



Gang-gang

JUNE 2022

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

JUNE MEETING

Wednesday 8 June 2022

7.30 pm

Normal face-to-face meeting

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

The June meeting will again be a normal face-to-face one held at our usual venue, but as school virus rules for after-hours public meetings in school premises remain unchanged (see under **Events** on <https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/covid-school-arrangements/school-advice>) you will still need to wear a mask and also check in using the Check in CBR QR code, as noted in the COG COVID Safety Plan available on the COG web site ([COG-CGGS-Checklist-COVID-19_09Mar22.pdf](https://canberrabirds.org.au/COG-CGGS-Checklist-COVID-19_09Mar22.pdf) (canberrabirds.org.au)).

The short presentation will be by **Jack Holland** on “**Forty seven years of local birding**”.

Jack will discuss some of the changes observed during his 47 years of local birding in Chapman/Rivett, with an emphasis on some of the more common species and their daily movement.

This will be a lead in for the main presentation by **Neil Hermes** on “**The Garden Bird Survey**”.

Continued Page 2

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

The weather over the 4 weeks from 27 April covered by this column has stayed cloudy and relatively mild, with so far only a couple of relatively light frosts. It was also quite wet, culminating one significant rain event mid-month, which was followed by a more than 10-day dry spell at the end. My impression was that bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (AoI) has been relatively quiet seems to be confirmed by my analysis below, with most of the summer migrants having moved away, with only those species for which some overwinter still present, a number of them in quite high numbers still.

Apart from the discovery of the Top Naas Rd as an excellent birding spot, the main interest has been the continued presence of **Swift Parrots**. On 28 April,

Continued Page 2

Victor Braguite



Swift Parrot

Everyone welcome

Neil will discuss the origins, aims and history of the survey, illustrate its value by using some examples that can be obtained from the very extensive data over its 42 year history, as well as outlining his plans for the future of the project.

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

continued from Page 1

almost immediately after suggesting in my previous column they may have moved on, Shorty alerted me that the presence of 8-10 **Swift Parrots** in Katoomba Park next to the Campbell shops had just been posted on Facebook. Many observers subsequently found up to a maximum of 16 birds there, with the last reports of four birds on 18 May. Outside of the Campbell shops area Shorty reported four birds in Symonston on 30 April, and on 11 May Chrissy Hastir saw at least four birds at Jenke Circuit Kambah, their main spot for 2021. So they may have moved on again, and please keep an eye and ear out for them, they can be quite noisy when feeding.

In respect of the usually departed spring/summer migrants still present in April there have been no further reports of the **White-throated Needletail** (last report on 21 March), the **Fork-tailed Swift** (last report 30 March), **Sacred Kingfisher** (last report on 9 April), **Rufous Songlark** (last report on 10 April), **Brush Cuckoo** (last report on 3 April) and **Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo** (last report on 20 April). The **Shining Bronze-cuckoo** was still reported from two locations, the most recent being from the Murrumbidgee walk between Casuarina Sands and Bulgar Creek on 14 May. In contrast, the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, which I've mentioned many times is the least migratory of our local cuckoos, was still reported from around 17 locations up to the time of writing.

Of the birds still present in April that mostly leave by the end of March or during April, there have been no further reports of the **Leaden Flycatcher** (last report on 16 April), the **Rufous Fantail** (also last reported on 16 April) and **Fairy Martin** (last report on 17 April). The **Tree Martin** was still reported from five locations, the most recent being two birds at the Namadgi NP Visitors Centre on 22 May, and the **Australian Reed-Warbler** was also still reported from five locations, most recently from the West Belconnen Pond on 20 May.

The **White-throated Gerygone** was last reported from Campbell Park on 29 April, but the **Western Gerygone** was still reported from four locations, the most being from Campbell Park from where up to three birds were reported, and most recently two birds on 22 May. Most of the **Noisy Friarbirds** left during the period, being reported from just six locations compared with close to 50 in April, the most recent being a bird at Campbell Park on 21 May.

However, there were still plenty of **Rufous Whistlers**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** and **Grey Fantails** present, reported from a remarkable around 25, 70 and over 100 locations, respectively. It may be expected that quite a few of these three species will overwinter, as will the **Mistletoebird** and **Superb Parrot** reported from five and around 35 locations (only nine south of LBG), respectively. This also applies to the **Dusky Woodswallow** and **Olive-backed Oriole**, still being reported from 21 and nine locations, respectively, during the period.

So please keep an eye out for any of the above species, particularly the last nine species to confirm whether some of them will overwinter this year.

Of the species that move from the mountains and higher country into Canberra and its surrounds in autumn/winter, both the **White-eared Honeyeater** and the **Golden Whistler** are now well established in urban and peri-urban locations, as is the **Scarlet Robin** which was reported from around 30 such locations of the over 50 total locations it was reported from during the period. However, the **Flame Robin** has still been reported only from nine such locations of the over 30 total locations, indicating it still has to move in closer.

The **Rose Robin** has been reported from seven locations in the period, four of which may be described as urban/peri-urban, but still one report from W of the Murrumbidgee River, with two birds at the Tidbinbilla NR on 21 May. Again, there were no reports of the **Pink Robin** during the period. Surprisingly there has only been the single report, an urban/peri-urban bird at the

ANBG on 21 May, of the **Crescent Honeyeater**. In contrast the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** has been reported from three locations over the period, the Gigerline NR, the nearby Williamsdale TSR, and from near Bredbo.

So please keep an eye out for the above as the move closer to Canberra, especially the last three.

There has been one “unusual bird” species reported over the period which deserves a special mention, the three **Black-chinned Honeyeaters** observed by Rainer Rehwinkel at Campbell Park on 20 May. These were seen in a mixed feeding flock with several other species. Although the light conditions were dull at the time, he could clearly see the birds’ greyish throat, bordered by white. The head marking was much blacker than the dull brown of the **Brown-headed Honeyeater** (which were present a little earlier), and the birds appeared to be bigger than that species too. The birds were very active, rarely stopping for more than a couple of seconds at a time, and he only saw the birds clearly twice, and then only briefly.

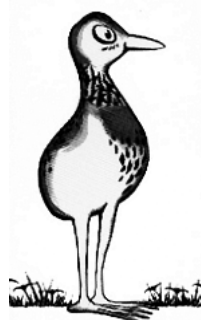
This record will require endorsement by the COG Rarities Panel. COG’s 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR) notes this species as a very rare vagrant from inland districts, with records previously from 1999, 2007 (10 records), 2008 and 2010. The above ABR includes a report of six birds at Jerangle, right on the SE edge of the COG Aol, but notes it was not presented for appraisal. The closest records I can find on eBird so far for 2022 is from S of Wagga Wagga as well as from Cowra, about 140 km to the W and NNW, respectively.

Two **Plumed Whistling Ducks** were reported from the Trucking Yard Lane Dam only on 20 May, but eight ducks were reported from the Badcoe VC Rest Area on Lake George on 21 May. Again, no **Freckled**



Rose Robin

Victor Braguine



Australian Ornithological Services P/L

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Victoria

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enquiries@philipmaher.com

Good birding, good food

2022

The Gulf Country

9 — 26 May 2022

Cairns, Karumba, Burketown,
Mt Isa, Winton

Atherton Tablelands and/or

Iron Range NP

30 May — 12 June 2022

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Central Australia

21 — 31 August 2022

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

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Check website for available places.

2023 tours

Atherton Tablelands & Iron Range

In two parts May 2023

Pilbara WA

Winter 2023

2023 Plains-wanderer Weekends

07 & 08 October 2023

21 & 22 October 2023

04 & 05 November 2023

18 & 19 November 2023

Contact Patricia Maher for itineraries.

www.philipmaher.com

Ducks were reported during the period. While **Australian Shelducks** were reported from 5 locations to the E and NE of Canberra during the period, the maximum of 60 seen together on the Wollogorang Road on 20 May was far lower numbers than in April. A female **Blue-billed Duck** with four ducklings (see further below), and a separate male, were reported from the Upper Stranger Pond, with single ducks also reported from the Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant and the farm dam on Lake Road. Four **Musk Ducks** were reported Rowes Lagoon on 10 May, the only location apart from the Sanctuary at Tidbinbilla NR.

Single (both flushed) **Stubble Quail** were reported from just two locations, a further indication of their lesser extent of calling post the breeding season. In contrast the **Brown Quail** was reported from around 11 locations, and up to 6 **Painted Button-quail** were reported from five locations in the period, an increase over April. On 11 May Sandra Henderson reported a **Little Button-quail** from the Top Naas Rd. She flushed a small quail-type bird from the roadside and it flew a short distance into a paddock. It had a white belly, and a brownish back, and was too small and too pale for a Brown Quail. Sandra also reported a single **Great Crested Grebe** from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 9 May, which was subsequently seen by a number of observers.

A **White-headed Pigeon** was reported from Queanbeyan on Facebook on 28 April, as well as one on eBird from Waramanga on 30 April, but no **Diamond or Peaceful Doves** were reported during the period.

An **Australian Spotted Crake** was reported only from near the big dam in Mulligans Flat NR on 1 May, but two **Spotless Crakes** were observed at the Coombs Pond on 19 May, as well as up to three at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands from 7-18 May. The larger number of reports of the latter so far this year is very interesting; there was a time when it was by far the harder bird to observe in the COG AoI. Again, no **Baillon's Crake** or **Lewin's Rail** have been reported during the period, whereas **Buff-banded Rails** were reported from two locations.

Banded Lapwings were reported from three locations, two at the Nanima TSR and at Bywong on 9 and 14 May, respectively, as well as five birds at the Riverbank Park in Yass on 18 May. However, no **Red-necked Avocets**, **Red-capped Plovers**, **Caspian Tern** or **Australian Little Bittern** were reported during the period. The **Common Sandpiper** appears to have finally departed. It was last seen at the silt/gross pollutant trap slightly to the W of where Village Creek flows under Drakeford Drive on 20 April. I looked for it there on 17 May but could not find it. An **Intermediate Egret** was reported from the West Belconnen Pond between 16-20 May.

Barn Owls were reported from four locations, with two reported by Shoshana Rapley at the Goorooyarroo NR on 26 April, one eating a rodent, the other perched on a fence. On 2 May Jean Casburn's breakfast was interrupted by unusually loud angry bird calls (**Red Wattlebirds**, **Grey Butcherbirds**, **Australian Magpies** and **Australian Ravens**) which continued for more than 10 minutes. When she went to check, a **Barn Owl** rose up from the ground just over the fence in her neighbour's property. While it flew off before she could see where it was hiding, she saw a gorgeous white bird with rufous stripes under tail feathers disappearing quickly. Warren Rowland photographed one at the Canberra Outlet Centre on 19 May. About five **Australian Ravens** were harassing while it was semi trapped behind a fence, luckily it managed to take off and get out while being closely chased.

The **Black-shouldered Kite** was reported from around 35 locations (similar to April), with both Sandra Henderson and Ben Milbourne reporting seven birds on the Top Naas Rd on 11 May (see also breeding record below), and the **Nankeen Kestrel** from around 47 locations (also similar to April) during the period. A grey morph **Grey Goshawk** was again reported perched on one of the lampposts on the Tuggeranong Parkway close to the Glenloch interchange on 5 May. There were no reports of the **Spotted Harrier**, **Black Kite** or **Black Falcon** during the period.

There has been just a single report of the **Azure Kingfisher**, on 20 May from the Point Hut Crossing and Picnic area, where it was present several years ago. However, there were no reports of the **Glossy Black-Cockatoo**, **Cockatiel**, **Turquoise Parrots**, or **Little, Musk** or **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** during the period.

An immature **Blue-faced Honeyeater**, with another calling further away, was reported only from the ANU on 16 May. A **Singing Honeyeater** was reported from Casey on 29 April, but no **Spiny-cheeked** or **Scarlet Honeyeaters**, **Little Friarbirds**, **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes**, **Zebra Finches** or **Tawny Grassbirds** were reported during the period.

Of the birds I continued to ask readers to keep a special lookout for in 2022, **Jacky Winters** were reported from four locations, with two birds reported from known location, the Namadgi NP Visitors Centre, only on 8 May. They were also reported from

three new locations, with up to four birds from the Top Naas Rd. Single birds were also reported from the Capital Country Holiday Park and the Yanununbeyan State Conservation Area on 8 and 14 May, respectively.

Hooded Robins were reported from three locations during the period. These include up to five birds at the known location of the Naas Road at Apollo Road between 1-19 May, and up to four birds at the new location of the Top Naas Rd between 29 April to 24 May, as well as up to two birds near Bredbo between 28 April and 19 May.

Single **Restless Flycatchers** were reported from the known 2022 locations, the Nelanglo TSR on 14 May, and the Naas Road at Apollo Road on 1 and 19 May. Two birds were seen McQuoid's Hill NR, from where they were also reported last winter, on 28 April and one bird there on 15 May. However, again most of the attention has again been on the one seen at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR and the adjacent Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant up to 24 May, as well as the nearby Norgrove Park on 21 May.

There were two late autumn breeding events worth a special mention, the first being the **Blue-billed Ducks** at Upper Stranger Pond mentioned above. On 20 May James Churches (and on 22 May Deb and Rod Ralph) photographed a female and four ducklings there. This species has rarely been recorded breeding in the COG Aol, with only 8 records (all of dependent young, five of which were in April or May), listed to June 2017 in the BIRD INFO on the COG web site. So, this is an additional late autumn record, noting that the species also bred there in both spring and autumn of the 2020-2021 breeding season.

The second is the **Black-shouldered Kite**, also as mentioned above. On 23 May Sandra Henderson found six birds on the Top Naas Rd, which included one family group of two adults and three begging young. That they had been fledged relatively recently is clear from the amount of orange around the neck, throat and upper chest in her photos. This species is a known autumn breeder, one of the few raptors that does so in the COG Aol.

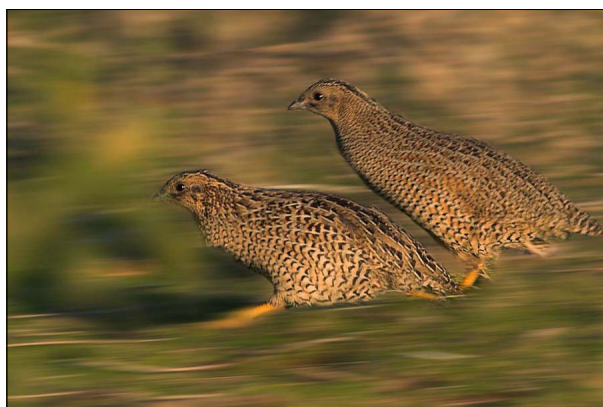
Mixed feeding flocks (MFF) should continue to be seen during June, before they break up as the new breeding season starts, so please continue look out for this phenomenon especially for the unexpected species often quietly feeding in amongst all the activity.

No further reports of honeyeater migration have come to my attention, confirming the poor season. At least in my local area of Chapman/Rivett, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** flocks have not yet started to form, indeed there have been very few birds around for the time of year. My **Common Starling** and **Common Myna** roosts have also moved on, from when their trees started losing their leaves early in May.

So please watch out for any overwintering spring/summer migrants mentioned above, for the still arriving altitudinal migrants, for MFFs and single species flocks, for roost sites and flights, and for any early winter breeding activity. Please also continue to keep a special look out for the **Restless Flycatcher**, **Jacky Winter** and **Hooded Robin**. As usual please ensure that all significant sightings are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

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

Jack Holland



Brown Quail

Julian Robinson



Stubble Quail

Tobias Hayashi

Committee News

The COG committee met by Zoom on 19 May.

The June members' meeting will again be held at Canberra Girls Grammar School. Everyone is welcome.

COG has signed the petition supporting the protection of Bluetts Block. If you haven't already signed it, there is still time. The petition is open until 7 July and can be found here – [ACT Legislative Assembly - Current e-Petitions](#)

Jean Casburn and several committee members met with Nicole Lawder MLA on 29 April at Bluetts Block to show her why COG considers its protection is important.

Other committee members met Jo Clay MLA at her request to discuss matters of interest on 23 May.

As reported last month the committee has made submissions on the Draft Action Plan – Loss of Mature Trees Threatening Process and the Urban Forest Bill which will replace the *Tree Protection Act 2005*. The committee is also considering submissions on proposed amendments to the development application for the proposed crematorium on Mugga Lane (amendments to DA202138789) and the Draft Planning Bill.

COG's submissions on various topics are published on the website – [COG Conservation Strategy - Canberra Birds](#) – after they have been submitted.

Neil Hermes *President* Alison Mackerras *Minutes Secretary*

COG's cogs No 12 – David McDonald

Our series about the volunteers in the COG gear house continues this month with David McDonald, tour guide, bird lister and keeper of the COG mailing list.

David began his birding career back in the 1980s while living in Darwin. Up in the top end the birds are of a more tropical and aquatic bent than we're used to in Canberra. But it was only once he arrived in 1986 that he began to take birding more seriously. Barbara Allan was the person who introduced him to COG, and like so many people who came before and after he was quickly hooked.

Before long David had commenced systematic surveys through the Royal Australian Ornithologist's Union's Australian Bird Count and the COG Atlas. For more than 30 years David has conducted surveys of Canberra's local birds. He is a prolific eBird-er, contributing at least one checklist a day, mainly from the western Palerang area where he lives. Through this extensive work David was able to create COG's Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the ACT, yet another exhaustive list that he continues to maintain to this day.

During the 1990s David served as COG's secretary, and established the COG's email discussion list, which he maintains to this day. David is a regular leader of COG's birding field trips, focussing on travelling stock reserves, nature reserves, and other destinations in COG's area of interest. He also founded and remains the Convenor of the Canberra Birds Conservation Fund.

Some people might call David's dedication an obsession, but does anyone who ever gets sucked into COG approach birds with anything less than full vigour?

Acknowledgements

Nathan Finger and David McDonald

Future Field Trips

COG Trips

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

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

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

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

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

Be Covid safe on COG field trips:

Maintain social distancing of 1.5 metres

Maintain hand hygiene

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

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

Sunday 5 June – Mt Arawang

Description: Mt Arawang is part of Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve, between Tuggeranong and Weston Creek. We will walk around the base of the hill. It is an easy walk, mainly flat. Seventy species have been recorded in Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve, including 4 species of raptor, **Speckled Warbler**, **Restless Flycatcher**, and **Golden** and **Rufous Whistler**.

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

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

Meeting time: 9am.

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

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

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

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

Saturday 11 June – Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve -Superb Lyrebird surveys

Since the January 2003 bushfires Peter Fullagar and Chris Davey 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 to join them for a morning's survey. They are calling for expressions of interest to join them at 8.00am

at the Reserve car park to walk the trails and to record the location of calling birds. Depending on the trails walked the survey should take about three hours.

This outing will be a repeat of the very successful surveys conducted at this time of the year since 2004.

Register with Chris Davey (chris_davey@aapt.net.au) MOB 0418679 847, providing your name and mobile number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Wednesday 15 June, Birrigai Time Trail

Meet at 9am in the Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre carpark, for a walk across the grasslands to the Birrigai Time Trail.

Distance - about 3km

Difficulty - quite easy, on tracks

Bring - sturdy shoes, hat, sunscreen.

Register with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com) with your name and phone number, and name and number for an emergency contact.

Sunday 19 June – McQuoids Hill

Over 110 species have been seen at McQuoids Hill.

Meeting time and place : Meet at 9.00am. Entry to McQuoids Hill is on Kambah Pool Rd, across from the golf course.

Walking distance: 2km

Degree of difficulty: easy

End time (approx.): 11am

What to bring: water, sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hat

Register with Sandra on shirmax2931@gmail.com, with your name and contact number, plus name and contact number for an emergency contact.

Sunday 26 June – Yanununbeyan SCA

Description: The Yanununbeyan SCA is a very nice area of woodland near to Captains Flat. I propose to visit two sites within the SCA - one being Apple Box Flat and the other being the south end of Woolcara Lane, near the junction with Spring Creek Trail. Note that Woolcara Lane is unsealed, narrow and a little uneven in places. The road is best suited to AWDs/4WDs. We may see a good range of woodland birds, including **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Scarlet Robin**. As it is mid-winter, please bring warm clothes. Please bring some morning tea.

Meeting time and place: We will meet at 730am at the Spotlight Car Park in Queanbeyan for carpooling.

Name of leader and contact details: To participate, please register with David Dedenczuk by email on david.dedenczuk@gmail.com or text to 0417 222 154 – please include your name, mobile number, and emergency contact name and number.

Details of July field trips will appear on the website in early June.



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Field Trip Reports

Farrer Ridge, 8 May 2022

Nine COG members joined me for a walk around Farrer Ridge. Starting from Athllon Drive, we walked to the summit for fantastic views of the Tuggeranong Valley. WE then walked down to the Farrer side of the reserve, past the water reservoir and back to Sulwood Drive. The birds were a little quiet, but we had good views of a male **Superb Parrot** next to the track, and managed to find two elusive **Australasian Grebes** on the dam.

Sandra Henderson

Brooks Creek TSR - 15 May 2022

On 15 May 2022, David McDonald led a small party of six COG members to the little known Brooks Creek travelling stock reserve (TSR) on Shingle Hill Way south east of Gundaroo. David began proceedings by providing the party with a snapshot of the natural and human history of the district. The weather was dreary, with much cloud and rain. Nonetheless, spirits were high as the party ascended the gentle slope into the remnant woodland hotspot north of the TSR. The party saw and heard a good variety (22 species) of woodland birds, including thornbill species, both local pardalote species, **Golden Whistlers** and **Scarlet Robins**. There were multiple platelets scratched into the leaf litter on the woodland floor, and the party flushed several quail. These birds may have been **Painted Buttonquail**, but were too quick to take wing to allow any positive identification. The party met the informative and helpful adjacent property owner, who provided further valuable local intelligence. When descending into the TSR hotspot itself, the party beheld a group of **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos** flying overhead - a final highlight to an intriguing and rewarding morning.

David Dedenczuk

Mulligans Flat, Wednesday Walk, 18 May 2022

16 COG members explored Mulligans Flat, which was our first group visit there for a couple of years. The Big Dam proved quite disappointing, but we did manage to find a **single Chestnut Teal**, both **Hoary-headed** and **Australasian Grebes**, and several **Silver Gulls**. A walk back past the dams near the woolshed provided a few woodland species, including a **White-throated Treecreeper** and a **Golden Whistler**. The highlight for most was a single **Tawny Frogmouth** spotted by Lindell, just before the exit gate.

Sandra Henderson

Australian National Botanic Gardens, 21 May 2022

Anthony Overs led the regular beginners' walk with six participants. **Gang-gang Cockatoos** started to appear before we left the carpark, and 12 were seen in total. The usual **Eastern Spinebills** and **New Holland Honeyeaters** put in plenty of appearances, and three **Satin Bowerbirds**, including a blue-black male at his bower, were seen and admired.

Sandra Henderson



Tawny Frogmouth

Victor Braguine

New Places: May 2022

Sandra Henderson

Top Naas Road

Where is it: almost immediately after crossing over the new bridge on Naas Rd (over the Gudgenby River), turn left onto Top Naas Rd.

Some years ago I turned onto this road, drove a few hundred metres and turned around. It has now become a birding hotspot, so I have visited twice in May. On the first occasion I parked near the first stock yards, and walked about 2.5km to the grid, which marks the end of the first property along the road. Along the way the landholder stopped and chatted, and told me about some of the birds around the homestead. The best birds seen on this first visit were a **Little Buttonquail** (flushed from roadside, perhaps because I was walking not driving at that stage), seven **Black-shouldered Kites** and a group of 19 **Eastern Rosellas**. On the second visit I drove all the way to the Caloola Farm entry and made my way slowly back, stopping at several places to walk a short distance. Four **Jacky Winters** were a highlight, as were a male **Hooded Robin**, a number of **Flame Robins**, and a family of **Black-shouldered Kites**, with three begging young. KB has confirmed this was a second brood for the pair for the season.

If you visit, please keep to the road (do not walk into paddocks on either side – they are all private property).



Hooded Robin, Jacky Winter, Southern Whiteface

Sandra Henderson

Finley Lake

I travel regularly to Deniliquin, but have not gone via Finley in the past. The lake there will certainly ensure I travel that way much more often!

It is a large lake, on the main road into town, so not difficult to find. There is a path around the lake, frequented by locals and visitors from the neighbouring caravan park. I spent less than an hour walking around the lake, but managed 34 species. These included two **Great Crested Grebes**, which are apparently not common there, but had been reported by someone else a few weeks earlier. I counted nearly 40 **Black Swans**, and a local assured me they are always there. I saw a single **Chestnut Teal** in a large group of ducks which stayed well away from shore, and a group of **Little Black Cormorants** were fishing as a pack.

Blighty

On the way from Deniliquin to Finley I passed through a tiny settlement called Blighty. With the Mulwala Canal on one side of the road, and two **Pied Butcherbirds** on the other side, it seemed like a good place to stop. I stopped either side of the main part of the settlement. The Canal, a major water supply channel, had a couple of **Little Pied Cormorants** as well as **Pacific Black Ducks** and **Australian Wood Ducks** on the water, and a group of **Straw-necked Ibis** wandering along the bank.

Tuggeranong Creek (Richardson)

Where: I parked at the Mulga Scouts hall on Cliff Crescent and walked over to the creek. It is possible to walk both sides of the creek, using pedestrian bridges near the Calwell shops and at Ashley Drive, I had been tipped off about Swift Parrots (which I didn't find) in the flowering eucalypts which are on the Tuggeranong Homestead and suburb sides of the creek. There were dozens of **Rainbow Lorikeets** and **Red Wattlebirds** taking advantage of the flowering. A number of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** were in the cement drain which is the Tuggeranong Creek, drinking from the creek, and many **Little Corellas** along the fenceline.

Woodland Surveys – autumn 2022 survey round

compiled by Jenny Bounds

The mild and higher rainfall spring/summer 2021/22 conditions continued into the autumn. Alison Rowell covered the surveys at Mt Ainslie/Campbell Park and Jerrabomberra West NR, due to medical related absences of the site coordinators – thank you Alison.

Hall/Gold Creek

Alison Rowell surveyed the seven sites in fine mild weather on 10 April. 18 species were seen in the sites and a further 13 were recorded outside/between the sites. Small groups of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** flew through late in the morning, and one mixed feeding flock of small birds was seen containing **Grey Fantail**, **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Brown Thornbills**. Other small woodland birds included **Buff-rumped Thornbill**, **Striated Pardalote**, **Superb Fairy-wren**, **Golden Whistler** and **Red-browed Finches** (uncommon on this site). **Laughing Kookaburras** and **Grey Butcherbirds** were seen or heard in several areas and **Noisy Friarbirds** were still present. The surprise of the survey was flushing a **Buff-banded Rail** from a small pool on a drainage line. The pool was only 1 x 2 metres and without edge vegetation apart from overhanging tussocks. The bird was fairly casual, stopping to have good look at Alison before walking off into a eucalypt thicket.

Mulligans Flat NR

In Jenny Bounds' medically enforced absence, Jack Holland organised the survey team on Sunday 27 March. The weather was cool to mild and a shower or two around northside. 48 species were recorded, a reasonable total, above average for autumn survey. Some spring migrants were still around, a few **Grey Fantails** moving through, a couple of **Rufous Whistlers**, **Noisy Friarbirds**, **White-throated Gerygones** and an **Olive-backed Oriole** on the west ridge. **Spotted Pardalotes** were on the move, 20 recorded on one of the circuits. **Scarlet Robins** were recorded at 3 sites, a number of **Superb Parrots** were around (one group of 22), **Golden Whistler** at two sites, **Grey Shrike-thrush** at two sites and a pair of the resident **Grey Currawongs**. A highlight was an **Aust. Hobby** at site 4. An interesting observation on the west ridge circuit was a **Brown Falcon** carrying a mouse. There were no small migratory honeyeaters recorded. Thank you very much to Jack and the team. Hopefully Jenny will be back for June survey with the ginger cake!

Gooroo North NR

Nicki Taws did the surveys on 11 April, a fine, sunny and relatively mild morning. The grass was long, dense and wet but fortunately Gooroo is relatively free of the weeds (fleabane, thistles etc) that infest other woodland sites. A total of 37 species was recorded, with no waterbirds nor any raptors seen. Highlights included 8 **Superb Parrots** perched in the dead tree at site 4, **Scarlet Robin** recorded at four sites, **Varied Sittella** at two sites, a **Western Gerygone** calling, **Mistletoebird** at one site, and a couple of large mixed feeding flocks of **Buff-rumped**, **Yellow-**



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rumped and Striated Thornbills, Weebills, both Pardalotes, Silvereyes, Speckled Warbler, Golden Whistler and Scarlet Robins. Although it was good conditions for honeyeater migration, Gooroo is rarely on the flight path, and it was only right at the end of the survey that a small flock of Yellow-faced and White-naped Honeyeaters flitted through. Apart from that, the only other honeyeaters were 1 Red Wattlebird and 1 Brown-headed Honeyeater. Overall, bird abundance was high, with many Rosellas and the small birds at most sites, seeming to indicate a good breeding season.

Gooroo South NR

Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley did the autumn survey in the south of the reserve in the first week of April. 50 species were recorded over the two days, although just 28 of these were found during 10 minute counts. Sunday 3rd April was mostly grey, mild and with little wind. Rather few species were recorded during surveys with highlights being a Brown Goshawk flushed from site 1, 14 Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes and 4 Olive-backed Orioles moving together, also at site 1, and a Mistletoebird at site 7. Other summer migrants were almost absent with just a couple of White-throated Gerygones heard. Walking between sites proved a lot more productive with several sizeable mixed flocks encountered which included species as Varied Sittella, Golden Whistler, White-eared Honeyeater, Southern Whiteface and Speckled Warbler. The most numerous species in the flocks were Grey Fantails, Buff-rumped and Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Silvereyes and Spotted Pardalotes. Some of the many fleabanes were festooned with Silvereyes, a closer look revealed heavy aphid infestations on the plants.

Wednesday 6th April was also grey, mild and mostly still. The four northern sites were surveyed, unfortunately these are all dominated by Noisy Miners and mainly Miners, Magpies and Parrots were recorded during 10 minute counts. One highlight was a Black-shouldered Kite flying over site 5. Superb Parrots were pleasingly frequent. Walking between sites was fairly quiet with very few small birds encountered and no mixed flocks. Most interesting was a Long-billed Corella seen with several Little Corellas, and a Golden-headed Cisticola seen and heard in the dense Phalaris in the paddock nearest the car park, possibly a first record for the reserve.

Mt Majura NR

Kathy Walter, John Goldie, Duncan McCaskill, with observer Peter Miller, conducted the surveys over 31 March & a cold, windy 1 April. A total of 32 species overall, including a few mixed flocks of small birds. These included Speckled Warblers, good numbers of Grey Fantail, Brown, Buff-rumped, Yellow and Striated Thornbills, Silvereyes and a single Superb Fairy-wren. One Golden Whistler and a single White-eared Honeyeater showed themselves. Common Bronzewings were in most of the northern sites and in good numbers. Swift Parrots were seen 200 metres from the site near the Hackett tanks, so just missed out being recorded in the survey count.

Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park

Alison Rowell did the survey in cool calm weather with light cloud on 22 April. Rabbits were active on most subsites, ground layer biomass was high and St John's Wort was common. 16 species were seen within the sites and another 6 were seen outside/between sites. Superb Parrots were seen at one site, White-winged Choughs and Common Bronzewings at two sites. Numbers of small woodland birds were low and included Grey Fantail, Superb Fairy-wren, Weebill, Grey Shrike-thrush and Striated Pardalote. No small honeyeaters



Swift Parrot

Victor Braguine

were recorded. **Noisy Miners** were seen at most sites, chasing smaller birds in several cases, and a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** was around late in the morning.

Newline

Sue Lashko surveyed on Saturday 2 April under cool and cloudy conditions. The 35 species recorded was amongst the lowest totals for an autumn survey, and birds were generally quiet, except for **Parrots** and **Cockatoos**. Just a few migrants remained, including **Black-faced Cuckooshrike**, **Grey Fantail** and **Noisy Friarbird**. **Nankeen Kestrel** and **Collared Sparrowhawk** were the only two raptors seen. Apart from plenty of **Superb Fairy-wrens**, there were few small birds, just one **Speckled Warbler** and a few **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** and **White-browed Scrubwren**, but no finches.

Jerrabomberra West NR

Alison Rowell had a long walk in due to wet ground conditions, to survey the seven sites in fine, mild weather on 24 April. The vegetation structure had changed considerably since the sites were set up in 2005 by Alison and Jenny Bounds, due to increased regeneration of eucalypts. 21 species were seen in the sites and a further 14 species outside/between sites. **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Brown Goshawk** and three **Black-shouldered Kites** were present, and small flocks of honeyeaters flew through from mid-morning. **Noisy Miners** were seen at three sites. **Dusky Woodswallows** were at two sites, both in Blakelys Red Gum woodland where they occur seasonally; rather late to be still around. Other small woodland birds recorded were **Striated Pardalote**, **Spotted Pardalote**, **Weebill**, **Willie Wagtail**, **Grey Fantail**, **Superb Fairy-wren**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, **Brown Thornbill** and two **White-plumed Honeyeaters** (unusual for this site). A highlight was a **Flame Robin** and a flock of **Little Ravens** near the woodland/grassland edge. 34 species total.

Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson surveyed over two days, Wednesday 30 and Thursday 31 March, as time permitted. It was very quiet, with the most productive sites producing only 6 species each. There was a little evidence of the honeyeater migration, with one flock of 25 **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** flying through at 8:40am and single birds in a couple of sites. The morning was saved by a very small, mixed feeding flock at site 1, comprising **Silvereyes**, **Grey Fantails**, **Weebills** and a **Rufous Whistler**. It was nice to see two **Speckled Warblers** at site 6. In all, 16 species were observed in sites, and a further 5 in between, although not much time was devoted to observing between sites. Total species number is well down on the average autumn count for Tuggeranong Hill.

Naas Sites

Julie McGuiness did the woodland survey on this rural lease south of Tharwa on 26th March, on a cool to warm, calm and clear morning. As with the previous three surveys, the grassy understorey was still very prolific: the thick green grassy and weedy plants covering every inch of the sites and being approx. 20-80cm high. Species diversity and species numbers were much lower than expected with a total of only 19 species observed, mostly common residents. No **Honeyeaters** besides the resident **Noisy Miners**, neither summer migrants nor evidence of late season breeding were seen. The only species of note was a single **Jacky Winter**, again a regular resident at this site. A couple of large flocks of **Eastern Rosellas**, one with over 30 birds, was seen. It was a day for butterfly diversity rather than birds.



Grey Fantail

Geoffrey Dabb



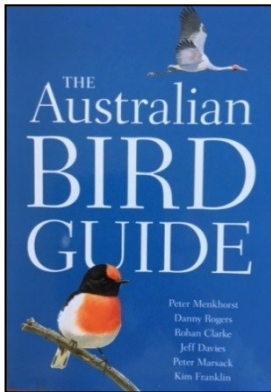
Willie Wagtail

David Cook

Publications for Sale

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

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



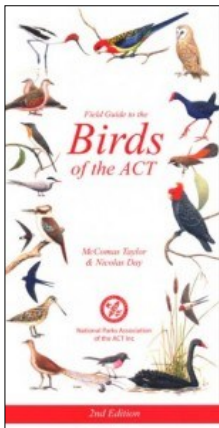
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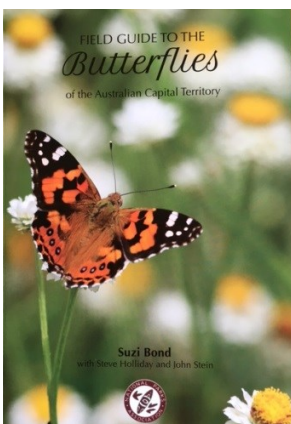


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Wednesday 29 June 2022

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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.

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