



Gang-gang

NOVEMBER 2023

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

NOVEMBER MEETING

Wednesday 8 November 2023
AGM followed by normal COG meeting

7.30 pm

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

The November 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.

AGM – see details under Annual Reports and Administrative Papers

Libby Robin - Canberra Ornithologists Group goes International

After the AGM (for details [see p 7](https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/) or <https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/>) there will be a single speaker.

Libby Robin, Emeritus Professor from the Fenner School of Environment and Society at the ANU, will be presenting on “**Canberra Ornithologists Group goes International**”, a major inclusion in her recently published book *What Birdo is That? A Field Guide to Bird People*.

[Continued Page 2](#)

Everyone welcome

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

The unseasonably warm weather continued to the end of the first of the 4 weeks from 27 September to 25 October inclusive covered by this column, when we had our best rainfall event for around 6 months. While the weather has been variable since, with some cool and often windy days and fewer warm ones, the only two small rain events has meant that by the end of the period conditions had dried off considerably, the most it has for nearly 4 years.

My feeling that bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (AoI) was more active before the significant rain event seems to be supported by my analysis below, with one exception all of the regular spring/summer migrants being well-established by then. In contrast, the coastal migrants, the **Eastern Koel** and the **Rainbow Bee-eater**, were relatively slow to arrive, and there have only been single reports of the passage migrants, the **Common Cicadabird**, **Satin Flycatcher** and **Rufous Fantail**. There were also fewer “unusual” species reported than was the case in September when there was an influx of “unusual” waterbird species.

When I mentioned in my previous column perhaps some more unexpected species from the fast-drying inland will arrive in October, I had 3 species particularly in mind. The first of these, the **Black-eared Cuckoo**, which was very soon reported on 28 September by Ben Milbourne in Stockdill Drive, Holt (from the Shepherds Lookout Carpark to the road end), with the very clear photos (including one of the bird clinging to a fence!) leaving no

[Continued Page 2](#)



Black-eared Cuckoo

Ben Milbourne

NOVEMBER MEETING *continued from Page 1*

It is nearly exactly 50 years since Canberra hosted the first meeting in the Southern Hemisphere of the venerable International Ornithologists' Congress (IOC) in 1974. Ninety years after its first meeting in Paris in 1884, the IOC broke with its tradition of European meetings and came to Australia.

Libby will explore the way local birdos pitched in to make the social and intellectual life of the congress in a very young city rich and varied. The conference's theme focused on the contributions made by the Southern Hemisphere to bird-knowledge. Its presenters included many of the leading scientists of the day. International conservation negotiations were also important. The XVI World Conference of the International Council for Bird Preservation, also met in Canberra, straight after the IOC.

What made all the intellectual and diplomatic achievements possible, however, was the work of the local organising group, who found themselves hosting unexpected birding excursions, and helping people who'd had a very difficult time getting to Australia in very practical ways. It was August and it snowed! Other complications included a major airline strike (delegates found themselves stuck in remote parts of Australia). There was no oil for the heating because of an embargo. But with some high-level negotiating from the Australian Academy of Science and others, and the energetic enthusiasm of COG volunteers and CSIRO family members on the ground, the Canberra IOC was voted a resounding success.

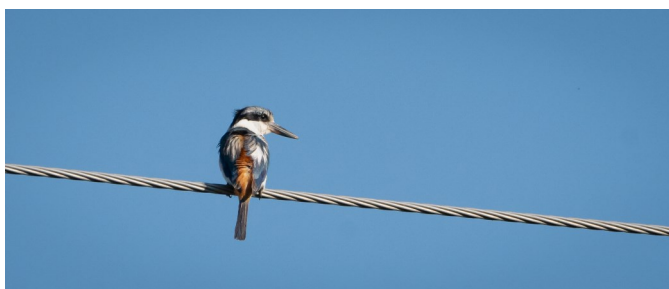
Summary/analysis of the past month and what to watch out for this month

continued from Page 1

doubt as to its identity. Many others were then able to find and photograph (again some lovely clear images) this bird over this area up to 2 October, but with no further reports.

It was certainly one of the more co-operative birds of this often-elusive species, which COG's 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR) notes as a rare, non-breeding visitor, with Canberra on the edge of its range from the dry inland. In keeping with this the most recent multiple reports of this species were from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR in January 2020 before the drought broke, with only the single further report of one calling there in December of that year.

The second was the **Red-backed Kingfisher**, also first reported by Ben Milbourne, again with clear pictures, from 1-27 Recycling circuit Macnamara (near Parkwood right on the ACT/NSW border), on 30 September. Possibly due to the more restricted access this bird was only reported by 5 others in the area up to 5 October, but then not until one was photographed near there on 20 October. Then on the afternoon of 22 October Gail Neumann reported a kingfisher-shaped bird at Bluetts Block sitting perched on a small dead tree with its "head black/white streaked, an orange rump, blue coverts, no colour in underparts. The back was streaked black/white indicating that it is a juvenile."



Red-backed Kingfisher

Ben Milbourne

While she only had a distant photo, her correct identification was fully confirmed (including it being a juvenile bird, as the Parkwood bird also appeared to be) by photos from 3 other birders later that day (it was clearly one of the highlights from the COG Blitz) as well as 2 observers on 24 October. In this case the 2018-2019 ABR lists it as a breeding vagrant, with "This inland species appears here occasionally". In keeping with this, the eBird map shows only the single "record" on the COG Aol since the start of 2018, the very famous and long observed bird at Campbell Park from 13 September to 21 October 2021.

October. His comments were: "Small honeyeater with very noticeable red bill and eye, upper parts black, yellow edges to flight and tail feathers. Both birds together within 50 m of Sanctuary loop. Call as per Pizzey and Knight.". He didn't mention that the call is diagnostic and is often described as a repeated: *Georg-ee, Georg-ee, Georg-ee*", so listen out for this call which is usually the first clue to its presence.

The third species was the **Painted Honeyeater**, two of which were reported by Peter Morris at the Tidbinbilla NR Visitor Centre on 20

Despite it being the COG Blitz weekend, no-one else seems to have located these birds, which the 2018-2019 COG ABR lists as a rare breeding visitor which is declared vulnerable in the ACT and NSW. The eBird map shows it was last reported from the Mulligans Flat NR on 30 December 2020, after having been frequently reported from Campbell Park from October to December of that year.

Of the spring/summer migrants first reported during September, the following species from the drying inland, the **Pallid Cuckoo**, **White-winged Triller** and **Rufous Songlark** are all well established by now, with the number of locations far higher than during the 3 wet years. The same applies to the **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallow**, though fewer of the latter, which predominates in the western half of their range, seem to have been reported in the latter part of the period. The **Brown Songlark** (for which there was just the single report in September) has also been regularly reported, but with only single reports from 2 locations compared to the many from the Parkwood area, a known favourite spot for them.

Unexpectedly, there have been further reports of the **Horsfield's Bushlark** (also just a single report in September) from 3 locations only, single birds on Parkwood Road Wallaroo on 7 October, a bird in Sutton before 11 October, and 2 birds on the Wollogorang Rd on 13 October. Notwithstanding, and noting the presence of the 3 less regular inland species above, there certainly has been a much bigger influx of birds from the W than for the past 3 springs.

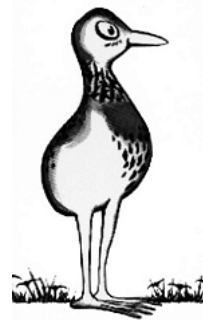
Of the coastal spring/summer migrants first reported during September, the **Sacred Kingfisher**, **White-throated Gerygone** and **Leaden Flycatcher**, and to a lesser extent, the **Dollarbird**, are all well established by now. However, the **Rainbow Bee-eater**, for which there was just a single report 24 September, has been particularly slow to arrive, with the next reports not until 3 and 7 October, and at the time of writing reports from only 7 further locations on eBird. Likewise, apart from the reports in early September, there have been reports of the **Brush Cuckoo**, which usually first arrives in October, from only 2 further locations, single birds calling at Mulligans Flat NR on 30 September, and in the Yass Valley from 18-24 October.

The **Eastern Koel** has also been slower to arrive than in the past few springs. After the first report of 2 birds on 19 September, the next reports were of calling in O'Connor, Watson and Griffith from around 4 October. There were then a number of further reports (with the first bird actually seen being 6 October in Kaleen), so that by the 11 October COG meeting its presence was relatively well-established, though people were still reporting hearing their first calls by around 20-21 October. An interesting feature was that most of the reports were the result of my direct request on the COG chat line rather than on eBird. Also, almost all of the calls in my local patch of Chapman/Rivett were of the male "*ko-el*", with my first female *kek keks keks* not heard until 20 October. It then was seen flying over to a calling male which in response uttered several *whoas*, only the second time I had heard that call this season.

Of the spring/summer migrants (all coastal) which usually arrive in October there have been two reports of the **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, a bird heard at the Goulburn Wetlands (just inside the COG Aol) on 18 October, and in Aranda on 19 October. There has been only the single report of the **Common Cicadabird**, two birds seen and heard at the Vanity's Crossing Road in the Pierces Creek Forest on 20 October. Interestingly, after the passage migrant the **Rufous Fantail** was reported from Bluett's Block on 9 September, there has only been one further report of one at Yass Gorge on 26 September.

Similarly, there has only been the single report of the passage migrant, the **Satin Flycatcher**, a male bird at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 11 October. While there was a "dark shiny sheen to feathers, flat breast demarcation line with slight frowny-face downwards pitch towards the end." the photos also provided the diagnostic feature, the black undertail contrasting sharply with the white chest and belly, I outlined in my presentation to COG on 13 September.

So, during November please keep a lookout for the species mentioned above which have only arrived so far in small numbers, in particular the coastal spring/summer migrants which seem to have been very slow to arrive so far.



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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



Scarlet Robin nest, Scarlet Robins Cedric Bear

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 12 and over 30 urban/peri-urban locations, well down from September but indicating some were still staying close to urban areas. In contrast the **Scarlet Robin** has largely moved away, reported from just 8 such locations, 4 of which were in the Mulligans Flat NR area, from where Cedric Bear recently recorded 2 different instances of their breeding. One was an adult on a nest and the other was parents feeding a fledgling out of the nest (see photo). The **Flame Robin** was still reported from around 3 such locations, all in the Gungahlin area, with the remaining locations well away from Canberra, indicating how much further it tends to travel to breed.

The **Rose Robin** has only been reported from 4 locations W of the Murrumbidgee River, well down from the 16 in September, of which half were urban/peri urban locations. Not surprisingly there were again no **Pink Robins** reported (the nearest report again was to the NE of Melbourne), but there have been reports from around 15 locations of the inland species, the **Red-capped Robin**, well up from September and again reflecting the drying inland.

There were reports of the **Crescent Honeyeater** from 2 urban/peri-urban locations two records from the ANBG, and a single one from Symonston, but only one other one to the W of the Murrumbidgee River. Again, there were no reports of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, **Swift Parrot** or **Brown Gerygone** during the period, but a **Bassian Thrush** was still reported from the ANBG on 21 October.

So please look out for the above species as they continue to move away from Canberra and its surrounds during November.

Apart from the inland species mentioned above, compared with September there were fewer "unusual" birds reported, including the waterbirds that featured then. While no further **Magpie Geese** were reported, the **Freckled Duck** continued to be present in increasing numbers at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR throughout the period, with a maximum of 10 ducks seen on 18 October. There were also 3 ducks reported on a roadside dam in Sutton on 18 October.

Four **Plumed Whistling Ducks** were also reported from the same dam on 18 October, but otherwise 2 ducks were reported only from the Trucking Yard Lane dam on 2 and 22 October. The **Australian Shelduck** was reported from 11 locations to the E and NE of Canberra during the period, with by far the maximum number for some time being the 350 ducks reported by Luke Downey at the N end of Lake George on 27 September. He noted that a huge flock was flushed from the far bank, which then wheeled over and landed on the close side.

Up to 11 **Blue-billed Ducks**, including two groups of 3 and 4 half-grown ducklings on 16 and 21 October, were regularly reported from the Upper Stranger Pond during the period, as were up to 2 ducks reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, with a pair observed displaying there on 15 October. Apart from the Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary, up to 4 **Musk Ducks** were reported from 4 locations.

Up to 5 **Great-crested Grebes** were reported from the Cotter Dam, with the only other report being a single bird on 13 October on the Murrumbidgee River at Bloomfield Flats in the NW of the COG Aol. **Stubble Quail** are clearly starting to call again, but not yet to the same extent as in previous wetter years, with up to 3 birds reported from 13 locations during the period, compared with 4 locations in September. Up to 3 **Brown Quail** were also reported from 13 locations, slightly up from September. Up to 3 **Painted Button-quail** were reported from 7 locations (similar to September), and a **Little Button-quail** was reported from the horse paddocks in Hall on 17 September.

Single **Peaceful Doves** were reported only from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 28 September, and from the West Belconnen Pond on 8 October, but there were no **White-headed Pigeons**, **Brush Bronzewing**, **Diamond** or **Bar-shouldered Doves** reported during the period.

The crane influx has continued but was mainly focused at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR where the **Baillon's Crane** was reported by many observers with a maximum of 5 on 19 October. Otherwise up to 3 birds were reported from 3 locations. The **Spotless Crane** was also regularly reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, with 2 birds seen on a number of occasions, and with reports of single birds at 5 other locations. The **Australian Spotted Crane** was also regularly reported the same location, with a maximum of 3 birds on 22 October, as well as single birds from 2 other locations. Single **Buff-banded Rails** were reported from 5 locations, again most frequently from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, but in contrast single **Lewin's Rails** were reported once only from 2 locations, from the Ginninderra Creek at Giralang on 15 October, and from Smiths Rd on 18 October.

Up to 14 **Banded Lapwings** were reported from Wollagorang Rd during the period, the only location from which they were observed. Up to 8 **Pied Stilts** were reported from the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman during the period, but 25 birds were recorded at the N end of Lake

George on 27 September. Ten **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** were photographed from the cygnus hide at Kelly's Swamp by Deb and Rod Ralph on 11 October, who noted they did several very fast turns above the water and then they were off after a few of them had quick dips while flying. No other birders observed them there and there was only one further report of a single bird on the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 16 October.

No **Red-necked Avocets**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Red-necked Stints**, **Pectoral Sandpiper**, or **Australian Little Bittern** were reported during the period, nor was the **Common Sandpiper**, which after 4 seasons there does not appear to have returned to around Lake Tuggeranong this spring. A **Whiskered Tern** was reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR peninsula on 22 October, with the only other report being a single bird at the N end of Lake George on 27 September. Likewise, there was only a report of a **Caspian Tern** was from Alexandra Drive Yarralumla on 29 September.

No **Little Egret** was reported during the period, but an **Intermediate Egret** was regularly reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR. In contrast **Great Egrets** were reported from 17 locations, well up from 10 in September, perhaps reflecting a drying inland. This is supported by **White-necked Herons** reported from 26 locations (again well up from the 10 in September). Up to 4 **Royal Spoonbills** were also reported 7 locations (up from 2 in September), and single **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** from 3 locations, but no **Glossy Ibis** were reported during the period.

No **Barn Owls** were reported during the period, but **Black-shouldered Kites** were still reported from around 50 locations (similar to September). A white morph **Grey Goshawk** was reported from Jerrabomberra Creek, Symonston on 6 October, and a **Spotted Harrier** on the Wollogorang Rd on 16 October. A **Black Kite** was reported from grassland on the N end of Lake George on 7 October, but there were no reports of the **Pacific Baza** or **Black Falcon** during the period.

An **Azure Kingfisher** was only reported from the Cotter River on 10 October. Fourteen **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** were reported from the Scotts Nature reserve on 15 October, with a further one there on 21 October. However, no **Cockatiel**, **Turquoise Parrots**, **Greater Bluebonnets** and **Purple-crowned, Scaly-breasted** or **Little Lorikeets** were reported over the period, and a **Musk Lorikeet** was reported only from Garran on 23 October.

A **Scarlet Honeyeater** was first reported from the ANBG by Sandra Henderson on 7 October, after which many birders observed up to 3 birds there to 12 October. A **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** was reported to the S of Canberra on 12 October, with then 2 birds there on 19 October, and up to 4 **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** were observed in Yass during the period. A **Singing Honeyeater** was photographed in Dunlop on 24 October. No **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period.

Four **White-fronted Chats** were reported only from the main dam at the National Arboretum on 21 October, as well as up to 4 from the Wollogorang Rd during the period. Two **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** were reported only from Whiskers Creek Rd Carwoola on 20-21 October, but no **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes**, **White-browed Babbler**, **Spangled Drongo**, **Tawny Grassbird** or **Zebra Finches** were reported during the period.

Again, the relatively few "unusual" bush birds (except for the 3 inland species at the start of this column), in particular parrots as shown by the above 3 paragraphs, is a bit puzzling.

Of the birds I have continued to ask readers to keep a special lookout for in 2023, **Jacky Winters** were reported from 4 locations during the period, with single birds on 8 and 14 October at Yass Gorge, and at Mulligans Flat NR between 29 September to 2 October (both new locations, the latter at least in recent years), with up to 2 birds on several occasions at the Gambles TSR in Sutton, and two birds also at Illilanga on 9 October (both known locations). Two birds were also reported from the COG Woodland Survey at the rural lease near Tharwa on 24 September, again a known location.



Hooded Robin (K2C survey)

Marcus Hellyer

The **Hooded Robin** was also reported from at least 4 locations, a new one being a single bird at Bredbo (a new location) on 8 October, with several at Scottsdale on the same day. These were during the K2C surveys where I was very pleased to find a pair at a very burnt out and poorly recovering site at Ingelara, where I had recorded them several times before the 2020 fires. There were others recorded during the K2C surveys, but I don't have the details. However, two birds were also recorded at 3 sites S of Bredbo (just outside the COG Aol) between 7-15 October, showing how the stronghold for this species in the COG Aol remains to the S of Canberra. Indeed, the eBird map shows that they have been recorded at only 4 sites well to N of Canberra since the beginning of 2018.

Restless Flycatchers were reported from 3 locations, with 3 birds at the Glendale Depot on 29 September (and a single bird on 19 October), and a single bird at the Kambah Pool NR on 19-20 October (a new site, at least in recent times). However, most observations were from the Nelanglo TSR, where up to 2 birds were regularly observed and photographed, including of

nest on 30 September (the adult seen on it prior to picture being taken). However, the outcome of this is unclear, with none of the subsequent eBird reports mentioning it.

Apart from the **Blue-billed Ducks**, **Scarlet Robin** and **Restless Flycatcher** mentioned above some other October breeding reports follow:

- In early October Nicki Taws posted that as she walked out after her Goorooyaroo COG woodland surveys she came across a pair of **Masked Lapwings** with 2 medium-sized chicks, so she started on a wide detour to avoid the wrath of the parents. The adults were feeding some distance from the chicks and a low flying **Australian Raven** took advantage of this, swooping low and plucking one of the chicks off the ground. The parents took off in mad pursuit, the first one to reach it hitting the Raven at full speed. The chick was released and fell to the ground, bounced a couple of times and scuttled off into the grass to live another day. This illustrates very clearly the caution in my previous column about the need to take great care around breeding birds as even when trying to minimise the impact the adults might be distracted just long enough to allow a predator an opportunity to take even relatively advanced young.
- For at least the third year in a row the **Tawny Frogmouths** on Cooleman Ridge I have been following for many years have built a nest but then subsequently not used it. Stuart Rae suggested it could be a single bird which part builds a nest and calls at night. He's not sure if males or females or both do this. To me it is a puzzle why it has not been able to find a new partner, considering the successful breeding not that far away.
- Since 27 September I have been seeing quite a few **Red Wattlebird** (RWBs) fledglings or hearing their typical begging in my local patch of Chapman/Rivett. This includes at one stage 2 different brood relatively advanced ones, one of which was within 10 metres of a nest where two large chicks were being fed. This underlines again my understanding that when RWBs are breeding they do not seem to hold down strict territories. Also once fledged the 2 young were nearly independent within a week, so much shorter that when RWBs host **Eastern Koel** fledglings which are dependent for around 3 weeks. With the relatively late arrival it is unlikely that many RWBs will host Koels in their second brood hatching around December, more likely their third brood around late January/February. This is a major reason why local RWBs remain a successful species despite being heavily parasitised by Koels.
- The **Australian Hobby** nest I mentioned in my previous column has continued, but from around 17 October it was hard to find the one bird often on sentry duty. So I checked more closely on 21 October and when close I heard one bird coming in calling, with the other coming off the nest and after a couple of small circuits around the tree both birds perched about a meter apart. The larger bird (the presumed female) proceeded to pluck (with feathers flying) a small bird or part of one (it may have been exchanged during circuits), over 5 minutes, seeming to eat it at the end, with the smaller bird sitting quietly slightly lower. The female then moved up a bit and did a small circuit before landing near the nest calling softly. I could not see it feed, but it did seem to move on to it pretty quickly. HANZAB indicates the larger female does most of the incubation with the smaller male providing most or all the food to it during then. The female also seems to do most of the direct feeding of the chicks for the first weeks.



White-winged Triller (K2C survey)

Marcus Hellyer

This was by far the highlight of my COG Blitz weekend, just 50 metres outside my GBS site, with my survey covering nearly the whole of Cooleman Ridge being very disappointing except for a couple of surprises. I agree very strongly with Mark Clayton, Michael Lenz and others, that the current bird life is nowhere near as varied as it once was, even after 3 wet years and with superficially at least the vegetation etc looking much the same. Birding on Cooleman Ridge was great for around 5 years after the January 2003 fires, but rapidly fell away after that with once common spring/summer visitors such as the **White-winged Triller**, the **Dusky Woodswallow** and **Rufous Songlark** no longer breeding, in fact hardly visiting there. The situation at Narrabundah Hill is only slightly better.

However, I strongly disagree that we should develop a new national Bird Atlas, which would take at least 10 years to plan, fund, gather the data and then analyse and publish it. By that time the situation will be even more dire, if not completely irreversible. There is plenty of evidence out there already, and what is needed is to gather the data from all sources (in whatever form) and condense it into a readable document rather than a very thick atlas, so that this can be brought to governments' attention as soon as possible. Then of course it's another thing to get them to read and act upon it in the face of other strong lobbies, just look at how hard it's proving to get proper protection for Bluetts Block in spite of having a "friendly" labor/green government. Or proper action on climate change.

In respect of large flocks Andrea and I observed another one of **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos**, this time of conservatively 75 birds at the SW corner of Narrabundah Hill on 1 October. Again no one else seems to have recorded anywhere near that many in the area.

Finally, there have been a number of very interesting urban sightings of the **Superb Lyrebird**, with on 11 and 18 August Lindell Emerton photographing one in Shackelton Circuit Mawson. She noted "This lone bird has been in my and my neighbours' yards for the past week.

There is plenty of leaf-litter for him to fossick in for feed and plenty of dense trees to roost in at night.” Then from at least 16 September one has been present at the Landmark Apartments in Barton where apparently it got trapped on one of the balconies and the resident had to free it. It has also been tossing stones out of their pots and tucking into their plants with one resident in particular wanting it removed. Where this bird comes from (assuming it’s the same one) is a mystery, with Mawson being > 5 km away from the nearest known presence location at Kambah Pool on eBird.

So please watch out for more of the remaining returning spring/summer migrants (particularly the coastal ones) mentioned above, for the last of the leaving altitudinal migrants, for roost sites and flights, and in particular for spring breeding activity before conditions become too dry. 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

Notice of the COG Annual General Meeting for 2023

Wednesday 8 November 2023, 7.30pm

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc. (Canberra Birds) will be held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 8 November 2023 in the usual venue at Canberra Girls’ Grammar School. Reminder: only financial members can vote.

Please send apologies to cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au.

As previously advised, the meeting will be a combined meeting – in-person or by Zoom.

The link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89483563926?pwd=aFVsN293TGNad3g4d2RscHJaY3U1Zz09>

Email cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au if you have trouble connecting and we will try to help.

If you do attend by Zoom, please email cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au during the meeting to record your attendance.

The agenda and financial reports are available here - <https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/>

Committee news

The Canberra Birds Annual General Meeting will be held on 8 November. The agenda and financial papers can be found at <http://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/>. For more information, see the notice elsewhere in this issue of Gang-gang.

The annual barbecue will be on 13th December at Black Mountain Peninsula from 6 pm. More details in the December Gang-gang.

The next 'Coffee & Chat' event at ANBG will be on Tuesday 14th November from 9:30 am to 11:30 am. Note: this Coffee & Chat will be the week after the AGM, rather than the day before.

Recent Submissions

None this month

Neil Hermes *President* Alison Mackerras *Minutes Secretary*

Advance notice of the COG Christmas Barbeque

Black Mountain Peninsula
(John Cardiff Close)

6.00 pm Wednesday 13 December 2023

Sausages, bread, onions, beer, wine and non-alcoholic drinks provided.

Please bring either a salad or a dessert, plus serving spoons, to share. You will also need to bring plates, cutlery, glasses, table and chairs.

There will be the usual monthly raffle.



Field Trip Reports

Sunday 1 October – private property, Majors Creek

This outing resulted from an invitation from the property owners who were keen to know what birds were on their farm as they embarked on a major undertaking to improve their recently acquired property through the use of Natural Sequence Farming, “a proven method for improving soil health, biodiversity, and water retention”.

We began with a guided tour of what they had achieved so far, following the five pillars of Natural Sequence Farming:

- Return to the top to recycle the lot
- Filtration is a must-know
- Careful where the animals go
- Let all plants grow
- Slow the flow

After 2 years of digging extra water collection ponds and channels to slow the water, and routing water through piles of woody debris and compost to add nutrients to the land, among other strategies, the valley below the house was green and lush. It was surrounded by a productive treed area which produced a good suite of birds including **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Striated Pardalote**, **White-throated Gerygone**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **Yellow-faced**, **White-plumed** and **White-naped Honeyeaters**, and **Rufous Whistler**. The farm dam yielded **Grey Teal**, **White-faced Heron** and **Little Pied Cormorant**.



Blotched Bluetongue

Ben Milbourne

The rest of the property has just a few trees as yet but, as work proceeds downstream, revegetation will occur. Nevertheless, in these open areas we recorded **Black-shouldered Kite**, **European Goldfinch**, **Australasian Pipit** and two female **Flame Robins**.

A total of 34 species was recorded and we hope to improve on that when we visit in two years' time. Thanks to the property owners for the invitation and for the delicious slow-cooked beef on fresh rolls!

Sue Lashko

Sunday 8 October – Kama NR

Muriel led a most interesting walk along the dam circuit at Kama NR for the five COG members who'd overcome the challenge of parking.

Soon after we passed through the entrance gate we saw two or three bronze-cuckoo mucking around in small saplings nearby and thanks to Teo's photos, we were able to confirm these as **Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo**, which was the only cuckoo call heard. We also noticed lots of birds in the eucalypt which was flowering on the right side of the track, including **Varied Sittella**, **White-winged Triller**, **Striated Pardalote**, **Rufous Whistler** (both a female and 2nd year male), and **Crimson Rosella** and **Eastern Rosella**.

We heard a **Superb Parrot**, and plenty of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**. Everyone managed to get good views of the **Varied Sittella**, and were delighted to see more later in our walk, including a nest-building pair. We also had good views of the three male **White-winged Triller**, which we saw more of later on. It took a long time to get to the first gate as we carefully looked at and photographed **Brown-headed Honeyeater**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, and gawked at the long uneven V of 34 **Great Cormorant** flying over Kama showing their clear white throat patches.

With such interesting species to watch we paid little attention to the **Superb Fairywren**. We did pay close attention to the few **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, which helped later when confirming our sightings of **Buff-rumped Thornbill**. Roy thought he saw a **Flame Robin**; however, a search didn't re-find it.

I said I was disappointed at not hearing any gerygone, but soon after we did hear a **White-throated Gerygone**, and possibly more on our walk back from the dam where we saw two **Australasian Grebe** in breeding plumage. Everyone enjoyed seeing **Dusky Woodswallow**, several **Laughing Kookaburra**, a single male **Red-rumped Parrot**, a single **Willie Wagtail**, one **Common Starling** and not many **Australian Magpie**, and we felt honoured that one of the many **Grey Fantail** showed us its nest. Our only raptor was a soaring **Brown Goshawk**. To top off our morning, as we were finishing our bird call of 32 species, an **Olive-backed Oriole** posed about 20 m away.

Michael Robbins

Sunday 8 October – K2C surveys, Bredbo area

The K2C surveys were held on a relatively calm and mild spring day. After several of these surveys being interrupted by wet weather and Covid, we were fortunate in being able to meet up at the Scottsdale Reserve for lunch after the morning's surveys. Three properties had to be done the following weekend but conditions were similar. We amassed a total of 97 species, which is close to the highest total we have had. The drying conditions inland were reflected in sightings of a flock of about 80 **White-browed Woodswallow** and a couple of **Masked Woodswallow** south of Bredbo. A Pied Butcherbird was sighted on one property near Michelago and records of this species are becoming regular from the region, although whether it is the same bird or several is not known.

We covered 34 sites across 18 different properties. As usual, the number of threatened and declining species recorded was encouraging: **Dusky Woodswallow** (11 properties), **Speckled Warbler** (6), **Brown Treecreeper** (7), **Diamond Firetail** (6), **Hooded Robin** (4), **Varied Sittella** (4, which is an unusually high number), **Southern Whiteface** (3), **White-winged Triller** (3), **Flame Robin** (2), **Scarlet Robin** (1), and **Jacky Winter** (1). There were breeding records for **Eastern Rosella**, **White-browed Scrubwren**, **Striated Thornbill**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Australian Magpie**, **White-winged Chough**, and a great record of **Southern Whiteface** in a nest built in a shed between the sarking and the roof.

We are very grateful to the landholders for their ongoing support for and interest in the surveys. Thanks to the COG members who help out and to Bush Heritage for supporting us. The next surveys are in April 2024.

Nicki Taws



Diamond Firetail, White-throated Gerygone *Marcus Hellyer*



Grey Shrike-thrush, Varied Sittella *Marcus Hellyer*

Sunday 15 October – private property, Murrumbateman

Ten COG members were treated to a delightful expedition, led by Sue Lashko, to visit a private property near Murrumbateman. Our host, Gill, participates in Birdlife's *Birds on Farms* project and has been revegetating and regenerating trees on her property for many years. We circumnavigated the farm for three and a half hours, saw kangaroo and a Frill-necked Lizard, and were charmed by her beautiful alpacas.

Highlights of our birding expedition included getting a great view of a beautiful pair of **Superb Parrots** engaged in what we think was courtship behaviour, and finding a good variety of spring migrants. We tracked and eventually all enjoyed watching a pair of **Olive-backed Orioles** flying around a beautiful area of remnant trees, and a pair of **Sacred Kingfishers** were acting and calling as though they had a nest nearby. Some saw a **Shining Bronze Cuckoo**, and a **Leaden Flycatcher**. **White-throated** and **Western Gerygones**, and **Noisy Friarbirds** were all quite vocal.

A pair of **Striated Pardalotes** were flying in and out of their tree hollow, a pair of **Varied Sittellas** showed well, and **Rufous Whistlers** were calling everywhere. **Yellow**, **Buff-rumped**, **Brown** and **Striated Thornbills** were recorded, as well as **Silvereyes** and **Superb Fairy-wrens**. We saw flocks of **Straw-necked Ibis**, a **White-faced Heron**, a **Little Pied Cormorant** and **Australian White Ibis** overhead.

It was a fantastic morning on a beautiful property, with a total of 37 bird species recorded.

Mary Pekin



Sacred Kingfisher, Olive-backed Oriole, Frill-necked Lizard
Ben Milbourne



COG members at Murrumbateman property, Superb Parrots, Varied Sittella

Tee Tong Teo

Wednesday 18 October – Lyrebird Trail, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve

There were only six participants for this field trip, including a non-member who was attending for the first time. It was a mild, still morning and very quiet on the trail. From the car park we had nice views of **White-browed Scrubwrens** and thornbill species, before we set off up the hill. **Golden Whistlers** were heard all along the path and we managed to have lovely views of one male. There was evidence of **Superb Lyrebird** activity in several places on the sides of the path and one screeched and flew off into the dense scrub as we startled it off the path ahead of us. Other highlights were a **Bassian Thrush** near the waterfall and the voice of a **Rose Robin** which was tantalisingly close to the track, but out of sight. A total of 28 species was recorded.

Note that the Trail is no longer known as the Lyrebird Trail. It is now labelled as the Cascade Trail.

Lia Battisson

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.

Sunday 5 November – Glenburn Precinct

The Glenburn precinct is a large area of modified grassland (formerly grazing land) with some woodland and (minor) creekline habitats. There are interesting heritage structures. We will do the classic 12km Glenburn circuit, and hopefully see a good range of grassland and woodland birds. More information is at: https://www.parks.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1077827/the-glenburn-precinct-heritage-trails.pdf

There is not much shade from trees, meaning that sun protection (hats, sunglasses and sunblock) is all the more important. Bring, too, plenty of water, morning tea and lunch. If it is too hot a day, I will choose another venue - most likely in forested high country. Meet at Spotlight in Queanbeyan at 8.00am for subsequent carpooling to Glenburn. Numbers limited to 12.

Registration is essential to david.dedenczuk@gmail.com or 0417 222 154, with your name and phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

David Dedenczuk

Sunday 12 November – Campbell Park nest workshop

Description: This outing will be a repeat of the very popular and practical nest workshops held over the past twenty years. As usual it will be a very informal outing which has been timed to coincide with the peak of the breeding season. The morning will start with the usual very short presentation, including tips on the types of nests built by different species of birds, and how to find nests or nesting behaviour. This will be followed by several hours putting this into practice, with participants looking for breeding behaviour, signs of nests, etc. This will also allow plenty of opportunities for bird watching. The workshop is particularly suitable for beginners or those relatively new to bird watching, though more experienced members and repeat customers are also very welcome.

Walking distance: While every year has been different, we often don't walk very far as there usually is a "hot spot" where most of the breeding activity occurs around 500 m from where we park. Maximum distance = 2.0 km of easy flat walking.

End Time: Between 11 am and 12 pm. Please remember to take morning tea which we will have out in the field.

Meeting time and place: Meet at 8:00 am at the far end of the car park. Take Northcott Drive up to the start of the Campbell Park Offices, where you take the right fork and keep to the outside of the very large car park, skirting it until you

get to the end. Intending participants might also like to look at the Campbell Park map on the COG website under the 'Maps, Forms and Lists' button.

Name of leader and contact details: Registration is essential no later than Friday 10 November. To participate, please register with Jack Holland (6288 7840) or preferably by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com – please include your name and phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Wednesday 15 November - Molonglo River loop walk

We will start near the RSPCA and walk a 4.5km loop, taking in an area where the three common cormorant species and darters nest each year. **Meet** at 8.30am near the RSPCA (there is plenty of parking nearby at North Weston Ponds). Most of this walk is flat, but care needs to be taken because the path is used by many cyclists. We'll cross the river on the low-level causeway and return on the far side of the river, crossing again on the higher level bridge not far from the end of North Weston Ponds. As usual, wear sturdy shoes, bring a hat, sunscreen and water. Registration is not necessary.

Sandra Henderson (shirmax2931@gmail.com)

Sunday 19 November – private property, Nanima

This outing is to a property which is part of Birds Australia's Birds on Farms project. Expect to see a range of woodland birds including spring migrants. **Meet** at 7.30am at Hall Primary School carpark in Hoskins Street, Hall, for carpooling. Bring hat, sunscreen, water and morning tea, and wear appropriate footwear and long trousers.

Register at smlashko@gmail.com, with your name, mobile number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Sue Lashko

Sunday 26 November - Birding for photographers

New to bird photography? Or maybe you are handy with a camera and simply wish to learn more about our wonderful avifauna? This outing is for you! Join Anthony Overs for a wander through the Australian National Botanic Gardens where we can get close to a range of local bush birds in a variety of habitats. We will learn about bird identification, the mysteries inside a field guide, bird behaviour and the ethics of birding. The outing will **commence at 9:15 am** at the ANBG bus shelter. Places are limited so **register** early by contacting Anthony (anthony.overs@gmail.com or 0419 202 155) - include your name and mobile phone number, as well as an emergency contact name and number. Anthony is happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you.

Sunday 26 November - Murrumbidgee River walk to De Salis historic cemetery

Meet at 8.30am in the carpark under Tharwa Bridge (cross the bridge, if coming from Tuggeranong, and turn right immediately to double back under the bridge) for a walk from Tharwa Bridge to the cemetery at the junction of the Gudgenby and Murrumbidgee Rivers. There is no need to register; don't forget sturdy shoes, hat, sunscreen and water.

Sandra Henderson (shirmax2931@gmail.com)

Sunday 3 December – Coombs Ponds

This walk will be around the big ponds at Coombs, with possibly an extension walk along part of Molonglo River. Meet at 8am at the parking area down from the RSPCA in Kirkpatrick Street, Weston. As well as a variety of waterbirds, there may be **White-fronted Chats** and raptors, as well as a number of summer visitors. Bring hat, sunscreen, water and morning tea.

Register by email to afulk94@icloud.com or phone/text 0403795156. Please provide your name, mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Anne Fulker

Sunday 10 December - North Mulligans Nature Reserve - beginners and new members

This walk is aimed at getting you to know new birds from different groups, e.g. parrots, honeyeaters, thornbills, waterbirds, and black and white birds. We will look at their identifying features, calls and behaviour, and the habitat they use. Bill Graham will lead this walk for about 2 hours. **Meet** at 7.45am at the carpark on the left after the last roundabout on Mulligans Flat Road between Forde and Bonner. **Registration** is essential; please provide your name and mobile phone number as well as an emergency contact name and number. **Book your place** with Bill (0466874723, bsgraham1948@gmail.com), who is happy to discuss if this outing is suitable for you. Please bring binoculars and field guide, water, hat, sun protection, sturdy footwear, long pants and morning tea. Limited to 12 people.

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**.

Bill Graham

Advance notice - 2024

Wednesday 17 January, 2024 - Mulligans Flat – evening walk

An easy evening walk, with a chance of seeing or hearing **Bush Stone-curlews** and other nocturnal species. **Meet** at 7.30pm at the reserve entry on Eric Wright St, Forde, where there are parking bays. Sturdy shoes and a torch are essential; insect repellent may be handy. Please **register** with Sandra at shirmax2931@gmail.com with your name and contact number, and name and number for an emergency contact.

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Julia Landford

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Woodland Surveys – Spring 2023 survey round

compiled by Jenny Bounds

This year marks the 25th anniversary of several foundation woodland sites, including Red Hill as noted by Harvey Perkins below. This year also marks the 28th year of the woodland surveys at Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve, the September survey is the 118th survey. Thank you to all who continue their long-time commitment to this important project.

Note: not all sites are reported.

Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve:

Jenny bounds and the team did the survey on Sunday the 24th of September—a fine morning, but cold early on. A total of 54 species were recorded, reasonable for an early spring survey. Some migrants were back (2 **Gerygones**, 3 **Cuckoos**, **Rufous Whistlers**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes**, a few **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**). **Common Bronzewing**, not common in the reserve, was recorded in the Woolshed environs, 5 sites had **Scarlet Robins**, and 3 raptors were observed (**Collared Sparrowhawk**, **Brown Goshawk**, **Nankeen Kestrel**). Groups of **Superb Parrots** were around the west ridge (7), the Woolshed area (6) and at site 19 in the central quartz ridge area (2). A pair of **Grey Shrike-thrush** was very vocal at site 5 (not all that common). A **Grey Currawong** was recorded on the eastern side. Three **Pink-eared Ducks** were on the large dam amongst several waterbird species. It was noted that **Grey Fantails** were scarce at the survey sites.

Goorooyaroo Nature Reserve (northern area):

Nicki Taws did the surveys on the 2nd of October at the northern sites on a mild, slightly cloudy morning, before the wind and the heat picked up. Last spring the grass was long and dense the ground was saturated and wildflowers prolific. This year the grass was cropped short, already drying and the wildflowers were sparse, but the dams were still full. The trees were not looking healthy with very sparse canopies on most of the Yellow Box. Perhaps this reflected the relatively low number of birds, particularly small birds such as **Thornbills**, **Weebills** and **Pardalotes**. Only 31 species were recorded at the 10-minute counts with few additional species in between. The early summer migrants present were **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Horsfield's** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos** and **Pallid Cuckoo**. The only honeyeaters were **Noisy Friarbird** and **Brown-headed Honeyeater**.

Highlights included **Superb Parrots** at 3 sites and a flock of **White-browed Woodswallows** circling overhead. Breeding records included **Australian Raven** and **Striated Thornbills** with dependent young. A pair of **Masked Lapwings** with 2 medium-sized chicks was seen as Nicki walked out, but the young birds managed to survive an attack by a low flying Australian Raven.

Goorooyaroo NR (southern area)

The spring bird survey in the southern half of Goorooyaroo was done by Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley on 29 September in sunny, mostly still conditions. The reserve was looking pretty good; plenty of water still in dams, and quite a few wildflowers out. They recorded a total of 54 species with 47 of those during the 10- minute counts, compared to 59 and 37 in 2022.

Raptors were quite prominent with a vocal **Brown Falcon**, a couple of **Nankeen Kestrels** and displaying **Brown Goshawks**. Spring/summer migrants present were **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Horsfield's** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos** and **Olive-backed Oriole**. A highlight was seeing four male **White-winged Trillers** feeding together in some eucalypt regrowth. Small birds were quite plentiful with **Thornbills**, **Pardalotes** and **Grey Fantails** widespread. Eight species of **Honeyeaters** were recorded with small movements of **White-naped** and **Yellow-faced** noted. There was a **Mistletoebird** at site 2, **Grey Currawong** heard at sites 8 and 9, and up to nine **Superb Parrots** at site 3 in an area where they regularly nest. Breeding records included **Australian Magpie** and **Grey Butcherbird** with active nests, a **Laughing Kookaburra** leaving a hollow, **Australian Raven**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Striated Thornbills** carrying food, and a variety of **Parrots** around hollows.

Mt Majura Nature Reserve:

Peter Miller did the survey on the western slope on 24 September. While the weather was pleasant, the birds were not plentiful; possibly influenced by two separate breeding attempts of **Noisy Miners** (one nest with fledglings, one building nest) recorded at sites 2 and 9 at opposite ends of the survey range (north and south respectively). **Noisy Miners** were also observed harassing **Crimson Rosellas**, **Pardalotes** and an **Australian Raven**. Small, resident woodland birds seen included **Brown Thornbills**, **Buff-Rumped Thornbills**, **Grey Fantails** and **Weebills**. Two small flocks of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were observed using sites as they moved south. A total of 19 species were seen/heard at the nine sites. Outside survey sites **Olive-backed Orioles** (2), **Common Bronzewing**, and **White-throated Treecreepers** were also recorded.

Mt Ainslie Reserve— Campbell Park:

The survey of the 9 sites on the eastern side of Mt Ainslie was conducted on 17 September by Michael Lenz, on a fine morning with light wind.

The most widespread species were: **Noisy Miner** (8 Sites), **Crimson Rosella** (7), **Weebill** and **Grey Fantail** (5 sites each). Species of interest included **Brown Goshawk**, **Superb Parrot**, **Shining-bronze** and **Fan-tailed Cuckoos**, **White-winged Triller**, **Leaden Flycatcher** and **Mistletoebird**. Missing for some time from the site now are past regulars, such as Common Bronzewing and White-throated Treecreeper. 35 species were recorded at sites and another 10 species in between sites.

Majura Field Range:

Kim Farley and Barbara Allan surveyed the Defence training range sites on Monday 9 October, a beautiful spring morning with sunny skies and no wind, perfect conditions. They recorded 35 species at the eight survey sites. Highlights were **White-necked Heron**, **Varied Sitella** at the same location and **Pallid Cuckoo**, **Shining** and **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos** at multiple sites. Raptors were also observed, **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Brown Falcon** and **Black-shouldered Kite**. And, as with the March and June surveys this year, there were fewer **Noisy Miners** than has been usual in recent years.

Red Hill Nature Reserve

Harvey Perkins celebrated the 25th anniversary of the woodland survey of Red Hill on Sunday 24 September on a perfect spring morning, with early high overcast clearing to clear blue skies and no wind. Despite a general lack of flowering, bird diversity and numbers were both above the long-term average for spring. Several late winter stragglers or early summer returns were evident, including both **Golden** and **Rufous Whistlers**, **Grey Fantails**, **White-throated Gerygones**, **Noisy Friarbird** and **Olive-backed Oriole**. **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** were also present despite the early time of day. The cohort of small bush birds included the staple **Superb Fairy-wrens**, **Buff-rumped Thornbills** and **Weebills**, as well as widespread but small numbers of **Spotted Pardalotes**, and a single **Striated Pardalote** heard, but lacked other thornbills, and **Speckled Warblers** were not recorded for a slightly concerning 5th consecutive survey. A nice touch was a gang of 10 **Gang-gangs** quietly feasting on spent blossoms of Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*).

A few less usual species made their presence known: an **Aust. Owlet-nightjar** called (just the 2nd record during these surveys), and at least one **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** was heard sporadically (perhaps surprisingly, only the 7th record). The only signs of possible breeding were a sole **Galah** inspecting a hollow, and a pair of **Australian Ravens** stationed near a nest, though they never actually went to the nest in the time Harvey was there. Overall, 38 species were recorded, 34 within the 9 survey sites and an additional 4 recorded only between sites. A tally of 424 individuals (both on and between sites) was well above the Spring average of 314.

Newline

Sue Lashko surveyed on 24 September in perfect conditions for birding, still and initially slightly overcast before clearing. Dams were still almost full and the ground still swampy in places. Waterbirds included **Pacific Black Duck**, **Australian Wood Duck**, **Australasian Grebe** and, surprisingly, a **Eurasian Coot**. Spring migrants were very vocal, especially **Olive-backed Orioles**, **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos**, a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** and a **Noisy Friarbird**. A silent **White-winged Triller** was an unusual sighting for Newline, as were a pair of **Brown-headed Honeyeaters**. There was also one each of **Rufous Whistler** and **White-throated Gerygone**, as well as several pairs of **Dusky Woodswallows** and a few **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes**. **Sacred Kingfishers** and **Tree Martins** had not yet arrived. While there were good numbers of **Superb Fairy-wrens** and **White-browed Scrubwrens**, no thornbills were recorded. **Rainbow Lorikeets** were seen entering tree hollows and a **Welcome Swallow** was seen carrying a pale, moth-sized object, not mud for nest building. A flock of 22 **Little Corellas** was a record for Newline. The final bird of the morning was a **Black-shouldered Kite**. A total of 45 species was recorded.



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Jerrabomberra West Nature Reserve

Jenny Bounds and Alison-Russell French, with Kathy Eyles observing (assessing weeds), did the survey in the woodland patch on Sunday 8 October, a fine and mild morning (the survey slightly delayed due to a couple of factors). **White-winged Trillers** were actively calling around several sites, more birds and more widely spread than usual; 3 species of cuckoos (**Pallid**, **Shining Bronze-cuckoo**, **Horsfields Bronze-cuckoo**), **White-throated Greygones**, **Rufous Whistlers** and **Olive-backed Orioles** were also calling. **Superb Fairy-wrens** were recorded at several sites across the woodland (more than usual and some in expanding blackberry patches). A pair of **Dusky Woodswallows** was seen hawking over open ground on the way out, near where a number of pairs usually nest over spring/summer. A **Mistletoebird** was recorded at one site. An interesting record near site 6, a **Leaden Flycatcher**, usually found in the higher quality sites deeper in the woodland patch. It was surprising to see a **White-faced Heron** perched in a large eucalypt at site 3, a site dominated by **Noisy Miners**. However, the highlight of the morning was two **Red-capped Robins** seen (and calling) between sites 5 and 7 (brown birds), moving with a flock of **Red-browed Finches**; some of the flock moved into site 7 and the **Red-capped Robins** were officially in the 10-minute site count! 43 species were recorded, very good for a spring survey and the highest total species in any seasonal survey there since 2018, noting that a few regular species (eg **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**), were absent this survey.

Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson did the survey on Wednesday 13 September. The morning started out cold but soon warmed up. The first observation of the morning was a small mixed feeding flock at Site 3, comprising **Weebills**, **Spotted Pardalote** and **Striated, Yellow-rumped** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills**. The only breeding record was a pair of **Australian Ravens** who switched duties on the nest at site 7. There were **Noisy Friarbirds** and **Grey Fantails** at several locations. Highlights were hearing a **Grey Currawong**, and a **Crescent Honeyeater**. Neither of these species have been observed there in the time Lia has done the surveys since June 2007. Other highlights included both **Rufous** and **Golden Whistlers** and a **Speckled Warbler**. In all, 44 species were observed, 26 at sites and a further 18 between sites

Naas Sites

Julie McGuinness surveyed on this rural lease south of Tharwa on 24 September, an overcast then sunny, mild, and calm morning. Eucalypts appeared in various states of health, and the grassy understorey was low with only a few Early Nancy's in flower. Species diversity was moderate and species numbers lowish. A total of 27 species were observed within the sites; with an extra four species outside the sites. In addition to the mostly common resident species, two **Jacky Winters** were seen, as well as two **Varied Sittellas**. Summer migrants observed were **Rufous Whistler**, **White-throated Gerygone**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, and a **Rainbow Bee-eater** was seen flying through. Outside the sites a **Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo** was heard, and **Noisy Friarbird** seen. The only breeding activity observed was **Aust. Magpie** on a nest and **Eastern Rosella** occupying a hollow.



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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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:

J Stanton
T Stanton
H Beckwith

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for December 2023 edition:

Wednesday 29 November 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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