



# Gang-gang

**FEBRUARY 2023**

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

## FEBRUARY MEETING

**Wednesday 8 February 2023**

**7.30 pm**

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

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

The first presentation “**Extreme Birding on Christmas and Cocos Islands**” will be by Sue Beatty on her recent trip to these islands, with the Cocos part probably to be deferred to the March meeting.

The main speaker will be **Dr Janet Gardner** who will be updating COG on her very important studies in her presentation entitled “**Bush birds and climate change: what does the future hold?**”

We are all aware of the increasingly frequent extreme weather events such as heatwaves that are a signal of contemporary climate change and that harm birds and other wildlife. However, we know little about how temperature extremes affect the survival of natural populations. This makes it difficult to predict how they will

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

The weather over the 8 weeks from 30 November 2022 to 24 January 2023 inclusive covered by this column remained wet for the first half of December, but then conditions became increasingly drier and particularly from around Christmas Day warmed up considerably. It has remained so since, but as shown below by that time bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (AoI) had already been determined by the very wet spring. This is underlined by the continuing nil or few reports of sightings of the later arriving inland spring migrants. Particularly in January bird (but not birder!) variety seems to have been rather low, with again relatively few “Unusual” birds reported.

The standout among these was the **Brush Bronzewing** first reported by Patrick Cox at the ANBG on 2 December. He heard its call but only briefly saw the bird

*Continued Page 2*



*Julian Robinson*

**Brush Bronzewing**

**Everyone welcome**

respond to ongoing climate change, and what we might do to manage this. In this talk Janet will describe how they used bird banding data collected over decades to show how climate affects mortality in populations of bush birds in semi-arid sites in NSW, and how they used this information to project survival patterns to the end of the century. She will also talk about their detailed study of colour-banded Jacky Winters that allowed them to understand how individual birds respond to temperature extremes and how that translates to the survival patterns they observed.

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

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from behind as it flew past. This unexpected sighting for a species that locally is generally considered to be restricted to well-watered habitats such as those of the upper Cotter catchment, was not followed up until 10 December when a male was first photographed at the ANBG. This bird was subsequently found and photographed by many observers up to 15 December but has not been reported from there since.

This poses the question, to where has this bird gone, similar to the **Pacific Baza**, **Greater Bluebonnet** and **Turquoise Parrot** that were the subject of similar intense focus earlier in 2022? However, since then the **Brush Bronzewing** has been reported from six different locations in its more normal habitat in the Brindabella/Namadgi NPs, perhaps due to the above observers having been alerted to keeping ear/eye out for them.

The only other “Unusual” species to receive anywhere near the same attention over the period were the **Australian Shelducks** present at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR for just the single day on 30 December (one was also reported flying over there on 10 January). Most prominent and photographed was the female, though several observers also reported a male present. In this case the main interest was their presence in the ACT rather than the sites to the E and NE from where they are regularly reported (see below).

Of the usually later arriving inland spring/summer migrants there were no reports during the period of the **Brown Songlark**, or of the **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallows**. As the closest reports have been from many km away, it is safe to predict there will not be any sightings of them in the COG Aol this spring/summer, despite that the inland is drying, given that there are usually few reports of these 3 species after the end of January.

Sightings of the **Horsfield’s Bushlark** have been at just 2 locations in December including at the Parkwood Road Wallaroo, with all except one over the NSW border and with, under perfect conditions, on 28 December Michael Lenz reporting 8 birds there, mainly identified by song. Michael also reported a single bird by call at the West Belconnen Pond on 13 January, the only sighting and location so far in 2023.

During the period **Rufous Songlarks** were reported from only 2 locations (Curtin Horse Paddocks and the Yankee Hat car park and track) during December, but somewhat surprisingly from 5 locations (all in the S half of the ACT) so far in January. The **White-winged Triller** was reported from 6 locations in December, but again surprisingly from 11 locations so far in January. Perhaps both show that a few more birds moved in as the inland was drying up?

Of the other less common spring/summer migrants the **Common Cicadabird** was reported from 7 locations in December, including heard at Mulligans Flat on 18 December while still on passage through. So far in January it has been reported from an amazing 14 locations, most in the



Rose Robin

*Victor Baguine*

Brindabella/Namadgi NPs, but also at three locations around Tallaganda NP/SF. The **Channel-billed Cuckoo** was reported from 5 locations, all in the northern half of Canberra, up to 29 December, but there have been no reports of them so far in 2023. The **Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo** and **Pallid Cuckoo** were reported from 7 locations each during December, and from another 5 and 3 locations, respectively, so far in January.

The **White-throated Needletail** has been reported only at 2 locations during the period, with 3 birds reported at Mt Taylor NR on 13 January and 11 birds at Bracks Hole Rd on 18 January. The related **Fork-tailed Swift** has also been reported from 2 locations so far, with a single bird over Holt on 11 January and 6 birds over O'Malley on 15 January.

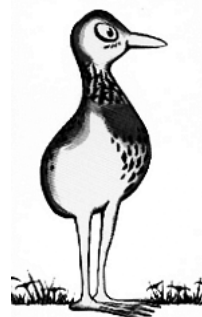
So until early April please keep a lookout for the last two species, especially (but not exclusively) when there are storm clouds around. During February please also keep a lookout for the last of the other above-mentioned species.

Of the species that return to the mountains and higher country after spending autumn/winter in Canberra and its surrounds, there have been a few reports from urban and peri-urban locations of the **White-eared Honeyeater** and the **Golden Whistler** (5 and 1, respectively), so far in January. There were still reports of **Scarlet Robins** from 4 such locations during January, but none of the **Flame** or **Rose Robin**. An immature or female Pink Robin was observed at the North Black Range Firetrail in the Tallaganda NP on 7 January, the first sighting of this species in the COG Aol since it was last seen at the ANBG on 26 July 2019. There were no reports of the inland species, the **Red-capped Robin**, anywhere in the COG Aol during the period.

There was still a report of a **Crescent Honeyeater** (at the ANBG on 16 December) during the period, but the only report of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** was one from the Gigerline NR on 19 January. So, during February please keep an eye out for any of the above species in the urban or peri-urban areas of Canberra.

Apart from the **Brush Bronzewing** and **Australian Shelduck** mentioned above (mainly because of their being in unexpected locations) there have again been few other "Unusual" species reported. There have been no reports of **Plumed Whistling Ducks** or **Freckled Ducks** during the period. In addition to those reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR mentioned above, **Australian Shelducks** were reported from 7 other locations to the E and NE of Canberra during December, and from 9 such locations so far in January. Compared with November numbers seem to be on the increase, with 150 seen on the SW corner of Lake George on 11 January, as well as 100 at the Wollogorang Lagoon and 60 in Bungendore, on 8 and 11 January, respectively.

In contrast **Blue-billed Duck** numbers seem to be on the decline as they were reported from just 2 locations in December, and a single bird just from one of these (the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR) up to 3 January. Apart from the Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary **Musk Ducks** were reported from 7 locations in December, with up to 5 birds reported from 8 locations so far in January. Up to 7 **Great-crested Grebe** were reported only from the Cotter Dam in December, from where up to 10 birds and up to 6 young chicks were reported by many observers in January.



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Good birding, good food

## 2023 tours

**Gulf of Carpentaria**  
16 June to 3 July 2023

**Plains-wanderer Weekends**  
7/8 & 21/22 October 2023  
4/5 & 18/19 November 2023

## 2024 tours

**Kutini - Payamu  
(Iron Range NP) Wet Season**  
4 to 10 January 2024  
Cairns to Lockhart River

**Far North Queensland**  
1 to 14 May 2024  
Part 1: Atherton Tablelands,  
Part 2: Musgrave, Archer River  
Kutini – Payamu (Iron Range NP)

**Top End**  
Late June/July 2024  
Darwin, Kakadu NP, Pine Creek,  
Katherine, Victoria River, Timber  
Creek, Kununurra.  
Optional Black Grasswren air  
charter to Mitchell Plateau

Please contact Patricia Maher for  
information & itineraries.

[www.philipmaher.com](http://www.philipmaher.com)

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In contrast to November when **Stubble Quail** were reported from only 3 locations, they were reported from 34 locations during December, and from 28 locations so far in January. **Brown Quail** were reported from 24 locations in December, and 20 so far in January. **Painted Button-quail** were reported from 6 locations in December, as well as another 8 locations so far in January, but again there were no reports of **Little Button-quail**, **White-headed Pigeon** or **Diamond Doves** during the period. Up to 2 **Peaceful Doves** were reported by a number of observers from the Cotter Rd over the period, with reports also from One Tree Hill and the Coombs Pond in January.

**Spotless Crakes** were reported from 5 locations in December, and from 6 locations so far in January. A single **Baillon's Crake** was reported only from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR in January, from where up to 2 **Australian Spotted Crakes** were also reported in December, as well as one from the Jerrabomberra Creek at Symonston on 31 December. **Lewin's Rails** were reported (mainly aural) from 2 locations in December, and from 4 locations so far in January, including being photographed at the Edgeworth Pond on 20 January. **Buff-banded Rails** were reported from only 2 locations in December and from 4 locations so far in January.

No **Banded Lapwings**, **Red-necked Avocets**, **Red-necked Stints** or **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** were reported during the period. The **Common Sandpiper** was recorded only from the northern end of Lake Tuggeranong including the Village Creek gross pollutant trap up to 4 January, with then a gap until it was seen there again on 24 January. No **Caspian** or **Whiskered Terns**, **Australian Little Bittern** or **Little Egrets** were reported during the period, but an **Intermediate Egret** was photographed by a number of observers at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 19 January.

The **Barn Owl** was reported from 2 locations (the Brindabella NP and Jeir) during December, and also from 2 locations (Uriarra Rd Stromlo and Mulligans Flat NR) so far in January. Numbers of the **Black-shouldered Kite** continued to drop in December, reported from just 2 locations (Top Naas Rd and Mulanggari grasslands, what a contrast after the extensive breeding season in 2022), but increased again to 8 locations so far in January. However, numbers of the **Nankeen Kestrel** seem to be holding, reported from around 55 locations in December (same as November) and around 50 so far in January. There were no reports of the **Spotted Harrier**, **Pacific Baza** (where has it gone?) or **Black Falcon** during the period. A **Grey Goshawk** was reported soaring briefly over the top of the hill at Bluetts Block then drifting away to the west on 5 January, and a single **Black Kite** was reported from the Hume Highway at Yarra (5 km W of Goulburn) on 14 January.

An **Azure Kingfisher** was reported from the Cotter Bend by a number of observers from 5-23 January. However, no **Glossy Black-Cockatoos**, **Turquoise Parrots**, **Greater Bluebonnet** (again to where have they gone?), **Little** or **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** were reported over the period. A tame **Cockatiel**, deemed most likely an aviary escapee, was reported by three observers on either side of the Commonwealth Ave bridge between 6-18 January. **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from Kambah and Garran in December, and 2 from Hughes on 2 January.

No **Singing Honeyeaters** or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period, but a **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** was heard calling repeatedly at the Nelanglo TSR on 9 January. A **Scarlet Honeyeater** was heard at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR 5 December and also at nearby Pialligo on 19 December, and two were heard at Carwoola on 1 January. Five and then separately 4 **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** were reported from Commonwealth Park on 15 December, with the former noting it included two yellow-faced immatures (so likely from the nearby Acton Park breeding event in October?). Four birds were also reported from the ANU on 6 January.

Two **White-fronted Chats** were reported from the Coombs and Edgeworth Ponds on 3 and 12 December, respectively, with a gap in reporting before 1 bird was observed at the latter on 20 January, and one also at the North Weston Ponds on 19 January. However, there were no **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes**, **Zebra Finches** or **Tawny Grassbirds** reported during the period.

Of the birds I will continue to ask readers to keep a special lookout for in 2023, there were again many reports of up to 4 **Jacky Winters** from the Glendale Depot in December. Most exciting was the presence of two young photographed in their exquisite nest, with an adult coming in with food, on the COG outing there on 4 December. This breeding event is known to have been successful as the cute, streaked fledglings/juveniles were later photographed from 24 December, and with up to 4 birds recorded there to 13 January. Disappointingly the only other report of **Jacky Winters** during the period was of 2 birds at the Gambles TSR near Sutton on 20 December, but they appeared to be nest building (they could be seen carrying nesting material in the photos).



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Also disappointing were the reports of 1-2 **Hooded Robins** only at the Top Naas Rd on 21 and 28 December. Between 8-11 January up to 3 birds including an immature male were photographed at Naas Rd at Apollo Rd, with a male reported from Bracks Hole Rd on 20 January being the only other sighting so far in 2023.

In December **Restless Flycatchers** were reported from 4 locations, including 1-2 birds at the Glendale Depot late in the month, 3 birds at Mullion and one at nearby Mountain Creek Road, both on 21 December. However, the most important sightings were at the Nelanglo TSR where up to five birds were reported, including Tony Willis/David Clark reporting a nest with 3 young about to fledge being fed by 2 parents on 3 December. So far in 2023 the **Restless Flycatcher** has only been reported from these same four locations, with single birds at the Glendale Depot up to 11 January, 2 birds at Mullion on 4 January and one on Mountain Creek Road on 6 January, and again importantly 2 birds from the Nelanglo TSR on 9 and 17 January, with on the former date Michael Lenz noting the pair foraging together; possibly indicating that they had young in the nest.

So while the reports of breeding for these three species is welcome, that they have each only been reported from a maximum of 4 sites is cause for continuing concern. Apart from the **Great-crested Grebe** breeding reports above, other interesting breeding observations include:

- I have been very fortunate in having been able to observe the full breeding cycle for the pair of **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** that arrived, rapidly built and then from early November were sitting on a typical shallow nest in a horizontal fork of a dead gum branch in my GBS site. By mid-December 3 chicks could be seen often huddled low together in the nest avoiding the strong winds at the time, as they did for a few days when they started to move out of it. They fledged on 23 December and while they were still around for at least another 3 weeks based on adult presence and calling they were not clearly heard and only one fledgling was ever seen being fed on one occasion. In the interim the nest fell out of the tree onto the public path below it on 27 December, so how they managed not to be blown out before is the big question, perhaps the weight of the 3 chicks managed to keep it secure until they left.
- In contrast the **Willie Wagtails** that built a nest very close by did not occupy it until early in December around 6 weeks after it was completed. Again, I was able to record the whole breeding event low above the public path and be amazed how quickly the two chicks grew once first seen in the nest on Christmas Day. On the afternoon of 29 December, they were huddled close together about 50 cm above the nest, and while still there early the next morning they were not seen again (or heard begging) even though they were still clearly present and being fed by the adults, with the birds staying around until at least 25 January.
- These are very different experiences compared with the very noisy **Pacific Koel**, **Australian Magpies** and **Pied Currawong** fledglings I more usually have around. In respect of the latter on 10 December Roman Soroka informed me that he also had a **Pied Currawong** with a beak abnormality that had been visiting their Chisholm garden since 2019. He believed it is a female, and despite having half of its upper mandible missing it had managed to raise two young every year since 2019. He had observed her feeding two young in their garden that day.

Mark Clayton responded to Roman's post on the COG chat line that he would think the beak is the result of an accident or something a bit more sinister on the part of a person with a dislike of currawongs. The female, despite the fact that she was raising a brood, looked very dishevelled (particularly at the back of its head and with her breast and belly feathers all sticking out like a skirt – see photo page 6), probably because she couldn't preen herself properly. This is very similar to my male which unfortunately was not seen again from about halfway through the fledgling feeding period.

- Anthony Overs has also had a very successful breeding season in and around his Hawker garden, with his posts on the COG chat line on 24 December and 7 January mentioning **Crested Pigeons**, **Eastern Spinebills**, **Red Wattlebirds**, **Superb Fairy-wrens**, **White-browed Scrub-wrens** and **Brown Thornbills** had all successfully raised young.
- On 16 January Neal Hardy asked on the COG chat line if anyone knew why young **Tawny Frogmouths** vocalise during the day? They had a surviving young bird with its parents, and the young one was markedly restless. Tawnies expert Stuart Rae clarified that young frogmouths mostly call when begging for food. This is a hoarse coughing sound, and it can be persistent. If that was what Neal was hearing that would be the reason. Other calls are soft, contact type, or anxious alarm calls. However, Stuart noted young frogmouths rarely call, and he had never heard them beg for food during the day. He wondered whether the adults might be having difficulty finding enough food this year because there is so much tall grass and weeds covering the ground. They cannot land on ground covered with such vegetation to catch food, and most of their food is collected from open ground covered with leaf and bark litter.

• Neal responded that the young was vocalising occasionally before, but certainly more that day. Quite a soft coughing sound, but persistent. It was quite restless, and moved often, mostly to its mother. Very interestingly John Goldie and Kathy Walter posted that they had a family (2 adults and a young bird) in their Watson yard. The young one was also fairly restless. One of them was making very soft churring sort of calls often throughout the day and on one occasion they heard a call like a soft motorbike running (like the 4th call on the Morcombe app).

• Last but not least it has been a very slow **Eastern Koel** breeding season so far with only 4 fledglings reported by 31 December (the lowest number for quite a few years), and only 26 by 24 January of which I am aware. This makes the sighting by Michael Lenz of a young **Eastern Koel** with quite a long tail, fed by **Red Wattlebirds**, in the middle of the wooded ridge in Glenoval Rd Lake Bathurst on 3 January all the more remarkable as it's a very rare rural breeding record.

It's difficult to know why the Koel breeding season has been so slow, given their early arrival and the very good conditions to date, certainly over the past two months adults have been very conspicuous in my local area of Chapman/Rivett, calling and seen flying around much longer than usual. All the known hosts so far have been **Red Wattlebirds**, despite in December a number of reports of adult Koels interacting/being harassed by **Magpie-larks**, a known host elsewhere but for which there is only the single record in Canberra.

In respect of roosts, in December **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** were still roosting at the two sites I have checked and in higher numbers than they were in December 2019. I am also seeing quite large flocks of over 50 birds in January. This provides further evidence that their year-round roosting in the western half of Weston Creek during the severe drought conditions in 2019 was not an outlier due to their staying around Canberra rather than moving to the mountains to breed in spring.

So please watch out for the last of the early departing spring/summer migrants mentioned above, for any urban/peri-urban altitudinal migrants, and in particular for any late summer breeding activity. Please also continue to keep a special look out in 2023 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*



**Pied Currawong**—beak abnormality

*Roman Soroka*



**Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike**

*Victor Braguine*

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## Committee News

The December barbecue was notable for the cold wind and the speed with which those present packed up and left when the rain came down. Fortunately, dessert had been served and eaten but sitting around to chat was not an option.

In contrast, it was wonderful to see so many members at the members' night, organised by Jack Holland on 11 January, indoors, in the calm of a fine summer evening. Thank you, Jack, for arranging the evening and thank you, speakers, for sharing your knowledge, experiences and future plans with us.

Committee members look forward to seeing you at Canberra Birds' activities in 2023. Jack is planning another series of interesting and informative monthly members' meetings and Sue Lashko has arranged outings for most weekends until the end of June (see <http://canberrabirds.org.au/category/trips/>). Sue would be happy to hear from anyone who wants to lead an outing, either to fill the remaining gaps in the current program or in the second half of the year.

The Canberra Birds (COG) committee met by Zoom on 19 January and has scheduled a half-day planning session on 11 February. One key discussion will be about membership numbers and ensuring that Canberra Birds (COG) will continue to be a strong voice for Canberra's birds up to and beyond our 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The committee is keen to fill the vacant treasurer's position.

### Recent Submissions

Canberra Birds has made a submission in relation to the draft ACT Planning Bill and commented on the draft recovery plan for the South-eastern Glossy Black-cockatoo.

Neil Hermes *President*

Alison Mackerras *Minutes Secretary*

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## ACT-Yass Birds on Farms project

Are you a passionate birdwatcher looking for an exciting new project? Do you want to help protect our vulnerable woodland birds? Do you want the chance to visit areas no birdwatcher has been to before?

Then the new 'ACT-Yass Birds on Farms' project by BirdLife Australia is for you!

The ACT-Yass Birds on Farms project is about the protection of woodland birds. Australia has around 195 bird species that rely on woodland habitat for their survival. Sadly, at least 51 of these bird taxa (species or subspecies) are now considered to be threatened or in significant decline. Habitat loss and fragmentation are the main reasons for the decline. In eastern Australia, over 80% of native woodland has been cleared for agricultural purposes. The remaining woodlands have become increasingly fragmented, and many remnants are now too small or in too poor a condition to support healthy bird populations.

The ACT-Yass Birds on Farms project will be working with rural landholders in the region to restore valuable habitat and protect the woodland birds. We will be starting a bird monitoring program on private rural properties, and we will be assisting interested landholders to develop habitat restoration plans to improve woodland habitat on their property.

We are in the process of organising regular bird surveys to learn more about the distribution of woodland birds on private rural land, and to be able to identify the differences in bird species' composition and abundance before and after habitat restoration.

The surveys will be conducted bi-annually in spring and autumn, and we will be using the standard 2-hectare, 20-minute survey technique. We will make sure that the surveys will not overlap with any existing surveys undertaken by COG. The first survey period will be from 15-30 April 2023.

The project works with rural properties in the ACT and NSW. The project area is shaped like a triangle with Canberra in the south, Boorowa in the northwest corner and Crookwell in the northeast corner. Landholders in this area can volunteer to have their property surveyed and opportunities to conduct bird surveys will increase over time when more landholders are participating in the project. Volunteers can nominate how far they are willing to travel within the project area.

We are currently looking for enthusiastic birdwatchers who would like to help us with the bird surveys. It will be fantastic if you are able to conduct regular surveys, but we understand that people have other commitments, and we will also be creating a pool of volunteers that can help us with the occasional survey.

If this sounds like a project you would be interested in or you would like more information, please [contact](#) Margot Oorebeek at [bof-act-yass@birdlife.org.au](mailto:bof-act-yass@birdlife.org.au). Alternatively, visit [Birds on Farms - BirdLife Australia](#).



The eight card designs:

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

### Canberra Birds 8-pack of greeting cards

Stock up on greeting cards, and be ready for all occasions!

Each fun and vibrant card pairs a different bird species with an iconic Canberra location. The cards are drawn by local cartoonist **Stuart McMillen**, a resident of Gorman Arts Centre, Braddon.

Greeting cards **\$6 each** or **8-packs for \$40**.

Shop directly via  
[stuartmcmillen.com/shop](http://stuartmcmillen.com/shop)



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# Future Field Trips

## COG Trips

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

"I declare that I am capable of undertaking the trip having discussed with the Trip Leader any limitations I have (e.g. medications, physical), assessed the risks to myself and my property, and ensured that I am adequately equipped. I will follow the instructions of the Field Trip Leader, and advise them before moving away from the group."

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

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

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

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

### Sunday 5 February – Mulligans Flat NR, Border Track

Note: This is not the Centenary Track which is in North Mulligans. The track follows the NSW border and begins at the Duke Road car park in NSW. The walk is about 5 km of medium difficulty, with three up and down walks returning through three gullies. Of the 83 species recorded the highlights include **Scarlet Robin, Grey Currawong, Varied Sitella** and **Common Bronzewing**.

**Meeting place:** Meet in the main carpark for North Mulligans on Mulligans Flat Road past the last roundabout between Bonner and Forde on the left-hand side. We will carpool, and go to Duke Road carpark.

**Meeting time:** 8:00 am. Walking distance: 5.4 kms. End time (approx.): 11:30am

**What to bring:** Water and morning tea, sunscreen, hat and sturdy shoes.

**Please register with the leader, Bill Graham** by email to [graham.br63@grapevine.com.au](mailto:graham.br63@grapevine.com.au), providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Register before 7pm on Friday 27 January 2023. Numbers will be limited to 15.

### Friday 10 to Wednesday 15 February – Capertee National Park

Capertee National Park is situated NNW of the Blue Mountains near Lithgow. We will do plenty of exploring around the National Park and areas near Glen Alice and Glen Davis. We will camp at Capertee campground which is pleasantly situated along a Casuarina-lined river. Target species for the trip will be **Black-chinned Honeyeaters, Rock Warbler, Plum-headed Finch, Diamond Firetail, Turquoise Parrot, Barn Owl, Barking Owl** and Squirrel Glider among others. Numbers limited. To book for this trip and receive further information please contact Kathy and John on [walter.goldie@gmail.com](mailto:walter.goldie@gmail.com)

### Sunday 12 February – Molonglo Reach boat trip

**Description:** This outing/cruise will be on the upper parts of Lake Burley Griffin (East Basin) and the adjacent Molonglo Reach, where late summer/early autumn is historically the peak time for breeding of darters as well as three species of cormorant there. The area also has a variety of water birds, and a range of land birds can be seen on the banks.

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We will again be travelling in the electric boat “MV Gull” which allows both a quiet approach as well as access to areas difficult to get to from the land.

**Meeting time:** The boat will depart at 8:00 am and the trip will last about 2 hours and will cost \$20, payable in cash on boarding.

**Meeting place: Kingston Boat Harbour at Trevillian Quay.** Participants will need to leave their cars in Eastlake Parade, where there is free all-day weekend street parking, or in the Glass Works/Bus Depot Markets car park and walk across Eastlake Parade and down Trevillian Quay. Once you have crossed the canal keep going straight ahead for around 50 m till you reach a gap between the buildings. Turn right and Wharf 6 and the boat should be clearly visible after 20 m once when you reach the harbour.

**Name of leader and contact details:** To participate, please contact Jack Holland by email on [jandaholland@bigpond.com](mailto:jandaholland@bigpond.com) – please include your mobile and your emergency contact name and number. There will be a maximum of 20 passengers. Jack Holland

### Wednesday 15 February - Mulligans Flat

In a break with usual tradition, we will hold an evening walk, both to escape the heat of mid-February, and in an attempt to see or hear **Bush Stone-Curlews, Southern Boobooks, Owlet-nightjars** and other night species. **Meet** at the carpark spaces on Eric Wright St in Forde at 7pm. I expect the walk to take 2-3 hours.

Walking will be on tracks.

**Please bring** a torch (headlamp or normal torch). If you have a small portable spotlight that may be useful if we find birds/animals. Wear sturdy shoes, and insect repellent may be useful.

**Numbers will be strictly limited** – I will accept registrations from the first 16 people to contact me. Please provide your name and mobile number, and name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Sandra Henderson [shirmax2931@gmail.com](mailto:shirmax2931@gmail.com)

### Sunday 19 February - Wanna Wanna Nature Reserve, Carwoola

**Description:** This well-hidden, small reserve is the place I’ve had my best ever views of **Painted Button-quail**, so we’ll obviously keep these in mind. We’ll be looking for small bush birds, and there may be a few waterbirds on a dam visible from the perimeter.

**Meeting time and place:** Meet at 8am at Pony Place at Carwoola. To get there, travel through Queanbeyan onto the Kings Highway. Turn right onto Captains Flat Road, then right again onto Clydesdale Rd after about 6km. Turn left onto Pony Place after about 1km and look for my car (white SUV) parked roadside. The nature reserve entrance is well hidden.

**Walking distance:** No more than 2km

**Degree of difficulty:** Medium. There are no tracks apart from the entry. The reserve is undulating and there are fallen limbs and rocks.

**End time** (approx.): 11am

**What to bring:** water, sturdy footwear, hat, sunscreen.

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

**Name of leader and contact details:** Sandra Henderson, [shirmax2931@gmail.com](mailto:shirmax2931@gmail.com)

### Sunday 26 February - Stromlo Forest West

Please register with the leader Kim ([kimlouiseFarley@gmail.com](mailto:kimlouiseFarley@gmail.com)) by COB Friday 24 February with your name and number, and the name and number of an emergency contact. When you register, Kim will send the meeting time and place for this morning walk at Stromlo West. Bring a hat and water.

**Kim Farley**

### Sunday 5 March - Casuarina Sands

**Description:** Walk along Murrumbidgee River towards Kambah Pool. Some uneven ground but relatively flat. Birding is usually good and can include **Dollarbird, Rainbow Bee-eater, Shining Bronze Cuckoo**.

**Meeting time and place:** Casuarina Sands carpark 8.30am

**Walking distance:** 3-4 km

**Degree of difficulty:** Easy/medium

**End time** (approx.): 11.00am

**What to bring:** Water, snack

Participants must **register** with the leader [prue.watters@gmail.com](mailto:prue.watters@gmail.com), providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

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**Numbers limited:** to 15  
Prue Watters

### Sunday 12 March - Red Rocks Gorge

**Description:** We will walk from Kambah Pool to a point along the track where we can look out at Red Rocks Gorge, then return along the same track.

**eBird hotspots:** <https://ebird.org/australia/hotspot/L4650287>

**Meeting time and place:** 8:30 am at the carpark at Kambah Pool.

**Walking distance:** 6.4 km

**Degree of difficulty:** Easy walking along a formed track, which is part of the Canberra Centenary Trail.

**End time (approx.):** 11 am

**What to bring:** Wear sturdy walking shoes and bring water, sunscreen and a snack, although there are no seats along this stretch of the river.

**Registration:** Essential. Please register with the leader, providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact, for each person that you wish to register, before 5pm, Friday 10 March 2023.

**Numbers limited:** 15 participants

**Name of leader and contact detail:** Lia Battison [liabattison@grapevine.com.au](mailto:liabattison@grapevine.com.au)

### Sunday 19 March - Googong Foreshores

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

**Meeting time and place:** Meet at the carpark for the foreshores at 8.30am. You need to get onto Old Cooma Road out of Queanbeyan. Once on Old Cooma Road, continue on to the left turn onto Googong Road. Follow Googong Road past the Googong township all the way to the Googong Foreshores carpark. This is just before the locked gate.

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

**Walking distance:** 2km

**Degree of difficulty:** easy

**End time (approx.):** 11am

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

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

**Name of leader and contact details:** Sandra Henderson, [shirmax2931@gmail.com](mailto:shirmax2931@gmail.com)

### Tuesday 21 to Friday 24 March – Ulladulla/Milton, NSW South Coast

Ulladulla/Milton is in the Shoalhaven district south of Nowra. Sites will include South Pacific Heathland Reserve, Morton National Park, Mt Bushwalker Track and Garrad Reserve. We will stay at Holiday Haven, Ulladulla. Target species for the trip will be **Glossy Black Cockatoo**, **Beautiful Firetail**, **Rockwarbler**, **Square-tailed Kite** and **Southern Emu-wren**. Numbers limited. To register for this trip and receive further information, please contact **Bill Graham** at [graham.br63@grapevine.com.au](mailto:graham.br63@grapevine.com.au)

**Please register asap as accommodation is likely to be in high demand and bookings will need to be made very soon.**

### Sunday 26 March – Tinderry Nature Reserve

The Tinderry Nature Reserve is a large reserve to the east of Michelago and to the south of Burra in NSW. It is well-frequented by bushwalkers visiting the great Tinderry peaks. I propose to visit a little-known and rarely-birded section of sub-alpine woodland in the Cassidy's Creek area, accessed from Burra Road.

The woodland has a range of good bush birds, including pardalotes, thornbills and honeyeaters.

**Meet** at 8.00am at the Kambah shops (corner Marconi and Drakeford). Please note that there is a wire fence to step over at the outset to this walk and which marks the boundary of the reserve. The fence is waist-high for me. As usual, bring water, hat, sunscreen and wear sturdy shoes.

**Register** with David ([david.dedenczuk@gmail.com](mailto:david.dedenczuk@gmail.com) or by text to 0417 222 154 by COB Friday 24 March 2023) with your name and number, and name and number of an emergency contact. Numbers limited to 12 as there is limited parking at the entrance to the reserve.



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## Field Trip Reports

### Sunday 4 December – Grassy Creek, Namadgi NP

Eight COG members left Canberra early on a fine December morning for the scenic drive down Boboyan Road to Grassy Creek at the very southern edge of the ACT. After arriving at the car parking area just before the NSW border, we proceeded westwards along the Grassy Creek Firetrail in clear, cool and still conditions - perfect for birding. This part of Namadgi National Park survived the 2019/2020 wildfires, as did the nearby historic homesteads. We saw and heard a good selection of woodland birds, including thornbills, honeyeaters and three species of cuckoo. At the conclusion of this first birding session, and after returning to the cars, we had seen some 40 species, including nine that were new for the Westerman's Homestead eBird hotspot list.

We walked the short distance over into NSW to have morning tea at the edge of the road and surveyed the birds there while we did so. Most NSW species were heard calling from the adjoining woodland, rather than seen - but could be counted for the Cooma Monaro LGA nonetheless. After morning tea, we undertook further bird surveying along the Carey's Firetrail to the east of Boboyan Road. A **Grey Shrikethrush** making an unusual trilling call was a highlight of this birding session. However, as the morning was well-advanced, birds were more subdued and less observable than they had been earlier in the morning, so we then returned to Canberra, having enjoyed the spectacular scenery, birding and history of our wonderful Namadgi National Park.

David Dedenczuk

### Sunday 11 December - Barren Grounds Nature Reserve

Most of our group carpooled from Canberra out to Barren Grounds NR, where we met with a couple more participants. In sunny, calm and mild weather conditions we started out on the Griffiths Loop Walk in an anticlockwise direction through open woodland and heath. The first few hundred metres is normally very birdy, but it was rather quiet for birds not just for this section but over the entire day, with most birds on our list heard or glimpsed only. We stopped for morning tea at the picturesque Stone Bridge creek crossing and then continued to the Saddleback Trig lookout, where we had lunch and clear views of the coastline to the south and the north. We then walked the rest of the loop track through forest habitat back to the carpark, with the Illawarra Lookout currently closed for repairs.

In total we recorded 28 species of bird, with the highlights being **Pilotbird**, **Cicadabird**, **Bassian Thrush** and **Olive Whistler**. While we dipped on many of the Barren Grounds specialties, it was nice to record **Shining Bronze Cuckoo**, **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo**, **Gang-gang Cockatoo**, **Brown Gerygone**, **Eastern Whipbird** and **Superb Lyrebird**. The most commonly-observed birds for the walk were **White-browed Scrub-wren** and **Grey Fantail**.

In addition to the birds, we also found some butterflies (mostly Common Brown, Macleay's Swallowtail and Varied Sword-grass Brown, but also Flame Sedge-skipper, Narrow-brand Grass-dart, Cabbage White, Caper White, Meadow Argus, Monarch, Yellow Admiral, Australian Painted Lady, Wonder Brown, Varied Dusky-blue and Common Grass-blue), some reptiles (Weasel Skink, Yellow-bellied Water Skink and Eastern Three-lined Skink), some orchids (Orange Blossom Orchid, Cow Orchid, Common Onion Orchid and a just finished Beard Orchid) and one species of native land slug (a few Royal Semi-slugs on the Gahnja).

Suzi Bond

### Wednesday 21 December - Queanbeyan Bushland Cemetery

Seventeen birders joined me for a wander around this interesting patch of bush. The site was much quieter at 8.30am than it had been when I arrived quite a bit earlier, but we eventually saw some nice birds. One of the more interesting was a pair of **Spotted Pardalotes** which I'd noticed a couple of days earlier nesting in a large pile of soil. We saw both birds enter the nest burrow, and Lindell managed a photo of one of them emerging. A male **Satin**



Spotted Pardalote

Lindell Emerton

**Bowerbird** showed quite nicely as it foraged in an area of thick shrubbery where I suspect it has a bower. While we walked around one of the areas currently being used for bush burials, an **Olive-backed Oriole** sat at the top of a tree, calling repeatedly, so everyone got a good view. There were nesting **Noisy Friarbirds** in the area, and we saw one of them at a partially constructed nest. Towards the end of the track we saw a male **Gang-gang Cockatoo**, which was still around as we finished up.

Sandra Henderson

### Sunday 15 January – Namadgi Visitor Centre

Sixteen keen birders assembled at Namadgi Visitor Centre on a calm morning. The grass was high, restricting views of ground birds, so we kept to the paths. The highlight was the **Varied Sittellas** and their nest. We saw and heard 46 species including **White-winged Choughs** and nest, **Rufous Whistlers**, **White-winged Trillers**, **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, and **Australasian Grebe** with young. It was a very pleasant morning with experienced birders helping everyone to see and identify the birds spotted.

Dianne Deans

### Wednesday 18 January - Campbell Park

A group of 20 members and guests gathered in the usual meeting place, wondering if we'd get through a walk without our raincoats. In the end, despite a few drops of rain, all went well. Perhaps because of the threatening rain, we were not able to catch a glimpse of the usual **Australian Owlet-nightjar**, but managed a birdlist of 49 species nonetheless.

Highlights included a group of at least seven **Gang-gang Cockatoos** actively exploring several hollows in a group of old trees on both sides of the track at one point, and a family group of **Varied Sittellas**, with two adults and two fledglings. A **Brush Cuckoo** was heard calling for some time near the Telecom Track, and several species were observed carrying nesting material or food. A **Brown Quail** was heard calling, although **Stubble Quail** were not seen or heard.

Sandra Henderson

### Sunday 22 January - Gilmore Horse Paddocks

Nine members and guests spent a pleasant couple of hours wandering the closed roads adjacent to the horse paddocks. While there were no unexpected sightings, some of the highlights included a fledgling **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, being fed by both parents, a group of **European Goldfinches**, several **Dusky Woodswallows**, and a very obliging male **Rufous Whistler**. One **Dusky Woodswallow** was keen to drive away an **Australian Magpie**, so we suspect there was a nest nearby, but could not find it. We managed to find 28 species, and I had spotted an additional three species prior to the start of the walk.

Sandra Henderson



Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

Sandra Henderson



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# Woodland Surveys – Nov/Dec 2022, early summer survey round

compiled by Jenny Bounds

Notes: Not all the woodland survey sites are reported. Paul Fennell has stepped down after more than two decades as the site coordinator for the Majura Field Range surveys; thank you Paul for your contribution. Kim Farley has taken over as the survey coordinator for the MFR.

## Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds and the team surveyed on Sunday 4 December, a fine, sunny morning with no wind, a perfect morning. The reserve had dried out after much rain in September/October, and grass growth was high in places, obscuring some of the COG site posts. The 58 species recorded were slightly higher than the September survey, and at the higher end of the usual early summer survey tally. All the common spring migrants were recorded and small birds were quite vocal. A significant highlight was at least two **Brush Cuckoos** calling around the north-west part of the reserve (western ridge). Other highlights included: **Common Bronzewing** at two sites, **Scarlet Robin** at two sites, a **Bush Stone-Curlew** calling, 3 **Varied Sittellas**, a **Brown Quail** heard, and 4 species of **thornbills**. Similar to the September survey, a group of small birds was around just north of the Woolshed while the group had morning tea, and **Speckled Warbler** was heard amongst them. On the Large Dam the best species was 1 **Royal Spoonbill** (unusual for Mulligans), but very few waterbirds were around. A family of **Pink-eared Ducks** with 3 ducklings was on the small dam upstream from the Large Dam (on the September survey a pair had been recorded on the Large Dam, and there has been a pair breeding there for some years).

## Goorooyarroo South NR

The final woodland survey for the year was done by Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley on Friday 2 and Tuesday 6 December. It was fine both days, mostly overcast on the former, and rather windy on the latter. The reserve had dried out considerably since the September survey although some creeks still held a fair bit of water. Grass and weed growth was prolific which made moving between sites a little challenging at times. A total of 59 species was recorded, with 40 of these during point counts, compared to 54 and 38 for December 2021.

Interesting records during 10 minute site counts included a **Speckled Warbler** at site 2, **Nankeen Kestrel** at sites 2 and 7, a **Brown Goshawk** at site 6 and **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo** at site 1. **Noisy Friarbirds** were in good numbers and other summer migrants recorded were **White-throated** and **Western Gerygones**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, and **Horsfield's** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos**. Incidental records included **Brown Falcon**, **Southern Whiteface** and **Golden-headed Cisticola**. Breeding was recorded for **Superb Fairy-wren** (carrying food), **Willie Wagtail** (nest building), **Yellow Thornbill**, **Australasian Grebe**, **Australian Magpie** and **Grey Butcherbird** (the last four with dependent young).

## Mt Majura NR

The woodland survey was conducted on 30 November and 3 December by Kathy Walter, John Goldie and Duncan McCaskill. Some sites were still very wet underfoot and the grass was thigh high! Birds were plentiful with a number of small birds at a couple of the sites further away from the urban edge/housing. These included: **Speckled Warblers**; **Brown**, **Buff-rumped** and **Striated Thornbills**; **Striated** and **Spotted Pardalotes**; **Superb Fairy-wren**; **Weebills** and **Grey Fantails**. Highlight for the survey was a **Channel-billed Cuckoo** seen by Duncan at site 7. **Superb Parrots** and **Gang-gang Cockatoos** were seen at a couple of sites. A total of 35 species was recorded over nine sites.

## Mt Ainslie NR /Campbell Park

The survey was carried out by Michael Lenz on 30 November, a calm, overcast morning, with clouds only clearing towards the end of the survey. The ground vegetation was in many parts very dense, tall and weedy. The most widespread species were **Crimson Rosella** (at 8 of 9 Sites), **Noisy Miner** (7) and **Eastern Rosella** (5). Overall, higher numbers of **Rufous Whistler**, **Grey Shrike-thrush** and **Noisy Friarbird** were present than in recent years, but notably **Leaden Flycatcher** seems to have declined sharply (only found at one spot). Also of interest were 3 **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos**, including a pair together, **Brown Goshawk**, **Dollarbird**, both species of **gerygones**, but only a few ground-foraging birds. A total of 30 species was recorded at sites and a further 12 between sites.



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## Majura Field Range

Kim Farley and Barbara Allan surveyed on Monday 28 November, a lovely morning, 17 degrees and sunny with a very light breeze. As well as the birds, the wildflowers were a real treat on this visit. They recorded 42 species at 7 of the 8 sites able to be accessed. The highlights were a male **Scarlet Robin**, a party of three **Speckled Warblers**, as well as several **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos** and **White-throated Gerygones**. There were also great views of a pair of **Leaden Flycatchers** and a brief sighting of a **Brown Falcon**. **Common Bronzewing**s were seen at 4 sites, which is more than usual at MFR. Another unusual sighting was several **Grey Currawongs**, and it was pleasing to see nesting **Tree Martins** at one site. Fewer **Noisy Miners** were recorded than on the September survey; perhaps they were otherwise occupied on nesting duties?

## Newline

Sue Lashko did the early summer survey on December 2 on a fine, warm morning. All sites were difficult to access due to lush growth of a wide variety of weeds and tall grasses. Raptors included an immature **Black-shouldered Kite** and a **Nankeen Kestrel**. **Rainbow Lorikeets** were seen entering hollows at 2 sites and a pair of **Australasian Grebes** had three young on one of the very full dams. A pair of **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos** duetting fired up the nearby **White-browed Scrubwrens**. Other migrants included **White-throated Gerygone**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Dusky Woodswallow** and **Black-faced Cuckooshrike**. Introduced species included **Common Myna**, **Common Starling**, **Common Blackbird**, **European Goldfinch** and **House Sparrow**, no doubt benefitting from the altered vegetation since the 2020 bushfire. A total of 41 species was recorded.

## Jerrabomberra West NR

Jenny Bounds and Alison Rowell surveyed the 7 sites in the woodland behind the grasslands on 18 December 2022, a fine morning but a little windy. Helpfully, the ground had dried out by then, making vehicle access to the woodland patch possible, and the track had recently been slashed. However, grass and weeds growth was prolific off track, chest high in places, with St John's Wort the weed of this season, but not too many prickly thistles this time. Just 27 species were recorded, on the low end of surveys in this season. Sites 1 & 2 in the more open Blakely's Red Gum woodland patch on the ridge-line were the best sites, with 11 species recorded in each site, and a further 6 outside the sites. Highlights were 2 **Dusky Woodswallows** at site 2 and another **Dusky Woodswallow** seen outside that site, a **Brown Falcon** also at site 2 and an **Australian Pipit** flushed in site 2. **Superb Fairy-wrens**, **Willie Wagtails** and **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** were recorded at both sites 1 and 2. It was a little quieter in the denser, mixed woodland patch, a **Mistletoebird** a highlight at site 3, **Grey Fantails** at most sites, at site 7 four **Buff-rumped Thornbills** in a group with **Superb Fairy-wren** and **Weebills**. Alison reported dead and dying Blakely's Red Gums at site 6. On the way out, a **European Goldfinch** was seen perched on a thistle (sometimes recorded in that area which can be prolific with thistles), a **Dusky Woodswallow** made its way along the grasslands edge fence, and a V-formation of **Australian White Ibis** was seen overhead.

## Tuggeranong Hill NR

Tuggeranong Hill was surveyed by Lia Battison on Friday 2 December. It was an overcast, mild and still morning. Many of the sites were heavily infested with St John's Wort and other weeds, but a couple were mainly covered in native wildflowers. Highlights were a **Brown Goshawk**, **Nankeen Kestrel**, three **Gang-gang Cockatoos**, and a pair of **Leaden Flycatchers** building a nest, although of these observations, only the **Gang-gang Cockatoos** were in a site. Other breeding records were **Australian Magpie** and **Pied Currawong** feeding young. A total of 19 species was observed during the survey counts, and an additional 20 between sites.

## Naas Sites

The woodland survey on this rural lease south of Tharwa had to be conducted on 23 November, a little earlier than the designated survey window. The weather was cool to mild, calm, but mostly overcast. The ground was much drier underfoot than during the previous couple of surveys, though drainage lines were still wet. Species diversity was higher than in spring survey, though species numbers were still low. A total of 30 species was observed within the sites and another 4 species between the sites. Notable observations were 3 **Jacky Winters**, 3 **Diamond Firetail**, 3 **Dusky Woodswallows**, a couple of **Olive-backed Orioles**, 2 **Leaden Flycatchers**, and flushing 2 adult **Tawny Frogmouths**. Sheep or cattle grazing had helpfully kept the extensive grassy understorey down and animals were present on almost all sites. In addition, small areas had been control-burned. Uncharacteristically, no **Western Gerygone**, **White-winged Triller**, **Tree Martin**, **Grey Shrike-thrush**, **thornbills** or **cuckoo** species were recorded on this survey. The only breeding activity observed was a few **White-plumed Honeyeater** and **Australasian Grebe** juveniles.



## Launch of *Long-Term Trends in ACT Woodland Birds 1998-2019* by the Canberra Ornithologists Group

### Monitoring bird data so we can design for and with nature

With beautiful views looking out on the mature native trees of Mulligans Flat Sanctuary, the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) officially launched its report ***Long-Term Trends in ACT Woodland Birds 1998-2019*** on Thursday 8 December at Wildbark at Mulligans Flat. About 45 people attended, including those involved in the COG bird surveys, Landcare organisations and Government agencies.

For more than two decades, COG has been collecting data across 142 sites in ACT grassy woodland locations, monitoring each site four times a year. The results of an analysis of data indicate declining trends for some common bird species and groups, such as small birds and birds dependent on woodland habitats. On the other hand, some larger-bodied birds are increasing in abundance.

Importantly, the report identifies a priority list of bird species of conservation concern – including some threatened bird species – for which COG recommends an ongoing watching brief.

COG President, Neil Hermes, spoke on the role of COG, particularly as citizen scientists.

Jenny Bounds, long-time COG member and manager of the survey program, then gave an overview of the key findings and thanked participants, some of whom had been involved since the project's beginning.

Bren Burkevics, ACT Conservator of [Flora](#) and Fauna (ACT Government), spoke of the extinction crisis and the value of the report in not only showing declines, but also what might be learned from areas where bird sightings are steady or increasing.

## Key Findings

Declining trends for 32 species, some generally regarded as common (16 species), mostly small birds, for example **Weebill, Grey Fantail, Superb Fairy-wren, Rufous Whistler**, and 3 species of thornbills. Both resident and seasonal species declined.

A declining trend for the small-bodied bird community and woodland dependent birds.

Significant increases in the reporting rates of large-bodied birds, many common, habitat generalists, adapted to urban-environments, and birds associated with degraded woodland communities. **Pied Currawong, Australian Magpie** are in this group.

An unexpected decrease in the canopy feeders group, which includes insectivores and nectar feeders such as honeyeaters.

The trend for the **Noisy Miner**, an aggressive, colonial native honeyeater showed a six-fold increase, the most of any species in the analysis. **Noisy Miners** can suppress small birds.

Dr Laura Rayner, ACT Government Senior Ecologist, who collaborated with COG for the data analysis, highlighted the significance of the report in noting that the changes to bird populations need more research to answer why they are happening, but also raise questions about what might happen if steps are taken to change the balance.

The report was launched by Dr Maxine Cooper, Chair, Landcare ACT, who looked forward to COG reporting again at the 30-year mark, after 2028, and including analysis of the effects of weather and climate change on bird trends.

Dr Cooper also pointed to the value of designing for, and with nature, so birds and the environment can be protected in every patch of the ACT and region. This would include developing 'whole-of-landscape' rural land conservation plans to protect and enhance woodland habitats and connectivity, and shaping urban planning to better protect birds and other biodiversity.

Dr Cooper's toast for the report was: 'A bird in the **Long-term Trends in ACT Woodland Birds 1998-2019** book is worth many in the Bush Capital. May this book inspire us to design for, and with nature, and use our hearts, heads, and hands to protect all woodland birds in our Bush Capital.'

All presenters touched on the theme of how this monitoring project and report has been a wonderful collaboration across sectors, community, government and academia. Many volunteers putting in hours of bird watching/survey time, a rigour to the design of the project, long-term continuity, collaboration with the ACT Government and the Australian National University. Also, special thanks were made to the COG team, Jenny Bounds, Chris Davey and Nicki Taws; ACT Government; Dr Laura Rayner; and analyst at the Australian National University, Dr John Evans; as well as the COG members who have undertaken the regular seasonal bird surveys.

The report is available on the COG website, under the conservation menu:

<https://canberrabirds.org.au/conservation/woodland-birds/cog-woodland-bird-monitoring-project/>



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## Publications for Sale

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

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



**RELEASED AUG 22!**

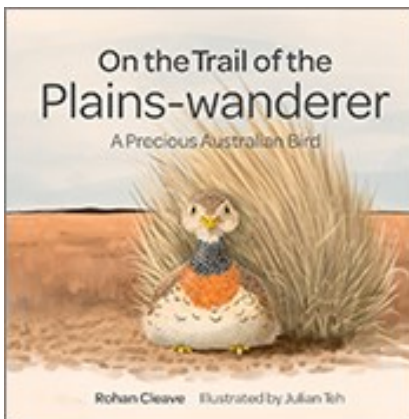
### THE COMPACT AUSTRALIAN BIRD GUIDE

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

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

Based on The Australian Bird Guide.

**Members' Price \$28.00 RRP \$34.99.**



### ON THE TRAIL OF THE PLAINS-WANDERER

A Precious Australian Bird

By: **Rohan Cleave** Illustrated by: **Julian Teh**

The story of the Plains-wanderer, a critically endangered Australian bird that is truly unique!

The Plains-wanderer is unlike any other bird on Earth – it's one of a kind!

On the Trail of the Plains-wanderer tells the true story of one of Australia's most critically endangered bird species. This unique, quirky and precious bird faces many threats, but continues to survive against the odds. Discover more about this fascinating bird and see how people are providing hope for their future.

Reading level varies from child to child, but we recommend this book for ages 5 to 9.

**Members' Price \$20 RRP \$24.99.**

## Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

Donations to this fund are tax deductible. Funds are used to support projects that protect and enhance native birds and the environments that sustain them.

## COG membership

2022-2023 memberships:

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

## New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

D Marsh  
M Tindale  
D Addison  
P Copley  
K Amphlett  
D Millen

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

**Deadline for March 2023 edition:**

**Wednesday 22 February 2023**

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

[gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au)

or

**c/- The Secretary, COG,**

**PO Box 331, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614.**

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

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

## COG information

**President:** Neil Hermes

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**Treasurer:** Vacant

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**Secretary:** Margaret Robertson

[cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au)

### Address for correspondence

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Jamison Centre, ACT 2614

### Canberra Bird Notes

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## COG website

[canberrabirds.org.au](http://canberrabirds.org.au)

### COG Webmaster

Julian Robinson

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### COG library

### Membership Enquiries & Updates:

[membership@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:membership@canberrabirds.org.au)

for change of address or other details.

### Gang-gang Newsletter

**Editor:** Sue Lashko

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**Lay-out Editor:** Gail Neumann

### Publication Sales

Kathy Walter

[sales@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:sales@canberrabirds.org.au)

## COG E-mail Discussion List

COG E-mail Discussion List COG has an email discussion list for members and friends: 'CanberraBirds'. Join (subscribe to) the list by following the links on the COG website or by sending an email message to [canberrabirds-subscribe@lists.canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:canberrabirds-subscribe@lists.canberrabirds.org.au). The subject line and body of the email can be empty.

To unsubscribe, either permanently or temporarily, send an email message to [canberrabirds-unsubscribe@lists.canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:canberrabirds-unsubscribe@lists.canberrabirds.org.au).

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