

Gang-gang

June 2006

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

Monthly Meeting

8 pm Wednesday

14 June 2006

*Canberra Girls Grammar School
corner Gawler Cres and Melbourne
Ave, Deakin. The meetings are held in
the Multi-media Theatre at the School.
Enter off Gawler Crescent using the
school road signposted as Gabriel
Drive. If that car-park is full, enter
using Chapel Drive.*

Our *first talk* will be by ever-
popular and erudite COG member
Dick Schodde, who will
enlighten us to the similarities and
differences between the “true”
quails and the button-quails.

Our *main talk* is a very special
June surprise, with the key title
word ‘**Gosford**’.

Everyone welcome

Avian Whimsy #42

Lily Trotters, Tom and Lilian

By the time you read this (unless of course you’ve put it aside for a time of real desperation), I’ll be on my way back from far north Queensland where, among my very favourite delectations, are the elegant little Comb-crested Jacanas (*Irediparra gallinacea*). Their lifestyle is so extraordinary, spreading their weight through ridiculously elongated toes in order to walk on lily pads, that it is unsurprising that they have attracted a range of folk names, including Lily Trotter, Lotusbird and Jesus Bird (for walking on water, OK?). Curiously though, the name we’ve adopted is none of these, nor is it English at all, nor Australian, nor even European. Nope, we went for the name by which a bird of the same family was known to the Tupi people of coastal Brazil. Well you would, wouldn’t you?

The genus name of the Australian bird (also found through New Guinea and Indonesia to the Philippines) commemorates one of our very greatest all-round biologists, Tom Iredale. (An old Jacana genus name was *Parra*; hence ‘Iredale’s Parra’. Putting aside the question as to whether we should name animals after people, I reckon this one is a compliment to both parties. I’m a lot less sure about the *gallinacea* – basically ‘chooky’!) Tom was, I believe, all the greater for having had no formal education beyond the age of 17, when tuberculosis forced him out of school and into years as an invalid in England, though he became apprenticed to a pharmacist. In 1901, aged 21, he emigrated to New Zealand and did clerical work to subsidise his bird-watching and a growing interest in molluscs. He spent nearly a year in 1908 with four other young researchers on the remote Kermadec Islands, half way to Tonga, where they were paid £10 – by whom I can’t determine – to study birds, which they also

lived on! Here he further developed his shell studies. (He had married two years previously; I can find no further reference to Alice, but the 10 month sojourn so soon after the wedding might explain why he was later free to remarry!) He visited Australia the following year and collected 300 Queensland mollusc species, then returned to England to work in the British Natural History Museum, first freelance, then for the dilettante-turned-workaholic Gregory Mathews on the monumental *Birds of Australia*. There is good evidence now that much of what appeared under Mathews’ name was actually penned by Iredale (literally too – he never used a typewriter and wrote standing up, never revising anything he’d written! He also apparently had no time for such affectations as crossing t’s and dotting i’s.) At the same time he was studying chitons, collecting bird parasites in Hungary and working with the author of the enormous *Index Animalium*.

In 1923 he married Lilian Medland, herself a remarkable person. She was born to landed gentry and as a child, with a tutor, she sketched outdoors, climbed mountains, skied and skated, reared two lion cubs and kept a woodpecker in her studio! She was an emancipist – one expression of which was that she smoked... She trained as a nurse and was a very talented painter, producing 318 plates for the 5-volume *Birds of the British Islands*. They came to Australia when he was

(Continued on page 8)

Field Trip reports

Easter Camp at Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve

Nineteen COG members shared the Honeyeater Flat Field Study Area at Munghorn with about 50 members of the Hunter Valley Bird Observers. Rain greeted the Thursday afternoon arrivals, but the skies quickly cleared and the rest of the weekend was perfect. We spent Friday morning on the 4km Castle Rocks Walking Track, which had a good range, but not large numbers, of birds, including a very elusive **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren**. The Castle Rocks are spectacular sandstone pagodas which harboured an interesting array of reptiles. The rest of the day was spent exploring various spots within the nature reserve – most activity was centered around flowering White Box but Regent Honeyeaters eluded us, although **Spiny-cheeked**, **Yellow-tufted** and **Black-chinned** were seen, along with **Little Lorikeets**. Saturday morning was spent exploring a streamline where Regents had been seen, again without success, but **Emu**, **White-browed Babbler**, **White-backed Swallow** and **Crested Shrike-tit** were present. We spent the rest of the day exploring TSRs and rivers north of Munghorn – highlights included **Brown Quail** and **Zebra Finch**. Determined to see **Regent Honeyeaters**, we staked out two large White Box early on Saturday and were rewarded with very good views of 6 birds. Satisfied, we headed north to Goulburn River National Park, where we visited three sites, the best of which, White Box Campground, yielded a flock of **Brown Treecreepers**, **Striped Honeyeater** and magnificent views of **Turquoise Parrots**. Spotlighting on Sunday night was equally rewarding with a female **Powerful Owl** sitting above us for about 10 minutes. **Southern Boobook**, **Tawny Frogmouth** and **Australian Owlet-nightjar** were also heard during the weekend. Within 100m of the camp area, we found **Rockwarbler**, **Rose Robin** and **Red-browed Treecreeper**. In all, 115 species of birds, including 17 species of honeyeater, 18 species of reptiles, 13 species of butterflies and one frog were recorded (the non-birds identified by Steve Holliday).

Sue Lashko

Botanic Gardens morning

Fifteen people attended the beginners walk at the ANBG on a beautiful Mother's Day morning. After covering a few basics we got stuck into finding some birds, learning a few tricks along the way. Everyone had good views of **Eastern Spinebill**, **Crimson Rosella**, **New Holland Honeyeater**, **Brown Thornbill**, **Grey Currawong**, **Eastern Yellow Robin** and **White-throated Treecreeper**. We couldn't locate the resident **Tawny Frogmouths** at the eucalypt lawn, nor, to my surprise and shock, did we see a **White-browed Scrubwren** anywhere in the gardens. I don't think any birder has been to the gardens for a couple of hours and NOT seen a scrubwren! The highlight of the morning was the mobbing of a **Southern Boobook** by a huge number of birds. We were initially drawn to the racket the birds were making, but finding the probable raptor proved difficult. The owl finally flew from a shrub, dropping its half eaten dinner from overnight (a **Crimson Rosella**). Several birders worked hard to locate the owl high in a tree and identify it correctly. Birds mobbing the owl included a green **Satin Bowerbird**, **Red Wattlebirds**, an **Australian Raven** and a few **Australian Magpies**. The raven was close enough to peck at the owl's tail. Thanks to those who attended a very enjoyable morning.

Anthony Overs

Tallaganda State Forest-Powerful Owl Search

Phew! The rain stopped in time and we found an owl.

Thirteen members and friends turned out on a damp evening to search for a **Powerful Owl**.

We tried first along the Palarang Road without success although a couple of **Boobook Owls** excitedly replied to our taped calls. We then played calls at a number of sites along the Lowden Forest Park road without any replies. Eyeshine from a couple of distant Greater Gliders raised our hopes for a while. Eventually a very gruff voice boomed up at us from the gully below and soon a small **Powerful Owl** flew in and perched where everyone could get a clear view. This was a "lifer" for most people present and the very first owl for Julian (age 8). Special thanks must go to Anthony Overs who demonstrated how to search for owls and played the calls of many of the night birds for us.

Tom Green

Wednesday walk at Tidbinbilla

Glorious autumn weather and 16 keen birders! Pity about the birds though.

We assembled at the carpark (**Wood Duck, Masked Lapwings, Galahs and Noisy Miners**) and began our search for robins south of the old information centre. Sadly there were few birds about, few flowers on the Banksias and no Flame Robin. In desperation we ticked some Emus that seemed more interested in us than we were in them.

We then moved on to the wetlands walk. A nice male **Scarlet Robin** brightened up our morning tea break. **Black Swans** with 3 cygnets, lots of well-fed **Pacific Black Ducks**, a single **Shoveller**, and 3 **Hardheads** were soon ticked. We were all pleased to see a Platypus skirting the far side of the pond. The male **Musk Duck** cruised around in the open and even put on a bit of his "Steamer duck" display. 37 species were recorded in the end but "bushbirds" were scarce and hard to see.

Tom Green

Surveys and other interests

Mulligans Flat Survey - Sunday 18 June

A notice for regular volunteers, please note your diaries. I will email a reminder nearer the time. The winter survey will be on Sunday 18 June, meeting at the gate to the reserve at 8.15am (winter time). Wear sturdy shoes or boots and bring clipboard, pencil and eraser, and mug for the usual morning tea afterwards. Jenny Bounds 6288 7802.

The next **National Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater**

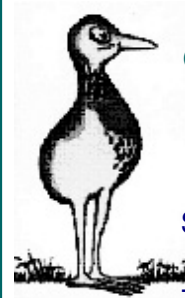
survey weekends for 2006 is on the 5-6 August (1st weekend in August). Survey forms can be obtained from Debbie Saunders, Swift Parrot recovery officer, (debbie.saunders@environment.nsw.gov.au, ph: 1800 66 57 66), or David Geering (david.geering@environment.nsw.gov.au, ph: 1800 62 10 56) or from the Birds Australia Swift Parrot web page (<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/birds/swift.html>). Volunteers are asked to contact either Debbie or David to nominate the areas they wish to survey or to get some survey area suggestions. COG does not have any organised activity on the first weekend, so why not get some friends together, enjoy the late autumn weather and survey some sites?

Future Field Trips

The **Guidelines for the conduct and advertising of COG field trips have been finalised and placed on the COG web site. Both trip leaders and members/participants should familiarise themselves with these guidelines. In particular, the Registration Form, which can be downloaded, should be completed on each field trip.**

Eurobodalla Nature Coast; Saturday –Monday 10-12 June – long weekend caravan park/camping at Broulee

COG will be visiting a number of birding spots on the Eurobodalla Nature Coast during the weekend, with members of the Eurobodalla Natural History Society (EHNS), including the Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens (very good for birds in winter), a mangrove boardwalk, coastal and forest areas. There are also other attractions (distractions!) like the popular Moruya markets on Saturday morning (close to Broulee). Jenny Bounds (Ph 6288 7802) and Tom Green (Ph 6247 0630) are sharing the job of organising the accommodation and activities for this weekend, with assistance from local birders in ENHS.



Australian Ornithological Services P/L

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South Yarra 3141
Victoria
Tel: 03 9820 4223
Mob: 04173 10200

enquiries@philipmaher.com

2006 Birding Tours

New Caledonia

1 — 8 August
includes Lifou & Ouvéa Islands

Plains-wanderer Weekends Good Food PW Weekend

18 & 19 November 2006

Regular Plains-wanderer weekends

December 2 & 3, 9 & 10,
16 & 17 and 30 & 31

2007 Birding Tours

Tasmanian Endemic Bird and Mammal Tour

18—24 February
Bruny Island, Melaleuca, pelagic

South West Western Australia 27 February — 7 March

Thailand

7—24 April
co-led with Uthai Treesucon

Gulf of Carpentaria June 2007—Cairns return

Strzelecki Track August 2007

**Central Coast NSW
inc nearby national parks**
November 2007
Barrington, Gloucester & Copeland
Tops, Mungahorn Gap and several
others parks

www.philipmaher.com

COG will be based at the Broulee Beach Holiday Park, 6 Lyttle St, Broulee (Big 4 Holiday Park). This is a small park in a quiet area of the coast, north of Moruya, adjacent to Broulee Island and a long quiet beach/foreshore. COG has booked a couple of 2 bed-room units next to each other in a quiet part of the park, from Friday to Sunday night inclusive - 3 nights. Units are spacious and have all facilities including crockery, cooking and eating utensils, stove, microwave and dishwasher, ensuite bathroom and balcony/outdoor seating area, plus barbecue area. A Queen bedroom for 2 people is available in each, with a single bed and bunk bed in the second bedroom for 3 people. For details of cost and to reserve a room/bed in the units, phone Jenny Bounds - 6288 7802. Powered sites in a grassed area adjacent to the units are available for those who have camper trailers, caravans or tents - please phone the Holiday Park direct (Ph 02 4471 6247) to reserve a powered site (COG has not booked these). Early booking for both units and powered sites is recommended.

All participants on this weekend are asked to please register with Jenny Bounds, phone above, including those staying privately in other accommodation, or at the Holiday Park in powered sites. As usual on COG weekends, we will arrange shared/communal meals on Sat and Sun nights - one night a barbecue.

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve; Saturday 24 June or Sunday 25 June depending on weather - Superb Lyrebird survey

Since the January 2003 bushfires Chris Davey and Peter Fullagar have been monitoring the return of the Superb Lyrebird to an area of the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

They wish to get an idea of the present distribution within the Reserve and are asking COG members who are familiar with the calls of the Lyrebird to join them for a morning's survey. They are calling for expressions of interest to join them at 8:00 am to walk the trails and to record the locations of calling birds. At this stage they envisage the survey will take about three hours. This outing will be a repeat of the very successful surveys conducted in 2004 and 2005.

Further details will be announced at the May/June COG meeting. If interested please contact Chris Davey on 6254 6324 (H) or Peter Fullagar on 6161 4808 (H).

Commonwealth Park, Sunday 7 July – Ducks Plus morning

Or everything you ever wanted to know about ducks, plus more! Local expert Peter Fullagar will be sharing his vast knowledge about ducks in this outing, which is suitable to both new and experienced members. Join Peter (6161 4808) at Regatta Point at 9 am for a stroll down to the ponds where we will be looking particularly at ducks and Peter will be pointing out aspects of duck behaviour. Depending on the level of activity we might move to other spots nearby where duck species are also known to gather.

Molonglo Valley Minibus Tour - Sunday 23 July

The Molonglo Valley provides a variety of habitats for birds of prey - thirteen species of birds of prey occur in the Valley, most of them breeding. It is one of the richest areas for birds of prey in our area, and rather unique being so close to a major city. Some of the Molonglo Valley is proposed for housing development, and this tour will also inform members on these issues. The focus of the day will be looking for and recording birds of prey/raptors, with possibilities including **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Peregrine Falcon**, and **Little Eagle** which is becoming rare in the ACT. A variety of other birds should also be seen. Our tour will visit Woodstock Nature Reserve on both sides of the Murrumbidgee/Molonglo Rivers, some lookout areas such as Shepherd's Lookout near Holt and Mt Stromlo, Coppins Crossing, and Uriarra Crossing where we will have lunch. There will be some walking so participants need to be sure-footed - an easy 600 metre loop on a graded track down to Shepherd's lookout and back up again, and an undulating walk of about 4.5 km return on a fire trail (moderate grade, includes up and down some slopes). Bring lunch and drinks for the day. Wear sturdy shoes or boots, and appropriate gear for the weather; carry waterproof jacket or raincoat if rain is predicted. It is proposed to use 1 or 2 minibuses for this tour; cost will be in the order of \$17-\$20 per person, depending on final numbers. Meeting time will be 8.30am, at Coleman Court Shopping Centre in Weston Creek where car parking is available (meeting details and actual cost will be provided later to participants). Tour will finish at 4pm. Jenny Bounds will lead the tour, with Jack Holland driving a second bus if we have the numbers. Seats on the bus can be booked with Jenny Bounds, ph 6288 7802.

Lake Ginninderra; Waterbirds for beginners - Sunday 6 August

This is the second of our bird walks in 2006 that is aimed specifically at beginners or new members. Meet Anthony



Follow
That Bird

CROWDY HEAD & COMBOYNE PLATEAU 22 - 26 JULY 2006

5 DAYS/ 4 NIGHTS \$1495 PP TWIN OR DBLE \$130 SSUPP

This trip has been especially designed to cater for Canberrans; starting and ending in Canberra with the aim to take you out of the July winter cold and into the Mid North Coast which is quite splendid and often overlooked. There is a generous diversity of bird life on the coast and as you move back to the moist forests around Comboyne with their 40 odd waterfalls.

Few people remain unmoved by the beauty and diversity of Crowdy Bay: the spectacular view of the broad sweep of Crowdy Beach, striking Diamond Head rising abruptly before dropping away gently to the wetlands and heaths of the coastal plain. Birds are prolific with well over a hundred species in the surrounding estuaries and national park.

Resident coucals at our accommodation right on Crowdy Head will delight with their lolloping walk. And below, beside the beach, Chestnut-rumped Heathwrens surprise with their inquisitive gaze while Figbirds yelp and then softly sing in the banksias.

Further inland Comboyne Plateau developed on the deep rich red loam derived from basalt. Large pockets of sub-tropical rainforest remain where Noisy Pitta, Logrunners, Fruit Pigeons and Eastern Whipbirds utilise these plant communities. Along the roadsides, Regent Bowerbirds and Scarlet Honeyeaters are expected to wow you with their spectacular colour.

Dates: 22 July to 24 July 2006—5 days /4 nights

Leader: Alan Morris

Summary

- * Escape the Winter Cold
- * Spectacular Mountain Vistas
- * Beautiful Beaches & Headlands
- * Mountain Rainforest Birds

Featured Birds

- * Noisy Pitta
- * Logrunners
- * Regent Bowerbirds
- * Figbirds

Contact us for an itinerary

Follow That Bird – Birds and Camaraderie

Tel 02 9973 1865 **Fax** 02 9973 1875

Email: tours@followthatbird.com.au

Website: www.followthatbird.com.au

Next newsletter

July deadline

Wednesday 28 June 2006

Please send updates, articles,
advertisements etcetera to the

Editors of *Gang-gang*

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

or send 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.

Print photographs with or without articles
are encouraged and welcomed.

Overs (6254 0168 AH or email on anthony.overs.reps@aph.gov.au) at 8.30 am in the car park at the western end of Diddams Close on Ginninderra Peninsula (also known as Diddams Close Park - see Yellow Pages Map 38, ref A9). We will walk the shores of the peninsula around to the eastern side, then back to the carpark along Diddams Close. We should be able to view several species of waterbirds up close, focusing on the identification features of the common species such as the various ducks, "waterhens" and cormorants. A variety of bush birds are also likely to be seen. Please don't forget to bring your binoculars and field guide.

Wednesday walk Lowden Forest Park 21st June

We will meet at the Spotlight carpark at 9 am on the 21st. Please consider carpooling for this trip. It is about 30 kms to the forest and will be a long morning. We will bird along the road through Rossi and the Tallaganda State Forest and hopefully reach the waterwheel for morning tea.

We will look for tall forest birds such as **Lewin Honeyeater** and **Olive whistler** and listen for **Lyrebirds** in the gullies.

Notices

Call for information on Channel Country birding

COG has received a request from Drew Morris, Tourism Information Officer, Warrarri Visitor Information Centre, Birdsville Qld 4482; tel 07 4656 3300; info@diamantina.qld.gov.au. He is producing a brochure highlighting the birding assets of the Diamantina Shire and would appreciate trip reports, bird lists, anecdotes and photographs from any COG members who have birded in the area - and he issues a warm welcome to any members heading out that way this winter to drop into the Information Centre and say hello.

It is subscription renewal time again. We have kept subscriptions to \$35 so we hope you will all rejoin and encourage your friends to do likewise. Please check the mailing label on the envelope of your CBN to see whether or not you need to renew for 2006-07. If you do, we offer three ways to pay – cash or cheque at meetings; cheque or money order to our PO box; or electronic transfer to our bank account (identifying yourself, please!). In every case, we would like you to complete a membership form with your current details. If you pay by bank transfer, use the electronic membership form on the website and email to cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au.

Report of April COG meeting.

Bruce Lindenmayer delivered a very informative short talk, illustrated with photos from our website, along with calls of the three whistlers found in our region, as well as the Grey Shrike-thrush and Pilotbird.

The main speaker for the evening was Chris Tidemann who discussed the prospects for the control of Common Mynas in the ACT. He strongly advocated that there should be attempts made to try to reduce numbers because of the impact they have on native species, especially hollow-dwelling birds and small mammals, as well as the amount of biomass they consume and the health risks they pose in outdoor eating areas.

Can myna numbers be controlled? This proved to be a more difficult question to answer. Valve traps, developed by Chris and others, can catch several dozen birds at a time and, when used repeatedly in the one area, have proved to greatly reduce or eliminate the birds locally. However, Chris' view is that a more effective way to eliminate large numbers of birds is to target their roosts. Mynas favour pencil pines for communal roosting and often roost in their hundreds. He is developing a synthetic tree which will incorporate a large net to trap the birds once they have been lured to the tree by playing flocking calls. Old roosts in real trees will hopefully be emptied by playing distress calls.

Sue Lashko

MUDBRICK COTTAGE

Mallacoota

Our mudbrick cottage is available for rental for all those nature lovers out there!! It is set amongst the trees in Mallacoota, Victoria (approximately 4 hours drive from Canberra). It is only 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) 62583531.

PASSIVE SOLAR HOUSE

South Rosedale

Arupingi is a passive solar house situated in a peaceful bushland setting in South Rosedale.

Birdwatching is possible from the comfort of a chair on the front or back deck, while for the more energetic, Guerrilla Bay and Burrewarra Point are within walking distance. The wetlands at Barling's Beach are only a few kilometres away. Rich birding is available in almost any direction. Contact Greg or Sallie Ramsay

(02) 6286 1564 or e-mail
greg.ramsay@actewagl.net.au



WONGA

Bawley Point

South Coast of N.S.W.

Two well equipped timber cottages in 50 acres. Damp and dry warm temperate forest, kunzea and rock provide for a diversity of birds and other animals. A short walk down the driveway leads to sand dunes and beaches, sea birds and Hooded Plovers. Close to National Parks, lakes and historic sites.

patricia.walker@bigpond.com

phone 02 6251 3136

www.visitnsw.com.au (follow the links to accommodation and Wonga)

COG SALES

- **'The Long Paddock** - a Directory of Travelling Stock Routes and Reserves in NSW' by Rural Lands Protection Board - \$31.00
- **The Birds of Western NSW: A Preliminary Atlas** - NSW Bird Atlassers - **reduced** to \$5.00
- **Finding Birds in Darwin, Kakadu and Top End** by Niven McCrie and James Watson. \$24.00.
- **Wet and Wild** - A Field Guide to the Freshwater Animals of the Southern Tablelands and High Country" by M Lintermans and W Osborne, \$28.00 (RRP \$34.95).
- **Wildlife on Farms** - by David Lindenmayer RRP \$29.95, **special price** for COG members - \$25.00.
- **Where to Find Birds in NE Queensland** - Joe Wieneke - \$16.00.
- **Reptiles and Frogs of the ACT** - Ross Bennett - \$13.00.
- **Native Trees of the ACT** - \$6.50.
- **Birds of Rottnest Island** – by Denis Saunders & Parry de Rebeira -\$15.00
- **Birds of Rottnest Island** – a check list - \$1.00
- **Grassland Flora** – a Field Guide for the Southern Tablelands (NSW and ACT) – by David Eddy et al. - \$13.00
- **Our Patch** – Field Guide to the Flora of the ACT Region - \$13.00
- **The Nestbox Book** – Gould League - \$12.50
- **Birds of Queensland's Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef** by Lloyd Nielsen - \$25.00
- **Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT** – by Taylor and Day \$14.00
- Simpson and Days' **Birds of Australia CDROM** Version 5.0 **special price** - \$45.00
- COG Atlas - \$12.00
- COG Car Stickers - \$2.00
- COG Birds of Canberra Gardens Poster - \$4.00
- COG Garden Bird Survey Chart (New Version) - \$1.00
- COG Badges – two colour versions - \$5.00
- COG Birds of the ACT – Two Centuries of Change – by Steve Wilson - \$25.00
- COG Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the ACT - \$1.00

COG T-shirts, Polo shirts, all above and other books on local flora and fauna available at the monthly meeting sales desk or by contacting Carol Macleay (for post and packing costs) on 02 6286 2624.

(Continued from page 1)

appointed conchologist at the Australian Museum. Here she did 53 plates of 883 birds for Mathews, and painted for Tom's books on Bowerbirds, and on birds of New Guinea. I've seen some of her work at the National Library and find it immensely impressive. Tom continued working long after his 1944 retirement, until his death in 1972. He published widely on shells, birds, ecology and zoogeography.

I might have to come back to the Jacanas themselves some other time, as I've somehow overused my word allocation already – and again! They are unusual, among many other things, in being polyandrous. She keeps up to four blokes and oversees their territories, leaving each one with a clutch of four eggs to brood and raise the chicks. She defends her harem – if you know a (polite) male equivalent for that, I'd be interested – from other rapacious females, while the males too defend their own smaller territories. They're better at nurturing than brawling though – they have a well-recorded habit of getting toes tangled and having to be pecked into separating by their mistress, doubtless annoyed at the prospect of her chicks' carer drowning himself.

I'm not sure what Tom would have made of all this; I suspect Lilian would have approved though.

Ian Fraser ianf@pcug.org.au

COG info

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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.

Office

COG no longer maintains an office. For all enquiries or access to COG's library phone Barbara Allen on 6254 6520

COG website

www.canberrabirds.org.au

COG membership

2005-2006 memberships:

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

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

Editor Canberra Bird Notes

CBN@canberrabirds.org.au



Gang-gang

If undeliverable, please return to
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