

Gang-gang

Canberra Birds Newsletter

JULY 2025

Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.



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JULY MEETING

Wednesday 9 July 2025
7:30 pm

Canberra Girls Grammar School,
Chapel, corner Gawler Cres and Melbourne Ave, Deakin

The July 2025 meeting will be a normal face-to-face one held as usual at the Canberra Girls Grammar School but will again be held in the Chapel where we will be meeting for the rest of 2025 while the Multi-media Theatre (MMT) is being renovated (see details below).

Chris Davey - Honeyeater migration along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor - Autumn 2025.

Sonam Dorji - Birds of Bhutan: A Glimpse into the Avian Diversity of the Eastern Himalayas.

The Chapel is much easier to find than the MMT. As for previous 2025 meetings entry and exit for the Chapel are from the main gates on Melbourne Ave, which automatically open and close. The Entry gate will be open, so please drive through and park in the main parking area to your left. Once parked proceed to the Chapel using main path as previously before turning left at the Admin Hub, or use the more direct (but darker) route keeping the Boarding House to your left – see [the amended map](#)

Limited parking will also be available using the Chapel Drive entrance on Gawler Cres and car park, this gate should also be open.

Though it is well lit, as it will be dark before and after the meeting, a torch for finding your way to the Chapel and 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.

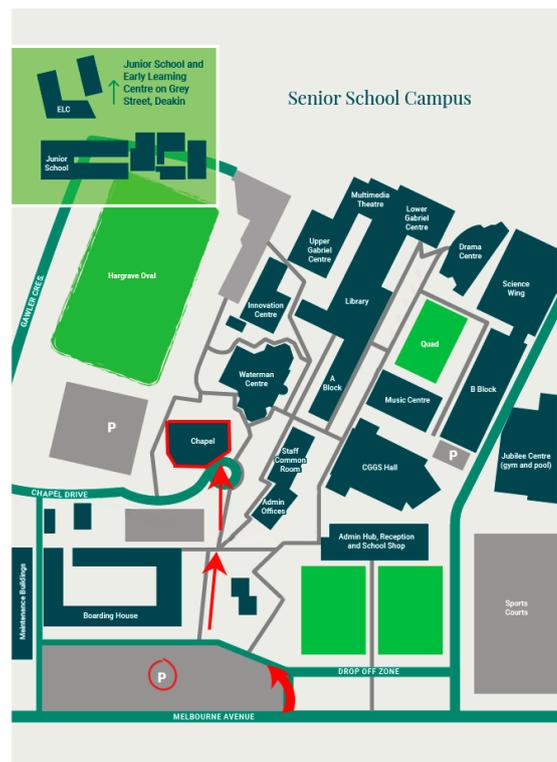
As COVID is still widespread in the community attendees should heed social distancing and good hygiene practice etc, and use their common sense and stay home if they have COVID symptoms. Mask wearing is recommended.

The short presentation will be by **Chris Davey** on the **“Honeyeater migration along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor - Autumn 2025”**

During April many members were involved in a survey of honeyeaters migrating along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor. Chris will present the results of the survey, discuss the findings and propose a new project for Autumn 2026

The main presentation will be by **Sonam Dorji** and is entitled **“Birds of Bhutan: A Glimpse into the Avian Diversity of the Eastern Himalayas”**

Sonam, a Bhutanese birder, professional bird guide and the Bhutan eBird reviewer, will be presenting on the birdlife of Bhutan, a small Himalayan kingdom with over 770 recorded bird species. The presentation will explore Bhutan’s diverse habitats and iconic species such as the Himalayan Monal, Satyr Tragopan, Ward's Trogon, White-bellied Heron, Ibisbill, and Black-necked Crane. He will also highlight key birding locations, conservation efforts, and the growing prospects of birding in a small yet biodiversity-rich country. Insights from his experience as a local bird guide and Bhutan’s eBird reviewer will also be shared.



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

At the start of the 4 weeks from 28 May to 24 June covered by this column, the weather turned much colder with increasingly severe frosts culminating in some record low temperatures for June. There was also a significant change towards the middle of the period bringing snow to the mountains. Both my notes and analysis below confirm that as a result bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (Aoi) was very low in June. Only a few of the spring/summer migrants known to overwinter were present, and the numbers of non-robin autumn/winter altitudinal migrants were still low. Except for two special birds, numbers of “unusual” species reported were low, well below the already very low numbers in May.

Highlights - Little Wattlebird and Brown Honeyeater

During the period the undoubted highlights were two honeyeaters rarely seen in the COG Aoi. The first was the **Little Wattlebird** first reported from the ANBG on the morning of 12 June by Rick Marris on Facebook and later that day on eBird by Elliot Overs. Following that many birders were able to observe and photograph the bird in and around the Banksia Garden to 23 June. Interestingly, only a few observers mentioned the wing patch, variously described as chestnut, rufous or reddish (cerise is my preference) which is an important diagnostic feature, though only visible in flight. However, many mentioned the lack of a wattle, which is less diagnostic as the juvenile **Red Wattlebird** only has a vestigial wattle; this can lead to confusion. The call is also quite diagnostic but doesn't seem to have been mentioned, so it appears it wasn't calling.

COG's 2018-2018 Annual Bird report (ABR) indicates the **Little Wattlebird** is a non-breeding vagrant from coastal districts. There were no endorsed records that year, and with only a few records occasionally over the previous years. Amazingly eBird shows no other records in the COG Aoi from the start of 2018, with the closest in that time being around Nelligen just W of Batemans Bay. So, again the question arises, how did it get here at least 100 km away from its usual preferred coastal habitat, and to where will it go?

On 16 June Mark Clayton posted that a photo of a **Brown Honeyeater** from Tralee NSW (near Hume ACT) had been put up that day on the Australian Bird Identification (ABID) site, and also on the NSW Rare Bird Alert website. While as expected this sighting seemed to attract considerable interest, at the time of writing the only records on eBird were of a bird photographed in South Tralee on 20 June, and one briefly glimpsed flying away from the car there on 21 June. I suspect other sightings may still be awaiting confirmation from the SE NSW eBird reviewer, but to me the eBird photos clearly confirm the sighting.

The 2018-2019 ABR does not list this species, which is also not included in Steve Wilson's book *Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change*. Interestingly the closest record on eBird since the start of 2018 is 2 birds recorded from the Jugiong Creek TSR about 100 km to the NW on 7 September 2024, as well as one photographed from Narrawa on 27 October 2023 directly N only slightly further away. Interestingly Mark noted there was a record from COG's Aoi in Yass (around 50 km to the E and NNE, respectively, of the above two sightings) several years ago where the photo at that time was also confirmed by several well-known local birders. I recall including this in my column at the time but am unable to locate it.

So, if endorsed by the COG/Canberra Birds Rarities Panel [as I expect it should be with Mark noting “that several well-known birders (including me) have agreed with the photo on the ABID site”] it will be the first fully confirmed record in the COG Aoi. At least from the eBird maps from 2018 it also appears to be the most southerly record from SE NSW.

The ranges of the three honeyeater species comprising the special “unusual” birds over the past 3 months provide interesting contrasts. The **Striped Honeyeater**, which was not reported during the period, is a very much inland species in southern NSW but then becomes coastal as well from just S of Newcastle to around Rockhampton. The **Little Wattlebird**, with which more local birders would be familiar, has a largely coastal range from around Adelaide to S of Gladstone, whereas the **Brown Honeyeater** is both inland and coastal (from about Nowra on the SE coast), but ranges a long way inland all the way across the north half of Australia to SW Australia (it is a very common honeyeater on the Perth coastal plain and the adjacent Darling Scarp).

Spring/summer migrants

Of the spring/summer migrants still present in May, during the period there have been no further reports of the **Sacred Kingfisher**, which was last reported on 2 May, or of the **Western Gerygone**, last reported on 20 May, or the **Noisy Friarbird**, also last reported on 20 May. The **Australian Reed-Warbler** was also last reported, from the JWNR, on 25 May.

However, there was still a very late **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** photographed at Zosterops Corner on 25 May, and an unknown number of **Tree Martins** were last reported from the Ginninderry Conservation Corridor on 4 June.

The **Rufous Whistler** was still reported from 2 locations (compared with 9 in May), the most recent one being at Oak Hill (Bonner) on 14 June, with a male seen foraging in bare trees at the West Belconnen Pond on 13 June. The **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike** was still reported from around 20 locations (compared with around 30 in May) up to the time of writing, as was the **Grey Fantail** from around 36 locations (compared with around 50 in May).

In particular the latter 2 species will stay over winter as will some of the **Mistletoebirds** and **Superb Parrots**, reported from around 17 (slightly down from May) and close to 60 (up from the 50 in May, with 23 south of the lake) locations. It is interesting how the last-named was reported from the most locations of the known overwintering spring/summer migrants when it was once largely absent here in winter. It adds to the evidence that the **Superb Parrot** is now an all-year resident in Canberra.

The **Dusky Woodswallow** and **Olive-backed Oriole** were still reported from around 8 (well down from the 20 in May) and 6 (half of those in May) locations, respectively.

So, during July please keep an eye out for the above and other spring/summer migrants which are overwintering.

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 **Scarlet Robin** is well and truly established, with reports from around 50 urban/peri-urban locations, similar to May. Andrea and I are finding them at a number of different spots in the central part of Cooleman Ridge, whereas they have been hard to find at Narrabundah Hill. The **Flame Robin** does not seem to be as well established, reported from just 17 locations, slightly down from May. There have been reports of the **Rose Robin** from 7 locations (up from the 5 in May), all E of the Murrumbidgee River. Again, there have been no **Pink Robin** sightings reported during the period, the closest location being NE of Melbourne.

The **Crescent Honeyeater** has been reported from 4 locations, just 2 of which could be considered urban/peri-urban, the 2 birds at the Kambah Pool NR on 12 June and up to 3 birds in the ANBG from 26 May to 20 June. The **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** was reported from 2 locations, with 2 birds feasting furiously on the mistletoe with hardly a call over 3 hours at the Kambah Pool NR on 12 June, and a single bird at Queanbeyan Riverside Corridor from 12-19 June.

Up to 2 **Bassian Thrush** were reported from the ANBG up to 13 June, with reports from 2 other locations in the mountains to the W of Canberra. No **Olive Whistler** or **Brown Gerygone** were reported from anywhere in the COG Aol during the period. **Swift Parrots** were also not reported during the period with eBird showing the closest sightings being to the SW of Sydney.

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

Unusual species

Apart from continuing presence of the **Little Wattlebird** and **Brown Honeyeater** described above there were no special “unusuals” species reported from the COG Aol during the period.

Again, there were no **Magpie Geese** or **Plumed Whistling Duck** reported during the period. **Freckled Duck** were reported from 4 locations, with up to 14 ducks continuing to be present at the JWNR throughout the period. A single duck was also reported from the big dam in Mulligans Flat NR on 14 and 20 June, with the highest number being the 33

ducks counted on the Lake Bathurst waterbird survey on 15 June. An unusual location was one reported from Weston Park (Yarralumla) on 22 June.

Within the ACT 2 **Australian Shelduck** were reported from the big dam at Mulligans Flat NR on 14 and 16 June. To the NE through to the E of Canberra the highest numbers were the 76 ducks on the Lake Bathurst survey on 15 June (about 1/3 the numbers in May). Otherwise, the maximum number from 4 locations was 20 ducks reported from the Trucking Yard Lane Dam on 2 June, the only location with multiple sightings.

Blue-billed Ducks were reported from 3 locations during the period, with up to 9 ducks reported from the Upper Stranger Pond between 28 May to 21 June. Three ducks were reported from the Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Ponds (FSTP) on 13 June, and up to 9 ducks were also reported from Rowes Lagoon between 30 May and 15 June. Interestingly none were reported from Lake Bathurst on 15 June, compared with the 300 ducks there on 11 May.

Apart from the Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary, **Musk Ducks** were reported from 8 locations (up from 4 in May), with 14 ducks recorded at Lake Bathurst on 15 June when there were also 5 reported from the adjacent Morass. Up to 2 ducks were reported from the Upper Stranger Pond between 28 May to 21 June, with a single duck from the Tin Hut Dam (Googong) on 21 June. Otherwise, there were 2 ducks at the Googong Foreshores on 31 May, a single duck from the JWNR on 3 June, 2 ducks on Rowes Lagoon on 7 June and one at Greenwood Road Murrumbateman on 22 June.

The **Great-crested Grebe** was reported from 1 location only, with just 2 reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 15 June (compared with 18 on 11 May).

Stubble Quail was reported from only 2 locations, with 6 reported from Lake Bathurst on 15 June and 10 (said to be a large family, so a low estimate) at Wandiyali Environa on 10 June. In contrast up to 5 **Brown Quail** were reported from 5 locations, slightly down from May. Again, no **Painted Button-quail** or **Little Button-quail** were reported during the period.

A **White-headed Pigeon** was seen drinking from a water bowl in Giralang on 19 June, but no **Brown Cuckoo-Dove**, **Brush Bronzewing**, **Peaceful** or **Diamond Doves** or **White-throated Nightjars** were reported during the period.

No **Baillon's Crakes** were again reported during the period. **Spotless Crakes** were reported from 1 location only, with up to 2 birds regularly from the JWNR, where 1-2 **Australian Spotted Crakes** were reported from 1-6 June, with one at the South Jerrabomberra Pond on 5 June being the only other location for the period.

Single **Buff-banded Rails** were reported from the JWNR on 3 and 22 June, with a single bird from the big dam at Mulligans Flat NR on 31 May and 20-22 June the only other location. A single **Lewin's Rail** was reported only from the JWNR on the morning and afternoon of 22 June. No **Black-tailed Nativehen** were reported during the period.

Twenty-five (compared with 17 in May) **Red-capped Plovers** were reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 15 June. Up to 12 **Pied Stilts** were reported from the NW end of Lake George from 29 May to 13 June, but no **Red-necked**



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Avocets, Australian Painted-snipe, Pacific Golden Plover, Banded Lapwing, Comb-crested Jacana, Sharp-tailed, Pectoral or Common Sandpipers, or Red-necked Stint were reported during the period.

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

No confirmed sightings of **Little or Plumed Egrets** were reported during the period. **Great Egrets** were reported from 12 locations (down from 17 in May) during the past month. A single **White-necked Heron** was reported from 3 locations only, with the last report being 3 June. Single **Royal Spoonbills** were reported from 2 locations only (well down for the 11 in May), at the Big Dam in Mulligans Flat NR on 4 June and the JWNR on 8 June. Two **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** were reported only from the Lake Bathurst survey on 15 June. Again, this is well down from the 6 locations in May, and numbers of these last three species have dropped considerably over the past few months. Again, no **Glossy Ibis** were reported during the period.

Two **Powerful Owls** were reported from the New Chums Road on 14-15 June, with a “pair calling throughout the night; and a male seen”, and then one seen at close range at 8:30 am the next morning. No **Barn Owls** were reported during the period, down from the 5 locations in May. **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from close to 50 locations in the period, the number of these being steady over the past 3 months. A single **Spotted Harrier** was reported only from the Majura Parkway on 7 June. However, no **Grey Goshawks, Pacific Baza, Black Kites or Black Falcons** were reported from anywhere in the COG Aol during the period.

Single **Azure Kingfishers** were reported from 3 known locations, the Stoney Creek NR on 6 June, the Uriarra Reserve West on 16 June and the Cotter Reserve on 21 June. No **Red-backed or Forest Kingfishers** were reported during the period.

No **Glossy Black-Cockatoos, Cockatiel, Turquoise Parrot, Scaly-breasted, Little or Purple-crowned Lorikeets** were reported over the period. Two **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from the University of Canberra on 30 May, with single birds in Griffith and Garran on 27 and 29 May, respectively, the only other reports.

Apart from the special “unusual” honeyeaters described above, **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** were reported from 2 locations, with 1 bird in Kambah on 6 June and single birds from the same spot in Wanniasa on 6, 21 and 23 June. However, no **Spiny-cheeked, Singing, Scarlet, Striped or Painted Honeyeaters or Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period.

White-fronted Chats were reported from 2 locations in the ACT, with sightings from 3 different spots in the still being developed northern half of Denman Prospect, 2 birds on 11 June, and 8 and 21 birds on 15 June, with 3 birds at the Charles Weston School Coombs on 12 June. Otherwise, 8 birds (down from 19 in May) were recorded at Lake Bathurst during the waterbird survey there on 15 June, as well as 2 and 32 birds from Lake Rd at SW Lake George on 11 and 22 June, respectively.

Four **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** were only reported from Whiskers Rd Carwoola on 30 May. However, no **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes, White-browed Babbler, Apostlebird, Spangled Drongo, Black-faced Monarch, Red-capped Robin, Tawny Grassbird or Zebra Finches** were reported during the period.

Jacky Winters were reported from only 2 known locations (as for May), with up to 4 birds seen on the Naas Rd at Spring Station Creek from 1-21 June, and a single bird at the Scottsdale Reserve on 20 June.

Hooded Robins were reported from 3 locations well to the S of Canberra, with a male photographed at the Orroral Valley on 21 June and 5 birds recorded at the Scottsdale Reserve on 20 June. Four birds were also reported from the Jerangle Rd (E of Bredbo) on 9 June, a new location but close to where others have been reported.

Restless Flycatchers were reported from just 3 locations, 2 birds on the Apollo Rd on 1 June, and single birds at the nearby Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 5 June, and on the Jerangle Rd on 9 June, the last being the only new location.

Compared even with May the number of “unusual” birds reported is very, very low, with in particular very few reports of pigeons/doves, raptors, parrots or passerines including honeyeaters.

Breeding

No early winter breeding has come to my attention.

Flocks, including of migrating birds

Andrea and I have continued to see mixed feeding flocks (MFF), including some very large active ones, making it difficult to count all the species let alone the numbers of each, and where often the **Superb Fairy-wren** is the main species. Some unexpected species in these include at least 8 **White-plumed Honeyeaters** interacting closely together in a likely family group on the Molonglo woodland track on 1 June. Also seeming to be caught up in all the action was a **Golden-headed Cisticola**, often observed along this track. So, keep an eye out for these, MFFs are expected to start breaking up from early July as birds start preparing for the breeding season.

On 11 June Steve Wallace observed an MFF of a different kind, a concentration of feeding waterbirds at the Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Ponds. Species in the group included **Pink-eared Duck, Hardhead, Grey Teal, Australasian Shoveler, Pacific Black Duck, Australasian** and **Hoary-headed Grebe**. On 29 May Andrea and I saw a conservative estimate of 75 **Little Black Cormorants** on Yarramundi Reach, they were in a tight group of birds in mid channel, they did not seem to be actively fishing (note 250 were reported from Yarralumla Bay on 4 May).

During July please watch out for the overwintering spring/summer migrants mentioned above, and for more of the incoming 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 11 June meeting presentations

The first COG/Canberra Birds monthly meeting at the Chapel, our new temporary venue at the Canberra Girls Grammar School, was successfully held (with just a few minor hiccups).

The first presentation was by **Graham Gall** and **Ben Harvey** introducing us to “**the BirdLife Photography Australia Biennial Conference March 2026 - Canberra Birds Collaboration**”.

This is a very important upcoming conference which will be of interest to many of our members, particularly those of us who are photographers. The interest was shown by the 35-40 attendees which was very good considering the cold night and that our main speaker was not able to be present.

Graham, who is Chair of the organising committee for the Conference to be held in Canberra on 7-8 March 2026, first spoke about this exciting event that is expected to bring over 250 bird lovers to the ACT from all over Australia.

It will be held at the Mercure Canberra, 59 Cameron Avenue, Belconnen, and will feature Rachael Bigsby, a young UK photographer, as the keynote speaker, as well as 10 other speakers from Australia and around the world.

Registration will open in November and is expected to cost \$270 for the full program including the conference dinner. There will also be technical shops and display tables, including one from COG/Canberra Birds.

Ben Harvey then outlined the pre and post Conference Field Trip program which will be on Thursday 6 March (tentatively the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR am, Mulligans Flat pm), Friday 7 March (the ANBG) and on Monday 9 March (Tidbinbilla NR).

For this he will be seeking help from COG both as leaders and facilitators, with the latter helping to guide the visitors around the venues. Sue Lashko will help co-ordinate these and will need a good number of COG/Canberra Birds members to volunteer to host the visitors who will be excited and keen to capture great bird images at our iconic hot spots.

On behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members many thanks to Graham and Ben for introducing us to the BirdLife Photography Australia Biennial Conference March 2026 - Canberra Birds Collaboration, providing both the broad details and inviting us to participate. We are more than happy to collaborate and very confident that many of our members will be very happy to do so and to help make it a very successful conference.

Unfortunately, our main speakers Bethany Dunne and Stuart Harris on Birds of the Snow Gum woodlands: a post-fire study, were not able to present as Bethany was down with COVID and instead **Jack Holland** dusted off and updated an old presentation entitled **Birds of the Month - Fuscous and Brown-headed Honeyeaters**.

In his introduction Jack noted that these two honeyeaters are often overlooked because they:

- are plain birds that lack clear diagnostic features
- are duller versions of another local species
- are very active birds which feed inside the foliage
- occur in groups, but often you are only alerted to their presence by their calling.

He then noted the **Fuscous Honeyeater** was a duller version of the **White-plumed Honeyeater**, but with a rather indistinct plume, which is variable in colour from whitish to quite yellow. The other subtle plumage differences are all around the head as follows:

- the gape is yellow in non-breeding, and black in breeding plumage
- the plume has a small black spot near the top, which sometimes extends to a black line at the front
- the eye-ring is yellow in non-breeding and black in breeding plumage
- both forms can have a dusky smudge in front of and around the eye

Jack then showed a number of slides of birds with either type of gape and pointing out the above features, as well as both types together taken in November (breeding season). He then showed a slide of an adult **White-plumed Honeyeater** with a very yellow face and a larger clearer white plume, and also of a juvenile with a yellow gape and a less clear plume but with a yellowish face lacking the above features.

He noted the **Fuscous Honeyeater** was more common in summer to the S of the ACT such as Namadgi NP where it likes Apple Box (*E bridgesiana*) woodland, and that it is often viewed as a "Passage Migrant" through ACT on autumn and spring migration.

However, some will over winter in variable numbers, with the species being much less common in recent years around his local area of Chapman/Rivett/Narrabundah Hill/Coolleman Ridge. He noted that eBird showed only 2 locations where it had been observed in past month, with the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR being the only place with multiple sightings.

Jack indicated that the **Fuscous Honeyeater** has numerous calls, one of which is very diagnostic, others being similar to the **White-plumed Honeyeater**. He then played the first two of Peter Boesman's recorded calls downloaded from the Xeno-canto web site (<https://xeno-canto.org/species/pilotula-fusca>). He noted the first short one, labelled as song, is diagnostic and was noted in The Australian Bird Guide as "Arig arig a *taw taw*".

However, attendees agreed it did not accurately represent the call. After his comment as to its possible origin, Philip Veerman's research indicates it seems to have originated in

Coffee and Chat at the Gardens Tuesday, 8 July

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.

Hugh Officer's book *Australian Honeyeaters* (updated in 1971) and seems to have been carried over into other Field Guides since. Steve Read mentioned he preferred "*Ticketty boo*" which Jack recalled Jenny Bounds always used, and it was agreed clearly is a much closer description.

Jack then played the longer one with mixed calls many resembling the **White-plumed Honeyeater's** but with the above heard several times in the background.

Jack then introduced the **Brown-headed Honeyeater** as a dull version of the **White-naped Honeyeater** with a brown head and a dull cream nape band and a cream eyepatch. It is brown/greenish on the back etc, and dirty white below. Again, its call often alerts you to its presence.

They are very sociable, travelling about in groups and in his past experience is very fond of water, often visiting his bird baths. His past experience too was that it is a winter visitor in his local area (see above). However, eBird records show no migratory pattern, with 23 diverse locations in the past month (May).

He then showed several slides pointing out these features followed by some of the **White-naped Honeyeater** which clearly has a blacker head and much greener back, as well as being much whiter below and in the nape, with the adult having orange-red bare skin above the eye. The juvenile, however, much more closely resembles the Brown-headed.

He then played another of Peter Boesman's recorded calls downloaded from the Xeno-canto web site (<https://xeno-canto.org/species/Melithreptus-brevirostris>), which in his view resembled a small machine gun, noting also that it is often given in flight.

On behalf of COG/Canberra Birds many thanks to Jack for his very instructive presentation, especially on the **Fuscous Honeyeater**. Attendees also very much appreciated Dick Schodde's additional comments based on his vast knowledge of these birds.

Readers might be interested to know that an amended version of Jack's presentation will be loaded onto the COG/Canberra Birds Facebook page.

Jack Holland



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

Time to renew your Canberra Birds membership - and to fill in a new membership form

Membership payments are now due for the 2025/26 financial year.

This year, we are also asking all members to fill in the membership form on our website. This will take only a couple of minutes but will help ensure COG records remain up to date. [Click here](#) to open the membership page, or find it linked from our website [home page](#).

Annual completion of the membership form has not previously been required for renewals, but over time some details have slipped out of date - particularly email and street addresses and preferred phone number.

Information from the membership forms will be transferred to a new system which will provide an ongoing up-to-date record of our members.

If you have any queries about these changes, please contact prue.watters@gmail.com.

Prue Watters, Acting Treasurer
28 June 2025

News from the Committee

The Canberra Birds Committee met on the 19th of June, after a busy month of committee business. A few highlights include:

- A meeting on-site at Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve between Jenny Bounds, Kim Farley and staff of the Parks and Conservation Service regarding siting and design of a proposed bird hide at the Reserve.
- Discussion of work nearing completion on a new system to store and manage membership records. This will ease the workload of both our volunteer Treasure and Membership Officer.
- Discussion of activity and next steps for rebuilding the Woodland Survey Database and other related work.
- The signing of an agreement between COG/Canberra Birds and BirdLife Australia on the Disposal of Surplus Funds and Assets in the (very unlikely) event of COG's dissolution. This was the subject of a Special Motion passed at the COG Annual General Meeting in November 2024. For information on this, see Appendix A of the [Draft 2024 AGM Minutes](#).
- And finally, we agreed that the new location for the monthly members' meeting is very satisfactory. It is a temporary location due to ongoing building works, but the Chapel at Canberra Girls Grammar is easy to access, with no steps and seems nice and warm. Come along to a meeting and find out.

Kim Farley, President

The 2025 Annual Bird Blitz needs you!

Dear members,

We are seeking someone to organise the annual Bird Blitz in October 2025. As you may know, Nicki Taws, who has organised the Blitz in recent years, has stepped down, and we need a new organiser to ensure this activity can continue.

The Bird Blitz has been an annual fixture on our birding calendar for 20 years. It contributes a valuable annual snapshot of bird distribution in the ACT and is also a fun way to bring members together to go birding.

Without an organiser, the Blitz is under threat and cannot continue if no-one steps forward to lead it. The role was advertised in the April Gang-gang, however we are still looking for someone to lead it. The activity is only for a few months and is not onerous. It involves organisation in the lead up to October with the option to be involved in preparing a short report of results. The role does not require in-depth knowledge of birds, but it does need someone who is a good organiser. A new volunteer will be welcomed, assisted and strongly supported.

If you'd like to find out more about what's involved contact Julie Hotchin on julie.hotchin@gmail.com.

We very much hope that we can continue the tradition of the annual Bird Blitz, with your help.

Julie
Vice-President

What is this?

A New Bird Hide at the Wetlands?



Not a piece of modern sculpture, but a bird blind nearing completion at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands!

It is currently a wall with viewing slots but will soon be completed by side walls at each end, a bench, and an enclosing fence and gate.

Miriam Fokker, Jerra Wetlands Ranger, has plans for a second stage in about 12 months. That will add steps and an upper-level enclosed hide - hence the tall poles already in place.

Find the new blind at Shoveler Pond, down Dairy Road and along the track past the cattle yards. Canberra Birds contributed to the siting and design of the structure, on Miriam's invitation.

Canberra Birds Committee

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 14 June – Tidbinbilla NR – Superb Lyrebird survey

The 22nd annual survey of the **Superb Lyrebird**, designed to provide an index of population numbers within the Reserve since the 2003 bushfires, was run under perfect conditions with a cool morning, a slight wind and clear skies.

Thanks to the 8 volunteers we were able to survey five of the six trails, missing out, unfortunately, on the Fishing Gap trail. To our surprise we found the road to the Mountain Creek carpark closed for repairs and so were unable to survey the Camel Back and Lyrebird/Cascades on Saturday. The next day Lia Battisson and Chris Davey returned early and after walking the 2 km to the Mountain Creek carpark were able to complete the survey. Thanks to Lucy Wenger and her expertise with the App AVENZA we were able to map the position of the Lyrebirds from the Devil’s Gap trail.

Lyrebird counts were as follows: Gibraltar Rocks - 3 (3), Devil’s Gap - 5 (4), Fishing Gap - not surveyed, Ashbrook -3 (3), Camel Back -11 (14). Figures in brackets are numbers reported last year. It should be noted that at times a calling bird can be heard from more than one trail. In this case the sighting is designated to one trail only. Numbers were similar to last year for all surveyed trails although slightly down on the Camel Back trail. As in previous years, the records (6) from Lyrebird /Cascades are not included in the total because this trail has only been surveyed since 2017. Assuming that Fishing Gap trail was 7 birds, the average of the two previous years, then the total count was 29, down from the previous year but similar to 2023; see Figure 1.

For the first survey in 2004 the only Lyrebirds recorded were 3 at Gibraltar Rocks and 3 at Devils Gap. Since then, the numbers at Gibraltar Rocks, Devils Gap and Fishing Gap trails have remained relatively stable at around 2-3 birds with an average of 3 birds at Ashbrook. At the Camel Back, numbers increased to around 25 in 2014 and have remained relatively stable since.

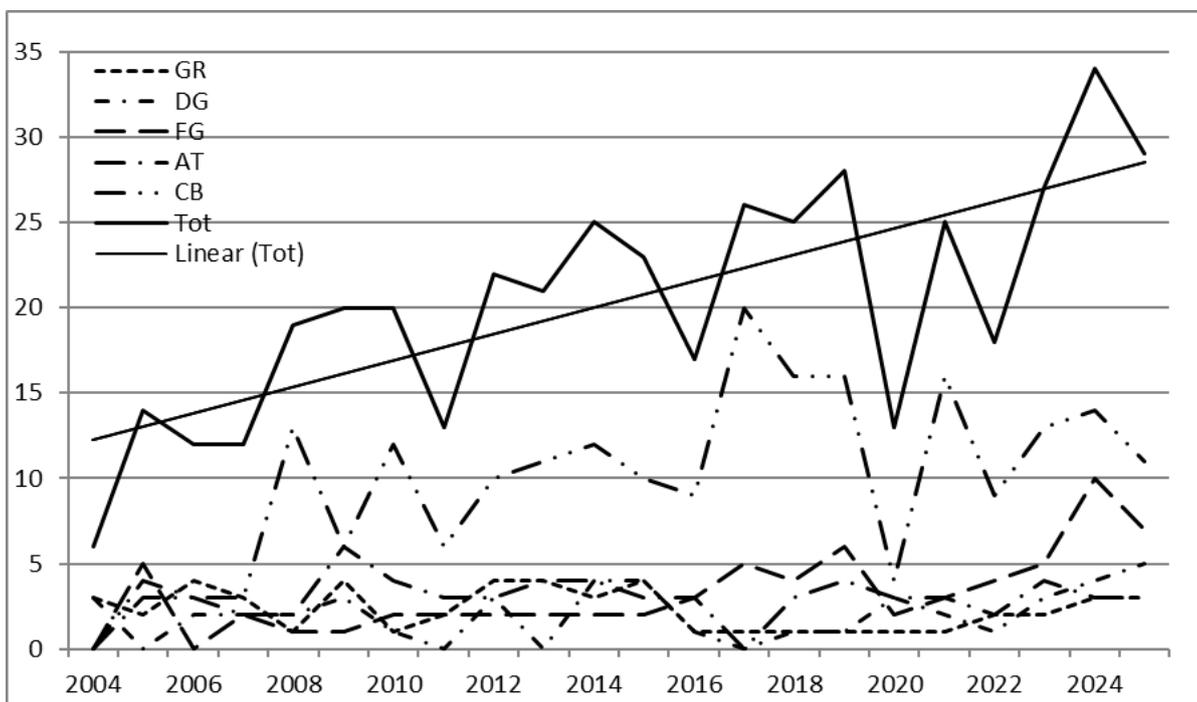


Figure 1. Numbers of Superb Lyrebirds recorded from walking trails at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, 2004-2025. GR-Gibraltar Rocks, DG -Devils Gap, FG-Fishing Gap, AT-Ashbrook Trail, CB-Camel Back, Tot - Total number of birds. A linear trend line has been fitted to the total number of Lyrebirds.

During the survey 30 bird species were recorded with the number seen depending very much on the trail walked: Gibraltar Rocks - 19 (24), Devil’s Gap - 19 (14), Fishing Gap - NS (16), Ashbrook - 13 (7), and Camel Back - 9 (8). The

Wonga Pigeon sighted on the Ashbrook Trail and the **Mistletoebird** at Devil's Gap had not been reported previously. The total number of species recorded over 20 surveys now stands at 63.

The **Superb Lyrebird**, **White-throated Treecreeper**, **Striated Thornbill**, **Brown Thornbill** and **Eastern Yellow Robin** were reported from the five trails. Two eBird checklists were submitted.

Many thanks to all the volunteers.

Chris Davey

Wednesday 18 June - Queanbeyan River Corridor

I'm sure, for most of those attending this outing, the highlight of our morning was the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** seen near the railway bridge near the NSW/ACT border, in the same spot Sandra had seen it the previous week. So, did we have good views of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**? Well, yes, at least for the possibly less than a minute it sat at the top of a dead tree. For the rest of the time, we had to be content with shadowy views through the thick foliage of the eucalyptus saplings. Fortunately, I think those new to Wednesday outings all managed a decent look at the bird.

Someone was feeding the waterbirds at the water's edge near the terraces. The **Black Swan** was easy for the newcomers to identify and, after consulting their pocket guide to ACT birds, they easily worked out the **Australasian Darter** was a male. On our return trip they had no trouble identifying differences between **Australasian Darter** and two **Little Black Cormorants**. Some of the newcomers were even commenting on the eye colour of the latter. They had no trouble distinguishing male and female **Australian Wood Duck**, once they started looking for that level of detail. We also saw many **Pacific Black Ducks**. They also got a good handle on the differences between **Dusky Moorhens** and **Eurasian Coots**.

There were lots of **Little Corella** on the far bank and, in the overcast conditions we had for most of walk, the yellow underwing of the **Little Corella** had at least one person wondering if there was a **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** in the flock feeding on the grass, but, no, we had to wait until later to see those. We had excellent views of **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosella**, but not such 'good' views of **Rainbow Lorikeet** or **Australian King Parrot**.

Mostly our views of the smaller birds were quite poor, and in some cases we only heard **White-browed Scrubwren**, **European Goldfinch**, **Silvereye**, **Superb Fairywren** and **Brown Thornbill**. No such problems with **Common Myna**, **Magpie-lark**, **Australian Magpie**, **Pied Currawong**, **Little Raven** and **Australian Raven**. We mainly identified the last two by call, as we didn't get close views of the **Little Raven**, but they were calling a lot as they flew around. In all, 41 species were recorded.



Teo

Scarlet Robin, by Tee Tong Teo, 22 June 2025, Glendale Depot, Namadgi NP, ACT.

Many thanks Sandra for another most delightful Wednesday Walk.

Michael Robbins

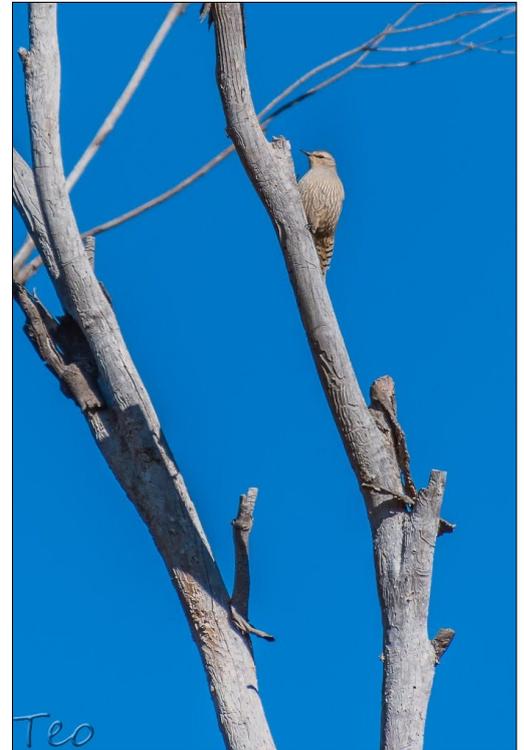
Sunday 22 June – Glendale Depot, Namadgi NP

Twenty COG members undertook a lovely 2.7 km stroll around the valley fronting Glendale Depot. A frigid and quiet start to the morning (minus 7.8 deg at Tuggeranong at 7:30am) had us crunching through frost as we warmed up by walking up the foot track from the carpark through eucalypt woodland. As the temperature rose and we reached the woodland edge, and then open grassland, bird activity increased and we encountered **Eastern Yellow Robin**, **White-throated Treecreeper** and **Weebill**.

In the mostly open areas and surrounding woodland edges, we had, over the entire walk, a plethora of woodland specials, including 11 **Scarlet Robin**, eight **Flame Robin** (with good looks at both sexes of both robin species), four **Eastern Yellow Robin**, one **Brown Treecreeper**, 15 **Superb Fairywren**, 30 **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, 11 **Buff-rumped Thornbill** and 25 **Red-browed Finch**. Two **Wedge-tailed Eagle** soared over the surrounding ridges.

A total of 24 bird species, comprising 194 individuals, were observed (thanks to Lia for recording the bird list). And many thanks to Prue Watters for leading a very pleasant couple of hours stroll in superb sunny and calm winter weather.

Julie McGuiness



Common Bronzewing, Brown Treecreeper, and
(below) **CanberraBirds** members, by Tee Tong Teo, 22 June 2025,
Glendale Depot, Namadgi NP, ACT.



Future Field Trips

COG Trips

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

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

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

Changes to trips are notified on:

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

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

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

Sunday 6 July – Farrer Ridge NR

Description: We will walk a loop through the remnant woodland vegetation along the trails that are mostly flat, but with the occasional short climb. Birds to be seen include: **Scarlet Robin**, various thornbill species, pardalotes, rosellas, **Australian King Parrots** and possibly **Wedge-tailed Eagles** and other small raptors.

Meeting time and place: 0830 at Muresk St entrance to the reserve.

Walking distance: Approx 4 km

Degree of difficulty: medium

End time (approx.): 1100

Registration: Participants must register with Angela at angkrb@gmail.com (at least 24 hours before the start of the field trip), providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact;

Numbers limited: 16

Angela Booth

Sunday 13 July – Urambi Hills NR Joint outing with Urambi Hills Park Care Group

Meet at 9:00 am at Meredith Circuit, Kambah, between houses 34 & 42 for entrance to Urambi Hills Nature Reserve.

This walk will explore the lower western slopes of Urambi Hills to Tuggeranong Creek. Depending on the day we may visit Urambi Hills trig via the new path, an easy zig-zag to top. Then on the return route to Meredith Circuit, we will visit a few of the sites Michael Robbins surveys*, as well as other 'birdy' spots and note a few interesting plants in the Reserve.

This is a repeat of successful outings in 2023 and 2024, on which, during one or other, we saw **Little Eagle** and **Southern Whiteface**, as well as the some of the more usually seen birds e.g. **Speckled Warbler**, and **Scarlet** and **Flame Robin**.

Registration essential to [mrobbins](mailto:mrobbins@home.netspeed.com.au) (at) home.netspeed.com.au, with your name and phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact. Maximum 20 attendees.

Please bring binoculars, a hat, water, sunscreen, morning tea and wear sturdy shoes.

* Michael has been helping the Urambi Hills Park Care group by conducting bird surveys each three months using the Woodland Bird Survey protocol at 8 sites in UHNR since 2017.

Lia Battison

Wednesday 16 July - Queanbeyan Riverside Corridor

To complement the June walk, in July we'll walk along the river towards Ellerton Drive. **Meet** at 8.30am at Isabella St, close to the

suspension bridge. This will take us past a known platypus hotspot, although one was spotted by a few on the June outing. Again, dress for the conditions, and the walk will be on an easy, well-worn track. **Register** with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com) with your name and number, and name and number of an emergency contact.
Sandra Henderson

Sunday 20 July – venue required, leader required

Sunday 3 August – Kambah Pool to Red Rocks Reserve

Description: The narrow path to Red Rocks Gorge is fairly easy, with some undulating parts, and there are usually plenty of birds to see along the way. On our return walk, we will have an optional detour down a short, steep path to the river and aim to walk back to the carpark along the river bank. Members are welcome to instead take the main path back to the carpark. Please wear sturdy shoes, and bring water, sunscreen and a hat.

Meet at 9am at the Kambah Pool carpark (follow signs to the left to Kambah Beach). The path starts about 20m uphill of the carpark. There are toilets at the carpark.

Walking distance: Approx 7.5 kms.

End time (approx.): 11:30am to 12 noon.

Name of leader and contact details: **Please register** with the leader, Judi by email on JudithPaulM@gmail.com with your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Please register before 7pm on Friday 1 August.



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Julatten QLD 4871
Tel: 07 4094 1665

Email: freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au

Sunday 17 August – Orroral Homestead

Meet at 8.30am at Namadgi Visitor Centre for carpooling. We'll then travel out to the old tracking station site parking area. After a wander around the site, we'll walk across to the Orroral Homestead. At times **Flame Robins** can be found at both places, and a **Swamp Harrier** is known to frequent the reed beds in the valley. If we have time we could call in at the Orroral campground on the way back, and walk the short bush track.

This is all easy walking. Dress warmly and bring morning tea.

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

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 24 August – Waterbirds for beginners – Jerrabomberra Wetlands

This morning walk will be aimed specifically to help beginners and new members identify waterbirds, as well as other birds in the surrounding treed and grassed areas, and to learn about their behaviour and calls. Jerrabomberra Wetlands is well suited to viewing ducks and other waterbirds at close quarters from the hides. Dress appropriately for winter conditions.

Meet at 9.00 am at the carpark at the end of Dairy Road. Registration is essential; please provide your name and mobile phone number, as well as an emergency contact name and number. Book your place with Sue (smlashko@gmail.com or text 0449 898 838), who will be happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you. Please make sure to bring your binoculars, and the ACT field guide by McComas Taylor if you have it.

*If you do not have binoculars, please let me know as COG can supply you with a pair to use on the day.
Note that the aim of the walk is to introduce you to **bird-watching**, not bird photography, so please leave your camera at home.*

Sue Lashko

Sunday 31 August - Goorooyarroo NR

Meet at the carpark at 8.00am. The approach is via Horse Park Drive from the Throsby end. Continue until you see the road begin to rise towards the Federal Highway. There is a gravel turn off to the left before the rise begins. It is quite hilly with deep eroded gullies and open woodland. Highlights include, **Speckled Warbler, Grey Currawong, Superb Parrot, Diamond Firetail and Red-Capped Robin.**

Walking distance 5 km. Level of difficulty medium with some hill walking.

What to bring: Sturdy boots, hat, sunscreen, water and morning tea. Finish time 11.00 am.

Register with Bill Graham on bsgraham1948@gmail.com or mob. 0466874723 with your name and mobile number and name and number of your emergency contact by Friday 29 August. Numbers limited to 16.

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

Monday 15 to Thursday 18 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, 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

Sue Lashko and Julian Teh



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Galapagos and Ecuador

1 - 14 January 2026

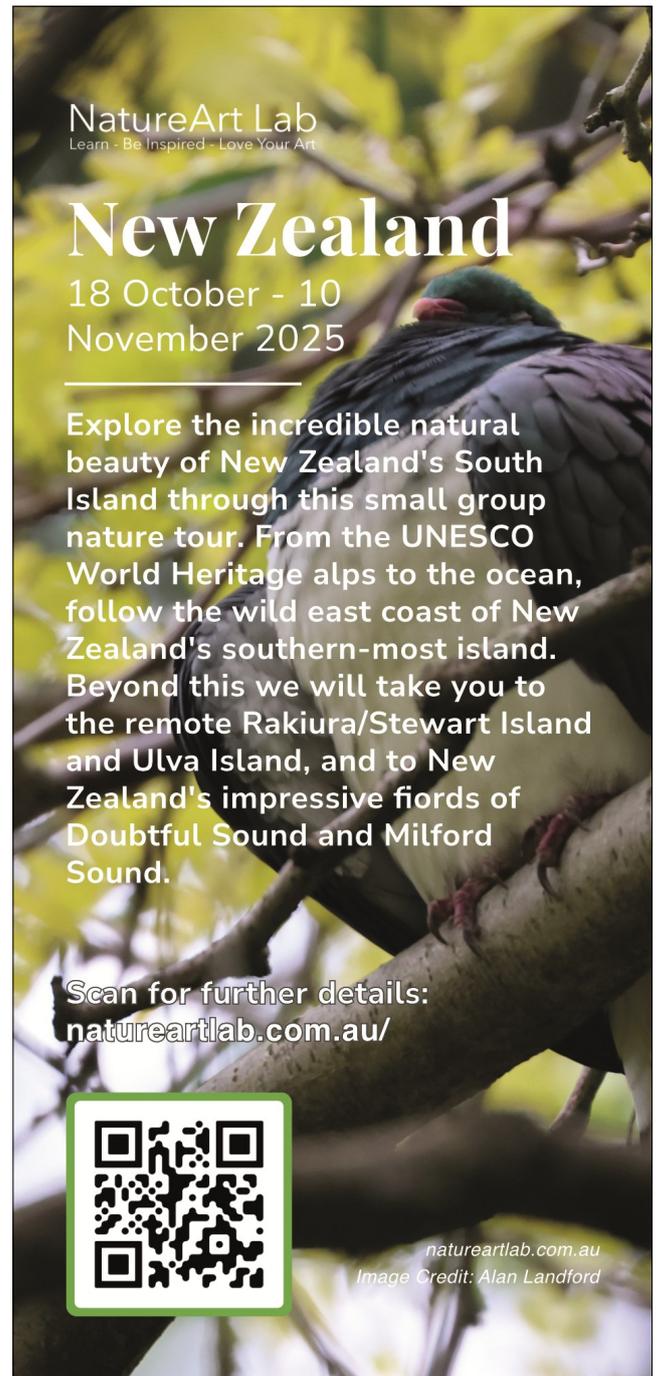
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Image Credit: Alan Landford



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A SHE-OAK TREE. A POEM BY EDWINA SMITH.

Standing proud and tall
One could study me
Guessing I'm a mighty Pine
Or a She-Oak tree
My branchlets look like feathers
Of a rain forest bird
Listen and they'll whisper
Wind will have them heard

Anchored in the earth
Nature comes to me
Lots of different birds
Need a She-Oak Tree
They cheep, chirp and chat
Then perch, roost and rest
Seeking shade or shelter
A place to build their nest

I've a special friend
With a smaller crest
Quiet and subdued
Unlike all the rest
They call him 'Glossy Black'
And he depends on me
Watch him cracking cones
Of a She-Oak Tree

He takes my tasty seeds
I grow as 'birdie' treats
His bulky beak works away
That's all a 'Glossy' eats
He feeds by day with no fuss
But may be rare to see
If only for the scattered orts
'Neath a She-Oak Tree

Together we're a team
This lovely bird and me
Perched upon a rocking branch
In a She-Oak Tree
He does rely on my supply
Of cones from which he feeds
Nothing else will ever do
Except for She-Oak seeds

A SHE-OAK TREE. A POEM BY EDWINA SMITH.

Woodlands whisper nature's song
Yet they have no voice
'Glossy Black' needs me so
As I'm his only choice
May hearts and minds protect our home
And just let us be
For this precious cockatoo
And a She-Oak Tree.

EDWINA SMITH.

24th June, 2025.

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Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

Donations to this fund are tax deductible. Funds are used to support projects that protect and enhance native birds and the environments that sustain them.

COG membership

2025-2026 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for August 2025 edition:

Wednesday 30 July 2025

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

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

or

c/- The Secretary, COG,

PO Box 331, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614.

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

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

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president@canberrabirds.org.au

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cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

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for change of address or other details.

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Lay-out Editor: Gail Neumann

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COG E-mail Discussion List

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

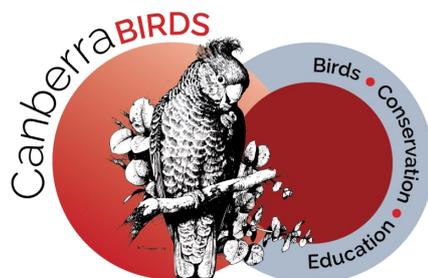
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Little Wattlebird by Richard Marris,
12 June 2025, Australian National
Botanical Gardens, Canberra, ACT