



Gang-gang

NOVEMBER 2013

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

NOVEMBER MEETING

Wednesday 13 November 2013

7.30 pm.

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

After the AGM the speaker will be **Dean Ingwersen**, Threatened Bird Program Manager/Regent Honeyeater recovery coordinator at BirdLife Australia, on "**Conserving Regent Honeyeaters in a changing landscape**".

Regent Honeyeaters have recently been listed as Critically Endangered in NSW, with population estimates now as low as 500 individuals nationally. While this may seem like great cause for alarm there are encouraging signs for the species – numbers appear to have stabilised somewhat recently, 2011 was the best breeding season for several years, and the captive breeding and release program has reached a couple of significant milestones in the past twelve months. During this seminar Dean will discuss all of these results and what they mean for the species, as well as discussing the reasons behind the situation we see the species in now. Dean will also provide some (hopefully) thought-provoking discussion around

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What to watch out for this month

The rapidly drying conditions in both Queensland and NSW, possibly compounded by the large areas that were burnt in the NSW bushfires, has resulted in a very different local bird scene from what I expected only 5 weeks ago. This includes a number of species that I hadn't alerted readers to look out for in my October column. The most conspicuous of these have been the **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallows**, which were first observed early in the month (surprisingly, I thought at the time, even though I heard them myself on two occasions) moving high overhead to unknown destinations, but towards the end had also been widely reported at ground level.

Numbers of the latter have not been as high as they can be (generally less than 50 of each species) and whether they will stay around long enough to breed is still unclear. However, reports of many at ground level a bit further inland at Young and overhead at Robertson, where

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Masked Woodswallow—female

Photo: Geoffrey Dabb

Everyone welcome

November Meeting — continued from Page 1

ways forward, along with an outline of the challenges ahead for Regent Honeyeaters and other woodland birds. From continuing habitat loss and a changing climate, through to increasing pressure from aggressive species like Noisy Miners, there are many challenges ahead.

Wednesday 11 December – Members' Night

Due to the unavailability of the meeting venue in January the COG committee has decided to move the annual Members' Night forward to December. This provides an opportunity for COG members to contribute short presentations (about 10-15 minutes long) on a range of bird related topics. So if you have a favourite birding moment for 2013, some special photos to share with members, a birding story to tell, or anything that you think might be of interest to other members, please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840 A/H), or by email on jack.holland@environment.gov.au) as soon as possible. Members who have not presented to COG before are especially encouraged.

Committee News

The COG Annual General Meeting will be held at the start of the November COG meeting.

COG will be undertaking another round of **Superb Parrot** surveys for the ACT Government.

COG is monitoring the **Silver Gull** breeding on Spinnaker Island.

Neil Hermes is leading the planning for COG's 50th anniversary in 2014. A number of projects are under consideration, and the help of COG members will be needed as the year progresses.

Sandra Henderson

What to watch out for this month— continued from Page 1

they are less often seen, suggest we could expect further influxes during November. Another species has been the **Channel-billed Cuckoo** of which there were 4 reports over two days of possibly the same bird but in different suburbs of Canberra; in a couple of cases there was sufficient time for the observer to grab binoculars and actually see the bird rather than the usual report of its noisy passage overhead.

This has also been well illustrated by a number of waders/waterbirds reported, some of them rarely seen in the ACT, at least outside of Lake Bathurst. The best observed of these (including as the back drop video to the start of the COG meeting) has probably been the **Wood Sandpiper**, which was present at the Fyshwick sewage ponds for several days early in the month. Others included up to 4 **Red-necked Stint**, a **Ruddy Turnstone**, and a probable **Common Tern** seen by a number of observers. This is a very rare inland record which if accepted by the Rarities Panel would be the first record for the ACT. Other records include up to 15 **Whiskered Tern**, 19 **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers**, a **Black-winged Stilt**, and up to 25 **Plumed Whistling-Ducks** at their usual spot at Trucking Yard Dam near Bungendore (one wonders what attracts them to this specific spot).

The much drier conditions than expected has also resulted in many more **White-winged Trillers** and **Rufous Songlarks** visiting the ACT than I had expected a month ago, in particular the former, with

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Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

Photo: John Gordon

What to watch out for this month—continued from Page 2

in one case a half dozen seen together and including reports of nest building already. Confounding my predictions of last month numbers of bronze-cuckoos also seem to have increased significantly, in particular the more coastal **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**. However, I can only find two further records of the **Pallid Cuckoo**, and it certainly doesn't appear that it's going to be a good year for observing this species, which actually seems to have moved out of the area.

The first report of the **Leaden Flycatcher** was just after I sent my October column to the editors on 26 September and this species was well and widely established a month later (as was the **Sacred Kingfisher** first reported on 21 September). This was soon followed by the **Rainbow Bee-eater** on 29 September; typically this is less widely observed after its passage through Canberra to the sandy creek beds, etc, to the south where it breeds. The first **Dollarbird** was reported on 3 October, and this species has also been widely reported since. The first **Eastern/Pacific Koel** was heard about 10 October; it too was increasingly reported as the month progressed, and it seems again will be causing sleepless nights for many Canberrans this summer.

Surprisingly, given they are also most likely to be here during dry years, there were no further reports of the **Brown Songlark**, and none so far of the **Horsfield's Bushlark**. Of the passage migrants, there were only two late reports of the **Rufous Fantail** and a single report of the **Satin Flycatcher**, and none so far of the **Cicadabird** (latter two species seen in

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Red-kneed Dottrel

Photo: David Cook



**Australian
Ornithological
Services P/L**

PO Box 385
South Yarra 3141
Victoria

Tel: 03 9820 4223
Mob: 04173 10200

enquiries@philipmaher.com

2014 tours

1 — 8 February
Tasmania bird & mammal tour

19 — 26 April
Alice Springs and
West MacDonnell Ranges

25 May — 8 June
Top End including
Mitchell Plateau/black grasswren
option

12 — 27 June
Queensland's Gulf of Carpentaria
& Atherton Tablelands

Late August
New Caledonia

6 — 25 September
Strzelecki Track 35th tour
The four states outback expedition

30 September — 8 October
NSW Central Coast. Gloucester
Tops NP, Barren Grounds NR,
Tapin Tops NP.

10 – 19 December
SW Western Australia

Plains-wanderer Weekends 2014

25 & 26 October 2014

Please see itineraries, checklists and
latest news on our website

www.philipmaher.com

What to watch for this month — continued
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southern Namadgi on the Blitz—ed.). So please keep an eye/ear out for these last-named species, which complete the list of those summer migrants likely to be seen in Canberra in most years.

As would be expected from the warming, drying conditions, reports of the winter altitudinal migrants from the urban/peri-urban areas of Canberra decreased significantly over the month. Notably there was one late report of a **Swift Parrot** taken into care after having been found sitting low in a tree in a car park in Campbell. Interestingly there was a report of two **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** investigating tree hollows at Campbell Park a couple of days earlier.

There have also been 6 further reports of the **Scarlet Honeyeater**, from 4 different locations. It is unclear why this coastal species has remained here under the drying conditions; I would expect for different reasons from most of the above, except perhaps for the **Shining Bronze-cuckoo**. Other rarer species reported have included the **Pied Butcherbird**, a **Spangled Drongo** (inland and coastal species, respectively) and a **Barn Owl**.

In keeping with mid-spring, there have been many reports of breeding during October, too many to attempt a summary, but with those for the **Tawny Frogmouth** (everybody's favourite) clearly predominating. However, the undoubted highlights were dependent young **Grey Butcherbirds** being fed in a Holder garden, a rare record and a further example of how this species has been moving into urban Canberra over the past 10 years or so. This was closely followed by a probable incubating **Red-kneed Dotterel** at Kelly's Swamp, which would be a very rare ACT breeding record. Other notable reports include Stuart Rae's lovely photos and text of a **Buff-rumped Thornbill** nest, and several of **Purple Swamphen** chicks.

Last month I predicted there was likely to be further excitement for birdwatchers in Canberra over the next months, but October has far exceeded my expectations. The above includes the records I've obtained from my usual sources up to and including 27 October, and of necessity have had to be somewhat selective. So if your best sighting hasn't been included, please accept my apologies; perhaps they will be able to be next month which with continuing drying conditions I predict will also be



Eastern Koel - female

Photo: John Gordon

very interesting – expect the unexpected! So please keep an eye out for further late arriving spring/summer migrants or unusual species in November.

Also breeding should be at its peak, and I highly recommend you join me for the Nest Workshop at Campbell Park on 17 November as reports during October indicate the presence of a wide variety of species there, and the past 10 years' experience has shown breeding numbers are at their best there when conditions are dry inland. As usual, always please ensure that all significant observations end up on the COG database.

Jack Holland

Field Trip Reports

23 to 27 September - Green Cape

This was the fifth COG trip since 2004 and was as enjoyable as the previous ones. The days followed a pattern of up early at the Point around 6am to watch the seabirds going by, then breakfast on the verandah, short trips to the heathlands and forest areas, especially around Pulpit Rock Road, about 3 km away, and often seabird and whale watching from the verandah in the afternoons. In the late afternoon, we enjoyed drinks and nibbles alfresco, depending on the weather. Overall, the weather was fairly good, but we had a spectacular southerly change and storm pass through on Thursday around the middle of the day, with gale force winds turning the sea into a washing machine.

Amongst the many **Short-tailed Shearwaters** passing by in streams were a few **Wedge-tailed Shearwaters**, **Fluttering Shearwaters**, **Fairy Prions** (feeding daintily on the water), **Common Diving-Petrels** and the occasional **Northern Giant-Petrel**. Abundant **Australasian Gannets**, as well as **Terns** (**Crested**, **Caspian** and one flock of **White-fronted**) passed by regularly, with a few **Cormorants** of several species including **Black-faced**. Humpbacked Whales passed by regularly heading south, some spouting and breaching far out and others closer in to the Cape. The only **Albatrosses** confirmed were **Shy**, but these were in good numbers, and more than 60 were seen trailing a fishing boat on one day, with a possible sighting of a **Salvin's**. Four **White-bellied Sea-Eagles** (2 adults and 2 immatures) were around, a **Whistling Kite** flew by occasionally, and up to 8 **Sooty Oystercatchers** were regularly on the rocks below or flying past piping loudly. When at the Point in the mornings, small groups of migrating **Honeyeaters** (**Yellow-faced** and **White-naped**) could be seen reaching the cliff, becoming confused at the expanse of water ahead, and eventually turning back. However, we did see two groups of **Galahs** doing the same thing, but then heading right out to sea in the direction of New Zealand - hopefully they made it back to Oz.

Some of the group birded part of the Light to Light walk from Pulpit Rock Road back to the lighthouse, while others visited Bittangabee Bay and along the roads in forest areas. Highlights were good views of **Southern Emu-wrens** in the grassy heaths, and one person got a look at a **Striated Fieldwren**. There was a sighting of a small khaki coloured **Parrot**, possibly a **Blue-winged**, but searches failed to find it again. **Wonga Pigeons**, **Lewin's Honeyeaters**, **New Holland Honeyeaters**, **Golden** and **Rufous Whistlers**, **Spotted Quail-thrush**, **Fan-tailed**, **Shining** and **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos** and a **Superb Lyrebird** were seen or heard in various habitats. Hearing up to 6 **Ground Parrots** calling from the heath along Pulpit Rock Road as dusk fell was also a highlight for all of the group - we had nibbles/drinks in the carpark at the Rock to escape the wind and then stopped at spots along the road back (and recommend future groups do this activity). One **Scarlet Honeyeater** was seen briefly near the cottages and **Scarlet Robin** was also recorded, both firsts for the COG Green Cape list. Common Wombats and Swamp Wallabies were regularly seen around the cottages. The trip total was 74 bird species, 8 mammals and 3 reptiles. Thanks to Peter Fullagar for his usual, great commentary on the seabirds.

Jenny Bounds



Southern Emu-wren Photo: David Letham | **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** Photo: Sandra Henderson | **Tawny-crowned Honeyeater** Photo: David Letham — Green Cape

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Friday 4 to Monday 7 October - Stackpoole Nature Reserve near Hillston, NSW

Eight COG members safely made the more than 400 km journey to the far south-west of NSW as trailblazers, as it were, to visit several nature reserves in this area.

For arriving early on the Thursday afternoon (3/10), two early birds affectionately known as “the two terriers” were punished by a freezing cold night, down to 0 degrees. However, the splendid and somewhat surprising dawn chorus the following chilly morning was more than ample compensation.

Definitely a highlight of the expedition was the profusion of a number of species; various honeyeaters singing and actually nesting close to the campsite at Stackpoole including such rarer species as **Spiny cheeked**, **Striped**, **Blue-faced**, **Painted** and **Black Honeyeaters**, **Little Friarbirds** and **Yellow-throated Miners**. Another example was six **Mistletoebirds** together in one small mistletoe-laden tree. Also seen here, there and elsewhere were the absolutely beautiful **Splendid Fairy-wrens**, a new species for some members. Of the parrot family there were regular sightings of **Galahs**, **Cockatiels**, **Australian Ringnecks**, **Bluebonnets**, **Red-rumped** and **Mulga Parrots**, and the **Major Mitchell Cockatoos** captured on film in a courtship display.

Understandably Stackpoole was the hotspot because it was our campsite and we were there at prime birdwatching times, early and late in the day on a daily basis. Other places we visited were Merriwagga N.R., Loughnan Reserve, Langtree N.R. and Merriwagga Swamp where, in addition to waterbirds, a **Whistling Kite** was on patrol and many hundreds of **Masked** and **White-browed Woodswallows** were engaged in breeding activities.

Perhaps surprisingly, only one **Jackie Winter** was counted and for **Hooded Robins** only one probable sighting, whereas **Red-capped Robins** were everywhere. Another really beautiful bird, the **Rainbow Bee-eater**, was present in numbers and at one stage nearly became a specimen for collection through a near road kill incident.

A total of 88 species was recorded on the final Sunday night roll-call but then on the following morning two small groups of **Varied Sittellas** (pileata) and a small flock of **Budgerigars** flying directly over the campsite brought the total to 90. Missing at Stackpoole but picked up by the terriers was a lone **Crimson Chat** at the Pulletop N.R. of much earlier Harry Frith and Malleefowl research significance.

Everything considered it was a very successful visit, blessed with good weather and convivial company and COG should consider going there again.



Striped Honeyeater, Major Mitchell Cockatoo, White-browed Woodswallow - Stackpoole NR

Photos: Stewart Deans

Field Trip Reports—continued from Page 6

On behalf of the participants I would like to sincerely thank Mark Clayton our leader, guide, mentor and raconteur for his expert advice and help given so freely at all times.

Terry Bell

10 October - Raptor ID Session

Following on from his excellent presentation at the members' meeting the evening before, Stephen Debus led a group of members on a field trip to put what we had learned into practice. Eighteen members met at the National Archives, then proceeded to Shepherd's Lookout. Within minutes of arriving we had very good views of a pair of **Wedge-tailed Eagles** overhead, slowly circling. Stephen was able to point out the subtle differences between the male and the female. Soon afterwards a **Whistling Kite** joined and occasionally interacted with them. Our next stop was to be the Lower Molonglo Water Treatment works where we saw another 2 pairs of **Wedge-tailed Eagles** off in the distance. On the way back we stopped on the top of the ridge on Stockdill Drive. By then the wind was howling, though it was warm. We saw a light morph **Little Eagle**, a **Brown Falcon** and, though only fleetingly, had good views of a **Black Falcon**. Stephen was able to confirm our tentative identification of this species.

A brief stopover at the Kippax shops turned into a morning tea break and some of our party saw an **Australian Hobby**. As we sat on the grass by the oval a **Willie Wagtail** built its nest above us and in the next tree a **Magpie-lark** was sitting on its nest. We then went on to the Historic Weetangera Methodist Cemetery and saw **Black Falcon** and **Australian Hobby** again. Next stop was the Jerrabomberra Wetlands. On the way there some participants saw a **Nankeel Kestrel** hovering and at the Wetlands we saw a dark morph **Little Eagle**. It was time to farewell Stephen and take him to the airport, then a brief visit to Newline Quarry yielded views of a **Brown Goshawk**. Apart from the 8 species of raptor, other highlights, of the 59 species we observed, were **Superb Parrot**, **Latham's Snipe** and a **Grey Currawong** on a nest. All in all, a very enjoyable outing. Thank you Stephen for leading us (and for being able to turn a speck in the distance into an identifiable raptor) and Jack for organising the outing.

Lia Battisson

Sunday 13 October - K2C Surveys

The 8th K2C bird surveys were held on a fine spring morning, starting with mild, still conditions but turning quite warm and very windy later in the morning. Almost all the expected summer migrants had returned to the area: 4 species of Cuckoo, both gerygones, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Rainbow Bee-eater**, **White-winged Triller**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Rufous Songlark** and **Tree Martin**. The warm, north-westerly winds had blown in **White-browed Woodswallows** at one site. No **Golden Whistlers** were recorded indicating they had probably already left for the cooler, wetter mountain areas; however, one late-departing **Flame Robin** was seen. The smaller insectivores (thornbills and fairy-wren) seemed to be in low numbers although all 5 thornbill species were recorded at one or more sites across the area. The survey reinforced the importance of this region for woodland birds with many records of threatened and declining species: **Brown Treecreeper** at eight properties, **Hooded Robin** at three, **Restless Flycatcher** 3, **Scarlet Robin** 2, **Diamond Firetail** 2, **Speckled Warbler** 2, **Southern Whiteface** 2, and **Varied Sittella**, **Crested Shrike-tit** and **Eastern Yellow Robin** at one site each. Breeding activity was recorded for eighteen species including **Southern Whiteface** and **Restless Flycatcher**. The survey morning finished up at the Scottsdale Reserve shearing shed where we shared our findings with each other over a barbeque lunch. Thank you once again to the K2C landholders for ongoing access, the COG participants for doing the surveys and to Bush Heritage Australia for hosting us at Scottsdale. The next surveys will take place in April 2014.

Nicki Taws

Wednesday 16 October – Tinderries

Nine members and guests met at Michelago and headed up the road towards the high Tinderries. Just before the first stop a **Spotted Quail-thrush** flew across in front of the lead car. We then paused briefly for a short walk passing through some very floriferous vegetation and scaling some rocks for a great view across the Murrumbidgee Valley to Southern Namadgi. A few birds were recorded here before we continued on to the main stop at the start of the Round Flat Fire Trail.

We set off down the track, fringed by dense regrowth following the 2009 bushfires. We followed the track for about 1.5km to the top of a steep ridge (about 1150m asl), finding that the fire had not crossed the ridge. We walked

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Field Trip Reports—continued from Page 7

another 1km to a creek through an area that seemed not to have been burnt and took lunch, returning by the same route.

Several migrant species were seen/heard during the walk. Noisiest amongst these were at least two **Sacred Kingfishers** which seemed to be giving a call made around a nest site. We didn't see them actually enter a hollow, so no breeding record. Cuckoos were in good supply with at least two **Fan-tailed Cuckoos** calling, one **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** being seen while the group paused for morning tea, and several **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos** heard and/or seen. Possibly two of the last species were tail-chasing but the event wasn't seen closely enough to rate a Display record.

In the flycatcher department **Grey Fantails** were everywhere (over the entire walk we estimated at least 30 birds) and several **Leaden Flycatchers** were heard calling. Honeyeaters were also well recorded with 6 species and several lurid male **Flame Robins** were seen beside the track in various spots.

Over both sites we recorded 37 species.

Martin Butterfield

Future Field Trips

At the start of each trip, and before proceeding on the 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.

Sunday 10 November – Currawang

If you wish to carpool, meet at the Netball Centre carpark on the right and just north of the Northbourne Ave/Mouat St intersection ready for a 7.30am departure. Distance from Canberra to Currawang is approximately 64 kms (about 45minutes). Those travelling independently should aim to arrive at Currawang by about 8.15am.

The outing will begin at the property where we will spend an hour or two, depending on available birds, but hopefully **White-throated Gerygone**, **Scarlet Robin**, **Pallid Cuckoo** and possibly **Diamond Firetail**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Mistletoebird**, **Yellow Thornbill**, **Flame Robin** and various raptors.

We will then spend a further 1 to 2 hours at my neighbour's property. If his paddock is not available (under negotiation – lambing and so on), my brother (or his neighbour) has a property on Collector Road which leads back to the Federal Highway. It is on a dirt road but very easy travelling. Possible species include **Hooded Robins**, **Rufous Songlarks**, **Peaceful Doves** and **Stubble Quail**.

Anyone keen after these spots, can always take a right onto the Federal Highway on the way home and go up the road a couple of kilometres to Rows Lagoon. There is quite a bit of water still lying around now, but it may be very different by November.

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Future Field Trips—*continued from Page 8*

How to get here: Stay on freeway from Northbourne Ave to Collector 50kms. Go past first left turn to Collector. Turn right onto Collector Road. At 2.8 kms take left onto Lucky Pass Road. There is 7.8 kms of dirt road (regular commuter traffic uses this road) to Currawang Road. Turn right and it is 2.9kms to our front gate 2388 right (low) side of road opposite old Post Office Telegraph Hill.

Bring morning tea. Toilet available at our place.

Please register with **Sue Lashko** by email at [smlashko\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:smlashko(at)gmail.com) indicating whether you intend to carpool or travel independently.

Jude Hopwood

Sunday 17 November — Campbell Park, Morning Nest Workshop

This will be a repeat of the very successful practical nest workshops held over the past ten years. This very informal outing has again been timed to coincide with the peak of the breeding season. The morning will start with the usual short presentation including tips on the types of nests built by different species of birds, and how to find nests or nesting behaviour. This will be followed by several hours putting this into practice, with participants looking for breeding behaviour, signs of nesting etc. This will also allow plenty of opportunity for bird watching.

This workshop is particularly suitable for beginners or those relatively new to bird watching, though more experienced members and repeat customers are also welcome. Though every year has been different, we often don't walk very far as there is usually a "hot spot" where most of the breeding activity occurs. To participate, please contact **Jack Holland** (6288 7840 A/H) by E-mail on jack.holland@environment.gov.au.

Meet at 8:00 am at the picnic tables at the far end of the car park. Take Northcott Drive up to the start of the Campbell Park Offices, where you take the right fork and keep to the outside of the very large car park, skirting it until you get to the end. Intending participants might also like to look at the Campbell Park map on the COG web site under the Maps, Forms and Lists button.

Wednesday November 20 - Hall TSR and Cemetery.

Meet at Hall TSR on the Barton Highway just before the Territory border at **8:30am** (note earlier time for summer).

Sunday 1 December – ACT Nudists Club and Kowen Forest

Meet At Spotlight, Queanbeyan, carpark at 8.30am. Car pool to ACT Nudist Club, King's Highway, Kowen. Bring morning tea, lunch and a folding chair. Shirley Kral, who will lead this outing, suggests a slow tour of the club grounds during the morning. Stay for lunch and a swim. Optional tour of Kowen pine forest in the afternoon, using the cars. Participants may leave at any time. Bring your swimsuit or swim nude, this is a clothes optional club.

Advance notice of a weekend outing in February 2014 as there is no January Gang-gang.

Friday 21 to Sunday 23 February 2014 – Guthega birds & flowers

Accommodation for 16 people will be in comfortable Kyilla Lodge, Mount Tate Road in Guthega. The lodge has a fully equipped kitchen and each bed has a doona and pillows. You will need to bring your own sheets, pillowslips, towels and food for the weekend. Final details will be sent to participants, but in the meantime further information about Kyilla Lodge can be found at www.brindabellaskiclub.org.au. The cost will be approximately \$60 if there are 16 participants. Payments are due no later than 15 January 2014 and participants will be contacted before then with the final cost. You will need to also pay a daily fee of \$16.00 per car to enter and use Kosciuszko National Park unless you hold an ALL PARKS PASS (NSW). Bookings are essential, either by email to casburnj@bigpond.com.au or ph: 02 62883929.

Leaders are Sue Lashko and Jean Casburn.

2014 COG FIELD TRIPS

Location	Destination	Leader
Wed 15 January	Wednesday Walk TBA	
Sun 19 January	Uriarra	Bruce Lindenmayer
Sun 2 February	Jerrabomberra Wetlands	Sue Lashko
Sun 16 February	Molonglo Reach Boat Trip	Jack Holland
Wed 19 February	Wednesday Walk TBA	
Fri 21 to Sun 23 February	Guthega -weekend accommodated	Jean Casburn
Sat 8 to Mon 10 March	Ben Boyd long weekend campout	
Sun 16 March	Parliament Gardens	Alison Russell-French
Wed 19 March	Wednesday Walk TBA	
Sun 23 March	Narrabundah Hill	Jean Casburn
Sun 6 April	Nursery Swamp	Leader required
Sun 13 April	K2C surveys	Nicki Taws
Wed 16 April	Wednesday Walk TBA	
Fri 18 to Mon 21 April	Round Hill Easter campout	To be confirmed
Sun 4 May	Campbell Park	Bruce Lindenmayer
Sat 10 May	ANBG - Beginners	Anthony Overs
Sat 17 May	Tallaganda - late afternoon/evening	Kathy Walter & John Goldie
Wed 21 May	Wednesday Walk TBA	
Sun 25 May	Bungonia - day trip	Leader required
Fri 6 to Mon 9 June	Deua Cabins long weekend accommo- dated	Sue Lashko
Sat 14 June	Superb Lyrebird Survey - Tidbinbilla NR	Chris Davey
Wed 18 June	Wednesday Walk TBA	
Sat 21- Sun 22 June	Moruya (WE accommodated)	
Sun 6 July	Suggestions welcome	Leader required
Wed 16 July	Wednesday Walk TBA	
Sun 20 July	Mount Majura Vineyard	Stuart Harris
Sat 26 to Sun 27 July	Eden pelagic WE accommodated	Anthony Overs
Sat 9 August	Lake Ginninderra - Beginners	Anthony Overs
Wed 20 August	Wednesday Walk TBA	
Sun 24 August	Lake Tuggeranong	Sandra Henderson
Sun 31 August	Late autumn bus trip (day)	
Sun 7 September	Kelly Road	Ian Anderson & Tony Willis
Sat 13 to Sun 14 September	Mates Gully camping	Sue Lashko
Wed 17 September	Wednesday Walk TBA	
Sun 21 September	Suggestions welcome	Leader required
Sat 27 to Sun 28 September	Yerranderie long weekend camping	Julian Robinson
Sat 4 to Mon 6 October	Charcoal Tank or Buddigower long weekend camping	Mark Clayton
Sun 12 October	K2C surveys (day)	Nicki Taws
Wed 15 Oct	Wednesday Walk TBA	
Sun 19 October	Bango Nature Reserve (nr Yass) (day)	Sue Lashko
Sat 25 to Sun 26 October	Bird Blitz (day)	Barbara Allen
Sun 2 November	Bibaringa (morning)	Stuart Harris
Sat 8 November	Aranda Bushland	Kay & Horst Hahne
Sun 16 November	Campbell Park, nest workshop	Jack Holland
Wed 19 November	Wednesday Walk TBA	
Sun 23 November	Brindabellas 4WD (day)	David McDonald
Sunday 7 December	Suggestions welcome	Leader required

What can you do to help conserve the birds of the Canberra region and protect their habitats, and save money at the same time?

The answer to this question is simple: donate to the Canberra Birds Conservation Fund! The Fund has supported a number of projects that have provided knowledge of value to conservation of the region's birds. It is on the national Register of Environmental Organisations, which means that donations made to it are tax-deductible.

The Canberra Birds Conservation Fund was established in the year 2000 for the purpose of supporting the Canberra Ornithologists Group's environmental objects by receiving and disbursing tax deductible donations.

The specific environmental objectives of the Fund are:

- To encourage interest in, and develop knowledge of, the birds of the Canberra region
- To promote and co-ordinate the study of birds
- To promote the conservation of native birds and their habitats.

The Fund operates under the rules of the Canberra Ornithologists Group and has a Committee of Management, the members of which are Penny Olsen, Geoffrey Dabb and David McDonald.

In the period since the Fund was established, members of COG, and the general public, have made generous (tax-deductible) grants to it. This has enabled the Fund to support the following projects, all successfully completed:

Learning about the conservation needs of the Superb Parrot in the Canberra region.

Bringing breeding birds back: a study of birds breeding in re-vegetation sites.

Support for the preparation of a manuscript on the plumage of the Speckled Warbler in the ACT.

Monitoring the re-establishment of the Superb Lyrebird in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

Monitoring the impacts of the Molonglo Valley developments on the birds of the Kama Agistment.

Return of the fauna: Brown Treecreeper reintroduction in eucalypt woodland.

The role of kangaroo grazing on the conservation of grassland and grassy woodland fauna in the Canberra region.

Parental provisioning calls to nestling scrubwrens: complex signals for a simple task?

Reductions in the body size of Australian birds as a response to climate change.

The nature of coevolved reciprocal adaptations prior to egg insertion by the parasite in the host nest (the 'front-line'), focussing upon interactions between the Superb Fairy-wren and the Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo.

Research into the evolution of host defences in the Yellow-rumped Thornbill.

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Conserve the birds—continued from Page 11

You will note that most of these happen to be research projects. Their findings have already contributed not just the scientific knowledge but to conservation planning and implementation. However, it is important to note that the Fund also welcomes applications to support other types of initiatives that help to promote COG's environmental objectives.

As COG's President notes in her report to the 2013 AGM, the Committee of Management of the Fund continues to receive enquiries from people seeking support for projects that are consistent with its environmental objectives. Unfortunately, owing to the relatively low level of income over the past year, the Fund is not able to support as much activity as it would like. In fact, the Fund is now largely depleted and not in a position to support any further environmental activities until new donations are received. COG members are encouraged to promote the Canberra Birds Conservation Fund. What about discussing it with your friends and business associates as well, encouraging them to make tax-deductible donations to the Fund in the interests of the birds of the Canberra region, and their habitats?

For more information, please contact the convenor of the fund, **David McDonald**, at telephone 6238 3706 or email cbcf@canberrabirds.org.au



Superb Parrot
Photo: Geoffrey Dabb



Brown Treecreeper
Photo: Anthony Overs



Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Photo: Geoffrey Dabb

Blitz letters and forms

Thanks to all who have responded to my letters about helping with the 2013 Blitz; it was fun meeting many of you at the training sessions.

If you were unable to take part in the Blitz for any reason, please feel free to change the date and cross out the "BLZ" label on the forms I mailed out and use them to survey on some other date, and feel free to contact me if you need any help learning about surveying.

Sorry if you didn't receive a letter and forms; I ran out of oomph. If you would like copies, please contact me and I'll email them to you.

Michael Robbins [mrobbins\[at\]home.netspeed.com.au](mailto:mrobbins[at]home.netspeed.com.au)

Woodland Spring Surveys

Mulligans Flat

Jenny Bounds and the team did the Mulligans Survey on Sunday 15 September in mild conditions, with no wind, although there was low, misty cloud early on. Most sites reported a good range/number of species, with 65 in total for the survey, one of the highest spring counts in recent years. A mid Sept survey is a little earlier than normal (due to other survey commitments and end of month long weekend), but it does give the opportunity to catch some early to mid-Sept passage birds such as **Rose Robin**. These were recorded by two of the teams near the quartz ridge, much the same area as one recorded in the spring 2011 survey. There were still a number of **Golden Whistlers** which had not moved to the ranges, as well as the early spring arrivals including **Horsfield's** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos**, **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones**, **Olive-backed Orioles**, **Grey Fantails**, **Rufous Whistler** and a few migratory **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** on the western ridge. The large dam area sites recorded **Superb Parrots** (9), **Straw-necked Ibis** (25), a pair of **Australian Shoveller**, **Australian** and **Hoary-headed Grebes**, and 2 **Whistling Kites** which seem to have settled in there. Several sightings of **Varied Sittella**, **Speckled Warbler** and **Scarlet Robin** added to the list.



Rose Robin, Mt Majura

Photo: David Cook



Red-capped Robin, Goorooyaroo NR

Photo: David Cook



Scarlet Robin, Mulligan's Flat

Photo: David Cook

Goorooyaroo NR (north)

Nicki Taws reported the survey in the northern half of Goorooyaroo was carried out on a cool but mercifully still morning. Highlights were **Painted Button-quail**, **Red-capped Robin**, **Owlet-nightjar**, and multiple sightings of **Superb Parrot**. Spring migrants were very vocal with both gerygones, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Pallid Cuckoo** and **Rufous Whistlers** in abundance, and one **White-winged Triller**. **Golden Whistler** and **White-eared Honeyeater** were still present. **Little Ravens** were common. 48 species were recorded in total.

Goorooyaroo NR (south)

Steve Holliday, Prue Buckley, and Dave and Kathy Cook, had perfect weather for the survey on 29 September in the southern half of Gooroo, with 53 species overall. As usual activity at each site varied, with a peak at site 3 recording 25 species in the 10 minute survey. Migrants present included **Rufous Whistler**, both gerygones, **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **White-winged Triller**, **Noisy Friarbird** and **Tree Martin**. At site 8

Woodland Spring Surveys—continued from Page 14

there were 2 very vocal **Brown Goshawks**. Other raptors seen were 2 **Nankeen Kestrels** and a **Wedge-tailed Eagle**. A **Diamond Firetail** was heard near site 5. Breeding records included rosellas, **Superb Parrots** and **Red-rumped Parrots** in or checking hollows, a **Dusky Woodswallow** carrying nesting material, and an **Australian Magpie** on a nest. **Superb Parrots** were recorded on a number of occasions. At site 7 a pair of **Mistletoebirds** put on an interesting display, with both birds calling and posturing, the male at least including quite a bit of mimicry in his song.

Campbell Park/Mt Ainslie NR

Michael Lenz surveyed on 13 September at the lower eastern slopes of Mt Ainslie, on a calm but still cold morning (some patches of light frost). Song activity was subdued, with the exception of **Speckled Warblers**. **White-throated Gerygones** just managed the length of 'Western Gerygone'-phrases. At the 9 sites, 39 species were recorded, with another 8 species in between. The most widespread species (number of sites) were **Crimson Rosella** (9), **Red Wattlebird** and **Noisy Friarbird** (8; the former rarely that common), **Grey Fantail** (7), **Eastern Rosella**, **Weebill**, **Noisy Miner** (6). Species of interest were **Mistletoebird**, **Speckled Warbler**, **Grey Butcherbird**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, a few **Rufous Whistlers**, **Jacky Winter**, **Varied Sittellas**, **Brown-headed Honeyeater**, **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Brown Goshawk**, **Flame Robin**, **Willie Wagtail**, and **Grey Fantails** everywhere. Breeding records were **Pied Currawong** nest building, **Noisy Miner** (large young in nest) and **White-winged Chough** (on nest).

Mt Majura NR

Kathy Walter and John Goldie did the surveys over 18 and 24 September. The majority of sites were done on the 18th later in the day than normal as it was raining early on. There had been a considerable amount of rain in the previous two days. Numbers and variety of birds on that day were low, with only one good mixed flock observed in a site and one outside. They included a number of small birds such as **Speckled Warbler**, **Silvereye**, **Buff** and **Yellow Rumped Thornbills**, **Striated Thornbill**, **Varied Sittella**, **Superb Fairy-wren**, **Mistletoebird**, **Grey Fantail**, **Golden Whistler**, **Weebill** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**. Surveys conducted on 24 Sept produced good numbers of parrot species and breeding records for **Eastern Rosella**, **Magpie** and **Noisy Miner**. A number of **Yellow Box** were in flower along with a nice lot of **Bulbine lilies**.

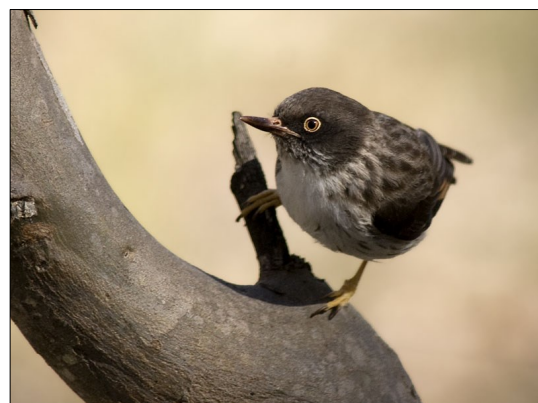


Jacky Winter Photo: Mat Gilfedder



Flame Robin - Female, Namadgi NP

Photo: David Cook



Varied Sittella, Callum Brae NR

Photo: David Cook

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Majura Field Firing Range

On 19 September, a cold and windy morning, Barbara Allan and two Defence environmental officers surveyed a soggy Range, to the accompaniment of blazing guns (in the firing area). Hearing birds was a challenge! Nevertheless 37 species were recorded, including pairs of **Scarlet Robins** and **Mistletoebirds**. **Golden Whistlers** were still around and vocal, as was a **Speckled Warbler**. The resident **Wedge-tailed Eagles** put in an appearance. The only summer migrants recorded were a male **Rufous Whistler**, **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** and **Tree Martins**. The whole Range was awash with colour, including at least three orchid species.

Newline

Sue Lashko did the survey on 30 September in calm conditions with light cloud cover. Spring migrants included **Noisy Friarbird**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, lots of **Grey Fantails**, **Rufous Whistler**, but no cuckoos or gerygones. There was plenty of breeding activity with **Dusky Woodswallows** on eggs, **White-winged Choughs** ON, **Wood Ducks** ON, **Noisy Miner** ON, **Striated Pardalotes** DI, **Magpie-larks** NB, **Pied Currawong** NB and unfortunately **Common Starlings** in all stages of breeding and increased numbers of **Common Mynas** doing likewise. The most unusual sighting was a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** being mobbed by 5 **Little Eagles**.

Callum Brae/Symonston

Sandra Henderson did the survey on 28 September in sunny, cool conditions, with wind starting to pick up for later sites. A total of 42 species was seen. There were several **White-winged Chough** nests within the reserve, with birds observed both on the nest and carrying food. **Nankeen Kestrels** were actively chasing **Magpies** from possible nest site, and **Australian Ravens** were on a nest above one survey site. Despite good flowering in many of the eucalypts, few honeyeaters were sighted. A large mixed group near "nursery corner" contained some very confiding **White-throated Gerygones** as well as **Speckled Warblers**, **Grey Fantails**, **Buff-rumped Thornbills** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills**.

Jenny Bounds

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MUDBRICK COTTAGE—MALLACOOTA

Our mudbrick cottage (Blue Wren Cottage) is available for rental. It is set amongst the trees in Mallacoota, Victoria (approximately 4 hours drive from Canberra). 10 minutes walk to the beach, 5 minutes walk to the golf course and about 15 minutes walk to town. It sleeps 4-6 upstairs and there is a sofa bed downstairs. It is fully self-contained with a kitchen and laundry.
Contact: Barbara de Bruine (02) 6258 3531, or barbdebruine@hotmail.com

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

2012-2013 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

P Gatenby, Hawker

M Snape, Crestwood (NSW)

J Copeman, Kambah

C Young, ANU

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for December 2013 edition

Wednesday 27 November 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 information

President—Alison Russell-French

0419 264702

Email: alisonrf@iinet.net.au

Vice President—Chris Davey

6254 6324

Email: chris_davey@aapt.net.au

Treasurer—Noel Luff

Email:

noelluff@hotmail.com.au

Secretary—Sandra Henderson

6231 0303

cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Address for correspondence

The Secretary

COG, PO Box 301

Civic Square, ACT 2608

COG library

For all enquiries or access to COG's library phone Barbara

Allan on

6254 6520

Membership inquiries—

Sandra Henderson

6231 0303

membership@canberrabirds.org.au

for changed address or other details

Gang-gang Newsletter

Editor: Sue Lashko

Email: gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

Lay-out Editor: Gail Neumann

Newsletter distribution

Anne Carrick

Canberra Bird Notes

Editor: Michael Lenz

lenzmj@hotmail.com.au

COG website

www.canberrabirds.org.au

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