



Gang-gang

APRIL 2025

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

APRIL MEETING

**Wednesday 9 April 2025
7:30 pm**

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

The April 2025 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.

Chun-Chieh Liao - Vocal communication in highly social White-winged Choughs: How do they stay safe and stay together?

Brendah Nyaguthii Nyagah - Beyond breeding: Spatial and social structure of the White-winged Chough during the non-breeding season.

Michael Lenz - Where do Noisy Friarbirds sleep? ...a puzzle finally put together (sort of)...

Please note that construction is still occurring around the Gabriel Drive parking area, and access to there is still not available. However, for 2025 the access gate and parking spot has changed.

Continued Page 2

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

Except for two at best moderate falls, at the middle and towards the end of the 4 weeks from 26 February to 25 March covered by this column, it has continued fine and warm for early autumn, though one vigorous but largely dry and short-lived change did move through. My analysis below shows that the sustained dry and warm weather pattern seems to have had a mixed effect on bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (Aoi), with most activity, particularly due to the more common partial migrants, not until after the first half of March. While the spring/summer migrants seem to be departing at their usual times, the return for some of the autumn/winter altitudinal migrants may have been delayed. Except for one very notable example below, numbers of "unusual" species reported were very low, compared with the already low numbers in February.

Continued Page 3



Black Kite

Deb Ralph

Everyone welcome

APRIL MEETING—continued from Page 1

Entry and exit are now from the main gates on Melbourne Ave which automatically open and close. The Entry gate will be open, so please drive through and park in the main parking area to your left. Once parked proceed to the Multi-media Theatre (MMT) using the more direct route in the [amended map](#).

This is roughly perpendicular to Melbourne Ave. Keep the Admin Hub, Reception and School Shop to your right and then proceed along a relatively flat and straight broad path keeping the columns to your 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 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 after the meeting, a torch for finding your way back to your car is recommended. The Exit gate is on a sensor pad, so please drive up to the gate and it will open for you.

There will be three presentations this month, the first two normal length short presentations and the third a slightly longer one. The first two will be by Ph D students from the Research School of Biology at the ANU, on two related aspects of the White-winged Chough behaviour.

First will be **Chun-Chieh Liao** on “**Vocal communication in highly social White-winged Choughs: How do they stay safe and stay together?**” To maximise the benefits of group living, social animals must maintain cohesion and coordinate their activities. But how do they make consensus decisions and stay together, especially when groups consist of individuals with different needs and abilities? Communication is key! In this talk, Chun-Chieh will explore the rich vocal world of a highly social bird species - the **White-winged Chough**. He will discuss their alarm calls, the development of antipredator responses, and the “lost calls” that help group members reunite.

Second will be **Brendah Nyaguthii Nyagah** on “**Beyond breeding: Spatial and social structure of the White-winged Chough during the non-breeding season.**” There is a need to understand how seasonality impacts the social structure of groups during periods of increased movements. Individual or collective movement of animals can be influenced by weather conditions that alter the resource abundance, e.g. periods of drought and winter, which will require them to expand their range and move to new areas. Increasing movements increase the rates of contact with conspecific neighbours and chances of being in contact with other groups. In this talk, Brendah will present about the **White-winged Chough** movement and home ranges to better understand the role of changes in space use driving patterns of social contact among other groups.

The third speaker will be **Michael Lenz** on “**Where do Noisy Friarbirds sleep? ...a puzzle finally put together (sort of)...**” The **Noisy Friarbird** has the status of ‘common breeding summer migrant’ in Canberra. Observations from Canberra show that only when breeding will they sleep at their nest site, at all other times at a communal roost. Michael will report on his observations of their flight path and counts over several years to support this conclusion. Communal roosting is a basic trait of the species. The behaviour of the birds while going to and coming from the roost can explain why this feature of **Noisy Friarbird** biology has gone largely unnoticed for so long.



White-winged Chough *Graham Stephinson*



Noisy Friarbird *David Cook*

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

continued from page 1

Highlight – Black Kite Influx

The undoubted highlight of the period, and one of the best in my 20 years of writing this column, was the influx of a very large number of **Black Kites** on Sunday 16 March. The first report I was aware of these was an alert from the COG/Canberra Birds outing at the Aranda Snow Gums NR when at 10:40 h they saw at least 20 raptors with clear forked tails soaring in thermals high above the National Arboretum, about 1 km to the S. A spate of reports soon followed from around the area and beyond with a maximum of 30 reported high over Rivett by 12:00 noon. This continued into the afternoon when at 14:17 h a conservative count of at least 36 (later amended to at least 75 after counting them on movies they had made) reported from the Mugga Lane tip by Deb and Rod Ralph. They were seen in a 180° arc all around them, from over the top of the tip hill on the right, to the left side of them and on the far left across Mugga Lane. Deb and Rod noted it was amazing to watch, some came close, but most were in the distance.

This is a typical site where you would expect **Black Kites**, and the number there was then surpassed by Ben Ward's counting of at least 100 of them at 18:47 h from Isaacs Ridge NR in Mugga Lane. He noted it was a huge flock of kites soaring overhead between there and the tip, with birds at all altitudes from just above the road to beyond what was visible to the naked eye in every direction. They lost count at 70 with many birds still to go, so definitely more than 100 (one of his photos showed 52, and this was less than half of the total). Dozens were also perched in trees along the road. It was absolutely incredible to see so many! Around the same time Callum Woods counted 20 gathered in one large and several smaller flocks on the road >20 km away on Captains Flat Rd, Primrose Valley in NSW.

This adds strong support that the true number of birds in the area at the time would have been greatly in excess of 100. Amazingly there were only 4 reports the next day, 3 of single birds (twice at Isaacs Ridge and one at Mt Arawang), as well as 5 birds by Julian Teh at the Barton Highway rest stop just N of the ACT at 17:15 h. They were circling low over the road in the same spot where 3 had been seen that morning. The only further report during this period was one over the National Zoo and Aquarium at 14:05 h on 18 March.

Overall, during this 3-day period the eBird map indicates there were reports of **Black Kites** from around 13 locations within the ACT itself (the furthest S being 1 at Naas Rd at Spring Station Creek late in the morning), as well as 8 from neighbouring NSW, with the furthest E being 1 at Lake Bathurst and 2 at the adjacent Morass. As the Lake Bathurst survey finished at 10:18 h it appears the former may actually have been the first seen for the day, or perhaps Philip Veerman's later report on the COG/Canberra Birds chat line of one on Oakey Hill at 09:40 h while driving along Tuggeranong Parkway may have been.

So where did they come from and where did they go to? The most plausible theory is that they came in on the NW wind which was strengthening about the time they were first seen (the eBird report from The Morass indicates that from the start 10:38 h there were "strong winds and white caps, impossible to accurately count birds on the water", and they continued to come in on the very strong afternoon NW winds. They then left again on the very strong SE change that came in around midnight, with just a few stragglers remaining the next day. However, analysis of the eBird map shows few if any reports of **Black Kites** to the W and NW of the COG AoI after 16 March, though there are quite a few reports of small numbers to the W of the Hume Highway from Jugiong to Albury before that.

A rather dated HANZAB monograph notes that the **Black Kite** is known for frequent, irregular irruptions and sometimes local influxes, including to coastal and subcoastal NSW. However, in my nearly 50 years of actively birding in the ACT I cannot recall such an event. COG's 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR) indicates it is a rare non-breeding (occasional) visitor from the inland, with that year a surprising 58 records from 27 widespread grid cells but a maximum 11 birds together at the Macarthur horse paddocks (close to the Mugga Lane tip). This "probably indicated some dryness to the W."

The **Black Kite** is an “unusual” species for which I report numbers in my monthly columns. I can’t recall anything like the above ABR numbers in recent columns, indeed eBird indicates that since the start of 2023 there have been reports of single bird at only 3 locations in the ACT itself, with the other 13 locations in the COG AoI to the N of a parallel line north of Lake George. So, indeed it appears to have been an unprecedented influx (which I feel describes the event more appropriately than irruption) in the ACT, at this stage for very unclear reasons.

Spring/summer migrants

Of the early departing inland spring/summer migrants usually present in limited numbers over summer, there have been no further reports of **Rufous Songlarks** (last reported on 23 February), but there was still a **Horsfield’s Bushlark** seen at West Belconnen Pond on 28 February. The only report of a **White-winged Triller** was one from the Kama NR on 10 March. There were reports of quite late **White-browed Woodswallows** during the period, with 20 birds identified by their musical dual ‘chip-chip’ note flying SW over the Pinnacle NR on 2 March, and a female observed as keeping separate from the **Dusky Woodswallows** etc, both in flight and perching, at Diddams Close Park on Lake Ginninderra on 11 March. Again, there have been no confirmed sightings of the **Masked Woodswallow** during this period.

There have been no reports of the **Pallid Cuckoo** (last reported on 10 February, it’s been another very poor year for them), but the **Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo** was still reported from 6 locations (up from the 4 in February), the most recent being 1 bird at Symonston on 11 March.

Despite the generally fine conditions, there have been reports for the **White-throated Needletail** from 14 locations (similar to February), the maximum being 60 birds over the Pinnacle on 21 March, closely followed by the 55 over Coopers Rd Wamboin and the 50 at the Shepherd’s Lookout track on 10 and 21 March, respectively. While from many locations, these are relatively low numbers compared with those that sometimes can be seen for this species, and very unusually for the COG AoI they were outnumbered by the related **Fork-tailed Swifts** which were reported from over 20 locations with a maximum of 160 birds seen on the Yass Rd Queanbeyan East just after midday on 16 March. There were also 92 counted over Griffith less than an hour later that day, as well as a total of 85 slightly earlier (late morning) over Greenwood Road Murrumbateman and the nearby Zosterops Corner.

As noted in my March column these are by far the most reports of these two species, particularly for the latter, for some years. So, despite the forecast fine weather please keep a lookout for the species which usually can be observed until early April.

Of the other less common coastal spring/summer migrants, there have been no further reports of the **Sahul Cicadabird**, the most recent having been on 9 February. Of the other departing spring/summer migrant species which usually leave in March the **Dollarbird** was reported from just 3 locations, most recently from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) on 8 March. The **Rainbow Bee-eater** was still reported from around 15 locations, most recently single birds from the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd and the Glendale Depot on 23 March. Surprisingly the **Sacred Kingfisher** was reported from only 9 locations, but with the most recent report also on 23 March from Hall Common.

Of the other birds that mostly have left by the end of March/early April, the **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** was reported from 6 locations, most recently from the Kowen Forest on 19 March. The **Sahul Brush Cuckoo** was reported from 3 locations, all still in their preferred summer habitat W of the Murrumbidgee River, with the most recent from 2 immatures at the Glendale Depot on 12 March. Surprisingly since I last recorded it in my local patch of Rivett/Chapman on 28 February (a late report as numbers had dropped quickly from mid-February), the **Eastern Koel** was still reported from 15 locations, with still a male photographed by Christine D eating figs in her garden on 24 March. Adults and a very advanced fledgling (see below) have been regular visitors there over the period, attracted by her figs etc.

The **Latham’s Snipe** was reported from just 2 locations, with a single bird from the JWNR on 4 and 25 March, but regularly up to 21 March from the Big Dam in Mulligans Flat NR where 6 birds were still recorded on 6 March. The **Australian Reed-Warbler** was still reported from up to 30 locations up to the time of writing. The **Tree Martin** was recorded from 22 locations up to the time of writing, but **Fairy Martins** were reported from 5 locations only to 13 March (1 bird at the JWNR), with easily the largest number being the 22 at the Nelanglo TSR on 3 March.

The **Leaden Flycatcher** was still reported from around 12 locations up to the time of writing, but the passage migrant, the **Satin Flycatcher**, was reported from just 3 locations, a male with down curved black chest still in its summer

habitat at Bulls Head on 9 March, an undescribed bird in Morrison Road, Bywong on 8 March and a probable female in a mixed feeding flock (MFF – see below) in Mawson on 13 March. The other passage migrant the **Australian Rufous Fantail**, was reported from 4 locations: from 2 spots still in its summer habitat in the mountains to the southwest of Canberra, including from 2 different places in Tidbinbilla NR on 21 and 23 March, and 2 in urban/peri-urban Canberra including in a MFF (see below).

So, during April please keep an eye out for the above and other spring/summer migrants which are still being reported but usually leave during April. These include the **Noisy Friarbird** (unusually after being largely absent over summer many have moved into my local patch of Chapman/Rivett and Narrabundah Hill during the period), **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone** (still reported from around 11 and over 35 locations, respectively, during the period), and most of the **Rufous Whistlers**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrikes** and **Grey Fantails**. A number of these last three species will overwinter, as will the **Mistletoebird** and **Superb Parrot**.

Autumn/winter altitudinal migrants

March is also the month when many species start to come to Canberra and its surrounds from the mountains and higher country to spend autumn/winter here. These include the **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Golden Whistler**. There have been just 11 reports from urban/peri-urban locations for the former compared with 9 in February, so it's still to move in, in contrast to the latter for which there have been reports from 22 locations compared with 2 in February. One of the first of these was an immature/female calling very loudly in my Chapman garden on 13 March.

The **Scarlet Robin** also started to move in from mid-March and it was reported around 18 urban/peri-urban locations, compared with 8 in February. In contrast there has been only one such report for the **Flame Robin** (2 birds from the Centennial Trail in Hall on 21 March), which is always much slower to move in. There were 3 such reports for the **Rose Robin**, an adult female in a MFF at the Isaac Pines on 15 March, an uncoloured bird on the Mt Majura blue metal road on 22 March and one at the ANBG on 24 March, with 4 other reports still in the mountains to the W of Canberra. Again, there have been no **Pink Robin** sightings reported during the period.

There has been one such report of **Crescent Honeyeater**, a bird in the ANBG on 21 March compared with 5 still in the mountains to the W, but no reports anywhere in the COG Aol during the period of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, of the **Brown Gerygone**. Reports of the **Bassian Thrush** and the **Olive Whistler** during the period were only from the mountains to the W. There have also been no reports anywhere within the COG Aol of the **Swift Parrots** migrating from Tasmania; I doubt that many will visit Canberra this autumn/winter, as there seems to be limited flowering available at this time.

So please during April look out for the above species as they move into Canberra and surrounds.



**Australian
Ornithological
Services P/L**

**PO Box 385
South Yarra 3141
Victoria
04173 10200**

enquiries@philipmaher.com

Good birding, good food

Central Australia
15 to 25 August 2025

Nullarbor Plain
5 to 25 September 2025
limited places left

Plains-wanderer Weekends

25 & 26 October 2025
6 & 7 December 2025

Wet Season Kutini – Payamu
Iron Range NP
7 to 13 January 2026

**Personal tours in the Denilquin district,
Victorian mallee, NE Victoria, Gippsland
and the Melbourne area or anywhere you
need to go to bolster your Australia list.**

Please contact Patricia Maher for
information, itineraries and costing.

www.philipmaher.com

Unusual species

Apart from the **Black Kite** influx described above there were no special “unusual” species reported during the period.

Again, there were no **Magpie Geese** or **Plumed Whistling Duck** reported from the COG Aol during the period. **Freckled Duck** were reported from 5 locations, with up to 9 ducks continuing to be present at the JWNR throughout the period. Otherwise easily the largest number was the 29 ducks counted from on the Lake Bathurst waterbird survey on 16 March. During the period **Australian Shelduck** reported from 7 locations to the N through to the E of Canberra, as is usual but about half the February number. Again, by far the highest numbers were the 603 on the Lake Bathurst survey on 16 March (37 were also at the adjacent Morass on this date). Otherwise, the maximum number was 2 ducks, indicating a sharp overall drop in numbers from February.

Blue-billed Ducks were reported from 4 locations during the period, with up to 6 ducks again reported from the Upper Stranger Pond throughout the period, which remains a hot spot for them. Otherwise, the highest number was the 11 ducks recorded at Lake Bathurst during the surveys there on 16 March (< 10% of the number recorded there on 11 February). Apart from the Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary, **Musk Ducks** were reported from 6 locations, with the highest numbers being the 26 ducks recorded at Lake Bathurst on 16 March when there were also 2 reported from the adjacent Morass. Otherwise, the highest number was 3 ducks on the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 16 March.

Numbers of the **Great-crested Grebe** were also well down from February, being reported from 3 rather than 6 locations. The maximum again was the 21 birds reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 16 March (there was just one at the adjacent Morass and 2 birds from the West Belconnen Pond on 1 March).

Up to 2 **Stubble Quail** were reported from 2 locations during the period, well down from the 6 in February. **Brown Quail** were reported from 5 locations, also down from February, with a maximum of 10 birds from the Poveys Rd, Colinton on 12 March. Again, no **Painted** or **Little Button-quail** were reported during the period.

During the period a **Brush Bronzewing** was reported only from the Paddys River Rd on 6 March. However, no **White-headed Pigeon**, **Brown Cuckoo-Dove**, **Peaceful** or **Diamond Doves** were reported during the period.

Despite some searching a single **White-throated Nightjar** was reported from the Concrete Rd Pierces Creek only on 28 February, and it remains unclear if the multiple birds spotted there and nearby last year were a post-breeding aggregation, a migrating flock stopping to rest and refuel, or just a good local population at that time.

There were no **Baillon's Crake** reported during the period, with the most recent being from the JWNR on 21 February. **Spotless Crakes** were reported from 3 locations, again only regularly from the JWNR from where up to 2 crakes were reported, with single birds at the Sanctuary at the Tidbinbilla NR and at Paddys Park on 10 and 15 March, respectively. Up to 2 **Australian Spotted Crake** were also regularly reported from the JWNR, less so at Paddys Park, and from the South Jerrabomberra Ponds on 11-13 March, with a single bird on Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 16 March.

Buff-banded Rail were reported from 2 locations, with a single bird at the Big Dam at Mulligans Flat NR on 6 and 9 March, and one at Campbell Park on 14 and 17 March. However, there have been no reports of **Lewin's Rails** or the **Black-tailed Nativehen**, a further indication that crake and rail numbers were well down over the period.

Five **Red-capped Plovers** with recently fledged young were reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 16 March. This is a species I have recently overlooked with between 4-14 birds also reported from there on the monthly surveys from November 2024 to February 2025, but otherwise only 1 bird at SW Lake George on 23 January. Eight **Pied Stilts** were reported from the Lake Bathurst surveys on 16 March, with otherwise only up to 4 from Lake George and 1 at Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 18 March.

No **Red-necked Avocets**, **Australian Painted-snipe**, **Pacific Golden Plover**, **Banded Lapwing**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Sharp-tailed** or **Pectoral Sandpipers** or **Red-necked Stint** were reported during the period, and the only reports of the **Common Sandpiper** at its usual spot around the gross pollutant trap at the inlet of Village Creek were on 20 and 24 March.

A **Caspian Tern** was reported only from the JWNr on 5 March, but no **Whiskered** or **White-winged Black Terns**, **Australasian** or **Australian Little/Black-backed Bitterns** were reported during the period.

No **Little Egret** was reported during the period, and a **Plumed Egret** reported only from the JWNr between 27 February to 6 March, with one also at the adjacent Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant (FSTP) on 27 February. Up to 4 **Great Egrets** were regularly reported only from the JWNr, otherwise single birds were reported from 11 other locations during the past month. **White-necked Herons** were reported from 19 locations, down from the close to 30 locations in February. **Royal Spoonbill** were reported from 7 locations (down from the 11 in February), up to 2 regularly from the JWNr and a maximum of 4 from SW Lake George. Up to 2 **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** were reported from 5 locations (compared with 4 in February), but no **Glossy Ibis** were reported during the period. Again, numbers of several of these species were down.

A **Barn Owl** was reported by call only from Scullin on 14 March, again well down from the 5 locations during February. **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from around 40 locations in the period, up from the 30 in February. Andrea and I saw a juvenile/immature with extensive though fairly light orange around head and neck indicative of summer breeding (watch out for more breeding activity from this autumn/winter breeder from now) along the Molonglo River opposite Coombs on 22 March. A **Spotted Harrier** was reported from the Lake Bathurst surveys on 16 March (and 2 near there just after) as well as one at Collector on 10 March. A **Black Falcon** was reported from Murrumbateman Rd Gundaroo on 27 February, on the Barton Hwy N of Murrumbateman on 16 March and from Wamboin on 19 March. Apart from those associated with the influx on 16 March there were no other reports of **Black Kites**, and there were also none of the **Grey Goshawk** or the **Pacific Baza** during the period.

Azure Kingfishers were reported from 4 locations, up to 2 regularly from the well-known Cotter Bend/Reserve, with 2 also at the Warri Bridge over the Shoalhaven River on 8 March, and on the Cooma Rd at Jerrabattgulla (SE of Captains Flat) on 15 March. There was also a late confirmation of one seen at the ANU on 23 February (all 3 are new locations). No **Red-backed** or **Forest Kingfishers** were reported during the period.

No **Glossy Black-Cockatoos**, **Cockatiel**, **Turquoise Parrot**, **Scaly-breasted**, **Little** or **Purple-crowned Lorikeets** were reported over the period. **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from 3 locations, with 2 birds at Lake Ginninderra on 18 March, as well as 1 at Macarthur on the same day, and then single birds in close succession in Garran and the adjacent Red Hill NR on 25 March.

A **Blue-faced Honeyeater** was reported from Pearce on 20 March, as well as 2 from the Riverbank Park in Yass on 23 March. However, no **Spiny-cheeked**, **Singing**, **Scarlet** or **Painted Honeyeaters**, **White-fronted Chats** or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period.

Two **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes** were reported from Hassett Park Campbell on 24 March, and 3 **Red-capped Robins** were reported only from for Vanitys Crossing Rd in the Pierces Creek Forest on 17 March. However, no **White-browed Babbler**, **Apostlebird**, **Spangled Drongo**, **Black-faced Monarch**, **Tawny Grassbird** or **Zebra Finches** were reported during the period.

Three **Jacky Winters** were reported only from the paddock opposite main entrance of the Namadgi NP Visitors Centre (a known location) on 21 March, and a male **Hooded Robin** from the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 11 March. On 21 March there was also a pair, briefly part of a MFF, at one of the sites at the Majura Defence Firing Range Facility woodland survey, from where they had not been seen for some time (again down from the 4 locations in February).

In contrast **Restless Flycatchers** were reported from 6 locations, with reports of up to 5 birds at the Nelanglo TSR between 26 February and 3 March. All other locations were from the S of the ACT, with single birds reported from Stranger Pond (a new location) on 13 March, at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 11 March, on the Boboyan Rd just S of there (a new location) on 22 March and from the Glendale Depot between 10-15 March. Kym Bradley has also reported one from her patch.

The big drop in “unusual” birds reported, compared with the already low numbers in February, is striking, in particular of pigeons/doves, waterbirds such as crakes and rails and shorebirds, parrots and passerines. However, the latter was somewhat overcome by the greater than usual activity (in my patch at least) of the more common passerine birds during the period (see below).

Breeding

Apart from the **Red-capped Plovers** and **Black-shouldered Kite** reports above (and the **Little Corellas** below), a few other early autumn breeding observations follow:

- On 28 February Kym Bradley reported that at the JWNR that day she observed that a begging **Royal Spoonbill** was following/chasing another around the wetlands and then came back into the tree (the one where they bred in a few years back). She noted it was a very popular tree. Of the 5 **Royal Spoonbills** they saw together briefly, one was collecting sticks. The **Cattle Egret** not in breeding plumage left with his/her stick, and the **Great Egret** was doing the same. However, checking the subsequent eBird lists for these 3 species does not reveal any notes of follow up breeding
- Reports during the period of **Eastern Koel** fledglings confirmed my suspicions that what looked like a bumper season had come to a surprisingly abrupt and early end, with only 10 reported for the period and the likely final total being 168 fledglings, very similar to the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 seasons from similar reporting.
- Only 3 of these were actually from during the reporting period, an advanced one likely moving through in Barbara Allan's Page garden on 28 February, and a very advanced one photographed feeding (on one occasion most unusually taking cheese left out) in Christine D's Flynn garden from 2-14 March. However, there was then a report by Sandra Henderson of 2 still begging (but not fed) youngsters from two walks from separate entrances, and with no overlap of tracks, at the Urambi Hills NR on 18 March (interestingly a male was still heard there too, but several hundred metres away). These two are the only ones reported possibly to have been hatched in March this season.
- Why there was such a sudden and unexpected end to the Koel breeding season is unclear to me, especially as adults were still very active in my local area of Chapman/Rivett in the first half of February. Perhaps it was a lack of **Red Wattlebirds** breeding for which I have no reports locally, with their numbers also being down compared with some previous seasons.

Flocks, including of migrating birds

Some very interesting mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) have come to my attention. On 15 March on Isaacs Ridge Andrea and I saw what we thought were 2 **Grey Fantails** together. However, when I looked through my binoculars the pink wash through the breast, the apparent lack of any white spot above the bill and the fantail-like behaviour identified one as an adult female **Rose Robin**, rather than female **Scarlet Robin** as I momentarily thought. Things got even better when Andrea spotted an **Australian Rufous Fantail** which allowed great views from above as it flitted around the low bushes below us. Added to this there was an early arriving immature/female **Golden Whistler**. As I've noted in previous Gang-gang columns while there's often an unexpected species lurking around in an MFF, to have 3 such birds in a total of 7 species was a very pleasant surprise (as were the **Hooded Robins** noted above).

Lindell Emerton then reported that 2 days before she thought she had a female **Leaden Flycatcher** for the first time in her Mawson yard in a MFF with 2 **Grey Fantails**, 5 **Silvereyes**, 2 **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** and a pair of **Eastern Spinebills**. However, from the photo the buff-edged wing feathers and the quite dark undertail suggested to me it was more likely to have been a female **Satin Flycatcher**. The females of these two species are notoriously hard to separate unless found breeding with a male. Also, the light when photographed can be a very important factor. Another feature is that the **Leaden** head is "concolourous" (an even colour) with the back, whereas the **Satin** has a fairly distinctive darker/glossier crown. There is a suggestion of the latter in Lindell's photo but again it may just have been the light.

Christine D has drawn my attention to the number of **Spotted Pardalotes** which she has noticed for the past month or so. They were present at every site she visited, but she didn't think she had ever seen so many together before her estimate of 50 birds in a very large MFF on Shepherd's Lookout on 21 March. She noted that Suzi Bond had also seen a huge flock of **Spotted Pardalotes** recently. On 23 March Christine visited Tidbinbilla, and again **Spotted Pardalotes** were the most common species. She noted that when she hears them at home, she just assumes there are a few up there in the trees, but after her encounter at Shepherd's Lookout, where she was surrounded by them in the smaller trees, and where every tree seemed to have at least 5 feeding in it, and mostly silent, she was now wondering if there are a lot more up there than she realised.

I agree with Christine there have been lots of **Spotted** (and to a lesser extent **Striated**) **Pardalotes** coming through over the past month. They have been much more noticeable, mainly by calling in my garden, and we've also had a very large MFF of them on Cooleman Ridge. In the past when I have seen large mixed flocks of pardalotes coming through, it's impossible to estimate numbers accurately, especially if they are in the trees. It's hard enough if they are flying out when you have to rely on their calls!

In respect of large flocks on 3 March Andrea and I conservatively estimated 350 **Little Corellas** in Commonwealth Park. They were spread out feeding on the lawns in loose smallish groups from the SW to NE corner, also some were in trees and flying around noisily. Several begging young were heard, and one seen fed in a tree. We did not check carefully for any **Long-billed** among them, but none were obvious.



Little Corella

Rhonda Hansch



Yellow-faced Honeyeater

Geoffrey Dabb

With Christine D's observations in Tidbinbilla, Michael Robbins at the Urambi Hills NR and mine at Cooleman Ridge and Chapman we agreed that 23 March (surprisingly a rather cloudy morning) was the first day when there were significant signs that the first **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were starting their migration. Flocks to date have not been large (not more than 20 together) and also most I have seen were not really in any hurry to move along. This includes the 20 feeding in a gum in my garden on the morning of 24 March. They have been present in my garden continuously since 14 March, much more so than in at least the past 10 years.

So, during April watch out for more honeyeaters streaming through, with the **White-naped** often predominating in the flocks towards the end of the month. Watch out also for **Red Wattlebirds**, both species of **pardalote** (see above), **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrikes**, **Dusky Woodswallows**, **Grey Fantails** and **Silvereyes** which have also been coming through.

April is the second month when there is lots of bird movement and activity in the COG Aol. So please watch out for the last of the departing spring/summer migrants mentioned above, particularly the **White-throated Needle-tail** and the **Fork-tailed Swift**, and for more of the returning autumn/winter altitudinal migrants, MFFs and single species flocks, as well as roosts and roost flights. 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

New Canberra Birds Brochures

Look out for the new Canberra Birds brochures that are now available in print and for download online at www.canberrabirds.org.au/publications.

Three new regional brochures describe interesting birding sites in the northern ACT, southern ACT, and ACT hills and ranges. Each brochure provides information about five birding locations, covering a variety of habitats, and for each site includes a description, details of access, likely species to be seen and other site information.



Our existing Canberra Birds brochure has also been refreshed with the new design theme (see above right).

Another two brochures are in preparation, a refreshed version of *Birding in the ACT* and one dedicated to the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve. We aim to release these in mid-2025.

Why new brochures?

The design of these brochures reflects the new image of Canberra Birds. They will help us to promote the birds of the Canberra region and to encourage locals and visitors of all levels of experience to go birding. They also promote Canberra Birds and the benefits of membership, and how to get involved in our organisation. The Committee decided to include an acknowledgement of country on each brochure, in line with a broader Canberra Birds policy on Indigenous recognition that is being developed.

Acknowledgements

Each brochure features eye-catching photos of representative species for each region and birding site sourced from local photographers. We extend our thanks to members and locals who kindly gave permission to reproduce their photos, which are a highlight of the brochures. We'd also like to thank members and others who gave their time to read and comment on draft versions of the brochures.

How do I get brochures?

'Hot off the press' print copies of the brochures will be available at the next Members' Meeting on 9 April. Keep an eye out for copies of the new brochures around Canberra and surrounds at popular locations such as the ANBG, Tidbinbilla and Wildbark, and at our Canberra Birds stall at community events. The brochures can be downloaded from the website at www.canberrabirds.org.au/publications.

Julie Hotchin

On behalf of the Brochures Working Group (Jenny Bounds, Alison Mackerras and Steve Read)

Summary of the 12 March meeting presentations

The first presentation was a very important and informative one by **Rachael Grigson** on **'Avian influenza H5N1...no longer a matter of if, but when?'**.

The interest was clear from the large attendance. Rachael began by showing and going through a diagram of the Avian Influenza Virus complex, noting that it is named by the outside proteins, that there are many sub-types, and that influenza A, which is one name for the many viruses which prefer wet and cold conditions, and is responsible for the outbreaks.

There are low and high pathogenic sub-types, the former (H1-H16) is common in wild birds but causes no disease except occasional mild disease in poultry. The low pathogenic H5 or H7 from wild birds may enter poultry production where genetic changes lead to the highly pathogenic H5 or H7 types. The latter was responsible for the recent poultry outbreaks including in the ACT. This is how the currently globally dominant HPAI strain H5N1 2.3.4.4b formed. Since 2021 it has spread and reached all continents including Antarctica, but not yet Australia, though it has recently been detected in the Kerguelen Islands only 440 km from the Australian External Territories of Heard and McDonald Islands.

Rachael indicated there is no way to prevent its spread to the Australian continent, and outlined what has been done, what is being done now and what we can do next. From overseas birds commonly affected include waterfowl, shorebirds, seabirds and predatory and scavenging species, but it is assumed any species could be affected. Wild mammals and domestic livestock are also at risk. H5N1 causes sudden death within days of infection in many cases, but unfortunately the wide range of clinical signs, including animals being asymptomatic, can delay its identification.

The National Avian Influenza Wild Bird Surveillance (NAIWB) program, which has been running for 20 years, has increased location numbers and a greater range of species for better early detection. She also outlined what a response may look like and what bird lovers can do.

Once again on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members many thanks to Rachael for giving up her very valuable time to prepare and present this very important and informative presentation to us. While a copy of Rachael's slides is on the Canberra Birds Facebook page, she can be contacted on Rachael.Grigson@act.gov.au or on 6207 6021. Other key information is on Avian Influenza - Be aware - Canberra Birds on this website or on <https://www.michellewille.com/avian-influenza-resources/>.

The second was another very interesting and informative presentation by **Geoffrey Dabb** on **'Uncommon non-breeding visitor: some reflections on the intermittent Freckled Duck, one of Canberra's most interesting birds'**.

The audience really appreciated the amount of research Geoffrey had done, and the many photos, many of which were his own. The interest in learning more about this ephemeral duck currently present at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) was clear from the large attendance. Its relative rarity is underlined by John Gould only having seen one specimen, that collected by John Gilbert in WA.

The first ACT region record seems to be from Yarralumla Bay in 1964 while the lake was filling, but it was not until the late 1970s when Michael Lenz commenced waterbird surveys of the local lakes that Lake George was identified as the best local site to see them. Indeed, in November 1992 he counted 728 ducks there, well over 1% of the estimated total population and easily enough ducks to meet the criteria for Ramsar Convention listing (which never came about.)

In preparation for his talk, Geoffrey spent considerable time trying to determine the actual status of the **Freckled Duck** in SE Australia, drilling down into the data in eBird, Birdlife Australia's Birdata and the COG database. This revealed the very interesting fact that if the status is based on records the ACT (in particular the Jerrabomberra Wetlands) seemed to have more ducks, whereas if you based it on the number of sightings per record, Lakes George and Bathurst clearly had the most. Therefore, he preferred the much more robust and accurate surveys such as the Victorian one initially covering 786 wetlands in relation to duck shooting, which is now much reduced.

Geoffrey noted that it is a shallow water largely vegetarian feeder, either by upending or swimming along with its head underwater. They can go through a complete flight feather wing moult in late summer rendering them particularly vulnerable. He also covered breeding, noting that this was originally in special places such as the now disappeared

Barrenbox Swamp near Griffith, NSW. However, his photos showed local males do develop the red on their bills in the breeding season, even if no breeding in the local area has been confirmed.

Once again on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members many thanks for giving this very interesting and informative presentation. We learnt so much about this special duck species. Geoffrey is also proposing to publish a much fuller version than the above in CBN, so please look out for it.

Jack Holland

Seeking an organiser for the annual Canberra Birds Blitz

Do you enjoy sharing your enthusiasm for birding with others? Are you a good at organising events? Would you like to take a key role in one of Canberra Birds' important annual conservation activities?

The Canberra Birds Committee is seeking someone to organise the annual Bird Blitz. The Blitz is a long-standing Canberra Birds event that aims to record all bird species in the ACT over one weekend in late October.

You can read more about the annual Bird Blitz here: <https://canberrabirds.org.au/observing-birds/cog-bird-blitz/>

This year the Blitz will take place on the weekend of 25-26 October. After several years in the role Nicki Taws is stepping down. The Committee would like to extend our thanks to Nicki for her energy and commitment she brought to organising the Blitz.

What does the role entail?

The Blitz organiser promotes the event, records who will visit which sites to ensure as wide a coverage as possible across the ACT, organises access to areas that birders cannot usually visit, and after the event collates the information collected. The organiser then usually presents an overview of the highlights and findings of the Blitz at a Members' meeting.

The role may also be split between two people with different interests and skills, such as for example someone to organise the event and someone else to manage the records and/or present the data findings.

Timing

The planning and set-up of the Blitz is undertaken during July to October, and the collation of records and preparing findings for presentation are done between November and January. There is a well-established process in place to streamline these activities so that the role is not onerous.

If you are interested in doing all or part of this role, we'd love to hear from you. You do not have to be a bird expert. We are looking for someone who is enthusiastic, willing to learn and good at coordinating people.

You will be supported by the Committee and others with experience in organising this activity.

Contact

If you're interested in taking on all or part of this role or would like more information about what's involved, contact Kim Farley on kimlouiseFarley@gmail.com or Julie Hotchin on julie.hotchin@gmail.com by **15 May 2025**.

Julie Hotchin
Vice-President

Membership Update

Membership renewals are due **from** the 1st of July 2025. Please do not pay before this date.

Coffee and Chat at the Gardens Tuesday, 8 April

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 11:00 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.

News from the Committee

Our 20th March committee meeting was satisfyingly routine, and with several activities coming to completion. This included the first of our set of updated information brochures about Canberra Birds and birding in the ACT. As with COG's earlier brochures, these will be used at community events and also be available at several key locations around the ACT.

We also noted the rapidly approaching Honeyeater Survey. Around 50 people have volunteered to take part on three mornings in April. This is an impressive number, and if you are one of those folk, we thank you very much. Chris Davey is running the survey and organising the volunteer workforce. Many of our wonderful long term members have volunteered and we also have a number of young university students taking part in a COG survey for the first time.

Elsewhere in this issue of Gang-gang is an article seeking a new Coordinator for the annual COG Blitz. The Blitz is a key event in the Canberra Birds year - held in October since 2005. If you are good at organising people and events, this role could be the one for you. The current Coordinator, Nicki Taws, is stepping back from the role. We thank her for her contribution.

Kim Farley, *President*

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 23-Friday 28 February—Crowdy Bay NP

Kathy Walter and John Goldie led a very successful field trip to Crowdy Bay National Park, a mid-north coastal park north of Taree. Fifteen COG members camped at Kylie's Beach campground for five nights and explored the surrounding habitats and birding spots by foot and car. The weather was consistently hot during the day and mild at night, so afternoon swims and siestas, and refreshing cold showers were just the ticket. Campground birds included **Tawny Frogmouth, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Little Wattlebird, Australasian Figbird, Torresian Crow, Spangled Drongo, Brown Quail** and an immature **Brahminy Kite**. In all 133 bird species were observed over the five days.



Scaly-breasted Lorikeet



Marcus Hellyer

Our first excursion was a five-kilometre circuit walk from the campground through coastal forest, post-fire regenerating heath, and woodland and coastal headlands. The scenery was magnificent as viewed from the latter, and special birds observed were **White-cheeked Honeyeater, Southern Emu-wren, Variegated** and **Red-backed Fairy-wren** and **Large-billed Scrubwren**.

Dusk spotlighting in nearby heath detected five **Ground Parrots** (one seen, the others heard) and another night's spotlighting effort detected a calling **Eastern Grass Owl**, which was then seen by a couple of people.

The group also drove to several nearby birding spots:

- Harrington Rainforest Walk (**Black-faced** and **Spectacled Monarch**, **Varied Triller**, **Mangrove Gerygone**)
- Manning River Estuary at Harrington (**Osprey**, **Pacific Golden Plover** (one in partial breeding plumage), **Red-capped** and **Greater Sand Plover**, **Sanderling**, **Eastern Curlew**, **Barred-tailed Godwit**, **Little**, **Common**, **Crested** and – a lifer for some – **Aleutian Tern**).
- Cattai Wetlands (**Sacred** and **Azure Kingfisher**, **Regent's Bowerbird** among the 63 species observed here).
- Middle Brother National Park, tall eucalypt forest (**Pale-yellow Robin**, **Topknot Pigeon**, **Rose Robin**).

The campground also had resident confiding **Eastern Grey Kangaroos**, **Echidna** and **Lace Monitors**. We dipped out on **Koala** unfortunately.



Left to right: **Regent's Bowerbird**, **Southern Emu-wren**, **Grey Fantail**

Marcus Hellyer



Left to right: **Mangrove Gerygone**, **Aleutian Tern**, **Little Tern**

Marcus Hellyer

Thanks to Kathy and John for devising and leading the trip, Lia Battisson for eBird recording over the entire trip, the photographers and everyone for their convivial company.

Julie McGuinness

Sunday 2 March—Stony Creek NR and Uriarra East

Eighteen members met at 8 am in the car park at the eastern end of Uriarra East Nature Reserve. After introductions we headed south and arrived at the gate to the Stony Creek Nature Reserve after about 400 metres. One of our party, who frequently arrives early, had seen a **White-bellied Sea Eagle** flying up the river before others arrived, so we looked out for it as we went, but it didn't reappear whilst we were there. Several of the migrants were still about: **Rainbow Bee-eaters**, **White-throated Gerygone**, **Dollarbirds** and **Rufous Whistlers**. We had reasonable views of a **Sahul Brush Cuckoo**, and a **Black-fronted Dotterel** was spied on a sandbar in the middle of the river.

Other highlights were three **White-faced Herons** soaring overhead and several **Mistletoebirds**, showing themselves on bare branches and calling to one another. Members of the group observed forty species in all.



Left to right: **Rainbow bee-eaters**, **Black-fronted Dotterel**, **White-faced Heron**

Sandra Henderson

Thank you, Sandra, for adding photos to the eBird report.

Lia Battisson

Sunday 9 March – Wallaroo district

Fourteen COG members explored the Wallaroo district just over the ACT's northern border in NSW. The area extends westwards from the Barton Highway across open grassland and then down sharply to the Murrumbidgee River. The region has historically been a pastoral district and is now slowly being sub-divided into hobby farms. Due to the lack of public land in the district it can be difficult to bird there without local knowledge or contacts.

We met in Hall Village and proceeded to our first stop, the historic Hall Cemetery, the oldest cemetery still in continuous use in the ACT. Despite the abundance of good habitat trees surrounding the cemetery, there was little bird activity with only small numbers of bush birds. However, as we were leaving we were rewarded with a good view of a female **Leaden Flycatcher**.

We then proceeded along Wallaroo Road to a private property and were given a tour by the owner. We had a good opportunity to learn the call of the **Stubble Quail**, which although unseen, frequently called. A close view of a pair of **Wedge-tailed Eagles** was a highlight, particularly for a Bhutanese visitor who had not seen them before. The final stop was a 'secret' path that leads from the end of Wallaroo Road that provides public access down to the Murrumbidgee River. Again, the birds were rather quiet, although we saw a range of bush birds. As we headed back up the path away from the river we had a nice view of an **Australian Hobby** hunting **Galahs** along the river corridor.

Many thanks to Lia Battisson for completing eBird checklists.

Marcus Hellyer

Sunday 16 March – Aranda Bushland NR South – Ian Loiterton Trail

Every birding outing brings its own surprises, and this field trip was a good reminder, if any was needed, that urban birding in Canberra can have some very unexpected and rewarding sightings. For the 15 people who joined me on this field trip in Aranda Bushland, this was one of those memorable occasions.

We gathered on a warm morning with clouds darkening as the morning progressed. Shortly after setting out across the open grassy area of the Aranda Snowgums Reserve, we were treated to good views of several **Pacific Swifts** circling across the sky. They were present for an hour or so, hawking over open grassland, giving us several further opportunities to observe them clearly. **Welcome Swallows** and **Tree Martins** were active in the same area.

As we walked through woodland, **Crimson Rosellas**, **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalotes**, and **Grey Fantails** were active and vocal, and their calls accompanied us throughout the walk. Several of the group had good views of a female **Golden Whistler** and another was heard further on. We visited the apple box glade on the southern edge of the reserve, which was quiet, although typically heavily populated with Eastern Grey Kangaroos. There were good views of a **Little Pied Cormorant** at the dam and **Red-browed Finches** were heard calling as we crossed the grassland towards a large, old

yellow box. Enjoying the shade, we watched **Brown Thornbills** and a **Striated Thornbill** wrangling a feast of a very large green caterpillar. **Eastern Rosellas**, **Weebills**, a **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** were also present.



Striated Thornbill with large green caterpillar
Sandra Henderson

The trail along the base and over the stony ridge was very quiet, although some of the group caught a brief sighting of a pair of **Black-shouldered Kites** before they flew out of view. A variety of small birds were active and vocal in the eucalypts on the slopes: a male **Scarlet Robin**, **Buff** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills**, both species of pardalotes and **White-throated Treecreeper**. We emerged from the woodland back onto the open grassland in time to witness a kettle of 20 or more **Black Kites** soaring in the thermals on the southern edge of the reserve, before they flew towards the Arboretum. This was a spectacular finish to a great morning's birding!

Thanks to Judi Millington for recording the bird list.

Julie Hotchin

Wednesday 19 March – Mulligans Flat NR big dam

Probably the highlight of the walk around the Big Dam at Mulligan's Flat, for most attendees, was having such good views of the **Red-kneed Dotterel**. And there wasn't just one, but three, and many people had great views of at least two clearly visible at the same time, and to be able to compare them in the same view with **Black-fronted Dotterel**.

Sandra pointed out the Red-kneed Dotterel appeared larger probably, not just because they are slightly larger than Black-fronted Dotterel, but their plumage colour and pattern makes the Red-kneed Dotterel appear larger.

For many attendees having good views of a **Latham's Snipe** was also a highlight, especially as it wasn't mentioned as a bird we might see. We also had good views of **Pink-eared Duck** and **Royal Spoonbill**.



Left to right: **Pink-eared Duck**, **Hoary-headed Grebe**
Tee Tong Teo

Probably, for many of us, the excellent views we had of the **Hoary-headed Grebe** adult being pursued by one young were also a highlight, especially as it included the young's calling.

Plenty of **Eurasian Coot** and **Australian Wood Duck** were seen, along with three **Black Swan**, a **Great Cormorant**, an **Australasian Darter**, an **Australian White Ibis**, an **Australasian Grebe**, a **White-faced Heron**, as well as **Grey Teal**, **Little Black Cormorant**, **Purple Swamphen** and **Masked Lapwing**.

Of the land birds, a poorly lit **Noisy Miner** perched at the top of a dead tree had us guessing for a while. The **White-plumed Honeyeater** at the top of another dead tree was in better light and not as hard to identify. Five parrot species were seen as well as **Grey Butcherbird**, **Willie Wagtail**, **Australian Raven** and **Superb Fairy-wren**.

Michael Robbins

Jerrabomberra West Nature Reserve – woodland bird survey program

We are seeking a couple of people to undertake the quarterly surveys at the Jerrabomberra West NR, on the Monaro Highway, opposite the Canberra Jail. Canberra Birds has 7 sites in the woodland patch at the back of this reserve, which also protects a large area of endangered grasslands with a link to Callum Brae Nature Reserve nearby. This is one of several locations where we have a long-term survey program.

110 species of birds have been recorded on surveys there over nearly 20 years, woodland and some grassland bird species. **Dusky Woodswallows** are regular seasonal breeders. Some uncommon species are recorded from time to time, such as **Southern Whiteface** and **Diamond Firetail**, and **Flame Robins** on the woodland/grassland edge in winter. A small group of **Swift Parrots** moving through in April one year is a special record.

A good knowledge of our local woodland birds is needed, able to identify by sight, and know a range of the common bird calls. It is important to have a commitment to do quarterly surveys seasonally, but the surveys could be shared by a small group (2-3 people), so there is flexibility and a back-up system.

Our woodland surveys at a number of locations are undertaken seasonally (in late March, June and September, and in late November/early December), generally within the same 9 days window book-ended by weekends. Surveys are done in mornings. Note, the woodland patch is a walk in on a formed track through the grasslands, with walking off track to sites; walking fitness is needed.

Please contact Jenny Bounds, the Program Coordinator, who can provide more details and discuss further: ph 62887802. Or email: jbounds@bigpond.com

Please include your phone contact details.

Information about the woodland bird survey program on this link:

<https://canberrabirds.org.au/conservation/woodland-birds/cog-woodland-bird-monitoring-project/>



NATURE LODGE OPTICS
62 OWEN ST HUSKISSON 0416516616
108 QUEEN ST BERRY 0488004700
The region's most trusted source for
Binoculars and Spotting Scopes
Free advice and unique guest
accommodation in Jervis Bay..
Proud Official Stockists of
SWAROVSKI - LEICA - ZEISS - STEINER
BUSHNELL - VORTEX - SCHÖEFHAUSEN
www.naturelodge.com.au




kingfisher park
birdwatchers lodge
Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns
**FOR THE BEST BIRDWATCHING
IN FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND**
Self-contained Units,
Bunk Rooms & Campground
www.birdwatchers.com.au
sootyowl@bigpond.com
Find us on Facebook

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 6 April – Narrabundah Hill

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

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

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

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

Sunday 13 April – K2C surveys – Bredbo area

COG will continue with the K2C surveys that have been running since April 2010. The surveyed properties have healthy populations of many of the rarer woodland birds such as **Diamond Firetail**, **Hooded Robin** and **Speckled Warbler**. We will be visiting the same sites to continue the monitoring and see if we can witness the autumn migrations. The surveys will be undertaken in 'blitz' fashion; that is, observers in small groups will visit a number of sites on one or more properties before regrouping for lunch and a sharing of the survey's findings. Less experienced observers are welcome to join in the survey as each team will have at least one experienced observer.

Anyone interested in participating is asked to contact Nicki Taws before Wednesday 9 April. Email: ntaws@bigpond.com or 0408 210 736.

Wednesday 16 April – Lindsay Pryor Arboretum

Meet at 8.30am in the carpark on Barrenjoey Drive, off Lady Denman Drive (where Barrenjoey meets Lady Denman at the traffic lights). We'll be walking the lake shores, through the Lindsay Pryor Arboretum

and Barrenjoey Peninsula, an easy walk, with plenty of shade. Most will be on mown areas or formed tracks. Bring water, sunscreen, hat and wear sensible shoes.

Please register with Margaret (mrgrtrbrtsn14@gmail.com) and include your name, phone number and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Margaret Robertson

Friday 18 April to Monday 21 April – private property at Wanganella – Easter camping

As with past visits to this location, we will camp at the old shearers' quarters, which means that there is space for tents and camper vans. We will have access to a basic kitchen (tank water, fridge/freezer, a sink for washing up), a microwave which I will provide, a large dining table, as well as very basic bathroom facilities (toilets and hot showers). There is limited internet access around the shearers' quarters. We will bird on the property, including one night excursion, as well as at some spots closer to Deniliquin. Numbers strictly limited to 16 participants.

I anticipate most will plan to arrive from Thursday 17 April, and depart on Monday 21 April.

To register contact Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com) with name and mobile number, and name and number of an emergency contact.



Feathers'n'Friends
Birdwatchers & nature lover's accommodation

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

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

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

Discounts available for Birdlife Australia members.

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

www.feathersnfriends.com.au

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

Sunday 27 April – Mount Majura Nature Reserve, 'The Fair', North Watson

Description: Mount Majura Nature Reserve, on the lower slopes of Mount Majura, is part of Canberra Nature Park. The plant community here is Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland, one of the most endangered ecological communities in Australia (over 90% cleared). Friends of Mt Majura work to protect and enhance the natural environment on Mount Majura and its surroundings and have undertaken significant habitat restoration.

Birds we may see include **Speckled Warbler, Common Bronzewing, Sacred Kingfisher, Golden and Rufous Whistler, Varied Sittella, Mistletoebird, Dusky Woodswallow and Fuscous Honeyeater.**

Meeting time and place: 8:30am. Corner of Tay and Ian Nicol St, Watson. There is a small carpark near the entrance gate to the reserve.

Walking distance: max of 3 km

Degree of difficulty: Easy, including some off-track walking.

End time (approx.): 11:00 am

What to bring: water, snack if wanted, hat, sunscreen

Registration: Please register with the leader, Sally Stephens, by email to sallysstephens@icloud.com providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Please do so before 7pm on Friday 25 April.

Sally Stephens and Prue Watters

Sunday 4 May – Mulligans Flat NR from Wildbark, Throsby

Meet at 8.30am at Wildbark, Rosenberg Street, Throsby, for a walk to the big dam, along its western side and then to a section of Mulligans Flat that is often overlooked: northwards on the Dam Track to the Old Coach Road (meeting it south of the old woolshed and the two smaller dams), then east along the Old Coach Road as far as Quoll Gate, and then back to Wildbark on Dungarvon Track. Expect to see a range of water and woodland birds, and possibly **Bush Stone Curlew**.

Please register with smlashko@gmail.com, providing your name, mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact.

McComas Taylor

Sunday 11 May – Tin Hut Dam

Meet at 9am at Tin Hut Dam carpark.

This is a very pleasant walk of around 2.5 km, where we'll slowly amble along the perimeter of a large pond in a woodland/grassland habitat. Some sections of the easy walk will go through grasslands with no defined track. Robins and a wide variety of woodland birds frequent this area along the western shore of Googong Dam.

Allow a 30 minute drive from either Calwell or Queanbeyan, noting that you will need to go through a farm gate and drive along a gravel track that's fine for all vehicles. If you'd like to car pool with others in your area, advise your suburb when you register and I'll email each person with contact details. We expect to be back at the car park by 11am.

Please register with markitindale@yahoo.com.au, providing your name, mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact. Limit of 16.

Mark Tindale

Saturday 17 May – Australian National Botanic Gardens - beginners outing

This morning walk will be the first for 2025 aimed specifically to help beginners and new members identify birds and to learn about their behaviour and calls. The Botanic Gardens are especially suitable for such an outing, as they allow the opportunity to observe a range of local bush birds in a variety of habitats. Due to the available food supply, they are also a relative haven for birds during late autumn/winter.

Anthony Overs will lead this outing, which will consist of a stroll through this lovely part of Canberra for a couple of hours.

Meet at 9.15am at the ANBG bus shelter.

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

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

Anthony Overs

Sunday 25 May - Bango Nature Reserve

Bango NR is 13 kms north of Yass via Cooks Hill Rd and Blakney Creek Rd South. It is 409 hectares of dry woodland with some steep hills. **Scarlet, Flame, Rose and Eastern Yellow Robins, Jacky Winter and Pied Butcherbird** have been recorded. Return via Dog Trap Rd stopping at wetland near **Jeir-Marchmont Rural Fire Shed**.

Meet at Hoskins St, Hall by old Hall Primary School at 8.00 am. Suggested contribution from passengers to drivers \$10.

Walking distance: about 5km. Degree of difficulty: medium.

End time: 3.00pm

What to bring: water, morning tea, lunch, hat, sunscreen and sturdy boots

Register with Bill Graham (bsgraham1948@gmail.com or 0466 874 723) by Friday 23 May, providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact

Numbers limited to 16

Sunday 8 June – Glendale Depot

Description: We will park at Glendale Depot and follow the Brandy Flat track for approximately 2kms before returning through Glendale Depot. This is not a difficult or overly hilly walk and will take us through open eucalypt forest. Sightings might include **Scarlet Robin, Crescent Honeyeater, Golden Whistler** and **Jacky Winter**.

Meet at Lanyon Marketplace carpark at 8:30 am for carpooling

Walking distance: Approx. 4 kms

End time (approx.): 11:30

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

Name of leader and contact details: Please **register** with the leader, Prue Watters, by email to prue.watters@gmail.com providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Please do so **before 7pm on Friday 6 June**. Numbers will be limited to 16.



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

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.

Canberra Birds membership

2024-2025 memberships:

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

New members

No new members

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for May 2025 edition:

Wednesday 30 April 2025

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

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

or

c/- The Secretary, Canberra Birds,

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.

Canberra Birds information

President: Kim Farley
president@canberrabirds.org.au

Treasurer: Vacant
cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Secretary: Margaret Robertson
cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Address for correspondence

The Secretary
Canberra Birds, PO Box 331
Jamison Centre, ACT 2614

Canberra Bird Notes

Editor: Michael Lenz
michael.lenz.birds@gmail.com
Sub-editor: Kevin Windle
Kevin.Windle@anu.edu.au

Canberra Birds website

canberrabirds.org.au

Canberra Birds Webmaster

Julian Robinson
cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au

Canberra Birds library

cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Membership Enquiries & Updates:

membership@canberrabirds.org.au
for change of address or other details.

Gang-gang Newsletter

Editor: Zac Flegg

Lay-out Editor: Wendy Whitham

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

Canberra Birds E-mail Discussion List

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

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

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

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

Gang-gang is published on Canberra Birds' website in PDF format.

ISSN 2208-018X

