

# Gang-gang

### **OCTOBER 2023**

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

### **OCTOBER MEETING**

### Wednesday 11 October 2023

7.30 pm

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

The October meeting will be a normal faceto-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.

Lori Gould - River Restoration and Management – Rivers of Carbon

Julia Penndorf - Cockatooing around – the social lives of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos in our cities

The first speaker will be Lori Gould, Program Manager at the ARRC, on "River Restoration and Management – Rivers of Carbon".

Our rivers are facing many issues that cause degradation of biodiversity and water quality, which affects everyone. Issues include erosion, weed invasion, unfettered livestock access, loss of biodiversity – in particular, important riparian vegetation, and barriers to fish movement. There are solutions, though. One example of a

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 30 August to 26 September covered by this column, when a very strong change moved through with a moderate rainfall and a low maximum of 11°C and a big -5°C frost. It then warmed up gradually culminating in a couple of very hot (29°C maximum), windy days, before a dry and much less severe change came through at the start of the final week. Bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (AoI) during September really seemed to pick up after the first change, with the first of many spring/summer migrants arriving, including some unexpected ones. There were also more "unusual" species (of water rather than bush birds) reported than was the case in winter.

The most unexpected "unusual" species for the period, and also the one which seemed to trigger the much higher waterbird activity in September, was the **Pectoral Sandpiper**. This was first photographed by Shorty in the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR paddocks on 1 September (appropriately at the start of the month). It was subsequently seen and photographed up to 5

Continued Page 2



**Pectoral Sandpiper** 

Shorty

#### **OCTOBER MEETING** continued from Page 1

program that addresses these issues is the Rivers of Carbon (ROC) project. This is on the on-ground program of the Australian River Restoration Centre (ARRC) and operates in an area covering Cooma to Sydney, Yass, Crookwell, and Boorowa.

Since 2012, the RoC team has worked with 161 landholders, planted 112,434 trees, fenced 158 kilometres of waterways and restored 1331 hectares of riparian land in south east NSW. The model helps landholders protect their water resources, reduce soil loss, improve biodiversity and ecosystem functions (such as natural pest control) and better manage stock in adjacent paddocks by providing shelter and clean water by accessing incentives for fencing, stock water, stock crossings, small-scale erosion control, revegetation and woody weeds. The program focuses on working with farmers personally while achieving regenerative agriculture outcomes. This results in clean water, better stock management and importantly, improvement in biodiversity and habitat for birds and other animals.

The main speaker will be Julia Penndorf, a postdoctoral fellow at the ANU, on "Cockatooing around – the social lives of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos in our cities."

Sulphur-crested Cockatoos are large, charismatic rockers ever present in our urban environments – but how much do we really know about their social lives? The Cognitive Ecology Group at the Research School of Biology, ANU, focuses on the social and cognitive ecology of urban Sulphur-crested Cockatoos. As part of their research, in 2023 they have temporarily marked over 900 cockatoos across 8 roosts in the Inner North of Canberra, combining these observational approaches with active GPS tracking of over 100 individuals. Julia has been studying their social associations and wider movements and will present some of her findings from both her past research on Sulphur-crested Cockatoos in Sydney, as well as preliminary findings about the social landscape of these birds in Canberra.

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

continued from Page 1

September in that area by many observers, often in the close presence of **Red-kneed** or **Black-fronted Dotterels**. COG's 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR) indicates it's a non-breeding vagrant, an occasional visitor to this region in very low numbers, with larger groups in 2003 and 2014. The eBird map shows only 2 reports since that time, in October 2020 and January 2021, both at the East Basin of Lake Bathurst, so it certainly has not visited our area much recently.



Latham's Snipe

Geoffrey Dabb

This observation seemed to lead to a "spate" of reports of waterbirds not regularly recorded from there (see below), with the most unexpected being the **Common Sandpiper**, photographed there, again in the paddocks, by Ben Ward on 10 September. Geoffrey Dabb wondered if this was the return of "our regular guest to the Tuggeranong water bodies"? He noted it would be ironic if this was a different individual that, now so close to, but unaware of the attractions of 'Commonsandpiperland, ACT', overflies the hotspot (from where it has been reported for the 4 seasons between spring 2019 and autumn 2023) and heads further south. He may well be correct as it has not yet been observed there this spring. In fact, eBird reveals that it is the only record for ACT/NSW so far this spring, all other reports being from around Melbourne.

Of the spring/summer migrants first reported during August, the Shining and Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos, Latham's Snipe, Rufous Whistler, Noisy Friarbird, Western Gerygone and Dusky Woodswallow are all well established by now, as is the Australian Reed-Warbler which was reported from only 3 locations in August. Of the species of which some had overwintered, the Mistletoebird was reported from 10 locations, compared with only 3 in August.

Of the two species which may have been expected in August, the first records of the Pallid Cuckoo were from the north of the ACT on 2 and 6 September, with the first ACT record being of one heard at North Mulligans on 7 September. It has been reported from 16 locations since, many of these in the past few days of the period, an indication that it may be a better season for this species than in the past wet spring/ summers. The first reports of the White-throated Gerygone were from Whiskers Creek Rd Carwoola and Goorooyaroo on 2 and 3 September, respectively, and then from around 35 locations since 10 September, so it too is now well established.

Of the spring/summer migrants expected during September, the first Sacred Kingfisher was reported by Kym Bradley at her patch to the south of Canberra on 4 September, but then only two further reports on 10 and 17 September but 6 more locations since 21 September. By 26 September there had not yet been any reports of the Rainbow Beeeater but 2 Eastern Koel were first reported by Julian Teh from Gundaroo Drive at Ginninderra Drive on 19 September (but none since). The first Leaden Flycatcher was reported by Rainer Rehwinkel at Aranda Bushland NR on 4 September, but then only from 6 more locations to 23 September. While the Leaden is by far the most likely during September, none of these reports met the 3 criteria I outlined to separate these from the very similar Satin Flycatcher (no reports to date) I outlined in my presentation to COG on 13 September.

All of the above are coastal species and the following reports of inland species are interesting. The White-winged Triller was first reported from Kama by David Clark on 15 September but has since been reported from another 18 locations. Similarly, the Rufous Songlark was first reported by Luke Downey at Lade Vale (in the very north of the COG AoI) on 6 September, before being photographed by Shorty at Coombs Pond on 15 September, but from 14 other locations since.

On 17 September Nicki Taws posted on the COG chatline that a flock of about 30 woodswallow species, some of which were identifiable as White-browed, had just drifted northwards over Cook. The Whitebrowed Woodswallow has been reported from 16 locations since, in particular over the hot and then very windy few days that followed to 22 September, with the highest number of 350 birds reported by Luke Downey over Wamboin on 18 September, but there were also flocks of 200 and 140 birds. Similarly, the Masked Woodswallow was reported from 12 locations since, with easily the highest number of 250 birds again being reported by Luke Downey over Wamboin on 18 September, though with 3 other flocks of between 50-70.

These reports confirm my prediction of much higher numbers of the above 4 species this spring/summer due to the fast drying out inland, and with the now formal announcement of El Niño and the positive Indian Ocean Dipole. Another inland species reported (which usually doesn't arrive until October) was the Horsfield's Bushlark identified by Ben Ward as a small, stocky lark with rufous on its wings (this panel is diagnostic, as is the finch-like bill) at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 7 September (but has not been reported since). Two Brown Songlarks were first reported from Wallaroo Rd on 17 September, and then photographed there the following day, but again there have been none reported since.



#### Australian Ornithological **Services P/L**

PO Box 385 South Yarra 3141 Victoria

04173 10200

### enquiries@philipmaher.com

### 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

Other species reported which often don't arrive until October were the **Brush Cuckoo**, reported from Tidbinbilla (including from a recording of its fear, fear, fear call – care needs to be taken with the very similar call of the **Crested Shrike-tit** which also occurs there) on 4 September, and from Mt Majura in a mixed group of cuckoos and cuckoo-shrikes around caterpillar-infested trees on 9 September. The **Dollarbird** was also first reported by Kim Bradley in her patch to the south of Canberra on 21 September, but there were no reports on eBird by 26 September.

So, during October please keep a lookout for the species mentioned above which have only arrived so far in small numbers, or have yet to be reported, as well as the **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, and the passage migrants, the **Satin Flycatcher, Rufous Fantail** (there was one reported from Bluett's Block on 9 September) and **Common Cicadabird.** 

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 20 and over 60 urban/peri-urban locations respectively, similar to August, so they have yet to move away (the latter in particular always seems to stay around longer). In contrast the **Scarlet Robin** has largely moved away, reported from just 10 locations, compared with 40 in the previous period. The **Flame Robin** was still reported from around 10 locations, compared with 17 in the previous period; neither of the two species has been reported from anywhere near my local patch of Cooleman Ridge during the period, so they have definitely moved away from there.

The **Rose Robin**, for which there has been a higher than usual number of reports over winter, has continued to be present and reported from 8 urban/peri urban locations (about half of the August reports), but with more reports from rural areas, 6 of which were west of the Murrumbidgee River, and 2 in the Tallaganda area. However, there were no **Pink Robins** (again the nearest report was to the northeast of Melbourne), but there have been more records of the inland species, the **Red-capped Robin**, with up to 2 birds reported, including an immature at Red Hill on 25 September, and from 3 locations to the west and north of Canberra, a likely effect of the drying inland.

There were reports of the **Crescent Honeyeater** from 3 urban/peri-urban locations (including the single report from the ANBG), plus from 6 other locations, all but one to the west of the Murrumbidgee River. However, there were no reports of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** during the period. There has also been just one report of a single **Swift Parrot** from Mulligans Flat on 13 September; most of this species will have migrated back to Tasmania by now.

There were also no reports of the **Brown Gerygone** during the period, with the nearest being 2 birds at Monga NP (about 75 km to the southeast) on 16 September. There was just a single urban report of a **Bassian Thrush** from CSIRO Black Mountain on 8 September; it was also reported from 4 other locations.

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

As noted above, there were more "unusual" waterbirds reported during the period than was the case for winter. Two juvenile **Magpie Geese**, less clearly marked with dusky grey underparts than adults, back and rump dusky grey, underparts mottled, cranial knob underdeveloped, facial skin greyish, were reported from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR woodlands loop by Peter Morris on 7 September. The nearest otherwise were reported from Wagga Wagga 150 km to the west. **Freckled Duck** continued to be present at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR throughout the period, usually just the one duck but 2 and 3 ducks on one and two occasions, respectively. However, those reported from the northern end of Lake George seem to have moved on.

Five **Plumed Whistling Ducks** were briefly (enough time for 6 observers to lodge them on eBird) present at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on the afternoon of 6 September, but otherwise 2 ducks were reported only from Trucking Yard Lane dam on 13 and 15 September. An **Australian Shelduck** was photographed from West Belconnen Pond on 13 September; this species was also reported from at least 14 locations to the east and northeast of Canberra during the period. This number assumes Wollorogang Rd as one location, from where a maximum of 26 birds was reported on 1 September.

Up to 4 adult **Blue-billed Ducks** were reported from Upper Stranger Pond during the period, with 2 ducks reported from Lade Vale Rd big dam on 6 September and a single duck from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 10 September. Apart from Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary, up to 4 **Musk Ducks** were reported from 7 locations.

Up to 10 (on the Murrumbidgee River at Bloomfield Flats in the northwest of the COG AoI) **Great-crested Grebes** were reported from 4 locations. **Stubble Quail** are starting to call again, with single birds reported from 4 locations during the

period, and up to 6 **Brown Quail** were reported from 9 locations, slightly down from August. Up to 5 **Painted Button-quail** were reported from 6 locations (down from August), but again no **Little Button-quail** were reported.

A White-headed Pigeon was reported only from Griffith on 22 September. Three Peaceful Doves were reported from Cotter Rd on 4 September, as well as one from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 2 September, but again there were no Brush Bronzewing, or Diamond or Bar-shouldered Doves reported during the period.

Many birders enjoyed observing/photographing the up to 3 **Baillon's Crake** which were often clambering over the vegetation at Coombs Pond from 11 September. These were the first reported in the COG AoI since early February 2023, and there appears to have been an influx of this species as up to 2 birds have been reported from 4 locations since. Up to 6 **Spotless Crakes** have also been reported from Coombs Pond, and up to 2 birds were regularly reported from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, with single birds at 3 other locations.

By contrast, single **Australian Spotted Crakes** were reported from only 3 locations, near Breadalbane on 11 September, Coombs Pond on 13 September, and Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 24 September. Up to 3 **Lewin's Rails** were reported from 4 locations, and up to 2 **Buff-banded Rails** were reported from 5 locations.

Up to 18 **Banded Lapwings** were reported from Wollogorang Rd by many observers during the period, as were 5 birds from the northern end of Lake George on 2 occasions. Up to 2 **Pied Stilts** were still reported at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, but those at the northern end of Lake George since late June seemed to have moved on, with reports of up to 6 birds only from 3 other locations to the north of Canberra. No **Red-necked Avocets, Comb-crested Jacana, Rednecked Stints, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** or **Australian Little Bittern** were reported during the period.

On 20 September Christine D reported at least 2 **Whiskered Tern** at West Belconnen Pond, but from 22-25 September a single bird was recorded/photographed by many observers at Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant and adjacent Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, a longer stay than usual for this mobile species. Many observers also saw/ photographed a **Caspian Tern** at these 2 locations between 22-23 September.



**Brown Quail** 

Julian Robinson

### COG'S BIRD BLITZ 2023

### October 21-22

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 <u>www.canberrabirds.org.au</u>, under the header 'Observing and Reporting Birds'. The list of sites adopted for 2022 will be updated shortly. Please let me know, <u>blitz@canberrabirds.org.au</u>, 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* 0408210736



Whiskered Tern

David Cook

No Little Egret was reported during the period, but an Intermediate Egret was reported from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 2 occasions. In contrast up to 2 Great Egrets were reported from 10 locations, well up from 3 in August and perhaps reflecting a drying inland. This is supported by White-necked Herons reported from 10 locations (well up from 4 in August), all single birds except for the 6 at Wet Lagoon on 15 September. However, up to 3 Royal Spoonbills were reported only from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR and adjacent Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant, and no Yellow-billed Spoonbill or Glossy Ibis were reported during the period.

Single **Barn Owls** were reported (all after dark) from 4 urban/peri-urban locations during the period and **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from around 50 locations during the period (slightly down from August). A **Black Kite** was reported from Mundoonen Southbound Rest Area on the Hume Hwy on 2 September, and a **Black Falcon** was flying over the Barton Hwy southeast of Yass on 16 September, but there were no reports of the **Pacific Baza, Grey Goshawk** or **Spotted Harrier** during the period.

A **Turquoise Parrot** was recorded at West Goulburn Bushland Reserve on 20 September. No **Azure Kingfisher, Glossy Black-Cockatoos, Cockatiel, Greater Bluebonnets** and **Purple-crowned, Scaly-breasted** or **Little Lorikeets** were reported over the period, and up to 2 **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from just

2 locations, well down from August.

No **Spiny-cheeked**, **Singing** or **Scarlet Honeyeaters**, or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period, though a **Blue-faced Honeyeater** was observed in Swinger Hill early in September. Up to 8 **White-fronted Chats** were reported from 4 locations in Molonglo, as well as from 2 locations to the east and northeast of the ACT.

Up to 2 **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** were reported from 3 locations, Whiskers Creek Rd, Bluett's Block and Yass Valley, but no **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes, White-browed Babbler, Spangled Drongo, Tawny Grassbird** or **Zebra Finches** were reported during the period.

The very few "unusual" bush birds as shown by the above 3 paragraphs is a bit puzzling; perhaps some more unexpected species from the fast-drying inland will arrive in October.

Of the birds I have continued to ask readers to keep a special lookout for in 2023, **Jacky Winters** were reported from just 3 known locations, up to 2 birds at Namina TSR, and single birds at Illilanga and Glendale Depot. Likewise, the **Hooded Robin** was also reported from just 3 locations, with up to 3 birds at Naas Rd at Apollo Rd, and single birds in Orroral Valley and Old Boboyan Rd (the only new location for 2023).

**Restless Flycatchers** were reported from 5 locations, with up to 2 birds from different spots in Orroral Valley, as well as Glendale Depot and Nelanglo TSR, where one was photographed on the nest. All these are known (or close to known) sites, with a single bird in Oaks Estate on 14 September being from a new site (possibly a bird moving through). The bird(s) from Chapman/Cooleman Ridge and adjacent Arawang horse paddocks/McQuoids Hill NR seem to have moved on, as may be expected in spring.

While disappointing, the lower numbers of the above are "sort of" expected in spring, as the birds move away or perhaps become less conspicuous while breeding. Kym Bradley has observed the first two species preparing to breed around her patch to the south of Canberra, and I very strongly echo her plea on the COG chatline to please treat breeding birds with RESPECT.

In the absence of any formal COG guidelines on this I draw readers' attention to the excellent photography ethics of the Birdlife Australia Photography Group which can be accessed on: https://birdlifephotography.org.au/components/com\_blphotos/ajax/download\_file.php?file=%2Fhome%2Fbirdli7% These indicate "Nesting is a time of great risk and stress for birds. Photographers must take great care to avoid disturbing birds in, at or near nests. Photographers should also be aware that their presence risks drawing attention to the nest by predators, as well as other people who may be less concerned about their impact on the nesting birds." This should also apply to birders just using binoculars.

Some other September breeding reports follow:

- Robin Hide has informed me that the **Tawny Frogmouth** reported on the nest in Chapman on 27 August was in fact pipped by the one at Corroboree Park which was first seen on 26 August. He noted that they were using the same branch back in 2009!
- Peter Fullagar informed me that the **Silver Gulls** Geoffrey Dabb had presumed were nesting on Spinnaker Island had in fact not yet started. He had checked that day and there were no birds on the island, but a loose flock of fewer than 40 **Silver Gulls** was circling high and widely over the general area. They were calling but none landed and certainly none were present on the ground. He noted that it was unlikely that eggs were present in these circumstances, as it is normal for the **Silver Gulls** to suddenly drop in on the breeding colony area briefly but then depart and do the same again over several days before settling properly. On 20 September Peter made a brief stop to check from Black Mountain Peninsula if the gulls had arrived for this breeding season. He noted they seemed settled with a reasonable estimate (counted in 50s) of 700 **Silver Gulls** on the island covering the typically used area.
- On 16 September I could hear unfamiliar calling and twice a raptor with relatively pointed wings and a long tail could be seen doing a circuit just outside my GBS site. The next morning a clearly identifiable **Australian Hobby** did a loop over our house and back to a large blue gum where it was joined by another that landed near the top. I then confirmed that they had taken over an **Australian Raven**'s nest which had not been used this season. Since then, I have often seen one bird acting as the sentry on several quite exposed spots near the nest, which from time to time the second bird has left to chase off any **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** (it's a favourite stopping spot for them on their way to their roost in the horse paddocks), **Pied Currawongs**, etc, that land in or approach the tree. This can all be seen from the window of our house and is the first confirmed breeding I am aware of in my local area in my 48 years there, with in recent times **Australian Hobbies** being seen very infrequently.

On 15 September Lia Battison still observed a small mixed feeding flock comprising **Weebills, Spotted** and **Striated Pardalotes,** and **Yellow-rumped** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills** on her Tuggeranong Hill woodland survey. In respect of large flocks, on 21 September Andrea and I saw a very noisy loose flock of **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos**, conservatively estimated at 120 birds, in the pines on the northern side of the Molonglo River near Southwells Crossing (opposite Coombs). Over 15 minutes all had moved towards the Tuggeranong Parkway/National Arboretum. This is by far the largest flock of this species I have seen for many years (probably since around the 2003 fires); interestingly no one else seems to have reported them on eBird despite the birds being very conspicuous.

Finally, the return (spring) migration of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** does not seem to have been conspicuous, with very few flocks coming to my attention.

So please watch out for more of the remaining returning spring/summer migrants mentioned above, for the last of the leaving altitudinal migrants, for roost sites and flights, and in particular for spring breeding activity while the still favourable conditions last. 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 email Discussion List ("COG chatline") 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. (a.k.a. Canberra Birds) will be held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 8 November 2023 in the usual venue at Canberra Girls' Grammar School.

This year there will be the option to attend the meeting virtually using Zoom. Details will be available in the November issue of Gang-gang. However, this will not include the speaker after the AGM concludes, so if you want to hear Libby Robin talk about her book 'What Birdo is That?' you will need to come in person.

The agenda and call for nominations are elsewhere in this issue of Gang-gang.

### **Annual General Meeting, 8 November 2023**

#### Agenda

- Opening
- Apologies
- Confirmation of minutes of 2022 AGM
- President's Report
- Adoption of President's report
- Presentation of annual statement of accounts
- Adoption of annual statement of accounts
- Appointment of auditor for 2023-24
- Election of office-bearers (President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer) and ordinary committee mem
  - bers
- Other matters for which notice has been given
- Close of meeting.

The minutes of the 2022 AGM are available on the website and financial reports will be published before the AGM (<u>http://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/</u>).

Please advise any apologies to cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au.

### **Committee news**

The committee is delighted to welcome three new committee members – Julie Hotchin, Ben Milbourne and Zac Flegg – who were appointed recently.

The Canberra Birds Annual General Meeting will be held on 8 November. More details plus the agenda, call for nominations and <u>nomination form</u> are available elsewhere in this issue of Gang-gang.

As mentioned last month, membership of Canberra Birds runs from 1 July to 30 June. If you haven't yet renewed for 2023-24 your membership lapsed on 30 September and you will not be eligible to vote at the AGM. Please renew now – <u>https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/joining-cog-and-renewing/</u>.

The next 'Coffee and Chat' event at ANBG will be on Tuesday 10 October from 9:30 am to 11:30 am.

The committee has approved updated versions of the following Canberra Birds' documents: Canberra Birds Copyright Policy

Neil Hermes President Alison Mackerras Minutes Secretary

### **Call for Nominations**

The COG/Canberra Birds committee consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and up to 10 general members. Nominations for positions on the committee are invited from interested members. <u>The form</u> is available in this issue of Gang-gang (page 17) or from <u>http://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/</u>.

Completed forms can be submitted by mail or scanned and emailed to <u>cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au</u>. Please note the mailing address is PO Box 331, Jamison Centre ACT 2614. If you need any additional information please contact a committee member or the COG office.

Nominations must be received by the Secretary no later than 30 October.

Additional nominations can be taken from the floor during the AGM if there are still vacant positions remaining after the meeting has considered nominations received in advance. Nominations need the support of two members and the endorsement of the nominee. All three people must be financial members of Canberra Birds. Feathers'n'Friends

### Birdwatchers & nature lover's accommodation

Feathers'n'Friends cottage is fully self-contained with extensive facilities to ensure guests can enjoy short or extended stays.

The secluded lodging is surrounded by tropical rainforest and beautiful gardens with varying habitats and a large variety of birds and wildlife.

Activities in the area include birdwatching at nearby Mt Lewis and other birdwatching locations, as well as Daintree River nature tours and other attractions.

Discounts available for Birdlife Australia members.

Check our website for comprehensive details, rates, and bookings:

www.feathersnfriends.com.au

Fred & Jeanette Birkbeck

244 Clacherty Road Julatten QLD 4871 Tel: 07 4094 1665 Email: freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au

### eBirders! Add value - add breeding codes to your lists

It's springtime and the breeding season is coming into full swing. If you don't already, how about adding breeding codes to your eBird records? It's easy to do and you will be providing extra value for those who use the data - notably COG itself.

Add breeding codes in either the eBird app on your phone, or in the eBird website - it only takes a few clicks, and the different codes are described as you go. Easy!

- In the eBird app, click on the species name in your list and then on 'Add breeding code'.
- On the eBird website, click on 'Add Details' after you click on a species for your list, and take it from there.

Kim Farley ACT eBird reviewer <u>kimlouisefarley@gmail.com</u>

### **Field Trip Reports**

### Sunday 3 September – Stromlo Forest Park West

On a cool, calm morning, 13 people explored Stromlo Forest Park West on the fire trails and in the bushland towards the Uriarra Travelling Stock Reserve.

With over 30 species recorded, the bird which most wanted to be discovered was the **Shining Bronze Cuckoo**, calling in the distance for over 30 minutes, and perching high on a dead tree, as well as in a high canopy. Two male **Scarlet Robins** were in different territories, one quite high in a tree about 20m above the ground. The **Grey Butcherbird** was also keen to be admired. We also saw three **Yellow-faced** and two **Brown-headed Honeyeaters**, many **Weebills** and four **Brown Thornbills**. The highlight of the morning was four **Varied Sittellas** high up in foliage, with lots of flying activity between two large trees and staying for over 20 minutes.

Possible breeding behaviour included a White-throated Treecreeper carrying nesting material, and a pair of Striated Pardalotes flitting in and out of a hollow in a tall eucalyptus.

We also heard an Australian Owlet Nightjar, a White-browed Scrubwren, Grey Strike-thrush, Speckled Warbler and Western Gerygone.

This is a great birding location.

Judi Millington

#### Sunday 10 September – Umbagong District Park

On a beautiful spring morning, Lia Battisson led a group of eight on an enjoyable and productive walk around the recently reopened tracks in the Umbagong District Park in Belconnen. In total, 35 species were seen or heard during the 2-hour walk, which began, before we'd left the carpark, with some members spotting a **Collared Sparrowhawk** and all of us seeing two **Australian Magpie** nests under construction.

We saw several species of parrots, several different honeyeaters including ten **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**, and several thornbills including a group of four **Yellow Thornbills**. Among the species heard but not seen were an **Olive-backed Oriole** and a **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**. At the beginning of the walk, Lia had promised us a surprise. This turned out to be a pair of **Tawny Frogmouths**, the male sitting on a typically scrappy nest and the female in the fork of a nearby tree.

Other highlights were three **Red-browed Finches** and good views of a single **Australian Reed Warbler**. The visiting student from the UK who was participating in her first COG outing was thrilled to see her first kangaroos and a Swamp Wallaby. Thanks to Lia for leading this walk.

Wendy Whitham

### Sunday 17 September – Urambi Hills NR

Four members of COG joined with 5 members of Urambi Hills Parkcare Group at Urambi Hills on a sunny, windy morning. The walk began at the small grassy car park area where the western section of Meredith Circuit meets Learmonth Drive.

This 4.5 km walk followed the fire trail heading southwest and then south along the creek line on the west edge of the Nature Reserve, keeping south-west of the Urambi Hills trig point. We left the fire trail to explore the grassed area to the east and the dam with bulrushes just north of Tuggeranong Creek. We returned along the grassed management trail to the west of the Urambi Hills trig point. This took 3 hours return. To avoid long grass in summer, you can instead follow the fire trail to Tuggeranong Creek and return the same way, or via the grassed management trail. This would be about 5 km.

Species of interest were: 2 Yellow-faced Honeyeaters flying over, 3 Southern Whiteface (at the north, furthest west end of the fire trail in a mixed feeding flock with at least 8 Yellow-rumped Thornbills all feeding on open ground which seemed to have been where mulch had been dumped), 5 Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, 1 Pied Butcherbird (singing and seen slightly west of the fire trail in both a large gum and wattles), 20 Tree Martins flying and feeding, 1 Red-browed Finch in low scrub along fence. We had good views of Nankeen Kestrel, probably a pair, and probably a pair of Australian Raven with one feeding the other on their nest. In the pond at the southern-most point we heard (but did not see) 1 Golden-headed Cisticola and 2 Australian Reed-Warblers. There are usually some duck species here in both the dam and the marshy lower points, but only 1 Australian Wood Duck was seen. We finished the walk with 1 Grey Butcherbird.

The Urambi Hills Park Care Group is very active in planting, as well as clearing and attempting to control for pig damage. This will help to sustain a long term improvement for our birds. They welcome input from COG, especially bird surveys.

Judi Millington

### Wednesday 20 September – Mt Taylor NR

Five COG members braved the blustery weather to explore the lower western slopes of Mt Taylor. Indeed, the birding wasn't initially good. However, our efforts were well repaid by the time we finished the outing at roughly 11 am.

Earlier we had worked really hard to get views of **Weebills**. Interestingly our birding luck changed when we had almost given up birding and were paying more attention to the plants, and enjoying sorting out the trees, shrubs and forbs. By the end we'd had good views of **Red-browed Finch**, **Silvereye**, **Striated Thornbill**, **Brown Thornbill**, **Grey Fantail**, **Superb Fairy-wren**, **Red Wattlebird**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** and a fleeting glimpse of **Dusky Woodswallow**. **Eastern** and **Crimson Rosella**, **Galah**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**, **Australian Magpie**, **Pied Currawong** and **Laughing Kookaburra** all put in an appearance. We didn't manage good views of either **Spotted** or **Striated Pardalote**, although we certainly heard plenty.

We also had brief glimpses of **Rainbow Lorikeet**, and several other species which we guessed at but weren't sure enough to include in the bird list which, although, not long was reasonable for a rather windy day.

Michael Robbins

### Sunday 24 September – Botanic Gardens Bushland Nature Walk

Twelve members and guests met at the lower car park inside the Botanic Gardens on a pleasant and sunny spring morning for a walk along the track which sidles around the southern side of Black Mountain to a lookout with good views over the lake. The walk is through open forest and is a little over 3 kilometres return.



Australian Owlet Nightjar

Tee Tong Teo

At the meeting point in the Botanic Gardens, we were welcomed by a family of Superb Fairy-wrens and, after crossing Black Mountain Road, by the raucous behaviour of a group of Red Wattlebirds and a Eurasian Blackbird with a Noisy Friarbird calling in the background. Walking through the forest, many small forest birds were active and calling including Weebill, Striated Thornbill, Grey Fantail, White-throated Treecreepers, Thornbill, Spotted and Striated Pardalotes Brown and White-browed Scrubwren. Many of the group saw (and all would have heard) a Fan-tailed Cuckoo while some also saw a Varied Sittella. The highlight of the walk was an Australian Owlet Nightjar peering out from its hollow in a eucalypt beside the track. A pair of Australian King-Parrots appeared to be inspecting a nesting hollow before being chased off by a pair of Crimson Rosellas. Towards the end of the walk was an active Whitewinged Chough's nest with a bird apparently incubating. The walk ends at a lookout with a good view of Lake Burley Griffin.

On our return to the cars, we found a small group of **Red-browed Firetails**. A total of 27 species was recorded. In addition, many of the group saw an Eastern Brown Snake which crossed the track behind us. A number of spring wildflowers were in bloom including Stypandra, Pimelia, Hardenbergia, Indigofera and several orchids.

Ian McMahon



Photos—from top: Striated Thornbill, Varied Sitella, King Parrot, Red-browed Firetails TeeTong Teo

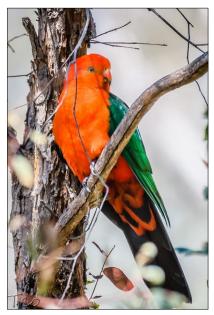
### Come Birding IN BOTSWANA

12 IBAs, 5.5 million ha of Ramsar wetlands, 614 bird species. Take yourself on the birding road trip of a lifetime. Check out the birdwatching page of **www.selfdrivetoursbotswana.com** A Botswana company run by keen birdwatchers.

CONTACT:GRAEME@SELFDRIVETOURSBOTSWANA.COM







### **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 <u>http://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/discussion-email-list/</u> and trips page of COG website <u>http://canberrabirds.org.au/category/trips/</u>.

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 <a href="mailto:smlashko@gmail.com">smlashko@gmail.com</a>

#### Sunday 8 October – Kama NR, Belconnen Note, this outing has been rescheduled from 5 November.

**Meet** at 8:30am at the reserve entrance on William Hovell Drive. It is not clearly signposted on either side of the road and parking is limited.

Approximately 5.5km from the Glenloch Interchange there is a hard-to-see nature reserve notice on the left hand (south) side of the road. You can park here and walk down to meet at the reserve entrance on this side of the road.

To use the off-road car park on the opposite side (north) of the road, DO NOT attempt a right-hand turn if travelling from the east. Instead continue on William Hovell Drive until you reach the William Hovell/Drake-Brockman roundabout - an approximate distance of 2.1km. Go around the roundabout and head back the way you came. The off-road car park will then be on your left. Climb over the gate and walk through the underpass to meet the group.

The walk will take about 3 hours but can be varied. Bring your binoculars, water, a snack, and sun protection. There are no toilets in the reserve. Muriel Story

### 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 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: <a href="https://www.ntaws.org">ntaws@bigpond.com</a> or 0408 210 736.

### 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 essentia**l; please provide your name and mobile phone number, as well as an emergency contact name and number. Book your place with Anthony (0419202155 or <u>anthony.overs@gmail.com</u>), 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.

Anthony Overs

### 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 <u>smlashko@gmail.com</u>, with your name and phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Sue Lashko

### Wednesday 18 October – Tidbinbilla NR, Lyrebird Trail

Meet at the Mountain Creek carpark in Tidbinbilla at 8.30am. This will be a 2km walk on a trail with some ups and downs, but not too difficult. It will take a couple of hours. **Superb Lyrebirds, Pilotbirds, Olive Whistler, Rufous Fantail** and **Crescent Honeyeater** are some of the birds we've seen on this track in the past.

Wear sturdy shoes, and bring sunscreen, water and a hat. No advance registration required. Sandra Henderson (<u>shirmax2931@gmail.com</u>)

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

See notice elsewhere in this newsletter.

### Tuesday 24 to Friday 27 October - Shellharbour area

We will stay at the NRMA Shellharbour Beachside Holiday Park, Shellharbour Village, (https://

<u>www.nrmaparksandresorts.com.au/shellharbour-beachside/</u>) 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 - <u>https://www.iboc.com.au/</u> - 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.

### Sunday 29 October – northern Namadgi NP

**Registration essential** mrobbins (at) <u>home.netspeed.com.au</u>, with your name and phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact. Maximum 16 attendees.

This is a reasonably easy 7.5 km all day bushwalk in northern Namadgi National Park, involving a short car shuffle. From Booromba Rocks carpark we will use the Australian Alps Walking Track to slowly walk down Booromba Creek to Bushfold Flats. After lunch we will then walk out to the gate on Apollo Road via the southern end of the Mt Tennent Fire Trail.

However, please make sure to bring a hat, water, sunscreen, lunch and binoculars, and wear sturdy shoes.

The Booromba Creek section involves a descent on a narrow track, followed by a flat section around Bush-fold Flats and a steepish descent on the fire trail with loose gravel underfoot, and finally a short climb back to Apollo Road. It is suitable for reasonably fit folk who are steady on their feet. Walking poles optional.

At the end of October, in these wet creek and dry forest habitats, we might expect to see, or at least hear, **Eastern Yellow Robin, Scarlet Robin, Golden Whistler** and **Rufous Whistler** and we've a good chance of hearing **Eastern Whipbird**, **Superb Lyrebird** and maybe **Pilotbird**. Raptors are a good possibility in the open country.

Unless I've had 16 registrations and organised car shuffle before Saturday 28/10/23, we'll meet at 8.30 am at the Namadgi Visitors Centre carpark, where we will arrange the car shuffle logistics and carpool.

Michael Robbins



Superb Lyrebird

Graham Stephinson

### Sunday 5 November

Venue required, leader required.

### 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 <u>jandaholland@bigpond.com</u> – please include your name and phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

15

#### 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 7.45am 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

Venue required, leader required



White-fronted Chat

David Cook

### 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 Whitefronted 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**

Venue required, leader required



- Crimson rosellas at the National
- Galahs at the Balloon Spectacular
- Gang-gang cockatoos at City Hill
- Rainbow-crested cockatoo at Black Mountain Tower
- Tawny frogmouths at Shine Dome



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

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

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

Shop directly via stuartmcmillen.com/shop

Canberra Birds Conservation	New members	NEXT NEWSLETTER
<b>Fund</b> 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 welcomes the following new members: I Lorbergs R Kelly D Webb D Pocock	Deadline for November 2023 edition: Wednesday 25 October 2023 Please send articles, advertisements, updates etc. to the Editors at:
COG membership		gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au
2022-2023 memberships:		or
Individual: \$50		c/- The Secretary, COG,
• Family: \$55		PO Box 331, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614.
Institution: \$50		Articles should be less than 500 words (300 for reports of 1- day field trips) except by prior arrangement with the editor.
• School student (under 18) \$20		Photographs (prints or electronic) with or without articles are encouraged.

### **COG** information

President: Neil Hermes 0413 828 045 president@canberrabirds.org.au

Treasurer: Vacant cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Secretary: Margaret Robertson cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

#### Address for correspondence

The Secretary COG, PO Box 331 Jamison Centre, ACT 2614

Canberra Bird Notes Editor: Michael Lenz michael.lenz.birds@gmail.com

### **COG website**

canberrabirds.org.au COG Webmaster Julian Robinson cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au

**COG** library

Membership Enquiries & Updates: membership@canberrabirds.org.au for change of address or other details.

Gang-gang Newsletter Editor: Sue Lashko gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au Lay-out Editor: Gail Neumann

**Publication Sales** 

### COG E-mail Discussion List

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

To unsubscribe, either permanently or temporarily, send an email message to canberrabirdsunsubscribe@lists.canberrabirds.org.au.

If you wish to re-subscribe after being unsubscribed temporarily, simply follow the 'subscribe' instructions above.

Copyright in *Gang-gang* articles is retained by the articles' authors.

*Gang-gang* is published on COG's website in PDF format.

### **ISSN 2208-018X**



### **COG Committee Nomination Form**

I hereby nominate	for the position *
of	on the COG Committee.
(*Positions: President, Vice-President, Secretary	v, Treasurer, General Members)
(Name):	
(Signature):	Date:
I second the nomination.	
(Name):	
(Signature):	Date:
I accept the nomination.	
(Name):	
(Signature):	Date:
Nomination forms can be submitted until the dat	te in the call for nominations. Send by mail to COG at PO Box
331, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614 or by email to g	cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au.
All nominators, seconders and nominees must b	e financial members of COG