autumn/winter in my experience) **Shining Bronze-cuckoo** last reported (photographed) from Stony Creek NR on 25 April.

The **White-throated Needletail** has also not been reported since 14 April, the **Rufous Fantail** since 6 April, and the **Satin Flycatcher** was last reported on 22 April. During the COG outing on 14 May two **Leaden Flycatchers** were reported calling on the eastern side of McQuoids Hill NR, and then Bill Handke observed a "single bird calling. Clear observation within 4 metres. Responding to calls," there on 16 May.

It wasn't otherwise described initially, including whether it was a male or female, and in either case how the **Satin Flycatcher** was ruled out. However, Bill provided further information to satisfy the ACT eBird reviewer that it was a male **Leaden Flycatcher**. This was very important for a late autumn sighting as there are very few, if any, of both species recorded in May in the COG Aol on BIRD INFO on the COG website. So, either species could still have been possible, the latter on passage through from the mountains, noting the late report of a female at Bluetts Block on 22 April.

As I mentioned in my Bird of the Month talk to COG in February 2020, these two species are very difficult to separate by call. Henry Nix emphasised this to me many years ago. Graeme Chapman (also a much better birder than me) notes on his website (<https://www.graemechapman.com.au/index.php>) that the **calls are not diagnostic**, as there is great variation both within and between individual **Leaden** and **Satin Flycatchers**. Thus, it would need a very practised ear to separate them. In addition, parts of the **Restless Flycatcher's** (known to be present in the area - see below) extensive range of calls, in particular the *chewy chewy* (*towhee towhee* or *tuii-tuii*) are also very similar and have fooled me previously. So, I cannot overemphasize that if you are going to report a difficult to identify species "out of season", please provide a very good description as was also done for the **Rufous Songlark** and **Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo** above.

Of the spring/summer migrants which were still present at multiple locations in the previous period, the **Australian Reed-Warbler** was still reported from 6 locations, most recently from Isabella Pond on 17 May.



Australian Ornithological Services P/L

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Good birding, good food

2024 tours

Kutini – Payamu Tour
(Iron Range NP) Wet Season
4 to 10 January 2024
Cairns to Lockhart River
incl. flights

Far North Queensland
NEW DATES
21 May to June 2024
Part 1: Atherton Tablelands,
Part 2: Musgrave, Archer River,
Kutini – Payamu (Iron Range NP)

Top End Birding Tour
20 June to 3 July 2024
Part 1: Darwin, Kakadu NP,
Pine Creek, Katherine,
Part 2: Victoria River,
Timber Creek, Kununurra.
Optional Black Grasswren air charter to
Mitchell Plateau

Strzelecki Track Outback Tour
1-20 September 2024

Please contact Patricia Maher
for information & itineraries.

www.philipmaher.com

Likewise, the **Tree Martin** was reported from around 3 locations, most recently 10 birds being reported from Campbell Park on 22 May. However, **Fairy Martins** were not reported during the period, with the most recent being on 18 April.

The **Western Gerygone** was also not reported during the period (last on 25 April), which is a bit of a surprise as in my experience this species usually stays longer (and sometimes overwinters) than the **White-throated Gerygone**, which was also last reported on 25 April.

Numbers of the **Noisy Friarbird** decreased significantly during the period, down from 50 to just 5 locations (if the 8 reports from the Wandiyali-Environs Safe Haven Avian Survey west of Googong are considered a single location), most recently from the ANBG on 6 May. Numbers of the **Rufous Whistler** also declined (but not quite as significantly) from close to 70 to 10 locations, with the most recent report from McQuoids Hill NR on 24 May. The **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** was still reported from over 45 locations, and the **Grey Fantail** seems even more reluctant to depart being still reported from around 65 locations compared with well over 100 in the previous period. These last four species are likely to overwinter with numbers in this same order.

The **Dusky Woodswallow** was still reported throughout the period though from 23 compared with around 50 locations, as was the **Olive-backed Oriole** from 6 compared with 23 locations previously. Both species are likely to overwinter in small numbers as is the **Mistletoebird** (also still reported from 6 locations compared with 9 previously) and the **Superb Parrot** still present at around 50 locations (14 south of the lake), a surprising increase on the 30 locations in the previous period.

So please keep an eye out for the above-mentioned spring/summer migrants, especially for the last 8 species which are likely to overwinter.

Of the species that return to Canberra and its surrounds from the mountains and higher country to spend autumn/winter here, over the period the **White-eared Honeyeater** and the **Golden Whistler** were widely reported from urban and peri-urban locations (around 30 and well over 70 locations, respectively). Likewise, the **Scarlet Robin** was reported from close to 40 such locations of the total of around 60. The **Flame Robin** has been slowly moving in closer, reported from around 15 such locations, still less than half of the total of around 40 locations. It has been easier to find them this season in my local patch of Coolman Ridge, where on 11 and 21 May Marieline Perrins reported a conservative estimate of 15 birds, of which 11 were males on the earlier date.

The **Rose Robin** has been reported from 9 urban/peri urban of a total of 14 locations, 2 of which were still from the mountains to the west of the Murrumbidgee River. There have been no further reports of the **Pink Robin** (the closest was from Lakes Entrance nearly 300 km to the south), but 2 male **Red-capped Robins** were reported from Jerrabomberra Mountain Reserve on 20 May. Up to two **Bassian Thrush** were reported at the ANBG to 16 May, and they were also reported from four locations in the mountains during the period.



Crescent Honeyeater

Julian Robinson

There has been only an urban/peri urban report of the **Crescent Honeyeater** (from a single location - Cook on 29 April and 18 May), and from 8 other locations, 5 being in the mountains to the west of the Murrumbidgee River. The only reports of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** were of 2 birds at Mt Rob Roy NR on 24 and 27 May, and up to 6 birds at Tharwa Sandwash from 27-30 May. As described above there were many reports of up to 45 **Swift Parrots**, particularly in Watson, over the period.

So please look out for the above species (and the **Brown Gerygone**) as they continue to move into Canberra and surrounds during June.

Up to 2 **Plumed Whistling Ducks** were reported from Trucking Yard Lane dam during the period, but there were no **Freckled Duck** reported from anywhere in the COG Aol (the nearest were 2 ducks at Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton). **Australian Shelducks** were again



Spotless Crake, Australian Spotted Crake

Stuart Harris

reported from 7 locations to the east and northeast of Canberra during the period, with the highest numbers being 270 on Wollongorang Rd on 26 May.

Up to 2 **Blue-billed Ducks** were reported from Upper Stranger Pond, but otherwise only a single duck from Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant on 30 April. In contrast, apart from Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary, up to 4 **Musk Ducks** (mostly single otherwise) were reported from 7 locations. Single **Great-crested Grebes** were reported from 2 locations, West Belconnen Pond and Lake Ginninderra.

No **Stubble Quail** were reported during the period, but up to 10 **Brown Quail** were reported from 11 locations, slightly down from April. Up to 3 **Painted Button-quail** were reported from 4 locations, similar to April, but no **Little Button-quail** was reported. There were no **Brush Bronzewing**, **Diamond**, **Peaceful** or **Bar-shouldered Doves** reported during the period, but a **White-headed Pigeon** was reported on Facebook from Calwell on 26 May.

Up to 4 **Spotless Crakes** were regularly reported from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, but otherwise only a single bird from Edgeworth Pond in Coombs on 26-27 May. Up to 2 **Australian Spotted Crakes** were reported only from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR during May. Again, no **Baillon's Crake** was reported during the period. A **Lewin's Rail** was reported from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 12 May, and a further one from Franklin Pond on 24 May. Up to 2 **Buff-banded Rails** were reported from the former, and one also from Justice Robert Hope Park in Watson on 13 and 16 May.

No **Banded Lapwings**, **Red-necked Avocets**, **Red-necked Stints** or **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** were reported during the period. The **Comb-crested Jacana** was still photographed at Rows Lagoon northeast of Collector as late as 30 May, but the **Common Sandpiper** seems to have departed being last recorded from the northern end of Lake Tuggeranong on 20 April. No **Caspian** or **Whiskered Terns**, or **Australian Little Bittern** were reported during the period.

A **Little Egret** was photographed flying (together with a **Cattle Egret**, and clearly enough to allow a positive identification) over Upper Stranger Pond on 29 April. A single **Intermediate Egret** was still observed from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR up to 9 May, with one then photographed at Yerrabi Pond on 13 May. Up to 4 **Great Egret** were reported from 7 locations, well down from the 14 in April. Up to 2 **Royal Spoonbill** were reported from 3 locations only, most recently on 7 May, and the **White-necked Heron** from 6 locations, again well down from the 14 in April. So, it looks like the influx of these species from the drying inland over the past couple of months is over.

A **Barn Owl** was photographed roosting at the ANU on 6 May, the observer being alerted to it by agitated **Noisy Miners**, **Australian Magpies** and **Pied Currawongs** that were swooping it. Another was seen well in flight (an unmistakable white owl) on Uriarra Rd after dark on 27 May, and one was also posted on Facebook perched on the razor wire at Canberra Airport on 26 May. **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from 22 locations during the period (slightly down from April), with the only breeding record a pair copulating at West Belconnen Pond on 26 May. The **Nankeen Kestrel** was reported from around 46 locations during the period, slightly down from the 55 in March.

The adult **Spotted Harrier** was last reported from the Molonglo Paddocks around the end of the Molonglo River woodland track on 4 May. There was also a sighting from Namarag – Molonglo River Reserve on 30 April, the only sighting I'm aware of west of John Gorton Drive/Coppins Crossing Rd. It may still be in the area, as there seem to have been few eBird lists from around there in May. There were no reports of the **Grey Goshawk**, **Black Kite** or **Black Falcon** during the period. However, an observation that seems to have slipped under ACT birders' radar was the report of a **Pacific Baza** photographed on a telephone pole at the Eaglehawk Holiday Park just across the border on 11 May. After the addition of some more field notes and the examination of enlarged photos this record was accepted by the NSW eBird reviewers.

A single **Azure Kingfisher** was reported only from Cotter Reserve on 15, 17 and 28 May. No **Glossy Black-Cockatoos**, **Cockatiel**, **Greater Bluebonnets**, **Turquoise Parrots**, **Scaly-breasted** or **Little Lorikeets** were reported over the period. However, on 28 April a photo of a single **Purple-crowned Lorikeet** at Karabar was posted on Facebook and was also included on the Canberra

Nature Map. It is tempting to speculate it was one of the two observed in Bowen Park during February, noting the nearest other reported sighting during the period was at Benalla, nearly 300 km to the southwest. Up to 3 **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from 3 locations (well down from the 7 in April) during the period.

No **Singing, Spiny-cheeked** or **Scarlet Honeyeaters**, or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period. In contrast **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** continued to be reported with 5-6 birds at Commonwealth Park and Acton Peninsula on 26 April, up to 2 birds at the ANU on 16 May and 1 bird at Yarralumla on 19 May. Importantly from the eBird map the observation of 2 birds in Mawson on 11 May seems to have been the most southerly report in Canberra of them to date.

White-fronted Chats were reported from 3 locations within their usual limited range in Canberra, with a maximum of 12 birds at the Wyndham Ave ponds in Denman Prospect on 20 May. The only report of the **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** was 2 birds at Whiskers Creek Rd, Carwoola, on 3 May. No **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes**, **Tawny Grassbirds** or **Zebra Finches** were reported during the period.

Of the birds I have continued to ask readers to keep a special lookout for in 2023, **Jacky Winters** have been reported from 3 locations, with the most exciting being the 9 birds photographed at Smiths Rd near Naas Rd (last reported from here in July 2018 so a new location in recent years) on both 9 and 26 May. Up to 5 birds were also reported from Top Naas Rd during the period, as well as a single bird on Baroona Rd off Monaro Hwy (both known locations) on 14 May. **Hooded Robins** were reported from 4 close together locations in the Namadgi NP area, up to 3 at Naas Rd at Apollo Rd, and up to 5 on Top Naas Rd throughout the period, as well as 1 bird from Glendale Depot on 22 May, and 2 birds from Orroral Valley on 27 May. Only the last-named is a new location.

Restless Flycatchers were reported from 7 locations, 3 of these being the close together - McQuoids Hill NR, Kambah Horse Yards and Cooleman Ridge, from where single birds have been reported throughout the period. There could be more than one as I saw one on the northwest end of Cooleman Ridge on 23 May when it was still reported from McQuoids Hill NR about 3 km to the south three days earlier. Up to 2 birds were reported from Nelanglo TSR on 24-25 May and from Top Naas Rd on 11 and 13 May, as well as single birds at Bluetts Block (the only new location) on 10 May, and on Baroona Rd on 14 May.

While it was the last month of autumn, there has been some breeding reported including:

- On 24 May Anthony Overs posted that his resident **Crested Pigeons** had been very sneaky indeed. On the evening of 22 May they came into roost in the thick shrubbery around the base of a large eucalypt, a site where they have bred multiple times in the past. However, there were three birds, with one being a brand new juvenile, about three quarters the size of the adults. He noted that they had managed to raise young coming into winter, and he didn't even notice.
- **Crested Pigeons** are known to breed throughout the year if conditions are right. In my garden on 10 May there were two birds vigorously harassing an adult to be fed and since then 4 birds including 2 noticeably smaller ones have been roosting, often huddled very close together, in a melaleuca near my back door. One feature that I have noticed over the years is how early this species goes to the roost and how late it can leave the roost compared with other local species.
- On the afternoon of 26 May, I first heard the typical begging/feeding noises and then saw an adult **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** feeding dependent young in a large casuarina near Rivett Oval. It is very interesting that nearly all my local breeding records of this species are in autumn/winter with 29 such records from April to August while I was actively watching/counting this species during 2019-2022.

From my observations mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) have been very active during the period, often comprising a different range of species with sometimes one, such as the **Superb Fairy-wren**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** or **Weebill**, and earlier **Silvereyes**, dominating. So please continue to enjoy watching out for these during June, as they will gradually dissipate once the breeding season starts in a month or two. I have also started to see flocks of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and **Little Corellas** gathering on roadsides, ovals, etc, a sign that winter is coming.

While I have not witnessed any flocks, Michael Robbins has informed me that the honeyeater migration continued at least until mid-May with small groups of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** still passing through his place in western Kambah. Small flocks were observed at nearby McQuoids Hill during the COG outing on 14 May, as well as a much larger group of **White-naped Honeyeaters**. On 23 May he reported over 20 **Red Wattlebirds** (RWB) which appeared to be migrating, the day before there

were over 30 doing so on Cooleman Ridge. Very few reports of this species migrating have come to my attention this autumn; certainly there have been very few RWBs seen in my GBS site or local patch of Chapman, Rivett, Cooleman Ridge and Narrabundah Hill during this time.

Finally on 25 May Sandra Henderson photographed a very cute leucistic **Australasian Grebe** with lots of other grebes in Jerrabomberra Creek. As far as I can tell from a search of the literature, this is a very rare occurrence.

So, during June please watch out for the last of the spring/summer migrants mentioned above, including those that may overwinter, for the remaining altitudinal migrants still to arrive, for MFFs and single species flocks, for roost sites and flights, and for any winter 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.



Australasian Grebe - leucistic

Sandra Henderson

Once again, my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to my two main data sources, posting on the COG email 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

Committee News

The Canberra Birds (COG) committee met by Zoom on 18 May.

COG has received a substantial bequest from the estate of former member Betty Storrs and the committee is immensely grateful to Betty for remembering COG in her will. The committee has not made any decisions about how the money will be spent but will give it careful consideration in the next few months.

The development application for the former Mugga Lane Zoo site next to Callum Brae Nature Reserve has been amended. Documents are available at <https://www.planning.act.gov.au/development-applications-assessments/development-applications/da-details?da-number=202138789&amendment-version=S144>. However, it is not obvious how the application has changed. The committee considered the original development application in 2021 and the submission from that time is on our website – <http://canberrabirds.org.au/conservation/cog-conservation-strategy/>.

Recent Submissions

COG's submission to the Review of the Namadgi National Park Plan of Management (2010) is on the website – <http://canberrabirds.org.au/conservation/cog-conservation-strategy/>.

Neil Hermes *President*

Alison Mackerras *Minutes Secretary*

Future Field Trips

COG Trips

Each participant must register prior to their chosen trip with their name and contact number and, before proceeding on the trip, must comply with the participant's responsibilities (wording follows). An emergency contact name and phone 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."

New birders and visitors are welcome. If you do not have your own binoculars, COG can lend you a pair, so please advise the trip leader when you register.

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.

Do NOT attend if you have tested positive for Covid, have been a close contact within the past 5 days, or have any Covid, cold or flu symptoms.

If you look on the website, you will note that there are still 11 field trip dates with neither a leader or a venue, including every weekend of September. If you can assist, please contact Sue Lashko at smlashko@gmail.com

Sunday 11 June - Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve - Superb Lyrebird survey

Since the January 2003 bushfires we have been monitoring the return of the **Superb Lyrebird** to an area of the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. We wish to get an idea of the present distribution within the Reserve and are asking COG members to join us for a morning's survey. We are calling for expressions of interest to join us at 8.00am at the Reserve car park to walk the trails and to record the location of calling birds. Depending on the trails walked the survey should take about three hours. Although the Visitor Centre is closed, the reserve is still open.

This outing will be a repeat of the very successful surveys conducted at this time of the year since 2004. For previous survey results see *Gang-gang* p11, July 2022.

Chris Davey (chris_davey@aapt.net.au) MOB 0418679 847 and Peter Fullagar

Sunday 25 June - The Pinnacle Nature Reserve, Hawker

Description: The Pinnacle is a 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. It forms an important link in the chain of Belconnen Hills reserves that connect Black Mountain to the Molonglo River corridor. Possible birds include **Scarlet Robin**, **Speckled Warbler**, **Varied Sittella**, 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

Sun 9 July 2023 – Kambah Pool

NOTE: I will be looking for somebody to keep a bird list and somebody to write a trip report, could be two people or same person. Although I don't need to know who's willing until 9 July, an earlier email offer would be appreciated.

Meet at 9.00am. Kambah Pool at northern carpark, downstream, nearest the rapids.

The size, fitness and ability of the group will determine how far we walk along the track towards Casuarina Sands, before returning by much the same route to Kambah Pool. Depending on the group we may take the odd short excursion into the bush and/or along the river. There are an interesting variety of habitats and therefore possible interesting variety of birds. Come and help us explore.

Remember to bring water and clothing appropriate to the weather forecast. No booking required. If you have any questions contact Michael Robbins (mrobbins at home.netspeed.com.au)

Sunday 16 July – Googong Western Foreshore

Description: we will walk the western foreshore of Googong Dam. A good range of waterbirds and bush birds can be found, and over 100 species have been reported here.

Meeting time and place: Meet at the carpark for the foreshores at 9.00am. You need to get onto Old Cooma Road out of Queanbeyan. Once on Old Cooma Road, continue on to the left turn onto Googong Road. Follow Googong Road past the Googong township all the way to the Googong Foreshores carpark. This is just before the locked gate.

eBird hotspot: <https://ebird.org/australia/hotspot/L3877216>

Walking distance: 2km

Degree of difficulty: easy

End time (approx.):11.30am

What to bring: water, sturdy footwear, hat, sunscreen. Bring morning tea.

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

and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Name of leader and contact details: Sandra Henderson, shirmax2931@gmail.com

Sunday 30 July - Goorooyarroo NR

Description: Goorooyarroo NR covers 829 hectares and is located in north-east Canberra. It consists mainly of Yellow Box-Red Gum grassy woodland and has a predator-proof fence within part of the reserve. It is a great reserve for finding birds typical of this habitat, such as honeyeaters, pardalotes and thornbills, and we will hopefully see **Superb Parrots**.

eBird hotspots: Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve

Meeting time and place: 9.00 am at the carpark off Horse Park Drive near the intersection of Horse Park Drive and the Federal Highway, NOT the entrance near the old Rocks Carpark.

Walking distance: 5 km approximately - we will see how far into the reserve we wish to walk on the day.

Degree of difficulty: Fairly easy as we will be walking the main undulating track in the reserve.

End time (approx.): 12.30 pm

What to bring: Water and morning tea.

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



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Email: freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au

Numbers limited: no

Name of leader and contact details: Bill Graham, email bsgraham1948@gmail.com

Sunday 6 August - Bungendore

Meet at 8.30am at Spotlight carpark in Queanbeyan for carpooling.

We'll travel to Bungendore to check out three birding sites. The farm dam out on Lake Rd (birding from the road beside the dam) often has a wide variety of species, the town common has a couple of large ponds (about 500m walking), and Trucking Yard Lane dam and paddocks (viewing from the roadside) are always worth a look. If anyone has a scope that may be useful for the Lake Rd stop.

Leader: Sandra Henderson (shirmax2931@gmail.com)

Please register with your name and phone number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Sunday 13 August – Cooleman Ridge

Meet at 9:00am at the nature reserve end of Kathner Street, Chapman. That's the end farthest from Hindmarsh Drive. We will walk 3 to 4 km depending on which route we decide on. There are some steepish sections but great views from the trig station.

eBird hotspot is <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L2541730/>.

Leader: Alison Mackerras (alison@mackerras.id.au)

Advance notice of a mid-week trip to the coast in October:

Tuesday 24 to Friday 27 October - Shellharbour area

We will stay at the NRMA Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park, Shellharbour Village, (<https://www.nrmaparksandresorts.com.au/shellharbour-beachside/>) which offers villas, cabins and powered sites. Note that NRMA Blue members receive a discount.

Numbers will be limited to 16, so please register early as bookings should be made soon. Advise me if you would like to share.

DO NOT book accommodation until I have confirmed your registration.

We will explore nearby Killalea State Park, Lake Illawarra, Minnamurra and other sites recommended by members of the Illawarra Bird Observers Club who have offered to join us on walks and a joint dinner one evening. Visit their website - <https://www.iboc.com.au/> - for a list of their walks and bird species observed. We will encounter a range of waterbirds and shorebirds as well as bush birds and if we are lucky, an **Australian Logrunner**.

To register contact Prue Watters prue.watters@gmail.com

Jerrabomberra Wetlands bird surveys

Since July 2012, quarterly bird surveys have been conducted at Jerrabomberra Wetlands. With special permission from ICON Water, also included in the survey area are the Fyshwick Sewage Ponds.

The surveys include all bird species and involve covering areas at the Wetlands such as Kelly Swamp, along the Molonglo River, through the area bordering Lake Burley Griffin, Jerrabomberra Creek, the Woodlands and the new wetlands development along Eyre Street.

Surveys take between 3-4 hours, meeting at the Wetlands carpark at sunrise. Surveys are conducted in January, April, July and October and are run on weekdays and designed not to clash with outings or woodland surveys. The next survey is set for mid-July.

The surveys are an excellent opportunity to learn about the terrestrial and waterbirds of the area and there is the opportunity to visit areas not open to the general public.

I am looking for volunteers who are prepared to commit some time with bird id expertise and/or are willing to act as scribes. If you are interested and would like further details please contact Chris Davey at chris_davey@aapt.net.au (MOB 0418679847)

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 14 May - McQuoids Hill, Kambah

On a glorious autumn morning, nine members met leader Michael Robbins for a walk around McQuoids Hill. Our first destination was the dam at the foot of the hill, outside the reserve itself. The lone bird seen close to the water was a **Willie Wagtail** eating what appeared to be a large moth. A flock of nine **Satin Bowerbirds** flew south out of a tall eucalypt near the dam. From there we headed up the hill to the tree line where we looked without success for finches. A nice surprise was a young **Grey Butcherbird** and we heard **Leaden Flycatchers** in this location. Continuing northwards around the hill, we saw **Galahs**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and **Red-rumped Parrots**, but again were frustrated in our search for finches. It wasn't until we had passed the junction with the track up to the top of the hill and were overlooking the land and buildings of Youth Haven that a small number of **Red-browed** and **Double-barred Finches** were spotted. From just about the same spot, we saw flocks of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** flying overhead. Another noteworthy honeyeater sighting was of a single **White-eared Honeyeater**. Surprisingly few thornbills were seen (only two **Yellow-rumped Thornbills**) but **Weebills** were prolific. A total of 27 species was recorded for the morning. Thanks to Michael for an informative and enjoyable morning's birding.

Wendy Whitham

Wednesday 17 May - Strathnairn to Shepherds Lookout

Fifteen members and friends gathered at McClymont Way, Strathnairn, at 8.30 for a walk led by Sandra Henderson to Shepherds Lookout along the recently established walking track. The weather was unpromising at the start, with a cold wind and a forecast maximum of 14 degrees, but warming as the cloud cleared. We admired the iron artworks along our route, representing Wallaby Grass, the Chocolate Lily and Kangaroo Grass, and later paused at the splendid view of the Murrumbidgee from Gruner's Vista. A female **Scarlet Robin** was seen early, with a **Grey Shrike-thrush** close by. A pair of **Nankeen Kestrels** was noticed on a dead tree some distance away, and a small dam held a single **Grey Teal** with four **Australian Wood Duck** on the bank. In woodland further along the way, mixed flocks of small passerines tested our skills in identifying fast-flitting thornbills and their calls. **Striated**, **Brown**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills** were all seen in varying numbers, along with **Weebills**, **Spotted Pardalotes**, **Grey Fantails** and **White-throated Treecreepers**. **Golden Whistlers** gave brief snatches of song and two females were seen. **Eastern Yellow Robins** were heard calling but they stayed out of sight. Near Shepherds Lookout, another mixed flock greeted us. It included **Brown Thornbills**, **Grey Fantails** and a male **Golden Whistler**. Honeyeaters were represented by **White-eared Honeyeaters** and **Eastern Spinebill**, both heard. There was a notable absence, in a walk lasting over three hours, of Yellow-faced, White-naped and White-plumed Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebirds, as well as Silvereyes.

At the lookout, as members were commenting on the absence of raptors, a pair of **Wedge-Tailed Eagles** appeared in the distance and afforded good views as they soared closer to us.

The total number of species recorded was 33. The only mammals of note were two Red-necked Wallabies.

Our thanks are due to Sandra for leading a successful walk on a route new to some of us.

Kevin Windle

Saturday 20 May - Australian National Botanic Gardens Beginners Walk

Anthony Overs led yet another well-attended outing at the ANBG, with Mark C and myself assisting. After ensuring everyone knew how to use binoculars, we ventured up the road next to the new banksia area, with good views of **Red Wattlebirds**, **Eastern Spinebills** and **New Holland Honeyeaters** enjoying the spectacular banksias and other flowers.

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 28 May - Queanbeyan Bushland Cemetery

The original venue of Googong Western Foreshores was unavailable because of the feral animal control activities, so we



New Holland Honeyeater

Sandra Henderson

revisited the bushland cemetery. It was a bitterly cold morning, but the sun was shining. As we approached the entry a couple of **Satin Bowerbirds** were calling just inside the gate, and a male **Golden Whistler** was the highlight along the track to the back of the cemetery. A large and active mixed flock was finally located on the suburb side of cemetery. Species identified in the very active group included **White-throated Treecreepers**, **Weebills**, **Silvereyes**, **Grey Fantails**, **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, **Superb Fairy-wrens** and **Spotted Pardalotes**. There was not the variety of species we found on the previous COG outing to this location, but a nice introduction to the many attendees who'd not visited this site in the past.

Sandra Henderson



The eight card designs:

- **Australian magpie** at the National Arboretum Canberra
- **Australian white ibis** at the National Carillon, Canberra
- **Bush-stone curlews** at Mulligans Flat Woolshed
- **Crimson rosellas** at the National Gallery of Australia Skyspace
- **Galahs** at the Balloon Spectacular
- **Gang-gang cockatoos** at City Hill
- **Rainbow-crested cockatoo** at Black Mountain Tower
- **Tawny frogmouths** at Shine Dome

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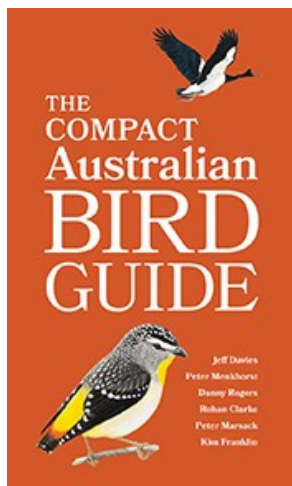
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Publications for Sale

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



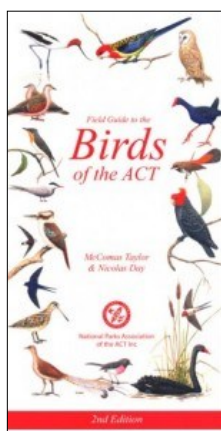
THE COMPACT AUSTRALIAN BIRD GUIDE

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

The Compact Australian Bird Guide is an easy-to-use and beautifully illustrated quick identification guide to all bird species regularly occurring in Australia. The content has been carefully designed to provide the reader with key information to enable rapid identification of a bird, in a convenient form. 264 pages | 198 x 120 mm

Based on The Australian Bird Guide.

Members' Price \$28.00 RRP \$34.99.

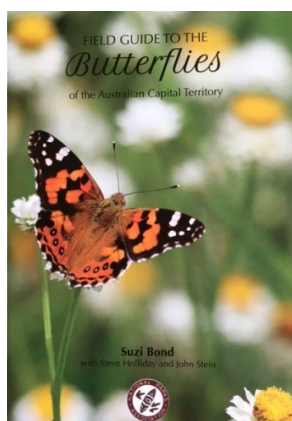


FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF THE ACT

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.



FIELD GUIDE TO THE BUTTERFLIES OF THE ACT

Suzi Bond, with Steve Holliday and John Stein

A beautiful book with detailed notes and photographs of the wide range of butterflies found across the Australian Capital Territory. Dr. Suzi Bond is a member of COG and a Visiting Fellow at the ANU where she researches the butterflies found in the ACT. Her research is driven by a fascination for our local butterfly fauna and a desire to better understand their populations and ecology.

With contributions from Steve Holliday and John Stein this book is a must for anyone interested in the butterflies of the ACT.

Members' Price: \$27.

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

2022-2023 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

J Churches
S Martin
T Gordon
G Newlyn
C Boyle
B Howland

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for July 2023 edition:

Wednesday 28 June 2023

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

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

or

c/- The Secretary, COG,

PO Box 331, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614.

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

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

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