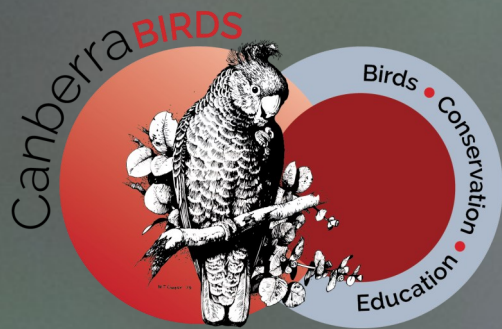




Gang-gang

Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc

Canberra Birds Newsletter

JULY 2026



Spotted Pardalote *Lindsay Hansch*

JULY MEETING

Wednesday 8 July 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 Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG)/Canberra Birds monthly meetings for the first half of 2026.

Speakers for the 8 July meeting will be:

Philip Veerman - An exposé of the story of the description of new subspecies of Australian birds in *Canberra Bird Notes*

Laura Rayner - An update of Superb Parrot research

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>)

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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.

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 short presentation will be by **Philip Veerman** on “**An exposé of the story of the description of new subspecies of Australian birds in *Canberra Bird Notes*.**”

One of the most unexpected and yet important items ever to have been published by COG was this article in 1988. Two versions of parts of the story have previously appeared and it is a strange story to be retold now, with adding the other side that has not been told before, being the role of the editor of the time and how and why it was necessary and how COG was helped whilst being able to make this valuable contribution.

The main presentation will be by **Dr Laura Rayner** on “**An update of Superb Parrot research.**”

Laura is an Assistant Director with the Office of Nature Conservation and lead author of the forthcoming ACT Nature Conservation Strategy. She is a passionate supporter of COG since moving to the ACT in 2010 when she started analysing the group's long-term woodland bird monitoring dataset, contributing to multiple scientific papers and technical reports on the program.

Laura has a Ph D in conservation ecology from the Australian National University and has worked extensively in the field of woodland bird and tree hollow research for almost 20 years. She has worked extensively with the ANU's Difficult Bird Research Group on species such as Regent Honeyeaters, Swift Parrots, Orange-bellied Parrots, but in particular Superb Parrots and Regent Parrots. Laura is a strong advocate for threatened species recovery, mature tree protection, nature positive policy, and science communication.

In her presentation, Laura will provide a Superb Parrot research update to the group. Her talk will cover a new range-wide monitoring program that is improving how we track Superb Parrot populations, along with cutting-edge research from the ANU revealing fresh insights into the birds' long-range movements. Laura will also discuss practical conservation efforts closer to home, including work to reduce predation pressure at Canberra's critical nesting colonies and a new, coordinated approach to managing nest boxes across the ACT. Together, we can discuss how monitoring, research and on-ground management are being integrated to support the conservation of this much-loved threatened species.

News from the Committee

The Committee met on the 18th of June with a return to our usual Zoom meeting after the enjoyable face-to-face meeting in May. A few highlights from the last month:

- A COG submission to the National Capital Authority was made on the 8th of June in response to the **Draft Detailed Conditions of Planning, Design and Development (DCPDD) for the North Curtin Residential Area**. This area encompasses the Curtin Horse Paddocks. Our response was broadly consistent with our 2020 submission made to an earlier planning instrument to rezone the land. Our 2020 submission is on our website. The 2026 submission will be added shortly.
- The search for a new Coordinator for the long term **Garden Birds Survey** is not yet complete. We had two expressions of interest, with discussion anticipated to continue with one of those people.
- A renewed effort is in train to have **historical COG publications** scanned and added to the website. These will join the publication already on the website - click on the Publications tab on our home page. The scanning will possibly/ hopefully be done by a commercial provider, but we are looking for a member who would like work on the logistics of this mini-project. A call for volunteers for this and other tasks will be issued in the next month or so.



Kim Farley. President, Canberra Birds
president@canberrabirds.org.au

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo , ACT, 22 February
2026, *Trevor Costa*

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

The often cloudy/showery weather, with much higher overnight temperatures, only a few light frosts, and two further moderate rain events continued in the 4 weeks from 27 May to 23 June covered by this column. Possibly due to the lack of special “unusual” species my feeling was that bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (AoI) was very low, as is usual for winter. My analysis below supports this; the complete spring/summer migrants have left at their usual time, though some of the altitudinal migrants have still been slow to move in. Reports of “unusual” species were very low.

Highlights

There were no special “unusual” species that drew much of the attention during the period. Some reports of the **Brown Gerygone** and **Spotted Harrier** have continued throughout the period, but the last report of the **Spangled Drongo** was on 17 May.

Spring/summer migrants

Of the spring/summer migrant species there was a late report of 2 **Shining Bronze-cuckoos** at the Nevertire Street parkland on 24 May (missed in my previous column). The **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, the least migratory of our local cuckoos, was still reported from 7 locations, down from 12 in the previous period.

However, there were no reports of the **Australian Reed-Warbler**, of which a few sometimes overwinter (most recent report on 15 May, 8 locations in the previous period). There were also no reports of the **Fairy Martin** (most recent on 26 April) but still reports from 2 locations of **Tree Martins**, 8 birds at SW Lake George on 6 June and 2 on a farm dam on the Sutton Rd on 12 June (compared with 4 locations in the previous period).

While there were no further reports of the **Western** (last reported on 2 May) or **White-throated Gerygone** (most recent on 1 May), there was still a report (a single bird at Lake Tuggeranong on 5 June, previous one on 24 May) of the **Noisy Friarbird**. This is in line with James Klarevas-Irby’s presentation on 10 June showing that this species is a complete migrant absent over winter in the ACT.

Rufous Whistlers were still recorded from around 3 locations (18 in previous period), most recently in the Gigerline NR on 17 June. The **Dusky Woodswallow** was reported from 4 locations and in particular throughout the period from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR), from where up to 50 birds have been reported. This is a favoured place in winter due to the presence of water. The **Olive-backed Oriole** was still reported from 4 locations (10 in previous period).

In contrast the **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike** was still reported from around 30 locations (40 in previous period) and **Grey Fantails** still from around 75 locations (close to 100 locations in previous period). Numbers of these five species will reduce further, though in particular some of the last three will overwinter, as will some of the **Mistletoebirds** recorded from 20 locations (14 in the previous period) and **Superb Parrots** which were still recorded from around 50 locations (22 S of the lake) compared to 75 locations in the previous period.

So, during July please keep an eye out for the above spring/summer migrants, in particular those which overwinter.

Autumn/winter altitudinal migrants

Of the species that spend spring/summer the mountains and higher country but return to Canberra and its surrounds in autumn, **Scarlet Robins** were reported from around 50 urban/peri-urban locations (similar to the previous period). The **Flame Robin** was reported from 15 such locations compared with 17 in the previous period. Our checking of this species shows it has been moved around on the SW side of Coleman Ridge, rather than staying in its favoured spot on the SW of Mt Arawang. Ben Milbourne’s excellent article in the June 2026 issue of Canberra Bird Notes clearly demonstrates that seasonal movement from higher to lower altitudes (and in reverse) occurs as a continuous process.

The **Rose Robin** has been reported from 3 urban/peri urban locations only (6 for previous period), as well as a report from the Cotter Reserve on 29 May. Again, there have been no confirmed **Pink Robin** (listed as a rare, non-breeding winter visitor in COG’s 2018-2019 Annual Bird report) sightings during the period, with the closest location now being Lakes Entrance.

The **Crescent Honeyeater** has been slow to move in, being reported from just 2 urban/peri-urban locations with up to 2 birds in John Brannan's Florey garden from 3 June and a single bird at Wanniassa Hills NR on 8 June. However, a number of reports from the Pierces Creek/Cotter/Casuarina Sands area indicates it was not far away. In contrast **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters** were reported from 6 locations, 5 of which were urban/peri-urban (3 distinct locations in the southern half of Tuggeranong, one on Isaacs Ridge and 3 close together spots at Googong).

Up to 2 **Bassian Thrush** were observed only at the ANBG from 28-31 May but there was only a report of an **Olive Whistler** in the Tallaganda SF on 12 June.

There were a couple of further reports of the **Brown Gerygone** at the JWNR to 14 June, but only a single report of a **Swift Parrot** at the Candle Bark Rd, Queanbeyan on 30 May, with otherwise the closest again being SW Sydney or across the border at Chiltern.

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** or **Plumed Whistling Duck** reported during the period. **Freckled Duck** were reported from 4 locations during the period (as for previous), with up to 4 ducks at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) throughout the period and 1 at the nearby Eyre St wetlands on 18 June. There were also 4-6 and 29 ducks recorded on the NW and SW Lake George, respectively, on 6 June and but none on the Lake Bathurst survey on 14 June (just 2 there on 17 May).

Australian Shelducks were reported from 1 location within the ACT (2 in previous period) with 1 duck at the Eyre St wetlands on 18 June. Outside of the ACT this species was reported from around 15 locations (8 in previous period) stretching from the NE round to the SE of the ACT, with the highest numbers being the 45 ducks on the Wollogorang Rd on 6 June just shadowing the 43 ducks on the Lake Bathurst survey on 14 June (104 ducks there on 17 May) plus 10 on the Morass, with all other numbers being single figures.

Blue-billed Ducks were reported from 3 locations during the past month (5 in previous period), with for the first time for quite a while none reported from the Upper Stranger Pond. Easily the highest were the 126 ducks reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 14 June (but just 25% of those there on 17 May). Up to 2 ducks were reported from the JWNR as well as up to 3 at the adjacent Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant (FSTP), with 6 ducks at NW Lake George the other location.

Musk Ducks were reported from 3 locations in the past month (4 in previous period), with the highest numbers being the 29 from the Lake Bathurst survey on 14 June, plus one duck at the Morass (29 and 1, respectively on 17 May). The other location was up to 2 ducks at Rows Lagoon on 15 June.

Stubble Quail were reported from 1 location during the period (2 in previous) with 5 quail at the West Belconnen Pond on 12 June. **Brown Quail** were reported from 4 locations (9 in previous period), with the maximum being 7 quail reported from the big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR on 1 June and West Belconnen Pond on 17 June. Up to 6 quail were also reported from the JWNR. No **Painted** or **Little Button-quail** were reported during the period.

A **Peaceful Dove** was reported from Nicholls on 29 May, but no **White-headed Pigeons**, **Brown Cuckoo-Dove**, **Brush Bronzewings** or **Diamond Doves** were reported during the period. There were also no **White-throated Nightjars** reported.

There were again no **Baillon's Crakes** reported during the period, and **Spotless Crakes** were reported from 5 locations (2 in previous period), with up to 2 birds at the JWNR to 18 June when one was also recorded at the nearby Eyre St wetlands. There were 2 crakes recorded on the Yass River Rd NW of Gundaroo on 12 June. However, systematic surveys of drain lines through audio recording showed there were at least 5 crakes around Sutherland Park in Taylor from 12 June, as well as 6 from Gungahlin on 22 June. The only **Australian Spotted Crake** reported during the period was 1 bird at the JWNR on 22 and 29 May.

Buff-banded Rails were reported from 3 locations (as in previous period), with single birds from the JWNR on 1 June, the nearby Eyre St wetlands on 27 May and the big dam in Mulligans Flat NR on 14 June. Again during systematic surveys of drain lines through audio recording a **Lewin's Rail** was photographed in Taylor on 15 June (and more suspected), with 4

also similarly reported on 22 June in Gungahlin during the period (1 location in the previous). The **Black-tailed Nativehen** was not reported during the period.

There were 9 **Double-Banded Plovers**, all in non-breeding plumage, recorded on the Lake Bathurst surveys on 14 June (well down from the 36 there on 17 May). **Pied Stilts** were reported 3 locations (as for previous), from 3 spots on NW Lake George with a maximum of 113 birds from the Badcoe VC Rest Area 6 June (just up from May) followed by 45 from the Wheatley VC Rest Area on 1 June. There was also 1 bird at the JWNR on 19 June. 21 **Red-capped Plovers** were only reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 14 June (compared with 29 on 17 May).

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. Also, no **Caspian Tern**, **Whiskered** or **White-winged Black Terns** were reported.

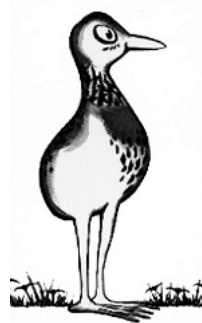
Great-crested Grebes were reported from 4 locations (2 in previous) with 3 from the Lake Bathurst survey on 14 June (7 on 17 May). The other 3 locations were close together, with 1 bird reported from Bracks Hole Rd on 27 May, six birds from the Cotter River and 1 from the Concrete Rd Pierces Creek, both on 1 June. Again, no **Australian Little Bittern** or **Australasian Bittern** were reported during the period.

No **Little Egrets** or **Plumed Egrets** were reported during the period. Again, in contrast **Great Egrets** were reported from 15 locations during the period (16 in previous), all but two within the ACT/Queanbeyan area.

Single **White-necked Herons** were reported from 7 locations (as for the previous period). **Royal Spoonbills** were reported from 2 locations during the period (well down from 8 in the previous), with 2 birds on the Wollongorang Rd on 30 May and 1 bird at the Jarramlee Pond on 8 June. **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** were reported from 5 locations (7 in previous), with the 7 birds at the Lake Bathurst survey on 14 June (10 on 17 May) easily the highest. No **Glossy Ibis** were reported during the period.

An **Eastern Barn Owl** was reported from 1 location during the period (3 in previous), again heard at night in Macarthur on 28 May. Two **Powerful Owls** were reported from the Warks/Blundells Creek Rds on the evening of 23 May, a pair was heard calling for some time before brief views (and a photograph) of a male bird. **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from 12 locations in the period, well down from the over 20 in the previous period..

The **Spotted Harrier** continued to be reported from the JWNR to 7 June, with a bird then photographed both at the West Belconnen Pond and then 40 minutes later (same bird?) at the Parkwood Horse agistment on 16 June. A **Black Falcon** was reported only from the Boboyan Road woodland on 31 May, with again good photographs allowing it to be distinguished from a dark phase Brown Falcon. However, no **Grey Goshawk**, **Black Kites** or **Pacific Baza** were reported from anywhere in the COG Aol during the period.



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Azure Kingfishers were reported from 3 locations (4 in the previous period) during the period with 2 birds photographed on the Uriarra Loop Track on 5 June, and single birds at the Cotter Bend on 1 and 6 June, with one at the nearby Cotter campground on 1 June. No **Red-backed** or **Forest Kingfishers** were reported during the period.

Two **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** were reported from the Goulburn Rd, Mt Fairy on 16 June but no wild **Cockatiel** were reported during the period. **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from 3 locations (as in previous period), with up to 3 birds in Evatt on 12 June, 4 and 1 birds at Lake Tuggeranong on 29 and 31 May, respectively, and an unknown number nearby in Kambah on 3 June. However, no **Turquoise Parrot**, **Scaly-breasted**, **Little** or **Purple-crowned Lorikeets** were reported over the period.

White-fronted Chats were reported from 3 locations in the period (as in previous), with up to 13 birds at the Holborow Ave Ponds from 26 May to 16 June. There were 3 birds on the Lake Bathurst survey on 14 June (6 on 17 May) and 6 birds on a farm dam on the Sutton Rd on 12 June. **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** were reported from 3 locations (5 in previous period) within the previous boundaries, with the 2 birds at the Mawson District Playing Fields on 5 June and in Scullin on 15 June, and one bird at the Illoura horse paddocks on 11 June. However, no **Spiny-cheeked**, **Singing**, **Scarlet**, **Lewin's**, **Brown**, **Striped** or **Painted Honeyeaters**, **Little Wattlebirds** or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period.

Two **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** were reported from the Zosterops Corner on 14 June. Single **Red-capped Robins** were reported only from the Nadjung Mada NR on 16 and 21 June. An **Eastern Whipbird** was again reported from Kambah near Mt Taylor on 16 June. However, no **White-browed Babbler**, **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike**, **Australasian Figbird**, **Apostlebird**, **Black-faced Monarch**, **Tawny Grassbird** or **Zebra Finches** were reported during the period.

Jacky Winters were reported from 7 locations over the period (8 in the previous) with a single bird on Sutton Rd at Wattle Flat Rd (a new location) on 10 June. All others were from at or near known locations to the S of the ACT with 1 bird on the Tharwa Woodland survey on 8 June, 3 birds at the Namadgi NP Visitors Centre on 13 June (and 2 on 22 June), single birds at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 1 and 13 June, 3 birds at the Top Naas Rd on 3 June, 2 birds at the Glendale Depot on 3 June and a single bird on the nearby Glendale Crossing on 31 May.

Hooded Robins were reported from 5 locations (6 in previous), again all to the S of Canberra, with 1 bird on the Birrigai Trail at Tidbinbilla NR on 31 May and up to 3 birds at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd 13 and 22 June and the nearby Top Naas Rd on 5 June, respectively. There were also 1 bird on the Jerangle Rd near Bredbo on 1 June, and 2 birds on a long 17 km walk from “Namadgi to honey suckle camp” on 11 June, the only likely new location.

However, **Restless Flycatchers** were reported from 1 location only period (5 in the previous), one bird at the Nelanglo TSR on from 27 May to 7 June. Interestingly there were none reported from the S of the ACT, similar to earlier in 2026.

The **Brown Treecreeper** was reported from 4 locations during the period (well down from 7 in the previous), with most interesting again being 1 bird reported from the Kama NR between 7-20 June. Other known sites include up to 4 birds were reported from the Nelanglo TSR to 16 June, and up to 3 birds at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd between 31 May and 22 June, and 1 bird on the Jerangle Rd near Bredbo on 1 June.

Reports of “unusual” species remained low over the period with again very few reports of pigeons/doves, parrots and honeyeaters and other passerines. However, the number of reports of the first two of the formerly “special” species remains encouraging.

Breeding

No special early winter breeding has come to my attention.

Flocks, including of migrating birds

Andrea and I have continued to observe mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) in our local area including a large, very active one of 7 species at Narrabundah Hill on 14 June. The most interesting one was a small one of 5 species on

Coffee and Chat at the Gardens Tuesday, 14 July

You are invited to Canberra Birds monthly Coffee and Chat at the Australian National Botanic Gardens cafe.



Come along any time between 9:30 and 11:00 on the second Tuesday of the month.

All welcome – experienced birders, new and would-be birders, locals and visitors.

Look for the table with the binoculars on it.

Coolleman Ridge on 12 June, consisting of 2 **Superb Fairy-wrens**, 2 **Silvereyes**, 3 **Red-browed Finch**, one **Double Barred Finch** and 1 **European Goldfinch**. So, in July please keep an eye out for the last MFFs which will break up as breeding commences.

Some larger single species flocks have also been reported, with Kim Farley counting 113 **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** (one large loose flock of 98 birds and 2 small parties) at the North Weston Ponds on 14 June. All were heading from the direction of the pine plantations along the Molonglo and towards the Stromlo area, but apart from the 40 birds Andrea and I saw around there on 1 June, there haven't been any other reports of high numbers from the area. Andrea and I also saw many **Little Corellas** at the Trucking Yard Lane dam (as well as generally in Bungendore) on 8 June with up to 600 birds having been reported from the former since mid-April. In the past week I have finally started to see flocks of around 50 **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** in my local patch of Chapman, Rivett, Narrabundah Hill and Coolleman Ridge.

During July, please watch out for the overwintering spring/summer migrants mentioned above, and for more of the incoming autumn/winter altitudinal migrants, the last MFFs and more single species flocks, as well as roosts and roost flights. As usual please ensure that all significant sightings are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

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

Jack Holland

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

Membership payments are now due for the 2026-27 financial year.

We are asking all members to fill in the membership form on our website. This will take only a couple of minutes and will help to ensure that COG's records remain up to date. Click here <https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/joining-cog-and-renewing/> to open the membership page, or find it linked from our website home page.

Information from the forms will be transferred to our new membership system which will provide an ongoing up-to-date record of our members. If you have any queries about these changes, please contact prue.watters@gmail.com.

Garden Bird Survey.

A reminder that the 2026 survey finishes on Thursday 2 July. I will be available at the Members Night meeting on Wednesday 8 July to hand out new charts and to receive all the contributions from 2025/26. If unable to attend the meeting please let me know and I will arrange delivery and pick-up.

For those who record their observation on EXCEL spreadsheets could you please send me the files and replace with an EXCEL available from the COG website at

<https://canberrabirds.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/GBS-Chart-2022-23.xlsx>

Once linked an EXCEL sheet will appear. To edit for the 2026-27 year insert 46 at Column A, Row 2 and then save.

Chris Davey MOB 0418 679 847

Summary of the 10 June meeting

The short very interesting and important presentation was by **James Klarevas-Irby** on “**Long distance migratory and nomadic movements of large honeyeaters**”. James delivered this very well with clear slides, making very good use of videos to clearly illustrate points, in particular species movements.

He began by noting that long distance migration of birds had been long known and studied but that Australian studies have been mainly limited to long distance wader movement with the local studies of the **Latham’s Snipe** being an excellent example. One problem with studying bird migration in Australia was that there are no bottlenecks that birds need to move through such as they occur for birds moving across the Mediterranean.

Some local studies have been done on larger birds such as raptors and ibis, but movements of birds weighing up to 150 g have been little studied due to technical problems with tagging them. The **Noisy Friarbird** and **Red Wattlebird** are larger species in this category and thus his team captured these locally and fitted them with Bluetooth devices which allows cell phones signals (without the owner being aware as long as their location is on) to be remotely detected. These are accurate to about 150 m and seem to work best when birds are on the move.

Since November 2025 James’ team has captured 51 Red Wattlebirds and 24 **Noisy Friarbirds** and have had 140,000 detections from these. This is still ongoing and his videos showed how from March 2026 the latter had moved north (though interestingly some went south first) and by May had completely moved away from the ACT. This is consistent with the monthly eBird pattern.

In contrast the **Red Wattlebird** is much more dispersive and is not moving as far with most moving to the E but others to the NW. This is consistent it locally being considered a partial compared with the complete migrant the **Noisy Friarbird**. Interestingly the rate of movement of both was much slower than the literature value of 10-12 m/sec, suggesting there is both movement and resting time.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members many thanks to James for giving his very interesting presentation on the migration of local honeyeaters, a phenomenon that has long been of interest to COG/Canberra Bird members. Our very best wishes for his continuing studies and we look forward to another presentation on these when they are further advanced.

James has provided the following contact details (farine.group.rsb@anu.edu.au) and has asked COG/Canberra Birds members to let him know if they know of potential spots where they could get access to target **Red Wattlebirds** or **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** (or **Noisy Friarbirds** and **Olive-backed Orioles** once they come back around).

An image of James’ last slide with the email address is also attached which also shows very clearly the Bluetooth devices his group uses for their large honeyeater tracking.



It is hard to understate the importance of these studies. If the trackers can be reduced to fit smaller honeyeaters there might be a chance of solving the 60-year-old question of where do our **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** go when they migrate out of the ACT in autumn.

The main also very interesting and informative presentation was by **Daniel Gowland** on “**Beyond Survival: Recovery Breeding, Rewilding and Threatened Species Conservation**”.

This was in the form of a video illustrating in detail the work of the Priam Psittaculture Centre and the National Threatened Species Institute (NTSI) to which Daniel spoke to, often very passionately, as the various issues were being projected.

The interest in Daniel’s work was very clear from the large audience, many of whom were not familiar with these centres, established over 30 years ago near Bungendore, involved in the conservation breeding and recovery of some of Australia’s rarest and most elusive fauna. The video showed living examples of some of the species they have successfully bred there, such as the **Glossy, Red-tailed** and **Baudin’s Black-Cockatoos** and the Smoky Mouse.

Daniel highlighted in particular his involvement with the critically **endangered Orange-bellied Parrot**, from which of an original total of 17 captive birds (3 of which were female) there is now a captive population of 300-600 birds. After 30 years of effort in breeding these there is now sufficient knowledge and experience to rear and release them so that in December 2024 a total of 92 birds, a third of them captive birds, flew from the mainland over Bass Strait to return to their sole breeding site at Melaleuca in SW Tasmania.

Daniel stressed that breeding birds to boost and enhance wild populations is very different from aviculture as preparing them for a life outside means allowing them to develop predator awareness, food sourcing, nesting and mating behaviours etc, that are vital for survival.

To illustrate the issues with successful breeding of wild birds in captivity, Daniel spent much of his presentation using their recent experience trying to breed the vulnerable **Eastern Ground Parrot**. He stressed that expertise and knowledge in breeding these birds well before they are on the brink is very important, including in this case as a surrogate for the closely related critically endangered **Western Ground Parrot**, of which only between 100-150 wild birds remain.

The video showed very clearly how their facility for the above was built with the mindset of quarantine, with small modules spaced all around so that if a pathogen comes in individual birds can be isolated. It also allows the birds free to choose which part of the structure they wish to go. Getting their diet right is also very important, for example **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** have a unique diet very high in protein and for far longer than other birds.

Imprinting is another issue, particularly with larger birds, and therefore at the NTSI care provided by humans is randomized so they have less chance of becoming accustomed to an individual person. They are also provided with autonomous spaces so that feeding happens on their own terms. Introduction to the larger flock is also managed in a gradual way to allow them to learn their social skills and gain confidence.

The above were all clearly illustrated on the video for the **Eastern Ground Parrot**, a relatively new project for which two birds have now successfully paired and will hopefully breed.

[Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Daniel for giving](#) up some of his very valuable time to give this very interesting and informative presentation on their facilities involved in the conservation breeding and recovery of some of Australia’s rarest and most elusive fauna. Many of the audience were not familiar with this program, despite it being close to Canberra. We wish him all the very best for the future successes of his program including the introduction of captive bred **Eastern Ground Parrots** into the wild.

Jack Holland

The Edge

Trevor Costa

Even though it's around midday, the air remains still and heavy with grey smoke hanging in the lowlands. To the north, beyond the boundary of the woodland sanctuary lie fallen trees, bulldozed into neat rows after the latest land clearing. They are now burning them. Like some advancing foreign army, they have reached the front line, as far as they can go, so now they lay waste and burn. As I begin the climb the smoke stings every breath and tastes of a familiar demise.

It's a relief to reach some height where the clean air still lingers. The distance thing dominates all and I really do love getting the height and seeing the landscape laid out below. The township and the far away traffic. It's a different perspective. You aren't down there mixing it with the madness. You are up here mixing it up with your own. I've come for the eagles again. It's not totally clear why I keep doing this. With each hike up my camera is turning more into a very heavy prop. A reason I can point to when I encounter other humans on the trail, or while hikers pass by as I'm sitting under my favourite tree above the eagle's roost. Oh...I'm just here to photograph the birds, you know, the razor chickens. See, this is my fancy camera for taking photos. They return the uncomfortable smile and move on quickly, oblivious to the large and powerful raptor circling above their heads.

I remain back from the hill's edge in case I disturb them in the gully below where they have their enormous nest. Last season they nested on an adjoining hill for the first time, and I know what it's like to blunder too close to a nest that I just didn't know was there. I was swooped by both parent eagles and I'm not keen for a repeat. This breeding season they have returned to the old, more established nest after failing to raise their chicks last year. This nest is tucked further away from the walking track, but the summit track that traverses the ridge line is very popular and still near enough that they keep a wary eye on those climbing up for the view. Knowing where the nest is this year means I stay well clear, but to an eagle, a creature that lives and dances in the sky, soaring on invisible threads, gliding from hill to hill in an instant, I'm starting to think distance is relative. Eagle space is a concept I don't think I can ever fully grasp or appreciate. I am trying though and I'm realising an eagle's eye is nothing like a camera lens, which means my photos remain less than inspiring

But I'm not sure it is healthy either, to seek them out repeatedly like this. It feels like I have developed a trauma bond with them since the swooping thing. Are there any eagle psychologists who can explain what the hell I'm doing? There is now an edge, their sharpness seems to stay, as if talons have already grasped and sharp beak scarred. I now seem to carry a wound that's flares and weeps when I don't see them. To watch them soar dark against the hillside or silhouetted against the sky eases something, blunts that edge, soothes the aches. I take something away from each encounter although I don't feel like a thief. Maybe I'm just trying to regain a trust I thought I had with them and them in me.



Wedge-tailed Eagle, Australian Magpie, 17 June 2026, Trevor Costa

I do seem to have a knack for eagle timing. As I reach the summit and begin to set up my camera gear, I feel the cool kiss of the westerly wind. It begins to build and funnel with some purpose up the valley over the far ridge and straight for my perch. It then veers north pushing the retreating smoke up the valley and hopefully to choke the would-be invaders. With the wind comes the lift the eagles need for their massive bulk. It's what they have been waiting for. I'm alerted to their rising by the whistling alarm of the magpies. The eagle's black forms launch from the green floor below. Both, gathering the wind under their enormous wings, lit by the sun they flash silvery and dark against the hills, then soon they are in the clear, circling way above. The magpies give up the chase and even the Ravens peel off. Just the two of them now, high up.

I almost forget to take a few photos as I watch the male carve a turn to the east towards hunting grounds I know lie outside the sanctuary, in surrounding farmlands rich in rabbits. The larger female goes higher and I need to lay on my back to track her, but she too soon disappears. This is a familiar pattern. She will drop like a stone out of sight to return to the nest at tree height. After a quick break she won't leave the eggs for long. A feathered fighter jet coming in so low, so fast I have yet to capture her on camera. Each time she scatters the complaining magpies like black and white confetti in her wake.

The show is over. I know the male will not be far away as I head back down. He won't leave the nesting female and go on a serious hunt until all humans are cleared from the high ridge, suddenly appearing above, as always to bid farewell or is it, good riddance. The country is clear of smoke now as I trek across the lowlands heading for the waiting car. I look back towards the hills to glimpse the dark shape of the male as he wheels once again over the ridge line, no more feigning, the wind in its seriousness and fickleness is hurrying him on for the hunt. I thank my suppliers. I have my fix for another day.



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For birding enthusiasts seeking time, stillness and uninterrupted observation, Myalla offers the perfect mid-week base. Book Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and receive one night free — or enjoy 10% off a weekend stay. T&C's apply. Direct booking only by email to Leasha@myalla.com.au.

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Field Trip Reports

Sunday 7 June – Mt Taylor NR

Shortly before 9am, a group of 17 members walked in light fog from the Sulwood Drive car park in a clockwise direction around Mount Taylor Nature Reserve. As we headed west, there were several groupings of smaller birds, including **Yellow-rumped, Brown, Buff-Rumped** and **Striated Thornbills**. Additional sightings included **Weebills, Spotted Pardalotes** and **Scarlet Robins** in two locations by the time we traversed north along the steep fire trail. The sun pierced through the mist by 10:30am, seemingly to the delight of many **Crimson Rosellas** that were seen frolicking in the sunshine along our circuitous route. We had low counts of 4 **White-eared Honeyeaters**, 2 **White-naped Honeyeaters**, 2 **Golden Whistlers**, a **Grey Strike-thrush** and an **Australian King Parrot**. A grouping of 8 **White-winged Choughs** was industriously working through the undergrowth on the east side of the reserve, before we returned to the car park by about 11:40am, with a tally of 27 species.

Mark Tindale

Saturday 13 June - Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, Superb Lyrebird Survey

The 23rd annual survey of the **Superb Lyrebird**, designed to provide an index of population numbers within the Reserve since the 2003 bushfires, was run under cloudy but warm conditions with threatening rain. Thanks to a great turnout and with 16 volunteer we were able to survey all six trails.

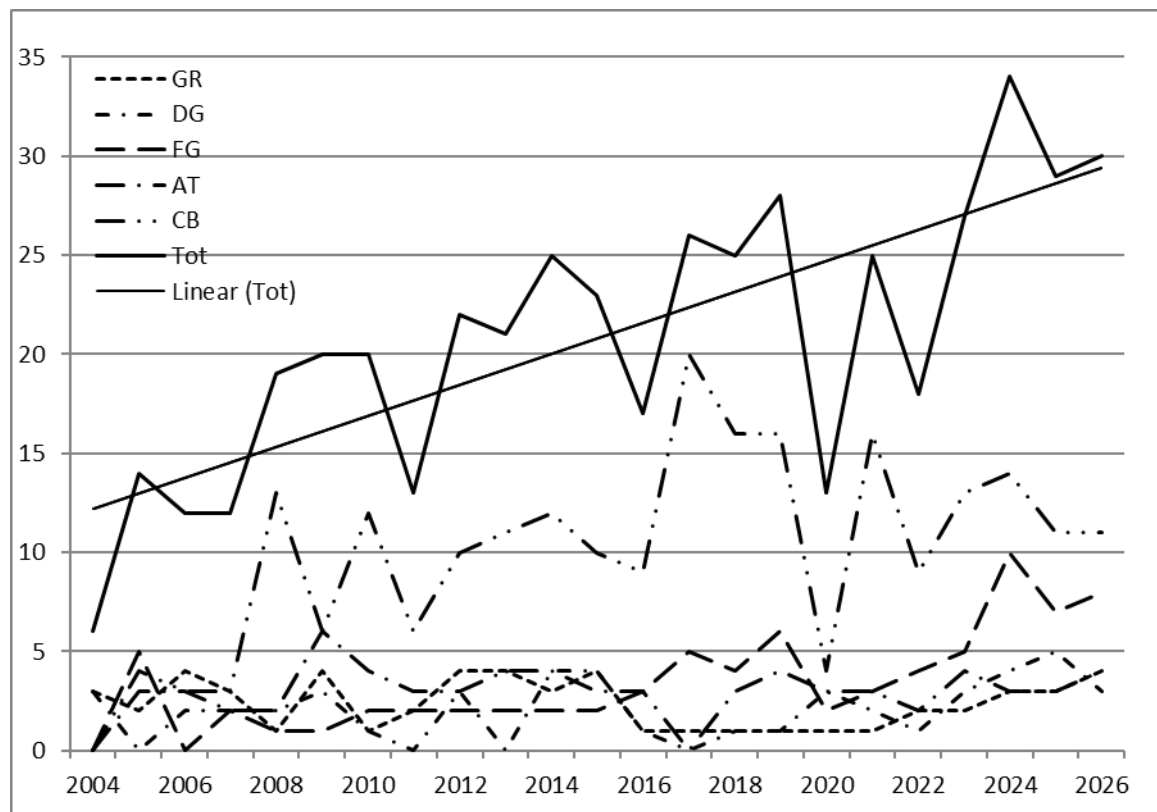


Figure 1. Numbers of **Superb Lyrebirds** recorded from walking trails at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, 2004-2026. GR-Gibraltar Rocks, DG-Devils Gap, FG-Fishing Gap, AT- Ashbrook Trail, CB-Camel Back, Tot-Total number of birds. A linear trend line has been fitted to the total number of Lyrebirds.

Superb Lyrebird counts were as follows: Gibraltar Rocks - 4 (3), Devils Gap - 3 (5), Fishing Gap - 8 (Not surveyed), Ashbrook - 4 (3), Camel Back -11 (11). Figures in brackets are numbers reported last year. It should be noted that at times a calling bird can be heard from more than one trail. In this case the sighting is designated to one trail only. Numbers were similar to last year for all surveyed trails. As in previous years, the records from Lyrebird /Cascades (4) are not included in the total because this trail has only been surveyed since 2017. The total count was 30, one down from the previous year; see Figure 1.

Of interest is that the number of birds recorded along Camel Back trail appears to be stable whilst the number at Fishing Gap appears to be increasing since 2020. Unfortunately, for 2025 the Fishing Gap trail was not surveyed so an estimate of 7 was given by taking the average of the two previous years. This estimate appears to be correct and supports the number recorded on 2026. The numbers at all other trails appear to be relatively stable. The linear trend line indicates an increasing number of Lyrebirds which is primarily due to the increase in numbers reported from Fishing Gap.

During the survey 36 bird species were recorded with the number seen depending very much on the trail walked: Gibraltar Rocks - 21 (19), Devils Gap - 17 (19), Fishing Gap - 17 (ns), Ashbrook - 17 (13), and Camel Back - 9 (9). The total number of species recorded over 23 surveys remains at 63.

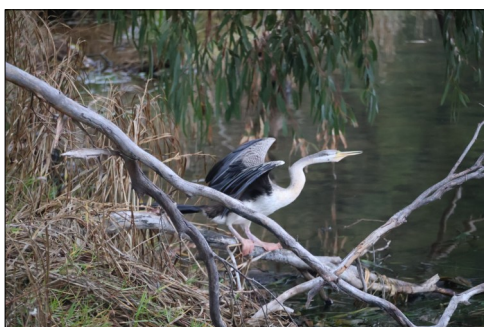
Superb Lyrebird, White-throated Treecreeper and Brown Thornbill were reported from the six trails. There were many species reported from one trail only. These included: **Weebill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, New Holland Honeyeater, Mistletoebird and Common Blackbird** from Gibraltar Rocks; **Wedge-tailed Eagle, Striated Pardalote, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Spotted Quail-thrush and Australian Magpie** from Devils Gap, **Grey Fantail** from Fishing Gap; **Gang-gang Cockatoo, Laughing Kookaburra** from Ashbrook; and **Pilotbird** from Camel Back.

Five eBird checklists were submitted. See previous July newsletters for details on particular surveys.

Many thanks to all the volunteers.

Chris Davey

Wednesday 17 June – Diddams Close, Lake Ginninderra

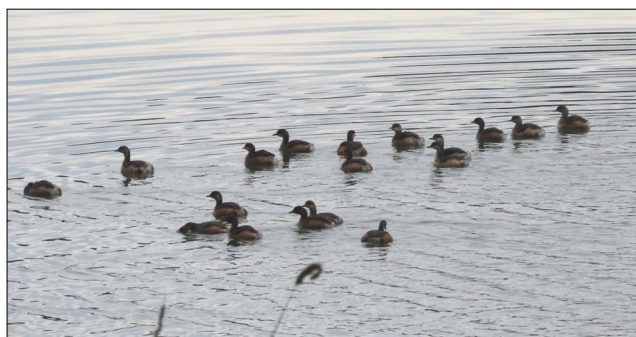


Australasian Darter, Lake Ginninderra, ACT, 17 June 2026, *Ben Bradey*

It was a somewhat dull and gloomy morning with a few spots of rain when a dozen birders set off along the shores of Lake Ginninderra at Diddams Close Park. A short walk to the dam wall revealed a handful of waterbirds (**Australian Wood** and **Pacific Black Ducks**, along with **Dusky Moorhen**) and the ever present **Superb Fairy-wrens**. Retracing our steps to the carpark, we set off along an easy (and wheelchair-accessible) path with around 10 **White-plumed Honeyeaters** and a few naughty **Noisy Miners** feasting on the flowering Argyle Apple trees. We soon spotted on the shoreline the first of what would be 13 **Australasian Darters** - 1 male and the rest female.

Two **Red Wattlebirds** were observed giving the **Laughing Kookaburra** a hard time as we continued along the foreshore opposite the town centre. Two

Australian Pelicans were seen on the other side of the lake in the distance, along with two **Black Swans** with seven recently fledged cygnets on the grass nearby. A group of 19 **Australasian Grebe** were swimming in the lake close to our shoreline as we neared the end of our journey.



Australasian Grebe, Lake Ginninderra, ACT, 17 June 2026, *Sandra Henderson*

The total number of other woodland birds observed was quite low, although the variety was roughly as to be expected (no thornbills though): one each of **Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Weebill, White-browed Scrubwren, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** and **Grey Strike-thrush**. Along the way we saw the occasional **Superb, Red-rumped** and **Australian King Parrots, Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas**, plus four **Rainbow Lorikeets**.

Many thanks to Sandra for leading us on the 2.2km walk and to Lia for compiling a list of the 40 species observed during our two hour walk.

Ben Bradey

Sunday 21 June - Murrumbidgee Discovery Track Section: Point Hutt Crossing to Pine Island South of Point Hutt

On a foggy winter morning, Michael Robbins led a group of 11 from the Point Hutt Crossing carpark on the track along the Murrumbidgee River to Pine Island. The fog lifted and the sunshine made conditions very pleasant.

As background to the outing, Michael observed that about 26 or so years ago, “West Murrumbidgee” had been considered as a possible “new town” for the ACT before “Molonglo” was fortunately chosen.

A total of 30 species was observed. **Eastern Spinebills** feeding on the abundant grevilleas were a highlight of the morning.

Large numbers of small birds were observed in the grevilleas, and thickets of blackberry and native raspberry growing along the riverbank. These included **White-browed Scrubwren**, **Superb Fairy-wren**, and **Yellow-rumped, Striated, Brown** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills**. Although sighted by one member of the group, **Red-browed Finch** were surprisingly scarce.

Other birds observed included: **Spotted Dove**, **Red Wattlebird**, **White-eared Honeyeater**, **Grey Shrike-thrush**, **Golden Whistler**, **Grey Fantail**, **Weebill**, **Spotted Pardalote** and **Silvereye**.

Small numbers of **Galah**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**, **Australian King Parrot** and **Crimson Rosella** were seen, along with **Australian Raven**, **Australian Magpie**, **Pied Currawong** and a **Masked Lapwing**. A pair of **Pacific Black Duck** and a **Little Pied Cormorant** were seen flying along the river. A **White-faced Heron** was heard.

A male **Brown Goshawk** or female **Collared Sparrowhawk** was spotted briefly with a pair of currawongs in close pursuit, allowing little opportunity for a positive identification. A pair of **Wedge-tailed Eagle** were also sighted.

Thanks to Michael for organising, Lia Battisson for keeping the bird list and Sandra Henderson for the photos. Also, farewell to Sunny Wang, a student at the ANU who had been on a number of COG outings, who was starting her return to China later in the day.

Evan Bitmead



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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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.

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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 5 July – Strathnairn to Shepherds Lookout

The track passes through the Ginninderry Conservation corridor and will cover various vegetation types including grasslands, Yellow Box/Red Gum/Scribbly Gum woodlands and Black Callitris Forest, so a good variety of birds should be on offer. For those seeking further details about the walk see <https://www.ginninderry.org/corridor-walking-tracks>

For those in need of a cuppa after the walk, coffee and cake should be available at the Stepping Stone Café located next to the carpark.

Meeting time and place: the outing will start at **8:00am** at the carpark located behind The Link (-35.232682 148.995186). Do not park at The Link for that is reserved for Ginninderry Trust employees.

Walk details: the walk will take approximately 2 ½ hours and will follow a purpose-built track linking The Link at Strathnairn to Shepherds Lookout. The grade 3 track will involve steps and some steep sections so appropriate 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

Sunday 19 July - Nanima Travelling Stock Reserve, Bedulluck TSR and Victoria St. Woodland, Hall

Description: Nanima TSR is a high biodiversity site with 90 species recorded. It backs onto Murrumbateman Creek. **Jacky Winter, White-eared Honeyeater, Scarlet Robin and Gang-gang Cockatoo** have been recorded. Bedulluck TSR is on the corner of the Barton Highway and Nanima Road and is good for raptors like **Black-shouldered Kite** and **Nankeen Kestrel**.

Meeting time and place: Old Hall Primary School in Hoskins St Hall at 8.30 am for carpooling. **Walking distance:** Nanima 0.8 km, Bedulluck 0.2km and Victoria St woodland 0.2km

Degree of difficulty: easy

End time: 3 pm at Hall

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

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

Numbers: limited to 16

Bill Graham

Sunday 2 August – Percival Hill NR

This reserve includes areas of Yellow Box - Blakeley's Red Gum Grassy Woodland. We will focus on the western side, including the trig point and dam. Possible birds include **Scarlet Robin**, **Golden Whistler** and a variety of honeyeaters. We will walk between 2 to 3 kms on different surfaces, including rough rocky tracks, finishing by 12:00. Wear sturdy boots, a hat and take water and morning tea. Trekking poles would be useful.

Meet at Schown Pl entrance (off Temperley St, Nicholls) at **09:00**.

Register at mrgtrbrtsn14@gmail.com by 31 July with your name and mobile number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Margaret Robertson

Sunday 16 August – Glendale Depot, Namadgi NP

Meet at 8am at Namadgi Visitor Centre (Naas Rd, Tharwa) for carpooling to the depot.

Glendale Depot is a very good hotspot within Namadgi National Park. Highlights at this time of year may include a variety of cuckoos, **Brown-headed** and **Crescent Honeyeaters**, **Jacky Winters** and a wide variety of other woodland species. The walk will be partly on tracks, but there will be some wandering through grassland. There are some slopes to be walked, but of course we'll be walking very slowly. We'll be there around three hours, with an estimated return to the Visitor Centre by noon. As usual, ensure you have sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hat and water.

Register with Mark at markjtindale@yahoo.com.au with your name and mobile number, and the name and number of an emergency contact by 14 August.

Mark Tindale

Sunday 30 August – Umbagog District Park, Latham

Description: Umbagog District Park has Ginninderra Creek running through the middle of it. Canberra Birds last had a field trip there in September of 2023. It will be an easy walk of 4-5km over flat ground.

Meeting place: Meet in the car park off Florey Dr, 250 metres south of Herron Cres, opposite 87 Florey Drive.

Meeting time: Meet at 8:20 for an 8:30 start.

End time (approx.): 11:30

What to bring: Water and Water and a snack, if desired, 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 28 August** as numbers will be limited to 15.

Lia Battisson

Sunday 6 September – Mt Majura and Mt Ainslie NRs

Description: A walk through mixed Eucalypt woodland along the lower slopes of the southern end of Mt Majura, possibly onto the northern end of Mt Ainslie. Target species would include woodland birds such as **Scarlet Robin**, **Speckled Warbler**, **Buff-rumped Thornbill**, and possibly some early migrants if the winter is as warm as predicted.

eBird hotspots: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1436201>

Meeting time and place: **8 am** Mackenzie Street Gate, Hackett, literally 2 houses north of Grayson St on the east side of the road, parking in the lot or on the street <https://maps.app.goo.gl/WRKKcaVnEsx7HFEy7>

Walking distance: 2-4 km depending on the birds

Degree of difficulty: medium - we will probably be off trail for much of it but the walking is fairly open and relatively flat
End time (approx.): 10:30 am

What to bring: water, morning tea, hat, sunscreen, good birding vibes

Registration: Participants must register by email to peter.miller4722@gmail.com by 6:00 PM Friday, Sept 4, providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact; please use the email to register

Numbers limited: yes to 20

Peter Miller

Sunday 13 September – Gale Precinct, Queanbeyan

This is an interesting area near Googong which includes a known rock climbing site (White Rocks) and I believe is looked after by Landcare.

Meet at 8.00am at the roadside parking area about 500m along Wickerslack Lane from Old Cooma Rd. This walk will be partly off-track to White Rocks, then back along a track to the cars. As usual, wear sturdy shoes and a hat.

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

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 20 September – Gunning

Details to be advised.

Nicki Taws

Sunday 27 September - Vanity Crossing Road

On this morning walk we will amble west along Vanity Crossing fire trail from the locked gate in Pierces Creek Forest to the Crossing itself on the Cotter River (3.2km), then return the same way (total walking distance 6.4km). The trail is undulating through tall dry forest with significant shrubby understorey in parts, with a couple of short somewhat steeper sections. There are views to Cotter River as it widens into the reservoir.

Possible birds include the usual forest species as well as **Crescent, New Holland** and (with much luck) **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters, Speckled Warbler, Wonga Pigeon** and **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**.

Meet at 8am for carpooling at the small carpark on Cotter Road at its junction with Paddys River Road (ie directly opposite Cotter Avenue). Limit 12 people. Late morning end time expected. Bring water, snacks, walking shoes, and walking poles if desired.

Please register with Julie at julie.mcguinness@gmail.com and include your name, phone number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Julie McGuinness

Macquarie Marshes and Binnaway – a trip in two parts

Part 1: Monday 28 September to Friday 2 October – Macquarie Marshes

Part 2: Friday 2 October to Wednesday 7 October – Binnaway area

On this trip we will be exploring the area around the little town of Binnaway in central NSW on the Castlereagh River. We'll be based in a private property that is a native plant nursery a few minutes out of town.

The trip will take place over the October Labour Day weekend, which hopefully will give working people an opportunity to participate.

Binnaway is around six hours drive from Canberra. We'll aim to arrive on the afternoon of Friday 2 October and leave early on Wednesday 7 October. People are of course welcome to arrive later or leave earlier.

The itinerary is loose at the moment but will likely include:

- A day exploring the property, which is a haven for honeyeaters.

- A day exploring the Binnaway region.

- Day trips potentially to Coonabarabran, the Warrumbungles and/or the Pilliga.

There is space to camp on the property. There is a small number of bedrooms in an unoccupied second house on the property which can be claimed by whoever gets back to me first. There is also affordable accommodation in Binnaway at the Railway Heritage Barracks: <https://www.facebook.com/binnawayrailwaybarracks2395/>

Binnaway sits near the boundary of the Great Dividing Range and the western plains and is on the Castlereagh River so there should be a good variety of birds. It will be spring so there should also be a good selection of returning migrants. It's also wildflower season and our hosts are wildflower experts so we should get good tips on the best sites to visit. The number of participants will be capped at 16.

But wait, there's more! Before Binnaway I'll be visiting the Macquarie Marshes, which are a huge Ramsar wetland in northern NSW. I'll be camping at Willie Retreat, a cattle station on the edge of the marshes that offers powered (\$40) and unpowered campsites (\$30) and bathroom facilities: <https://willieretreat2824.wixsite.com/willie-retreat>

There's meant to be good birdwatching at Willie Retreat itself, with **Brolgas** and **Glossy Ibis** and even sightings of **Australasian Bittern** and **Australian Painted Snipe**. However, staying there provides access to several other great activities in the marshes:

It's about 20 minutes' drive from Burrima Boardwalk. Built by local landowners and conservationists, the 2km long boardwalk allows you to walk out into the marshes. It's a great spot. I visited about four years ago and have been wanting to go back ever since. The cost per car is \$25 but I think you can get multiple visits for that: <https://burrimamacquariemarshes.com/>

Macquarie Marshes kayak tours. These guided paddling tours get you out into the middle of the marshes, which are normally inaccessible. The price for a 2 ½ hour paddle is \$150: <https://www.macquariemarsheskayaktours.com.au/>

NSW NPS Macquarie Marshes wading and walking tour. As the name suggests, this is a walk through the marshes themselves where you get wet... This activity costs \$30: <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/guided-tours/macquarie-marshes-wading-and-nature-walk>

The kayak and wading tours are only held in spring. The wading tour is not offered every day and it looks like Tuesday 29 October is the only date that will work for us. It's up to you to book accommodation and activities for yourselves but I'm planning on the following itinerary:

Monday 28 Sept: drive to Willie Retreat, probably via Parkes (around 7 hours).

Tuesday 29 Sept: wading/walking tour in morning, Burrima boardwalk in afternoon/evening and spotlighting.

Wednesday 30 Sept: morning kayak tour. There is also an afternoon/evening one which I might do as well. There are only four participants in each session (six if we go as a group) so don't leave booking until the last minute!

Thursday 1 October: general birding including Burrima boardwalk.

Friday 2 October: relocate to Binnaway via Gilgandra, which has some birding opportunities (around 3 hour drive).

You are very welcome to just do the Macquarie Marshes or the Binnaway half of the trip.

Of course, everything will depend on the fuel situation. We had to cancel the planned Easter camping trip to western NSW earlier this year due to fuel shortages and uncertainty. Hopefully we'll have better luck this time. It probably makes sense to carpool if possible. I can fit one or two people and their gear in my ute, but you would need to work with my itinerary. I can also put people looking to carpool in touch with each other.

If you have questions, feel free to contact me on 0418 264 868 or at pickelbarrel@gmail.com

Marcus Hellyer



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Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

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Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

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

COG membership

2025-2026 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

Nik Froelich
Sue Gage
Jennifer Crone
Sarah Hill & Richard Bosci
Sam Galindo
Ruiqi Wang
Chloe D'Monte & Ewen Lawler
Samuel Macauley
Paul Cheeseman
Gary Dickson

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for AUGUST 2026 edition:

Wednesday 22 July 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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Gang-gang Newsletter

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