



Gang-gang

JULY 2013

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

JULY MEETING

Wednesday 10 July 2013

7.30 pm.

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

To start proceedings, **Geoffrey Dabb** will present a Bird of the Month talk entitled '**The Brown Gerygone, with particular reference to the current visitors at the ANBG**'.

The main speaker will be **Jerry Olsen**, Adjunct Professional Associate, Institute of Applied Ecology, University of Canberra, on **Eagles in the ACT**.

As many members are aware, Jerry has studied birds of prey in the Canberra region since 1975 and published some 100 papers and articles and five books on raptors. In 2002, with Susan Trost, Michael Wink and Hedi Sauer-Gürth, he discovered and named a new species in Indonesia, the **Little Sumba Hawk-owl** *Ninox sumbaensis*. In 2012 his book, *Australian High Country Owls*, received a Whitley Award.

In this talk Jerry will briefly discuss the 14 breeding raptor species found around the ACT region and outline his studies on eagles. **Little Eagles**, *Hieraaetus morphnoides*, have declined regionally since the 1990s and rabbits have been implicated in this decline. In 2005 he alerted researchers to the catastrophic decline in **Little Eagle** in the ACT, and has since worked with ACT Parks and Conservation and the Canberra Ornithologists Group to document this decline and explain it.

What to watch out for this month.

My June column was written about a week early before having a month's holiday, so the review part of this one covers about 5 weeks from 21 May. I was surprised on my return that the suite of birds in my garden and local patch were much the same, despite there being over 45 mm of rain in my gauge and things appearing much damper than before I left. This is also supported by **Freckled** and **Pink-eared Ducks** and large numbers of the more common ducks still being reported, as well as **Red-kneed Dotterels** and a **Black-tailed Native-hen**. The presence of these species, which generally favour the inland, suggests conditions remain dry out there; whether the significant rain that fell in the last week of June reached sufficiently far into west to change this remains to be seen.

The main new bird appearing in this period has been the **Brown Gerygone**, largely in its usual winter spot of the rain forest gully at the Australian National Botanic Gardens but, as far as I can tell, in unprecedented



Photo: David Cook

Brown Gerygone (*Gerygone mouki*)

Everyone welcome

numbers, at least from recent times, with up to 20 seen here, but with also at least one sighting at Wamboin well away from this location (perhaps in transit?).

I suspect many members aren't familiar with this species or, such as yours truly, don't observe it regularly, and that it might be overlooked, or confused with thornbills which may accompany it. Therefore I'll be very interested in Geoffrey Dabb's bird of the month presentation on this species at our July meeting, including any ideas as to why it comes to Canberra from its favoured (and warmer) coastal habitat mainly in winter, an interesting example of "reverse migration".

While for unclear reasons this species is attracted into Canberra in winter, it is apparent that few of the summer migrants have stayed over this winter, despite it not having been unusually cold to date.

The **Grey Fantail** is still being regularly reported in small numbers, and the **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike** a bit less so, but I can find only a single record of the **Dusky Woodswallow** on 23 May and two of the **Olive-backed Oriole** on 29 May and 2 June. I can find no reports of the **Rufous Whistler** though there have been several of the **Superb Parrot**, the last being on 8 June. By contrast I can find no reports of the **Swift Parrot** in this time period; I understand most are down on the South Coast again. Some **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** do seem to be overwintering this year, with scattered reports throughout the period, plus a few of **White-naped Honeyeaters**, but only a single report of the **Fuscous Honeyeater** late in the period. Unexpectedly there have been two reports of the **Mistletoebird**, again late in the period.

Of the winter altitudinal migrants, the **Flame Robin** continues to be scarce in the open areas close to Canberra, and remains absent in my local patch of

NW Cooleman Ridge/southern fence line of Narabundah Hill and the Chapman horse paddocks, as well as at Stromlo Forest Park and Callum Brae. However, reports of the **Pink Robin** and the **Rose Robin** in the Botanic Gardens have continued, where the **Crescent Honeyeater** has also been relatively regularly observed. There has also been a further report of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, and a couple of the **Restless Flycatcher**, both again on the north side of Canberra.

So it does appear to be a relatively quiet winter on the Canberra bird scene, apart from the large flocks of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and corellas feeding in the suburbs and road verges, and the continued sightings of many **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** to the west of the city. While in the warmer years the first spring/summer migrants will have started to return by the end of July/early August, it appears unlikely that this will happen this year. However, the early breeders such as the **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** will start breeding in July; perhaps with the damper conditions it will be a better breeding season than it was last autumn, when in contrast with the past few years there were very few reports of breeding. Indeed I noticed the **Masked Lapwing** already on the nest in its usual spot next to the pool in the backyard of a place in Percy Crescent, Chapman, at the end of the third week of June. One wonders why it does so early and what will be the chances of success; for example how can the eggs kept warm enough while the ground is so cold, not to mention the air for the sitting adult?

While it has been a quiet time for bird watching in Canberra, hopefully things will start to pick up soon. So keep an eye out for any migrant species that may unexpectedly return in July and for any breeding commencing, and as always please ensure that all significant observations end up on the COG database.

- Jack Holland



Left : **Flame Robin**
(*Petroica phoenicea*)
Photo: Geoffrey Dabb

Centre:
Pink Robin
(*Petroica rosea*)
Photo: Lindsay Hansch

Right:
Rose Robin
(*Petroica rodinogaster*)
Photo: Geoffrey Dabb



COMMITTEE NEWS

- Thank you to all who've already paid their 2013-2014 membership fees. Fees remain at \$35 for the new financial year, and 2014 will be a special year, being COG's 50th anniversary.
- Birdlife Australia has produced a draft document about affiliation with other bird groups. The committee, and BIGnet, are continuing to look at the issues.
- The committee is grateful to John Giacon for volunteering to help run the COG Sales Table at meetings.

- Sandra Henderson

Thank you

It is with a sense of sadness that we will no longer be able to enjoy Ian Fraser's whimsical reflections on birds and bird related aspects. After 11 years, he has produced his last entry (which appears on pages 9 & 10 of this *Gang-gang*) and I know that many will miss this regular and much appreciated addition to the newsletter.

Ian captures not only insightful views in his writing about birds but aspects that many of us wouldn't have the opportunity to experience ourselves. I can assure him that we do indeed read his contribution and I know that many will miss the absence of his avian reflections. I particularly liked a recent piece on Zebbies. I too am a great fan of them having watched them closely on a friend's property and appreciate what a great little bird they are and how they reflect so much of Australia's unique bird world.

On behalf of all COG members I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Ian for his long standing contribution and support for COG and the newsletter through his Whimsical reflections. I encourage Ian to share any future avian reflections he feels we would enjoy on an *ad hoc* basis.

Best wishes, Ian, and a heartfelt thank you from us all.

- Alison Russell-French



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2013

20 July – 3 August
Gulf of Carpentaria
Cairns to Mt Isa, returning via
Atherton Tablelands

1 – 20 September
Strzelecki Outback
Vic, NSW, SW Q'ld, SA. 34th tour

22 – 29 September:
NSW Central Coast, Barrington Tops
NP, Barren Grounds NR

2 & 3 October
Birding for beginners in
Murray Valley NP

10 – 18 December:
SW Western Australia birding
and mammal tour

2013 Plains-wanderer weekends

7 & 8 December
28 & 29 December

2014 tours

2 – 8 Feb: Tasmania
19 – 26 April: Alice Springs
25 May – 8 June: Top End
June: Gulf Country
August: New Caledonia
September: Strzelecki Track
30 Oct – 6 Nov NSW Central Coast,
Barrington Tops NP, Barren Grounds
NR

Please see itineraries, checklists and
latest news on our website

www.philipmaher.com

Field Trip Reports

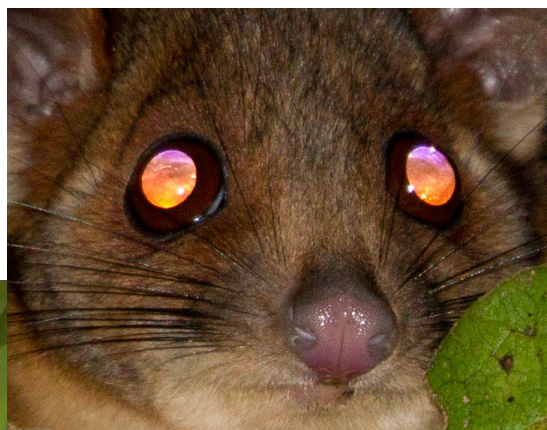
Friday night—Monday 7-10 June—Jamberoo Valley/Barren Grounds NR

The 16 participants in the June long weekend COG outing were accommodated in three cosy cottages at the Ben Ricketts Environment Centre, conveniently located just down the hill from Barren Ground Nature Reserve. The latter was visited on three occasions at three different times of day. **Eastern Bristlebirds** taunted us with their calls, some very close, but frustratingly not a single bird was sighted. **Southern Emu-wrens** were much more obliging, but only one member, walking quietly on her own, saw a **Ground Parrot** – and not just a glimpse, but a close-up view as it sat on the track and then flew for about 40 metres over the heath. We heard **Beautiful Firetail** calls, but they too remained hidden.

The Ben Ricketts property was alive with birds with wonderful sightings from the cottage verandahs, including **Topknot Pigeon**, **Red-browed Treecreeper**, **Brown Gerygone** and **Lewin's Honeyeater**. **Superb Lyrebirds** were in full voice and some were lucky enough to see them dash by. Other special birds seen or heard on the property included **Bassian Thrush**, **Yellow-throated Scrubwren**, **Large-billed Scrubwren**, **Wonga Pigeon** and **Brown Cuckoo-Dove**. A **Grey Goshawk** cruised the treetops just below the clifftops.

Spotlighting walks yielded calling **Southern Boobook** and wonderful views of Mountain Brushtail Possum, Sugar Glider, Greater Glider and Common Ringtail Possum.

We added to the bird list by venturing further afield to Saddleback Mountain, above Kiama, and to the nearby Jerrara Dam. Most members travelled home via the impressive Carrington Falls and Wingecarribee Reservoir, where a chance meeting with a local landholder saw us invited to bird on their beautiful wooded property.



Photos: Julian Robinson



For a winter weekend, we were quite content with the 83 species recorded.

- Sue Lashko



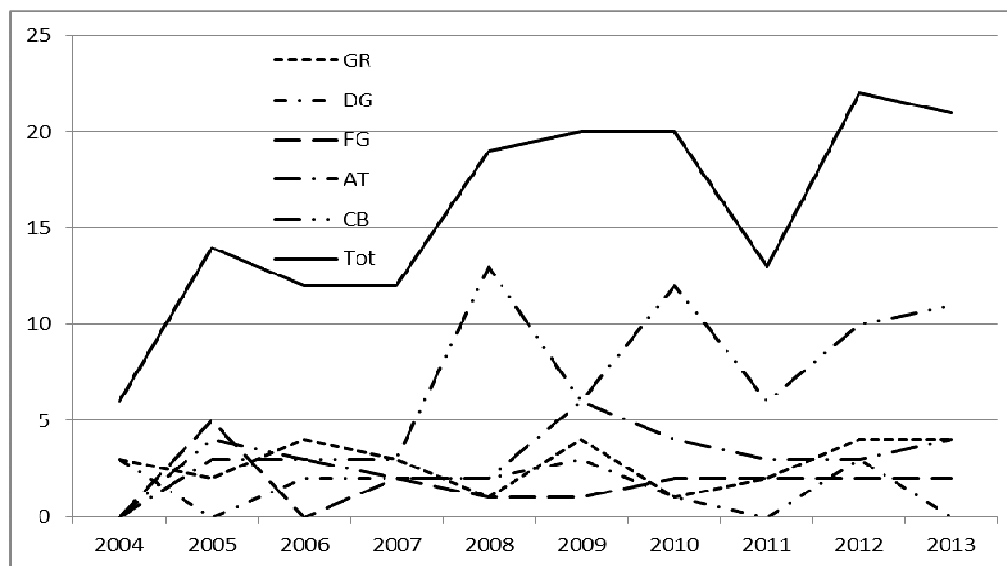
Saturday 15 June – Superb Lyrebird survey – Tidbinbilla NR

The tenth annual survey of the **Superb Lyrebird**, designed to provide an index of population numbers since the 2003 bushfires, was run under perfect conditions with a cold morning, no wind and clear skies.

The thirteen COG members and friends were all assembled at the car park by 8.00 am and after breaking up into teams soon started to survey the five main walking trails. In addition there were sufficient numbers to cover the Lyrebird/Cascades trail. The Gibraltar Rocks track was surveyed along the fire trail, not along the new alignment. Taking a minimum count, 21 individual **Superb Lyrebirds** were recorded within the Reserve compared with 6, 14, 12, 12, 19, 19-20, 20, 13 and 22 in previous years (Gibraltar Rocks-4, Devil's Gap-0, Fishing Gap-2, Ashbrook-4, Camel Back-11), see Figure 1. These counts do not include the two birds recorded from the Lyrebird trail which has only been counted previously in 2011 when the trail was first re-opened.

Figure 1. Numbers of Superb Lyrebirds recorded from walking trails at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, 2004-2013.

GR-Gibraltar Rocks,
DG-Devils Gap,
FG-Fishing Gap,
AT- Ashbrook Trail,
CB-Camel Back,
Tot- Total number of birds



During the survey 33 species were recorded, similar to previous years, with the number seen depending very much on the trail walked: Gibraltar Rocks-20, Devil's Gap-19, Fishing Gap-17, Ashbrook-14, Camel Back-15 and Lyrebird-16 with, as usual, a greater number of species being recorded from the dryer western facing slopes. There were 6 species reported from all trails; **White-eared Honeyeater**, **Striated Thornbill**, **White-browed Scrubwren**, **Spotted Pardalote**, **Eastern Yellow Robin** and **White-throated Treecreeper**. Species seen from one track only included the **Little Raven**, **Laughing Kookaburra**, **Eastern Rosella**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, **Australian Magpie**, **Gang-gang Cockatoo**, **Grey Currawong**, **Pilotbird**, **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo**, **Common Bronzewing** and **Grey Fantail**. A report of **Red-browed Treecreepers** on the Fishing gap Trail was not included in the list as it was not confirmed by the observer. Many thanks to the participants and to the authorities for waiving the entry fees.

- Chris Davey

Wednesday Walk 19 June - Australian National Botanic Gardens

Twenty-nine hardy souls joined the Wednesday walk. The wind was brisk, the temperature was cool, and the sun was struggling to have any impact. Once we got into the walk, conditions improved - it was coldest in the carpark! With hopes of **Brown Gerygones** and **Pink Robins**, we headed up the far side of the Rainforest Gully, but saw little until we went into the rainforest on the way back down. The gerygones were keeping company with **Brown** and **Striated Thornbills**, as well as a **Golden Whistler**, while a large group of **Silver-eyes** moved past at the same spot. On then to the Sydney Gully, followed by a wander down the road past the CSIRO gate. A detour to see the active **Satin Bowerbird** bower put us in the right spot to see two **Pink Robin** females. Throughout the walk **Eastern Spinebills**, **Crimson Rosellas** and **White-browed Scrubwrens** were in abundance. Although we'd diminished in numbers by the end of the walk, a large group enjoyed coffee or hot chocolate. Twenty one species in total were recorded.

- Sandra Henderson

Sunday 23 June - Report on Stromlo Forest Park, morning stroll

Fifteen members and guests joined me on a clear, sunny morning, but this was deceptive because as soon as we stepped out of the cars it was very cold due to a strong wind blowing from the south. We set off with this deliberately behind our backs looking to flush species from the ground and soon saw a flock of birds flying into the adjacent wattles. On their return to the ground to feed we were able to observe that this consisted of over 30 **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** and a dozen **Australasian Pipits**, identified by their erect stance, repeated running forward and then “teetering”. The only other species present seemed to be at least one **Double-barred Finch** and a single **European Goldfinch**. Over the other side of the entrance road we flushed a pure flock of over 30 **Superb Fairywrens** (over 50 seen on the day), and later found 27 **Crested Pigeons** feeding together.

Unfortunately none of these ground-feeding flocks contained any of our target birds, **White-fronted Chats**, **Flame Robins** and **Diamond Firetail**. Although two participants had seen a flock of about 30 of the first-named as they drove in, a wide search of that area failed to re-locate them. This is the first time in many visits that I have been unable to find them, and suspect they are now ranging more widely due to the extensive bare ground available from all the suburban development.

By the time we finished this circuit and returned to the cars for morning tea, the sun had gone behind the clouds and the wind had become even stronger and colder, so most participants called it a day. Four joined me over at the Bushfire Memorial where it was hoped there would be more cover and shelter from the wind, but again birds proved very elusive and we only added a few, either by call or the briefest of views, to our final list of 17 species.

- Jack Holland

Future Field Trips

Before the start of each trip, each participant must sign a COG Field Trip Registration Form which acknowledges the participant's responsibilities. The form reads as follows:

I declare I am capable of undertaking this 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 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 trips page of the COG website <http://canberrabirds.org.au/> and on the COG chat-line at <http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds/2012-03/index.html>

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.

Friday 5 to Sunday 7 July - Mallacoota

Don't miss this opportunity to visit this unspoilt wilderness area. We will explore with local ornithologist, Bob Semmens, the sewage works, airport (possible **Ground Parrots** and **Australian Hobby**), Gypsy Point (**Nankeen Night-heron**, **Whistling Kites**, **White-bellied Sea-Eagles**) Double Creek (**Wonga Pigeons**, **Lewin's** and **Scarlet Honeyeaters**), our block (**Rainbow Lorikeets**, **Eastern Yellow Robin**, **New Holland honeyeaters**) and of course, the beach and wharf area.

A list of accommodation options will be supplied on application or you can camp at the Foreshore Caravan Park. Please contact **Barbara de Bruine** at barbdebruine@hotmail.com or ring 62583531.

Sunday 21 July – Mount Majura Vineyard

This is a repeat of a most excellent field trip run last year in the Mount Majura Vineyard (MMV). MMV is now the ACT's only working vineyard that offers both wine making and cellar door facilities and sits at the foot of Mount Majura, on the eastern side. Stuart spends nearly every working day outside and has managed to 'tick' 70 species within the parameters of MMV, which belies the notion that agriculture (viticulture) creates 'poor birding zones'. To his surprise, with the advent of winter, an avian exodus did not occur; on the contrary, large flocks of **Diamond Firetail**, **Red-browed Finch** and **European Goldfinch**, and both **Flame** and **Scarlet Robin** were sighted on a regular basis. Nothing can be promised; at worst you will experience a nice morning walk, with some hills, fresh air, outstanding views and some tidbits of info about MMV and Canberra wine in general. Please dress appropriately for this walk, as the terrain ('terroir') is quite open and the ground can be uneven and rocky in parts (though we will be sticking to established paths as a rule). Rabbit holes hidden by grass pose a threat to ankles.

Meet Stuart Harris at 8.45 am in MMV's large car park off Majura Rd (<http://www.mountmajura.com.au/index.html>) which runs between Canberra Airport/Pialligo (in the south) and the Federal Hwy/Horse Park Drive (in the north), for a prompt 9 am start. Major roadworks are in progress so any changes to the entry to MMV will be notified on the chatline.

Before entering the vineyard, the bottom of your shoes will be sprayed with Ethanol which will prevent the spread of *Phylloxera* fungal spores which have had, and could have, a devastating effect on the root systems of grape vines.

Sunday 18 August – Mystery bus trip - day outing

Jenny Bounds and Jack Holland are planning a bus trip for this date. Some aspects are expected to be the same as previous bus trips; ie cost of transport by two 12-seater buses, the point of departure will be the National Library car park at 8 am and it will run until mid afternoon (bring morning tea and lunch), but we are keen to change the specific objectives of this trip. These are still being discussed/planned but it is expected we will visit some spots where participants may not normally go and will be able to see some good birds. If you are interested in participating please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840 AH or by email on jack.holland@environment.gov.au).

Friday 13 to Sunday 15 September 2013- Galong, west of Harden

This outing will involve a visit to a property that has undergone an extensive replanting program over many years. The outing will be in response to an invitation by the property owner to view the large diversity of birds that now reside on the property in response to the planting program.

The outing will also involve a visit to Jindalee Nature Reserve, an old COG haunt of Box-Ironbark not visited for many years or possibly nearby to Black Range if permission can be obtained from land owners.

Accommodation for the two nights will be at the St Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre, see www.stclement.com.au and will provide a different accommodation experience than usually expected at a COG outing.

For further details contact Sue Lashko at smlashko@gmail.com

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 September – Eden pelagics

COG has booked the weekend of September 21 and 22 for two one-day pelagic trips. The outings leave from Eden Harbour in the early morning (time to be confirmed), and return mid-afternoon. Each trip can accommodate 12 people, and the cost per person per trip will be \$100. October is one of the peak months for seabird migration off the east coast of Australia and there should be a wide diversity of seabirds. Organising travel and accommodation will be each individual's responsibility but there may be opportunities for car-pooling and an informal get-together for dinner/drinks in Eden on the Friday and Saturday evenings. *(cont' next page)*

Bookings will only be confirmed when full payment is received. Payment must be made by July 31. These trips need to be fully subscribed to ensure COG does not make a loss, and as is the case with all paid trips, preference is given to COG members. Once you've booked and paid, no refunds can be given unless a replacement can be found.

As with all boating activities the trip will be weather dependent and rough seas could lead to the cancellation or postponement of the trip.

Please book with Sandra Henderson (shirmax2931@gmail.com) and indicate which day you prefer (Saturday or Sunday). Payment by direct deposit to COG's bank account is preferred – details will be sent to those who express interest.

Monday 23 to Friday 27 September 2013 - Green Cape

Built in 1883 and perched on the edge of a peninsula, Green Cape Light Station is the tallest and most southerly lighthouse in NSW. Its octagonal tower juts out from a square base in dramatic contrast to the low-lying landscape surrounding it. It looks across Disaster Bay – the site of many shipwrecks. A tour of the lighthouse itself is normally provided for participants, and the historic Ly-ee-Moon Cemetery is only a few minutes' walk from the accommodation.



Accommodation: Two cottages that were previously the assistant keepers' residences have been carefully restored to offer superb 3.5 star heritage accommodation. Each cottage contains a fully equipped kitchen, dining room, bathroom, master bedroom (with queen-size bed), second bedroom (with two single beds) and family/lounge room (with sofa bed). Each cottage can accommodate up to six people. We have booked for four nights from Mon 23 September to Fri 27 September – that is, to arrive on Monday (after midday) and depart on Friday morning.

Costs: The commitment is for a 4-night stay – no concession for shorter stays. The total accommodation costs will be \$190 per person (payable by

the end of July, once you've registered your interest with Sandra Henderson). There is also a \$7 fee per car per day to enter Ben Boyd National Park. This can be paid at a self-registration booth on arrival.

Catering: Evening meals will be communal, and arrangements for that will be made closer to the time. Bring your own food for breakfasts and lunches – and BYO wine/beer/spirits. Please note that there are no shops nearby so bring all food and drink items with you.

Activities: There will be ample opportunity for good seabird watching from the cape, and the heathlands surrounding the cottages are excellent for birds including **Ground Parrot, Southern Emu-wren, Striated Fieldwren, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, Beautiful Firetail** and other typical eastern Australian coastal heathland species. To get some idea of the activities and birds, check the trip report for the last visit (Trips page on COG's website, 2011 trips, September- Green Cape) or visit Peter Fullagar's blog at <http://mipartners.blogspot.com.au/2011/09/cog-at-green-cape-in-2011.html>

Those interested in being part of this year's trip please contact Sandra Henderson at shirmax2931@gmail.com.

A personal telescope and tripod can be very useful at Green Cape.

Avian Whimsy #100

Birds in Service

It seems appropriate that Whimsies should be ending as they've so often proceeded – by more or less writing themselves. You see, I thought I was going to write something on Darters, but somehow it's heading off from there in another direction, and all I can do is hang on. The continued use of Great Cormorants in Japan since the 6th century AD to fish for their controllers (mostly now for tourists) is well-known, but did you know that Darters are also traditionally used thus in south-east Asia and north-east India? Moreover, not only have cormorants been so employed in China for at least 2,000 years, but members of the British royal court delighted in the pastime for a while in the 16th and 17th centuries. Then I started to ponder on other ways in which birds have been forced into our service. I'm not going to consider exploitation of wild birds; by the time we considered 'harvesting' of birds for meat, eggs, plumes and 'sport', and even their pursuit by birdwatchers, we'd have a list of basically every species on earth. I'm also going to omit birds which have been the subject of veneration – from ibis in Egypt to the ravens at the Tower of London – as mostly this hasn't much affected them.



Fig. 29.
The Egyptian God Seb, with his symbol the goose; and the Sacred Goose on a stand, as offered in sacrifice.

Apart from fishing, birds of two different Orders – Accipitrids, ie hawks/eagles etc, and Falcons – have long been utilised to hunt for humans. (Of course the people who could afford to do this were never the ones who were actually hungry.) It seems that falconry arose in China and India at least 4,000 years ago (in cheerful disregard of taxonomy, accipitrids such as goshawks and eagles are included in the term), spread throughout Asia from Persia to Japan by 2,000 years ago, and thence into Europe. Eagles are still used in the traditional way right across central Asia for hunting prey as large as gazelles and wolves.

Other Accipitrids have been utilised in quite another way entirely by Buddhist communities in Tibet, and Parsis in western India, both of whom leave their dead out (on rock outcrops and wooden towers respectively) for vultures to take care of.

And what about taking care of the living? I can think of a couple of examples. Most famous in our culture are the geese that guarded Rome. Actually they probably didn't, but the legend has it that a flock of domestic geese alerted the apparently dozy guards of the approach of the Gauls 2,400 years ago; whether they were already sacred to the Temple of Juno, as reported, or were subsequently promoted, isn't clear. There is no doubt though that they are eminently suited to the role, being nosy, noisy, aggressive insomniacs. There are lots of stories of Guard Geese since then, including in modern times in prisons in Colombia and Brazil, a whisky distillery in Scotland and US military bases in Germany. In South America, screamers – a family of three large species in the same order as ducks and geese – are well-named, and are not uncommonly domesticated in villages to warn of strangers.



The Roman Geese were descendants of wild Greylag Geese, but they weren't the first to become commensals. Egyptian Geese were tamed well over 4,000 years go – though when the Persians conquered Egypt the geese were liberated and never tamed again! The Swan Goose was likewise domesticated in China some 3,000 years ago. Mallards have been kept for food across Eurasia for almost as long, and .

Muscovy Ducks were well established in villages in South America when the Spanish arrived to wreck everything.

King Quail were reputedly used as hand warmers by Chinese emperors 5,000 years and turkeys were kept in central America from 2,000 years ago. Red Junglefowl have been domesticated in India, south-east Asia and China for around 8,000 years; they reached Polynesia by 3,300 years ago, and Chile soon afterwards. However it has been suggested that Rock Doves may have been domesticated (in Egypt and the Middle East) for 10,000 years!

All these domestications were largely pragmatic, but imprisonment of small birds and parrots for human gratification is widespread and long-established – parrots have been caged for many centuries from India to Mexico. Today the most common cage birds, sadly, are two Australian parrots, Budgies and Cockatiels. Island Canaries were brought to Europe from the Canary Islands (named for dogs, not birds, but let's not get distracted) soon after 1400 and soon took over as most-popular cage bird from Goldfinches. They came down to earth abruptly when taken down coal mines to warn miners of gas infiltration, by dying; they still played this role until the late 20th century.

Pigeons have been used to carry messages since King Cyrus of Persia did so 2,500 years ago, and continued to be used by the military well into the later 20th century.

Of course, as ever, there is so much more to say, but my space and time have gone. Thanks for reading.

Ian Fraser calochilus51@internode.on.net

My thanks too to Kathy Walter, Gang-gang Editor in June 2002 who invited me to start this series; neither of us dreamt I'd still be whittering on 11 years later! Likewise to her successors, Tanya Rough, Sue Lashko, Greg Ramsay and Janette Lenz who have been unwaveringly encouraging.

If you would like to continue to enjoy Ian's writings, visit his blog at
<http://ianfrasertalkingnaturally.blogspot.com.au/>



Alison Russell-French, COG's President, has given a special word of thanks to Ian. This can be found on page 3 of this edition of Gang-gang.

Share your bird stories with Gang-gang readers

We all know that Ian Fraser is a hard act (or even an impossible act) to follow, but now that he has written his final Whimsy, we have a blank page to fill. I am sure there are members who would be keen to share a bird story in Gang-gang. Whether it be your favourite local birding spot, an interesting bird encounter or just a good bird story, we would welcome your contributions on a one-off, occasional or regular basis. Send contributions to gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

CANBERRA ORNITHOLOGISTS GROUP INC.
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL / APPLICATION

☐ **Renewal** ☐ **New Member**

1. Membership fees are currently **\$35** per annum, and are due on 1 July for existing members.
2. You can pay by **cash** or **cheque** at COG meetings, or by **cheque/money order** through the post – do not post cash. Mail your payment to:
- Memberships
Canberra Ornithologists Group
PO Box 301
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608
3. **Electronic funds transfer** can be used to pay subscriptions. If you pay by EFT please notify Sandra Henderson at cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au and make sure you identify your deposit with your name, and make sure you also notify any change of details. Transfer funds to:
- Canberra Ornithologists Group
St George Bank
Account number 050111462 BSB 112908

Title Name

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Street address Town/Suburb State Postcode

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Telephone: Home Work Mobile

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Email – please print carefully

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Family memberships : list names of family members covered by membership

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- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single membership - \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family membership - \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Institution - \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> School student - \$17.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canberra Birds Conservation Fund Donation - \$ (a receipt will be issued for tax purposes) | |

If you would prefer to read either Gang-gang (monthly newsletter) or Canberra Bird Notes (journal, 3x/yr) on the COG website instead of receiving a printed copy, please tick the box(es) below, and you will be notified by email when the publication is available on the COG website.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gang-gang | <input type="checkbox"/> Canberra Bird Notes |
|------------------------------------|--|

DEUA TIN HUTS

(Via Braidwood)

Comfortable accommodation on the door-step of the Deua National Park at Krawarree via Braidwood NSW.

Three cosy huts accommodating up to 14 people. A short walk into the Deua National Park, the Big Hole and Marble Arch, walks in the beautiful Shoalhaven Valley.

Reasonable rates, hampers on request,
Group booking discounts.

Email enquiry@deuatinhuts.com
www.deuatinhuts.com
Ph 02 4847 1248

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

G & J Early, Nicholls

NEXT NEWSLETTER

**Deadline for the August
2013 edition
Wednesday 24 July 2013**

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 info

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Newsletter distribution
Brian Fair and helpers

COG website
www.canberrabirds.org.au

COG library

For all enquiries or access to COG's library phone Barbara Allan on
6254 6520

COG membership

2012-2013 memberships:

- Individuals, families and institutions: \$35
- school students (under 18): \$17.50.

Membership inquiries—

Sandra Henderson
6231 0303
member-ship@canberrabirds.org.au
for changed address or other details

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 E-mail Discussion List

COG has an email discussion list for members and friends: 'Canberra Birds'.

Join the list by following the links on the COG website or by sending an empty email message to;

canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au

The subject is 'subscribe' (without the quotation marks).

Canberra Bird Notes

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Gang-gang

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