



Gang-gang

MARCH 2024

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

MARCH MEETING

Wednesday 13 March 2024

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

The March 2024 meeting will be a normal face-to-face one held at our usual venue. As COVID is still widespread in the community 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.

Lisa Fortana and Brendah Nyaguthii – our experiences at the Brisbane Australasian Ornithological Conference

Michael Lenz - A very interesting lake – 41 years of counting birds at Lake Bathurst (“Bundong”).

Please note that construction is currently occurring around the Gabriel Drive parking area, and access to there may not be available. If the gate is locked, please use the Chapel Drive entrance and park there. To get to the Multi-media Centre from there, please proceed keeping the Chapel and the next two buildings to your left until you reach a gap between the buildings, go through this and you will see the Gabriel Drive parking area in front of you (see the map on COG’s web site at

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Everyone welcome

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

It remained dry for the first of the four weeks from 31 January to 27 February inclusive covered by this column, and while there was some rain after this, it was variable and patchy, so that by the end of the period conditions were the driest they had been all summer. While bird observer activity remained high, bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (AoI), at least in terms of variety, was lower than in January in particular. Many of the less common inland spring/summer migrants were again not recorded, and a lower number of “unusual” species were reported.

The one special “unusual” bird which attracted much attention towards the end of the month was the **White-throated Nightjar** initially reported on 22 February by Zebedee Muller and Luke Downey. On the Concrete Rd at Pierces Creek they did an exact count of 7 individuals calling from various directions over the distance of their walk. A high-pitched accelerating

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White-throated Nightjar

Barbara Allan

MARCH MEETING—*continued from Page 1*

<https://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/other-resources/cog-monthly-meeting-location/>). **A torch for finding your way back to your car after the meeting is also recommended.**

For the March meeting there will be three shorter presentations, the first two being presentations by the two ANU Ph D students sponsored by COG/Canberra Birds to attend the Australasian Ornithological Conference (AOC) in Brisbane at the end of November 2023.

First **Lisa Fortana** will introduce herself and her Ph D project (Cognitive ecology in parrots, with a special focus on the Sulphur crested Cockatoo), with a special emphasis on the paper she presented at the AOC (investigating innovativeness in wild cockatoos using specific cognitive tasks). She will conclude with a summary of her experience in Brisbane and how this has helped her from an academic point of view.

Next **Brendah Nyaguthii** will first talk about her experience at the AOC Conference, followed briefly by what her poster was about (cooperative breeding behaviour in a plural breeder; the Vulturine Guineafowl), and finally, a short overview of what her Ph D with choughs is about i.e., multilevel societies as well as their movement behaviour outside of the breeding season.

The third slightly longer presentation will be by **Michael Lenz** on “**A very interesting lake – 41 years of counting birds at Lake Bathurst (“Bundong”)**”.

In early 1980 surveys of the waterbirds at Lake Bathurst commenced. The surveys were conducted on behalf of COG. Michael conducted/organised monthly visits to the lake until early 2021. His talk will explain the key features of the lake and provide a very brief overview of visiting and breeding waterbirds. The spread of the weed Serrated Tussock has had a major impact on the lake environment. Since 2016 Lake Bathurst is included in Birdlife Australia’s network of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA). In late 2023 COG/Canberra Birds established a new team to continue with visits to the lake.

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

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ascending bubbly call - *wooop-wooop-woop* - was heard. Several birds were also seen, fairly dark nightjars with white throat patch and long wings and tail in flight. They also provided a link to a short video (with audio) of one of them flying past.

Zeb and Luke also reported hearing single **White-throated Nightjars** at 6 other close by spots that same evening. At dusk on 25 February 4 other observers saw one bird on Concrete Rd, where about an hour later Zeb flushed two non-calling birds as he walked along the road. Over those 4 nights the species was recorded at a total of 12 locations over a 6 km stretch to the E and S of the Cotter Dam. Even allowing for some double counting this raises the question as to how common the **White-throated Nightjar** actually is in the COG Aol.

COG’s 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR) lists it as a rare, breeding, occasional summer visitor from coastal areas for which there were 2 records in 2017-2018 and the last breeding record in November 2002. Checking eBird from 2018 reveals only 3 additional records, a bird at Hoskintown on 27 February 2018, one heard at Bibaringa on 13 June and 1 August 2019 (note winter records), and one seen flying/hunting at dusk near the Woolshed at Mulligans Flat on 11 February 2021.

The ACT eBird co-ordinator Kim Farley posted that there has been some discussion among observers as to why multiple birds have been found to be present at this time. She noted that the species is migratory in the southern parts of its range, and wondered perhaps the birds are moving through our district and may not be around for very long. Either way I expect that, unless you stumble upon one or do a specific search, the **White-throated Nightjar’s** habit of resting very well camouflaged in the leaf litter during the day, and with observers not being familiar with its call, results in it being under-reported in common with other less familiar nocturnal birds.

Despite the drier weather there have been no further spring/summer records of the inland species the **Australian Painted-snipe**, **Red-backed Kingfisher**, **Painted Honeyeater**, **White-browed** or **Masked Woodswallows**; in fact, there have been no records of these species from within 200 km of Canberra during the period.

The last **Brown Songlark** was reported from the Wollogorang Rd before the period started on 28 January. There has been on one report of the **Horsfield's Bushlark** during the period, a single bird at the Briar Shallows Rd at Plains Rd Hoskintown on 11 February, the previous report being also of 1 bird seen on Taylors Creek Rd E of Lake George on 29 January. However, **White-winged Trillers** and **Rufous Songlarks** were still reported during February, from 12 and 10 locations, respectively.

In my February column I had overlooked that the last reports of the **Channel-billed Cuckoo** were on 19 December, with one bird from Swinger Hill in the morning and then from the nearby Mt Mugga Mugga in the evening. However, a **Black-eared Cuckoo** was reported and confirmed by a clear description of its call from the Nass Rd at Apollo Rd on 11 February.

White-throated Needle-tails have been reported from just 3 locations, 2 birds over Ginninderra Creek in Giralang on 5 February, and a single bird at the Cotter River and 20 birds over North Weston Ponds, both on 6 February. However, there have been no reports of the related **Fork-tailed Swift** this summer. It has again been a poor year to see these two species, continuing on from a series of poor years.

March is the first month of considerable autumn bird movement so please also keep an eye out for the last of the above and also the other departing spring/summer migrant species such as the **Dollarbird**, **Rainbow Bee-eater** (listen for them calling overhead as they migrate north) and **Sacred Kingfisher**, which all usually leave, in that order, by mid-March (all three were still widely reported during February, up to the time of writing).



Rainbow Bee-eater

Hailey Beckwith



**Australian
Ornithological
Services P/L**

PO Box 385
South Yarra 3141
Victoria

04173 10200

enquiries@philipmaher.com

Good birding, good food

2024 tours

The 2024 Far North Queensland & Strzelecki Track outback tours are full.

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 from Jununurra

Birders wishing to do just the Mitchell Plateau excursion are welcome to put their names down.

2024 Plains-wanderer Weekends

28 & 29 September 2024

02 & 03 November 2024

Please contact Patricia Maher for information & itineraries.

www.philipmaher.com

Other birds that mostly have left by the end of March/early April include the **Shining** and **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, the **Pallid** and **Brush Cuckoo**, **Eastern Koel** (see breeding comments below), **Latham's Snipe**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Australian Reed-Warbler** (often very quiet in March), **Tree** and **Fairy Martins**. Except for the **Pallid Cuckoo**, which was reported from just 4 locations (another poor summer for this species), all were still widely reported in February.



Pallid Cuckoo

Ben Milbourne

Towards the end of March, the first **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** will start their migration. The passage migrants, the **Satin Flycatcher** and **Australian Rufous Fantail**, were still reported from the mountains to the southwest of Canberra or to the SE around Tallaganda NP. However, there was a very well described report for a male of the former at Macarthur on 7 February, and single birds of the latter were reported from the Aranda Bushland (an immature in a mixed flock with **Grey Fantails**, thornbills and pardalotes) as well as the ANBG on 20 February. These were a couple of hours apart, a possible indication that they had started to move.

Of the species that return to Canberra and its surrounds from the mountains and higher country to spend autumn/winter here, there have been a few reports from urban and peri-urban locations of the **White-eared Honeyeater** and the **Golden Whistler** (6 each), during the period, indicating they are yet to come in in numbers. There were reports of **Scarlet Robins** from 4 peri-urban locations indicating they only a few have started to move closer, but none of the **Flame, Rose** or **Pink Robin**.

There were no urban/peri-urban reports of the **Crescent Honeyeater**, and no reports of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** or **Brown Gerygone** (last reported from the ANBG in December 2023) anywhere in the COG Aol during the period. However, on 13 February Sandra Henderson saw 2 **Bassian Thrush** at the ANBG. She noted that she was very surprised to see these birds, which were flushed from the ground, and flew to a high perch together before flying down into Sydney Gully. The previous record from here was on 13 November 2023.

So please look out for the above species as they move into Canberra and surrounds. Towards the end of March please also look out for any early **Swift Parrots** migrating from Tasmania; it will be interesting to see if they visit Canberra this autumn/winter, this is likely to depend on the amount of flowering available.

Apart from the **White-throated Nightjar** above, there were fewer "unusual" birds reported than was the case for the first two months of summer. No further **Magpie Geese** were recorded, and the **Freckled Ducks** present since June 2023 at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) seem to have moved on (last reported from there on 5 January), with the only records being 2 ducks on Lake Bathurst on 29 January and a single one there on 24 February.

Two **Plumed Whistling Ducks** were reported from the Trucking Yard Lane dam only on 31 January and 4 February. As usual the **Australian Shelduck** was reported from 11 locations from the NE through to the E of Canberra during the period, with the maximum being the 70 ducks reported from the Bungendore Meadow Dam on 4 February. Overall numbers seemed to be well down from those in January.

Blue-billed Ducks were again regularly reported from the Upper Stranger Pond during the period, with a maximum of 4 there on 3 January. The only other location was Lake Bathurst where 6 ducks were recorded on 29 January and 5 on 24 February. Apart from the Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary, up to 9 **Musk Ducks** were reported from 7 locations. **Great-crested Grebes** were reported from 4 locations, easily the maximum being the 14 birds at Lake Bathurst on 24 February.

Stubble Quail were reported from well over 50 locations during the period, similar to January. **Brown Quail** were reported from around 22 locations, about half of the 40 in January. Single **Painted Button-quail** were reported from 5 locations, slightly up from January. Again, no **Little Button-quail** were reported during the period.

Up to 2 **Brush Bronzewing**s were reported from 3 locations to the W of the Murrumbidgee River. Single **Peaceful Doves** were reported from the Cotter Rd to the west of Canberra on 8 and 25 February, but there were no **White-headed Pigeons, Diamond** or **Bar-shouldered Doves** reported during the period.

Compared with January, numbers of the **Baillon's Crake** at the JWNR dropped during February, with a maximum of 2 birds seen there and with the last report on 17 February. Notably it was not reported from any other locations. Up to 3 **Spotless Crakes** were also regularly reported from the JWNR, but up to 5 crakes at 10 other locations, similar to January. Up to 8 **Australian Spotted Crake** were reported from the JWNR, but with one and two birds only at 2 other locations. Single **Buff-banded Rails** were reported only from 5 locations (well down from January). Up to 3 **Lewin's Rails** were reported from 6 locations, including the JWNR.

Up to 5 **Banded Lapwings** were reported from the Wollogorang Rd from 2-3 February, again the only location during the period. Up to 4 **Pied Stilts** were reported from 3 locations only from the NW side of Lake George, well down from the numbers in January. No **Red-necked Avocets**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Pectoral** or **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers**, or **Red-necked Stint** were reported during the period. However, the **Common Sandpiper** was still regularly reported from the Village Creek inlet at Lake Tuggeranong.

A single **Caspian Tern** was reported from Isabella Pond on 5 February and from the West Basin LBG on 23 February, but no **Whiskered Tern** or **White-winged Black Tern** were reported during the period.

The **Australasian Little/Black-backed Bittern** continued to be reported from the JWNR. While a maximum of 2 were reported to eBird, breeding was confirmed as on 11 February Shorty commented that he finally got a photo of one of the juveniles. He noted the first juvenile he saw a week or so ago was very plain in plumage, so he suspected at least four birds were present. A juvenile was also reported by several other observers later that week.

No **Little Egret** was again reported during the period, but up to 4 **Plumed** (formerly **Intermediate**) **Egrets** were reported from 4 locations (only a single bird from the JWNR on 23 and 27 February). In contrast **Great Egrets** were reported from around 11 locations (well down from January). **Royal Spoonbills** were reported from around 11 locations (as for January), and up to 3 **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** were reported from 5 locations, up from January. No **Glossy Ibis** were reported during the period.

Single **Barn Owls** were reported from 6 locations during the period, and **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from over 55 locations (similar to January). Single **Black Kites** were reported from Murrumbateman and Parkesbourne on 5 and 11 February, respectively. A **Spotted Harrier** was reported from Murrumbateman on 8 February and from John Gorton Drive, very close to where it was reported last year, on 23 February (so keep an eye out for it!). A grey morph **Grey Goshawk** was reported over Griffith on 7 February, one was at Dickson on 5 February and at Sutton on 16 February, but there were no reports of the **Pacific Baza** or **Black Falcon** during the period.

An **Azure Kingfisher** was reported by several observers from 2 spots on the Cotter Reserve during the period, as well as one at the Tidbinbilla NR on 1 February. However, a new spot for this species seems to be the Queanbeyan River Trail where one was seen by a number of observers on 15 and 17 February. No **Glossy Black-Cockatoos**, **Cockatiel**, **Turquoise Parrots**, **Greater Bluebonnets** and **Purple-crowned, Scaly-breasted, Little** or (surprisingly) **Musk Lorikeets** were reported over the period.

The **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters** at the Rock Valley homestead in the Tidbinbilla NR were further reported with a maximum of 3 bird being seen on 3 February (and also one at the Sanctuary on 1 February). Two birds were last photographed there on 12 February and the fate of the second nest reported in January is unclear to me. A **Blue-faced Honeyeater** was reported from Watson on 23 February, as well as 2 birds in Yass on 6 February and 4 there on 12 February, respectively. A **Little Friarbird** was reported from Murrumbateman on 18 February, but no **Scarlet** or **Singing Honeyeaters** were reported during the period.

In the ACT two **White-fronted Chats** were reported only from the National Arboretum on 25 February, with reports of single birds on single occasions only at 2 other locations. A light morph **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** was reported from the Naas Road/Apollo Road paddock on 23 February, and 5 **White-browed Babblers** were reported from the Queanbeyan River Trail on



Image by Cape Koala Arts ©

LET'S CATCH UP

Please join us for an informal
Canberra Birds social evening at the

PUBLIC (bar & dining)
Corner of Flinders Way & Franklin St, Manuka
(across from Coles)

4th WED of each month (7 to 9 PM)
next date: MARCH 27th

Look for the table with binoculars on it



EVERYONE WELCOME

15 February. However, no **Chestnut-rumped Heathwrens**, **White-browed Babbler**, **Spangled Drongo** or **Zebra Finches** were reported during the period.

While more species were observed over the period, again there were relatively few “unusual” bush birds, in particular parrots as shown by the above 4 paragraphs.

Of the species I have asked readers to keep a special lookout for, **Jacky Winters** were reported from 3 locations only during the period, with sightings of up to 3 birds from the known Glendale Depot, a single bird on the Tidbinbilla Rd on 10 February and 3 birds on the Clearview Rd, Michelago on 26 February, the latter two being new locations. The **Hooded Robin** was reported from 3 known locations, with regular sightings of up to 3 birds at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd to 17 February, and 2 birds at the Scottsdale Reserve on 5-6 February. On 12 February Kym Bradley reported a second juvenile female at her patch to the S of Canberra.

Restless Flycatchers were reported from 4 locations, with up to 4 birds reported from the Nelanglo TSR up to 14 February. Two birds were reported from the Mcleods Creek NR Gundaroo on 8 February and single birds were reported from Illilanga on 11 February and the Apollo Rd (also a new location) on 26 February.

The breeding season has continued in the third month of summer, and apart from the **Australasian Little/Black-backed Bittern** and **Hooded Robins** above, the following are mentioned:

- One 11 February Line Perrins reported a **Red-capped Robin** feeding a young at Bluetts Block. This would likely be the second brood of the pair whose nest was predated in early December. This species, which had returned in the dry spring, was recorded at only 2 other locations in February.
- On 13 February Kym Bradley informed me that some of her **Rainbow Bee-eater** chicks had still not fledged. While she was expecting it anytime it continues to amaze me how soon after fledging many juvenile spring/summer migrants manage to move away from the COG Aol, likely within a month in this case.
- Both the **Crested Pigeon** and the **Magpie-lark** in my GBS site fledged young during the period, the former having the third brood in a row with only a very small interval between and in different nests. I have always found fledglings of the latter difficult to find in my area, they are certainly much quieter than the **Eastern Koel** fledglings.
- It has been a very different breeding season for the **Eastern Koel**, with the adults seeming to stay much later than usual. At the time of writing, I still had at least 4 calling, and some also still being seen, in my local patch, with other Koel watchers noting similar activity. Despite employing much the same methods and sources as in previous years, the number of fledglings of which I am aware of is much lower at 64 compared with around 180 in the two previous years, with most usually reported by now.
- This number includes just 4 in my local patch of NW Chapman and W Rivett, considerably fewer than in recent years. The reasons for this and the longer staying adults is unclear, though there appear to be fewer **Red Wattlebirds** (their main host and the only confirmed one for 2023-2024) around than in previous seasons.

Autumn is the time for mixed feeding flocks (MFF) to form. The one in my garden has continued with one of the **White-browed Scrubwrens** still attacking our TV room window. So please watch out for these, especially for the unexpected species like the **Australian Rufous Fantail** mentioned above, often quietly lurking in all the activity.

In respect of large flocks, over the past week **Pied Currawongs** seem to have come into the garden early, with several instances of at least 15 hanging around doing their winter wailing for well over an hour, or otherwise competing with the **Satin Bowerbirds** to steal my tomatoes. I also recorded 136 **Rock Doves** on the wires in the small park in Rivett near me, the highest count there so far for this increasing species in my local patch.

March is a month when there is lots of bird movement and activity in the COG Aol. So please watch out for the last of the departing spring/summer migrants mentioned above, particularly the **White-throated Needle-tail** and the **Fork-tailed Swift**, and for the first of the returning autumn/winter altitudinal migrants,



Australian Rufous Fantail

Ben Milbourne

MFFs and single species flocks, as well as roosts and roost flights. 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

Coffee and Chat at the Gardens Tuesday, 12 March

You are invited to Canberra Birds monthly Coffee and Chat at the Australian National Botanic Gardens cafe.

Come along any time between 9:30 and 11:30.

All welcome – experienced birders, new and would-be birders, locals and visitors.

Look for the table with the binoculars on it.



Field Trip Reports



Two Sticks Road

Tee Tong Teo

Sunday 28 January- Two Sticks Road and Baldy Range Trail, Brindabellas

On a bright Sunday morning, 13 birders and I joined an outing led by Archer and Prue to Two Sticks Road and Baldy Range Track in Brindabella National Park. Having heard great things from Archer’s very successful reconnaissance a few days before, hopes were high for some classic wetter forest birds of the higher ranges, and we weren’t disappointed.

Relatively flat compared to the network of trails that run through the upper forest of Brindabella, Two Sticks Road had a wonderful mosaic of habitats that made for some varied birding, including tussocky forest and dense, wet gullies. The mountains were refreshing in the sunny weather and the temperature ideal for bird activity. Immediately upon parking about 1 km from the intersection with Blue Range Road, flocks of **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** called overhead, and it wasn’t long before we were hearing a few distant **Superb Lyrebirds**. **Striated Thornbills** kept to the upper canopy of the mid-storey vegetation, but as we rounded the road to our first wet gully we quickly got onto a **Red-browed Treecreeper** and the first of a few gorgeous **Rufous Fantails**. I was happy to pick up on the call of a **Rose Robin** and a few people managed fleeting looks. Later, after a prolonged encounter with a confiding pair of tail-flicking **Satin**

Flycatchers, a **Pilotbird**’s call cut above the chatter of a mixed flock of **White-naped** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**, though it remained remote for all.

On the way back to the cars, Angela noticed movement in a wet gully and a beautiful **Wonga Pigeon** materialised out of the shade. This was my bird of the day and, although challenging to spot, everyone eventually had great looks.

After a brief drive and lunch stop, we began to ascend and then descend a far steeper Baldy Range Trail to the sounds of **Striated Pardalote** and **Red Wattlebird**. We also had clear views of a **Collared Sparrowhawk**. Though quieter than Two Sticks Road, we picked up on more **Satin Flycatchers** calling, a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** trilling and an adult-juvenile trio of **Red-browed Treecreepers** that posed well for us. Finally, chunks of peeling bark alerted us to the activity of a female **Eastern Shrike-tit**, which was a nice way to wrap up the birding before the walk back to the cars.

Overall, the two roads were fabulous, and many people mentioned that they would be back for another visit in the future; me included!

Aiden Powell

Sunday 4 February 2024 - Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve

The outing was run to celebrate World Wetland Day and the adoption of The Convention on Wetlands, in 1971, known as the RAMSAR Convention. The signatories, including Australia, signed the Convention in the city of Ramsar, Iran, situated on the southern edge of the Caspian Sea.

According to the RAMSAR website, Australia has 67 nominated sites. Ginini Flats in Namadgi National Park is the only RAMSAR site in the ACT; for further details see [Australia | The Convention on Wetlands, The Convention on Wetlands \(ramsar.org\)](https://ramsar.org).



Swamp Harrier

Irene Lorbergs

Seventeen members and friends met at the carpark at the end of Dairy Road at 7:30am and broke up into two groups with each working their way around Kelly's Swamp via each of the hides. We then completed the outing as a group past the Billabong, up and along the Levee Bank, then along the Boardwalk. By then it was 10:00am and getting warm so both the group and the birds called it a day.

We recorded 47 species but unfortunately the Catch of the Day, the Little Bittern, eluded us. My thanks to Sandra Henderson and Lia Battison who helped by guiding the second group and organising the eBird submission. The eBird listing can be found at <https://ebird.org/australia/checklist/S161173232>

Chris Davey

Sunday 11 February – Moncrieff Ridge

Six of us met on a lovely morning at the Amaroo Playing Fields, where our trip leader Bill Graham explained some of the landscape features and recent history of the area. We then walked down to the Gungaherra Creek, where we heard the call of a **Golden-headed Cisticola** and observed a group of **Little Ravens** flying overhead. Walking along the shared path just below the ridge allowed us to closely observe **Striated Pardalotes**, **European Goldfinch**, **Black-faced Cuckooshrike**, **Dusky Woodswallows** (including one eating a cicada), and **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas**, among other species.

At the dam a **Little Pied** and a **Great Cormorant** were sitting on dead wood, and other waterbirds such as **Australian Wood Duck** and **Australasian Swamphen** were also seen.

The highlight of the day was a pair of **Australian Hobby**, first seen flying and calling in the woodland on the ridge and later seen sitting in a tree right beside the path allowing for extended close observation of their brilliant brown plumage.

The morning yielded sightings of 44 species, which was quite a remarkable total and highlighted the importance of this park as habitat within an increasingly urbanised environment.

Thanks to Bill for leading this great walk.

Lachlan Duncan

Sunday 18 February – Gungahlin Hill

Some 41 species were seen or heard on this morning walk, led by Lachlan Duncan who was in charge of a COG outing for the first time. We met at the stile in Cocoparra Crescent, Crace, where we began the walk in an auspicious fashion with a flyover of seven **Superb Parrots**. In the first hundred metres or so of the walk itself, we saw nine other parrot species including a pair of **Gang-gang Cockatoos** which posed nicely for the photographers in the group. Both **Sulphur-**

crested cockatoos and **Rainbow Lorikeets** were observed checking out possible nest sites. Also seen in this open forest area was a group of **Striated Pardalotes**.

Walking south down the hill, we came to a spot enlivened by the presence of **Superb Fairy-wrens** and **Red-browed Finch**. After passing the 1RPH radio station in the south-east corner of the Nature Reserve, we came to a sizeable dam where we saw two **Australasian Grebes**, two **Eurasian Coots**, one **Pacific Black Duck**, a single **Little Pied Cormorant** and two **Australian Reed-Warblers**. In the same vicinity a couple of participants heard a **Golden-headed Cisticola** calling.

Two raptors were seen towards the end of the open country, before we re-climbed Gungahlin Hill; one was a **Brown Falcon** perching on a transmission tower and the other a **Nankeen Kestrel** in flight. Other highlights were the sighting of **Sacred Kingfishers**, a **Black-faced Cuckooshrike** and several **Dusky Woodswallows**.

One final note: the wasps we saw at a nest among the grass stalks have been identified in Canberra Nature Map as Asian Paper Wasps, and have not been recorded in that area before.

Thanks to Lachlan for leading this most enjoyable and parrot-filled walk.
Wendy Whitham

Wednesday 21 February - Mulligans Flat evening walk, Wednesday

Since I'd seen no night birds on a trial run a few weeks earlier, I was not especially optimistic about our chances for this Wednesday walk, which had already been postponed from January due to rain. Sixteen people joined me for the walk on a pleasantly cool evening, including new members and visitors.

At the first dam we found a pair of **Australasian Grebes** with three youngsters, one of which was very noisy. An echidna ambled by near the edge of the dam – a treat for some who'd never seen one in the wild. The walk followed the Dam Track and returned on the Old Coach Road, and it was not long after passing the further entry into the dam area that we heard the eerie calls of **Bush Stone-curlews**. Although we did not see the birds, there was obviously more than one, and we heard the calls on three occasions. Along the Old Coach Road, a **Tawny Frogmouth** was sitting on a dead branch close to the track, and shortly after we heard a **Southern Boobook** calling from some distance away. **White-throated Treecreepers** were heard several times in near darkness. Apart from the echidna, brush-tailed possums, wallabies and kangaroos were out and about, and we had fleeting glimpses of Eastern Bettongs on a couple of occasions.



Tawny Frogmouth

Tee Tong Teo

<https://ebird.org/australia/checklist/S162470910>

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 25 February – Mt McDonald

Nine punctual members commenced the walk at 8:30am, firstly taking a brisk walk up the walking trail from the Brindabella Road car park to the Cotter Dam lookout. It was a sunny, calm morning with clear skies and a temperature of 14 degrees. In total 21 species were seen or heard along the dry gravel tracks leading to the summit of Mount McDonald. The majority of smaller species were seen in shrubs and small trees along the management track towards the top of the summit, including over 30 **Silvereyes** and smaller numbers of **Red-browed Finches**, **Spotted Pardalotes**, **Superb Fairy-wrens** and **Brown Thornbills**. Some were taking full advantage of the fruiting blackberries in many sheltered parts of the hillside. A group of eight **Noisy Friarbirds** flew overhead at one stage and a lone **Nankeen Kestrel** was soaring above the fire management track, shortly before a pair of drones passed overhead at fast pace from east to west. Other highlights included **Eastern Yellow Robin**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** and **White-plumed Honeyeaters**. We had a brief stop under the trig station on the exposed summit of Mount MacDonal before 10am before heading back down to the car park on the management trail. Four **Buff-rumped Thornbills** were seen near the car park as we arrived back, shortly before 11am.

Mark Tindale

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 3 March – Rendezvous Creek, Namadgi National Park

Description: This is a beautiful walk through a range of habitats in Namadgi – bubbling mountain brooks, open grassland and woodland. There are records of some of the more unusual honeyeaters for our region: **Fuscous**, **Crescent** and **Brown-headed**. There are also **Flame Robins** and **Scarlet Robins**, the chance of a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** and Lia saw a **Swamp Harrier** here last September.

eBird hotspot: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L6082099?yr=all&m=>

Meeting time and place: 7.30 am at Isabella Plains Supabarn for carpooling. Rendezvous Creek car park is quite small and won't fit a lot of cars. It is a further 35 min / 40km drive from the meeting spot so please be punctual.

Walking distance: 3.2 km

Degree of difficulty: Easy/medium (can be a bit wet in patches if it's been raining).

End time (approx.): 11am. If we finish at Rendezvous Creek early we can have a look around the Glendale Depot and Gudgenby River, which is just back up the road a little.

What to bring: Water, morning tea, hat, sunscreen.

Registration: Participants must register with the leader at least 24 hours before the start of the field trip, providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact;

Numbers limited: No

Name of leader and contact details: Marcus Hellyer (0418 264 868 / pickelbarrel@gmail.com)

Sunday 10 March – Mt Rogers

Meeting place/time: Meet at the carpark in Wickens Place, Fraser at 9am

Description: On tracks amongst mixed Eucalypt/shrub vegetation. Surface is uneven. Some steep sections. Rated easy/medium.

Distance 2-3 km and duration about 2 hrs.

Sturdy shoes, long pants, hat and water are recommended for this walk.

Numbers not limited but please register by 9 March at chamoisnz@gmail.com providing your name and mobile number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Kirsty Craven 0405 319 917 or 6258 3133

Sunday 17 March - One Tree Hill, Hall

Description: The Canberra Centennial Trail is a 140 km walking/cycling trail which takes in many of the landmarks of the ACT. On the northern side it passes through Hall and travels north-east, parallel to the New South Wales/ACT border. We will walk the Trail from Hall to One Tree Hill. It is a steady uphill climb, and the last section to the summit is quite steep. Some people may choose not to walk the last two hundred metres.

Meeting place and time: Meet at the Centennial Trail Trackhead, at the north-eastern end of Hoskins St, Hall at 8:20 for an 8:30 start.

Walking distance: Six kilometres, including return.

End time (approx.): 11:30

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

Please **register** with the leader, Lia Battisson by email to liabattisson@outlook.com, providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Please do so **before 7pm on Friday 15 March**, as numbers will be limited to 15.

Wednesday 20 March – Kambah Pool

Meet at 8.30am. Map 27 D14 (UBD). Park at step-through access gate on the right-hand side of Kambah Pool Road. This is about 700 m from the roundabout where Kambah Pool Rd crosses Allchin Cct/Barrett St, Kambah. The gate is opposite the start of the golf club driving range and about 400 m before the entry to the golf club.

We'll aim to walk the perimeter track with excursions into the bush and grassy areas in hopes of seeing **Double-barred Finch, Diamond Firetail, Red-browed Finch and Speckled Warbler**, while keeping our eyes and ears alert for raptors. At the end of the walk, those who are feeling fit, may wish to climb the hill with me to check on the **Wedge-tailed Eagle** nest.

Remember to bring water, sunscreen and a hat. No booking required. If you have any questions contact Michael Robbins (mrobbins at home.netspeed.com.au)

Tuesday 19-Friday 22 March - Cowra, Central Western Slopes, NSW

Cowra is 185 kms north of Canberra. Sites will include Barryrennie Road, Conimbla National Park, Cowra Sewage Treatment Plant, Wyangala Dam and Cowra Japanese Garden. Target species include **Black-chinned Honeyeater, Chestnut-rumped and Inland Thornbills, Turquoise Parrot and Ground Cuckooshrike**.

We plan to stay at Cowra Caravan Park <https://www.cowravanpark.com.au/Home> ph 02 6342 1627. There are cabins available, as well as sites for tents, camper trailers, caravans, etc. Numbers limited. To register for this trip and further information, please contact Bill Graham at bsgraham1948@gmail.com

Please register asap as accommodation may be in high demand and bookings will need to be made very soon. Do not book accommodation until your registration is confirmed.

Bill Graham

Sunday 24 March – Mt Jerrabomberra

Meet at 8.30am in the parking area at the start of Jerrabomberra Hill Rd (which is off Halloran Drive just past Esmond Ave).

This is a fairly easy 2.5km walk to the summit up a well-maintained unsealed road. COG has not visited since April 2019. The walk will take 2-3 hours. Bring a snack and we'll have a short break at the summit, which offers wonderful views. 80 species have been recorded on the mountain, with **Gang-gangs Cockatoos** seen often, and I've seen a **Rufous Fantail** in the past near one of the gullies. As usual, wear sturdy shoes, hat, sunscreen.

Register at shirmax2931@gmail.com before Saturday 23 March, with name and phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Sandra Henderson

28 March to Monday 1 April - Easter at Bimbimbi River Camp

This camp will be on the Upper Murray, near Walwa, about 300km from Canberra. The property has 3km of access to the Murray River, with campsites set back from the river and Crown land along the riverbank. There are no facilities, except a toilet, so you will need to take everything else you need, including water, and take everything out, including your rubbish. Activities for the three full days are still in the planning stage.

To **register**, contact Marcus Hellyer at pickelbarrel@gmail.com with your name, mobile number and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact (ie. someone who will not be travelling with you).

Sunday 7 April – Narrabundah Hill – morning outing

Description: This outing has again been timed for the autumn honeyeater migration season, with the northern and western boundaries of the reserve having known local migration routes. We will walk along these two boundaries, depending on conditions and the species seen, and we will either return by the same or a different path. This will be around 4 km on relatively flat ground. We will also look for other autumn birds such as **Scarlet Robin** and mixed feeding flocks, or late departing summer migrants such as gerygones.

Meeting time: While daylight savings will have ended that morning the **walk will start at 8:30 am** to maximise the opportunity to see the honeyeaters which generally come through late in the morning in early April (we saw over 2500 birds there at a similar timing in 2019).

Meeting place: Meet at the parking area and stile at the northeast end of the reserve, at the corner of Warragamba Avenue and Eucumbene Drive, Duffy. **Please note that the entry to this parking area is a little tricky and is in fact about 25 metres past (on the Mount Stromlo side) the T-junction with Warragamba Avenue and, for those driving along Eucumbene Drive from Duffy, involves a quite tricky 180 degrees turn, so please take care. Please take water and morning tea to have on the track.**

Name of leader and contact details: To participate, please contact Jack Holland by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com – please include your mobile and emergency contact name and number.

Sunday 14 April – 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 witness the autumn migrations. 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 10 April**. Email: ntaws@bigpond.com or 0408 210 736.

Sunday 21 April - McLeod's Creek Nature Reserve, Gundaroo

The reserve of 240ha has a woodland section to the east where **Painted Button-quail** have been recorded. The larger section is grassland with scattered trees. The species list is 99, including **Scarlet, Flame** and **Red-capped Robins, Eastern Shrike-tit** and various raptors.

Meet at Sutton Primary School carpark at 8.00am for carpooling. **Walking distance** about 3.5km. Degree of difficulty – medium. **End time:** approx. 11.30am. **Bring** water, morning tea, hat, sunscreen and wear long pants.

Please register with the leader by 19 April with your name and mobile number and name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Numbers limited to 16.

Bill Graham (bsgraham1948@gmail.com)

Sunday 28 April 2024 - Honeysuckle Creek

We'll walk a woodland track that starts at the tracking station and ends at the campground. **Meet** at the Tracking Station site at 8.30am. To get to Honeysuckle Creek, drive out on Naas Rd from Tharwa, and turn right onto Apollo Rd.

Bring: hat, sunscreen, water, sturdy shoes. This will be an easy outing, with a bit of history thrown in!

Please register with Sandra at shirmax2931@gmail.com with your name and mobile number, and name and number for an emergency contact.

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 5 May – Square Rock

The walk up to Square Rock from the carpark will require some energy, but is quite achievable at birdwatching pace, and the view at the top is worth the climb. The round trip is approximately 6 kilometres. Possible birds include **Bassian Thrush** and **Spotted Quail-thrush**, as well as good views of raptors at the top.

Meet at the Kambah shops at 8:30am for carpooling.

Bring water and morning tea, and wear sturdy shoes. Bring a warm jumper and/or a rain jacket in case of any deterioration in the weather.

Register at liabattison@outlook.com with your name, mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Lia Battison

Saturday 18 May- Australian National Botanic Gardens – beginners' outing

This morning walk will be the first for 2024 aimed 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 late autumn/winter. Anthony Overs will lead this outing, which will consist of a stroll through this lovely part of Canberra for a couple of hours.

Meet at 9.15am at the ANBG bus shelter.

Registration is essential; please provide your name and mobile phone number, as well as an emergency contact name and number.

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

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

Anthony Overs

Sunday 26 May 2024 – Oaks Estate

Meet at 9am at the lower end of River St in Oaks Estate. There's a small dirt parking area right at the end, otherwise park on River St, preferably on the same side as any cars already there. This is an easy walk, along the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers. Most of the time we will be in the ACT, but a diversion to the historic Riverside Cemetery takes us into NSW. It is an 'out-and-back-walk' (about 6km total distance), all on tracks.

As usual, bring hat, sunscreen and water, and wear sturdy shoes.

Register with Sandra at shirmax2931@gmail.com
[Sandra Henderson](#)



Red-browed Finch

Ben Milbourne

Wings on King

Autumn Bird Surveys

25th- 28th
April 2024

Agenda

25th Welcome &
Orientation

26th - Bird Surveys
27th Bird Surveys &
dinner with guest
speaker

28th - 1st May
optional

Orange-bellied
parot surveys

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 - **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

2023-2024 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

N Robinson

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for April 2024 edition:

Wednesday 27 March 2024

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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