

Gang-gang

Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc

Canberra Birds Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2026



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FEBRUARY MEETING

Wednesday 11 February 2026

7.30 pm

Bugang Room, Denman Village Community Centre, 5 Felstead Vista, Denman Prospect

As detailed below there has been a change in venue for the first formal COG/Canberra Birds meeting in 2026 on 11 February. Speakers for this meeting will be:

Dr Simon Copland - Saving Canberra's Western Edge

Kim Farley - the bird fauna of the Woodland of west Stromlo including Uriarra TSR.

Temporary change of meeting venue for Canberra Birds

The Canberra Birds committee has decided to change the venue for our monthly members' meetings, at least until renovations of the Canberra Girls Grammar School's Multi-media Theatre are complete, expected in August/September 2026.

The new venue is the Bugang Room at the Denman Village Community Centre, located at 5 Felstead Vista, adjacent to the Denman Prospect shops (see Google Maps link <https://maps.app.goo.gl/NqW3XrN5iJf8dzRe9>)

This is a light, spacious, modern event venue with a kitchen. There is plentiful parking, under lights, close to the door and with several disabled parking spots outside the door. The room is on the first floor, accessed by two flights of stairs or by a lift.

For people attending the meeting by public transport, the R10 bus provides a very good service around every 15 minutes from the ANU through Civic to the Denman Prospect shops with the bus stop opposite the venue. For example, a bus runs there from 6:57 to 7:23 pm and return buses at 9:05 or 9:35 pm arriving at the ANU at 9:31 and 10:01 pm, respectively.

The first speaker will be **Dr Simon Copland**, Executive Director of the Conservation Council ACT Region on “**Saving Canberra's Western Edge**”.

Canberra's Western Edge, a beautiful area of critically endangered ecosystems to Canberra's west, is up for unsustainable, unaffordable and dangerous development by the ACT Government. In this presentation, Simon will talk about the importance of this region, the threats it faces, and what we can do to ensure it is preserved.

This important area is bordered by the Murrumbidgee River and the regions of Kambah, Weston Creek, the Molonglo Valley and Belconnen, and thus likely to be of great interest to many members. Therefore there will be plenty of time allowed for questions after.

As an example of the values of the Western Edge **Kim Farley** will then present about the bird fauna of one of her favourite sites, the “**Woodland of west Stromlo and includes Uriarra TSR.**”

The area of this site is almost as big as Bluetts Block and very close to it and forms part of a corridor that runs from the Murrumbidgee over to the Molonglo. It is officially part of Stromlo Forest Park though fenced off from it and is an area of grassy box woodland with some remarkable old trees on it. It has a bird list of 108 species on eBird.

News from the Committee

We had our first **meeting** of the year on the 22nd of January and began picking up the reins for 2026. Priorities in the next few months include:

- supporting our new Treasurer and Secretary as they come to grips with their roles. Peter Miller has already had a good lead-in with the assistance of outgoing Treasurer Prue Watters.
- Further slow but continuing work on understanding and then replacing the legacy databases that hold decades of COG/Canberra Birds data. At the same time, planning has commenced for an annual report based on eBird data. Several Committee members, along with others who have special expertise are involved in these activities.
- The **website** will receive a refresh in the next six months. Some of the site's underlying infrastructure will be replaced, as it is now quite dated and increasingly difficult to maintain. At the same time, we are taking the opportunity to update the look and feel of the website. Thank you, Julian Robinson, for your work on this project.

And other news...

- The next few months will be busy with several **community events and a big conference**.
 - On February 21, the quarterly stall at **Wildbark at Mulligans Flat**, with volunteers already lined up.
 - On February 28, an event with the **Nepalese Association of Agriculture, Forestry & Environment**. Another volunteer or two will be needed. Contact Julie at Hotchinbridge@bigpond.com if this one interests you.
 - On 4-5 and 9 March Canberra Birds is providing the pre and post Conference field trips program for the **Birdlife Aust Photography Conference**, being held this year in Canberra. Sue Lashko is organising this.
 - An event that needs a few more helpers is the Canberra Birds stall at the March 21 **Lanyon Harvest Festival**. We already have two volunteers for this but, as an all-day event, a few more people would be great. Contact Bill at bsgraham1948@gmail.com about this one.

Helping out at events is open to all our members. No experience needed, as you will always have a more experienced person with you.

- A special Commemorative issue of **Canberra Bird Notes** is being released in February and showcases 60 years of CBN's remarkable contributions to the knowledge of the birds of Canberra and our local region.
- And last but not least, thank you to **Mark Clayton** and his team for organising and running another enjoyable Quiz night on January 14th. I was out of town and couldn't attend but I hear that the start time coincided with a heavy thunderstorm. People shrugged off the rain and, I am sure, went on to answer the trivia questions with lightning speed.

Kim Farley, President.
President@canberrabirds.org.au



Members enjoying Christmas barbeque, Black Mountain Peninsular, 10 December 2025, Julie Hotchin

Summary/analysis of the past two months and what to watch out for in February

Conditions over the 9 weeks from 26 November 2025 to 27 January 2026 covered by this column were hot (with extreme heat waves in the first week of January and another at the end of the period) and dry. There was some moderate rainfall just before Christmas, and then very variable falls associated with storms in mid-January. Despite this my analysis below shows a significant increase in bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (Aoi), probably boosted by an increased observer effort during the holidays. Most of the earlier leaving spring/summer migrants were still present at the end of the period, and reports of “unusual” species greatly increased compared with most of 2025.

Highlights

There were four species which captured the attention of many birders over the period.



The first of these was the **Black-tailed Nativehen** first reported on 30 November by Sandra Henderson, a single bird sheltering on edge of water, under vegetation near the big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR. This was very close to where it was last reported from 2 November to 5 December 2024, but this time it has stayed even longer and was reported by many observers to at least 26 January 2026. Again, one wonders how it got there and where it has been in the interim, with the closest records on eBird since the start of 2023 being single sightings of a bird near Batlow and North of Harden, both around 100 km away, in November 2023 and 2024, respectively.



The second species was the **Australian Shelduck** at this same big dam at the Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve for which two ducks were initially reported by Patrick Wyllie on 8 December. While two had been seen here as recently as 16 June 2025, the big interest was alerted by Julie Clarke first reporting 10 birds here on 22 December, with a pair of adults and what appeared to be a family group of 6 immature birds and a pair of adults. Kim Farley, the ACT eBird co-ordinator, has confirmed the young birds, noting they were easy enough to pick, being a little smaller than the adults and with a paler undertail, with no neck ring and variously mottled faces. She noted the birds had been reported flying, so presumably they flew in with the two adults they were accompanying.

Black-tailed Nativehen, Mulligans Flat NR, ACT, 10 December 2025, *Julie Clark*

Australian Shelduck, Mulligans Flat NR, ACT, 30 January 2026, *Julie Clark*

Kim also noted not only are **Australian Shelducks** very uncommon to rare in the ACT, but reports of juveniles/immatures are even rarer. While there are quite a few breeding records up to 2017, all of dependent young, in BIRD INFO on the Canberra Birds web site, I'm not sure how many would actually be in the ACT, with most expected to be otherwise in COG Aoi, where they are more commonly reported. Up to 10 ducks (and on one occasion 12 ducks on 6 January) continued to be reported by many observers at least up to 26 January.

The third species was the **Brown Honeyeater** first reported from the Jarramlee Pond (West Macgregor) by Christine D on 1 January. Christine had heard its loud “sweet-sweet-quarty -quarty -quarty” call multiple times there on 15 December and had glimpsed it a couple of times as it flew across the pond, or over into private backyards but this time she managed to photograph it and again thanked Peter Christian for finding it for her. Reports of 1-2 birds from there continued to at least 26 January. This species had last been reported from the nearby Fassifern Pond on 30 September 2025, from where 1-2 birds were also reported from 3-8 January.

The fourth species was the **Black-faced Monarch** first reported from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) by John Hurrell early on 8



Brown Honeyeater, Jarramlee Pond, West Macgregor, ACT, 14 January 2026, *Richard Marris*



Black-faced Monarch, Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, ACT, 10 January 2026, *Ben Milbourne*

January and subsequently reported from there by many other observers to 12 January. It had last been reported from there between 2-10 April 2024, with a subsequent sighting at McQuoid’s Hill on 19 April 2014, and with all other sightings since the start of 2023 being in the Tallaganda region of NSW.

Spring and summer migrants

Of the spring and summer migrant species which had not been reported in November the first reports of the **White-throated Needletail** were of a single bird at O’Connor on 11 December, followed by 7 birds over The Pinnacle NR on 13 December. Then from 23 December they were reported from 9 further locations, with a maximum of 40 birds on the Brindabella Rd at Blundells Creek Rd on 5 January. Interestingly this is also the most recent date any were recorded, despite the storms around on 14 January. The related **Spine-tailed Swift** has not been reported so far, and it looks like it might be another poor season to see these 2 species.

Of the inland spring/summer migrants which are the among the earliest to depart the COG Aol the **Horsfield’s Bushlark** has still been reported from 4 locations, regularly up to the time of writing from the Macgregor (up to 6 birds) and Wallaroo (up to 12 birds) sides of Parkwood Rd, and with 3 reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 3 January as well as up to 3 birds from the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman between 13-21 January. The **Brown Songlark** has only been reported from the Parkwood Rd area, with up to 2 birds on the ACT side, and up to 5 birds on the NSW side, again at the time of writing.

Up to 2 **Rufous Songlarks** were only reported from around 9 locations in the past month, including the Parkwood Rd area. This compares with 12 locations in December, so despite the drying conditions it has been a poor summer for this inland migrant species.

Of the inland Woodswallows the **White-browed Woodswallow** was reported from around 9 locations in the past month, with again a concentration on the NW ACT/NSW border, where both the highest number (24 at the Parkwood horse agistment) and most recent (16 at the Dunlop Grasslands on 27 January) birds were reported. This compares with 7 locations in the previous month which also contained several breeding records. These include 3 obvious breeding pairs, each staying in the vicinity of a tree and aggressively defending it from other birds and repeatedly carrying food into the tree, as well as carrying food, at the Dunlop Grasslands on 20 and 23 December, respectively. There was also a report of a male nest building at the Nelanglo Travelling Stock Reserve on 17 December.

In contrast there were no reports of the **Masked Woodswallows** in the past month, and from only 3 locations in the previous one, with 2 birds at the Scottsdale reserve between 27 November and 3 December, 1 briefly seen with **White-broweds** at the Dunlop Grasslands on 20 December, and 1 at Campbell Park on 24 December.

There have been reports of the **Channel-billed Cuckoo** from 2 locations only in the past month, single birds from Griffith and Symonston, both on 31 December. This compares with observations from 9 locations between 4 (The Pinnacle NR) and 24 (at Canturf) December. These were all single birds except for 2 at Weetangera on 13 December where Nik Froelich noted "Alerted by a call raucous ee-awk repeated. Then after observation (including photographing it I) saw it flying between trees being harassed by **Noisy Miners**. While observing the first, surprised to hear another call to the southeast, only one seen."

Of the 2 inland cuckoo species usually present, the **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** was reported from 10 locations in the past month and the **Pallid Cuckoo** from just 5 locations, so it appears numbers of these two species will again be low in the New Year, compared with those in October. There have been no reports of the other inland **Black-eared Cuckoo** over the period.

Of the coastal spring/summer migrants the **Sahul Cicadabird** is often the earliest to leave, but it was still reported from 10 locations in the Brindabella mountains in the past month, with up to 3 birds observed and most recently on 24 January.

So, during February please keep a lookout for the species mentioned above which, except for the swift species, are usually also the first to depart.

Autumn and winter altitudinal migrants

Of the species that leave Canberra and its surrounds for the mountains and higher country to spend spring/summer there, the **White-eared Honeyeater** and the **Golden Whistler** were still recorded in 11 and 3 urban/peri-urban locations over the past month, in particular the latter having almost completely moved away from Canberra this summer.

There were still reports of **Scarlet Robins** from 6 urban/peri-urban locations, but none for the **Flame** or **Rose Robin**. This is the same for all three species as in November, with the latter two not expected to return for another 2 months. Again, there have been no confirmed **Pink Robin** sightings during the period, with the closest locations being Merritts Nature Trail and the Riverside Walk at Thredbo, both well-known summer locations for this species.

The **Crescent Honeyeater** has also moved away from such locations, and the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** was not reported from anywhere within the COG Aol in the period. While a **Bassian Thrush** was still reported from the ANBG on 14 January, the **Olive Whistler** was not reported from such locations, and the **Brown Gerygones** was not reported from anywhere within the COG Aol during the period.



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Unusual species

Apart from those discussed above, there were many more “unusual” species reported from the COG Aol during the period than in November. As eBird Bar Charts only show recent sightings for the past month, in many cases the analysis above and below only covers this time rather than the full 9-week period.

Again, there were no **Magpie Geese** or **Plumed Whistling Duck** reported during the period. **Freckled Duck** were reported from 3 locations during the period, with the highest number being the 146 recorded on the Lake Bathurst Survey on 3 January (there were 113 on 6 December). They continued to be present at the JWNR throughout with a maximum of 14 counted there on 11 December, with numbers dropping off somewhat in January but with still up to 8 ducks recorded. There were also 2 ducks reported from the adjacent Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant (FSTP) on 29 December.

Apart from those at the big dam on Mulligans Flat NR discussed above, 2 **Australian Shelducks** were also reported from the JWNR on 29 December. Outside of the ACT this species was recorded from 9 locations stretching from the NE round to S (1 duck on the Little Burra Estate Dam at Googong on 19 January) of the ACT, with the easily highest numbers being the 610 ducks counted on the Lake Bathurst survey on 3 January, and easily the second highest being the 33 ducks at the Morass (there were also 675, including one huge flock of around 580 birds, and 32 there, respectively on 6 December).

Blue-billed Ducks were reported from 5 locations during the past month, with a maximum of 9 ducks reported from the Upper Stranger Pond where they were present throughout the period. Up to 6 ducks were regularly reported from the JWNR, and up to 4 ducks were reported from Rowes Lagoon. There were 13 ducks on the Lake Bathurst survey as well as 9 at the Morass on 3 January (but none at either on 6 December).

Musk Ducks were reported from 6 locations in the past month, with the maximum numbers being the 18 ducks on the Lake Bathurst survey plus one duck on the adjacent Morass on 3 January (8 and 2 ducks, respectively, on 6 December). Just a single duck was reported from Rowes Lagoon during the period. The other reports were 1 duck at Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 21 January, and the Shoreline Walk on the Googong dam on 31 December and 2 January, as well as 1 duck at the Uriarra Station large dam between 28 December and 18 January.

Stubble Quail were reported from 10 locations in the past month, with most of these on either side of the NW ACT/NSW border where a maximum of 10 birds were reported from the Parkwood Rd, Wallaroo on 18 January, with 6 on the Macgregor side of this road on the same day. Otherwise, there was a maximum of 2 quail. **Brown Quail** were reported from 6 locations only, with the maximum being 7 quail from the big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR on 15 January. Otherwise only 1 or 2 birds were reported. The **Painted Button-quail** was reported only from 1 location only in the past month, 2 birds on the Black Mountain NR Belconnen Way on 15 January, with one there on 25 January, but again no **Little Button-quail** were reported during the period.

Brush Bronzings were reported from 5 locations over the past month with up to 2 birds from 3 locations within the Pierce’s Creek forest area between 3-14 January. Two birds were also seen separately on the Mt Franklin Rd Brindabella

on 16 January, as well as one bird on the Whiskers Rd Carwoola on 28 December. **Peaceful Doves** were reported from 5 locations, with up to 2 birds from the Cotter Rd from 20 January. Single birds were also reported from the JWNR, the Federal Golf Course, the Stony Creek NR and Yerrabi Pond, all in January. No **White-headed Pigeon**, **Brown Cuckoo-Dove** or **Diamond Doves** were reported during the period.

White-throated Nightjars were reported from 2 locations during the period, with one bird on the Pierces Creek Concrete Rd on 17 and 30 December, with another on the Pierces Creek Forest-New Pipeline Rd on the latter date.

Coffee and Chat at the Gardens Tuesday, 10 February

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.

Baillon's Crakes were reported from 5 locations in the past month, up to 3 birds regularly at the JWNR. Single birds were reported from the big dam at Mulligans Flat NR, from the Valley Avenue Pond, the Upper Stranger Pond and the South Jerrabomberra Pond. **Spotless Crakes** were reported from around 10 locations in the past month, with easily the maximum being the 10 crakes observed (across 300 metres of creek line with reedbeds with 5 crakes seen at one time, 2 adults and 3 tiny black fluffy chicks) at the Hibberd Cres footbridge on Forde Creek on 23 December (the maximum otherwise was 4 at the JWNR). **Australian Spotted Crakes** were reported from 8 locations in the past month, with up to 10 regularly reported from the JWNR, with a maximum of 4 at the other locations.

Buff-banded Rails were reported from 5 locations, with up to 4 birds regularly from the big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR, but up to 2 otherwise, including at the JWNR. Single **Lewin's Rails** were reported from 2 locations with single birds at the Franklin Ponds system on 29 November and 29 December, and up to 2 birds on Forde Creek between 23 December and 15 January. Please see above for reports of the **Black-tailed Nativehen** during the period.

Kim Farley alerted me to a **Bush Stone-Curlew** in a suburban garden in the Tuggeranong Valley having been reported with photos and endorsed on Canberra Nature Map on 21 January. I was surprised that there were no eBird sightings since the start of 2023 other than close to their re-introduction site at the Mulligans Flat NR.

A single **Pacific Golden Plover** was reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on both 6 December and 3 January. **Pied Stilts** were reported 6 locations including 3 birds from the Lake Bathurst survey and 19 on The Morass on 3 January (8 and 18 there, respectively, on 6 December). Two of these locations were 3 spots along the NW and 2 on the SW side of Lake George, where a maximum of 45 birds were reported from the Lake Rd area on 11 December. Up to 3 birds were also reported from the JWNR throughout the period as well as 2 from the Eyre St wetlands on 25 January. **Red-capped Plovers** were reported from 2 locations, with 4 birds on the Lake Bathurst Survey on 3 January, and 18 there on 6 December. There were also 14 birds on Lake Rd SW Lake George on 21 December, as well as 2 on 12 January.

However, there were no **Red-necked Avocets, Banded Lapwing, Australian Painted-snipe, Comb-crested Jacana** or **Red-necked Stint** reported during the period. The **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** was reported from only 2 locations with 1 bird on the Lake Bathurst survey on 6 December and 4 at Lake Rd SW Lake George on 21 December (numbers of this species certainly have declined in the COG Aol). **Pectoral** or **Common Sandpipers** (the latter has clearly not returned to its formerly favoured spot on Lake Tuggeranong this season) were not reported during the period.

Whiskered Terns were reported from 3 locations with up to 2 from the JWNR between 28-30 November, with 1 also on the adjacent FSTP on 27-28 November. There were also 4 birds recorded from the Lake Bathurst survey on 6 December. **Caspian Terns** were reported from 4 locations, with up to 2 birds regularly at the JWNR and up to 4 birds at the adjacent FSTP during the period. There were also 2 birds at Grevillea Park on 11 January and 1 on Lake Ginninderra on 18 January. No **White-winged Black Terns** were reported during the period.

The **Great-crested Grebe** was reported from 8 locations, with up to 15 reported from the Bracks Hole Rd on the upper Cotter Dam from 24 December. There were 11 birds reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 3 January (with 5 there on 6 December) as well as one at The Morass (none in December). One bird was reported regularly from Upper Stranger Pond from 28 December, and the West Belconnen Pond from 5 January, with 1-2 birds at the other 3 locations.

The **Australian Little Bittern** continued to be present at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) with sightings of between 1-2 birds from 6 December to 4 January when Shorty reported that he saw two flying into the reeds from the Cygnus hide. He only managed to get photos of a female, and while they were distant shots it was the first time he had seen a female with the pinkish flush, which Steve Wallace had informed him about. Shorty noted that it looked like breeding may be occurring for the second season in a row, but there were no further reports until 2 birds were seen around the same spot on 27 January. No **Australasian Bitterns** were reported during the period.

No **Little Egrets** were again reported during the period, but **Plumed Egrets** were reported from 2 locations, 1 well observed bird at the JWNR from 30 December, and up to 2 birds at the Goulburn Wetlands (just within the COG Aol) from 3 December. In contrast **Great Egrets** were reported from 13 locations during the past month, interestingly all but one within the ACT/Jerrabomberra area and including up to 4 birds regularly at the JWNR.

For reasons that aren't clear to me, the **White-necked Heron** continues to be widely reported from over 20 locations in the past month, including 1 bird Andrea and I have seen regularly at dams on the south side of Narrabundah Hill. **Royal Spoonbills** were reported from 12 locations during the past month, with all but 2 within the ACT. Up to four (from Lake

Bathurst on 6 December) **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** were reported from 7 locations during the period. A **Glossy Ibis** was reported only from the JWNR on 27 December and 2 January.

Single **Eastern Barn Owls** were reported from 7 locations during the past month, with many seen or heard during the night. A **Powerful Owl** was reported only from the New Chums Rd on 4 January, with a "Male call, a deep double hoot coming from a gully" reported. **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from around 22 locations in the past month, numbers seem to be recovering from the low of 12 locations in November. Single **Spotted Harriers** were reported from 3 locations, on the Federal Hwy near Sutton on 3 January, from the Fassifern Pond on 5 January, and at the nearby Parkwood Rd Macgregor on 13 and 21 January.

Single **Black Kites** were reported from 4 locations, at the Yass Service Centre from 12-28 December, at the nearby Barton Hwy at the Hume Hwy on 17 January, on the Lake Bathurst survey on 3 January and from the Australian Defence Force Academy on 21 December. Single **Black Falcons** were reported from 6 locations during the period, from the Barton Hwy at the Hume Hwy on 6 December and 18 January, flying south down the middle of the Federal Highway just south of Sutton on 19 December and on the Shepherds Lookout Walk on 20 December. There was also 1 bird from the London Bridge on the Googong Dam reserve on 27 December, at the Barton Hwy at Gounyan Rd on 5 January, and from the Parkwood Rd in NSW on 13 January. However, no **Pacific Baza** or **Grey Goshawks** were reported from anywhere in the COG Aol during the period.

Azure Kingfishers were reported from 2 locations during the period with up to 2 birds regularly from the Cotter Bend and one from the Giralang Pond on 25 January, a new location but with connections to other known spots. No **Red-backed** or **Forest Kingfishers** were reported during the period.

Two **Little Lorikeets** flew through at Symonston on 3 January, while **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from 3 locations over the past month, up to 4 birds at Kambah from 29 December to 1 January as well as up to 5 birds from Holt between 1-9 January, and 2 birds at Mulligans Flat NR on 6 January. However, no **Glossy Black-Cockatoos**, **Cockatiel**, **Turquoise Parrot**, **Scaly-breasted** or **Purple-crowned Lorikeets** were reported over the period.

A **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** was last reported from the known location at the Rock Valley in the Tidbinbilla NR on 7 December, and there was another observed during the Goorooyaroo NR woodland survey on 11 December. A **Scarlet Honeyeater** was recorded only from the ANBG on 22 December. **White-fronted Chats** were reported from just 2 locations in the past month, with a single female or juvenile bird on Parkwood Rd Macgregor on 22 January and 6 birds in 2 different groups at the Holborow Ave Ponds on 24 January. While 5 birds were reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 6 December, they were not present in the area on 3 January. A **Little Friarbird** was photographed at The Pinnacle NR on 16 December but no **Singing**, **Striped** or **Painted Honeyeaters**, or **Little Wattlebirds** were reported during the period (see above for further sightings of the **Brown Honeyeater**).

Blue-faced Honeyeaters were recorded from around 6 locations with 1 and 3 birds at the Riverbank Park in Yass on 22 December and 2 January, respectively, 1 and 2 birds in the main Comur St of Yass on 1 and 19 January, respectively, and 1 bird at the Mundoonen Rest Area on the Hume Hwy on 3 January. On 30 December John Leonard posted that as in the previous two years **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** were observed in spring a few times in the area north of the Hughes Primary School and then vanished for a few weeks but today reappeared with a youngster in tow. On 4 January John posted that they had been in his backyard in Hughes the last few mornings with two young. These posts led to a series of eBird reports of up to 6 birds in Hughes, including photographs of dependent young being fed, from 1-4 January, with further reports of up to 2 birds from the nearby Deakin, the Federal Golf Course and Garran between 5-13 January.

Chestnut-rumped Heathwren were reported from 4 locations with 1 photographed at Holt on 7 January, an unexpected spot, much more so than the single bird at Bluetts Block on 11 January or the 4 birds from Whiskers Creek in Carwoola on the same day. The bird observed at Rendezvous Creek on 22 January is also from a new spot in recent years, but a more likely one.

Red-capped Robins were reported from 7 locations, most notably from the Bracks Hole Fire Trail from where up to 7 birds were observed, including more reports of juveniles, from 14 December. Up to 3 birds (on one occasion again with a juvenile) were reported from 3 spots in the Pierces Creek forest area between 22 December and 8 January. Another, possibly a young brown bird, was photographed at Campbell Park on 29 December, with an immature male with a red

cap photographed at the Nadjung Mada NR on 25 January. Up to 3 birds, again with a juvenile (on 11 December), were reported from the Zosterops Corner between 27 November and 24 January.

No **White-browed Babbler**, **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes**, **Apostlebird**, **Spangled Drongo**, **Tawny Grassbird** or **Zebra Finches** were reported during the period (see above for the **Black-faced Monarch** observed at the JWNR).

Jacky Winters were reported from 3 locations over the period with 1 bird from the Mulligans Flat NR on 8 December and 3 January, 2 birds, one a juvenile dark brown bird with streaking on the throat and breast, and heavily spotted/streaked back and wings, during the Tharwa Woodlands Survey on 12 December, and also 2 birds, again one a heavily streaked juvenile, at the Glendale Crossing on 24 January.

Hooded Robins were reported from 5 locations in the past month, with a pair and a male reported from the Bracks Hole Rd on 7 and 12 of January, respectively, and 3 birds (a pair and a juvenile) at Naas Rd near Spring Creek on 22-24 January. Up to 3 birds were reported from the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd from 3 January, again with a juvenile from 17 January, a male on the Orroral Road, the only (slightly) new location, on 22 January and a female with a young bird on the Yankee Hut car park and track on 13 January. Earlier there were 4-8 **Hooded Robins** (on one occasion two pairs with young) at Scottsdale between 27 November and 4 December as well as 2 at Poveys Rd Colinton just north of there on 26 November.

In January the **Restless Flycatcher** was reported from 2 known locations with a single bird at the Nelanglo TSR from 10 December to 23 January, and a bird at the Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary on 7 January. Earlier 1 bird was reported from Scottsdale on 27 November and a single bird from Poveys Rd Colinton (a new location) on 26 November.

The **Brown Treecreeper** was reported from 4 locations in the past month, with easily the most records of up to 2 birds at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd from 6 December. There was also 1 bird at the nearby Top Naas on 5 January, with up to 3 birds at the Nelanglo TSR from 10 December, and 2 birds around 10 km SSE of Michelago on 26 January. Earlier there was a single bird at Scottsdale on 3 December.

While reports of “unusual” species significantly increased over the period there were still very few reports of pigeons/doves and parrots.

Breeding

First I need to again remind readers of the care that needs to be taken around breeding birds as outlined in the [Ethical Birding Guidelines - Canberra Birds](#) which can be found through the Canberra Birds web site (in particular please read and follow the sections on Nesting Birds and Bird Photography).

Apart from the **Australian Shelduck**, **Spotless Crake**, **Blue-faced Honeyeater**, **White-browed Woodswallow**, **Jacky Winter** and the **Red-capped** and **Hooded Robins** noted above, the following are some other summer breeding observations:

On 8 December Steve Wallace observed a **Black Swan** with six small cygnets go across the area in front of Snipe hide at the JWNR. Unfortunately, another pair was also present in the area and one of them attacked the cygnets. Despite the protestations of the parent, two cygnets got particularly rough treatment with one so badly hurt that it had trouble moving across the grass. The following day a swan with three larger cygnets was seen attacking a much smaller cygnet, similar in size to the one hurt the day before. Steve noted he had seen adults attacking each other but not an adult attacking very small cygnets and asked if anyone observed swans attacking the cygnets of another pair? However, there seem to have been no shared responses to his question.

On 15 December Doug Liang alerted me that he had found a pair of **Superb Parrots** with at least 3 fledglings half adult size and all chattering away with squeaky high-pitched voices behind near Cooleman Court. I wondered whether this was a rare southside breeding record, but superb's expert Laura Rayner informed me that Weston is within the foraging range they'd expect for birds breeding in the Central Molonglo. She also noted that it was a good year for them. When Doug posted his sightings on the COG chat line Helen Cross provided a number of her sightings (with photos) of **Superb Parrots** with young in the Cooleman Court area. These were also reports of young birds in Phillip and Lake Tuggeranong.

Kim Farley posted that on 1 January, Sue Beatty spotted a **Red-browed Treecreeper** entering a hollow along Warks Rd in Namadgi NP. They were birding together, with Steve Read, Julie Hotchin and Peri Bolton arriving at just the right time to see the birds too. There was discussion about whether one or two adults were visiting the nest, but Kim thought two. Sue took photos of an adult and a chick which were later loaded onto eBird which, if you looked carefully, you could see the fluffy grey plumage of the chick. Some observers saw an adult removing a faecal sac from the nest and Kim noted that an adult was visiting to feed the chick every 3 minutes or so.

Kim also noted that the only other local eBird photo records of **Red-browed Treecreeper** nests or juveniles was Shorty's and Christine D's from 2021 where the chick seemed a little older than their bird - less fluffy for a start. Checking the BIRD INFO data on the Canberra Birds web site confirmed there are limited records for **Red-browed Treecreeper** breeding up to 2017, with not more than one breeding record per month, except for 2 records per month of dependent young between November and February,

The **Eastern Koel** seems to be having a very good breeding season so far, with at the time of writing 132 fledglings having come to my attention, with as expected **Red Wattlebirds** the only known host. This includes one from the Murrumbateman Village Box gum grassy woodland reserve (the first one from this area) and is the highest number I have recorded up to late January, beating the 105 for the good (early) 2024-2025 season and the 60 at this time for the bumper 2020-2021 season in which fledglings were reported very late up to mid-April.

At least 20 (it has been very hard to keep an accurate count due to the mobility of the more advanced fledglings) of these have been mine in Rivett/Chapman within dog walking distance from home where adult Koel activity has been the highest ever (I thought they were moving away but on the morning of 26 January I could see or hear at least 6 birds together). This disproves my theory from last season, when I had very few fledglings despite lots of adult **Eastern Koel** activity, that if they are noisy **Red Wattlebirds** are more alert to the females attempting to parasitise their nests.

Flocks, including of migrating birds

As may be expected during the breeding season very few, if any, mixed feeding flocks (during January Andrea and I have seen some small ones starting to form in our local area of Cooleman Ridge/Narrabundah Hill) or large flocks of single species have been reported.

There have been some interesting other reports as follows:

On 29 November Sonya Duus posted on the COG chat line that she regularly hears what sounds like an **Eastern Whipbird** in the streets just below Sulwood Drive/Mt Taylor in Kambah. She hadn't seen the bird/s, but that morning took some recordings on her phone. She had also put a record on eBird in that area in February 2025 with a good clear recording when she assumed one might just be moving through. Later that day Sonya posted that she had knocked on the door and spoken with the owners of the house and lovely garden where she last heard the bird. They confirmed that they had at least one **Eastern Whipbird** living between their and their neighbour's garden. It came for the first time last summer and stayed until at least May before disappearing but turned up again around September last year.

On 27 December Martin Bennett separately posted that in recent weeks there have been many male, and also female **Eastern Whipbird** calls in the Kambah East area., in the general position south of Sulwood Drive, including the streets of Bissenburger, Marconi and Summerland. There were many calls from the male, and often a response from a female (the whistle, whip and chew chew). Whilst the female had not been seen, the male had been foraging in undergrowth of dense backyards. Martin had a personal record from March 2024, whereby a male and female call were heard for a few days but then ceased (at the time he thought them to be moving through and never to be seen again). He noted that potentially the same pair had stuck around.

These are rare urban records with only 2 other inner Canberra records on eBird since the start of 2023, at the ANBG and the Bruce Ridge NR in 2023 and 2024, respectively. On 29 November Ken Black responded that they had had an **Eastern Whipbird** in their next-door neighbour's house in Fraser a couple of months ago. They had heard it over a few days, then saw very briefly, but hadn't heard it for over a month now. There are also urban/peri-urban records from 6 locations around Queanbeyan as well as 3 peri-urban locations on the W side of Canberra, with Kambah Pool being quite close to Kambah.

On afternoon of 23 December Steve Read reported that a more raucous commotion than usual from the **White-winged Choughs** at his place in Stirling merited investigation and revealed eight of the birds in a tall casuarina keep watch on a motionless Sugar Glider (**Krefft's Glider**). Over the next half an hour, the choughs kept up their calling but did not move closer. **Red Wattlebirds**, **Magpie-larks** and then a couple of **Pied Currawongs** came by and joined in. One bold currawong edged closer and eventually aimed several pecks at the glider, to which the glider responded by simply moving around the trunk of the casuarina but then by scampering higher away from the currawong. Eventually the choughs calmed down and returned to their foraging on the ground, the currawongs flew off, and peace was restored. Steve noted Sugar Gliders are well-known nest predators, potentially explaining the birds' behaviour, but it was interesting to speculate why the glider was out and about in the daytime.

On 27 January David Rosalky posted that the *Eucalyptus blakeleyi* in his front yard in Deakin was covered in lerp which had induced a feeding frenzy of mainly **Red Wattlebirds** but also **Noisy Miners** for several days. His guess was about 20 birds in all. But the interesting thing from his perspective was the presence of 3 **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**. They were delicately placing the attached leaves between their mandibles and running their bills along the leaf, apparently scraping off the lerps. John Leonard noted this is a favourite feeding method of **Superb Parrots** too.

Finally, from around the New Year, I've noticed a nearly all black **Magpie-lark** in or around my GBS site in Chapman. The only clear white is a largish wing patch (clear in flight), otherwise the bird seems very black on the back and looks like a male **Common Blackbird** or male **Eastern Koel** when flying away. On a closer look it is really dark grey under, and you can actually see the usual black areas are darker, with clear white eyebrows and some patchy white on the side of the head. Very interesting is that it seems to have become the male of one of the (three) pairs within the GBS site. I asked on the chat line if any subscriber had any experience with a similar bird? Steve Wallace responded that there is mention of one bird (under Aberrant Plumage) in HANZAB online: "Single record of juvenile with melanistic plumage: entirely black with green sheen on back when seen in full sunlight." This was clearly a darker bird than mine is.

During February, please watch out for the inland spring/summer migrants usually expected to have left by the end of the month mentioned above, as well as for **White-throated Needletails** and **Spine-tailed Swifts**, for the first Mixed Feeding Flocks and larger numbers of single species, and for any late summer breeding activity. As usual please ensure that all significant sightings are properly reported so that they will 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

Calling Local Bird Photographers!

Over the last year, we have made a few changes to the layout of the Gang-Gang newsletter; this has included changes to the cover and adding more images throughout. Finding images can often be one of the most challenging aspects of publishing the Newsletter—with many hours spent scouring Facebook, Instagram, ebird and contacting photographers.

We are always looking for photos to use in our publications. They do not need to be professionally shot or edited--as long as they demonstrate wild birdlife in and around the ACT--we are interested in them!

Any photographer interested in having their images published is welcome to send them to gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au.

Please also read through our policy on [Acknowledgements and Copyrights](#).

Zachary Flegg, editor

Summary of the 14 January meeting

For COG/Canberra Birds' first meeting of 2026 Mark Clayton organised and ran another very successful COG Quiz Night.

It was a pity that for the second year in a row some intending participants may have been prevented from coming due to the sudden and unexpected storms around, but we managed to have 6 tables and fill the Woden Valley Uniting Church Hall, which is very suitable for these nights.

It was again very clear to everyone that Mark had put another amazing amount of thought, effort and work in designing the quiz and again we are all very grateful for this.

Attendees were again impressed at the range and depth of the questions and very much enjoyed the evening. We were challenged by the wide variety of questions, not only about birds but on a range of related topics which allowed some to use their general knowledge if they were relatively new to birds.

Also, importantly it again provided the perfect opportunity for COG/Canberra Birds members (many attendees were again long-time COG members) to have an enjoyable get together for our first meeting for 2026.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members many thanks to Mark for organising and running another very successful COG Quiz Night (his third in three years) and for the enormous effort he put in to make it very successful.

Also, again a very special thanks from us all to Marion and Gil Pfitzner for taking on the very crucial role of the markers, which as usual was a pressured and stressful task.

Jack Holland

Success at the Birdlife Australia Conference

Canberra Birds provided funding to two PhD students at ANU to attend the Birdlife Australia conference in Perth in November 2025.

Yiqing Chen presented a paper entitled *Global distribution and evolution of mixed species flocking in birds*. Yiqing said that to date we still do not know how many species join mixed-species flocks, how common mixed-species flocking is both geographically and phylogenetically, and whether present studies have been biased towards studying a subset of possible flocking systems. Her study is finding important gaps in mixed species flock research,



Yiqing won a prize for being the runner-up for the best student talk.

Volunteers for the 2026 honeyeater migration survey

NOW CALLING FOR VOLUNTEERS

In April 2025 Canberra Birds conducted surveys of migrating honeyeaters along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor. Many of our members took part, with preliminary results presented by survey coordinator, Chris Davey on page 11 of the May issue of [Gang-gang](#) and in more detail at the July members meeting.

The honeyeater migration is a feature of the local birding scene and occurs twice a year, with birds passing through the ACT in spring and autumn. The autumn movement is the more obvious, as birds move in flocks from their breeding grounds in the Brindabella Ranges and beyond.

The April 2025 survey was very successful and revealed that numbers of migrating birds were well down from our previous survey in 1997. Impressions from the local bush telegraph indicate that the main passage of migratory birds may have been in late March-early April. So we will repeat and extend the survey in autumn 2026 - starting mid-March and finishing mid-May.

We are again seeking volunteers to take part. All levels of experience are welcome. If you haven't surveyed before or want to develop your identification skills this is a great opportunity to do so. It is not necessary to commit to attend all 10 survey days!

In 2025, eighty-eight species were reported during the passage. The survey therefore provides a great opportunity to view the migration and also record other species in the area.

What's involved?

Our volunteer surveyors count the number of birds passing through nine locations along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor. Teams of 2-3 people count birds at each site, with experienced observers teamed with less-experienced observers.

When and Where: The mornings of 14, 21 and 28 March, 4, 11, 18 and 25 April and 2, 9 and 16 May at Casuarina Sands, Pine Island, Gigerline A (Tharwa Sandwash) and Angle Crossing. In addition, if we have enough volunteers, we will survey Uriarra Crossing, Kambah Pool, Point Hut, Gigerline B and Williamsdale on the 11, 18 and 25 April.

What: Count the number of each migrating species over 15 minute periods between 8:00 am and 1.00 pm and record these on a special survey sheet.

Information and support: **WE ARE CALLING FOR VOLUNTEERS.** Could you please email [Chris Davey](mailto:chrisdavey12@gmail.com) (daveychris12@gmail.com) providing your mobile number and indicate which survey/s and sites you would like to be involved with. If you wish to survey at different sites on different surveys that would not be a problem.



White-naped Honeyeater - John Hurrell



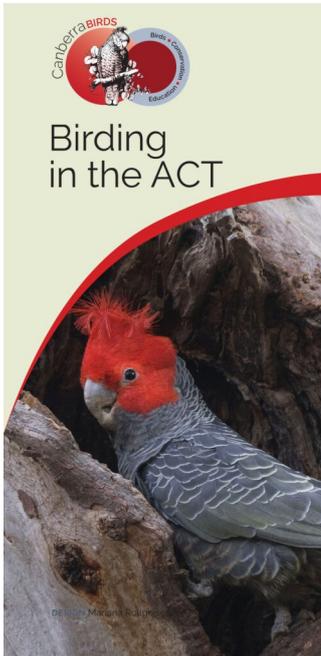
Yellow-faced Honeyeater - John Hurrell

The survey sites, their location and a copy of the recording sheet can be found on the [Honeyeater Survey web page](#) on the Canberra Birds website.

Please get involved with this interesting survey. As in 2025, it will be most enjoyable, and you will be contributing to a very worthwhile citizen science project.

Kim Farley
President, Canberra Birds

New and updated Canberra Birds brochures



Two new large format (A3) Canberra Birds brochures are now available for download on our website: <https://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/brochures/>.

The new *Birding in the ACT* brochure provides an overview of the wide variety of species found here plus an introduction to some of the best birding locations.

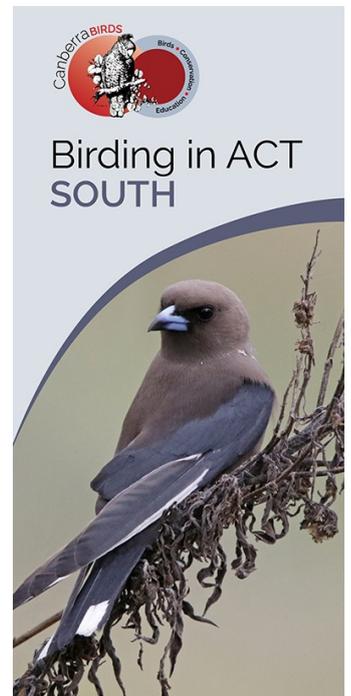
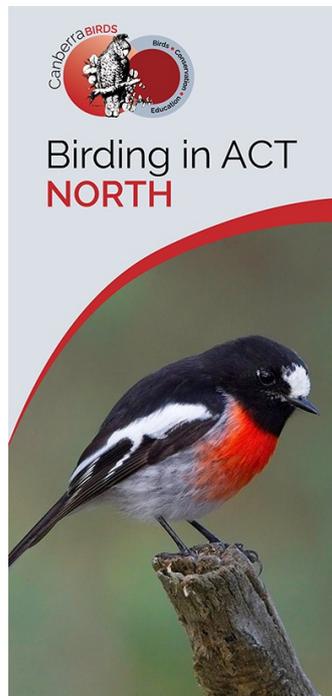
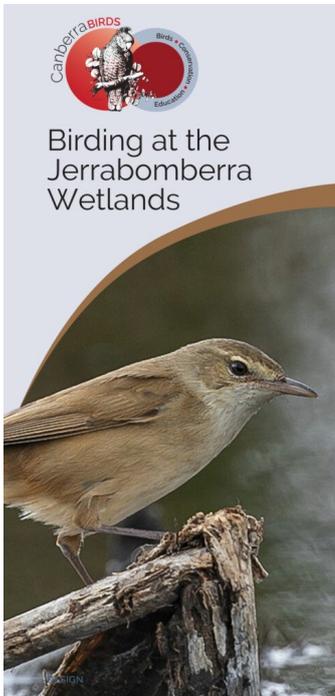
The new *Birding at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands* brochure describes what to look for and where to go in the reserve.

Our other updated brochures on *Birding in ACT North*, *Birding in ACT South* and *Birding in ACT Ranges* are also available to download from this webpage. Each of these brochures describes five interesting places to go birding in the ACT.

Printed copies of these brochures will be available to members at the February meeting.

We would also like to thank the many people who contributed to these brochures by allowing us to reproduce your photographs, by providing text or proof-reading.

The Brochures Working Group
Jenny Bounds, Julie Hotchin, Alison Mackerras and Steve Read



Tour of the bird specimens in the Australian National Wildlife Collection (ANWC)

Thursday 19 February, 2.00 pm

Tuesday 24 February, 10.00 am

Location: ANWC, Building 803 'Diversity', CSIRO, Clunies Ross St., Acton

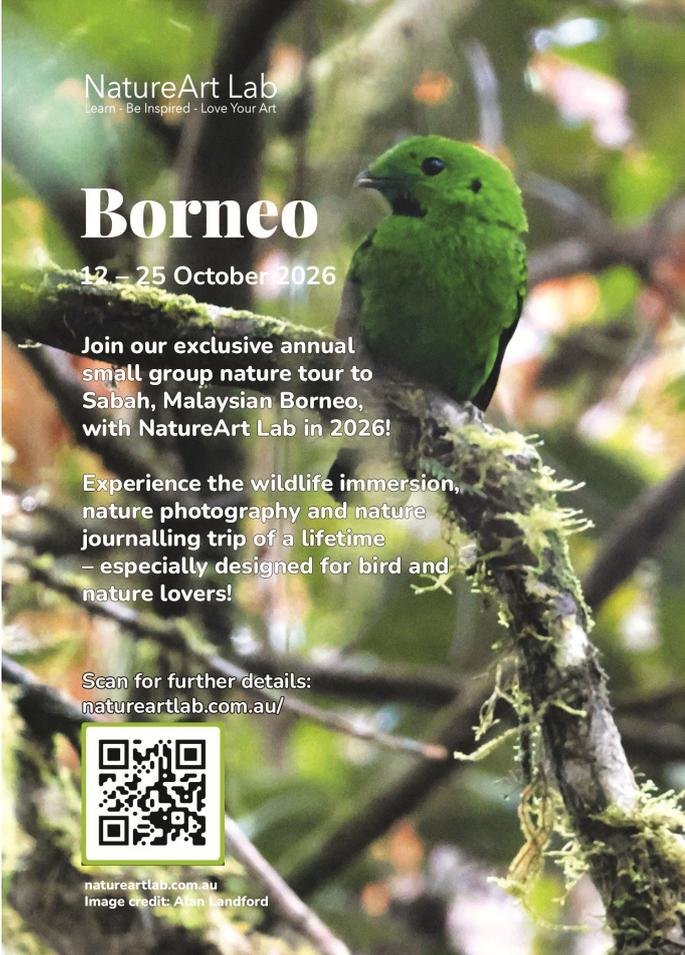
Two tours to view the bird specimens in the ANWC have been arranged for Canberra Birds members. The Australian National Wildlife Collection (ANWC) holds almost 200,000 irreplaceable scientific specimens of wildlife, including skins, skeletons, specimens in spirit, bird egg collections, a wildlife sound library and frozen tissue.

This includes 55,000 birds, representing about 99 per cent of Australian bird species – the most comprehensive collection of Australian and Papua New Guinean birds in the southern hemisphere.

More information is available here: <https://www.csiro.au/en/about/facilities-collections/Collections/ANWC/What-our-collection-holds>.

Each tour will last for about an hour. Numbers are limited. Details of how to access 'Diversity', the new collections building housing the wildlife collection, will be provided to participants closer to the date.

Please register with Julie Hotchin at julie.hotchin@gmail.com and provide your mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact.



NatureArt Lab
Learn - Be Inspired - Love Your Art

Borneo

12 – 25 October 2026

Join our exclusive annual small group nature tour to Sabah, Malaysian Borneo, with NatureArt Lab in 2026!

Experience the wildlife immersion, nature photography and nature journaling trip of a lifetime – especially designed for bird and nature lovers!

Scan for further details:
natureartlab.com.au/



natureartlab.com.au
Image credit: Alan Landford



NatureArt Lab
Learn - Be Inspired - Love Your Art

Costa Rica

14 - 30 June 2026

Join our exclusive small group nature tour to Costa Rica, with NatureArt Lab in 2026 – especially designed for bird and nature lovers!

Experience the wildlife immersion, nature photography mentoring and art workshops with Costa Rican artist Tamara Rojas.

Scan for further details:
natureartlab.com.au/



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Image credit: Alan Landford

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 30 November 2025 - Pabral Road, Northern Brindabellas

Nineteen COG members and a visitor from Taiwan undertook a lovely, slow stroll along Pabral Road in the northern Brindabellas, south-east of Mt Coree. The morning started coolish and partly cloudy as we walked up the flattish fire trail from its junction with Curries Road; the return walk was cut a bit short as we scurried back to the cars through a couple of light showers.

The habitat was tall eucalypt forest with a mostly shrubby understorey, small areas of tussock grass and an area of damp swamp. The western side of the road had mostly slim, even-aged regrowth post the 2003 fire and the remnants of a mixed species arboretum. The eastern wetter side still had mature trees.

A total of 29 bird species, comprising 244 individuals, were observed, the most numerous being **White-naped Honeyeater** (approx. 60) and **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** (approx. 54). The former were observed breeding, with one bird seen leaving a nest; and another seen feeding an almost tail-less juvenile. **Grey Fantail** were also in significant numbers, and the forest rang to the calls of many **Grey Shrike-thrush**, and **Rufous** and **Golden Whistler**. Smaller numbers of other notable species included **Gang-Gang Cockatoo** (a male seen exiting a hollow), **Leaden Flycatcher** (with a pair seen on a nest), **Spotted Pardalote** (seen exiting a road side tunnel), **Eastern Shrike-tit**, **Rufous Fantail**, **Eastern Yellow Robin**, and reasonable views of **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** and **Wonga Pigeon**.



Pabral Road, Northern Brindabellas, ACT,
30 November 2025, *Julie Hotchin*

Thanks to Kim Farley for leading a very pleasant stroll in a less visited area of the Brindies for many.

Julie McGuiness

Sunday 7 December – Narrawa Stockpile, Narrawa Bridge TSR & Grabben Gullen TSR

Bill Graham led a group of 9 COG members on an intrepid, adventurous road trip across the gentle rolling slopes of the Upper Lachlan Shire, in quaint localities between Crookwell and Boorowa. We visited three unique sites on a warm Sunday that followed a very hot Saturday heatwave. The day started with high level clouds and around 16 degrees, changing to clear skies with 26 degrees by late morning.

Site 1: Narrawa Stockpile - this small wooded area between Narrawa Creek and Boorowa Road was alive with birds. Ten **White-browed Woodswallows** and 7 **Dusky Woodswallows** soared through the trees, while a pair of **Eastern Shrike-tits** were catching cicadas, impaling them on a twig and then savagely carving up unlucky victims for their two fledglings, in a pre-Christmas feast. Three **Diamond Firetails**, a **Red-browed Finch** and a **Tree Martin** were skilfully spotted by keen observers, in addition to a **Rufous Songlark** and **Rainbow Bee-eater**, which were both heard. Raptors included a **Brown Goshawk** and a **Nankeen Kestrel**. Unsurprisingly, **Sulphur-Crested Cockatoos**, **Red-rumped Parrots**, **Superb Fairywrens** and **White-plumed Honeyeaters** were also present. At least 6 **Australian Reed Warblers** were in the reeds along to the creek. A total of 22 species was observed.

Site 2: Narrawa Bridge TSR - after arriving at this peaceful mixed woodland site adjacent to the Lachlan River, we proceeded under the road bridge and along the banks of the river, opposite a very dry rocky slope on the opposite side of the river. It was a very pleasant flat walk with a total of 31 observed species. Highlights included five very persistently-calling **Sacred Kingfishers** and 3 **Dollarbirds**, the latter easy to find, as they were striking a pose on dead tree branches when not flying along the river. **Noisy Friarbirds**, **Rufous Whistlers** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** added to the complex soundscape as the day warmed up, while a variety of small birds included **Superb Fairywrens**, **White-browed**

Scrubwrens, Striated Thornbills, Brown Thornbill, White-throated Gerygones, Silvereyes, Red-browed Firetails and an **Eastern Yellow Robin**. A **Mistletoebird** also made itself known with intermittent pre-Christmas calling, even though there was hardly any mistletoe.

We enjoyed a pitstop at the Red Robin Nursery for coffee, cakes and pastries, before heading south through the little hamlet of Grabben Gullen.

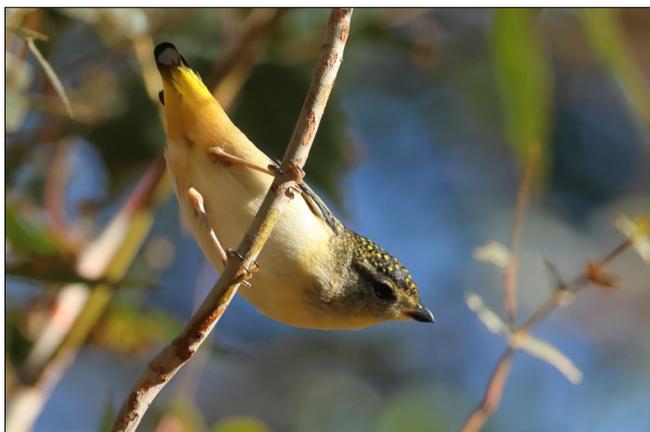
Site 3: Grabben Gullen TSR - this woodland site had many incredibly ancient trees that would tell some stories that would rival Grimm's fairy tales. It also has a series of nicely vegetated dams along two perimeter fences. The trees provided incredibly rich habitat for many of the 38 species that were observed. These included **Sacred Kingfishers, White-throated Treecreepers, Striated Pardalotes, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Laughing Kookaburras, Striated Thornbills, a Brown Thornbill, Grey Fantails** and a **Mistletoebird**. The water habitats supported many different



waterbirds, including an **Australasian Darter, Pacific Heron, two White-faced Herons, Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants, an Australian Ibis, a Eurasian Coot, Grey Teals, Pacific Black Ducks, Hardheads, Maned Ducks and Hoary-headed Grebes**. A final highlight of the day were raptor encounters: two **Wedge-tailed Eagles** were riding the high-altitude summer thermals, while a **Brown Goshawk** patrolled in a menacing manner above the tree canopy in diligent circular flight patterns.

Many thanks to Bill for once again giving up his time to go exploring prior to this trip and then taking us to three very interesting sites that none of us had ever visited before.

Mark Tindale



Sunday 14 December 2025 - Tharwa Sandwash, Angle Crossing, Namadgi Visitor Centre

Thirteen COG members met by the Tharwa bridge to explore Tharwa district and the Murrumbidgee Valley. Our first stop was Tharwa Sandwash, a former sandmining area on the Murrumbidgee River in Gigerline Nature Reserve. The 1km-long path along the left bank of the river afforded us a slightly elevated position to observe the birds flying along the river and moving in the tree on the opposite bank. The water level was extremely low, offering a **White-necked Heron** the opportunity to walk across the river. **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** were the most numerous birds, closely followed by **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**, the calls of which were omnipresent. Many species of bush birds were seen in small numbers along the track and two **Eastern Whipbirds** were heard on the other side of the river.



Our second site was also in Gigerline Nature Reserve at Angle Crossing, a location by a causeway over the river. The low water level allowed us to easily cross the river and park on the right bank. Back on the left bank there was an imposing **Wedge-tailed Eagles'** nest. Earlier in the week, the trip leader had seen an adult bringing food to a juvenile in the nest, but while we saw two eagles soaring above the valley on this outing, there was no activity in the nest. We walked through the tea tree along the river and saw a small number of bush birds such as **Silvereye, Red-browed Finch, Rufous Whistler** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**. A single **Eastern**

Black-fronted Dotterel, Angle Crossing, ACT; **Spotted Pardalote**, Tharwa Sandwash, ACT, **Dusky Woodswallow**, Namadgi Visitors Centre, ACT, 14 December 2025, *Marcus Hellyer*

Yellow Robin was a somewhat unexpected find. A **Black-fronted Dotterel** demonstrated how effective its camouflage can be even in bright sunlight.

For our third and final site, we swapped the river valley for the open woodland of Namadgi National Park Visitors' Centre. The dry conditions were once again evident with the small wetland in the grounds being completely dry. The change of habitat meant that birds here were somewhat different from river valley locations. The number of juvenile birds (**Eastern Rosella, Olive-back Oriole, Dusky Woodswallow, Willie Wagtail**) suggested that this had been a successful breeding season. A **Noisy Friarbird** was enjoying a meal of one of the many cicadas that were evident at all three sites.

Our thanks to Lia Battison for managing the trip's eBird records. Overall, between the three sites, 48 species were recorded.

Marcus Hellyer



Magpie Lark, Olive-backed Oriole, Willie Wagtail, Cotter Reserve, 17 December 2025, *Tee Tong Teo*

Wednesday 17 December – Cotter Reserve

About 20 birders led by Sandra Henderson enjoyed an easy morning walk looping around the Cotter River from Cotter Bend through Cotter Reserve. Conditions were fine and still. Pin oaks by the carpark featured **Rufous Whistlers** and a **White-throated Gerygone** and also contained two nests with sitting birds, **Willie Wagtail** and **Olive-backed Oriole**.

Australian Wood Ducks(15) grazed on the manicured grassland, where there were also **Australian Magpies** feeding young and a juvenile **Australian Raven** hopefully begging. **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos**(12) were active in the casuarinas lining the river. Also in that habitat were **Brown Thornbill, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Satin Bowerbird, Crimson Rosella, Noisy Friarbird** and **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**. Adjacent native scrub featured **Red-browed Finch, Leaden Flycatcher, White-browed Scrubwren** and **Grey Fantail**, as well as the calls of **Eastern Spinebill, Eastern Yellow Robin** and **White-throated Treecreeper**. We had no luck finding an Azure Kingfisher but a **Sacred Kingfisher** was heard.



A highlight was a pair of **Brown Goshawks** in eucalypts near the Cotter Dam. There were 33 species in total.

Nina Johnson

Eastern Spinebill, Cotter Reserve, 17 December 2025, *Tee Tong Teo*

Sunday 18 January – Blundells Creek Road/Warks Road, Namadgi NP

The 4km walk to the Warks Rd intersection has been a January fixture for COG for many years but this was the coldest event for many as we started down Blundells Creek Road around 8.30 am.

The wind and overcast sky had the birds teasing us with occasional calls for a time but eventually warmth and light brought a nice selection (32 species in total) into view.

Taking the prize for quantity were 50+ each of **White-naped** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**.

Less numerous but more interesting for most of us were:

Australian Rufous Fantail – living up to its “flits and dances about the mid-level vegetation” description;

Satin Flycatcher – a couple of inky black males declared by their scratchy calls;

A solitary **Sahul Cicadabird** seen from directly underneath. Personally, I got confused by an unaccustomed view of a notched tail with white tips for the first time;

Perhaps *the* highlight for those lucky enough to see them – two **Pilotbirds** alighting long enough for ID and then flying off – one, then two, then away!

The day ending with a distant **Wonga Pigeon** – a habit finally paying off for those repeatedly scanning down the track – on the last walk along Warks Rd before calling it a day.

We were back to the Bushfire Memorial by 1430 thanks to the drivers.

Thanks to Sandra for organising and Lia for listing.

David Lie

Sunday 25 January – Gungahlin Cemetery and Norwood Park

This outing was cancelled due to extreme weather conditions.



Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Cotter Reserve, 17 December 2025, *Tee Tong Teo*

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 8 February – Lake Tuggeranong: Town Centre & Isabella Pond Circuit

Description: This will be a relaxing amble around the Town Centre section of Lake Tuggeranong, before a very pleasant circular route along quiet paved paths to Monash Grassland and Isabella Pond - then back to Lake Tuggeranong. Isabella Pond often has a surprising range of wetland species (including **Pink-eared** and **Blue-billed Ducks** and the potential for rails and crakes). We'll also check progress on some re-vegetated storm channels along the route.

Meeting time and place: In front of Tuggeranong Library at 8:00am - plenty of parking opposite. The meeting point/time is also easy for people arriving by R4 bus at the Tuggeranong Terminus.

Walk details: A very easy flat walk of approximately 5 kms that may take 2-3 hours at birding pace. We'll follow marked paths with some short grass in urban parklands.

What to bring: Sun protection (very important as the majority of the route is exposed), water, morning tea and binoculars.

Registration: Please register with Mark Tindale by email (marktindale@yahoo.com.au), no later than Friday 6 Feb. Participants should provide their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Mark Tindale

Sunday 15 February – Stromlo West Woodland

This is the first of four field trips to sites on Canberra's Western Edge. For more information see: <https://conservationcouncil.org.au/western-edge/>

This woodland shares a long boundary with the old Uriarra Travelling Stock Reserve and together the two blocks form a corridor between the south western corner of Bluetts Block and the Deep Creek drainage line down to the Murrumbidgee. The woodland is part of Stromlo Forest Park, and while open to the public, is also fenced off from the Park by old pastoral fence lines. It has a rich flora of large trees, areas with a shrubby understorey and many wildflowers in spring and summer.

The bird list of 104 species includes several ACT Threatened Species. Birds regularly recorded on the block in summer are **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Rainbow Bee-eater**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Speckled Warbler** and honeyeaters and thornbills of multiple species. Sometimes we see **Grey Currawong**, **Common Bronzewing** and **Scarlet Robin**.

We **will meet at 8:00 am** at a carpark by Uriarra Rd. Wear sturdy shoes as there are no footpaths, and bring a hat and a drink as the weather may be warm.

Register with kimlouisefarley@gmail.com with your name, mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Once you register, Kim will send you information about the meeting point and a Google Maps link to get you there.

Kim Farley

Wednesday 18 February 2026 - Palmerville Heritage Park, McKellar

Meet at the heritage park carpark on Owen Dixon Drive in McKellar at 08:00. Expect to see reputedly the oldest living English oaks in the ACT, a bay tree, Lombardy poplars and the National Landcare Forest. eBird lists around 80 species for the site. The easy walk will be on gravel paths and the newly completed raised boardwalk.

Time permitting, we will also visit the nearby Giralang Pond. Access is via a formed path underneath Gundaroo Drive. **Nankeen Night Herons** are regularly seen and **Latham's Snipe** are visitors to the pond.

Take a hat, water and wear appropriate footwear.

Register with Margaret at mrgtrbrtsn14@gmail.com with your name, mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Margaret Robertson

Sunday 22 February 2026 – National Arboretum

The walk will start at 08:00 from the parking area for the Cork Oak Plantation. Soon after entering the National Arboretum, just starting up Forest Drive, turn right onto Cork Oak Rd, drive to the end and park. We will first explore 'scrubby' land before the Cork Oak Plantation, then the Plantation. Following this we'll retrace our steps, then climb the (small) hill through the Himalayan Cedars to the "Wide Brown Land" sculpture. From there we'll head to the STEP block (Forest 20), after which those who are interested can visit the cafe for appropriate refreshments and a chat, and others can return to their cars at Cork Oak Plantation.

The outing will take about 2-3 hours. Water, sun hat and good walking shoes will be required.

Please register with Michael (mrobbins@home.netspeed.com.au) and include your name, phone number and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Michael Robbins

Friday 27 February to Sunday 1 Mar 2026 - Weddin Mountains Camping weekend

Weddin Mountains National Park, near Grenfell, consists of a small rocky range of mountains with a mix of Callitris and eucalypt woodlands. It has an interesting range of birds as it is the transition between the flat inland and the western slopes region. Special birds might include **Turquoise Parrot, Bluebonnet, Red-capped Robin, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, White-browed Babbler** and **Barn Owl**.

Ben Hall campground is about 3 hrs drive from Canberra. This is a weekend camping trip to a National Park campground where you will need to bring all your own supplies, including water.

Please register with Kathy Walter or John Goldie via email walter.goldie@gmail.com with your name, mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Kathy Walter and John Goldie

Sunday 8 March – Goulburn

Meet at 7.30am at the parking area for the netball centre in Lyneham for carpooling. Suggested contribution for passengers is \$10 – please bring correct money.

In Goulburn we will visit the Goulburn Wetlands and a small bushland reserve. Both sites are easy walking mostly on tracks. Please bring water, morning tea and lunch. If there is time we will call in at Rowes Lagoon on the way back to Canberra.

Register with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com) providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 15 March – Cooleman Ridge Part 1

This is the second of four field trips to sites on Canberra's Western Edge. For more information see: <https://conservationcouncil.org.au/western-edge/>

Description: We will walk a loop that includes parts of the remnant and regenerating woodland that form part of a green corridor and provide habitat for a variety of birds, depending on the season. This walk will focus on the western section of the Ridge. Birds to be seen may include: **Scarlet Robin**, mixed feeding flocks including various thornbills, **Silvereye**, etc, pardalotes, rosellas, **Australian King Parrot**, **Gang-gang Cockatoo**, **Australian Boobook**, **Tawny Frogmouth**, **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Peregrine** and **Brown Falcons**, and other small raptors.

Meeting time and place: 0800 at Darrell Place, Chapman

Walking distance: Approx 3.5 to 4 km

Degree of difficulty: medium, but there are some quite steep, and sometimes slippery, sections of the track that we will take. Walking poles optional.

End time (approx.): 1100

What to bring: water, morning tea, hat, sunscreen, and wear appropriate footwear.

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: to 15

Angela Booth

Sunday 22 March – Bracks Hole

Meet at Uriarra East reserve at 8am for carpooling. Bracks Hole Rd is off Brindabella Rd, and is a walking track down to the back of Cotter Dam. It is usually the easiest place in the ACT to see **Great Crested Grebes**, and in recent times the track has also become known for **Red-capped Robins**. Highlights in the past have also included **White-bellied Sea-Eagles** and **Hooded Robins**. The walk is on a firetrail - a gentle 2km downhill to the water, which of course means we walk 2km uphill to get back to the cars. There is very limited parking close to the locked gate.

Bring morning tea and water, and wear a hat and appropriate footwear.

Register with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com) providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 29 March – Cooleman Ridge Part 2 - Mt Arawang

This is the third of four field trips to sites on Canberra's Western Edge. For more information see: <https://conservationcouncil.org.au/western-edge/>

Description: Mt Arawang is part of Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve, between Tuggeranong and Weston Creek. We will walk around the base of the hill. It is an easy walk, mainly flat. Seventy species have been recorded in Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve, including 4 species of Raptor, **Speckled Warbler**, **Restless Flycatcher**, and **Golden** and **Rufous Whistler**.

Meeting place: Meet at 8am near the gate on the western side of Namatjira Drive, where Chapman ends/begins, where there is space for a few cars. There is also space for a few cars on the eastern side of Namatjira Drive, at the end/beginning of Fisher.

Walking distance: 3 kms around the base. If there is interest, we could walk the track over the summit as well.

End time (approx.): 10:00 for the base loop, and an extra 45 mins to an hour to traverse the summit.

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

Name of leader and contact details: Please register with the leader by email to liabattisson@outlook.com providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Do so **before 7pm on Friday 27 March 2026** as numbers will be limited to 15.

Lia Battisson

Friday 3 to Monday 6 April – Easter camp at Yanga National Park

In this year's Easter camp, we'll explore Yanga National Park and its surrounds. Yanga is on the Murrumbidgee River in far western NSW. We'll base ourselves at Mamanga campground, a lovely birdy spot right on the Murrumbidgee. There is no cost other than a \$6 booking fee, but please book early. There are no facilities there other than pit toilets and fireplaces. It has decent mobile reception.

Balranald is about 10 minutes away and has a number of motels for those who prefer not to camp (again, book early as it's Easter and Balranald is a popular spot to break up the long drive between Sydney and Adelaide). Balranald is also a convenient spot for supplies and the Balranald Discovery Centre features the luxury of free showers.

Locations that we'll explore include:

- Yanga Homestead
- Yanga Lake (with a short walking track and bird hide)
- Yanga Woolshed (yes, there are a lot of things called Yanga there)
- two nature trails in Balranald
- some locations on the Murray River which is less than an hour away
- any other good sites that people can recommend

I'll be aiming to get there on Thursday evening. We'll do local trips Friday-Sunday and head off on Monday. We'll do a group dinner one night in Balranald.

For those wanting more information about birds and birding locations in the region, Ted and Alex Wnorowski's 'Australian Good Birding Guide: NSW-ACT' has good coverage. There's also birding information in this guide put out by the local tourism board:

<https://www.discoverbalranald.com/nature-wildlife#:~:text=A%20large%20number%20of%20migratory%20birds%20rely,as%20a%20resting%20foraging%20and%20breeding%20ground>

Unfortunately, Yanga is quite a drive away from Canberra -- around 650km, or a good seven hours, so please factor that into your travel plans. You might want to break up your trip with a visit to the excellent Fivebough wetlands at Leeton.

There are possibilities for self-organised extensions to the COG trip if you have more time available: Yanga is less than two hours' drive from Mungo National Park and (in a different direction) the birding hotspot of Hattah-Kulkyne NP in Victoria (featuring Mallee Emu-wrens and Regent Parrots). Those with a few more days could even head north to Menindee Lakes, Broken Hill and the amazing Mutawintji National Park in outback western NSW. If you are thinking about follow-on trips and are looking for people to travel with, I'm happy to share details with other participants.

If you are interested in attending, please contact me on pickelbarrel@gmail.com with your name, mobile number and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Marcus Hellyer



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

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Woodland Surveys – Early summer 2025 survey round –

compiled by Jenny Bounds

The late spring months had variable weather, some cool days and cold overnights, and many windy days. The woodland survey period was a mix of cool and windy days, some warm to hot days in the 30s, and milder weather at the end.

Note: not all sites are reported.

Acknowledgements

Jenny Bounds wishes to acknowledge and thank Martyn Moffat who has retired from the Mulligans Flat surveys after 30 years of regular contribution, an outstanding effort. Martyn was one of Jenny's original team when she commenced surveys there in 1995, the last one of the original group. Also, many thanks to Duncan McCaskill for his regular contribution to the woodland surveys at Mulligans Flat, as well as the Mt Majura Nature Reserve sites and filling in at Campbell Park/Mt Ainslie. Duncan has an open invitation to join the Mulligans survey when his visits to Canberra to see family and friends coincide.

Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds and the team did the quarterly survey on Sunday 7 December. After a couple of very hot days and an overnight windy change, they had a very pleasant morning for the survey. The 5 teams reported good bird activity and bird numbers at most sites. A large number of species was recorded in the Woolshed environs. The highlight was a number of **White-Winged Trillers**, which called all morning. It was almost like early spring activity. Possibly 8-10 Trillers in the wider area as they were also recorded at a couple of the nearby woodland sites. It is unusual to see so many Trillers on the western side of Mulligans, usually they are found on the eastern side or in Goorooyaroo Nature Reserve, and not so active in early summer. All the dams were full and it seemed like there had been more local rainfall there than in some other parts of Canberra. A total of 63 species, similar to the September spring survey, and the same as in early December 2023 survey.



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Other highlights were a **Satin Bowerbird** flying through near the Woolshed, (a rare record at Mulligans), and **Superb Parrots** in small numbers around nine of the sites, mostly around the central ridge and eastern sites. **Pallid Cuckoos** were recorded at 2 sites and a **Brush Cuckoo** was heard near the large dam. **Scarlet Robins** were recorded at 2 sites on the central quartz ridge (a pair and a single bird), one **Golden Whistler** record at the Woolshed, and **Common Bronze-wing** at 2 sites on the western ridge and slopes. Otherwise, there was a good mix of woodland birds such as **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, both **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones**, and four **Thornbill** species. A few **Ducks** and **Eurasian Coots** on the large dam, with one **Pink-eared Duck** sighted. There was a noticeable number of **Common Starlings** feeding on the short green grass on the suburbs side/western side.

Goorooyaroo Nature Reserve (northern area)

The December survey in Gooro north was carried out by Nicki Taws on a mild, fresh morning after hot weather. Birds were active and vocal, making the most of some cooler weather. Summer migrants were prominent, including 3 **Cuckoos** – **Brush**, **Pallid** and **Shining Bronze**, **Leaden Flycatcher** (with dependent young), **White-winged Triller**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, both **White-throated** and **Western Gerygones**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, a **Dollarbird** (not commonly recorded in the surveys), **Dusky Woodswallow** and plenty of **Noisy Friarbirds** (the only honeyeater recorded). A pair of **Yellow Thornbills** was an uncommon record – the reserve has very few bipinnate wattles, a favourite habitat of this species.

Some **White-winged Choughs** were starting a new nest, the slab had been laid but it wasn't very level, and they were having some difficulty making the stringybark material stick. A pair of **Brown Goshawks** were causing consternation. They have nested in nearly every one of the 27 years that the surveys have been running, but no nest was found this year. A surprise record was a lone **Straw-necked Ibis** in the open woodland paddock, the first time Nicki remembered recording one in the surveys. Another surprise was the complete lack of **Superb Parrots**. Perhaps they had moved all the new fledglings into the suburbs to find food.

Goorooyaroo NR (southern area)

The final Gooroo South survey for the year was done by Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley on 11 December in reasonable conditions, mild, overcast and light to moderate winds. The reserve was looking rather dry with water levels in dams noticeably lower than on our spring survey. A total of 49 species were recorded, with 36 of these during point counts, down from 53 and 44 for the equivalent survey in 2024.

The highlight for the morning was a very vocal **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** between sites 6 and 5. Unfortunately it wouldn't sit for photos and eventually disappeared to the south. Some other interesting records included a **Pied Butcherbird** heard in the distance from site 7, a family of 4 **Tawny Frogmouths** at site 4, **Speckled Warblers** at sites 7 and 9, **Mistletoebird** at site 9 and a **Grey Currawong** at site 2. Several **Pallid Cuckoos** were present and very vocal. Other spring/summer migrants present, mostly in low numbers, were **Noisy Friarbirds**, **White-throated** and **Western Gerygones**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **White-winged Triller**, **Rufous Whistler** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**. The complete lack of raptors was a surprise. Small birds in general were rather thin on the ground although they did record a reasonable range of species such as **Brown-headed** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**, four species of **Thornbill**, **Grey Fantail** and **Weebill**.

Mt Majura NR

The surveys were done on 31 November and 1 December by Kathy Walter, John Goldie and Peter Miller in cool windy weather. They found the majority of the sites to be fairly quiet. A total of 27 species were seen overall. Small birds were fairly scarce in the majority of sites. Highlights were a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** in two separate sites over two days, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Superb Parrots** in one site and a couple of **Red-rumped Parrots** which is fairly unusual for these sites. No **Speckled Warblers** seen or heard this survey.

Majura Defence Training Area

Kim Farley and Sue Beatty surveyed the 8 sites at the Defence Training Area on 10 December. It was a lovely cool morning after several hot days. Overall, they saw 44 species on the sites, and two further species between sites. Interesting species included a **Pallid Cuckoo** calling constantly at one site. At another site they had a calling **Brush Cuckoo** - possibly two. Of interest was the number of **Olive-backed Orioles** heard and seen at nearly all sites. **White-winged Trillers** were recorded at several sites, a **Brown Falcon** was a nice sighting at the first site and a pair **Common Bronze-wings** by a dam at one of the sites. There were good numbers of very active **Noisy Friarbirds** everywhere. Also of interest was the number of waterbirds at the various small dams, maybe reflecting dry conditions across the region. These included **Australasian Grebes** with young, **Pacific Black Ducks** with young, **Wood Ducks** and a **White-necked Heron** (this last between sites). Quite a few **Straw-necked Ibises** were seen between sites. Breeding records were juvenile **Buff-rumped Thornbills** being fed by adults, **Noisy Miners** carrying food and possible nesting of **Tree Martin**. No **Robins** or **Dusky Woodswallows**.

Mt Ainslie Nature Reserve/Campbell Park

The summer woodland survey at the lower eastern slopes of Mt Ainslie was carried out by Michael Lenz on 3 December, a mild fine morning. The site was dry, ground vegetation low and sparse, except for the widespread stands of St John's Wort. Bird distribution was very patchy, with the number of species per site ranging from 3 to 15. At the 9 sites, the most widespread species were again **Crimson Rosella** and **Spotted Pardalote** (at 6 sites each) and **Noisy Miner** (5 sites). Taking the routes between sites into account as well, **Weebills**, **Noisy Friarbirds**, **Spotted Pardalotes**, and **Grey**

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Fantails were most often encountered. Notable observations were 2 **Wedge-tailed Eagles**, and **White-winged Trillers** encountered 7 times with a total of 11 birds. A flock of **Gang-gang Cockatoos** was seen near the Pistol Club, and further birds to the East of Northcott Drive, with a total of at least 23. A **Noisy Friarbird** was feeding young in the nest. 21 species were recorded at sites with a further 12 between sites.

Newline

Sue Lashko surveyed on 8 December in pleasant, cool conditions initially but warmed up by the end of the survey. Most of the summer migrants were recorded including **White-winged Triller**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Sacred Kingfisher**, **Dollarbird**, **White-throated Gerygone**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** and **Dusky Woodswallow**. No cuckoos were recorded. The continuing decline of small birds was quite apparent, with just a few **Weebill**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** and **White-browed Scrubwren**, although there were good numbers of **Superb Fairy-wrens**. The only raptor of the morning was a **Brown Falcon**. The site was very dry with all dams completely or almost empty. As usual, the front paddock and the one adjacent to the now closed quarry had the most species diversity, with 18 and 14 species respectively. A total of 42 species were recorded.

Tuggeranong Hill NR

Tuggeranong Hill was surveyed on Wednesday 3 December by Lia Battisson. It was a mild and still morning. Species which are not often seen within sites, but made it onto the site list this season were **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Olive-backed Oriole** and **Grey Butcherbird**. A **Dollarbird** was heard and **Noisy Friarbirds** were present in several places. **Dusky Woodswallows** were by the Theodore substation, where they are most reliably seen at this time of the year. The only breeding observed was an **Australian Magpie** feeding young. In all, 37 species were observed, 19 of those within sites. This is the same number of species as the summer survey in 2024. Lia remarked on how many of the large trees are deteriorating and the proliferation of the invasive weed St John's Wort across all the sites.

Naas Sites

On 12 December Julie Hotchin and Julie McGuinness conducted the late spring/summer survey on this rural leasehold south of Tharwa. The morning was overcast, mild and still, with the clouds still hovering over the ranges when they completed the survey. The site was very brown and dry, with water in the main dam while the dam along the driveway was empty. Despite these conditions, there was a good diversity of species and birds were active at most sites. A total of 47 species was recorded, of which 33 species were seen or heard in the six sites and a further 14 species recorded between sites.

Highlights included two **Jacky Winters** (one adult and a juvenile at site 4) and a **Collared Sparrowhawk** flying through the same site. Spring-summer migrants present included numerous **Rufous Whistlers** (heard or seen at three sites), a **Golden Whistler**, **White-throated** and **Western Gerygones**, **Dusky Woodswallows**, while a **Horsfield's Bronzecuckoo** and an **Olive-backed Oriole** were heard. There were few honeyeaters present except for pairs of **Brown-headed** and **White-plumed Honeyeaters**, **Noisy Friarbirds** and several resident **Noisy Miners**. Few smaller birds were observed, which is similar to this survey last year. Those seen or heard included a few **Striated Pardalotes**, **Weebills**, **Grey Fantails** and the ubiquitous **Willie Wagtails**. No thornbill species were recorded. Breeding activity was observed for several species. A **Jacky Winter** was moving about carrying a long grass stem in its bill, and fledgling **Dusky Woodswallows** and **Willie Wagtails** were being fed or begging to be fed. **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas**, **Red-rumped Parrots**, **Galahs**, **Little Corellas** and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** were all present in modest numbers, although none, surprisingly, were observed at or in hollows. The total species recorded (47) was one less than in 2024.



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COG membership

2025-2026 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

Rosemary Landy & family
Venus Mizubata & family
Hamilton Darroch & family
Rev Christopher Lewis & family
Shan Southwell

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for MARCH 2026 edition:

Wednesday 25 February 2026

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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