



Gang-gang

SEPTEMBER 2023

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Wednesday 13 September 2023

7.30 pm

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

The September 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.

Jack Holland - Leaden and Satin Flycatchers.

Nicki Taws - 20 years of K2C and Birdwatch surveys; how COG has helped demonstrate the value of woodland restoration for birds.

First there will be a Bird of the Month presentation by **Jack Holland** on the "**Leaden and Satin Flycatchers**", in his view the most difficult pair of local species to properly identify, particularly outside of the breeding season.

The main presentation will be by **Nicki Taws** on "**20 years of K2C and Birdwatch surveys; how COG has helped demonstrate the value of woodland restoration for birds**".

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Everyone welcome

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

Following the hottest July on record the unseasonably warm weather continued over the 5 weeks from 26 July to 29 August inclusive covered by this column, though after about the first week there were some cooler and/or showery days. Despite this, my analysis below supports my impression that bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (AoI) during August remained relatively low. With the exception of the **Olive Backed Oriole** and **Fairy Martin**, most of the spring migrants which might be expected delayed their return until around the final week of the period, when maximum temperatures reached the high teens. The altitudinal migrants also seem to have been slow to move away, and again many fewer "unusual" species were reported.

Probably the most interesting sighting during the period was the report by Ben Milbourne on 10 August of 360 **Red-rumped Parrots** on the Duntroon playing fields off Addison Rd (on the NE side of Fairbairn Ave). The birds were carpeting sections of the playing fields, and as per eBird's requirements for large counts he counted them in multiples of 10 across three playing fields and

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Olive Backed Oriole

Geoffrey Dabb

Many COG members have participated for more than 10 years in surveys of the K2C region south of Canberra, and for more than 20 years in *Birdwatch* surveys to the north-west of the ACT. The surveys are investigating the effects of conservation actions, specifically grazing exclusion and revegetation, on the woodland bird community, with some very positive results, as Nicki will outline. They also offer the opportunity for participants to visit some beautiful areas on private property that are not open to the general public.

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

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about 12 trees. That this is a very large number is illustrated that the High Count function in eBird's Bar Charts shows that around 100 is the next highest number for 2023, and even back to the start of 2018 the highest is around 225. This species is known to flock together around a food source and perhaps the playing fields had been oversown with grass seed that brought in every local **Red-rumped Parrot**.

Of the spring/summer migrants not reported during July (or some not in winter) the first species reported to return was the **Rufous Whistler** at the Shepherds Lookout walk where a bird was recorded on 29 July. This was followed by reports of single birds from only 4 other locations from 2 August, indicating that most birds of this species are still to return. Reports of the **Fairy Martin** followed soon after with the first on 30 July of a single bird (correctly identified by its rufous head) at the Baroona Wetlands. However, in this case the next report was from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR the next day and it was regularly reported from there during August with a maximum of 36 birds on 20 August. Together with reports of up to 7 birds from 6 other locations, this species has clearly returned in some numbers.

Other species expected to return in August seem to have been much slower to arrive. The first **Shining Bronze-cuckoo** was reported from Campbell Park on 8 August, from where there were 4 more reports, all of single birds, as well as from 3 other locations (3 birds from one nearby). The related **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** was reported from two locations, both single birds with the first from Lake Ginninderra on 20 August, but at the time of writing no **Pallid Cuckoo** had yet been reported.

The first report of the **Noisy Friarbird** was of one heard in the Yass Valley on 4 August, but the first report in the ACT was one photographed on Cooleman Ridge on 24 August (in my local patch where ironically there have been very few over the past 5 or so years, though I did hear one in my GBS site 2 days later), with reports from a further 13 locations, indicating the start of an influx late in the period. The first report of a returning **Western Gerygone** was from Lyneham on 23 August, with reports from just 2 locations after this, but there have been no confirmed reports of the related **White-throated Gerygone** to date. The first returning **Latham's Snipe** was photographed at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 26 August, but again it had not yet been reported from elsewhere.

Of the spring summer migrants reported during July surprisingly the **Australian Reed-Warbler** was reported from 3 locations only, with reports of 1-2 birds at 2 of them, but with regular reports of up to 8 birds at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR. In contrast the **Tree Martin** was reported from around 20 locations so is now well established.

Following the single bird in Campbell on 12 July, the first report of the **Dusky Woodswallow** was of 8 and 2 birds at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 19 August, with from 23 August reports from a further 8 locations, also indicating a late influx. In contrast there were reports from over 30 locations of the **Olive-backed Oriole**, this compares with only 3 locations during July, so this species has clearly returned in



Red-rumped Parrot

Harvey Perkins

numbers, as has the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, the least migratory local cuckoo, reported from 17 locations compared with 6 in July.

As for July single **Mistletoebirds** were reported from only 3 locations, at Isaacs Ridge NR on 5 August, the Wanniasa Hills NR on 7 August and from the Yass River on 15 August. The **Superb Parrot** also seems only to have moved back in smallish numbers and was recorded from 23 locations compared with around 14 in July (8 of these were south of the lake compared with 4 in July). The **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** is also moving back reported from around 38 locations compared with 20 in July, but few **Grey Fantail** seem to have returned, reported from around 80 locations, compared with around 70 in the previous period.

So, during September please keep an eye out for the above-mentioned spring/summer migrants. Please also look out for (in rough order) the **Leadend Flycatcher** (there was an aural record from the Tharwa Sandwash on 8 August – please note my presentation at the COG meeting on 13 September), **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Rainbow Bee-eater** and the **Eastern Koel** (reports of them calling in mid Augst were not able to be confirmed). Watch out too for increasing numbers of returning **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters**, though this is never as spectacular as their autumn migration. The **White-winged Triller** and **Rufous Songlark** also usually return towards the end of the month, numbers of these reaching the COG Aol, as well as the **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallow**, may be somewhat greater this year than for some time due to the drying inland.

Of the species that move to Canberra and its surrounds from the mountains and higher country to spend autumn/winter here, the **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Golden Whistler** were still recorded from around 30 and over 60 urban/peri-urban locations, so have yet to move away (the latter in particular always seems to stay around quite long). The **Scarlet Robin** also still has to move away, still being reported from over 40 such locations, the same number as in the previous period. While the **Flame Robin** was still reported from around 17 such locations, compared with 12 in the previous period; despite my searching they have not been reported in my local patch of Cooleman Ridge since a single bird was seen there on 16 August, so they do appear to have now moved away from some areas.

The **Rose Robin**, which I mentioned in my August column was often considered as a passage migrant, has continued to be present and reported from 14 urban/peri urban locations (same as for July), with 3 reports from rural areas, two of which were on the Murrumbidgee River. Again, there were no **Pink Robins** (nearest report was to the NE of Melbourne) but the first **Red-capped Robin** was reported in the COG Aol for some time, an immature female from the Canberra Centenary Trail in Mulligans Flat NR on 7 August.

There were reports of the **Crescent Honeyeater** from 4 urban/peri-urban locations (including the first one from the ANBG so far in 2023, a male photographed there on 23 August), plus from 9 other locations, all but one on or to the W of the Murrumbidgee River. The single **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** at the ANBG was last reported on 28 July, the only location for the period. On 26 August at least 7 **Swift Parrots** were



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Good birding, good food

Kutini – Payamu Tour
(Iron Range NP) Wet Season
4 to 10 January 2024
Cairns to Lockhart River
incl. flights.

Far North Queensland
NEW DATES
21 May to 3 June 2024
Part 1: Atherton Tablelands,
Part 2: Musgrave, Archer River,
Kutini – Payamu (Iron Range NP)

Top End Birding Tour
20 June to 3 July 2024
Part 1: Darwin, Kakadu NP, Pine Creek,
Katherine,
Part 2: Victoria River, Timber Creek,
Kununurra. Optional Black Grasswren air
charter to Mitchell Plateau

Strzelecki Track Outback Tour
September 2024

Please contact Patricia Maher
for information & itineraries.

www.philipmaher.com

reported from Antill St Dickson, but these were not re-located with the nearest other report being 7 birds at the Tarcutta Hills Reserve over 100 km to the W on 31 July.

There were also no reports of the **Brown Gerygone** during the period, with the nearest being 6 birds at the Majors Creek Mountain Rd (about 70 km to the SE) on 30 July. Up to two **Bassian Thrush** were reported from the ANBG during the period, they were also reported from 3 locations in the mountains, and from the Tallaganda SF.

So please look out for the above species as they continue to move away from Canberra and its surrounds during September, including for **Swift Parrots** passing through on their migration back to Tasmania.

Again, there were relatively few “unusual” birds reported during the period. An unexpected sighting was a **Magpie Goose** (identified by its distinct black and white plumage and red stubby beak leading up to a distinctive 'lump' on-top of its head) seen flying towards Lake Ginninderra on the evening of 9 August. This species is not listed in COG's 2018-2019 Annual Bird report (ABR) and is the first ACT record on eBird for 2023 (all previous ones back to 2018 were the captive ones at the Tidbinbilla NR) though 1-2 geese have been reported from the Wet Lagoon, Breadalbane during this year.

Freckled Duck continued to be present at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR throughout the period, but 3 ducks were last seen on 3 August, with only one and sometimes 2 ducks reported since. Up to 3 ducks were also reported from the northern end of Lake George. Again, 2 **Plumed Whistling Ducks** were reported only from the Trucking Yard Lane dam during the period, where up to 40 **Australian Shelducks** were reported. These were also reported from at least 10 locations the E and NE of Canberra during the period. This number includes the Wollorogang Rd as one location, from where there were reports at many slightly different spots but with a maximum of 35 birds on 29 July. Up to 6 adult **Blue-billed Ducks** were reported only from the Upper Stranger Pond from 15 August, and apart from the Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary, up to 4 **Musk Ducks** were reported from 4 locations.

Five adult **Great-crested Grebes** were reported by 4 observers on the West Basin of LBG on 27-28 August, 3 had been reported earlier on Lake Ginninderra on 24 August. Again, no **Stubble Quail** were reported during the period, but up to 18 (in 2 groups on Cooleman Ridge) **Brown Quail** were reported from 10 locations, slightly up from July. Up to 4 **Painted Button-quail** were reported from 9 locations (well up from July), but again, no **Little Button-quail** were reported.

White-headed Pigeons were reported from 3 locations, single birds at Giralang and Lanyon Drive Queanbeyan on 21 and 22 August, respectively, but with a remarkable 8 birds photographed together on the wires in Queanbeyan itself on 14 August. Two **Peaceful Doves** were reported from Isabella Plains on 15 August, but there were no **Brush Bronzewing**, **Diamond** or **Bar-shouldered Doves** reported during the period.

Up to 5 **Spotless Crakes** were regularly reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR. While these five were seen fleeing from a controlled burn, up to 4 birds were otherwise reported. Single birds were also reported at the Coombs and Edgeworth Ponds on 4 and 20 August, respectively. In contrast a single **Australian Spotted Crake** was reported only from the North Watson Wetlands on 1 August. I continue to be amazed at how in the 1980s and 1990s the latter was easily the most observed, with the former quite rare. Again, no **Baillon's Crake** was reported during the period.

In contrast up to 3 **Lewin's Rail**, also once considered very rare in the ACT, were recorded from 5 locations, with the Edgeworth (Holden's Creek) Pond a popular spot to see them recently. Up to 2 **Buff-banded Rails** were also reported from 5 locations.



Pied Stilt

Shorty

Up to 10 **Banded Lapwings** were reported from the Wollorogang Rd on 3 occasions during the period, as were 5 **Red-necked Avocets** from the N end of Lake George on 2 occasions. Up to 3 **Pied Stilts** at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR were reported by many observers from 17 August, this species has been present in much greater numbers (maximum of 55 birds) at the N end of Lake George since late June. No **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Red-necked Stints**, **Common** or **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers**, or **Australian Little Bittern** were reported

during the period, but a single **Caspian Tern** was reported from the N end of Lake George on 30 July as was a **Whiskered Tern** there between 5-14 August.

No **Little Egret** was reported during the period, but an **Intermediate Egret** was reported from the Wet Lagoon on 29 July. Up to 3 **Great Egrets** were reported from 3 locations, up to 2 **Royal Spoonbills** were reported from 4 locations, and up to 2 **White-necked Heron** also from 4 locations. However, no **Glossy Ibis** were reported during the period.

Single **Barn Owls** were reported from 5 urban locations during the period and **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from around 55 locations during the period (similar to July – see breeding details below). A **Spotted Harrier** was reported from the Federal Highway dam near Wollogorang on 3 August, but “unusual” raptors were scarce otherwise and there were no reports of the **Pacific Baza**, **Grey Goshawk**, **Black Kite** or **Black Falcon** during the period.

An **Azure Kingfisher** was reported only on 5 August from the southside of Yass Riverbank Park just downstream of the old Hume Hwy bridge, where it was perched on a branch above and repeatedly diving into the river. No **Glossy Black-Cockatoos**, **Cockatiel**, **Greater Bluebonnets**, **Turquoise Parrots** and **Purple-crowned, Scaly-breasted** or **Little Lorikeets** were reported over the period, but up to 8 **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from 5 locations.

No **Spiny-cheeked**, **Singing** or **Scarlet Honeyeaters**, or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period, but a **Blue-faced Honeyeater** was observed in Turner on 13 August. Up to 9 **White-fronted Chats** were reported from 5 locations in Molonglo, and up to 10 birds were also reported from 4 locations to the E and NE of the ACT.

A **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** was reported from the Cuumbeun NR on 20 August with up to 3 birds also reported from Whiskers Creek Rd Carwoola between 1-26 August, but no **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes**, **White-browed Babbler**, **Spangled Drongo** or **Zebra Finches** were reported during the period. However, a **Tawny Grassbird** was photographed on Taylors Creek Rd to the E of Lake George on 13 August.

Of the birds I have continued to ask readers to keep a special lookout for in 2023, the **Jacky Winter** was reported from 5 locations. Two birds were regularly reported from the Gambles TSR Sutton as well as from Illilanga on the Baroona Rd, both known locations, as is the single bird reported on 27 August from the Namina TSR. Reports from new locations were 3 birds from the Yass River Rd on 5 August and a single bird from Lake George Rd, Currawang on 8 August. Interestingly all except one location was from the EN or NE of the ACT whereas records in the past few years have been predominantly from the S.

A **Hooded Robin** was also reported from Currawang on 8 August but reports from the 5 other locations were all from the SW or S of Canberra as usual. Two birds were reported on several occasions from the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd and a single bird from the Top Naas Rd on 8 August. A pair was reported from the Gibraltar Peak Track Tidbinbilla NR on 6 August, 2 birds regularly from the Orroral Valley, and 3 birds from the Nursery Swamp track, the only new location, on 7 August.

Restless Flycatchers were reported from 5 locations all to the SW or S; the one from Chapman/Coolleman Ridge (which has continued to evade me) was still reported as late as 23 August, with one also at the adjacent Arawang horse paddocks on 2 August. A single bird was also reported from the nearby Kambah horse yard late in July, but one was then reported at the nearby McQuoids Hill NR on 23 August. One wonders whether this was a single bird moving around or at least 2 birds. Single birds were also reported from the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 7 August and at Illilanga on 3 occasions during the period. All of these are known or close to known sites.

In respect of the winter breeding by the **Black-shouldered Kite** there were 4 reports/photographs of juveniles/immatures in eBird lists over the period, with the most interesting comment “two juveniles (with light brown plumage) still begging for food from adult. Adult not very receptive” at Illilanga on 17 August.

The breeding season is clearly underway with the most interesting reports to date coming to my attention being:

- On 27 August Susan Wishart informed me that the male **Tawny Frogmouth** was on the nest in the usual tree in suburban Chapman. This is for the fourth year in a row, in a different spot from the last couple, but the same as before that. That this is early (last year it was first reported on 7 September) was confirmed by Tawnies researcher Stuart Rae telling me that he had not yet seen a bird on a nest, but a few nests were well built.
- On 29 August Geoffrey posted that 2 days earlier while looking from Black Mountain Peninsular for the **Great-crested Grebes** (see above) in the rain, what was more evident was the colony of **Silver Gulls** on Spinnaker Island. Taking another look that afternoon he found quite a contrast, much less activity with mainly (he presumed) brooding birds

there. I thought it might be a bit early given the large numbers he reported at the Fyshwick Sewage Ponds only 3 weeks earlier (see below), but eBird indicates that they had begun breeding as early as by 5 August 2019 at this well-known spot.

No notable mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) have come to my attention, certainly the large groups of **Superb Fairy-wrens** I was seeing in July have broken up. In respect of single flocks of large birds apart from the **Red-rumped Parrots** mentioned above on 6 August Geoffrey Dabb posted that at the Fyshwick Sewage Ponds that morning there was a continuation of the **Silver Gull** festival, with many foraging in the mown grass but spending much time in the air. He counted more than 400 in the one photo with about as many again in the area, so quite a few gulls. The next day Geoffrey noted that **Australian White Ibis** were flying into Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR during the morning, he made a count of 116, mainly in the billabong area.

September is the first full month of significant bird activity in the COG Aol. So please watch out for more of the returning spring/summer migrants mentioned above, for the last of the leaving altitudinal migrants, for roost sites and flights, for any late MFFs or single flocks, and for early spring breeding activity. With the still favourable conditions there should be lots of the last-named. 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

COG'S BIRD BLITZ 2023

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 October

After 3 years of inclement weather, covid restrictions, closed tracks and locked gates, this year's blitz, our 19th, is the opportunity to put all that behind us and head to all corners of the ACT.

We need as many participants as possible to conduct bird surveys across the whole of the ACT, in an effort to obtain as complete a snapshot as possible of the birds in mid-spring.

Details are on the COG website www.canberrabirds.org.au, under the header 'Observing and Reporting Birds'. The list of sites adopted for 2022 will be updated shortly. Please let me know, blitz@canberrabirds.org.au, where you would like to survey and I will put your name against that site.

If you regularly survey particular spots, it would be ideal if you could do them again, but feel free to also go somewhere different.

It is also fine to survey a site if someone else has adopted it but we would like to cover as many of the sites as possible, or you can nominate your own area that isn't on the list.

This year we are also including a focus on one of our threatened species, the **Hooded Robin**, with some additional sites added to help Blitzers find this delightful species.

Nicki Taws

Committee News

The Canberra Birds (COG) committee met by Zoom on 17 August and is holding a half-day planning session on 26 August.

As can be seen from the list of volunteers needed in last month's Gang-gang, the committee is concerned that some activities will have to cease if we can't encourage more members to be involved in keeping Canberra Birds running. Please check that list again and contact a committee member if you want to know more about a specific role.

Canberra Birds members are reminded that memberships run from 1 July to 30 June. If you haven't yet renewed for 2023-24 your membership will lapse on 30 September and you will not be eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting on 8 November. Please renew now – <https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/joining-cog-and-renewing/>.

The committee intends to ask members to vote on an important issue at the AGM (see note elsewhere in this issue) and consequently asks that members plan to attend the meeting. However, the committee is also considering how to provide a Zoom option for members who are unable to come in person. More information will be provided in the October issue of Gang-gang.

Bill Graham and Kim Farley have now held two of the new 'Coffee and Chat' events at Australian National Botanic Gardens café. Twelve people attended each time. Come along for a relaxed time to chat with like-minded people about birds and birding and anything else that interests you. The next one will be on Tuesday 12th September from 9:30 am to 11:30 am.

The committee has approved updated versions of the following Canberra Birds' documents
Canberra Birds Conservation Fund Policy and Governance Framework

Recent Submissions

None this month

Neil Hermes *President* Alison Mackerras *Minutes Secretary*

You are invited to Bird chat and coffee at the Botanic Gardens

Join us at the cafe at the Aust National Botanic Gardens on **Tuesday 12 September**.

Very informal, just turn up anytime between 9:30 and 11:30 to chat with other birders and would-be birders.

There will be no formal proceedings, talks or speakers - just a chance to get together with others in a pleasant location.

Anyone and everyone is welcome.

Look for the table with the binoculars standing on it.

Bill Graham

Canberra Birds (COG) committee member



Tawny Frogmouth

Julian Robinson

Two students off to the Aust Ornithological Conference 2023 - with COG's assistance

Birdlife Australia and Birds New Zealand are co-hosting the 12th [Australasian Ornithological Conference](#) (AOC) in Brisbane in November 2023. The AOC is the largest biennial gathering of enthusiastic amateur and professional ornithologists from our region.

COG committee decided to financially assist one or two suitable people to attend the AOC. The opportunity was open to anyone whose participation in the AOC aligned with COG's Objectives.

Applications closed on 10 August, with interviews conducted a week later. Our two successful applicants are both ANU PhD students and both are COG members. They will be giving a presentation to a COG meeting early in 2024 to tell us about their experience of the conference and at a later date will be telling us about their PhD projects - on White-winged Chough and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo respectively.

COG Committee

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The continued viability and vibrancy of Canberra Birds and all that it provides to its members is reliant on our volunteers.

Some of our long serving volunteers have indicated their wish to retire. It's time for others to step up and take the club forward with fresh energy and enthusiasm. To fulfill our governance requirements the following positions must be filled:

Committee positions

Vice-president
Minutes Secretary
Treasurer
General committee members

To continue the same of level of services we currently provide, the following positions need to be filled if they are to be continued:

Non-committee positions

Members' meeting convenor
Bookstall Officer
Gang-gang newsletter editors
Website manager and assistants

Our work includes the study of birds, collecting robust data to improve knowledge and understanding about birds; developing community interest in birds through field trips and monthly meetings and promoting conservation of birds and habitats through research and advocacy.

See the [Canberra Birds website](#) for more information about us and what we do.
Becoming involved is rewarding so please get in touch if you would like to know more.

Email cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

COG Committee

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 5 days, or have any Covid, cold or flu symptoms.

If you look on the website, you will note that there are still 3 field trip dates with neither a leader or a venue, in the best months of the year for birding. If you can assist, please contact Sue Lashko at smlashko@gmail.com

Sunday 3 September - Stromlo Forest West

Description: An easy walk of approximately 2 km through woodland at the far western edge of Stromlo Forest Park. We will NOT be climbing Mt Stromlo and will be several kilometres from the main biking trails of the Forest Park. Birding is usually good and we can expect a good range of species and springtime bird activity.

Meeting time and place: Meet at 8.30am, finish approx 10:30am. Park at the carpark called 'Stromlo Forest Park Western Carpark' on Google Maps. If this car park is full there is another tiny car park about 200 metres further down Uriarra Road. Please wear closed shoes and long pants as the grass is long and can be scratchy. Bring a hat.

Register with Kim Farley by email to kimlouisefarley@gmail.com with your name and number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Sunday 10 September – Umbagog District Park, Latham

Description: Umbagog District Park is in Latham and has Ginninderra Creek running through the middle of it. A lot of work has been done over the last months to upgrade the bridges and this work is due for completion before the official re-opening on 1 September, just in time for spring. We will explore the Park, which has not been visited by COG for some time. It will be an easy walk.

Meeting place: Meet in the car park on Dalley Cres, Latham, at 8:20 for an 8:30 start. The carpark is about 50 metres from the intersection of Florey Drive and Dalley Cres.

Walking distance: 4 to 5 kms

End time (approx.): 11:30 am

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

Name of leader and contact details: Please **register** with the leader, Lia Battisson by email to liabattisson@outlook.com, providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Do so **before 7pm on**

Friday 8 September 2023 as numbers will be limited to 15.

Sunday 17 September – Urambi Hills NR

Joint outing with ACT Landcare for the Canberra Festival of Nature.

Meet at 8:30 am at the Meredith Circuit/Learmonth Drive entrance to Urambi Hills Nature Reserve.

This walk will explore the lower western slopes of Urambi Hills to Tuggeranong Creek. Then on the return route to Meredith Circuit, we will visit a few of the sites Michael surveys*, as well as other 'birdy' spots and note a few interesting plants in UHNR.

Registration essential mrobbins (at) home.netspeed.com.au, with your name and phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact. Maximum 20 attendees.

Please bring binoculars, a hat, water, sunscreen, morning tea and wear sturdy shoes.

* Michael has been helping the Urambi Hills Park Care group by conducting bird surveys each three months using the Woodland Bird Survey protocol at 8 sites in UHNR since 2017.

Michael Robbins

Sunday 24 September – Botanic Gardens Bushland Nature Walk

Start time: 9.00am. Finish around 11.00am

Description: This walk begins in the Botanic Gardens car park, crosses Black Mt Drive and then sidles around the southern side of Black Mt to a lookout with good views over the lake. The walk is through open forest and is a little over 3km return. The track itself involves some up and down, including some steps, and is rocky in parts, so solid footwear is recommended. Spring wildflowers should be in bloom and we hope for some of the returning migrant bird species.

Meeting time and place: Meet at 9.00am in the lower car park inside the Botanic Gardens, closest to Black Mt Drive.

Limit of 12 participants.

Register with Wendy Whitham by email to wendywhitham617@gmail.com with your name and mobile phone number, and the name and number of an emergency contact. If you need to ring me on the day, my mobile number is 0419 589 420.

Sunday 1 October - Private property, Majors Creek, near Braidwood

The property owners are in the process of establishing a wildlife corridor on their farm, about a third of which is woodland with a large dam.

Meet at 7.30 am in the Spotlight carpark at Queanbeyan for carpooling. We will take a maximum of 16 people in 4 cars. A barbeque lunch will follow a morning of birding.

Wear long pants and sturdy shoes, as snakes are likely to be out and about. Bring hat and morning tea.

Registration is essential to smlashko@gmail.com, with your name and phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Sue Lashko

Sunday 8 October – K2C surveys, Bredbo area

COG will continue with the K2C surveys that have been running since April 2010. The surveyed properties have healthy populations of many of the



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rarer woodland birds such as **Diamond Firetail**, **Hooded Robin** and **Speckled Warbler**. We will be visiting the same sites to continue the monitoring and see if we can add to the property lists with spring-summer migrants. The surveys will be undertaken in 'blitz' fashion; that is, observers in small groups will visit a number of sites on one or more properties before regrouping for lunch and a sharing of the survey's findings. Less experienced observers are welcome to join in the survey as each team will have at least one experienced observer. Anyone interested in participating is asked to **contact Nicki Taws before Wednesday 4 October**. Email: ntaws@bigpond.com or 0408 210 736.

Sunday 8 October - Kama NR

Note the change of date from 5 Nov. Further details will appear on the website.

Saturday 14 October - Australian National Botanic Gardens – beginners' outing

This morning walk aims specifically to help beginners and new members identify birds and to learn about their behaviour and calls. The Botanic Gardens are especially suitable for such an outing, as they allow the opportunity to observe a range of local bush birds in a variety of habitats. Due to the available food supply they are also a relative haven for birds during winter. Anthony Overs will lead this outing, which will consist of a stroll through this lovely part of Canberra for a couple of hours. Meet at 9.15am at the ANBG bus shelter.

Registration is essential; please provide your name and mobile phone number, as well as an emergency contact name and number. Book your place with Anthony (0419202155 or anthony.overs@gmail.com), who will be happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you. Please make sure to bring your binoculars and field guide. **If you do not have binoculars, please let me know as COG can supply you with a pair to use on the day.**

Note that the aim of the walk is to introduce you to bird-watching, not bird photography, so please leave your camera at home.

Sunday 15 October – Private property, Murrumbateman

This morning outing will be to a property which is part of Birdlife's Birds on Farms project. It is a former vineyard, with revegetated sites as well as remnant vegetation sites. There should be a good variety of woodland birds as well as spring migrants.

Meet at Hall Primary School in Hoskins Street, Hall, at 8.00am for carpooling.

Registration is essential to smlashko@gmail.com, with your name and phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Sue Lashko

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 October – COG's Bird Blitz

[See notice on Page 6 in this newsletter.](#)

Tuesday 24 to Friday 27 October - Shellharbour area

We will stay at the NRMA Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park, Shellharbour Village, (<https://www.nrmaparksandresorts.com.au/shellharbour-beachside/>) which offers villas, cabins and powered sites. Note that NRMA Blue members receive a discount. Numbers will be limited to 16, so please register early as bookings should be made soon. Advise me if you would like to share. **DO NOT book accommodation until I have confirmed your registration.**

We will explore nearby Killalea State Park, Lake Illawarra, Minnamurra and other sites recommended by members of the Illawarra Bird Observers Club who have offered to join us on walks and a joint dinner one evening. Visit their website - <https://www.iboc.com.au/> - for a list of their walks and bird species observed. We will encounter a range of waterbirds and shorebirds as well as bush birds and if we are lucky, an **Australian Logrunner**.

To register contact Prue Watters prue.watters@gmail.com

This trip is now full but if you wish to go on the waiting list, there is always the possibility that some people will cancel.

Spring Bird surveys on King Island

Birds of King Island are again coordinating our Spring Bird surveys on King Island. Please find more information and registration forms on our website: <https://www.birdsofkingisland.com/wings-on-king>

We would love volunteers to join us.



Wings on King

Spring Bird Surveys

9- 12th November 2023

We can't do it alone.
We need YOU to give us a hand

Agenda
9th- Welcome & Orientation
10th - Bird Surveys
11th Bird Surveys & dinner with guest speaker

REGISTRATIONS ARE NOW OPEN go to
<https://www.birdsofkingisland.com/register>

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<https://www.birdsofkingisland.com/>

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Field Trip Reports

Sunday 30 July — Gorooyarroo Nature Reserve

Twelve members and guests met at the southern end of the reserve on a pleasant and sunny winter morning. We were soon rewarded with excellent views of a pair of **Nankeen Kestrels**, and distant views of a pair of **Black-shouldered Kites**. The kestrels kept us company on and off as we walked along the main road through the reserve. There were plenty of noisy **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and a number of **Little Corellas**, often checking out hollows in the many large old trees in the reserve. The cockatoos raised the alarm when a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** flew overhead. We also had good views of a pair of **Brown Falcons** on several occasions during the morning. We flushed about 10 **Brown Quail**, giving us only the briefest of views before disappearing in the long grass. On our way back to the car park we went through a patch of sheoaks where we found, amongst other small birds, a pair of **Speckled Warblers** and a male **Rose Robin**. A total of 33 species was recorded.

Duncan McCaskill

Sunday 6 August – Bungendore Area

There were only five participants on this field trip. It was overcast, but lovely weather for ducks! At our first stop at the dam on Trucking Yard Lane, a pair of preening **Plumed Whistling-Ducks** on the side of the dam charmed us, whilst **Pacific Black Ducks** and **Grey Teal** swam on the dam and eight **Australian Shelducks** fed out in the fields. A **Eurasian Skylark** sang overhead. There was a large flock of **Little Corellas** feeding on the seed bins, interspersed with about 50 **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**. Other species there included both corvids. Our next stop was the Bungendore Common, where the most numerous species were **Eurasian Coot** and **Australasian Swamphen**. A **Grey Shrike-thrush** was seen carrying food. Here we added **Australian Wood Duck** to the duck list. At the Sewerage Treatment Plant we added **Australasian Shoveler**, **Hardhead** and **Chestnut Teal** and saw more of the same species that we had seen earlier. Our last stop was at the farm dam on Lake Road, where we added **Pink-eared Duck** and saw **Australasian** and **Hoary-headed Grebe**, **Black-fronted Dotterel** and two **White-fronted Chat**. In all, 50 species were recorded, including 9 different ducks. Thank you, Sandra, for organising and leading this outing.

Lia Battisson

Sunday 13 August – Cooleman Ridge

Ten people set out on a gloomy but dry morning to do a circuit of Cooleman Ridge. We started on the Chapman side and enjoyed the views of Weston Creek and beyond. **Crimson Rosellas** and **Satin Bowerbirds** were the most numerous birds early on. Diversity increased as we headed down the western side of the ridge with small birds such as **Superb Fairy-wrens**, pardalotes, various thornbills and a male **Scarlet Robin** showing themselves. The dam at the bottom was completely covered with Azolla and bright pink. Here we found the highlight of the morning, a **Southern Boobook** sitting on the ground beside the



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

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track! We were concerned that it might be ill or injured and it was an easy target for any unleashed dog. Fortunately, we had a former Parks ranger in the group. She carefully picked it up, checked it for injuries (none) and moved it behind a fence out of sight of passers-by. After a few moments it flew away slowly but apparently freely and we all breathed a sigh of relief. We concluded that it had probably collided with the metal gate it was sitting beside and was temporarily stunned. Two **Diamond Firetails** were a welcome sighting towards the end of the walk. In all, we saw 37 species in an area that's easy to get to but was new to some of the group.

Alison Mackerras

Wednesday 16 August – Molonglo River Reserve Woodland Walk

Sandra, as always, did an excellent job of delivering on the birds advised as likely to be seen.

I believe all participants on the COG 16 August 2023 Wednesday Walk had good views of **White-fronted Chat**, and most saw **Red-browed Finch**, and the **Nankeen Kestrel**, which was the only raptor seen. Before seeing the **White-fronted Chat**, both **Welcome Swallow** and **Australasian Grebe** were seen.

The historic relics were viewed, as was the wonderful old Apple Box, but not the Varied Sittella, Brown Treecreeper, Superb Parrot or Sacred Kingfisher shown on the signs. Probably another trip to this excellent woodland walk is warranted. There was however an abundance of **Superb Fairy-wrens** in several locations, and of **Brown Thornbills**, in at least in one area. We also saw and heard **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**. **Weebills** were also heard, but no Buff-rumped Thornbill. **Common Starling** and **Common Myna**, along with much blackberry, and other weeds, reminded us of the impact of colonisation. However, they, along with **Pied Currawong**, **Australian Magpie** (nest building) and **Australian Raven** added to our total list of 30 species. A single **Golden-headed Cisticola** was seen by some attendees and most saw the **White-faced Heron**, including in flight. Except for those of us who walked ahead, most saw the **Willy Wagtail**, **White-plumed Honeyeater**, and **Red Wattlebird**. A single **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** and single **Grey Butcherbird** were heard. Multiple **Red-rumped Parrots**, **Crimson Rosellas**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and **Galahs** were seen and heard. **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** were only heard.

Of the non bird fauna, probably the most interesting sighting was of a few Wallaroo, among the many Eastern Grey Kangaroo.

Michael Robbins

Sunday 27 August – Percival Hill

Seven members and guests gathered in Crace on a sunny late winter morning. We headed across Gundaroo Drive towards Percival Hill in Nicholls. In the shrubs along Ginninderra Creek we found **Red-browed Finches**, **European Goldfinches** and **Yellow Thornbills**. Crossing the Gungahlin Pond dam wall gave us good views of the water birds in the pond, which included many **Eurasian Coots**, a few **Black Swans** and a **Darter** on the dam wall. The Percival Hill reserve had typical woodland birds such as plenty of **Weebills**, plus **Yellow-rumped**, **Buff-rumped**, **Striated** and **Brown Thornbills**. **Brown-headed Honeyeaters** could be heard in the distance. On the western side of the hill we found an active **White-winged Chough** nest and the old trees on that side of the hill attracted the interest of cockatoos and **Rainbow Lorikeets**. The pond next to the golf course had a number of **Hardheads** and **Australasian** and **Hoary-headed Grebes**. On the way back to the carpark there was a **Black-shouldered Kite** sitting in a small tree near the creek. We ended up with 51 species for the morning. Many thanks to Bill for organizing the outing.

Duncan McCaskill

Galah
European Goldfinch
Sandra Henderson



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:

S Dorji
B Dunne

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for October 2023 edition:

Wednesday 29 September 2023

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

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.

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