

# Gang-gang

**MAY 2025**

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

## MAY MEETING

**Wednesday 14 May 2025  
7:30 pm**

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

The May 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.

**Shefali Dorepalli - The life and times of a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo: Age-related variation in cognition and behaviour.**

**Rob Heinsohn - Where music meets conservation: the incredible Palm Cockatoos of Cape York Peninsula.**

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. 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

[Continued Page 2](#)

**Everyone welcome**

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

The fine and warm autumn weather continued for the nearly 5 weeks from 26 March to 28 April covered by this column, with no rain except for a moderate fall at the start and a part showery final week. My analysis below shows bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (Aol) seemed to pick up a bit compared with March. Except for a few late staying birds the spring/summer migrants seem to have departed at their usual times, though the return of some of the autumn/winter altitudinal migrants may have been delayed. Except for one very notable example below, numbers of “unusual” species reported were low, though perhaps a bit up compared with the very low numbers in March.

### Highlight – Striped Honeyeater

The undoubted highlight of the period, and very different from that in previous one, began at 9:55 am on 5 April when Tracy Rail posted on the COG/Canberra Birds chat line “**Striped Honeyeater** at Cantor Crescent woodland in Higgins currently”. Within the next hour Shorty had confirmed and photographed this very unexpected sighting, with many other birders then also able to observe and photograph it. After the first day it seemed to

[Continued Page 2](#)



Striped Honeyeater

*Ben Milbourne*

---

## MAY MEETING—continued from page 1

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.

The short presentation will be by **Shefali Dorepalli**, a PhD student at the Research School of Biology at the ANU, on “**The life and times of a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo: Age-related variation in cognition and behaviour.**”

Behavioural change can occur across the lifetime of an individual. How and when do these changes occur? Do individuals develop certain abilities and skills over their juvenile period, and refine their social connections or movement patterns into adulthood? In this talk, Shefali will discuss her PhD work, which seeks to understand age-related variation in cognition and behaviour in an iconic long-lived species, the **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** (*Cacatua galerita*). She will talk about changes in social behaviour, movement patterns, motor skills and some fundamental cognitive abilities, including inhibitory control and object permanence.

The main presentation will be by Professor **Rob Heinsohn** of the Fenner School of Environment and Society at the ANU and is entitled “**Where music meets conservation: the incredible Palm Cockatoos of Cape York Peninsula.**”

Australia’s **Palm Cockatoos** are well-known for their unique love of drumming. The males craft their own drumsticks or seed pod tools and bang rhythmically on their nest hollows to attract potential mates or to mark their territory. This talk will showcase this unique behaviour and how it may have evolved.

---

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

continued from page 1

move about 100 m to the ESE across Cantor Cres into the Tester Park/Boniwell St Playground area from where it was reported up to 13 April, with then a break before a couple more reports from Tester Park on 24-25 April.

Somewhat of a surprise to me, since I am familiar with this species not that far to the NW of the COG AoI, it is not listed in 2018-2019 COG Annual Bird Report (ABR) or found in the ACT Bird Atlas. The eBird map also shows no records in the COG AoI since 2018, the closest being some around Blakney Creek just NE of Yass between April 2024 and April 2025. However, Steve Wilson’s book *Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change* notes a record endorsed by the Rarities Panel from Charnwood on 28 October 1995. The Panel’s Secretary, Barbara Allan, has clarified that there are no other endorsed records.

So, it appears the usual question follows for these rare sightings (only the second in the COG AoI): what was this bird doing in Higgins, how long will it stay, and to where it will go. Early photographs, especially Shorty’s, show the bird eating scale insects, so perhaps once it has exhausted the local sources in Higgins it may only move a short distance to exploit another source.

---

## Spring and summer migrants

Of the earlier departing inland spring/summer migrants still present in March, during the period there have been no further reports of the **Horsfield's Bushlark** (last reported on 28 February) or of **White-browed Woodswallows**, last reported on 2 and 11 March. However, there was a report of a very late, still black and white-plumaged, male **White-winged Triller** from the Pinnacle on 16 April (the previous report was one from the Kama NR on 10 March).

While there have again been no reports of the **Pallid Cuckoo** (last reported on 10 February, but they can be still around until late March/early April), the **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** was still reported from 2 locations, one first photographed on the ground (the rufous edges to the tail feathers being the main diagnostic identification feature) in the Orroral Valley on 7 April and one clearly heard at the Casuarina Sands NR on 10 April.

Somewhat surprising considering more have been present this summer/early autumn than for some years, and that they can sometimes still be observed until early in April, there have been no reports for the **White-throated Needle-tail** or the related **Fork-tailed Swifts** during the period, the last reports being just before its start on 26 March.

Of the earlier leaving coastal spring/summer migrants still present in March, there have been no reports of the **Dollarbird**, the most recent one being on 8 March. However, there was still a report of the **Sahul Cicadabird** heard at the Curtin playing fields and bike path on 7 April, with the most recent previous record being 9 February. Two **Rainbow Bee-eaters** were still reported heard over Wamboin on 26 March. The **Sacred Kingfisher** was still reported from 3 locations, a bird at Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 28 March, one on Cooleman Ridge NR on 5 April and one bird from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) on 5 April, with 2 there on 19 April.

The **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** was reported from 2 locations, one from Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 27 March and another at the Tharwa Sandwash on 15 April. There has been a very late report of the **Sahul Brush Cuckoo** at the Stony Creek NR Carwoola on 24 April, with the most recent report being from the Glendale Depot on 12 March. However, there have been no further reports of the **Eastern Koel**, with the most recent one being the male photographed by Christine D eating figs in her Flynn garden on 24 March. This is a very early departure, for unclear reasons, for this species on which I keep pretty close tabs.

There have also been no reports of the **Latham's Snipe** during the period, with the most recent one being 25 March. However, the **Australian Reed-Warbler** was still reported from 11 locations up to the time of writing (compared with 30 for March). The **Tree Martin** was recorded from 20 locations up to the time of writing (similar to March), but there were 3 late reports of **Fairy Martins**, 1 and 4 birds from the Kama NR on 20 April, an unknown number from Bungendore on 21 April, and 3 birds at the London Bridge, Googong on 28 April, the most recent previous report being on 13 March. The **Leaden Flycatcher** was still reported from 8 locations (only slightly down from March) with the most recent one being a male from the Mt Rogers reserve on 14 April. In contrast, there were no reports of the passage migrant, the **Satin Flycatcher**, the most recent having been on 13 March. There have been reports of the other passage migrant the **Australian Rufous Fantail**, from 3 locations, all in urban/peri-urban Canberra. One bird was at the ANBG from 8-12 April, another in Jansz Cres Griffith on 14 April, and on the weekend of 12-13 April one had stunned itself by flying into John Brannan's lounge room window in Florey (only the second time they'd had one in their garden). Fortunately, it was apparently unharmed and flew off several minutes later.

Of the birds that usually leave during April the **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone** were still reported from around 5 and 10 locations, respectively (down from 11 and over 35 in March), during the period. The most recent are: one of each at Campbell Park on 19 April, and on 27 April, respectively. The **Noisy Friarbird** was still reported from 17 locations, the most recent being a bird at Red Hill and 2 birds in Rivett (after not having been present all summer, they have stayed unusually late in my local patch) on 26 April.

Though most of the **Rufous Whistlers**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrikes** and **Grey Fantails** will depart in May, they have still been reported from well over 50, 70 and 100 locations, respectively, during the period. However, some will stay over winter (the very high numbers of the last-named in late March/early April in my local area dropped dramatically towards the end of the period). Some of the **Mistletoebird** and **Superb Parrot**, still reported from 17 and close to 70 (only 16 south of the lake) locations, will also stay over winter.

Most of the **Dusky Woodswallows** and **Olive-backed Orioles**, still reported from over 50 and 16 locations, respectively, will also depart in May, though particularly the latter will overwinter, usually as single birds.

---

So, during May please keep an eye out for the above and other spring/summer migrants which are still being reported but usually leave during this month.

### Autumn/winter altitudinal migrants

Of the species that come to Canberra and its surrounds from the mountains and higher country to spend autumn/winter here, the **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Golden Whistler** certainly moved in over April with reports from around 55 and close to 70 urban/peri-urban locations, compared with 11 and 22 in March, respectively. The former has been particularly conspicuous with its calling in my local patch of Cooleman Ridge and Narrabundah Hill.



Flame Robin

*Victor Braguine*

The **Scarlet Robin** has also well and truly moved in with reports from close to 50 urban/peri-urban locations, compared with 18 in March. Possibly due to the continuing warm weather, the **Flame Robin** has been much slower to move in (as it often is) with reports from 11 locations compared with just one in March. The **Rose Robin** has also moved away from its summer habitat in the mountains to the W of Canberra, with reports from 9 locations, all of which were urban/peri urban. Again, there have been no **Pink Robin** sightings reported during the period, the closest location being many km away just to the NE of Melbourne.

There has been one such report of **Crescent Honeyeater**, a bird in the ANBG on 16 April compared with 5 reports still to the S and E of Canberra. The **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, was reported from 4 locations during the period: 3 birds at the Naas Valley Fire Trail on 8 April, several birds at the Strike-a-Light TSR (on the Bredbo to Jerangle Rd) during the K2C surveys on 12 April, 2 birds at Angle Crossing during the honeyeater survey there on 19 April, and 1 bird heard at the nearby Gigerline NR West on 22 and 25 April.

Up to 2 **Bassian Thrush** have been regularly reported from the ANBG since 2 April, with reports from 5 other locations in the mountains to the W of Canberra. Similarly, up to 2 **Olive Whistlers** were reported from the ANBG between 7-11 April, with the only other report being 2 birds at the (upper) Bendora Rd in the Namadgi NR on 24 April. However, there have been no reports of the **Brown Gerygone** anywhere in the COG Aol during the period.

The **Swift Parrot** has been reported from 2 locations, with 1 bird seen at Kingston on 11 April, and 4 birds near the big dam in Mulligans Flat NR on 26 April, during the period. eBird shows no other reports so far in NSW, the closest being around Wodonga just across the Victorian border. As there still seems to be limited flowering available at this time, I doubt that many will visit Canberra this autumn/winter.

So please during May look out for the above species as more of them move into Canberra and surrounds.

### Unusual species

Apart from the **Striped Honeyeater** 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 3 locations, with up to 14 ducks continuing to be present at the JWNR throughout the period. However, the largest number was the 62 ducks counted from on the Lake Bathurst waterbird survey on 11 April, with 22 also counted on the SW corner of Lake George that same day.

During the period **Australian Shelduck** reported from 2 locations within the ACT, with 1 duck reported from the big dam at Mulligans Flat NR on 6 April, and then 2 ducks regularly there from 13 April. Two ducks were also reported from the JWNR on 8 April and one on 15 April. As is usual they were also reported 7 locations to the N through to the E of Canberra, but slightly below the March numbers. Again, by far the highest numbers were the 480 on the Lake Bathurst survey on 11 April (14 were also at the adjacent Morass on this date, but there were 40 recorded there on 26 March).



Otherwise, the maximum number was 28 reported from the Bungendore Meadow Dam on 13 April, with 18 ducks also reported from the SW corner of Lake George on 11 April.

**Blue-billed Ducks** were reported from 3 locations during the period, with 4 ducks reported from the Upper Stranger Pond only on 3-4 April. An unclear number of ducks were reported from the JWNR on 24 April, but easily the highest number was the 48 ducks recorded at Lake Bathurst during the surveys there on 11 April (4 X the number recorded there on 16 March). Apart from the Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary, **Musk Ducks** were reported only from 4 locations to the N and NE of the ACT, with the highest numbers being the 32 ducks recorded at Lake Bathurst on 11 April when there were also 6 reported from the adjacent Morass. Up to 4 ducks were reported from the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman and a single duck from Rowes Lagoon.

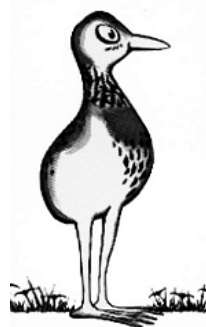
Numbers of the **Great-crested Grebe** have continued to drop, being reported from only 2 locations. The maximum was just 8 birds reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 11 April (down from the 22 in March) with otherwise just 1 and 4 birds were reported from the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 28 March and 16 April, respectively.

A single **Stubble Quail** was reported from the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman only on 16 April, the dry conditions and short grass are not favouring this species. In contrast **Brown Quail** were reported from 9 locations, up from the 5 in March, with a maximum of 9 birds from the Glendale Depot on 6 April. A single **Painted Button-quail** was reported only from Mt Ainslie NR on 18 April, but again no **Little Button-quail** were reported during the period.

During the period a **Brush Bronzewing** was only reported calling from the Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary on 27 March. However, no **White-headed Pigeon**, **Brown Cuckoo-Dove**, **Peaceful** or **Diamond Doves**, or **White-throated Nightjars** were reported during the period.

No **Baillon's Crakes** were again reported during the period. However, on 12 March Robin Hide posted on the COG/Canberra Birds chat line that there was still a little water with short mud flats on each side of the small "triangular dam" at Campbell Park, and a minute crane had scurried rapidly out of sight as he walked past. At a distance of about 15 m or so, and in shaded light, it was difficult to get a proper look, but his guess was a **Baillon's Crake**. I had been hesitant to include this sighting in my April column as at the time the species had not been fully confirmed, and in part because I tend to associate the Baillon's clambering on vegetation in the water rather than on mud flats in comparison with the other two local species. However, Robin returned the next day and spotted what appeared to be the same bird running away, and got off a quick snap photo which confirmed it was probably a Baillon's.

**Spotless Crakes** were reported from 2 locations, with up to 2 birds regularly from the JWNR, but with 8 birds using playback at the Beltana Park (Googong) on 24 April. Up to 2 **Australian Spotted Crakes** were also regularly reported from the JWNR, with reports from 4 other locations: up to 2 birds from the South Jerrabomberra Ponds between 5 -25 April, and single birds from Paddys Park and the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 30 March, and from Casey Pond on 28 April.



**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**

### **Membership Payment**

**Membership payments for the 2025/26  
financial year are due from 1 July  
2025.**

**Please do not make a payment before  
this date. Please contact me if you have  
any queries.**

**Prue Watters** ( [prue.watters@gmail.com](mailto:prue.watters@gmail.com) )  
Acting Treasurer, Canberra Birds

---

**Single Buff-banded Rail** were reported only from the JWNR on 3 and 16 April, from where a **Lewin's Rail** was reported on 25-26 April. Three of the latter were also recorded using playback at the Beltana Park (Googong) on 24 April. No **Black-tailed Nativehen** was reported during the period.

Four **Pied Stilts** were reported from 3 locations, 4 from the Lake Bathurst surveys on 11 April, but 26 that same day from the SW corner of Lake George and 10 from the Badcoe VC rest area at Lake George on 27 April. Thirty two (well up from the 5 in March) **Red-capped Plovers** were reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 11 April, with 1 bird also seen at the SW corner of Lake George that day.

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 **Common Sandpiper** was last reported at its usual spot around the gross pollutant trap at the inlet of Village Creek on 23 April (high time for it to fly N).

No **Caspian**, **Whiskered** or **White-winged Black Terns**, **Australasian** or **Australian Little/Black-backed Bitterns** were reported during the period.

A **Little Egret** was reported from the JWNR on 9 April, and a **Plumed Egret** from there on 5 and 7 April. Up to 6 **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 14 locations, a bit down from the 19 locations in March. **Royal Spoonbill** were reported from 11 locations (up from the 7 in March), up to 9 regularly from the JWNR but otherwise a maximum of 10 birds from the Lyneham Wetlands on 13 April. Two **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** were reported from the JWNR on 25-26 April, and 2 from the big dam at Mulligans Flat NR on 27 April. Again, no **Glossy Ibis** were reported during the period.

Single **Barn Owls** were reported from 2 locations, one was being mobbed by a flock of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**, **Australian Ravens** and **Pied Currawongs** at the University of Canberra on the morning of 24 April, and the other after sunrise in Gungahlin on 28 April. **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from around 40 locations in the period, similar to March. Single **Spotted Harriers** were reported from 5 ACT locations, one from Majura on 11 April, one from the JWNR and also the Canturf Farn on 14 April, and one from Ainslie on 16 April, as well as one from The Morass on 19 April.

**Grey Goshawks** were reported from 5 locations. A white morph in a **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** flock, being harassed by **Australian Ravens**, was reported from Mawson on 1 April. A grey morph was observed perched at Coppins Crossing on 8 April, another circling in a thermal over Garran on 10 April, and another photographed at the JWNR on 13 April. Another grey morph **Grey Goshawk** was observed at Lake Ginninderra on 25 April, the attention being drawn by ravens, magpies and cockatoos all giving their alarm calls. Compared with the influx in March, a **Black Kite** was reported in the ACT only from Symonston on 3 April, with an unclear number also reported from the Goulburn to Braidwood Rd N of Lake Bathurst on 23 April. A **Black Falcon** was photographed at The Morass on 19 April but there were no reports of the **Pacific Baza** during the period.

An **Azure Kingfisher** was reported only from the well-known Cotter Bend location between 26-31 March. No **Red-backed** or **Forest Kingfishers** were reported during the period.

Four **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** were reported from Hoskintown on 5 April, but no **Cockatiel**, **Turquoise Parrot**, **Scaly-breasted**, **Little** or **Purple-crowned Lorikeets** were reported over the period. Up to 5 **Musk Lorikeets** were regularly reported from the University of Canberra from 11 April, with reports from 4 other locations: 2 from the Hawker Oval and Playing Fields on 30 March, 1 from the Queanbeyan Bicentennial Park on 2 April, 2 from the Ginninderra Village Nicholls on 12 April and 2 from the Pinnacle NR on 25 April.

Apart from the **Striped Honeyeater** described above, two **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters** were photographed at Springrange just to the N of the ACT from 2-13 April. **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** were reported from 6 locations: in order, two birds from Macarthur on 2 April, a bird at the ANU on 3 April, a bird in Campbell on 6 April and one further east at Campbell Park on 9 April. A bird was then reported from Yerrabi Pond on 12 April, followed by 2 birds in Wanniasa from 13-24 April. This species is clearly expanding its range in Canberra, with the above representing the most northerly, easterly and southerly reports to date.

---

While **White-fronted Chats** were reported from 3 locations only, numbers were high as can happen from this flocking species. Up to 6 birds were reported from the Holborrow Ave Ponds (Denman Prospect) between 24-27 April, but these numbers were small compared to the 21 birds on the Yass River Rd on 30 March and the 38 birds recorded at Lake Bathurst during the waterbird survey there on 11 April. However, no **Singing, Scarlet** or **Painted Honeyeaters** or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period.

For unclear reasons the **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** seems to have recently slipped off my list of birds I cover. During the period 1 bird was reported from the Cuumbeun NR S of Captains Flat on 30 March and 4 April, as well as 2 birds from Whiskers Rd Carwoola on 29 March and 2 April. However, Suzi Bond has let me know that on 10 March she and Richard Allen found a single **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** on the walking track between Mt Ginini and Stockyard Spur in the Brindabellas. Richard photographed this bird and added it to Canberra Nature Map with the notes “first record to my knowledge high in Brindabellas. Certainly, none recorded in ala (Atlas of Living Australia). A couple of records near Talbingo and Yarrangobilly. Another high country record near Mt Jagungal.” Checking eBird from 2018 shows records from the Namadgi NP at lower altitudes of 1 bird the old Boboyan Rd woodland in February 2018, one at the Hospital Hill Lookout in January 2022, and one at Blue Gum Hill in November 2023.

**White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes** were reported from 2 locations, a dark morph by a number of observers from the Kama NR from 18-22 April, and a light morph from the Nadjung Mada NR (between Gungahlin and the Federal Hwy) on 18 April. **Red-capped Robins** were reported only from one location, a female photographed in a mixed feeding flock (MFF) at the Kama NR on 22 April. However, no **White-browed Babbler, Apostlebird, Spangled Drongo, Black-faced Monarch, Tawny Grassbird** or **Zebra Finches** were reported during the period.

**Jacky Winters** were reported from 7 locations, the most remarkable being the 11 birds seen together by Line Perrins sitting along the fence and atop a gate post from the paddock opposite the main entrance of the Namadgi NP Visitors Centre (a known location) on 30 March (there were 5 there on 17 April). There were also 4 birds photographed at the nearby Naas Rd at Spring Station Creek on 15 April and up to 5 birds recorded at the Glendale Depot (both known locations) between 4-7 April. Earlier records were 2 birds at Tharwa and one at Smiths Rd near Naas Rd, both on 27 March. To the N of Canberra 1 bird was reported from the Back Creek Rd near Gundaroo (the only new location) and 2 birds slightly further N on the Yass River Rd, both on 30 March.

**Hooded Robins** were reported from 5 locations, with 2 birds at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 4 April and also at the nearby Top Naas Rd on 27 April. They were also recorded from 3 locations during the K2C surveys on 13 April, with Jonno Wong and me finding a pair in a very open area on the fence on the drive into Ingelara (a known location). However, the most reliable spot there is from Scottdale itself where there are multiple birds with surveyors reliably finding them around the wool shed when having lunch.

**Restless Flycatchers** were reported from an even more remarkable 10 locations, with the only Canberra report being (thanks to Shorty) “A post with pics on Facebook of a Restless Flycatcher at West Belconnen Pond” (a known location) on the morning of 4 April. One bird was reported from the well-known Nelanglo TSR on 2 and 23 April, with all other locations being from the S of the ACT. These were (from N to S) 1 bird at the Namadgi NP Visitors Centre on 12 April, one at the Apollo Rd and one on the Top Naas Rd, both on 27 April, one bird in the Orroral Valley on 1 and 12 April, one at the Glendale Depot on 6-7 April, and 1-2 birds at the Yankee Hut car park and track from 31 March to 24 April (all known locations). There were also reports from 2 properties on the K2C surveys on 13 April.

While the large number of reports of the above species for which I formerly asked readers to keep a special lookout is encouraging, the number of other “unusual” birds reported, while up from March, is still low, with in particular very few reports of pigeons/doves or parrots.

## Breeding

Limited mid-autumn breeding has come to my attention, with the following worth reporting:

- On 31 March Anthony Overs posted on the COG/Canberra Birds chat line that the **Satin Bowerbirds** that reside across the street somewhere in Hawker visit often. The female had raised two broods this season. She came over with a begging young bird in tow some time back in November, and she had been visiting over the last two weeks with two brand new juveniles. One of the local young males had finally reached his seventh year and

---

recently moulted into his satin blue plumage, however, he had retained a few brown coverts in the wings and a single green feather on his face.

- I noted that I'd also had an unusually loud begging dependent young (dy) **Satin Bowerbird** in my garden in Chapman for the past 2 weeks, much more advanced than the very recently fledged one I had in early February. Shorty noted that he also had a young **Satin Bowerbird** attend his Symonston bird baths on a daily basis. Interestingly soon after my dy left up to two males and several green birds returned to my garden to revive the bower across the fence in my neighbour's place.

## Flocks, including of migrating birds

Quite a few mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) have been reported, in particular during the COG woodland surveys reported elsewhere in this issue. Other interesting MFFs include Stuart Rae reporting to me that he saw an immature, bird of the year **Shining Bronze-cuckoo** moulting into adult type plumage at Taylor on 25 March. It was in a mixed flock of **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, **Grey Fantails**, **Weebills**, **Golden Whistler**, **Brown Thornbill** and **Grey-Shrike-thrush**, in remnant Yellow Box woodland.

On 31 March Anthony Overs posted that for the last week or so, a group of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** (YFHE) has been loitering around Dungowan St in Hawker. He had seen a maximum of 13 birds at any one time but thought there were more about. They seemed to have settled in for a while, and they came to the bath often, particularly in the morning. I noted that from 14 March I'd also had over 20 YFHE in my garden too, and they did not seem too keen to move on though possibly doing so very slowly. They had also been very keen on one bird bath in particular, and on the morning of 28 March there was a very audible buzz around it with at least 15 **YFHE** using it to drink and bathe along with a mixed feeding flock (MFF) with at least 12 **Spotted Pardalotes**, **Striated Pardalotes**, 2 **Grey Fantails**, 1 **Brown Thornbill** and **Silvereyes**.

After still having at least 25 **YFHE**'s in a MFF in my neighbour's mugga ironbark on 11 April, they finally seemed to move on (see my comments on the honeyeater migration below), but on 24 April there were at least 15 **White-naped Honeyeaters** (also very unusual in my GBS site for the past 10 years or more) at the same bird bath, along with **Silvereyes** and **Striated Thornbills** (good numbers of the latter have been present in my GBS site for the past couple of autumn/winters). All were very active, and it has been very hard to estimate numbers.

The results of the Honeyeater Migration Survey are reported elsewhere in this issue but following the disappointing numbers on the Narrabundah Hill outing on 6 April (see separate report), there have since been very few, often zero, honeyeaters seen migrating when I've been there or on Cooleman Ridge. My best experience this season was on the K2C survey when at the top of the hill opposite the Kelly Rd turnoff Jonno Wong and I saw at least 550 **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** moving SSE in the very thick fog over about 10 minutes around 7:30 am. There were none when we returned a couple of hours later.

Migrating **Red Wattlebirds** do not seem to have been prominent this autumn with my only observation being around 25 moving through on Cooleman Ridge on the afternoon of 16 April. On 26 April similar sized flocks were reported from Nicholls and near Jerrabomberra Creek heading east over the Monaro Hwy, but the largest group brought to my attention was the 80 (also 60 and 30) birds seen on the Honeyeater Survey that day at Casuarina Sands.

So, during May watch out for the last of the honeyeaters coming through, with the **White-naped** often predominating in the flocks.

May is the final month of autumn 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, 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*



---

## Summary of the 9 April meeting presentations

The first of three short presentations was the very interesting and informative “**Vocal communication in highly social White-winged Choughs: How do they stay safe and stay together?**” by **Chun-Chieh Liao**, a PhD student at the Research School of Biology at the ANU.

This was a very well-prepared presentation, given very confidently and with humour. The slides were very well set out and clear and contained many short videos vividly illustrating the **White-winged Chough’s** reaction to a number of different threatening situations.

Chun-Chieh began by noting that while animals have lots of well-studied and different alarm calls, this has been little studied in birds, including how quickly young birds take to learn to respond.

The **White-winged Chough** was chosen as a very good candidate for adding to this data, noting that their stages of development can be clearly identified by their iris colour, which changes over 6 years from brown through light red and finally to bright red in a fully mature adult.

Using sound and short videos Chun-Chieh illustrated firstly the reaction of a 6-year-old adult to three different threats, terrestrial (fox) and 2 different aerial calls, with the Crimson Rosella call as the control. These resulted in three different responses causing the bird either to look up or flee. He then played the same alarm calls to 0.5-to-1-year immatures who showed little reaction.

Very interestingly the fourth call Chun-Chieh has identified, very similar but used in a very different context to the alert aerial alarm response call, is the one the **White-winged Chough** uses as a contact call. He then demonstrated, again by video, the responses in a group situation. One very interesting observation was how the Chough’s eyes bulge when responding to the different alarms.

Once again on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Chun-Chieh for giving this very interesting and informative presentation to us on a bird that we are all very familiar with, including their calls. However, many of us were not aware of the significance between the different calls, in particular the very similar aerial alarm and contact calls. We wish Chun-Chieh the very best with the completion of his Ph D studies and to hearing about the full study in the future.

The second was another very interesting and informative and related presentation “**Beyond breeding: Spatial and social structure of the White-winged Chough during the non-breeding season.**” by **Brendah Nyaguthii Nyagah**, also a Ph D student at the Research School of Biology at the ANU.

This too was a very well-prepared presentation, given confidently and with humour. The slides were very well prepared and set out and contained some short videos at the end of the **White-winged Chough’s** reaction to playback calls and non-territoriality, as well as some amusing anecdotes of what passersby thought of Choughs as Brendah was studying them.

She started by pointing out that Home Range is a fundamental aspect of animal behaviour, and the various factors such as scarcity of resources which may drive changes in Home Range. For example, under dry conditions they move larger distances thus using new areas. In her study reflected in the title above, Brendah used the state-of-the-art technique of Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) tags (which she described in detail) to capture where Choughs in Canberra go in the non-breeding season, aiming to find whether space use changes the patterns of social contact among groups.

She noted that **White-winged Choughs** are predominately insectivores which live in groups of between 2-20 individuals and are co-operative breeders with an extended period of post-fledgling care of >200 days. During the winter several groups gather to forage together, consisting of aggregations of up to 100 birds, although the identity of each group is maintained.

They are thus a good candidate for studying the formation of multilevel societies. In her main study areas of O’Connor/ Lyneham, Brendah has been able to use the BLE tags and mobile phones (including deploying gateways at stationary positions to cover gaps) to adequately sample the flocks and she showed visual representations of the social network and estimates of the home ranges, as well as the spatial and social dynamics of the various groups during the non-

breeding season. A similar study during the breeding season clearly showed how much more contracted they were then.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Brendah for giving this very interesting and informative presentation, providing some insight into the long-standing question of why **White-winged Choughs** form flocks during winter. We wish Brendah the very best with the completion of her PhD studies and to hearing about the full study in the future.

The third was another very interesting and informative presentation **“Where do Noisy Friarbirds sleep? ...a puzzle finally put together (sort of)…”** by well-known Canberra Birds identity **Michael Lenz**.

Michael once again clearly demonstrated his remarkable observational skills. Attendees were in awe of how he managed to discover the unexpected fact that **Noisy Friarbirds** roost together out of the breeding season, which it is clear from the literature that very few, if any, others have been able to find.

It all began when Michael was living in Ainslie and noticed two-way movement of Noisy Friarbirds in the morning and afternoon. It continued when he moved to North Lyneham where his detective work revealed that the birds were moving through the saddle between Mt Majura and Mt Ainslie, and across the Majura Field Range to and from a roost site in the NSW Gooroyaroo Nature Reserve. Unfortunately, he was unable to locate the exact spot due to access problems.

Michael noted that one reason for the lack of previous discovery is that the **Noisy Friarbird** roost flights are very different from other species such as the Crimson Rosella, Australian King-Parrot and Pied Currawong, as they move singly or in small groups quickly and quietly, wherever possible moving under the cover of vegetation. Hence, their flight is much less conspicuous.

More crucially they return much earlier in the day to their roost site, arriving there already 2 hours before sunset. In the mornings they funnel out once they have passed through the saddle. Very important also is that the observer must be stationary for extended periods at an open space that the birds have to cross.

Michael concluded that communal roosting is a basic trait of **Noisy Friarbird** biology outside the breeding season, and that possible other sites occur in the ACT, with Macarthur Hill/Fadden Pines being a likely one.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Michael for giving this very interesting and informative presentation, outlining his evidence for what to many of us was unexpected. He asked why have others not noticed and recorded it before for this widespread and common species, the clear answer being Michael's phenomenal and unique observation skills.

In case anyone is interested in more details Michael has recently had this work published in Australian Field Ornithology 42: 1-10 (2025).

*Jack Holland*

### Collection of Wingspan/Birdlife Magazines from 1998 to present

I have a collection of Birdlife Australia's quarterly magazine Wingspan (later renamed Australian Birdlife) from December 1998 to the present. It's a complete set from Dec 1998 and the magazines are in very good condition (some still in their wrapping). They're free to a good home to anyone who'd like to come and collect them (from Braddon, ACT).

Please text (or email) me, at 0427 254 831 or [doratoxylon@gmail.com](mailto:doratoxylon@gmail.com).  
Richard

### Coffee and Chat at the Gardens Tuesday, 13 May

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.

## A successful Honeyeater Survey in April

A big thank you to all the keen people who gave up their Saturday mornings to count migrating honeyeaters along the Murrumbidgee during April. Around fifty people volunteered, which was a wonderful turn out. That meant that even though Easter and the Anzac Day long weekend fell during the survey period, we still had enough people to field good teams at each of the 9 sites along the river.

Volunteers included many of our committed long-term members, as well as new members and interested people who were not members. We also had a good mix of very experienced birders and newer birders building their skills. It seems lots of good conversations and interesting incidental birding was also had by the teams. Some of the survey teams contributed photos of themselves at their survey sites and these are shown on the next page.

The table below compares the number of Yellow-faced and White-naped Honeyeaters counted at the various sites in 1997 and again in 2025.

Site	Yellow-faced Honeyeaters					
	13/04/1997	12/04/2025	20/04/1997	19/04/2025	27/04/1997	26/04/2025
Uriarra Crossing	486	37	55	15	10	6
Casuarina Sands	5914	2108	498	61	687	84
Kambah Pool	1103	261	92	25	1310	84
Pine Island	1604	627	249	130	521	120
Point Hut	2425	72	189	56	387	20
Gigerline A	8084	335	563	222	611	215
Gigerline B	4112	252	311	157	328	56
Angle Crossing	1031	1351	1432	475	1333	622
Williamsdale	180	1549	1448	NC	2680	483
Total	24939	6592	4837	1141	7867	1690
Total+ Williamsdale	24939	6592	4837	2157	7867	1690
Site	White-naped Honeyeaters					
	13/04/1997	12/04/2025	20/04/1997	19/04/2025	27/04/1997	26/04/2025
Uriarra Crossing	5	1	0	0	1	0
Casuarina Sands	914	184	92	28	574	4
Kambah Pool	25	9	81	5	2579	39
Pine Island	380	84	10	2	893	19
Point Hut	16	1	28	28	263	12
Gigerline A	1258	53	366	110	259	635
Gigerline B	425	5	8	4	111	0
Angle Crossing	208	183	1780	145	2800	517
Williamsdale	0	183	470	NC	2603	586
Total	3231	703	2835	322	10083	1812
Total+ Williamsdale	3231	703	2835	707	10083	1812
NC	no count					



None of the counts in 2025 exceeded those of 1997 except for the four cells highlighted in yellow. Unfortunately, Williamsdale was not counted on 19/4/25 and so two totals are provided. The first with a total count of 37,643 and 9,423 for Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and 16,149 and 3,837 for White-naped Honeyeaters. Then a repeat but with the average of the first and final survey averaged to provide the missing data for Williamsdale of 37,643 and 10,439 for Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and 16,149 and 3,222 for White-naped Honeyeaters. The reduction in numbers for both species is startling.

A further preliminary discussion of results, and some speculations on changes since the previous survey in 1997 and again in 2025 will be presented at the July members meeting.

*Kim Farley and Chris Davey*





## News from the Committee

Due to the Easter break and Anzac Day, our committee meeting was delayed until the 30th of April. This made for a packed agenda.

Key topics included concern about the October **COG Blitz**. The Blitz has been a fixture of the COG birding calendar for many years and many members take part. It creates a valuable annual snapshot of the birds of the ACT. A new Blitz Coordinator is being sought, with an article in April Gang-gang describing the role. To date, no-one has expressed interest. Without a Coordinator, the Blitz is under threat. The role is not a year-round task, and does not necessarily require a knowledge of birds - but it does require someone who is a good organiser. Contact Julie Hotchin or I if you would like to chat about this interesting job. [Hotchinbridge@bigpond.com](mailto:Hotchinbridge@bigpond.com) or [kimlouisefarley@gmail.com](mailto:kimlouisefarley@gmail.com)

As in 2023, Canberra Birds is offering financial assistance for attendance at the **Australasian Ornithological Conference**. The Conference is taking place in November in Perth. Applications are invited from anyone whose research or other project supports Canberra Birds objectives. Information about this funding opportunity and an application form will be added to the website in June. Information will also be included in the June Gang-gang, posted to the Chatline and to our Facebook page.

The committee also noted the successful conclusion of the April **Honeyeater Migration Survey**. Great fun was had by all, and valuable data collected. Thank you, Chris Davey for leading this work.

Finally, the committee, with Jenny Bounds taking the lead, is currently working on Canberra Birds/COG's response to both the **Tidbinbilla and the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR Plans of Management**. Submissions are due mid-May.

Kim Farley, *President*



COG members on the Easter camp at Wanganella  
*Marcus Hellyer*

NatureArt Lab  
Learn - Be Inspired - Love Your Art

# Galapagos and Ecuador

1 - 14 January 2026

Book your place now for this bucket-list nature adventure!  
Journey through the remarkable Galapagos Islands and

Amazonian Ecuador and explore spectacular scenery, natural wonders and incredible flora and fauna of these world-renowned wildlife destinations!

Scan for further details:  
[natureartlab.com.au/](http://natureartlab.com.au/)

[natureartlab.com.au](http://natureartlab.com.au)  
Image Credit: Alan Landford

## Field Trip Reports

### Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 March – Eden pelagics

This year's Eden pelagics were, by far, the most comfortable pelagic trips I've ever undertaken. Conditions over the weekend were extremely calm with very pleasant temperatures, and hardly more than a gentle breeze. I've never seen a flatter ocean at the shelf! Truly wonderful days to be a human on the water.

Unfortunately, by the same token, the birds were a bit harder to come by than we're accustomed to off Eden. Each day started slowly and we struggled to attract a following on the ride out to the shelf; nevertheless, on both days we managed to return home with a respectable species list.

The Saturday trip began with an **Arctic Jaeger** at the edge of the heads, followed by a second bird slightly further out. On the way to the shelf we managed to capture the attention of some **Flesh-footed Shearwaters**, providing a nice ID exercise among decent numbers of **Wedge-tailed** and **Short-tailed Shearwaters**. Over the course of a few hours at the shelf we set up a couple of drift points, and birds slowly meandered past; a handful of **Shy Albatross** and a single **Buller's Albatross** put on a nice show, as did a couple of **Grey-faced Petrels**. With such good visibility across the ocean surface, I was surprised at the lack of storm-petrels, with none of any species recorded. Throughout the day we were accompanied by the usual roving flocks of **Australasian Gannet**.

With even calmer conditions forecast for the Sunday, my hopes of adding to the species tally were not high. The journey to the shelf was uninspiring, with even the shearwaters showing little interest in a free feed, though we did again record **Flesh-footed**, **Short-tailed** and **Wedge-tailed**. Very brief flybys gave us just enough blurry photographs to confirm the identity of single **Hutton's** and **Fluttering Shearwaters**. Once at the shelf we began to gain momentum, and ended up having a great time! Good numbers of **Shy Albatross** sat with us throughout the day, providing fantastic views and entertainment as they accepted our fishy offerings. Two **Buller's Albatross** also dropped by, though they mostly kept their distance. We were treated to incredibly good views of a **White-chinned Petrel** that sat with us for an extended period in the afternoon, and the missing **Storm-petrels** from Saturday finally showed up, with a somewhat distant **Wilson's** and two very obliging **White-faced**.

The most unusual sighting of the entire weekend wasn't a seabird - on our journey back to shore on Sunday afternoon, we were joined by a **Grey Fantail**. First encountered roughly 15km offshore, the bird made a beeline for the boat and flew straight into the cabin! Unfortunately it was disturbed and flew outside again where it spent the next half-hour or so following the boat, attempting to land on the slippery railings. Flying low across the surface of the water, at times it seemed certain that it would run out of energy and crash into the ocean - but every time it disappeared behind a fleck of surf, it would reappear and make another pass. Thankfully it did eventually succeed in landing, and stayed aboard for some time before taking off, gaining altitude, and disappearing to the southwest.

Shy Albatross, Short-tailed Shearwater, White-chinned Petrel,  
Black-faced Cormorant, Grey Fantail

Julian Teh





---

On both days we were treated to our usual tour of the **Black-faced Cormorant** roost on the southern edge of Twofold Bay. This colony seems to have had an especially good season, with a healthy 193 counted on Sunday!

Many thanks to Mark and Lindsay from Freedom Charters for their ongoing skill, enthusiasm, flexibility and well-timed biscuit runs, and to all of the participants who made it such an enjoyable weekend on the water.

Julian Teh

### Sunday 30 March - Rob Roy Reserve, Tuggeranong

Eleven members and visitors met at Kambah Village to carpool before driving to Rob Roy Nature Reserve on the south-east fringe of Canberra. The morning got off to good start before the group even left the cul-de-sac where we had parked, with a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** spotted soaring over the reserve as well as some loud **Australian Magpie** and **Galah** on a nearby dead tree. The large eagle was sighted again not long after perched high in a tree at the top of a hill.

We followed a rocky, beautiful creek for a while observing **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosella**, as well as hearing and seeing a number of **Spotted Pardalote**. As we climbed the hill from the creek, we were lucky enough to spot two male **Scarlet Robin** which were located by the group through following their song. A few large Wallaroo were also seen. We also saw a diverse range of thornbills: **Striated**, **Buff-rumped**, and **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**. In a clearing, we enjoyed watching **White-eared** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**, **Grey Fantail** and two **Eastern Spinebill**. As we made our way back to the car, a **Nankeen Kestrel** was spotted.

The off-track ramble through the reserve, including some skilful climbing over and under fences, proved a challenging walk but we were rewarded with sweeping views across to Mount Taylor. Many thanks to our intrepid leader Michael for a highly enjoyable morning with 32 species observed in total. Thank you to David Lie for keeping the bird list.

Sarah Tomkin

### Sunday 6 April - Narrabundah Hill

Twenty-four members and guests joined me on this annual outing. We walked for about 2.0 km along the northern and over half of the western boundaries of this reserve, returning by the same route. The aim was to observe any honeyeater migration, as well as to find any mixed feeding flocks (MFF), autumn altitudinal migrants and any late departing summer migrants.

Given the near zero minimum overnight and the clear, calm conditions forecast, I had expected a significant number of honeyeaters to come through. However, at the start the northwesterly wind picked up and the clouds rolled in. We did see a conservative total of around 90 **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** (YFHE), mostly in flocks moving through in loose groups of no more than about 20. These were mainly along the northern boundary, flying high and very rapidly towards the east so that by the time participants had been alerted to them they had largely moved on. The remainder consisted of small numbers in the many loose MFFs, feeding in the trees and shrubs with the other birds and, like those that had been in my garden for the past 3 weeks, showing little sign of moving on. A few **White-naped Honeyeaters** were seen or heard only by some of the group.

The major species in the MFFs included **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalotes** and, while they were often typically very active, enough birds spent some time on dead branches or in open view to allow all the group to have very good views. Estimating numbers of these two active species moving among the foliage is always very difficult; very conservative estimates were 25 and 15 birds, respectively. **Grey Fantails** were very conspicuous and seemed to be everywhere, again conservatively estimated as at least 25. **Silvereyes**, often the buff-flanked Tasmanian form, were also feeding in the blackberries or foliage, or in groups flying overhead, with a conservative estimate of 75 birds. **Red-browed Finches** were also feeding in the blackberries but also proved to be surprisingly hard to view. Other species in the MFFs included **Weebills** and **Superb Fairy-wrens** and, on a couple of occasions, **Striated Thornbills**, which are not seen that often in the reserve.

Of the autumn altitudinal migrants, at least one **White-eared Honeyeater** showed itself very well, and quite a few others could be heard calling. However, one of the undoubted highlights was a male **Golden Whistler**, which stayed still in the open, giving great views to all. A couple of females/immatures were also seen but only by a few participants, as was the male **Scarlet Robin**, the only robin recorded. Few summer migrants were seen; these included a **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** sitting on a fence which allowed good views for all, including its wing shuffling, but only a few saw the male **Rufous Whistler**.



Golden Whistler, Australian Hobby Michael Agnew

A loose flock of 23 **Little Ravens** flew north, unusually giving only the occasional call to confirm the identification which was mainly by jizz. A **Brown Goshawk** circling around high was also seen briefly, but better views were obtained of a very dark **Wedge-tailed Eagle** being pursued by a group of **Australian Magpies**. However, the undoubted highlight was at the end of the morning when an **Australian Hobby** was seen plucking a small bird (probably a **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** as they are known to hunt them there as they are coming through) while perched in open view in a dead tree. Everyone was able to have long clear views of the male (by its small size) including of its half-collar and smallish black hood. Slightly earlier some of us had seen a larger female identified mainly by the very pointed wings, slim body and long tail of its dark silhouette as it lazily flew high over.

At 33 species, this was the third lowest number in the now 11 trips I have led at this time (the lowest was 31 species in 2021, and second lowest 32 in 2024, with the usual total being between 42 and 50). The reason for this very low count wasn't clear, but possibly because the conditions (cool, cloudy and windy) weren't ideal. Nevertheless, participants enjoyed the morning, and I was reminded again of how important COG outings can be as social occasions.

Many thanks again for Sue Lashko for helping me lead the walk when numbers doubled in the last few days. Many thanks also to Sandra Henderson for doing the eBird list; this is always a very difficult task

when a large number of people are seeing and calling out names of the different birds they are seeing.  
Jack Holland

### Sunday 13 April – K2C surveys, Bredbo area

It was a somewhat foggy start to the K2C surveys, clearing mid-morning to a warm, sunny day, continuing the long dry spell of autumn 2025. A total of 89 species was recorded which was a good number considering most of the summer migrants appeared to have left (no cuckoos, gerygone, flycatchers or songlarks).

The woodlands were very dry and small birds such as thornbills and pardalotes were generally in low abundance. We still had good records of threatened and declining species including: **Gang-gang Cockatoo**, recorded at 3 properties with a highlight of 35 feeding contentedly on Hawthorn berries, **Brown Treecreeper** (3 properties), **Speckled Warbler** (3), **Southern Whiteface** (3), **Dusky Woodswallow** (5), **Scarlet Robin** (8), **Flame Robin** (2), **Hooded Robin** (3), and **Diamond Firetail** (7 properties, including a sighting of 9 birds together). Scottsdale is becoming an increasingly reliable place to find **Hooded Robin** and other threatened species such as **Diamond Firetail** and **Southern Whiteface**. Other highlights were **Restless Flycatcher** at 2 properties, **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters** at Strike-a-Light TSR, and **Pied Butcherbird**, becoming a regular sighting near Williamsdale. There were few raptor sightings in the dry, still conditions but an undoubted highlight was a **White-bellied Sea-eagle** seen at fairly close-range feeding on a kangaroo carcass.

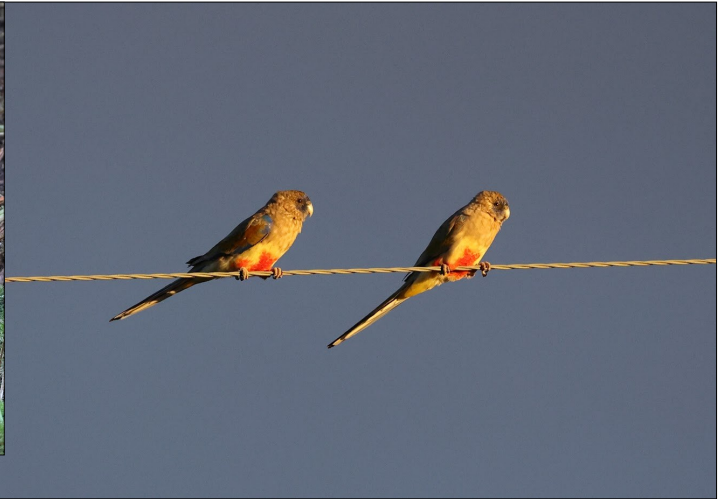
Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> was not the ideal weather for honeyeater migration which was almost non-existent across all sites. Quite a contrast to the clear and still morning of Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>, and at two of the K2C sites which had to be surveyed this morning, the migration of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** was in full swing with over 1,000 birds recorded in 20 minutes at each of two sites, using planted shelterbelts as corridors to move across the cleared valley.

Thank you to all who joined the survey, to the landholders, and to Bush Heritage for use of the Scottsdale shed.  
Nicki Taws

### Thursday 17 to Monday 21 April – Easter camp at Wanganella

Fourteen COG members joined the Easter Camp year based at the old shearers' quarters on a private property north of Wanganella, about 60km north of Deniliquin. We were again joined by the property owner, a keen birder himself, as we visited various semi-arid habitats around the property, as well as woodland, scrublands, dry forests and wetlands further afield in the Wanganella area, around Deniliquin, and at the Mathoura Reedbeds and Gulpa Creek Forest adjacent to the Murray Valley National Park. The weather was lovely for birding and camping – warm to hot days 26 -





**Easter Camp**—clockwise from top: **Yellow Rosella** (*Angela Booth*), **Greater Blue Bonnet** (*Marcus Hellyer*), **Banded Lapwing** (*Marcus Hellyer*), **Chestnut-rumped Thornbill** (*Marcus Hellyer*), **Purple-backed Fairywren** (*Marcus Hellyer*), **Southern Whiteface** (*Marcus Hellyer*), **Red-capped Robin** (*Marcus Hellyer*), **Emu** (*Marcus Hellyer*), **Southern Boobook** (*Marcus Hellyer*)





**Easter Camp (ctd.) - Mistletoebird** (*Angela Booth*), **Zebra Finch** (*Angela Booth*). **White-fronted Chat** (*Marcus Hellyer*), **Whistling Kite** (*Marcus Hellyer*), **Brown Falcon** (*Marcus Hellyer*), **Black Kite** (*Marcus Hellyer*), **Singing Honeyeater** (*Marcus Hellyer*), **Australian (Mallee) Ringneck** (*Angela Booth*)

---

32°, mild nights and generally clear and calm conditions. Once again sunrises and sunsets on the plains were outstanding, and the possibility of an aurora had a couple of people up early in the mornings.

In all 102 bird species were seen by the group over the three plus days and nights – a very good tally considering that the property and the area in general had received little rain since Christmas and was looking very dry. Unfortunately, the Mathoura Reedbeds were essentially dry; not a waterbird to be seen (although some lovely **Yellow Rosella** were).

John's house and dam area gave us good views of a resident roosting **Southern Boobook**, a lone **Black-tailed Native Hen** and some **Greater Bluebonnet**. The surrounding paddocks had **Emu** families, **Banded Lapwing** and many **Red Kangaroos**. Woodland and grassland areas far and wide gave us target inland species such as **Chestnut-rumped Thornbill**, **Brown Treecreeper**, **Purple-backed** and **White-winged Fairy Wren**, **Southern Whiteface**, **Red-capped Robin**, **Singing** and **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater**, **Yellow-throated Miner**, **White-fronted Chat**, **Black-faced** and **White-breasted Woodswallow**, **Apostlebird**, **Pied Butcherbird** and a few **Zebra Finch**. We also lucked on a couple of parties of **Grey-crowned Babbler**. Phil Maher's re-vegetated woodland patches around Wanganella and Mathoura remain impressive in the flora planted and still thriving; productive for flowering mistletoe and **Mistletoebird**. The 8 Mile Creek wetland near Wanganella did have water and produced an array of waterbirds, including significant numbers of **Pacific Black Duck**, **White-necked Heron**, **Yellow-billed** and **Royal Spoonbill**, and **Australian Pelican**.

A variety of raptors were seen including **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Nankeen Kestrel**, **Black** and **Whistling Kite**, **Australian Hobby** and **Brown Falcon**.

The highlight target bird **Plains Wanderer** was, for the first time on COG trips to the property, not to be found, despite a couple of hours pacing and torch sweeping around the grassland paddocks, then driving and spotlighting around other possible spots.

From a social perspective, we again enjoyed communal nibbles and drinks each evening before dinner and the bring-a-plate shared meal – confirming the culinary skills of all. Many thanks for the conviviality of all participants; the generosity of those sharing their knowledge on flora and fauna and their vehicles for carpooling; to John for hosting us again; and, of course, to Sandra Henderson for organising another very successful Easter camp.

Julie McGuinness

### Sunday 27 April – Clancy's Walking Track, Mt Majura

I once did a bird survey on Clancy's Walking Track and saw only **Pied Currawongs** and **Noisy Miners**. Not so today. Ably led by first time leader Sally Stephens, we found a couple of mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) that afforded great views of excellent birds. Fourteen of us met at the gate near the junction of Ian Nicol & Tay streets in Watson, and received a good briefing from Sally about the area's land use and its restoration by the Friends of Mt Majura group. It was grazed from the 1830s to 1985 and now has some grassy woodland and maturing plantings that provide good habitat for smaller birds.

We wandered off track directly up the slight incline to get to the thicker understory and away from the **Noisy Miners** and many, many Currawongs that patrolled the outskirts of the block. We followed the sounds of **White-throated Treecreeper** and **Grey Butcherbird**, and saw a **Common Bronzewing**, and a **Laughing Kookaburra** being chased by a currawong. Our first MFF delivered **Grey Fantails**, **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalotes**, **Weebills**, **Yellow-rumped**, **Brown** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, **Golden Whistlers**, and the world's cutest display of shirt-fronting as two male **Scarlet Robins** got territorial in full view of our group. We meandered down to the dam towards the Federal Highway/Valour Park following the calls of **Brown-headed Honeyeater**. We found another MFF (or was it the same party, moved to a new location?) that delivered another riot of small birds, including a **Speckled Warbler**, **White-eared Honeyeater**, **Superb Fairy-wrens** and a small flock of **Yellow-eared Honeyeaters**. There was also a very relaxed echidna that ambled from the far side of the dam towards us without fear.

Along our path we also saw plenty of the colourful big guys – **Australian King Parrots**, and **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas**, and an **Eastern Spinebill** came by right at the end making up the 32 species we saw over two and a half hours.

Despite her disclaimers she was still somewhat of a beginner, Sally did a great job leading the group, deftly leveraging the local know-how of the Mt Majura regular, and the ID skills of the more experienced birders. For those of us with poor aural memories, it was a reminder that recognising birds calls is a special kind of superpower. I'll keep practicing.

[Said experienced birders took the opportunity at the end of our walk to put in a plug for more volunteers to lead walks. You don't need gold-standard IDing skills; you just need a place, and some enthusiasm, which we had today. It was a great day.]

Beck Redden

## Field trips from July to December 2025

I am currently putting together the field trip programme for the second 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.

<b>In Canberra - north of the lake</b>  National Arboretum Goorooyarroo NR	<b>In Canberra - south of the lake</b>  Capital Hill (around Parliament House) Farrer Ridge NR Oakey Hill NR
<b>Close to Canberra</b>  Tharwa Sandwash Namadgi NP – Nursery Swamp Namadgi NP – Hospital Hill Brindabellas – Mt Franklin Rd/Piccadilly Circus area Brindabellas – walk to Pryor's Hut Brindabellas - <i>Micalong Swamp Flora Reserve</i> <i>Tinderries</i> <i>Yass Gorge</i> Lake Road, Bungendore Jerrabomberra Hill, Queanbeyan	<b>Close to Canberra</b>  Namadgi NP – Nursery Swamp Namadgi NP – Old Boboyan Rd N end & Yankee Hut (due to reopen in June) Namadgi NP – Yerrabi Track Namadgi NP – Grassy Creek/Yaouk Valley Namadgi NP – Mt Clear Namadgi NP – Shanahan's Track Various sections of Canberra Centennial Trail
<b>Further afield</b>  Burrinjuck Dam Mittagong area Monga NP Bungonia Gorge – day trip or weekend camping Goulburn	<b>Longer trips – camping or accommodated</b>  Mittagong/Moss Vale area Coastal NSW Royal NP – Bonnie Vale campground SW slopes Inland NSW Northern Victoria

*Sue Lashko*



## 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 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](mailto: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 [markjtindale@yahoo.com.au](mailto:markjtindale@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](mailto: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

### Wednesday 21 May – Black Mountain Forest Loop

**Meet at 8.30am** at the Forest Loop carpark on right hand side of Black Mountain Road, well up the mountain. The Forest Loop is a 2.3km circuit around the mountain below the summit. There are occasional sections with a few steps, but it is not a difficult walk, and will take a couple of hours. As usual, wear sturdy shoes, hat, sunscreen.

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

Sandra Henderson

### 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**.



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

Fred & Jeanette Birkbeck

244 Clacherty Road  
Julatten QLD 4871  
Tel: 07 4094 1665

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

**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 the Bill Graham ([bsgraham1948@gmail.com](mailto:bsgraham1948@gmail.com), or 0466874723 ) 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](mailto: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.

### Saturday 14 June – Tidbinbilla NR – Superb Lyrebird survey

Since the January 2003 bushfires we have been monitoring the return of the **Superb Lyrebird** to an area of the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. We wish to get an idea of the present distribution within the Reserve and are asking COG members to join us for a morning's survey. We are calling for expressions of interest to join us at 8.00am at the

---

Reserve car park to walk the trails and to record the location of calling birds. Depending on the trails walked the survey should take about three hours.

This outing will be a repeat of the very successful surveys conducted at this time of the year since 2004. For previous survey results see *Gang-gang* p11, July 2023.

Chris Davey ([daveychris12@gmail.com](mailto:daveychris12@gmail.com)) 0418 679 847 and Peter Fullagar

### Wednesday 18 June – Queanbeyan River Corridor

Meet at Isabella St, close to the suspension bridge. We will walk to the Railway Bridge (about 2.4km) and return (partly on the opposite side of the river). The walk takes us from the Queanbeyan town centre to the ACT border (Oaks Estate). Most of the time we'll be on footpaths, with occasional forays down to the edge of the river. As usual, wear sturdy shoes, hat, sunscreen. Register with Sandra at [shirmax2931@gmail.com](mailto:shirmax2931@gmail.com), with your name and number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Sandra Henderson

## Field trips later in the year that require early booking – one mid-week accommodated trip in September and two pelagics in October

### Monday 22 to Thursday 25 September – Tathra

Description: This is a mid-week trip to Tathra staying for 3 nights in the Kianinny Bush Cottages located in bushland just outside Tathra. There will be bird walks around our accommodation as well as excursions to sites within Mimosa Rocks National Park and nearby wetlands. We can expect to see around 100 species including **Glossy Black Cockatoos**, **Superb Lyrebirds**, **Crescent Honeyeaters**, **Hooded Plovers**, other shorebirds and seabirds.

**Meeting time and place:** Drive to Kianinny Cottages on the morning of 22 August. Expect a bird walk that afternoon from about 1.30pm.

**Walking distance:** 2-5 km each day

**What to bring:** Self-catering (BYO meals or dinner at Tathra Hotel or other eateries in town). Packed lunches some days. More detailed information will be provided to those who register.

**Participants must register** with the leader at [prue.watters@gmail.com](mailto:prue.watters@gmail.com), providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Six cottages have been booked. Each cottage has 2 bedrooms, one with a queen-sized bed and another with twin beds, plus bathroom, kitchen and living area.

When you register, if you wish to share a cabin with particular people, please notify the leader. The cost will depend on the number in each cabin. The cost for one cabin for 3 nights with 3 people sharing is approximately \$600 (ie about \$200 per person for a 3 night stay).

Prue Watters - 0414 357 456

### Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 October – Eden pelagics

Two one-day pelagics have been booked, departing from Eden at 7am to approximately 3pm each day. Cost will be about \$164 per day. The boat holds just 12 passengers, so early booking is recommended. At this stage, to maximise the number of people who can participate, **bookings will only be accepted for one day**, but if numbers are insufficient to fill the boat on both days or if there are late cancellations, there may be the opportunity to go on both days. **To register, I require the following information (please reply by numbering 1 to 4 and providing your answers):**

1. Name and mobile number
  2. Name and number of an emergency contact
  3. Which day do you wish to register for? Sat 18, or Sun 19, or don't mind
- Would you like to express an interest in a second day if it becomes available? yes or no.

**Register** at [smlashko@gmail.com](mailto:smlashko@gmail.com)

Sue Lashko and Julian Teh

# Woodland Surveys – Autumn 2025 survey round

compiled by Jenny Bounds

Note: not all sites are reported.

## Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds and the team did the quarterly survey on Sunday 30 March, in reasonable weather conditions, mild and clear to partly overcast, with little wind (except for a brief period of rising breeze mid-survey). This contrasted with persistent rain over the Friday night and all-day Saturday before the survey, although mostly light rain. A couple of **Rufous Whistlers** were still around, and a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** recorded in the central part of the reserve. **Yellow Faced Honeyeaters** were moving through in small numbers, with one group of 32 on the eastern side. **Grey Fantails** were also on the move, particularly on the protected west ridge. There was a noticeable increase in **Scarlet Robin** records (usual in autumn/winter), a couple of records of **White-eared Honeyeater** (resident in the reserve in very low numbers but increases in winter). **Superb Parrots** were recorded in several spots, two sightings of **Varied Sittellas**, a **Common Bronzewing**, 3 **Royal Spoonbills** on the large dam and **Pink-eared Ducks** also on the large dam with various common waterbirds. **Bush Stone-curlews** were heard in two places, near site 2 and the transect across the central quartz ridge.

The total 53 species compares with recent autumn surveys: 57 in 2024; 44 in 2023 (dry late summer/early autumn); 47 in 2022; 39 in 2021 (wetter than usual summer, less waterbirds).

## Goorooyaroo NR (southern area)

Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley surveyed 2 April in very pleasant conditions, mostly sunny, mild (after a cold start) and very light winds. The reserve was looking fairly dry although several dams still had quite a bit of water in them. They recorded 45 species, with 35 of these during 10 minutes counts. For comparison, last year's autumn totals were 43 and 27 species.

Amongst the more interesting species recorded during counts were a **Brown Falcon** at site 1, a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** at site 5, a **Rose Robin** at site 2, **Scarlet Robins** at 2 sites and a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** at site 9. Incidental records included a **Speckled Warbler**, **Red-browed Finches**, 2 **Dusky Woodswallows**, another **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** and a couple of **Rufous Whistlers**. **Western Gerygones**, **Mistletoebirds**, **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Golden Whistlers** were present in several places. There were good numbers of **pardalotes**, particularly **Spotted**, in many places. Several



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](https://stuartmcmillen.com/shop)



flocks of up to 30 **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were seen, mostly heading east. Other birds on the move were a couple of small flocks of **Red Wattlebirds** and a group of 8 **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes**.

### Mt Majura NR

Kathy Walter, John Goldie and Peter Miller conducted the surveys over 3 days, the bulk of sites being done on 20 March. A total of 26 species was recorded over the 9 sites. This seems a low total given all three surveyed 5 of the sites together. Overall most sites were quiet with very few small birds seen, and no **Speckled Warblers** recorded (usually recorded at 2 of the sites). Highlights were a good number of **Common Bronzewing**s in a number of sites, and an unusual record of an **Olive-backed Oriole** in one site. The Kurrajongs were full of seedpods which seemed to be attracting **King Parrots**, **Australian Ravens** and **Pied Currawongs**. Mistletoe was flowering at one site with a number of Scarlet Jezabel butterflies feeding on the flowers and many Common Brown butterflies around.

### Majura Defence Training Area

Kim Farley and Sue Beatty surveyed the 8 sites on 21 March and recorded 33 species in total. After rain started only three species were recorded at each of the last two sites. Honeyeaters were in shorter supply than usual, with only a couple of **White-eared Honeyeaters** recorded and no **Red Wattlebirds**, **Noisy Friarbirds** or **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**. There were good numbers of thornbills, particularly **Buff-rumped**. The highlights of the morning were an **Aust. Hobby** at site 2, a **White-throated Gerygone** and a **Speckled Warbler** at site 3, **Western Gerygone** at site 7, and a pair of **Scarlet Robins** and two **Olive-backed Orioles** at site 4.

However, site 3 was the place to be. As well as a **White throated Gerygone** at a relatively late time in the season, a mixed feeding flock passed through; this included **Rufous Whistlers**, **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, **Grey Fantails** and **Weebills**. But the highlight of highlights was a pair of **Hooded Robins** at the same place, with these being briefly part of the same mixed flock. It is of interest that **Hooded Robins** were recorded in this area on and off years ago and had not been recorded there for quite a long time. Finally, the decline of **Noisy Miners** at site 7 continues. Once a hotspot for this species among the eight survey sites, none were recorded on this survey.

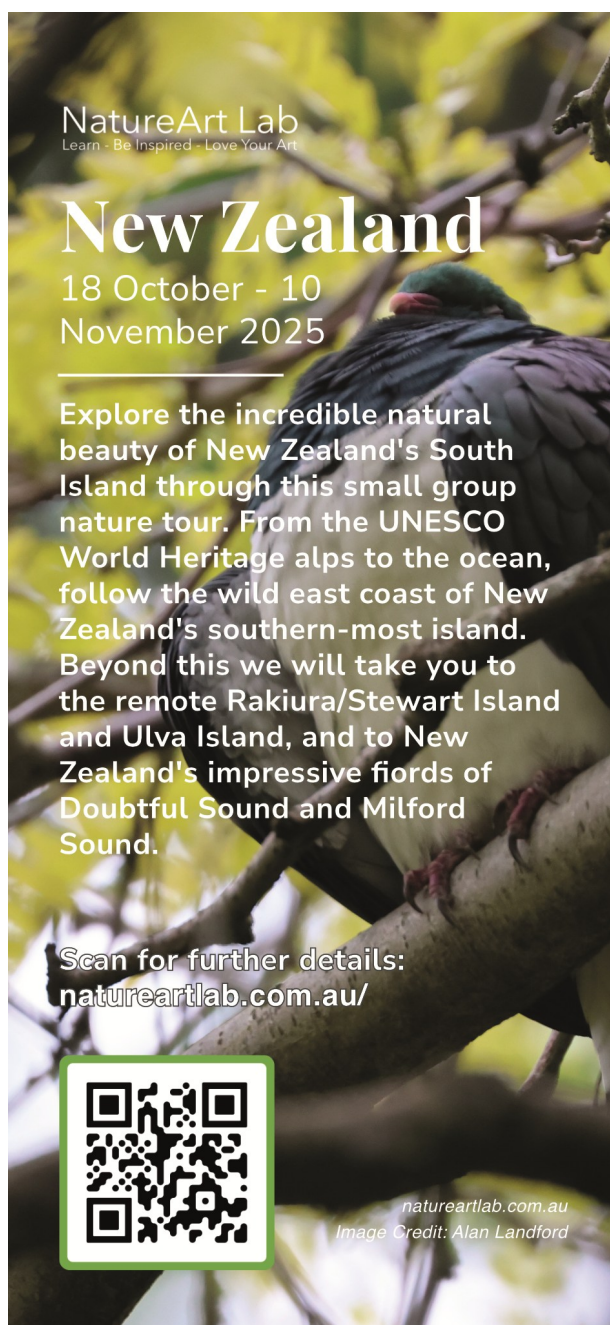
### Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park

Robin Hide and Michael Lenz surveyed the lower eastern slopes of Mt Ainslie on 28 March under an overcast sky, with light wind and a pleasant temperature. The area was very dry. Birdlife was dominated by parrots, **Noisy Miners** and pardalotes. Other bushbirds were very scarce. Several sites had only 2 to 3 species. Only after completing the survey did they encounter a small, mixed feeding flock.

The most widespread species were again **Crimson Rosella** and **Noisy Miner** at 7 of the 9 sites. Of note were 1 **Wedge-tailed Eagle** moving between trees, 1 **Scarlet Robin**, 1 **White-throated Gerygone**, 2 **Rufous Whistlers** and a **Golden Whistler**. In total 26 species were recorded: 19 at sites and 7 additional species between sites.

### Newline

The survey was carried out on 22 March in fine, still and mild conditions. After rain the previous day, birds were very active and, with plenty of second-fruiting blackberries, firethorn and




NatureArt Lab  
Learn - Be Inspired - Love Your Art

## New Zealand

18 October - 10 November 2025

Explore the incredible natural beauty of New Zealand's South Island through this small group nature tour. From the UNESCO World Heritage alps to the ocean, follow the wild east coast of New Zealand's southern-most island. Beyond this we will take you to the remote Rakiura/Stewart Island and Ulva Island, and to New Zealand's impressive fiords of Doubtful Sound and Milford Sound.

Scan for further details:  
[natureartlab.com.au/](http://natureartlab.com.au/)



[natureartlab.com.au](http://natureartlab.com.au)  
Image Credit: Alan Landford

rosehips, **Silvereyes** (dominantly Tasmanian birds) were present in big numbers. Only two dams contained water, **Pacific Black Duck** and **Grey Teal** were the only waterbirds seen. The best site in the front paddock yielded 23 species including **Western Gerygone**, **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**, **Double-barred** and **Red-browed Finch** and both pardalotes. **Dusky Woodswallows**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** and **Rufous Whistler** were other migrants recorded during the morning. A pair of **Golden-headed Cisticola** perched up in Site 2, an unusual record, as was a **White-throated Treecreeper** near the quarry. The only raptor for the morning was a **Black-shouldered Kite**. The total of 39 species is about average for an autumn survey at Newline.

### Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson surveyed on Wednesday 26 March, on a mostly clear, warm and still morning. Site 3, the first for the morning, was the most active, with the usual **Rainbow Lorikeets** and a small mixed feeding flock, comprising **Spotted Pardalotes**, **Weebills**, **Striated and Buff-rumped Thornbills**, **Grey Fantail** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**. **Spotted Pardalotes** were prolific everywhere, with flocks of up to 30 birds at times. Only a few **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were migrating, and they didn't start until around 11am. There were three separate observations of **Scarlet Robin**, and on reviewing the autumn report of 2024, it was noted that three separate observations of this species were also made then. At site 6 **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** were making a fuss and a raptor was suspected. A **Nankeen Kestrel** soon made its presence known. The morning ended with yet another small mixed feeding flock in the most unlikely site 7. This group included a **Golden Whistler**, **White-throated Treecreeper** and **White-eared Honeyeater**, as well as the usual suspects. In all, 23 species were observed in sites, and a further 10 in between, which is a bit less than the average for autumn survey.

### Naas Sites

Julie Hotchin and Julie McGuiness conducted the autumn survey on this rural leasehold south of Tharwa on 27 March. Early mist and cloud lifted to a clear and still, then quite warm, morning. Overall, 41 species were recorded: 24 species observed at the sites and a further 17 species between sites.

A few **White-eared**, **White-plumed** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were present at one site, and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were active in and moving through the canopy in small groups elsewhere throughout the morning. Spring migrants still present were numerous **Dusky Woodswallows**, as well as **Rufous Whistler**, **White-throated Gerygone** and **Grey Fantail**. Parrots included **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas**, **Galahs** (in large numbers) and **Red-rumped Parrots**. Unusually for this location, several **Gang-gang Cockatoos** were observed in pairs and threes. A male **Scarlet Robin** was observed in one site and at least one other was heard. Few small birds were present, apart from the regular calls of **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalotes**, **Striated Thornbills** and **Weebills**.

Highlights between sites were a pair of **Jacky Winters** that flew across the driveway not long after they arrived and were still there when they left, a **Pied Butcherbird**, and a soaring **Wedge-tailed Eagle**. The 24 species recorded at the sites is similar to this season in previous years: 25 in 2024 and 20 in 2023.



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](http://www.birdwatchers.com.au)  
[sootyowl@bigpond.com](mailto:sootyowl@bigpond.com)  
Find us on Facebook

**NATURE LODGE OPTICS**  
62 OWEN ST HUSKISSON 0415516616  
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](http://www.naturelodge.com.au)

---

## A SPOTTED PARDALOTE. A POEM BY EDWINA SMITH.

A tall and mighty gum  
Sways gently with the breeze  
Native to this land  
The hardiest of trees  
Weathering the storms  
Magnificent and strong  
But all is not well  
Whatever could be wrong?

Hiding under leaves  
A persistent little pest  
Taking vital sap  
An uninvited guest  
Safe in sugar shells  
They won't go away  
Those pesky, sticky lerps  
Could be here to stay

A tiny, lively bird  
Perhaps a little nervous  
Flies to the rescue  
Complete with cleaning service  
He hops amongst the leaves  
Seen only at a glance  
What could he do  
To give our tree a chance?

He's black, red and ochre  
Yellow 'round his throat  
Spotted crown and wings  
Mark this Pardalote  
So tiny, teeny-weeny

How can it be  
That such a little bird  
Can help a massive tree?

Flitting side to side  
Legs and feet are strong  
Clinging upside down  
Now it shan't be long  
Till he comes upon  
Tasty, sticky lerps  
Busy beak at work  
Feeding as he chirps

A tall and mighty gum  
Sways gently with the breeze  
Native to this land  
The hardiest of trees  
All is well again  
With nature's antidote  
Breakfast, lunch and dinner  
For a Spotted Pardalote!

EDWINA SMITH

31<sup>st</sup> March, 2025.



## 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:

D Lie  
G Turner  
S Dorepelli  
L Nesa  
K Barnett

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

**Deadline for June 2025 edition:**

**Wednesday 28 May 2025**

**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.

## COG information

**President:** Kim Farley

[president@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:president@canberrabirds.org.au)

**Treasurer:** Vacant

[cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au)

**Secretary:** Margaret Robertson

[cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au)

### Address for correspondence

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

### Canberra Bird Notes

Editor: Michael Lenz

[michael.lenz.birds@gmail.com](mailto:michael.lenz.birds@gmail.com)

Sub-editor: Kevin Windle

[Kevin.Windle@anu.edu.au](mailto:Kevin.Windle@anu.edu.au)

## COG website

[canberrabirds.org.au](http://canberrabirds.org.au)

### COG Webmaster

Julian Robinson

[cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au)

### COG library

### Membership Enquiries & Updates:

[membership@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:membership@canberrabirds.org.au)

for change of address or other details.

### Gang-gang Newsletter

**Editor:** Zac Flegg

**Lay-out Editor:** Gail Neumann

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

## 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.

To unsubscribe, either permanently or temporarily, send an email message to [canberrabirds-unsubscribe@lists.canberrabirds.org.au](mailto: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 COG's website in PDF format.

ISSN 2208-018X

