

Gang-gang

Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc

Canberra Birds Newsletter

MARCH 2026

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MARCH MEETING

Wednesday 11 March 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 COG/Canberra Birds monthly meetings for the first half of 2026.

Speakers for the March meeting will be:

Launch the Commemorative issue of *Canberra Bird Notes*

Philip Gibbons - What we have learnt from 15 years of research on old trees in and around Canberra?

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/NqW3XrN5jlf8dzRe9>)

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.

To help guide you once there the Canberra Birds Sandwich Boards will be outside the front door and at the top of the stairs/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 to 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 meeting will start with the **Launch the Commemorative issue of *Canberra Bird Notes* (CBN)**, Vol. 50 No. 2: <https://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/canberra-bird-notes/>.

CBN's 50 volumes have reported research, bird observations and reflections on the birdlife of the Canberra region for 57 years. It has kept the local birding community in touch with wider trends and new information and has a potentially wide audience for a local journal. And while COG and CBN evolved from a strong professional scientific core, a key strength of COG and CBN has always been citizen science - structured, accurate, worthwhile and organised amateur science. This Commemorative Issue showcases the diversity and scope of CBN content over this period by republishing a selection of its wide range of research articles. The launch is an opportunity to hear how CBN has contributed to the knowledge and conservation of the birdlife in our region.

The main speaker will be **Emeritus Professor Philip Gibbons** from the Fenner School of Environment and Science at the ANU on "**What we have learnt from 15 years of research on old trees in and around Canberra?**"

Many of the mature eucalypts in Canberra's landscape pre-date colonisation. In this talk Phil Gibbons will outline results from his group's research on mature trees: their value as habitat for birds, threats to their persistence, the extent to which we can replace the functions of mature trees with artificial structures such as nest boxes and how to manage the threats mature trees pose to people and property in urban areas.

News from the Committee

- The Committee met on the 19th of February and we were delighted to welcome **Sandie Jones** as not only a new Committee member but as our new **Canberra Birds Secretary**. Some of you have already met Sandie as she has come along on at least one field trip in very recent times. Welcome Sandie.
- On 7-8 March, the **Birdlife Australia Biennial Photography Conference** will be held in the ACT. Canberra Birds is running the pre and post Conference walks for delegates. Thank you very much to Sue Lashko for organising the Conference walks program and thank you to our members, too many to list here, who have generously volunteered their time to lead the walks. Up to 100 delegates have booked for some of the venues, so multiple walks and multiple guides have been enlisted. My advice is that if you want some quiet birding at Jerra Wetlands in the near future, perhaps avoid the morning of Thursday the 5th as that walk has been heavily booked!
- The March 11 meeting will **launch the Commemorative issue of *Canberra Bird Notes*, which celebrates 50 volumes over 57 years**. The Commemorative issue showcases the diversity and scope of *CBN* content by republishing a selection of its wide range of research articles along with commentary and a select bibliography. Read more elsewhere in this issue.

Kim Farley, President.

Email president@canberrabirds.org.au

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

It remained hot and dry over the 4 weeks from 28 January to 24 February covered by this column until there was a very significant rain event at the end of the first week of February. While hot conditions returned, it stayed green with some showers over the last few days. Despite this my analysis below shows a significant decrease in bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (Aoi), even taking into account the increased observer effort during the holidays and the nine-week previous period. Many of the earlier leaving spring/summer migrants had left before the significant rain event above, and reports of “unusual” species dropped significantly to be similar to most of 2025 levels.

Highlights

The undoubted highlight for the period was when on 4 February Helen Cross posted on the chat line that she had recently recorded **Australian Rufous Fantails** fledging 2 young in the ANBG. Looking at her eBird checklist revealed great photos of 2 juveniles fledged sometime between 9 am and 1.15 pm on 15 January. Checking eBird also revealed that 1 and on one occasion (4 January) 2 birds had been recorded there since 12 December, and that there were several further records of a fledgling/juvenile up to 17 February, over a month later.

Helen asked, “Have they been recorded breeding in suburban Canberra before?”. As she had received no response, on Shorty’s prompting I did some investigation confirming there were no records of breeding in suburban Canberra on eBird. However, on checking COG’s *Birds of the Australian Capital Territory: An Atlas covering August 1986 to July 1989 (inclusive)* I noted at the end of the description for the **Rufous Fantail** (p121) “...and have also



Australian Rufous Fantail, Australian National Botanical Garden, 15 January 2026, *Helen Cross*



Australian Rufous Fantail, Australian National Botanical Gardens 15 January 2026, *Helen Cross*

nested successfully in the rainforest gully at the Botanic Gardens (K Thaler)". This is a personal communication from Kurt Thaler who I recall worked there at the time.

So, there would appear to be at least some historic **Australian Rufous Fantail** 1980s urban Canberra breeding records, and the question arose whether there have been any since. As COG's 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR) indicated "No breeding records this year. There have only been breeding records in 9 of the last 32 years (last in 2005)." This tallies with the number of records in BIRD INFO on the Canberra Birds web site, but when I checked the ABRs from 1986-1987 to 2005-2006 (with the latter noting the "first breeding record for seven years"), I could find only 5 of these; all were in either the Brindabellas or Tallaganda SF area.

In summary I, and I expect many others, did not fully appreciate how unusual this record was. An even more unusual observation by Julian Robinson is discussed under **Breeding** below.

Spring/summer migrants

Of the spring/summer migrant species which had not been reported in January up to 12 **Fork-tailed Swifts** were reported from the Vanitys Crossing Rd in the Pierces Creek forest on 1 February, with 2 recorded on the Brindabella Rd on 5 February the only other confirmed report until a late record of one at the Tharwa Sandwash on 23 February. Eight and 4 **White-throated Needletail** were reported from the same first 2 locations, respectively, as well as 4 other locations (6 compared with 9 in the previous month) from 28 January. The maximum was 65 birds near Mt Coree on 4 February closely followed

by 60 at Giralang pines on 11 February, the most recent record and the only one during/post the significant rain event from 7 February.

Of the inland spring/summer migrants which are the among the earliest to depart the COG Aol, a single **Horsfield's Bushlark** was last reported from the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 31 January, with one at the Border Point on the Parkwood Rd on 29 January being the only other report during period. A **Brown Songlark** was last reported from the latter location on 29 January as well as one on the Wallaroo side of the Parkwood Rd on the same day. The **Rufous Songlark** was reported from only 2 locations (9 in January), 2 birds from the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 31 January and from the Ginninderra Creek Macgregor on 1 February.

This confirms it has been a very poor summer for this inland migrant species. In contrast up to 12 **White-winged Trillers** were still reported from up to 17 locations and were still present at the time of writing.

Of the inland Woodswallows the **White-browed Woodswallow** was reported from a single location only (9 in the previous period) with between 13-25 birds (including young being fed) from the Jarramlee Homestead Rd at the Dunlop Grasslands from 28 January to 1 February. Up to 2 **Masked Woodswallows** were reported only from this location during this period.

There were no reports of the **Channel-billed Cuckoo** during the period, with the most recent being single birds from Griffith and Symonston, both on 31 December. Of the 2 inland cuckoo species usually present, up to 2 **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** were reported from 7 locations (10 in January) in the past month, with the most recent at the Goorooyaroo NR on 19 February. However, the **Pallid Cuckoo** was reported from just 1 location (5 in January), 1 bird on the Ginninderra Ck at Melba on 15 February, confirming that numbers are again low in the New Year, compared with those in October. There have been no reports of the other inland **Black-eared Cuckoo** this spring/summer.

Of the coastal spring/summer migrants the **Sahul Cicadabird**, often the earliest to leave, was still reported from 4 locations within the Tidbinbilla NR (compared with 10 in January), a single bird between 28-31 January and on 11 February.

During March please also keep an eye out for the above and other departing spring/summer migrant species such as the **Dollarbird**, **Rainbow Bee-eater** (listen for them calling overhead as they migrate north) and **Sacred Kingfisher**, which all usually leave, in that order, by mid-March (all three were still widely reported during February, up to the time of writing).

Other birds that mostly have left by the end of March/early April include the **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Sahul Brush Cuckoo**, **Eastern Koel**, **Latham's Snipe**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Australian Reed-Warbler** (often very quiet in March), **Tree** and **Fairy Martins**, all of which were still widely reported in February. The passage migrants, the **Satin Flycatcher** and **Australian Rufous Fantail**, were both still reported from the mountains to the southwest of Canberra or around Tallaganda SF. However, in terms of urban/peri-urban locations there was a report of a pair of the former at the Black Mountain NR on 13 February, and the successful breeding of the pair at the ANBG is discussed above.

Autumn/winter altitudinal migrants

Of the species that leave Canberra and its surrounds for the mountains and higher country to spend spring/summer there, but return in autumn, the **White-eared Honeyeater** and the **Golden Whistler** were still recorded in 8 and 4 urban/peri-urban locations over the past month. This compares with 11 and 3, respectively, in January, an indication that they have not yet started to move in.

There were reports of **Scarlet Robins** from 8 urban/peri-urban locations (6 in January), with some indications they are starting to move back, but none for the **Flame** or **Rose Robin**. These latter two not expected to return until late March. Again, there have been no confirmed **Pink Robin** sightings during the period, with the closest locations again being Geehi and Thredbo in the Kosciuszko NP.

The **Crescent Honeyeater** also stayed away from such locations, being reported from 3 locations West of the Murrumbidgee River, and the only **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** reported from anywhere within the COG Aol was around 15 km SE of Michelago on 26 January. The **Olive Whistler** and **Bassian Thrush** were not reported from such locations, and again the **Brown Gerygone** was not reported from anywhere within the COG Aol during the period.

Unusual species

There were no "unusual" species reported from the COG Aol during the period that deserve special attention.

Again, there were no **Magpie Geese** reported during the period. However, a single **Plumed Whistling Duck** was present at the Trucking Yard Lane dam from 21 February, the first one reported from there since 27 September 2024, and from the COG Aol since 10 December 2024 (Wet Lagoon). **Freckled Duck** were reported from 3 locations during the period, with easily the highest number being the 68 recorded on the Lake Bathurst Survey on 8 February (there were 146 there on 3 January). Up to 10 ducks continued to be present at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) throughout the period. There were also 2 ducks reported from the Upper Stranger Pond on 22 February.

Up to 5 **Australian Shelducks** continued to be reported from the big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR to 23 February. Outside of the ACT this species was reported from 8 locations (similar to January) stretching from the NE round to the E of the ACT, with the easily highest numbers being the 720 ducks (plus 4 on the Morass) counted on the Lake Bathurst survey on 8 February (643 ducks in total on 3 January), and easily the second highest being the 92 ducks at the Trucking Yard Estate on 20 February.

Blue-billed Ducks were reported from 4 locations during the past month (5 in January), with a maximum of 11 ducks reported from the Upper Stranger Pond where they were present throughout the period. Up to 5 ducks were reported from the JWNR to 9 February, and up to 4 at the adjacent Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant (FSTP) throughout the period. There was just a single duck recorded on the Lake Bathurst survey on 8 February, and none from the adjacent Morass.

Musk Ducks were reported from 3 locations in the past month (6 in January), with none of these from the ACT. The maximum number was 27 ducks on the Lake Bathurst survey (plus one duck on the adjacent Morass) on 8 February (19 in total on 3 January). There was also 1 duck at the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 31 January.

The **Stubble Quail** was reported from just a single location (compared with 10 in January) in the past month, 2 birds from the Border Point on Parkwood Rd on 29 January. I expect the grass growth following the significant rain early in February will not affect numbers as this came too late after the breeding season. **Brown Quail** were reported from 5 locations (6 in January), with the maximum being 9 quail at the Holborow Ave Ponds on 28 January, and 6 from the big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR on 13-15 February. The **Painted Button-quail** was not reported in the past month (1 location in January) and again no **Little Button-quail** were reported during the period.

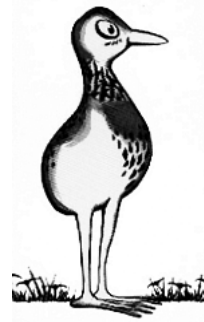
Brush Bronzewings were reported from 4 locations over the past month (5 in January) with single birds reported from the Blue Range Rd Coree on 4 February, Corin Rd past Woods Reserve on 6 February and near Rendevous Creek on 11 February. A late report was of one feeding on the Brindabella Rd on 23 February. Up to 2 **Peaceful Doves** were reported only from the Cotter Rd to 6 February (compared with 5 locations in January). No **White-headed Pigeon**, **Brown Cuckoo-Dove** or **Diamond Doves** were reported during the period.

At the time of writing there were no confirmed **White-throated Nightjars** reported during the period compared with from 2 locations in the previous one.

Baillon's Crakes were reported from 2 locations in the past month (compared with 5 in the previous month), with up to 2 birds at the JWNR from 1-6 February. A single bird was reported from the Ginninderra Creek at West Macgregor on 2 February. **Spotless Crakes** were reported from 3 locations (well down from the around 10 locations previously) in the past month, with 3 crakes observed at the North Watson Wetlands on 30 January and up to 3 at the JWNR throughout the period. There were also 2 crakes reported from the Yankee Hut car park and track on 30 January. **Australian Spotted Crakes** were reported from 5 locations in the past month (down from 8 in January), with up to 6 regularly reported from the JWNR, and a maximum of 4 at the other locations.

Buff-banded Rails were reported from 3 locations (5 in January), with single birds from the North Watson Wetlands on 30 January, the JWNR on 7 February and the big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR on 11 February. **Lewin's Rails** were reported from 4 locations (up from 2 in January) with up to 2 birds at the AIS wetland (Bruce) from 30 January to 3 February, single birds at the JWNR to 10 February and at the Googong Common on 9 February, and 2 birds at the Yankee Hut car park and track on 30 January.

The **Black-tailed Nativehen** at the big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR continued to be reported to 13 February, so it was present there for around 2.5 months this summer, having been first reported there on 30 November.



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Pied Stilts were reported 6 locations (as for January) which include 4 spots from the NW Lake George from where a maximum of 200 birds were reported on 11 February (otherwise 30 birds). There were 4 birds from both the Lake Bathurst survey and The Morass on 8 February (2 and 19 there, respectively, on 3 January). Otherwise, the maximum was 2 birds. **Red-capped Plovers** were reported from 2 locations (as for January), with a single bird on the Lake Bathurst Survey and 4 at the adjacent The Morass on 8 February.

However, there were no **Pacific Golden Plovers, Red-necked Avocets, Banded Lapwing, Australian Painted-snipe, Comb-crested Jacana, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed, Pectoral** or **Common Sandpipers** reported during the period. A **Caspian Tern** was reported from the JWNR on 29 January, but no **Whiskered** or **White-winged Black Terns** were reported during the period.

The **Great-crested Grebe** was reported from 7 locations (8 in January), with just 3 reported from the Bracks Hole Rd on the upper Cotter Dam on 28 January (compared with up to 15 in the previous period). There were 12 birds reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 8 February (with 11 there on 3 January) but none at The Morass (1 in January). There were 3 birds on the Corin Dam on 6 February, with 1-2 birds at the other 4 locations.

The **Australian Little Bittern** was heard calling at the JWNR only on 16 February, but no **Australasian Bitterns** were reported during the period.

No **Little Egrets** were again reported during the period, but **Plumed Egrets** were reported from 3 locations (2 in January), with up to 3 egrets observed at the JWNR to 3 February, and a single bird at the Goulburn Wetlands (just within the COG Aol) to 12 February. There was also one bird at the Bungendore Common on 20 and 22 February. In contrast **Great Egrets** were reported from 16 locations during the past month (13 in January), interestingly all but two within the ACT and including up to 4 birds regularly at the JWNR.

For reasons that remain unclear, the **White-necked Heron** continues to be widely reported from around 26 locations in the past month (over 20 in January), including 1 bird still at the dams on the S side of Narrabundah Hill. **Royal Spoonbills** were reported 13 locations during the past month (similar to January), with all but 2 within the ACT. On 23 February Shorty posted a video from the JWNR of a begging juvenile **Royal Spoonbill** following an adult and in the end being fed, but apart from one record on eBird of a juvenile begging there on 14 February, there is no indication of the breeding event actually having occurred there. Up to 5 (from Lake Bathurst on 8 February) **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** were reported from 5 locations (7 in January) during the period. A **Glossy Ibis** was reported from the JWNR on 6 February.

Single **Eastern Barn Owls** were reported 2 locations during the past month (7 in January), both heard at night, 1 at Zosterops Corner on 1 February and the other in Symonston on 5 February. A **Powerful Owl** was reported from the Warks/Bundell Creek Rds from 19-23 February. **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from around 14 locations in the past month, with numbers dropping again from the 22 locations in January. A **Spotted Harrier** was reported only (3 locations in January) from the Nass Rd at Apollo Rd on 28 January.

A **Black Falcon** was reported only from Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 31 January (6 locations in January) but no **Black Kites** (4 locations in January), **Pacific Baza** or **Grey Goshawks** were reported from anywhere in the COG Aol during the period.

Azure Kingfishers were reported from 2 locations (as for January) during the period with up to 3 birds regularly from the Cotter Bend and 2 at the adjacent Cotter Reserve. No **Red-backed** or **Forest Kingfishers** were reported during the period.

Musk Lorikeets were reported from 2 locations over the past month (3 in January), with 2 birds at Zosterops Corner on 7 February and also at Macarthur on 14

Coffee and Chat at the Gardens Tuesday, 10 March

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.

February. However, no **Glossy Black-Cockatoos, Cockatiel, Turquoise Parrot, Scaly-breasted, Little or Purple-crowned Lorikeets** were reported over the period.

Up to 2 **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters** were regularly reported from the known location at the Rock Valley in the Tidbinbilla NR throughout the period. On one occasion (11 February) a bird was photographed carrying food, and on 14 February a bird was observed catching insects in the grass and taking them back to a thick bushy area, via a perch in a dead tree above the bush. **White-fronted Chats** were reported from just 2 locations in the past month (as for January), with 20 birds at the Holborow Ave Ponds on 22-23 February. Two birds were reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 8 February; they were not present in the area on 3 January.

A **Little Friarbird** was reported from the Eaglehawk Hotel on 27 January, but no **Singing, Scarlet, Brown, Striped or Painted Honeyeaters, or Little Wattlebirds** were reported during the period. More surprisingly there were no **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** reported during the period (6 locations in January).

Chestnut-rumped Heathwren were reported from 2 locations (4 in January) with 1 photographed at Bluetts Block on 31 January, and a female calling regularly on Mt Tennent on 18 February. A **Black-faced Monarch** was photographed at Harold's Cross on 6 February.

Red-capped Robins were reported from up to 8 locations (7 in January), but with only a single bird (a male) from the Bracks Hole Fire Trail on 28 January. However, 2 birds (an adult female with rusty cap, being followed by juvenile with pale wing bars but no colour on the head or chest) were reported from the nearby Priors/Crusher Rds in the Cotter lower catchment on 3 February. A juvenile was also photographed from the Vanitys Crossing Rd in the Pierces Creek forest area on 2 February. Another young brown bird was photographed at the Nadjung Mada NR on 3 February. Two birds were reported from the Zosterops Corner on 3 February, and a single bird was reported about halfway between there and Murrumbateman on 9 February. Finally, an immature bird with a rusty forehead was photographed at the Rock Valley Homestead in the Tidbinbilla NR between 29 January and 3 February (as well as a full male there on 30 January) and at the nearby Hanging Rock on 12 February. It is clear that following the low numbers in the 3 wet years from 2020-2022 this species has returned and is breeding.

No **White-browed Babbler, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes, Apostlebird, Spangled Drongo, Tawny Grassbird or Zebra Finches** were reported during the period.

Jacky Winters were reported from just 1 (new) location over the period (3 in January) with 2 birds photographed on the Sutton Rd on 15 February. **Hooded Robins** were reported from 2 known locations (5 in January), with up to 4 birds (a pair and 2 juveniles on 1 February) at the Naas Rd near Spring Creek from 29 January to 13 February. Up to 2 birds were reported from the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 1, 18 and 22 February. The **Restless Flycatcher** was reported from only 1 known location (2 in January) with a single bird at the Nelanglo TSR on 15 February.

The **Brown Treecreeper** was reported from 4 locations in the past month (as for January), with up to 2 birds at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 1 and 18 February, with a late report there of 6 birds on 22 February. There were also up to 2 birds at the Yankee Hut car park and track from 4-20 February, 4 birds at the Nelanglo TSR on 15 February, and a single bird on the Rossi Rd S of Bungendore on 20 February.

Reports of "unusual" species nose-dived again over the period with very few reports of pigeons/doves, raptors, parrots and honeyeaters. Only numbers of the **White-necked Heron** and the **Red-capped Robin** seem to have markedly increased in the past month.

Breeding

Apart from the **Royal Spoonbill, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, White-browed Woodswallow, Australian Rufous Fantail** and the **Red-capped** and **Hooded Robins** noted above, the following are some other late summer breeding observations:

As an example of what careful observation of your local area can reveal, on 18 February Shorty let me know about his breeding records at his Symonston home and in the park in general for this season. They were **Shining-bronze Cuckoo** (he suspected **Superb Fairywrens** were the hosts as they have had none of their own), **Yellow-rumped, Yellow** and

Brown Thornbill, Red-browed Finch (they were nesting again for the third time, his highest count so far being 47 birds including juveniles), **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalote, Eastern Spinebill, Pied Currawong, Magpie-Lark, Willie Wagtail, Grey Fantail, White-winged Chough** and **Australian Raven**.

Sadly, his **Australian Magpies** nested twice but not long after he could hear the young in the nest, they went silent, the same as last season (as I included in my November 2025 column, we have had a number of very poor breeding seasons in Chapman/Rivett too). His **Red Wattlebirds** as usual had raised two of their own young and then raised an **Eastern Koel** fledgling. He did have two juveniles present for a short time one day but suspected the second was from another nest nearby.

On 9 February David Rosalky posted that there has been a green **Satin Bowerbird** (SBB) in his Deakin area behaving very much as if it is nesting, but he could not locate the nest as their elusive approach to their nest was quite effective. On the weekend, a green SBB had been busy in their garden seemingly foraging. At the same time, he heard unfamiliar cheeping, a bit like a sparrow. David noted he had never seen or heard a fledgling SBB and was wondering if that could be the sound, but HANZAB was not particularly helpful on the subject.

I responded to David that in my experience with **Satin Bowerbirds**, mainly from having young in my garden over the years, is that they are very quiet and it is often only possible to tell they are fledglings/juveniles by their still yellowish gapes rather than seen or heard being fed. I have put this down to the female SBB having to do all the sitting and feeding by herself (including defending the eggs/young), while the male stays around the bower trying to attract other partners.

Philip Veerman agreed with me, but Geoffrey Dabb posted that in his experience the young juveniles, say to 6 months, are also distinctly brownish. I responded that in my experience, especially in poorer light, I've always found it very hard to tell green birds apart except when green males start developing much lighter bills. Interestingly on 18 February I had 2 green **Satin Bowerbirds** above my tomatoes and after a while I could hear both making the same softish contact call noise, readily identifiable as SBBs. One had food in its bill which it fed to the other when it moved towards it. While they were hard to distinguish due to the poor light, the juvenile did seem slightly browner than the feeding parent.

On 15 February Julian Robinson posted about an interesting sighting he had the week before at Callum Brae. Initially a young **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** caught his eye and seemed to remain in the same area for some time. Finally, he realised there were probably two, and he took a dozen photographs and watched it/them for about 15 minutes, feeding and perching. Only one or eventually two were visible at a time. However, checking the photos later he was surprised to see that he had captured 5 different individuals. He noted that from the observer's point of view it would be easy to miss a similar gathering - his was only noticed because he was stationary for long enough to suspect more than one and then took multiple photos. Without the camera the count would have been 2, and if he had not been stationary, only 1 bird.

With his photos arranged in order of eye-ring development, he could show the young birds covered a range of stages of development – a still gapy juvenile to a nearly grey-backed immature. Julian hadn't heard of this number of young cuckoos keeping company before and wondered if it is actually unusual or not. He noted there have been discussions of the post-fledging behaviour of cuckoos in Canberra, including whether parents hang around to check on their offspring, and also whether young birds team up with others or with biological parents or other adults for whatever reason (migration, company, mutual protection?).



Five **Fan-tail Cuckoos**, Callum Brae, 15 February 2026, *Julian Robinson*

This is a truly remarkable sighting, which clearly demonstrates the value of closely examining your observations. I responded that I have one example of a similar occurrence with the **Eastern Koel** when I saw at least 4 fledglings in my garden on the morning of 26 March 2021. While a couple were still giving their characteristic begging call, I suspected that at least some were independent and moving through on their migration N. In my articles in CBN there are other examples of up to 3 fledglings/juveniles close together but generally they were still begging and fed by their **Red Wattlebird** hosts.

The only other similar example I could recall is up to 4 **Shining Bronze-cuckoos** together at the Tidbinbilla NR on 3 April 2005. They were probably congregating for food, and Julian uncovered another very interesting report by Hugh Possingham in CBN in O'Malley on 26 February 1989 that is also related to a food source, this time attracting a large Mixed Feeding Flock which included a very unusual collection of cuckoos - "3 **Fan-tailed Cuckoos**, 2 **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos**, 1 **Black-eared Cuckoo** and 2 **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos**".

So, it remains unclear whether this gathering is a regular occurrence that is normally not noticed by observers, or a rare occurrence that is exceptional and not representative of normal cuckoo behaviour.

With the many young **Eastern Koels** that I have been observing close to home this season I have had at least a couple of further examples where there were 2 fledglings begging in the same yard, and another could be heard within 100 m away. With so many around, it's been a very confusing season for me to estimate how many fledglings/immatures there actually have been, for example, finding them still in the same spot 3 weeks later when the original young there was already quite advanced. Unfortunately, unlike Julian I am not a photographer, and while photos of them may have helped, I am very reluctant to stand close to people's gardens with a camera while trying to find the noisy but often-hidden young birds.

My tally of **Eastern Koel** fledglings of which I am aware now stands at 177 for the season (35 in the past 4 weeks), again with the **Red Wattlebird** the only known host. These include a very young one photographed at the Yass Riverbank Park on 8 February and an immature recorded begging at the Goulburn Wetlands on 4 February. While reports slowed down from around the end of the first week of February (after the rain) there are still quite a few being reported, particularly from Belconnen. I heard my last one in Chapman/Rivett (one moving through our garden begging very loudly for several minutes) a week ago. Adult calling also dropped significantly after the rain.

Flocks, including of migrating birds

There is a misconception amongst some birders that mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) only form in winter. My experience is that they can form any time after the breeding season, say from mid-January, and I expected the very dry conditions up to the end of the first week of February would have encouraged collective feeding but few MFFs have come to my attention.

Easily the most notable was a remarkable ground MFF Andrea and I ran into on the W side of the Narrabundah Hill reserve (note Western Edge country), with the 16 species in some way associated observed over 10 minutes. Some were using the boundary fence line from which to hawk, including 6 **Willie Wagtails**, 5 **Dusky Woodswallows**, 2 **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** (one an immature) and 2 **Red-browed Finch**. There was also a pair of **White-winged Trillers** with a male still in full breeding plumage quietly feeding in the paddock, and a female on the track. Exactly what was attracting them along the fence beside a very dry paddock and with an extensive blackberry patch on the other side of the track was not clear.

In regards to large flocks of single species, **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** have been returning to the Narrabundah Hill area, with 24 birds over our house in Chapman on 22 February heading East into the suburbs.

On 23 February Tracy Rail posted that while they regularly see and hear a dozen or more **Superb Parrots** flying over or stopping off in parts of Higgins, over recent days they have both seen enormous flocks flying over from east to west. A few days before she saw a minimum of 36 parrots. That afternoon her husband saw the biggest flock he said he had ever seen, upwards of 40 birds. Tracy asked "Any thoughts on what might be going on? Are they migrating? Perhaps flying from Gorooyaroo or doing a smaller circuit from Kama?"

I contacted **Superb Parrot** expert Laura Rayner who confirmed they are seeing good numbers in Canberra this year. She also confirmed that some work to protect their nests in Goorooyaroo appears to have been very successful, which may have contributed some additional young to these flocks.

Towards the end of March, the first **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** will start their migration. On 15 February Andrea and I saw at least 10 Yellow-faced Honeyeaters in Coombs that appeared to be associated with MFF that seemed to be coming up from the Molonglo River, stopping briefly in a medium size casuarina, then going over the track and road towards the houses.

March is the middle month when there is lots of bird movement and activity in the COG AoI. So please watch out for the last of the departing spring/summer migrants mentioned above, particularly the **White-throated Needletail** and the **Fork-tailed Swift**, and for the first of the returning autumn/winter altitudinal migrants. Watch out also for MFFs and single species flocks, roosts and roost flights, as well as for any autumn breeding (remember the COG Ethical Birding Guidelines). As usual please ensure that all significant sightings are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

Once again, my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to my two main data sources, posting on the COG/ Canberra Birds e-mail Discussion List (“COG chat line”) and the eBird Australia database, as well as direct correspondence with me. As always, I am very grateful to all involved for publishing this information without which it would not be possible to put this column together.

Jack Holland



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Image credit: Alan Landford

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

Summary of the 11 February meeting

The first presentation at our new (temporary) venue, the Bugang Room in the Denman Village Community Centre, was a very topical one by **Simon Copland**, Executive Director of the Conservation Council ACT Region, on “**Saving Canberra's Western Edge**”.

Members' strong interest in this campaign was clearly shown by the more than 50 attendees for our first meeting at this venue, from which, as Simon pointed out, the view outside allowed a very clear indication of why it is so important to save this area from development.

Canberra's Western Edge is a beautiful area of critically endangered ecosystems to Canberra's west, that is potentially up for unsustainable, unaffordable and dangerous development by the ACT Government. As Simon's map showed, this important area is bordered by the Murrumbidgee River and the regions of Kambah, Weston Creek, the Molonglo Valley and Belconnen,

Simon noted that the idea for the campaign was seeded by the ACT Government needing to set its urban boundary over the next 2 years as part of the agreement with the Greens after the 2024 election, and that the Conservation Council feels that it is very important to tell the government now, before decisions are made, that we want our Western Edge kept outside of that boundary.

This protective buffer is needed as it is an ecological sanctuary featuring beautiful rivers, woodlands and grasslands that is home to many rare plants, birds and animals. It is also a sacred Ngunnawal site as well as a place for many Canberrans to relax and enjoy.

Simon made the very important point that the campaign is about much more than creating a large parkland reserve and thus they are adopting a flexible approach as matters develop. In this respect, there has already been very good engagement with local farmers, many of which are very aware of environmental values such as wildlife corridors. He also noted a very important development is that the draft Nature Conservation Strategy with its “nature positive” approach has recently been released for consultation by the ACT Government.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members many thanks to Simon for giving up his valuable time to tell us about this very important campaign to save an area which many of us are very familiar with and have used for both birding and recreation. We were truly amazed at how much progress, due to Simon's hard work, has already been made since its launch in August 2025.

For readers wanting to learn more about this campaign the link to the campaign page is www.conservationcouncil.org.au/western-edge.

To illustrate some of the values of the Western Edge, Canberra Birds President Kim Farley then gave a presentation about the birds and other fauna/flora of one of her favourite sites, which she has recently termed the “Stromlo Woodlands”, and where she has been surveying for around 10 years.

Using a map Kim showed that the “Stromlo Woodlands” are almost as big as Bluetts Block and very close to it, and incorporates the Uriarra TSR, forming 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 is a less visited site, possibly because it is fenced off and thought to be private land and thus not accessible.

It has a bird list of 108 species on eBird. Kim illustrated with photos some of the avian highlights with the presence of an adult male (on one occasion a second bird believed to be a female was present, but there were not clear views) **Hooded Robin** in October 2025 probably the most notable as eBird shows it is the closest recent record to suburban Canberra.

Species known to breed there include **Speckled Warblers, White-throated** and **Western Gerygones, White-winged Trillers, Dusky Woodswallows, Varied Sittellas, Leaden Flycatchers** and **Scarlet Robins**. The **Gang-gang Cockatoo**,

Rainbow Bee-eater, Pied Butcherbird and Diamond Firetail have also been recorded there, and in autumn there is a known honeyeater migration route coming up a deep gully from the Murrumbidgee towards Belconnen.

Kim also showed slides of some of the flora, including an extensive flora list for which she thanked Rainer Rehwinkel for his very large contribution. The site has a range of vegetation communities including some of the very old trees and is not too weedy.

On behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Kim for giving up some of her very valuable time to tell us about the fauna and flora values of this very interesting location. It highlighted very clearly the need to save Canberra's Western Edge as a protected buffer zone and was the perfect follow up to the Saving the Western Edge presentation.

Jack Holland

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



Tonya Hall, ANWC and COG members, ANWC, February 2026, *Tee Tong Teo*

We were shown a variety of specimens from the familiar to the exotic to the (sadly) extinct. Close views of cassowaries trussed like chickens to fit on the draws revealed the detailed scales on their feet and legs. A comparison of different species of albatross illustrated the sheer size of the Wandering Albatross. Drawers of Wompoo Pigeons from Papua New Guinea and northern Queensland highlighted the differences in the size and colouring of birds from each region, illustrating the so-called 'Bergmann effect' of how birds that live closer to the Equator are often smaller and more colourful.

Specimens are also invaluable for identification. The attributes of familiar species such as Leaden and Satin Flycatchers, female Grey and Chestnut Teal, and Collared Sparrowhawk and Brown Goshawk that are not always easy to differentiate in the field could be examined closely. A striking example is two inland species, the Chiming and Chirruping Wedgebills. While fine dark streaking on the throat and breast of the latter field can be a guide to identification, close inspection of three female specimens all showed no obvious external difference. One simply has to learn the calls.

Have you ever wondered what lies in storage in the 'Bird Vault' at the ANWC? Twenty members had a rare chance to find out on two recent tours of the collection of bird specimens led by Tonya Haff, Director of the ANWC, and Julian Teh.

The 'Bird Vault' is a purpose-built storage for bird specimens housed at the ANWC. The specimens are preserved for research, such as into plumage and colour variation, and to provide genetic material for DNA and isotopic research, and for questions that will arise in the future. The specimens are arranged carefully by species in draws in taxonomic order (although the sequence was finalised not long before AviList was released). Male birds face forward or left and female birds are placed facing right, which is easily remembered, as Tonya quipped, 'Girls are always right'.



Wandering Albatross wing, ANWC, February 2026, *Tee Tong Teo*

The remains of two extinct species were also carefully shown – a pair of Paradise Parrots that once formed part of a nineteenth-century taxidermy display and the skull of a Thylacine, about 4000 years old, discovered by archaeologists at Yarrangobilly caves.

Just as interesting as the specimens themselves are the stories about how they made their way into the collection – via collectors, the occasional gift, or from members of the public. Jack Holland, for example, was briefly reunited with a young Eastern Koel that had been electrocuted which he gave to the collection.

A note to readers: if you come across a freshly dead bird, wrap it in a paper towel and place it in a zip lock or several plastic bags and pop it into the freezer before contacting the ANWC to ask whether the specimen is of interest to them. We extend our thanks to Tonya and Julian for generously sharing their time and expertise to lead these groups through the collection.

Julie Hotchin



Clockwise - **Wompoo Fruit Dove**, Tee Tong Teo; **Grey & Chestnut Teal**, Julie Hotchin; **Paradise Parrot**, Tee Tong Teo, **Chirruping & Chiming Wedgebill**, Venus Mizubata; ANWC, February 2026

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 1 February – Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR – World Wetlands Day

This outing is held each year to celebrate World Wetlands Day (which actually occurs on February 2) and the theme for 2026 was celebrating cultural heritage and traditional knowledge.

After a week of heatwave conditions, it was a relief to start this walk in cool conditions and overcast skies and, when we finished about 10.30, the temperature was only 23°C. This meant that birds were very active, including the more cryptic species.

With 20 attendees, we split the group into two, with two scopes each, and this allowed everyone to have close views of **Latham's Snipe**, **Australian Spotted Crake** and **Freckled Duck**, as well as the more common ducks, waterhens and even an immature **Australasian Grebe** sitting in one place as it had an extended preening session. When we first arrived, **Nankeen Night Herons** were still flying around and one perched in a tree, giving great scope views. Three **Great Egrets** were frequently on the move, with two of them in a combative mood, but unfortunately the recently-reported **Plumed Egrets** were not present.

Moving between the hides, we found a young **Pacific Koel** being fed by a **Red Wattlebird**, and elsewhere saw an adult female **Pacific Koel**. **Red-browed Finches** and **Silvereyes** were plentiful, and one group was lucky enough to watch an immature **Little Grassbird** feeding in the grassed area behind Snipe hide.

A welcome shower arrived about 10am, with one group lucky enough to be in Cygnus hide at the time. The rain increased bird activity with a **Latham's Snipe** appearing on the muddy edge to feed right in front of the hide and then **Royal Spoonbills** flying into the shallows to feed energetically to the delight of the onlookers. Unfortunately, the other group was caught in the open as they attempted to complete the circuit of Kelly Swamp.

The species total was 54 when both groups shared their sightings. There were many new birders among the attendees and all appeared to enjoy the experience.

Thanks to Lia, Desley and Sandra for their assistance.

Sue Lashko



Sunday 8 February - Lake Tuggeranong, Isabella Pond, Upper Stranger Pond

Mark Tindale led a group of 11 for a successful outing in the vicinity of Lake Tuggeranong. Canberra had received steady rain overnight and the cooler conditions were welcomed after several hot days. Light rain began falling again as the observers – now a procession of raincoats and umbrellas – started walking, and it did not stop until everyone was driving home.

At Lake Tuggeranong Weir, 23 species were sighted. As might be expected, the list included **Eurasian Coot**, **Australasian Swamphen**, **Dusky Moorhen**, **Pacific Black Duck**, **Maned Duck** and **Silver Gulls**, along with a **Black Swan** and a **Great Cormorant**. Other birds included **Red-rumped Parrots** on the ground, with **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**, **Little Corellas** and **Welcome Swallows** flying overhead.

At Isabella Pond, there were greater numbers of **Maned Duck** and **Pacific Black Duck** along with **Grey Teal**. Additional species sighted here included **Hardheads**, **Australasian Grebes**, **Little Pied Cormorant**, **Little Black Cormorant**, **Australian Pelican** and **White-faced Heron**.



CanberraBirds members, **Red-rumped Parrots**, Lake Tuggeranong, 8 February 2026, *Tee Tong Teo*

The group's stoicism was rewarded at Upper Stranger Pond, where 6 male and 1 female **Blue-billed Ducks** were observed. Further out on the water, a **Great Crested Grebe** was sighted in the company of several **Silver Gulls**. Conditions were not great for spotting bush birds but species observed during the morning included **Red-browed Finch**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbill**, **Rufous Whistler** and **Willie Wagtail**.

Thanks to Mark for organising and to Lia for keeping the list. Despite the less-than-ideal conditions, everyone enjoyed the morning!

Evan Bitmead

Tuesday 10 February – Mulligans Flat NR evening walk

Sandra Henderson led a group of 20 for a pleasant after-dinner stroll on the woodland loop of Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve from the carpark on Eric Wright Street, Forde.

It was warm and partly cloudy, with an intermittent breeze that made for ideal walking conditions. Birds were very quiet, however, with a total of 20 species observed. No nocturnal birds seen and the Bush Stone-curlews were silent.

Numbers of **Galahs**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**, **Crimson Rosellas**, **Eastern Rosellas** and **Australian Magpies** were seen along the walk.

Australian Wood Duck, **Pacific Black Duck**, **Australasian Grebe** and **Australian White Ibis** were seen at the small dam, with a **Common Bronzewing** flying across.

Brown-headed Honeyeaters and **Buff-rumped Thornbills** were seen in a small mixed flock passing quickly overhead in the canopy. Other species observed before the light faded included **Laughing Kookaburra**, **White-throated Treecreeper**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Noisy Miner**, **Pied Currawong**, **Grey Fantail** and **Australian Raven**.



CanberraBirds Members; Echidna, Mulligans Flat NR, 10 February 2026, Tee Tong Teo



Eastern Bettong, Mulligans Flat NR, 10 February 2026, Tee Tong Teo

Red-necked and Swamp Wallabies, Eastern Bettongs, Common Brushtail Possums and Echidnas provided interest along the way, in addition to many Eastern Grey Kangaroos.

Everyone enjoyed the evening and will be back again with their torches next year!

Thanks to Sandra for organising this outing after the scheduled January outing was cancelled due to extreme heat. Thanks also to Julie McGuinness for keeping the list and to Julie Hotchin and Tee Tong Teo for the photos.

Evan Bitmead

Sunday 15 February – Stromlo West Woodland

Twenty-seven members and guests, including some new birders, joined Kim Farley for a leisurely walk through the Stromlo woodlands, at the far western edge of Stromlo Forest Park. The adjoining Uriarra Travelling Stock Reserve is part of Stromlo woodlands, although we did not cross the fence into the TSR during our walk.



Western Gerygone, Stromlo West Woodland, 15 February 2026, *Richard Marris*

Rufous Whistler, Stromlo West Woodland, 15 February 2026, *Tee Tong Teo*

For most people it was their first visit to the area, which is a 98 hectare (240 acre) area of Box-Gum Grassy Woodland with, some Natural Temperate Grassland, a rocky ridge, shrublands and some lovely views to the Murrumbidgee River corridor and Brindabellas.

We walked, mostly following well-used kangaroo trails, across grassland then onto the ridge, before making a wide loop through shrublands and back through an area of tree regrowth following the 2003 bushfires. We saw some magnificent trees including Blakely’s Red Gum, Red Stringybark, Yellow Box, Apple Box, Mealy Bundy and Ironbark.

Bird numbers were less than expected, probably a reflection of the chatter amongst the large group. However, as we entered the area we were greeted by the beautiful calls of three **Pied Butcherbirds**. Other highlights included: two surprisingly quiet **Dollarbirds**; an adult **Tawny Frogmouth** sitting high up in the fork of a tree; two **Western Gerygones**, including one recent fledgling; two **Wedge-tailed Eagles** soaring high above, with the youngster being heard calling long before we saw them; a juvenile **Rufous Whistler** being fed by a female; and an **Australian Owlet-nightjar** calling. Other birds seen and/or heard by some of the group included **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Grey Currawong**, and both **Striated** and **Spotted Pardalotes**.

With 108 bird species having been reported at Stromlo woodlands in the last few years, including several ACT Vulnerable or Threatened species, after a lovely couple of hours wandering through the varying habitats, the group had seen 34 species with 139 individual birds.

Angela Booth



Tawny Frogmouth, CanberraBirds members, **Dollarbird**, Stromlo West Woodland, 15 February 2026, *Tee Tong Teo*

Wednesday 18 February 2006, Palmerville Heritage Park and Giralang Pond

We met at the Palmerville Heritage Park, a new location for many of us. A heritage trail has been created, with information signs giving some history of the settlement, and a new boardwalk over the sometimes boggy areas. **Double-barred** and **Red-browed Finches**, **Golden-headed Cisticolas** and **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** were some of the more interesting of the 29 species seen.

It was only a short walk to Giralang Pond, where we searched without success for Nankeen Night Herons. A **Great Egret**, **Royal Spoonbill**, **Latham’s Snipe** and a **White-faced Heron** were among the 36 species recorded at this location.

Thanks to Richard for the bird lists, and Margaret for leading the walk.

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 22 February - National Arboretum

Twenty-one experienced and novice bird enthusiasts were led by Michael Robbins on a tour of the northern section of the National Arboretum. We started the walk through a mixed native planting on the way to the Cork Oak forest, and heard **Grey Butcherbird**. In the Cork Oaks, we discovered a mud nest belonging to a large family of **White-winged Chough**. We counted around 15 near the nest and 30 over the morning, so perhaps there were two families in the area? The forest edge afforded views of the nearby paddocks with a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** perched on a low branch in the distance. It was soon accompanied by a second eagle and later in the morning we saw both flying high above us. **Red-rumped Parrots** were seen flying across the paddock without stopping to give us a good look at them. Looking back into the forest we were given fleeting glances of **Silvereyes** and **Grey Fantails**. However, the thick foliage of the cork trees meant not everybody had a good sighting. Retracing our steps back to the carpark revealed an **Olive-backed Oriole** perched in a eucalypt tree.

Heading up Boundary Road, we watched with amusement as the **Noisy Miners**, **Australian Raven**, **Pied Currawong**, **Common Starling**, **Common Myna** and **White-winged Chough** feasted on figs in the fig plantation. Later in the morning we encountered a volunteer with a rather poor harvest to make jam for fundraising.



Australian Mappie, National Arboretum, ACT, 22 February 2026, Linda J. Wilson

The highlight of the day was reaching the top of Boundary Road, and seeing a flock of 13 **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** and 3 **Double-barred Finches**. Everybody had a good look and with our breath caught, we headed downhill to the STEP garden. It was about this point that Lia (keeping our eBird list) was made virtually redundant. We saw precious little in the way of birds, although the group enjoyed observing the diverse range of plants local to the Southern Tablelands.



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As the morning was getting on, we decided to skip the optional coffee at the visitor centre and instead marched up another hill to the Himalayan Cedars. A small number of birds were observed. Maybe a few 'new' **Crimson Rosella**. And back through the fig plantation, maybe a 'new' **Eastern Rosella** - we were careful to look, maybe touch, but definitely not pick the figs. It was 99 for the birds and 1 for the volunteer.

Our 4.5km walk led us back to the carpark where we all thanked Michael for leading this walk and Lia for recording 31 species and then sharing the bird list with others.



Ben Bradey

CanberraBirds
members, Stromlo
West Woodland,
ACT, 15 February
2026, 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 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

Wednesday 18 March – Molonglo Loop, Weston

We will start near the RSPCA and walk a 4.5km loop. **Meet at 8.30am** near the RSPCA (there is plenty of parking nearby at North Weston Ponds). Most of this walk is flat, but care needs to be taken because the path is used by many cyclists. We'll cross the river on the low-level causeway and return on the far side of river, crossing again on the higher-level bridge not far from the end of North Weston Ponds.

As usual, wear sturdy shoes, bring a hat, sunscreen and water.

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

Michael Robbins

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%2C%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

Easter Sunday 5 April - Narrabundah Hill - morning outing

This is another field trip to sites on Canberra's Western Edge. For more information see: <https://conservationcouncil.org.au/western-edge/>

Description: Those members who will be staying at home this Easter and/or who will have visiting birder friends are welcome to join this outing to the Narrabundah Hill reserve, a major location on Canberra's Western Edge. This outing has again been timed for the autumn honeyeater migration season, with the northern and western boundaries of the reserve having known local migration routes. We will walk along these two boundaries, depending on conditions and the species seen, possibly along most of the western one, and we will either return by the same or a different path. This will be up to 5 km on relatively flat ground. We will also look for other autumn birds such as **Scarlet Robin** and mixed feeding flocks, or late departing summer migrants such as gerygones.

Meeting time: While daylight savings will have ended that morning the **walk will start at 8:30 am** to maximise the opportunity to see the honeyeaters which in early April generally come through later in the morning.

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

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

Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 April – Eden pelagics

Two one-day pelagics have been booked, departing from Eden at 7am to approximately 3pm each day. The cost will be about \$164 per day. The boat holds just 12 passengers, so early booking is recommended. At this stage, I am taking bookings for **one day only**. If there are vacancies later, you may be able to go on both days. Note that almost everyone who has booked so far wants to go on both days so, if you want a spot, **register before Sunday 1 March**.

To register, I require the following information (please reply by numbering 1 to 4 and providing your answers):

1. Name and mobile number
2. Name and number of an emergency contact
3. Which day do you wish to register for? Sat 11 April, or Sun 12 April?

If a vacancy occurs, do you wish to go on both days?

Register at smlashko@gmail.com

Sue Lashko and Julian Teh

Saturday 11 April – K2C surveys, Bredbo area

COG will continue with the K2C surveys that have been running since April 2010 in the Michelago-Bredbo area. The surveyed properties have healthy populations of many of the rarer woodland birds such as **Diamond Firetail**, **Hooded Robin** and **Speckled Warbler**. We will be visiting the same sites to continue the monitoring and see if we can witness the autumn migrations. The surveys will be undertaken in 'blitz' fashion; that is, observers in small groups will visit a number of sites on one or more properties before regrouping for lunch and a sharing of the survey's findings. Less experienced observers are welcome to join in the survey as each team will have at least one experienced observer. Anyone interested in participating is asked to contact Nicki Taws before Wednesday 8 April. Email: ntaws@bigpond.com with your name, mobile number, and the name and contact of an emergency contact.

Nicki Taws

Sunday 12 April – Wandiyali near Googong

On this outing we will visit Wandiyali, a privately-owned wildlife reserve between Jerrabomberra and Googong. Wandiyali includes a 600ha sanctuary protected by a predator-proof fence - see <https://wandiyalirestorationtrust.org/> Wandiyali recently entered into a partnership with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy to reintroduce locally extinct species to the sanctuary: <https://wandiyalirestorationtrust.org/news/about-our-partnership-with-awc-australian-wildlife-conservancy> and

<https://www.australianwildlife.org/sanctuaries/wandiyalienvirona-wildlife-sanctuary?srsId=AfmBOorprC2k8eV23Ngmsv4Wz2v05jKUub7zXk77i3hleUhsC4ccqQf>

Wandiyali has a range of habitats including grassland, open woodland, gullies and wetlands so we should see a good range of birds. There are also lots of native mammals and reptiles. The sanctuary was recently in the news because it was visited by a koala.

We'll be accompanied by Kaz and Sandy, the landholders, who'll give an introduction to Wandiyali and show us the best spots for birds.

Wandiyali has a Landcare volunteer program (which I'm involved in), so if you are interested in helping to manage and protect this amazing oasis, this will be a great opportunity to talk to Kaz and Sandy about getting involved.

Please be prepared to walk off trails, so long pants and sensible shoes are a must as it will be snake season. Walking poles are optional. We'll avoid the steepest sections but there will likely be some rolling country.

Please bring water and a snack for morning tea - we'll likely be out for a few hours.



The eight card designs:

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

Canberra Birds 8-pack of greeting cards

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

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

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

Shop directly via
stuartmcmillen.com/shop

Please meet at 8:00am at the main gate marked on this Google maps pin:

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/aBtscEbQA8HhCrTz5>

It's also useful to read these old-fashioned directions:

- Head south on Old Cooma Road from the junction with Edwin Land Parkway.
- Continue along Old Cooma Road for 3.7km.
- Turn right into an unnamed road/driveway (note that Google maps may say you can't turn right here but there is a turning lane and it is legal and safe to turn here). Note that there is no sign for Wandiyali on the corner.
- Continue along the driveway for around 1.2km to the main gate.
- After turning off Old Cooma Road, you will see the sanctuary fence start after a few hundred metres on the left.
- Ignore the houses and driveways on the right.
- You will pass the first gate in the sanctuary fence on the left - ignore this gate and keep driving along the driveway.
- You will reach the main gate where I will be waiting to assign parking and let you into the sanctuary.
- You shouldn't get lost, but if you do, call me on 0418 264 868.

Numbers will be limited to 25 people, so first in best dressed. Register at pickelbarrel@gmail.com with your name, mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Marcus Hellyer

Sunday 19 April 2026 - Dalton Cemetery and Showground, Jerrawa Travelling Stock Reserve, and Gundaroo Cemetery and Common

Description: The first two sites are in the Upper Lachlan Shire north of Gunning. They have good connectivity with nearby woodlands. **Jacky Winter**, **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Rose Robin** have been recorded at Dalton Cemetery. Jerrawa Creek TSR has had **Pied Butcherbird** and **Common Bronzewing**. Gundaroo Cemetery and Common near Yass River are good for raptors including **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Spotted Harrier** and **Brown Falcon**.

Meeting time and place: Victoria St carpark, Sutton Primary School carpark at 8.00 am for carpooling. Suggested contribution for petrol - \$10 per passenger.

Walking distance: Dalton 0.8 km, Jerrawa Ck 1.6 km and Gundaroo Cemetery and Common 1 km

Degree of difficulty: easy

End time: 4.00 pm at Sutton

What to bring: water, morning tea, lunch, sunscreen, water, sturdy shoes, hat.

Numbers: limited to 16

Participants must **register** with the leader at bsgraham1948@gmail.com , providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact

Bill Graham

Sunday 26 April - Private properties at Wallaces Gap near Majors Creek

Today's walk will cover three properties across a variety of habitats and all property owners are keen bird watchers, happy to share their experiences and special places with visitors. It will be the first time that Canberra Birds have been to this location.

We will start at the highest point of our trip leader's property (Ben), descending through the Silvertop Ash forest. We should at least hear **Eastern Yellow Robin** and **Superb Lyrebirds**. **Gang-gang Cockatoos** and **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** are often seen in this area along with **Spotted Quail-thrush** and **Grey Currawongs**. As we reach the valley floor, we will enter Lucy's property dominated by Black Wattle and Black Sheoak, a favourite food source of the **Glossy Black-Cockatoo**. We can expect to see where they have been feeding although they normally only appear at dusk.

Next we will make our way to Marshall's property and stop for a quick morning tea (BYO) in their sheltered courtyard. The Peppermint Gums nearby are host to many small birds including **Yellow-rumped**, **Striated** and **Brown Thornbills**, both pardalotes, **Varied Sittellas**, and **Crescent**, **White-naped**, **New Holland**, **Brown-headed** and **White-eared Honeyeaters**. **Satin Bowerbirds** are regularly seen here as well.

We then follow a wet gully (**Black-faced Monarch** and **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** each seen once) to nearby Brick Kiln Creek. The wide creek bed contains thick strands of tea tree and we will hear many birds within the bushes, but need to

wait patiently on the bank for them to appear as they fly up into the Snow and Ribbon Gums nearby. **Sacred** and **Azure Kingfishers** have been observed near the creek.

Our walk continues along the creek with the adjacent Snow Gum-grassy woodland landscape providing habitat for robins, swallows and thornbills. A short uphill section (option for a car shuffle) leads up to Ben's house where we will stop for lunch (BYO) to enjoy the view (and birds) from the deck. With luck the resident **Wedge-tailed Eagle** may now be spotted tracing the invisible thermals high above.

Our drivers will be taken back to the start in order to retrieve their cars and save everybody a long walk back up the hill. Keep an eye out for **herons** on the nearby farm dams as we leave.

The walk is about 3kms, mostly flat or downhill and mostly on driveways or bush tracks. Wear suitable footwear in case we decide to go off-track. Walking poles optional. Bring water and food for the trip. Toilets are available at each property if needed.

Meet at Spotlight Queanbeyan at 7:15am for a 70 minute drive to the property. Suggested contribution for drivers if carpooling is \$10 – please bring correct money.

End time is approximately 2pm before returning to Queanbeyan soon after 3pm.

Please **register** with Ben Bradey (bbradeyau@yahoo.com.au) and include your name, phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Sunday 10 May – Nursery Swamp

On this trip we will visit one of the most delightful spots in Namadgi National Park. **Spotted Quail-thrush** have been seen and heard on the uphill section, and in the higher altitude section, there's the possibility of **Olive Whistler**.

Meet at the Kambah Village shopping centre car park (cnr Drakeford Drive and Marconi Crescent) at 8.30 am for carpooling. Suggested contribution from each passenger to drivers: \$10.

We will then drive to the Orroral Valley. The first part of the walk is 2 km uphill on a fairly steep track, then we continue along a valley through Black Saltees to Nursery Swamp, a fen at 1,100 metres altitude containing peat that has been dated to 10,000 years BP. The walking distance is about 10 km round trip. The area is of great significance to Aboriginal people, containing both rock art and tool-making sites.

We will return in the early afternoon, so bring morning tea, lunch and water, and be prepared for changeable weather as we will be at altitude.

Registration for this trip is essential **by 6pm on Friday 8 May**; maximum: 16 attendees.

To register, or to obtain further information, please contact the trip leader, Michael by email - mrobbins (at) home.netspeed.com.au with your name, mobile number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Michael Robbins

Saturday 16 May – Australian National Botanic Gardens – beginners' outing

This morning walk will be the first for 2026 aimed specifically to help beginners and new members identify birds and to learn about their behaviour and calls. The Botanic Gardens are especially suitable for such an outing, as they allow the



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opportunity to observe a range of local bush birds in a variety of habitats. Due to the available food supply, they are also a relative haven for birds during late autumn/winter. Anthony Overs will lead this outing, which will consist of a stroll through this lovely part of Canberra for a couple of hours. Meet at 9.15am at the ANBG bus shelter. Registration is essential; please provide your name and mobile phone number, as well as an emergency contact name and number. Book your place with Anthony (0419202155, or anthony.overs@gmail.com), who will be happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you. Please make sure to bring your binoculars and field guide.

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

Anthony Overs

Sunday 24 May – Kama Nature Reserve

Description. Although not part of the proposed Western Edge development, the habitat and birds in the Reserve area are a good representative of flora and fauna to be found in the area designated as the Western Edge. Excellent views of parts of the proposed area can also be viewed from the Reserve.

Kama Nature Reserve is a designated COG woodland site with surveys conducted since 2005 by Chris Davey. Surveys were first conducted before the area was declared a Reserve and was grazed by cattle and sheep, so there have been many changes since then.

The habitat in the Reserve consists of Yellow-Box/Red Gum woodland in the northern section leading to grassland and riverine habitat to the south. This outing will be conducted in the woodland section of the Reserve.

During the walk we will visit some of the monitoring points and compare images taken in 2005, 2015 and again in 2025 showing the changes in the vegetation as the area slowly recovers from the effects of stock grazing.

Meeting time and place. The outing will start at 8:00am at the Reserve carpark (-35.2597 149.0296). The carpark is situated on the northern side of William Hovell Drive. If heading from the City, continue past the entrance and turn back at the roundabout where William Hovell Drive meets Drake Brockman Drive. DO NOT TRY to ENTER the CARPARK when heading north across on-coming traffic. The Reserve is entered via a stock path underneath Hovell Drive.

Walk details. The walk will cover about 5 km on well-formed dirt tracks and take about 2-3 hours. Water, a sun hat and good walking shoes will be required.

Please **register** with Chris (daveychris12@gmail.com) and include your name, phone number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Chris Davey



Gang-gang Cockatoo, 10 February 2026, Richard Marris

JASPER. A POEM BY EDWINA SMITH.

Dear Nature,

We are very lucky
and have the perfect spot.
There's lots of forest trees
for when it gets too hot.
A stream meanders by
not far from where we live.
Blessed by nature's bounty,
the bush has much to give.

With Tilly on the wing
together we attend,
to our timbered home
that we all defend.
Our family's quite a team,
keep watch and do their bit.
They're always on the lookout,
work hard and never quit.

We love our native gum,
standing strong and old.
It's hollow etched by time
and worth its weight in gold.
Great success with nesting!
Our family grew by two:
hatched, fed and feathered
from that tree they flew!

Campers came our way,
a trip to fish the stream.
They pitched an ageing tent
that had a faulty seam.
They settled for the night
but couldn't zip the door.
Our early morning calls
will wake them up for sure.

Morning broke, no one woke,

the campers still in bed.
Way up high, a branch close by,
we perched just overhead.
Our raucous calls then began,
a laughing, cackling sound.
We were shortly soon to see
what one of them had found!

Bleary eyed and sleepy,
he yawned and turned his head.
With mind in disbelief
he very calmly said:
"Bill and Blake, there's a snake.
I'd better 'take' him out.
Need a stick, I'll be quick,
don't move, talk or shout."

From the tent he crept,
his mission very clear.
So scared he nearly wept,
no time to shed a tear.
He found a sturdy stick
to give a lethal clout.
His second thought was better,
just lift the blighter out!

Now we hushed our calls,
all still within the tent.
A head poked out the flap,
the snake and off he went!
But Tilly's swooping speed,
no prey could ever match.
Down she dived, lightning quick
and got it, what a catch!

He'll have a yarn to tell,
our hero of the day!
Bill and Blake aghast
without a word to say.

I'm glad we woke them up
and saved a nasty nip.
The serpent now subdued
in Tilly's vice-like grip.

Our family had a laugh
and then so did he.
His fright became a smile,
his mates relieved to see
Tilley swiftly 'tending'
to her meal against a rock.
The others ghostly white,
standing mute in shock!
The campers caught a fish
then off home they went.
They all agreed to save
and buy a better tent.
Tilly 'sorted out' her snack;
she broke the serpent's back.
Quite a tasty, tender treat,
that red-bellied black!

As you know dear Nature,
some birds softly twitter.
Others sing, shriek or squawk
yet nothing could be fitter
than Aussie kookaburras.
We're tough and very loud;
it makes us what we are
and we are very proud!

Yours merrily,
Jasper.

EDWINA SMITH

15th January, 2024.

Revised 5th February, 2026

Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

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

COG membership

2025-2026 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

Catriona Standfield

Linda Wilson

Hannah Paddon

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for APRIL 2026 edition:

Wednesday 25 March 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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COG E-mail Discussion List

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

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