

# Gang-gang

**NOVEMBER 2024**

**Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.**

## NOVEMBER MEETING

**Wednesday 13 November 2024  
7:30 pm**

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

The November 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.

**AGM** – see details under Annual Reports and Administrative Papers, Page 11.

**McComas Taylor - Through the binoculars backwards: how the ACT Bird Atlas and Field Guide came about, and other ancient history.**

*Please note that construction is currently occurring around the Gabriel Drive parking area, and access to there is not available. So please use the Chapel Drive entrance and park there. Then proceed to the Multi-media Centre (MMT) using the alternative route the Canberra Girls Grammar School has provided as shown in the [map on p 10](#).*

*Once parked proceed down past the Chapel and smaller Admin Offices, keeping them to your left. Just past the latter turn left along a relatively flat*

[Continued Page 2](#)

**Everyone welcome**

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

On the second day into the 5 weeks from 24 September to 29 October inclusive covered by this column, the dry windy September weather changed with a moderate rain event. A further two such events greened up conditions considerably, though it was again dry for the last 10 days though with less wind. The rain may have been, at least in part, responsible for an increase in bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (AoI) during October, particularly the first two weeks. While some have been slow to arrive, all the expected spring/summer migrants have now been reported, though many of the inland ones are present in relatively low numbers. While there have been a few more “unusual” birds reported, their numbers are still well below those of last summer/early autumn.

The most “unusual” bird and undoubted highlight of the period was the **Forest Kingfisher** first sighted and importantly well photographed (thus allowing swift endorsement by the COG/Canberra Birds Rarities Panel) by Christine D on the Gibraltar Forest Trail off the Corin Road

[Continued Page 2](#)



**Forest Kingfisher**

*Victor Braguine*

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## NOVEMBER MEETING—*continued from Page 1*

and straight broad path keeping the columns to you left. Near to the end, go left up the 3 m wide steps, turn half right and you will find an open glass door. Go through this, across the empty room and past the toilets, and then either enter the MMT either through the bottom MMT door or go further along and up the steps where you reach the usual entry door. Though it is well lit, as it will be dark a torch for finding your way to the MMT and back to your car after the meeting is recommended.

After the AGM (for details see p. 11 or <https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/>) there will be a single speaker, **McComas Taylor** on “**Through the binoculars backwards: how the ACT Bird Atlas and Field Guide came about, and other ancient history.**”

McComas will talk about his experiences during the planning and development of the 'Birds of the ACT: an Atlas' during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Atlas was the first attempt to map the distribution of every bird in our region. This was followed by the 'Field Guide to Birds of the ACT', generously funded by late COG member Alastair Morrison, and which has just been reprinted for the sixth time.

McComas has been involved in birds in the ACT since the day he arrived from Melbourne in 1979. He continues to watch every bird he sees and is not ashamed to admit that he likes Blackbirds.

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

on 13 October. The bird was still present there on 14 October allowing at least other 11 birders to record it, with the final observation being a bird heard near Gibraltar Peak on 15 October.

It was clearly the first report of a new species for the COG Aol as it is not listed in the COG/Canberra Birds 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR), or under BIRD INFO or the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the Australian Capital Territory on our web site, nor is it mentioned in Steve Wilson's book *Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change*. So, where it came from and where it has gone to is a complete mystery. Checking eBird reveals 1 record from the Randwick Environment Park (close to 300 km to the NE) on 10 October 2024 and checking further from January 2018 shows only 1 record from Camden in November 2020, but otherwise records are from well to the N of Newcastle.

Of the spring/summer migrants present but reported from only a few locations in September the **Sacred Kingfisher**, which had been reported only from the Umbagog District Park (Latham) and the (Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) on 11 and 18-19 September, respectively, continued to arrive quite slowly with reports from Lake Ginninderra and Campbell Park on 26 September, and then none until 3 October. However, it is by now well established with reports from well over 50 locations. Likewise, the **Leaden Flycatcher** which had been reported from just one location (the Curtin playing fields and bike path on 23 September) was not further reported until 1 from Callum Brae and then from at Mulligans Flat NR and Zosterops Corner on 28 and 29 September, respectively. However, it is also now well established with reports from over 40 locations.

The first report of a calling male **Eastern Koel**, for which the only ACT reports were (surprisingly) for 2 females from Symonston and Canberra on 15 September, was from Waramanga on 23 September, with a further one seen and heard at Mawson on 25 September. There were a few further reports until there seemed to be an influx on 3-4 October, including 2 close males giving the *ko-el* and *whoa* call, respectively, the latter in answer to the female *kek kek* call around their favourite local area, a small park in Rivett. However, until a few days ago they seemed to be largely restricted to there, so despite them being recorded from over 60 locations on eBird (an underestimate given many of the early records were provided directly to me) my impression from the extent of still *ko-el* calling reported is that they have not yet properly established in time to catch the second **Red Wattlebirds'** brood (see breeding below).

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In contrast to the 3 above coastal species, the **Rufous Songlark**, which had been heard at the JWNR on 7 September, but with no further records until one was there on 23 September and then the following day one photographed in a Kaleen back yard, has been very slow to arrive, with reports after this from only 12 locations. So, it does not look like a good season to see this inland species, likewise the **White-winged Triller** which has been reported only from around 20 locations during the period. Similarly, the **Pallid Cuckoo**, whose absence in recent seasons was commented on the COG/Canberra Birds chat line by a number of subscribers, was reported from only 12 locations, but there seem to be a few more of the **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** around, as it was reported from 21 locations.

This all seems to reflect still good conditions inland which is underlined by there only being two reports of the **White-browed Woodswallow** during the period, with Nicki Taws reporting a flock (possibly with some **Masked**) over Gorooyaroo NR on 8 October, and Sho Rapley reporting 50 birds over Greenwood Hill (SW of the Sutton turnoff) on 11 October. Sho also reported 10 **Masked Woodswallows**, as well as at least 300 mixed species. She noted it could have been in excess of 1000 as they were streaming over the ridgeline heading west (to their preferred conditions?) for an hour, but due to high altitude counting was difficult, and it was hard to estimate the exact ratio, so she supplied rough counts of individuals of each species actually identified. The only other report of the latter was a single bird over the Red Hill NP water reservoirs on 23 October.

This is also supported by the **Brown Songlark**, first reported from Lake Bathurst on 21 September, only being reported from 2 further locations, a male at the West Belconnen Pond on 19 and 21 October (there were also a couple of late reports from the adjacent Dunlop Grasslands on 29 October), as well as 2 at Marchmont (S of Yass) on 20 October. The latter is also the only place the **Horsfield's Bushlark** has been reported so far this spring, with 2 birds observed there on the same day.

Of the coastal species which had not yet been reported in September, the first **Rainbow Bee-eaters** were heard by Kym Bradley at her patch to the S of Canberra on 30 September, then one was reported from Ginninderra Creek (Latham) on 3 October, with the next one heard at the Curtin Playing Fields on 7 October. At the time of writing they had been reported at around 25 locations, so are by now well established. Likewise, the first **Dollarbird** was not reported until from the COG/Canberra Birds outing at the Lions Youth Haven (Kambah) on 6 October, but since then from a further 16 locations, so it is also establishing well after a slow start.

After Nicki Taws reported a **Channel-billed Cuckoo** calling raucously as it flew over the Gorooyaroo NR on 8 October, there has been a flurry of reports of this species, mostly heard, at 11 further locations. I expect at least some of these may have been the same bird, as the one reported from Page at 7:05 am, and then from Lyneham at 7:30 am on 11 October may have been. Either way these have been by far the most reports in October I can recall at least for some years, perhaps it may still become the new Koel, as has often been predicted. The **Brush Cuckoo** was first reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR and the nearby Campbell Park on 13 October, and subsequently from a further 7 locations.

Finally of the passage migrants, a male **Satin Flycatcher** was first reported from the Tidbinbilla Sanctuary on 10 October and subsequently reports accepted from a further 7 locations, mostly over the Blitz weekend of 26-27 October. None of these have been of passage migrants through Canberra, a reminder of the difficulty of separating even the males from each other (the demarcation line on the breast is downcurved and meets the wing at an acute angle compared with straight and meets the wing at 90° for the Leaden).

### Coffee and Chat at the Gardens Tuesday, 12 November

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 on the second Tuesday of the month.

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

Look for the table with the binoculars on it.

The first **Australian Rufous Fantail** was reported from the Warks/Blundells Creek Roads on 29 September, but from only 4 other locations since, all from the W of the Murrumbidgee River, except for one on Hall Common, Hall Creek on 27 October. The **Common Cicadabird** was first reported from 2 locations within the Tidbinbilla NR by 2 different observers on 19 October and after from the Two Sticks Rd on 20 October as well as single birds at 2 different spots at the Pinnacle BR on 26 October.

So during November please keep an eye out for those species mentioned above which have yet to reach the COG Aol in numbers, especially the inland ones should it dry out further.

Of the species that come to Canberra and its surrounds from the mountains and higher country to spend autumn/winter here, the

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**White-eared Honeyeater** and the **Golden Whistler** were each still present at around 20 (actually up from the 17 in September) and 26 (about half of September) urban/peri-urban locations.

The **Scarlet Robin** was reported just 6 such locations, slightly down from the 9 in September, of which 4 were from the Mulligans Flat NR area, where it has been recorded breeding (see below). Compared with the 9 in September, the **Flame Robin** was reported from just 1 such location, Campbell Park, where it has bred (see below). The **Rose Robin** was only reported from 8 locations in the mountains well to the W of the Murrumbidgee River (photo), and there have been no further **Pink Robin** sightings.



**Rose Robin**

*Victor Braguine*

There were still reports of up to 2 **Crescent Honeyeaters** from the ANBG to 10 October, otherwise from only 3 locations well to the W of the Murrumbidgee River. However, there were no reports of **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters** during the period, or of the **Swift Parrot** (it's been a poor winter to see them locally) or **Brown Gerygone**.

Up to 4 **Bassian Thrush** were still reported from the ANBG to 12 October, as well as one from the Aranda Snow Gums NR on 9 October. The latter was perhaps *en route* to the mountains to the W, from where it has been reported from 3 locations, as well as five birds from the Tallaganda NP on 2 October. However, the **Olive Whistler** was not further reported from the ANBG during the period; only from 5 locations in the mountains to the W, as well as from the Tallaganda NP.

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

While there have been some more reports of “unusual” birds during the period than in recent months, none really require a special mention.

No **Magpie Geese** were reported in the COG Aol during the period, but four **Freckled Duck** were first reported from the JWNR on 7 October. Between 1-4 ducks have been reported from there since, as well as 2 ducks on one occasion from the adjacent Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Ponds (FSTP), the only other location during the period. Again, only a single **Plumed Whistling Duck** was reported from the Trucking Yard Lane dam on 27 September. However, a pair of **Australian Shelduck** were reported from the Point Hut Road dam (Gordon) from 14-19 October, apart from as is usual, 7 locations to the N through to the E of Canberra. Numbers were again low apart from the 49 ducks seen at NW Lake George on 27 October, and the 25-26 seen at the Trucking Yard Lane dam.

**Blue-billed Ducks** were reported from 3 locations, 6 (with 3 possibly 4 young ducklings) at the Upper Stranger Pond on 17 October, between 1-3 ducks at the JWNR between 29 September and 1 October, and 1-2 ducks at Rows Lagoon between 30 September and 15 October. Apart from the Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary, single **Musk Ducks** were reported from 5 locations, the big dam at Ingelara (K2C), the Tin Hut Dam (Googong), Edgeworth Pond (Coombs), the Morass, and Rows Lagoon. **Great-crested Grebes** were reported from 4 locations (the most for a while), the Bracks Hole Road off the Cotter Dam (up to 9 birds), Acacia Inlet on LBG, and the West Belconnen and Yerrabi Ponds.

Surprisingly single **Stubble Quail** were reported from only 4 locations during the period, the Point Hut Dam Rd, the Arawang horse paddocks, Campbell Park and Marchmont (S of Yass), an indication the grass is still short, and they are not yet calling. Up to 5 **Brown Quail** were reported from 10 locations, similar to September. However, no **Painted Button-quail** or **Little Button-quail** were reported during the period.

No **White-headed Pigeon**, **Brush Bronzewing**, **Brown Cuckoo-Dove**, **Peaceful** or **Diamond Doves** were reported during the period. There were also no further reports of the **White-throated Nightjar**.

**Baillon's Crake** were reported from 3 locations, with up to 3 birds regularly observed the JWNR and a single bird at the West Belconnen Pond and Coaldrake Ave Pond (Coombs). **Spotless Crakes** were also reported from 3 locations, with up to 2 regularly from the JWNR, and a single bird at the Coombs and Whitlam Ponds. Up to 6 **Australian Spotted Crake** were also very regularly reported from the JWNR, with a single bird at the Isabella Pond and the big dam at Mulligans Flat NR. Up to 5

**Buff-banded Rails** were reported from the JWNR, as well as up to 2 from 4 other locations. Up to 2 **Lewin's Rails** were reported from the JWNR, with the only other location being a single bird from the Denman Prospect Ponds.

**Pied Stilts** were reported from 6 locations, with the 52 birds seen at the NW end of Lake George on 27 October easily the highest number. Two **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** were still reported from the FSTP to 26 September, but then only 2 from the JWNR on 25-26 October. No **Red-necked Avocet**, **Australian Painted-snipe**, **Banded Lapwing**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Pectoral Sandpiper** or **Red-necked Stint** were reported during the period.

On 11 October Sandra Henderson reported that the **Common Sandpiper** was hard to find this season! She had managed to spot it on a small rock on the town centre side of the first island (ie, island furthest from Athllon Dr) on Lake Tuggeranong. Sandra managed only one poor shot before it flitted off round the end of the island. This remains the only sighting for the period (and the second for the season)

A **Whiskered Black Tern** was reported from the JWNR and the adjacent FSTP on 25 October, but no **Caspian** or **White-winged Black Tern**, **Australasian Bittern** or **Australasian Little/Black-backed Bittern** were reported during the period.

A **Little Egret** was reported from the JWNR on 25 September and stayed until the next day, long enough for a number of observers to record it. Similarly, a **Plumed Egret** was reported from there (and once from the FSTP) on 8-9 October. Single **Great Egrets** were reported from 10 locations, and up to 3 (but mainly single) **White-necked Herons** were reported from 18 locations. Up to 4 **Royal Spoonbill** were reported from 3 locations, and up to 2 **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** from 4 locations. On 4 October 5 **Glossy Ibis** were reported flying over the JWNR, the only record for this species during the period.

Single **Barn Owls** were reported from 3 locations, but **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from 37 locations (down from the over 50 in September) during the period. A white morph **Grey Goshawk** was recorded at Condor Creek in Uriarra Forest on 20 October, but there were no reports of the **Pacific Baza**, **Spotted Harrier**, **Black Kite** or **Black Falcon** during the period.

An **Azure Kingfisher** was reported only from the Sanctuary at the Tidbinbilla NR on 13 October, but no **Red-Backed Kingfisher**, **Glossy Black-Cockatoos**, **Cockatiel**, **Turquoise Parrot**, **Purple-crowned**, **Scaly-breasted** or **Little Lorikeets** were reported over the period. Five **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from the University of Canberra on 13 and 22 October, with 1 and 2 birds from Watson on 2 and 23 October, respectively.

A **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** was photographed at the Goorooyaroo NR on 7 October and a further bird reported from Spring Range slightly to the N of there on 20 October. A male **Scarlet Honeyeater** was reported from the ANBG on 2 October. Single **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** were reported from the Riverbank Park and the adjacent Yass Gorge on 5 and



Red-capped Robin

Victor Braguire



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#### 2025 Plains-wanderer Weekends

25 & 26 October 2025  
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22 & 23 November 2025  
6 & 7 December 2025

The 2025 November weekends will be limited to 6 participants per weekend & the October and December weekends will have the usual 8 participants.

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6 October, respectively, as well as one in Hughes on 4 October. No **Singing Honeyeaters** or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period.

**White-fronted Chats** were reported from 2 close together locations, with 2 birds at the Holborow Ave Ponds (Denman Prospect) on 4 October, and 1 bird at the Denman Prospect Ponds on 27 October. Two **Black-faced Monarchs** were reported from the central Tallaganda NP area on 2 October. **Red-capped Robins** were reported from 6 locations, up to 3 birds at the Bracks Hole Rd Coree, up to 2 birds from the Gooroyaroo NR (see photo) and single birds from Campbell Park, 2 different spots in Mulligans Flat NR and from Zosterops Corner. However, no **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike**, **White-browed Babbler**, **Spangled Drongo**, **Tawny Grassbird** or **Zebra Finch** were reported during the period.

While there have been a few more “unusual” birds reported, the low numbers from winter have continued, in particular of pigeons/doves, waders, raptors, parrots, honeyeaters or other passerines.

Of the birds I have continued to ask readers to keep a special lookout for in 2024, the **Jacky Winter** was reported from 4 known locations, 2 birds from Ingelara and one from Illilanga during the K2C surveys on 13 October, a single bird from the Mulligans Flat NR between 29 September to 21 October, and 2 birds from Sutton on 2 October.

**Hooded Robins** were reported from 4 known locations, with 2 and 3 birds at Ingelara and Scottsdale, respectively, during K2C surveys on 13 October, and a male at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 20 October, as well as at Kym Bradley’s patch to the S of Canberra.

**Restless Flycatcher** were also reported from 4 locations, with 2 at the known Nelanglo TSR on 4-5 October, and 1 at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 26 October. New locations were two close together spots in Bonner, Ida W St on 13 October, and Oak Hill on 19 October.

Following the rain during the period, it seems to be a reasonable breeding season. Some observations follow *but again I first need to remind readers of the care that needs to be taken around breeding birds as outlined the new COG Ethical Birding Guidelines which can be found through the link on the Home Page of the Canberra Birds web site (in particular please read and follow the sections on Nesting Birds and Bird Photography)*:

During the Mulligans Flat NR woodland survey on 29 September a pair of **Scarlet Robins** at a nest with two young was observed at one site. On 24 October Stuart Rae asked me: has anyone confirmed the **Flame Robins** breeding at Campbell Park, as he had watched the female feed a dependent juvenile recently out of the nest that afternoon? Checking eBird a male, female and 2 dependent young were reported from there by Chris McAuliffe on 16 October. This seems to be the only other record, so this rare peri-urban breeding event was not as well observed as the brown pair that successfully bred there in 2014 as published in CBN.

At Ingelara during the K2C surveys on 13 October we observed a male **Hooded Robin** feeding a quivering grey bird. I first thought a juvenile, but this was ruled out by the lack of steaking/spotting around the head and upper breast. So, it was likely pair bonding which Kym Bradley has often observed at her patch to the S of Canberra. Kym has also observed the female being similarly fed by the young male from the previous season. Checking HANZAB reveals under Co-operative Breeding: “Often breed co-operatively, in groups consisting of breeding pair and one or two helpers; helpers can be male or female but possibly more often males.”. This was something of which both of us were not aware.

On 4 October at the Gungahlin Pond just south of the three islands Chris Davey recorded a pair of **Australasian Shoveler** with 5-6 young. The young were about 2/3rd grown and swimming very tight with the adults. To Chris’ mind there was no doubt that the young could not fly and so presumably were bred on the pond. He wondered whether Shoveler breeding in the ACT been recorded before? A check of the information under BIRD INFO on the COG/Canberra Birds web site showed that there has been some breeding recorded in the COG Aol, but mainly of dependent young (13 cases between October and February with the latter an outlier). The question is: has there been any recently? I was not able to recall any since 2017.

On 20 October John Leonard asked on the chat line “Has anyone ever been swooped by a **Black-shouldered Kite** (BSK)?” That morning, he was standing by the roadside at the top of the Apollo Road/Naas Road Paddock when he observed a BSK in a dead tree on the other side of the road. It was joined by another, and they swirled around calling (John didn't know whether this was courtship or two birds facing off over territory). During this one of the birds, which had been flying at about 10 metres off the ground, deliberately swooped lower over him, down to within two metres of his head. He thought it was an excess of either amorousness or aggression; there was no sign of a nest they were defending.

I referred John to my article in CBN 30(3) 97-116 (2005) where I describe post 2003 fires **BSK** breeding on Cooleman Ridge, where it certainly was a quite vicious swooper, similar to my experience with **Brown Goshawks**. That John was unable to find a nest accords with my experience that the nest can be quite well hidden, for example in amongst a mistletoe clump. The only breeding information elicited through a trawl of the 35 eBird records for the period was courtship behaviour photographed by Deb and Rod Ralph at the JWNR on 27 October (rather late for this often-winter breeder).

**Red Wattlebirds** (RWBs) seem to be having a good breeding season, at least in my local area, where the first brood (of at least eight fledglings at different spots including at the front and back of my house) fledged from a nest I was watching on 1 October. I also recorded some more local dependent young during the Blitz and others have also reported similar timing. I expect RWBs (not all) will start their second brood soon, perhaps too early to include many **Eastern Koel** chicks (those that would be reported in December). I observed 2 RWBs attacking a male **Koel** on 26 October and others who have observed such aggression include Margaret Robertson (plus from the **Magpie-lark**, a rare host in the COG Aol) and Alison Milton. So perhaps RWBs are becoming less naïve, this season may tell?

There has still been some mixed feeding flock reports including on 28 September when Duncan McCaskill, Peter Miller, Kathy Walter and John Goldie conducted the Mt Majura woodland surveys. A couple of sites had small mixed flocks which included **Speckled Warbler**, **Superb Fairy-wren**, **Yellow-rumped**, **Buff-rumped**, and **Brown Thornbills**; **Grey Fantail**, **Golden Whistler** and **Yellow faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters**.

A large (still winter?) flock of 34 **White-winged Choughs** was also observed on the Mulligans Flat woodland survey on 29 September.

Around 6 am on 30 September Doug Liang reported to me probably the biggest flock of **Gang-gang Cockatoos** he'd ever seen, he 33 counted and there were probably close to 40 all up. Interestingly they were really confiding and inquisitive as he walked under their roosting trees and were flying playfully very close to the ground even encircling his legs, one young female even flew between them! There seemed to be quite a lot of young birds amongst them, presumably last year's offspring. It was certainly a big flock as eBird shows the high count since New Year 2023 is 68 birds, but with nothing over 30 otherwise.



**Laughing Kookaburra, Tiger Snake** *Victor Braguine*

Finally on 21 October at the Tidbinbilla NR Victor Braguine saw a **Laughing Kookaburra** pick up a baby Tiger Snake from the path in front of them; it flew up into a tree (see photo), perched and swallowed it in seconds. Victor had heard about things like that but witnessed it for the first time. It was a baby snake, still deadly, identified by experts from a specialised Facebook group.

November is the last month of the spring significant bird activity in the COG Aol. So please watch out for more of the returning spring/summer migrants mentioned above, for the last of the leaving altitudinal migrants, for roost sites and flights, for any single species flocks, and for any breeding activity. 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/Canberra Birds 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*

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## Summary of Presentations from the 9 October Meeting

The shorter presentation was a very interesting and informative one by **Paul Russell** on “**Learning from the Birds**”.

Paul indicated that the original Birdlife Australia’s Birds on Farms project was conducted in 1995-1997 in Victoria but was revamped in 2017 and included NSW in 2019. The ACT-Yass project, covering a rough inverted triangle from the top half of the ACT to Boorowa and Crookwell, and currently involving 50 properties and greater than 130 survey sites with more than 30 volunteer surveyors, began last year.

Further expansion is mooted, with the aim being to reverse the decline of woodland birds through monitoring and to apply the research outcomes to develop targeted habitat restoration plans with landholders. Paul noted the importance of farms as most of the remaining temperate woodland in Australia (of which >80% has been lost) is on private property, much of which is fragmented, with remaining remnants on poor soils.

Of the 195 species dependent on woodland, 51 species or sub-species are threatened or are in significant decline. They need help as they often require characteristics that have been cleared such as shrubs, ground cover (including woody debris and leaf litter) as well as nesting hollows. Habitat diversity can be increased by protecting and restoring remnant woodland, encouraging regeneration and creating new habitat by planting.

Paul outlined some of the positive results from the overall project so far, such as remnant woodland and restoration plots having fewer species than remnant woodland with restoration, and that sites with an increasing amount of mistletoe and number of tree hollows have an increasing number of woodland bird species.

Paul also briefly provided the results of the 3 survey seasons of the ACT-Yass project so far, with 103 species observed (76 in remnant and 71 in restored sites), including 15 Conservation Action Plan species.



### **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.

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

**[www.feathersnfriends.com.au](http://www.feathersnfriends.com.au)**

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Email: [freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au](mailto:freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au)

Once again on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members many thanks to Paul for his very interesting and informative presentation on this relatively new Birdlife Australia project covering our local area. Please accept our very best wishes for the continuing success of this very important project, including the fourth survey season which is now underway. We trust that his presentation has resulted in attracting some additional surveyors.

The main presentation was a very important and interesting presentation of work by **Chris Davey, Peter Fullagar** and **Nick Nicholls** on “**Potential impacts of a rodent eradication program on the Lord Howe Island lowland terrestrial avifauna**”.

Chris gave the presentation and began by describing their and COG’s involvement with Lord Howe Island (LHI), starting with a biological survey and LHI Woodhen population estimates way back in 1971, the Woodhen recovery program in the 1980s and a further survey in 2007.

This was a major reason that when funding was approved for the Rodent Eradication Program in 2012, they were approached to design and conduct fully funded bird surveys which would be carried out by themselves with support from COG members.

Five annual surveys of lowland terrestrial bird species were conducted pre-eradication from 2013-2018 (not in 2015), with further surveys 2019 shortly after the eradication program, and again in 2022 (surveys were not possible in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID).



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Rodent baiting was carried out using bait stations around the settlement areas, with aerial baiting outside these, and Chris outlined details of the survey protocols for both the morning plot and evening transect surveys, each carried out over six days.

While the surveys recorded 33 land bird species (including 7 shorebirds), only 12 species provided enough records for analysis by Nick Nicholls, 6 covered by plot surveys and 5 species by both. Several species [Golden Whistler, Pied Currawong (50% were held in captivity) and Sacred Kingfisher] showed no change, some initially declined but recovered to pre-eradication levels (Song Thrush, Common Blackbird, Buff-banded Rail and Swampheh), while two (Emerald Dove and Silvereye) first increased but then returned to pre-eradication levels.

On the other hand, numbers of the LHI Woodhen (90% were held in captivity) continued to increase. With the help of maps Chris provided possible reasons for these changes (interestingly the Buff-banded Rail with its long beak had access to the bait stations which the Common Blackbird did not) but was not able to explain why numbers of the Magpie-lark and Welcome Swallow have remained lower. Chris underlined that this was one reason further surveys should be conducted to measure long-term changes, but this would require funding and experienced observers.

Once again on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members many thanks to Chris, Peter and Nick for the very interesting and informative presentation. The interest was very clear from the large turnout, including members who had helped with the surveys, some multiple times. They can very rightly be very proud of what they have achieved, and it would be great if they were able to do more surveys.

*Jack Holland*

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## Committee News

The Committee met for a **planning day** on the 12th and followed this with our **monthly meeting** on the 17th.

The **planning day** was the first since August 2023. We reviewed the year, our continued work on the recommendations from the strategic review of COG in 2019 and set priorities for the committee's work in 2025. Our key priorities are:

- COG Databases and Annual Bird Report
- Continued work on a new Canberra Birds design theme including completion of a new suite of birding brochures
- A staged renewal of parts of the website
- Continued work on building and retaining our membership

Commencement of work on archives, records and Canberra Birds history

At our **monthly meeting** we agreed to add information to the website about avian flu. This will refer interested or concerned people to the key government and other sources of information on this disease. We also finalised the documents and arrangements for the AGM on November 13.

Conservation submission this month: Comments on the Bluetts Block Territory Plan amendments.

Neil Hermes *President*



kingfisher park  
birdwatchers lodge

Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

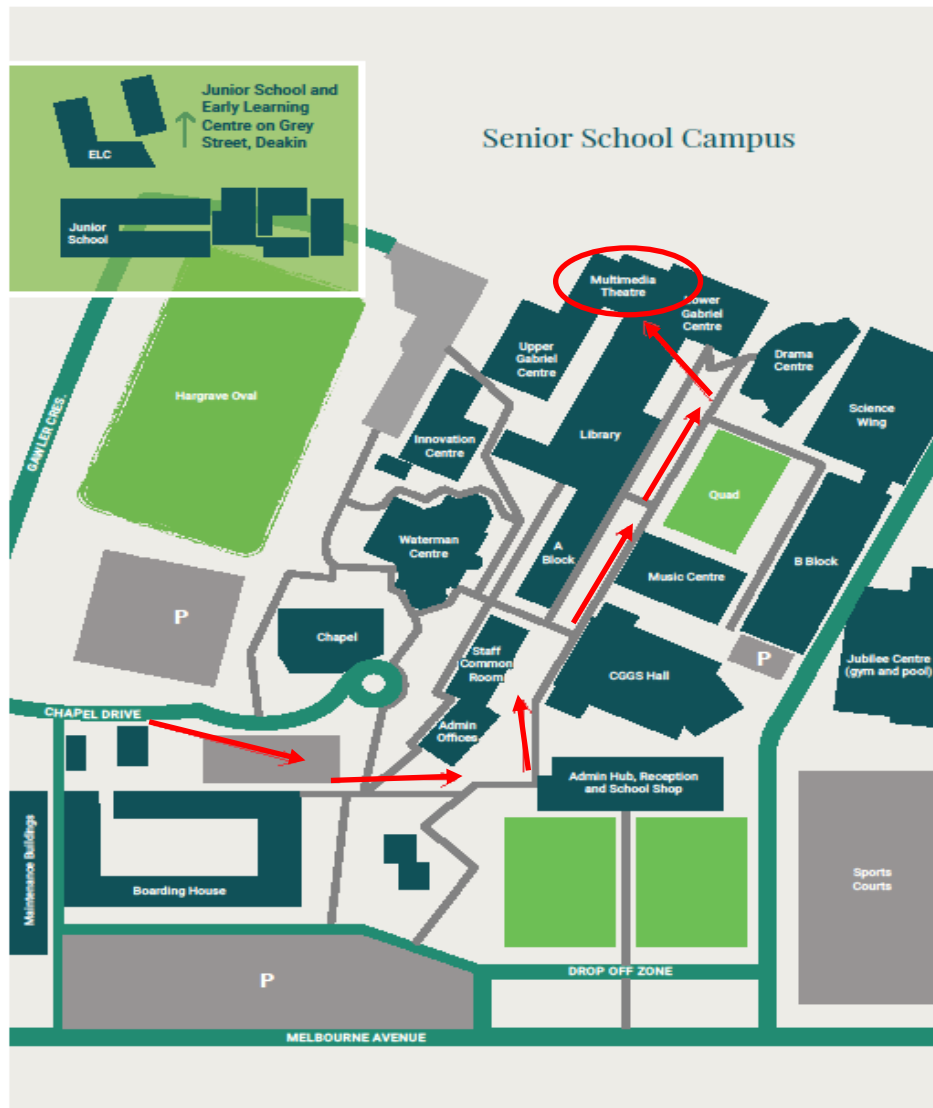
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## November Meeting : map showing access to the Multi-media Centre (MMT)



### Advance notice of the Canberra Birds Christmas Barbeque

#### Black Mountain Peninsula (John Cardiff Close) 6.00 pm Wednesday 11 December 2024

Sausages, bread, onions, beer, wine and non-alcoholic drinks provided. Vegetarian options will also be provided.

We will also be celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canberra Birds (COG) with a birthday cake.

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

There will be the usual monthly raffle.



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# Notice of the COG Annual General Meeting for 2024

**Wednesday 13 November 2023, 7.30pm**

Our Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc. (Canberra Birds) will be held at our usual venue in the Multimedia Centre at Canberra Girls' Grammar School. You may attend in person or by Zoom.

## Meeting papers

The 2024 Agenda, draft minutes of the 2023 AGM, financial reports for 2023-24 and President's reports for 2021-22 and 2022-23 are available at <http://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/>.

This year a Special Motion will be put to the Meeting. This is about Vesting Surplus Property on Dissolution, and was introduced on page 9 of the October [Gang-gang](#). The two papers relating to the Motion were emailed to members on 21-22 October.

## Attending in person

Directions to the Multimedia Centre <https://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/other-resources/cog-monthly-meeting-location/>

## Attending by Zoom

Zoom link

<https://anu.zoom.us/j/84726375063?pwd=84OewwP9zmFc7t1UP5ac6T3va8eEWq.1>

Meeting ID: 847 2637 5063

Password: 899264

If you have trouble connecting to Zoom, email [cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au) and we will try to help.

Could Zoom attendees please email [cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au) during the meeting so that we can record your attendance.

## Only financial members may vote...

If you haven't paid your membership for this financial year, renew now from the link on the Canberra Birds home page or click [here](#)

## Apologies

If you cannot attend, please send apologies to [cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au).

## Annual General Meeting 13 November 2024

### Agenda

- 1 Opening
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Confirmation of minutes of 2023 AGM
- 4 Adoption of President's Reports for 2021-22 and 2022-23
- 5 President's Report 2023-24
- 6 Adoption of President's Report 2023-24
- 7 Presentation of annual statement of accounts
- 8 Adoption of annual statement of accounts
- 9 Appointment of auditor for 2024-25
- 10 Presentation of Steve Wilson Medal
- 11 Election of office-bearers (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer) and ordinary committee members
- 12 Other matters for which notice has been given
  - a. Special Motion: Vesting Surplus Property on Dissolution
- 13 Close of meeting

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# Canberra Birds Committee

Do you want to influence the direction of Canberra Birds? Do you have ideas about how we could enhance our current activities? Are you passionate about birds, want to contribute to conservation, or just want to be more involved?

Have you considered joining the Canberra Birds Committee?

We are seeking members to join the Committee as we embark on our next phase as Canberra Birds.

## About your Committee

The Committee provides leadership, direction and governance for Canberra Birds. The Committee comprises the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and up to 10 general members.

Our range of activities and responsibilities offer opportunities for members with a broad range of skills and experience. Current Committee members have diverse experience and expertise drawn from conservation, education, the public sector, research, science, and policy. You do not need specialist skills or experience in birds (although this would be highly valued), simply a willingness to work with others, to learn and to take responsibility for specific activities.

## Role of a Committee Member

Time commitment is on a yearly basis

Participate in an online meeting once a month for 1.5 hours, and contribute to out-of-session discussion and decisions

Prepare for the meeting by reading papers and contribute from your background and expertise.

Ensure the business of Canberra Birds is carried out in accordance with the law under the terms of our Rules of Association.

Contribute to a working group or project that builds on your particular talents and interests – designing brochures, drafting conservation submissions, rebuilding our website or databases, visiting community groups.

Share ideas, initiate projects, and keep Canberra Birds fresh and current!

If you have an interest in IT and/or web design, have a flair for writing, a talent for project management and/or ideas and enthusiasm for community engagement, then do consider getting involved.

Our areas of focus for next year include improving our community profile through social media and brochures/publication, organising how we record bird survey data and produce a new Annual Bird report, redesigning our website and streamlining our membership processes.

## 'Try Before you Buy'

If you're interested, but unsure about how the Committee functions, you are very welcome to come to one or more of our meetings as an observer, or shadow another Committee member for a month, so that you can experience the range of issues addressed and whether being a Committee member is for you.

Also, if you're interested in participating in a particular activity planned for next year (or beyond), or any other ongoing Canberra Birds activity, but are unable to commit to being a Committee member, we'd love to hear from you. There will be lots of scope for members to be involved in specific projects or activities, or parts of them, as we progress.

The nomination form is available from <https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/>. Nominations need the support of two members and the endorsement of the nominee. All three people must be members of Canberra Birds.

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Completed forms can be submitted by mail to P.O. Box 331 Jamison Centre ACT 2614, or scanned and emailed to [cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au). **Nominations must be received by the Secretary no later than 6 November.** Alternatively, members can nominate at the AGM, but these nominations can only progress if there are vacancies on the committee after accepting the nominations of members who are nominated a week in advance.

### Interested?

Contact Kim Farley or Julie Hotchin to find out more about what being a member of the Committee involves or if you'd like more information about how to be involved in specific activities.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kim Farley and Julie Hotchin  
[kimlouisefarley@gmail.com](mailto:kimlouisefarley@gmail.com)  
[julie.hotchin@gmail.com](mailto:julie.hotchin@gmail.com)

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## Canberra Birds hosts BIGnet annual meeting on 21 September

Canberra Birds hosted a very successful meeting of the NSW/ACT Bird Interest Group network (BIGnet) at Wildbark at Mulligans Flat, on Saturday 21 September. The event was organised by Committee members Jenny Bounds (Conservation Officer), Julie Hotchin (Committee member) and Kim Farley (Vice President). We would also like to acknowledge Alison Mackerras for preparing the minutes of the business meeting and Margaret Robertson for managing registrations. Jenny has a long-time association with BIGnet, representing Canberra Birds. There was positive feedback about all aspects of the event.

The day included a morning business meeting for delegates from NSW and ACT bird groups, and an afternoon Presentations Forum on the theme of 'Community Engagement in Conservation in the ACT', to which representatives from local community conservation groups and Canberra Birds members were invited. The formal proceedings were followed by a dinner at Frankies in Forde, a Twilight Tour in Mulligan's Flat Woodland Sanctuary for our special visitors, and a bird walk in the Sanctuary on Sunday morning led by Nicki Taws.

As this event coincided with our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, it was an opportunity to show the new Canberra Birds logo (launched at the September members' meeting) as the centrepiece of a birthday cake at afternoon tea, and our new banner.

### More about BIGnet

BIGnet has existed since 1991 as a forum to discuss birds conservation issues, exchange information about what birding groups are doing, share ideas and learnings, and to collaborate on initiatives and projects.

Committee officials and conservation officers from the large to smaller birding clubs/groups (including Birdlife Australia's regional groups) attend twice a year. Meetings are hosted by members groups on a rotating basis. Canberra Birds has hosted seven times over the years. In recent years, there is a face-to-face meeting and a meeting held on zoom annually.

### Saturday morning - BIGnet business meeting

Jenny Bounds chaired the business meeting and ran this tightly with a very full agenda to discuss.

The President of Birdlife Australia, Mandy Bamford was a special guest. Mandy spoke about Birdlife's priorities, conservation strategy, and their advocacy and actions for strong nature laws, particularly the reforms proposed for national environmental legislation (EPBC Act). Several delegates representing Birdlife Southern NSW shared what they have been doing locally in the Sydney region concerning advocacy for strong nature laws (eg lobbying local MPs), and a presentation was made about the issues/difficulties in advocating for and protecting habitats for shorebirds in southern Sydney (Botany Bay, Port Hacking).

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) was another topic of discussion. This is a significant Birdlife Aust. initiative and many of the clubs including Canberra Birds undertake bird surveys, monitoring and reporting on KBAs. Margot Oorebeek and Dr Holly Parsons (via Zoom) gave presentations on several Birdlife Aust. projects, including ‘Birds on Farms’, the ‘Urban Birds Program’ and the ‘Gang-gang nesting hollows’ project, the last is funded by moneys raised from the NSW Twitchathon and managed through BIGnet.

### Saturday afternoon - Presentations Forum

Four presentations focussed on the theme of ‘Community Engagement in Conservation in the ACT’ showcased what is happening in the ACT in the environmental space. All the projects/programs featured involved Canberra Birds volunteers, in bird surveys or project support. Kim Farley convened the Forum Program.

*Conservation and community: The Mulligans Flat – Gorooyaroo Woodland Experiment*, presented by Dr Belinda Wilson, Shoshana Rapley and Brittany Brockett, Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University. This featured the history of the experimental research and reintroductions of fauna species into the Mulligans Flat Sanctuary. The Bush-stone Curlew reintroduction which Canberra Birds has been involved in was a highlight.

*Community Engagement in the Ginnindery Conservation Corridor*, presented by Bridie Noble from the Ginnindery Conservation Trust. This is a conservation area adjacent to the Murrumbidgee River in the NW of the ACT, with aims and programs to engage the new and growing urban community in valuing and protecting their local patch.

*Lake Bathurst (‘Bundong’), a Boom and Bust Lake*, presented by Dr Michael Lenz, a long-time member of Canberra Birds who has undertaken bird surveys there over several decades (surveys commenced in 1980). This is a little known Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). A large number of common to rare species of waterbirds have been recorded from the lake, which varies in water levels.

*The Latham’s Snipe Project* presented by Lori Gould who is researching the Snipe for a PhD. This is part of a national project with researchers, students, volunteers, and government staff in Australia and overseas (Japan), who have been working together since 2015 to learn more about this cryptic species using tracking technology. The presentation included a viewing of the documentary “Snipe” released this year. The Latham’s Snipe Project has been supported at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve, by the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust, and a number of Canberra Birds volunteers and bird banders.

The BIGnet organising team – Jenny Bounds, Julie Hotchin and Kim Farley.



Clockwise: The BIGnet business meeting—delegates at the table; Mandy Bamford, President Birdlife Aust. speaking about their advocacy for strong nature laws; BIGnet organizing group at Frankies at Forde: Kim Farley, Jenny Bounds, Julie Hotchin; The Forum, Kim introducing the video presentation about the Mulligans Flat-Gorooyaroo Woodland Experiment.

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# ACT Avian Influenza Update

ACT Biosecurity continues to test sites within the ACT as part of the National Avian Influenza preparedness response.

Australia remains the only continent free from HPAI H5N1. There is no way to prevent new strains of avian influenza entering Australia with migratory wild birds or transmission between wild birds.

High pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1, has spread rapidly worldwide and caused significant impacts overseas for both poultry and wild birds. HPAI H5N1 has also spread to mammalian species and there have been some limited cases of human infection.

HPAI H5N1 poses a significant threat to Canberra's wildlife, people, agriculture and economy.

**It is important that we are well prepared for its potential arrival.**

**Do not handle sick or dead birds. All unusual illness or death in birds must be reported to the Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Hotline on [1800 675 888](tel:1800675888).**

The ACT Biosecurity vet will present on H5N1 at a COG/Canberra Birds meeting early in 2025 to provide more detailed information.



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Image Credit: Alan Landford

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## Field Trip Reports

### Tuesday 24 to Friday 27 September – Culburra and surrounds

Nine people spent four days in the Shoalhaven visiting a number of sites, including coastal, estuarine, sandstone, forest and heath. We convened on Tuesday afternoon at the caravan park in Culburra and drove to Orient Point to check out the waters across to Comerong Island and Greenwell Point and then to explore Orient Point Wetland Reserve. **Little Pied** and **Pied Cormorant** posed nicely to show their differences, **White-bellied Sea Eagle** patrolled the coastline, and the first of many **Little Wattlebird**, **Brown Gerygone** and **Yellow Thornbill** put in an appearance. With plenty of daylight left, we then walked out to Crookhaven Heads, where at least 5 Humpback Whales were sighted soon after we left the carpark. Once we had reached the rock platform, we scanned for waders. Thanks to quick reactions from Teo, a flock flying quickly over us was photographed and later identified as mostly **Pacific Golden Plover** with **Ruddy Turnstone** and **Red-necked Stint**. In the understorey on the headland, we had wonderful views of **Variegated Fairy-wren** with the male in spectacular fresh plumage. From the lookout, we saw **Australasian Gannet** and three small dark-winged and white-bellied shearwaters, too distant to positively identify as either **Fluttering** or **Hutton's Shearwater**.

With the weather forecast looking dire for Thursday, we had to do as much as possible on Wednesday. We began the day at Bomaderry Creek, previously a good spot for **Rockwarbler**, but there have been no recent records and we were unable to find them either. However, the walk among the sandstone cliffs was picturesque and a good variety of bush birds were recorded including breeding **Satin Bowerbird** and **Superb Fairy-wren**. We then drove further west to taller forest in Bangalee Reserve, bordering the Shoalhaven River. Here the highlights were hearing a **Green Catbird** and seeing a pair of **Eastern Yellow Robin** feeding two tiny chicks in an exquisitely-decorated nest low in a shrub.

With an afternoon high tide, our main destination for the afternoon was Shoalhaven Heads but, on the way, we had time to drive along Jennings Lane which has a series of wetlands bordering the narrow but quiet road, allowing us to stop frequently to observe a variety of ducks and cormorants, as well as both **White-necked** and **White-faced Heron**, **Great** and **Eastern Cattle Egret**, and **Yellow-billed** and **Royal Spoonbill**.

Once at Shoalhaven Heads, we walked through to the ocean beach and on to the high tide roost on the inlet. There were many **Red-capped Plover** scattered across the sand, much of which was home to a large quantity of dead logs and branches washed down the Shoalhaven River in the last big flood. This gave the plovers plenty of shelter for nesting sites and we gave them a wide berth to avoid disturbance. **Pied Oystercatcher** nests were being protected in a fenced off area, with individual nests ringed with multiple strands of electrified wire as protection against foxes and ravens; apparently, because feathers are made of keratin, birds do not get a shock if they touch the wires. The fallen timber, often in large piles, meant that we could approach the high tide roost without disturbing the **Eastern Curlew** and **Bar-tailed Godwit** and everyone had excellent scope views. It seems the smaller sandpipers have not yet arrived.

There was still time for a brief visit to Lake Wollumboola which is currently open to the sea. This means the water level is higher and most of the sandbars that used to be favoured by waders are now underwater; as well, the water is more saline, which has apparently reduced the numbers of **Black Swan**, although there were still many hundreds. Despite this, as well as **Eastern Curlew** and **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Red Knot** were recorded, and we were able to see **Caspian**, **Crested** and a single **Australian (Gull-billed) Tern** lined up for comparison.

The rain began during the night and continued for most of Thursday. There were couple of brief breaks and we dashed out to the nearby boat ramp to stretch our legs. A **Whimbrel** was the only addition to our list. We passed the rest of the time playing cards, reading, etc, until the rain cleared about 3pm and we set off for Callala Creek Bushland Reserve. It was alive with birds and among the 30 species recorded were **Black-faced Monarch**, **Golden** and **Rufous Whistler**, **Eastern Whipbird** (seen), and **Spotted Pardalote** leaving a nesting burrow in a sandy bank beside the track, with two similar burrows nearby. On the way back, **White-headed Pigeons** perched on powerlines were a nice addition to our birdlist.

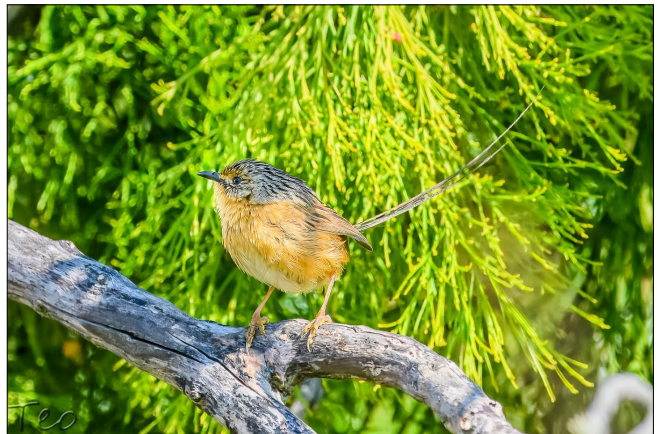
Fortunately, Friday was fine and we began the day with a walk through bushland across the road from the caravan park. A female **Pacific Koel** being mobbed by **Red Wattlebirds** was the first bird to catch our attention. **Sacred Kingfisher** was also new, and we were pleased to have more views of **Black-faced Monarch** and to see **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** which had previously been heard only.



Culburra and surrounds



Day 1: Mistletoebird, Variegated Fairywren Day 2: White-browed Scrubwren, White-necked Heron, Red-capped Plover (broken wing display), Eastern Curlew Day 3: Australian Pelican, Eastern Yellow Robin. Tee Tong Teo



Culburra Day 4: Pacific Koel, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Eastern Ground Parrot, Satin Bowerbird, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo Day 5: Eastern Bristlebird, Southern Emu-wren, Eastern Whipbird

*Tee Tong Teo*

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The rest of the morning was spent at Abrahams Bosom Reserve near Currarong. It was an interesting loop walk taking us onto the very scenic coast in several spots then back through low forest and lots of flowering understorey plants. **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** and **White-cheeked Honeyeater** were the highlights of the morning.

With most of the group returning to Canberra that afternoon, we had time for one last birding site: Beecroft Peninsula which is closed during the week but opens at midday on Fridays. We walked a short distance along the heath-lined fire trail to Little Target Beach, hoping to see **Eastern Bristlebird**. It was not long before we heard birds calling, and then 3 were seen briefly crossing the track. Most of us then headed home but 2 couples stayed an extra night so were able to return later on Friday afternoon and had much better views of **Eastern Bristlebird** as well as **Eastern Ground Parrot**.

We were happy with our trip total of 105 species, especially with one day mostly lost due to rain. Many thanks to Prue Watters for taking the time to do a reconnaissance trip to the area and liaising with Shoalhaven birders to find the best places to visit. Thanks also to Lia for compiling the many eBird lists. The eBird trip report can be viewed at <https://ebird.org/tripreport/277375>

Sue Lashko

### Sunday 29 September - Pejar Dam and Crookwell area

Only 3 people joined Bill for what proved to be a very enjoyable day out visiting Pejar Dam, Crookwell, and Lyells and Berrebangelo TSRs. Raptors sighted were limited to a **Nankeen Kestrel** and a **Black-shouldered Kite**. At Pejar Dam there were over 100 **Eurasian Coot** with small numbers of all grebes, while at Jean Todkill Park there was a group of 27 **Hoary-headed Grebes** and a flotilla of 11 **Australasian Grebes** drifting in a line. There were **Musk Ducks** on both dams including two males at Jean Todkill Park producing a fine splashing display. Other ducks seen were **Hardhead**, **Australian Wood Duck** and **Pacific Black Duck**. **Australian Reed Warblers** were present and vocal at both places. Small flocks of **Red-browed Finch**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, **Superb Fairy-wren** and **Welcome Swallow** were seen near Pejar Dam.

As we were travelling, several groups of **Straw-necked Ibis** were seen in the fields with the largest group being a mix of 65 adult and immature birds at Grabben Gullen. There were also large groups of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** feeding and we counted 70 at Lyells TSR. Other than them and a flock of **White-winged Chough** at Lyells, the TSRs were relatively quiet. However, at Lyells there were a couple of very healthy brown snakes and 3 glossy shinglebacks. Unfortunately, there was also pig damage.

Other birds seen during the day were solitary or limited to small numbers. These included **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalote**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, **Crimson Rosella**, **Red-rumped Parrot**, **Grey Fantail**, **Australian Raven** and **Red Wattlebird**. Heard but not seen included **Pied Butcherbird**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Rufous Whistler** and **Grey Shrike-thrush**. Overall, 56 species were recorded and it was a lovely drive.

Sheila Hughes

### Sunday 6 October – Lions Youth Haven/Westwood Farm, Kambah

Twenty-two members and guests joined Helen for a walk around the 650 ha Lions Youth Haven property managed by her husband, Graham. We walked through varying habitats including open native woodlands, native grasses and groundcovers, and introduced pasture plants.

One of the first birds we encountered was a **White-winged Chough** that had become entangled in string and the fence wire. A trusty pen knife was used to free the bird which hopped away and started eating immediately, despite being a bit wonky on its legs. We then walked along the edge of the two creeks on the property where we encountered **White-faced Heron**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, a pair of **Australian King Parrots** and a distant **Brown Falcon**. The two known local pairs of **Wedge-tailed Eagles** soared high above us – one pair flying close to the Murrumbidgee River, above Forster Hill and the other pair flying above the neighbouring property and McQuoids Hill. We saw a few, but heard more, **White-throated Gerygone** and heard one **Western Gerygone**. A highlight for many was seeing our first **Oriental Dollarbird** and **White-winged Triller** for the season. Although we heard and saw many **Striated Pardalotes**, we neither saw nor heard any **Spotted Pardalotes**. **Superb Fairywrens**, **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** and **Grey Fantails** were plentiful, and a flock of 33 **Red-browed Finches** was seen feeding on grass seeds.

After a 4.5km walk, during which 54 species were recorded, it was an unexpected surprise to be chauffeured back to our parked cars in the Lions Haven bus by Graham. Many thanks to Helen and Sandra for organising such an interesting and productive outing.

Angela Booth

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## Sunday 13 October – K2C surveys

The Spring K2C surveys were held in fine weather and, although it wasn't too warm or windy, the prolonged dry spell has meant some sites were looking quite parched. The expected summer migrants were present, and small flocks of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were migrating through at a few sites. Highlights included **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** along the Murrumbidgee, the now regular **Pied Butcherbird** at a couple of sites, **Brown Treecreeper** breeding, **White-winged Triller** at a couple of sites, **Varied Sittella** at one site, **Pink-eared Duck** and **Musk Duck** on the large dam at Ingelara, and **Jacky Winter** at the same property. **Hooded Robin** and **Diamond Firetail** were recorded at only a few sites but both species were easily seen at Scottsdale, around the shed while we had our lunch. Thank you to the volunteers, landholders and Bush Heritage for hosting us for our lunch gathering. The next surveys will be in April 2025.

Nicki Taws

## Monday 14 to Sunday 20 October – Warren, Macquarie Marshes, Gundabooka NP – extended camping trip

Twelve eager birders arrived on Monday afternoon at the caravan park in Warren. It backs onto the town levee and ponds north of the wetlands so the evening walk was around these. Highlights included **Glossy Ibis**, **Cockatiel**, **Australian Ringneck**, **Purple-backed Fairy-wren** and **Grey-crowned Babbler**.

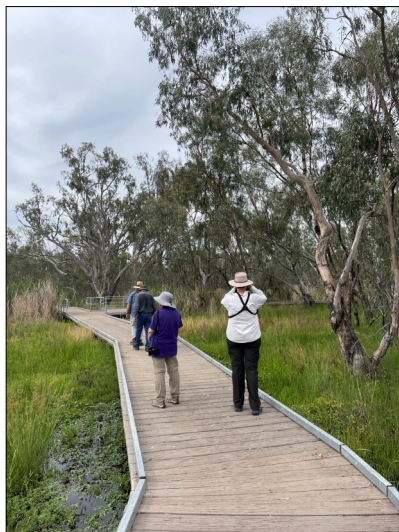
After heavy overnight rain, the next morning we walked around Tiger Bay Wetlands where a pair of **Black Falcon**, **Plum-headed Finch**, **Black-tailed Native-hen**, stunning **Red-winged Parrot** and **Baillon's Crake** were seen, as well as a number of water birds, including at least 180 **Straw-necked Ibis** perched on the many dead trees.

After a coffee stop at a converted church cafe we drove in convoy to Burrima day visitor area, in Macquarie Marshes, with shelters and toilet facilities protected by a high levee. The infrastructure in the wetlands for visitors is extensive, with a 2-kilometre boardwalk, and high and low viewing platforms. **Pale-headed Rosella**, **White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike** and **White-breasted Woodswallow** were additions to our ever-growing birdlist.

More overnight rain meant a change of plans for the route to our main destination, Gundabooka National Park, with sealed roads being the only sensible option as we all made our separate ways northwards, with many mixed flocks of **Masked** and **White-browed Woodswallow** along the way. Curious local **Red-capped Robin** and **Splendid Fairy-wren** checked us out as we set up camp in the recently upgraded Dry Tank Campground for the next four nights.

On Wednesday morning thunder rumbled around but there was only light rain so we set out on the Little Mountain Walk from camp. Typical mulga birds seen included **Inland** and **Chestnut-rumped Thornbill**, **Crested Bellbird**, **Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush** and **White-browed Treecreeper**. At the end of the walk, we were rewarded with splendid views of Mt Gundabooka, as well as **Pink Cockatoo** and **Mulga Parrot**.

In the afternoon we did the walk to Yapa rock art caves. This was more open, rocky platform country leading to a small creek and gorge in the edge of which is the cave with the rock art. Excellent sightings of **Pink Cockatoo** feeding, a **Spotted Bowerbird** and a **Red-backed Kingfisher** capped off a lovely day.



Canberra Birds members enjoying Warren, Macquarie Marshes and Gundabooka NP  
*Kathy Walter*

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The next day again threatened rain and some short showers were enough to settle the dust. We drove to the Shearers' Quarters and did a local walk to the dam. On the way there were **White-browed** and **Chestnut-crowned Babbler**, as well as a **Little Woodswallow**. We circled back from the dam via the old station dump and car graveyard and nearer to the Shearers' Quarters saw **Crested Bellbird**, **Hooded Robin**, **Mistletoebird** and **Restless Flycatcher**.

With more rain threatening, we decided to bring forward the planned late afternoon outing to Bennetts Gorge walk to before lunch. We headed onto open country between the mulga woodland and Mt Gundabooka escarpment which is crossed by multiple creeks. Flocks of **Budgerigars** were seen in the trees along the dry creek beds running out from the mountain. We headed back to camp for the rest of the day and a fierce game of Up and Down the River was waged as the afternoon thunderstorm raged around and drenching sheets of rain swept past the picnic shelter.

The next day, while John and Steve tried to sort out some battery issues, the rest of us walked to the road to check conditions. We added **Yellow Thornbill** to our birdlist, and enjoyed the many pairs of **Red-capped Robin**, as well as great views of a **Crested Bellbird**. **Emu** were seen bathing in the larger ponds of loose water at the road edge.

The rain had soaked in remarkably quickly and it was decided to attempt the run down Yanda track to a campsite by the Darling River. A stop at a dam on route yielded excellent bird watching including **Crimson Chat** for those lucky enough to see them, and a nesting pair of **Restless Flycatcher** and a **Brown Falcon**. On the water were **Australasian Grebe** and a pair of **Hardhead**.

We drove on northwards, but unfortunately the road got very wet about 10km in so it was decided to return to the dam for lunch which yielded a sighting of a pair of **Wedge-tailed Eagle**. The afternoon was spent in camp and saw a return match in the card game before we headed back down the track for evening drinks by the dam. In beautiful evening light over 100 **Tree Martin** soared and dived as they fed over the water of the dam. **Red-winged** and **Mulga Parrot**, **Australian Ringneck**, **Galah** and a **Pink Cockatoo** all came down to drink, while the **Black-tailed Native-hen** had a good bath. A nest of **Striped Honeyeaters** was nearby and we got a close view of the adult bird. The **Restless Flycatchers** attacked a sole **Australian Raven**. Pigs we had seen earlier came for a drink. The day after we left; the park was due to close for feral control and the number of goats and pigs seen suggested it was definitely needed.

Camp visitors included one strap-nosed brown snake looking for the ultimate shade with Martin and Pat, two species of frog, a gecko, a dragon, and a scorpion visiting Sandra's tent. This was a winning double for her as she had also scored the large centipede seeking dry ground at Burrima.

In summary, 128 bird species were seen on another very successful trip organised by Kathy Walter and John Goldie. Many thanks to them.

Sheila Hughes

### **Sunday 20 October – private property near Bookham**

We had glorious weather, and hospitality to match when we visited Jason's property near Bookham. Of the many highlights, watching Platypus swimming in the river as we ate lunch on the river bank is near the top of the list.

And the birds!! Those of us coming from Canberra arrived at 9 am, and although you might think that late for the birds, we were met by a cacophony of sound. Or maybe I should say babel, as it really wasn't a chaotic mixture, merely me being confused by so many different bird calls

Fortunately I was able to block out enough to identify the **Rufous Songlark**, although almost drowned out, which was sitting tastefully on a small boulder and obligingly did a short display flight. We were conservative in recording numbers as it was difficult to be sure we were hearing/seeing different individuals, given there was so much avian activity, and we didn't manage to stroll very far. However, the **Rainbow Bee-eaters** were so beautifully flying just above our heads or taking a short rest on a branch nearby we probably recorded accurately the number in the small area of property over which we strolled. They were most certainly a highlight of the outing.

Our **Gang-gang Cockatoo**, **Galah**, **Little Corella**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** and **Australian King-Parrot** numbers were probably fairly accurate, but those for **Crimson Rosella** and **Eastern Rosella** probably conservative.

Horsfield's and Shining Bronze-Cuckoo were heard, and a Fan-tailed Cuckoo seen as it was being chased by a small group of Striated Thornbill. Our first White-throated Treecreeper proved difficult to see clearly. However, we then had excellent views of several more, as was also the case with Red-browed Finch. Striated Pardalote obliged by flying in and out a hollow Eucalyptus branch in plain view, but Spotted Pardalote weren't quite as obliging. Other small birds recorded included Superb Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Thornbill, Silvereve and Mistletoebird, the latter in the plentiful mistletoe growth on Casuarina, with at least a couple of flowers. There were plenty of Olive-backed Oriole, Sacred Kingfisher and very vocal White-throated Gerygone.

Waterbirds included Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Great Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant and White-faced Heron. Raptors included three Nankeen Kestrel and a distant Wedge-tailed Eagle.

A total of 50 species was recorded.

Michael Robbins



Bookham Landscapes



Nicole Damagio

## Field trips from January to June 2025

I am currently putting together the field trip programme for the first half of 2025 and am looking for leaders and venues. There are some suggestions below, but I am always happy to hear about new places, especially if you have access to private property. If you are willing to lead a trip, please contact me at [smlashko@gmail.com](mailto:smlashko@gmail.com). Note that you do not have to be an experienced birder to lead a trip, as there are always plenty of experienced birders to help out.

Sue Lashko

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>In Canberra - north of the lake</b></p> <p>Mt Majura NR<br/>National Arboretum<br/>Forde Creek and ponds of Gungahlin</p>  | <p><b>In Canberra - south of the lake</b></p> <p>Red Hill NR<br/>Rob Roy NR<br/>Wanniassa Hills NR</p>   |
| <p><b>Close to Canberra</b></p> <p>Tharwa Sandwash<br/>Namadgi NP – Nursery Swamp<br/>Namadgi NP – walk from Glendale Depot to Brandy Flat<br/>Namadgi NP – Hospital Hill<br/>Brindabellas - Micalong Swamp Flora Reserve<br/>Tinderries</p> | <p><b>Close to Canberra</b></p> <p>Bango NR (near Yass)<br/>Various sections of Canberra Centennial Trail<br/>Lake Road, Bungendore<br/>Brooks Hill Reserve, Bungendore<br/>London Bridge &amp; Tin Hut Dam,<br/>Googong</p> |
| <p><b>Further afield</b></p> <p>Tallaganda NP<br/>Burrinjuck Dam<br/>Mittagong area<br/>Monga NP</p>   | <p><b>Longer trips – camping or accommodated</b></p> <p>Coastal NSW<br/>SW slopes<br/>Inland NSW<br/>Northern Victoria</p>   |

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# Future Field Trips

## COG Trips

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

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

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

Changes to trips are notified on:

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

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

**Do NOT attend if you have tested positive for Covid, have been a close contact within the past 5 days, or have any Covid, cold or flu symptoms.**

### Sunday 3 November – Callum Brae NR

**Meet at 8am** at the entry to Callum Brae Nature Reserve on Narrabundah Lane. Callum Brae is a Red Gum/Yellow Box woodland with several old farm dams. It is a COG woodland survey area, with a wide range of woodland birds.

Wear sturdy shoes, and bring a hat, water and sunscreen. There is some parking at the entry, and an informal carpark on the other side of the road.

**Register** with Sandra at [shirmax2931@gmail.com](mailto:shirmax2931@gmail.com)

Sandra Henderson

### Sunday 17 November – private property near Wee Jasper

The Micalong Descents property is 210 h and sits along the Micalong River, about 30km south-west of Wee Jasper. Over 250 species, including 40 species of bird, have been recorded on the property. The vegetation is a mix of tall wet forest (Mountain Gum, Narrow-leaved Peppermint, Ribbon Gum), dry woodland (Red Stringybark, Apple Box), and forest hollow (Mountain Swamp Gum, Mountain Gum). There are a variety of forest birds including **Superb Lyrebird, Gang-gang Cockatoo, Golden Whistler, Yellow-tailed Cockatoo, Boobook, Powerful Owl** and **Spotted Quail-thrush** to name a few.

We will **meet** at Uriarra Crossing; after the crossing, turn right and then immediately right into the carpark. Be ready to leave at 7.15am for the 1 hour 30 minute journey. The suggested contribution by passengers to their driver is \$15; please bring the correct money. Bring morning tea, lunch and water, and wear sturdy walking shoes. This outing will be limited to 16 participants in 4 vehicles.

**Register** no later than Wed 12 November, by email to [smlashko@gmail.com](mailto:smlashko@gmail.com). Please provide your name, mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact, as well as the suburb you live in, as it may be possible to organise carpooling in advance.

Sue Lashko and Brett Howland

### Wednesday 20 November - South Jerrabomberra Ponds

**Meet at 8.30am** at the pond on the corner of Oxalis and Environa Drives. Park a little further on along Environa Drive, where there are several roadside parking bays. Environa Drive (off Tompsitt Drive) is the only entry point to South Jerrabomberra, and it is a couple of kilometres along that road to the ponds, which are on either side of the road. We will walk around the two open ponds, and then walk along to peer through the fence at the newest pond, not yet open. These new ponds already have over 80 species on eBird lists, and will only improve with time. Wear sturdy shoes and bring hat, sunscreen and water.

**Register** with Sandra at [shirmax2931@gmail.com](mailto:shirmax2931@gmail.com). Please provide your name, mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Sandra Henderson

### Sunday 24 November - Rye Park, Phils Creek TSR and Pudman TSR

Phils Creek and Pudman TSRs are woodlands where **Eastern Shrike-tit**, **Little Friarbird**, **Jacky Winter** and **Brown Treecreeper** have been seen. Grassy Creek Road between Rye Park and Rugby is good for **Fairy Martins**, raptors and **Australasian Pipits**.

**Meeting time and place:** Hall Primary School in Hoskins St Hall at 7.30 am for carpooling. Suggested contribution to driver is \$10. Please bring correct money. Walking distance: Phils Creek 2 km, other sites 0.4 km.

Degree of difficulty: easy

End time: 4.00 pm at Hall Primary School

What to bring: water, morning tea, lunch, sunscreen, water, sturdy shoes, hat. We will have lunch at H.E.A. Dunkley Park in Boorowa.

**Participants must register** with the leader by email at [bsgraham1948@icloud.com](mailto:bsgraham1948@icloud.com) no later than Friday 22 November, providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Numbers limited to 16.

Bill Graham

### Saturday 30 November – Aranda Bushland NR – beginners' outing

This morning walk will be aimed specifically to help beginners and new members identify bush birds and to learn about their behaviour and calls. The spring migrants will have returned and hopefully we will be able to find **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **Dollarbird** and **Leadon Flycatcher**, as well as the resident species.

**Meet** at the main carpark on Bindubi Street at 8.30am. The walk will last for 2-3 hours.

**Registration** is essential; please provide your name and mobile phone number, as well as an emergency contact name and number. Book your place with Sue (email [smlashko@gmail.com](mailto:smlashko@gmail.com)) who will be happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you. Please make sure to bring your binoculars and ACT 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.**

Sue Lashko, Michael Robbins

### Sunday 1 December – Bluetts Block

Bluetts Block is one of the few remaining areas of natural bushland containing heath in the south of Canberra and is a vital connection for wildlife between the Molonglo River Corridor and the Murrumbidgee River.

We can expect to see and hear **Eastern Yellow Robin**, **White-throated Treecreeper**, thornbills, **Rufous Whistler**, parrots and perhaps **White-throated Gerygone** and other migrants.



#### 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)

**3rd Wed of each month (7 to 9 PM)**  
**next date: 20 November**

Look for the table with binoculars on it



**EVERYONE WELCOME**

Image by Cape Keala Arts ©



**Meet** at 8.30am at the white gates on Uriarra Rd. Find the spot by driving from Stromlo Forest Park roundabout for 2.5 km on Uriarra Road, at which point you will see the end of a bicycle track on the lefthand side which runs parallel to Uriarra Road. Park near the gate on the lefthand side of the road, or across the road alongside the white gates. Please take care, as cars often travel very fast along Uriarra Road. Be aware that it will be necessary to step through a loose wire strand fence to start the walk, or you can climb through the white gates.

This is mostly an uphill and down again walk but we will take it in gentle stages as we stop to listen for bird calls. Please wear sturdy walking shoes and bring water.

Numbers are limited so please **register** no later than Thursday 28 November by sending an email to Kim Farley at [kimlouisefarley@gmail.com](mailto:kimlouisefarley@gmail.com). Please provide your name, mobile number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.  
Kim Farley

### Sunday 8 December – Tuggeranong Hill NR

Tuggeranong Hill is a 365 hectare nature reserve in South Tuggeranong. We will explore the section in Theodore behind the electricity substation. Speckled Warbler and Crested Shrike-Tit have been seen here in the past.

Bring hat, sunscreen, lots of water and sturdy shoes.

**Meet at 8 am** at the substation which is halfway round Callister Cres, Theodore. Car pool where possible, as parking is limited. **Please register** with Lia Battisson at [liabattisson@outlook.com](mailto:liabattisson@outlook.com).

### Sunday 15 December – Cuumbean NR

**Meet at 8am** at the entrance on Captains Flat Rd, on the right just over 1km from the Kings Hwy, where there is a gravel pull-off area for parking.

The walk will be 2-3 hours, with some gentle slopes and one short, sharp uphill section. Wear sturdy shoes and bring hat, water, sunscreen.

There have been over 80 species seen in the reserve.

**Register** with Sandra at [shirmax2931@gmail.com](mailto:shirmax2931@gmail.com), with name and phone number, and name and number for an emergency contact.  
Sandra Henderson



The eight card designs:

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

## Canberra Birds 8-pack of greeting cards

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

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

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

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

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# Woodland Surveys – spring 2024 survey round

– compiled by Jenny Bounds

The early spring was windy, not much rain, with conditions on the dry side. This possibly influenced low reporting of some species this spring, such as White-winged Trillers.

Note: not all sites are reported.

## Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds and the team did the quarterly survey on Sunday 29 September under slightly overcast skies, but good conditions, calm and fairly mild. The reserve was looking a little on the dry side, reflecting recent weather conditions (windy, not much rain). However, there were a lot of birds around, particularly the smaller ones like thornbills (4 species), the early spring migrants were vocal, especially **Olive-backed Orioles** at a number of sites, both **White-throated** and **Western Gerygones**, and **Leaden Flycatchers** back at some sites. Small groups of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** and a few **White-naped Honeyeaters** were moving around. Most sites had reasonable numbers of birds in and around sites. Highlights included **Superb Parrots**, a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, a large flock of 34 **White-winged Choughs** and a pair of **Scarlet Robins** at a nest with two young (a site on the central ridge). Not many waterbirds and no raptors, possibly influencing the 51 species total for the survey. Spring survey totals vary, in recent years – 2020/48; 2021/54; 2022/57; 2023/54.



Scarlet Robin at nest

Prue Buckley

## Goorooyaroo NR (northern area)

Nicki Taws did the spring woodland bird survey at Gooroo North on an overcast but fairly wind-free morning. The reserve was heaving with macropods, but despite that and the dry conditions, there were lovely displays of Creamy Candles and Billy Buttons. Birdwise, many of the summer migrants were present – **Noisy Friarbird**, both **Gerygones**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Shining Bronze-cuckoo**. No **Sacred Kingfisher** or **White-winged Triller** present. Highlights included a new species for the surveys – a **Channel-billed Cuckoo** calling raucously as it flew over, and a flock of **White-browed Woodswallow** (+/- **Masked Woodswallow**). A **Red-capped Robin** was heard calling, and **Superb Parrots** were seen flying through at a couple of sites. The most common honeyeater was the **Brown-headed Honeyeater** at a couple of sites, with only the occasional **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** heard. Thornbill numbers were low, usual for spring.

## Goorooyaroo NR (southern area)

Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley did the spring bird survey in the southern half of Gooroo on 30 September, in mostly sunny conditions with a cool breeze. The reserve was looking a bit dry, although there was water in most dams, and quite a few wildflowers out. They recorded a total of 51 species with 39 of those during the 10 minute site counts, compared to 54 and 47 last year.

Highlights included a couple of species of displaying raptors, **Nankeen Kestrels** and **Brown Goshawks**, both near sites where they had previously nested. Spring/summer migrants present were **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones**, **Noisy Friarbirds**, **Rufous Whistlers**, **Horsfield's** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos** and **Olive-backed Orioles**. Small birds were reasonably plentiful with thornbills, pardalotes, **Weebills**, **Superb Fairy-wrens** and **Grey Fantails** all fairly widespread. Eight species of honeyeater were recorded although no migration was evident. **Noisy Miners**, **Brown-headed** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were the most numerous. They recorded **Mistletoebirds** at 4 sites. Breeding records were few but included an active **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** nest, and a **European Goldfinch** collecting fluffy material from a thistle and flying off with it.

## Mt Majura NR

Duncan McCaskill, Peter Miller, Kathy Walter and John Goldie conducted the surveys, with the majority being done on Saturday 28 September. A number of the sites were fairly quiet. Around 38 species recorded in total. A couple of sites had small mixed flocks which included: **Specked Warbler**, **Superb Fairy-wren**; **Yellow-rumped**, **Buff-rumped**, and **Brown Thornbills**; **Grey Fantail**, **Golden Whistler** and **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters**. Of note were three species of

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cuckoo, **Horsfields Bronze-cuckoo**, **Shining Bronze-cuckoo** and **Fantailed Cuckoo**. They recorded a single **Fuscous Honeyeater** between two of the sites.

### **Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park**

The 9 sites on the eastern lower slopes of Mt Ainslie were surveyed by Michael Lenz on 2 October. It was overcast initially, and later cleared partially, wind was light to moderate. Overall bird activity was lower compared to a visit in early September. The three most widespread species were **Crimson Rosella** (recorded at 7 sites) and **Noisy Miner** and **Galah** (each at 6 sites). Spring arrivals included **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, **White-throated Gerygone**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **Olive-backed Oriole** and several **Mistletoebirds** (although no fruit was evident in the mistletoes). Of note 1 **Superb Parrot** and 1 **Speckled Warbler**. One group of **White-winged Choughs** had 2 young in a nest, young **Australian Ravens** were heard begging from a nest, and young **Noisy Miners** could be heard throughout the area.

### **Newline**

Sue Lashko surveyed on 28 September in calm conditions, with some light cloud. There had been some cattle grazing, as well as some mowing which had encouraged fresh grass growth and made walking to some sites much easier. However, weed growth has greatly expanded, with blackberries and boxthorn thickets necessitating long detours to other sites. A number of spring migrants were recorded including **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones**, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Tree Martin**, as well as lots of **Grey Fantails**. **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** were recorded in ones or twos at several sites. Eight species of parrot were recorded with **Australian King Parrot** being an unusual record. The only raptor for the morning was the usual **Brown Goshawk**. A total of 47 species was recorded.

### **Jerrabomberra West NR**

Jenny Bounds surveyed the 7 sites over two fine, sunny and calm mornings, 3 and 4 October, with a total of 35 species recorded. Generally the usual species for spring, but **White-winged Trillers** were absent. A pair of **Dusky Woodswallows** were in the usual Blakelys Red Gum patch (outside the nearby site 2), a **Tree Martin** at site 1 (recorded there some years), a **Speckled Warbler** at site 5 (deep in the woodland patch), a few **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** and **Noisy Friarbirds** around, and **Shining Bronze-cuckoo** calling outside a couple of the sites. A highlight was a pair of **Black-shouldered Kites** perched just outside site 2 during the 10 minute count.

### **Tuggeranong Hill NR**

Lia Battisson, surveyed on Sunday 29 September. The morning started out still and mild for the most part, but the wind came up towards the end of the morning. The most active site was No 2, with eleven species, including an occupied **White-winged Chough's** nest. There were very few honeyeaters about, with just two **Red Wattlebirds**, a maximum of three **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** in three sites and one **Eastern Spinebill** heard between sites. The highlight of the morning was seeing a female **Mistletoebird** at site 5 and a male on the way to site 6. In all, 32 species were observed, 25 in sites and a further 7 between sites. These numbers are about average for Tuggeranong Hill in spring, but well below the total of 44 species observed in 2023.

### **Naas Sites**

Julie Hotchin and Steve Read conducted the spring survey on this rural leasehold south of Tharwa on 30 September. It was mostly sunny and calm, warming up as the morning progressed. They heard a lot of birds calling when they started, with the first site being particularly active. In total 42 species were recorded, of which 31 species were recorded in the six sites. The number of species (42) was a third higher than recorded in 2023 (31) and higher than in 2022 (37).

Highlights included a **Rufous Songlark** heard from the car on arrival, a **Jacky Winter** calling vigorously and showing well between sites, and two **Mistletoebirds**. Raptors seen were a **Nankeen Kestrel** hunting over an open area near the dam, and a **Brown Falcon** harassed by a **Welcome Swallow** between sites. Spring-summer migrants present included **Dusky Woodswallows**, numerous vocal **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones**, **Rufous Whistlers** and a **Fan-Tailed Cuckoo**. There were few honeyeaters present other than some **Yellow-Faced Honeyeaters**, a single **Brown-headed Honeyeater** and a couple of the resident **Noisy Miners**. Few smaller birds were observed at most sites, but these included **Striated Pardalotes**, **Grey Fantails** and the ubiquitous **Willie Wagtails**.

Breeding activity included a pair of **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** going in and out of a nest, a **Weebill** collecting lichen, a **White-winged Chough** on a nest, a **Magpie Lark** collecting mud from the dam and nest building, and **Galaha**s and **Red-rumped Parrots** inspecting hollows.

## 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

2024-2025 memberships:

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

## New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for December 2024 edition:

**Wednesday 27 November 2024**

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

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

or

c/- The Secretary, COG,

PO Box 331, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614.

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

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

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### COG library

### Membership Enquiries & Updates:

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### Gang-gang Newsletter

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## COG E-mail Discussion List

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

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