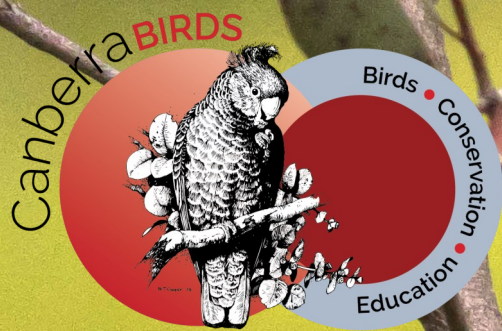




Gang-gang

Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc

Canberra Birds Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2026



Brown-headed Honeyeater, Pinnacle NR, ACT,
11 August 2026. Photo by *Peter Ravlich*

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Wednesday 9 September 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 2026.

Speakers for the 9 September meeting will be:

Steve Read - Changes to our constitution

Neil Hermes - The COG Garden Bird Survey. History, thoughts and musings

Rachael Grigson - Your Avian Flu questions answered

Change of meeting venue for COG/Canberra Birds

Until further notice the venue for our 2026 monthly members' meetings will remain the Bugang Room at the Denman Village Community Centre, located at 5 Felstead Vista, adjacent to the Denman Prospect shops (see Google Maps link <https://maps.app.goo.gl/NqW3XrN5ijf8dzRe9>)

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

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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.

At the September meeting there will be three presentations, the first two shorter ones than usual, followed by a presentation including a Q & A session on the Avian Flu.

The first presentation will be by **Steve Read**, who will outline **changes to our constitution** that are being proposed to match the updated ACT Model Rules for Incorporated Associations and to underpin our charitable status and requirements as a Deductible Gift Recipient. Details of the proposed changes will also be emailed to members in due course.

The second presentation will be by **Neil Hermes** on “**The COG Garden Bird Survey. History, thoughts and musings**”

Neil, a former President of COG/Canberra Birds, along with the late Prof Henry Nix, set up the still continuing Garden Bird Survey (GBS). This began in July 1981 and is now in its 45th year. The GBS records the species and abundance of birds in suburban gardens and allows members and supporters to count the maximum number of individual bird species on a weekly basis. The project has established a unique long-term set of

information, which has been compiled in a detailed computer database, into the annual geographic distributions and population abundance patterns of common, rare and introduced bird species.

Unfortunately, participation in this very valuable project has declined in recent years, partly due to the current lack of a GBS co-ordinator. Neil will give us his thoughts and musings about the Survey as it developed and changed over time.

The final presentation will be by **Rachael Grigson**, Biosecurity Veterinary Officer, ACT Government, on “**Your Avian Flu questions answered.**”

Rachael spoke to COG/Canberra Birds about H5N1 Avian Flu at the Canberra Birds meeting back in March 2025. That presentation is on the Canberra Birds Facebook page and can be viewed at any time from <https://www.facebook.com/reel/4061440154092172>

In September, Rachael will bring us up to date and then open the floor to your questions. Not only is this a very good opportunity to learn more about what ACT Government and Australian governments are doing in response to Avian Flu, but the question-and-answer session will be both interesting and valuable.

News from the Committee

The Committee met on the 20th of August, by Zoom as nearly always, and managed to close a little earlier than usual. Key items over the last month include:

- The Committee is keeping a very close eye on information about Avian Flu and its spread across Australia. We have representation on the ACT govt's ongoing Stakeholders Forum and have contributed to several media spots and webinars. On September 9th, Rachael Grigson, ACT Govt Biosecurity Vet Officer will be at our monthly meeting to update us and answer our questions. All are welcome at Denman Community Centre at 7:30 pm. At the time of writing in late August, no Avian Flu has been reported in the ACT.
- As in 2023 and 2025, the Committee discussed and agreed that Canberra Birds will partially fund one or two suitably qualified people to attend the 2027 Australasian Ornithological Conference. This is being held in February, earlier than usual, and will take place in Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. If you would like to apply for funding, read more elsewhere in this issue of Gang-gang.
- Legal changes have prompted a review of COG's Constitution. This work has been led by Vice-President Julie Hotchin, with strong input from Steve Read and David McDonald. Several updates are proposed and will be put to members at the November AGM. Members will shortly receive an email listing the proposed changes and inviting comment.
- In early August, Jenny Bounds and I attended the ACT Govt's annual Ecofocus event. Through a series of talks and posters, Ecofocus showcases research, projects and other activities being undertaken by government, academic and community organisations. It was a very interesting and worthwhile day.

Kim Farley, president@canberrabirds.org.au

Seeking a new Canberra Birds Members Meeting organiser

If you like to keep abreast of new research into birds, want to expand your networks of people who share an interest in birds and the conservation of their habitats, and can see yourself developing a varied and interesting program of speakers (with input and support of a team of helpers), this role may be for you.

For 60 years the monthly members meeting has played a vital role in facilitating the community that is Canberra Birds. These meetings create a forum where members come together to listen to speakers who enrich their knowledge, to keep abreast of local happenings, and to mingle and chat with fellow members.

Jack Holland, who has organised our monthly members meetings with aplomb for the last 19 years, is stepping down at the end of this year. We are now looking for a volunteer to take on this role.

What's involved?

The main activities of the role are to:

Arrange speakers for each meeting. You may already have a network of contacts of people who research birds or are involved in their conservation in other ways, across academia, government or the community – but this is not essential. Members of the Committee and others will support you to identify suitable speakers and develop your networks. The most important thing is that you are willing to invite, liaise and communicate with the speakers to contribute to a smoothly run event each month.

Promote the speakers and their topics to members for each meeting in *Gang-gang*, on our website and via the Chatline.

Manage logistical support (such as A/V) for speakers, if required, on the night.

Follow up after the meeting by thanking our speakers and writing a brief summary for *Gang-gang*.

Jack will retire from the role in November 2026. Ideally, the new meeting organiser will commence in the role towards the end of this year, to give you time to develop a program of speakers for the first part of 2027, with input and support from Jack and others.

We'd like to stress that this role need not be onerous, and that you will be supported at each stage while you find your feet. The role does not require any public speaking, nor will it tie you down, as others will assist if for any reason you are unable to be present at a members meeting.

Canberra Birds is a volunteer run organisation, and we are relying on a member to come forward to organise our monthly members meeting so that they continue in the future.

If you're interested in taking on this role and/or would like more information, please get in touch with Kim Farley on kimlouisefarley@gmail.com or 0414 990 250.

Julie Hotchin

Coffee and Chat at the Gardens Tuesday, 8 September

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.



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

The very frosty weather continued for the first three of the 5 weeks from 22 July to 25 August covered by this column. It was broken up by a significant rain event after which there were few, if any, frosts with temperatures in the final week having a distinct spring feel. While my analysis below supports that this led to an influx of spring/summer migrants, otherwise bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (Aoi) continued to be very low. In particular reports of “unusual” species remained very low, this time also for ducks and other waterbird species.

Highlights

There were no special “unusual” species that drew much of the attention during the period.

Spring/summer migrants



Noisy Friarbird, Goorooyarroo NR, ACT,
David Cook

Of the spring/summer migrant species which started to return during the period, the most notable seems to have been the **Noisy Friarbird**. Following the mid-winter report on 19 July, up to 5 birds continued to be reported at Zosterops Corner NE of Murrumbateman from 2 August. However, the first report from the ACT itself was from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) on 17 August, after which it was reported from over another 30 locations. Hopefully this pattern has been able to provide some very good data for the ANU’s James Klarevas-Irby’s tracking project of this species.

Another very early returnee was a **Pallid Cuckoo** first heard by two very experienced observers at the Tidbinbilla Rd at Point Hut Rd on 5 August and later seen and photographed there to 14 August. However, there have been reports from only 2 other locations since, single birds from the Zosterops Corner on 20 August and the horse paddocks at Hall on 21 August. There was also a very early report of an **Eastern Koel** heard in Symonston on 19 August, but none since.

Another early report was of the **Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo** from Kenny on 8 August, with up to 2 birds reported from Campbell Park on 22 August the only other report so far. There have been reports of the **Shining Bronze-cuckoo** from only one location so far, a single bird again from the Zosterops Corner from 16-19 August. In contrast the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, the least migratory of our local cuckoos, was reported from a remarkable 35 locations. This is well up from the 8 in the previous period, so another species which has moved in during the period.

The **Western Gerygone** has also returned with reports from 2 locations, 1 bird from the Kelly Rd near Williamsdale on 16 August and one from the Pinnacle NR on 20 August. However, the **White throated Gerygone** has yet to be reported this new season.

The first **Latham’s Snipe** returning from Japan was reported from the JWNR on 18 August, but there seem to have been no further reports since. The **Australian Reed-Warbler**, still reported from the JWNR on 8 July, was reported from 3 locations, up to 2 birds from the JWNR from 14 August, as well as 2 birds from the South Jerrabomberra Ponds on 20 August, and 1 bird from the Upper Stranger Pond on 24 August.



Pallid Cuckoo, Mullligans Flat NR, ACT, *David Cook*

Fairy Martins have also returned being reported from 7 locations, the earliest being 4 birds in the Goorooyaroo NR on 26 July. In comparison the **Tree Martin**, which was still reported from 6 locations in the previous period, as also clearly moved back in, being reported from 23 locations.

In contrast **Rufous Whistlers**, still recorded from 3 locations in the previous period (last on 10 July), seems to have been relatively slow to move back, recorded from 7 locations, with the first reports being single birds at the Shepherd's Lookout Walk and the Aranda Snow Gums NR, both on 8 August.

The **Dusky Woodswallow**, also reported from 3 locations in the previous period (last on 19 July), was reported from 13 locations during the period, the earliest being 1 bird at the Pine Island Reserve on 15 August. **Olive-backed Orioles**, still reported from 7 locations in the previous period, have also moved back in numbers, being reported from 28 locations during the period (see below for some of Shorty's comments).



Grey Fantail, 7 March 2025, *Lindsay Hansch*

The first two of the following four over wintering species have also started to move back in, the **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike** (around 50 locations compared with 20 in previous period), and **Grey Fantails** (around 80 vs 60 locations), more so than **Mistletoebirds** (recorded from 8 locations as for the previous period) and **Superb Parrots** recorded from around 63 locations, with of them 23 S of the lake (again similar to the previous period).

So, during September please keep an eye out for more of the above as they move in, and also for (in rough order) the **Leaden Flycatcher** (please be very careful with your identifications, especially of females), **Sacred Kingfisher** and **Rainbow Bee-eater**. Watch out too for increasing numbers of returning **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters**, though this is never as spectacular as their autumn migration. The **White-winged Triller** (one heard at the JWNR on 23 August) and **Rufous Songlark** also usually return towards the end of the month, numbers of these reaching the COG Aol, as well as the **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallow**, will depend on how dry it is in the inland.

Autumn/winter altitudinal migrants

Of the species that spend spring/summer in the mountains and higher country but return to Canberra and its surrounds in autumn/winter, the **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Golden Whistler** were still reported from over 40 and around 60 urban/peri-urban locations, respectively. So, keep an eye out for them, the former in particular is often quiet before it moves away, and the latter often delays its departure,

Somewhat surprisingly **Scarlet Robins** were reported from up to 40 urban/peri-urban locations (similar to the previous period). They certainly have been harder to find in my local area where I have been keeping a special lookout for them (as well as Flames), with my last records (both single females) from Narrabundah Hill on 27 July but with them seeming to stay longer at Cooleman Ridge to 17 August.

The **Flame Robin** which usually moves away earlier, was still reported from 14 such locations compared with 20 in the previous period. I thought the last record in my local area might have been the 16 (flocks of 9 with 2 orange males and 7 with 3 orange) likely moving towards higher country that Patrick Cox reported from Narrabundah Hill on 25 July, until we found a single female in the horse paddocks (a favoured location) there on 20 August. None have been reported from Cooleman Ridge in the period (last report 19 July), though up to 10 were still reported from the nearby Arawang Horse Paddocks to 8 August.

Amazingly single **Rose Robins** have been reported from 11 urban/peri urban locations in the period (only 3 in the previous), perhaps this often-considered passage migrant has made an early return. Again, there have been no confirmed **Pink Robin** sightings during the period, with the closest location still being E of Melbourne.

The **Crescent Honeyeater** has continued to be slow to move in, with the only possible close to urban/peri-urban report being 2 birds on the Kambah Pool to Red Rocks Gorge trail on 16 August, with all other reports of up to 4 birds being from 4 locations on or to the W of the Murrumbidgee River. **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters** were reported from 2 locations (as for the previous period), one bird at the Pinnacle NR on 20 August and 1 at Googong on 23 August.

Up to 2 **Bassian Thrush** were observed the ANBG to 18 August with up to 3 birds reported from the Sherwood Forest from 27 July to 2 August. A bird was also reported from the Honeysuckle Creek campground on 8 August. No **Olive Whistlers** were reported throughout the period. There have also been no confirmed reports **Swift Parrot**, with the closest location still being the Shoalhaven Heads area.

There were two further reports of the single **Brown Gerygone** at the JWNR on 1 and 5 August, the former still in mixed species feeding flock and photographed on the latter. There have been no confirmed reports of it at the ANBG, the usually favoured location, this winter.

During September, please keep an eye out for the species mentioned above in urban/peri-urban locations as they move away.

Unusual species

As for July 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. For the first time in quite a while there were also no **Freckled Duck** reported from anywhere in the COG Aol during the period.

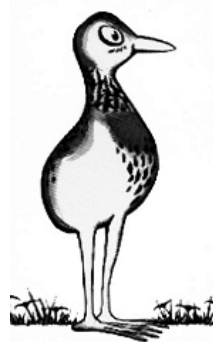
Australian Shelducks were only reported from around 9 locations (12 in previous period) stretching from the NE round to the SE of the ACT, with the highest numbers being the 10 ducks (well down from 36 there in previous period) on the Wollagorang Rd on 22 August. There were just 2 ducks on the Lake Bathurst survey on 16 August plus 6 on the Morass (3 and 6 ducks there, respectively on 19 July).

Blue-billed Ducks were reported from 6 locations during the past month (as in previous period), with up to 10 ducks regularly at the Upper Stranger Pond, up to 4 ducks at the Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Ponds (FSTP) but only up to 2 ducks at the JWNR from 25-26 July. There was 1 duck at the Taylor Ponds on 12 August, and 4 ducks on the big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR on 15 August, with the 13 ducks reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 16 August being much lower numbers than the 44 ducks there on 19 July. Overall, these numbers are much lower than the maximum of 284 ducks at NW Lake George early in July.

Musk Ducks were reported from 3 locations in the past month (5 in previous period), with none from the ACT. The highest numbers were the 34 ducks from the Lake Bathurst survey on 16 August, plus one duck at the Morass (33 and 1, respectively on 19 July). The other location was up to 3 ducks at Rowes Lagoon.

It is not clear to me why duck numbers seem to have dropped so low.

A single **Stubble Quail** were reported only from the Glendale Depot on 16 August (0 locations in previous period). **Brown Quail** were reported from 6 locations (5 in previous period), with the maximum being 7



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Australian Pipit, Glendale Depot Namadgi
NR, ACT, 12 August 2026, *Tee Tong Teo*

quail reported from big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR on 7 August. Again, no **Painted** or **Little Button-quail** were reported during the period.

No **White-headed Pigeon**, **Brown Cuckoo-Doves**, **Brush Bronzewing**, **Peaceful** 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, but **Spotless Crakes** were reported from 4 locations (3 in previous period), with up to 3 birds at the JWNR during the period. Single crakes were reported the Ginninderra Creek Evatt and the North Watson Wetlands, both on 10 August, as well as at the big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR on 15 August. There were again no **Australian Spotted Crakes** reported during the period.

Buff-banded Rails were reported from 2 locations (as for previous period), with up to 2 birds from the JWNR, and a single rail from the ANU on 12 and 21 August. **Lewin's Rails** were reported from just 1 location (4 in previous period) with a single rail the Ginninderra Creek Evatt on 10 August. The **Black-tailed Nativehen** was not reported during the period.

There were 7 **Red-capped Plovers** on the Lake Bathurst survey on 16 August (13 there on 19 July). **Pied Stilts** were reported 3 spots on NW Lake George with a maximum of 30 birds from the Wheatley VC Rest Area on 22 August (well down from the 100 stilts in the previous period). There were 9 **Red-necked Avocets** at the Badcoe VC rest area on 6 August and 4 there on 23 August.

No **Double-Banded Plovers**, **Pacific Golden Plovers**, **Banded Lapwing**, **Australian Painted-snipe**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Red-necked Stint**, **Sharp-tailed**, **Pectoral** or **Common Sandpipers** were reported during the period. Also, no **Caspian Tern**, **Whiskered** or **White-winged Black Terns** were reported.

Great-crested Grebes were reported from 2 locations during the period (0 in previous), with single birds at the Bracks Hole Rd on 14 and 22 August, and on the Lake Bathurst survey on 16 August. Again, no **Australian Little Bittern** or **Australasian Bittern** were reported during the period.

Also, no **Little Egrets** or **Plumed Egrets** were reported during the period. Single **Great Egrets** were reported from 8 locations during the period (15 in previous), again all but two within the ACT/Queanbeyan area. **White-necked Herons** were reported from 3 locations (as for the previous period) in the NE of the COG Aol, single birds at the Wet Lagoon Breadalbane on 3 August, near Lake Bathurst on 16 August and at Rows Lagoon on 23 August.

Royal Spoonbills were reported from just one location (well down from 4 in the previous), 3 birds at the North Mitchell Grasslands on 23 August. **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** were also reported from just 1 location (5 in previous), with 3 birds at the Wollagorang Rd on 3 August. No **Glossy Ibis** were reported during the period.

Again, numbers of other waterbirds are well down from earlier in 2026, in particular the **White-necked Heron** and the Spoonbills.

An **Eastern Barn Owl** was reported only from Gundaroo after dark on 15 August, but no confirmed **Powerful Owls** were reported. **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from up to 15 locations in the period, down from the 21 in the previous period. The **Spotted Harrier** was last reported from the JWNR on 30 July, and also from the Dunlop Grasslands on 4 August. However, no confirmed **Grey Goshawk**, **Pacific Baza**, **Black Kite** or **Black Falcon** were reported from anywhere in the COG Aol during the period.

Azure Kingfishers were reported from 3 locations (as in the previous period) during the period with again up to 3 birds at the lower overlook on the Molonglo River (near the Sewage Treatment Plant) and 1 bird at the nearby Woodstock Nature Reserve on 25 July. In a post to the COG chat line Jack Hunter wondered whether these were the same birds travelling around 1.5 km. I expect there are no answers to this question as the species has only been more widely reported in the ACT over the past 10 years or so, including from a number of spots along the Cotter River downstream of the dam.

Jack also asked, "Is there any possibility or precedence of **Azure Kingfishers** breeding in the ACT?" The first instance I can recall is of two birds calling constantly apparently courting on the Uriarra Loop Track on 19 July 2019. Possible breeding has also been reported on the Cotter River, but details are harder to check. The third location during the period was a bird at the Sanctuary at Tidbinbilla on 6 August, but no **Red-backed** or **Forest Kingfishers** were reported during the period.

No **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** or **Cockatiel** were reported during the period. **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from 3 locations (4 in previous period), two birds at Swinger Hill on 3 August, and at the Shepherd's Lookout Walk on 19 August, with 3 birds at Lake Ginninderra on 22 August. However, no **Turquoise Parrots**, **Little, Scaly-breasted** or **Purple-crowned Lorikeets** were reported over the period.

A **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** was reported from the known Rock Valley Homestead area in the Tidbinbilla NR on 21 August (2 were there on 24 August), as well as from private property S of Gunning on 15 August. **White-fronted Chats** were reported from 5 locations in the period (4 in previous), with 4 birds at Whitlam on 15 August. The other locations were all in the NE corner of the COG Aol, with 8 birds on the Lake Bathurst survey on 16 August (17 on 19 July), 4 birds on the Wollogorang Rd on 3 August, 6 birds at the Wet Lagoon Breadalbane on the same day and 2 birds at the Kibby VC Rest Area (the N end of the Federal Hwy) on 8 August.

Blue-faced Honeyeaters were reported from 5 locations (4 in previous period) with the single bird at the Lanyon Market Place, Condor on 1 August now the most southerly record I am aware of in the ACT. All other records were from N of LBG, with 3 birds at the University of Canberra on 24 July, 4 birds in Commonwealth Park on 4 August, and single birds at the Hawker Oval and Playing fields on 16 August and at Bruce on 17 August. However, no **Singing, Scarlet, Lewin's, Brown, Striped** or **Painted Honeyeaters**, **Little Wattlebirds** or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period.

Three **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** were reported from Whiskers Creek Rd Carwoola on 23 August. **Red-capped Robins** were reported from 3 locations (4 in previous) with up to 2 birds continuing to be at the Nadjung Mada NR to 14 August. There was also a bird reported from the nearby Kenny on 8 August as well as 2 birds on the Bracks Hole Fire Trail on 27 July and 14 August. On the first date there, Greg Wood reported 4 species of Robin, including **Hooded, Scarlet** and **Eastern Yellow**. He noted there must be very good pickings, insect-wise, though on the second day, when **Flame Robins** were also present, he added they were feeding over the degraded ground under repair.

No **White-browed Babbler**, **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike**, **Australasian Figbird**, **Apostlebird**, **Spangled Drongo**, **Black-faced Monarch**, **Tawny Grassbird** or **Zebra Finches** were reported during the period.

Jacky Winters were reported from 4 known locations over the period (3 in the previous), In the S of the ACT there 3 at the Namadgi NP Visitors Centre on 1 August and up to 2 at the Top Naas Rd on 26-27 July. To the N of Canberra there were 2 birds at Mulligans Flat NR on 15 August (and one on 24 August), and one bird at the Namina TSR on 7 August.

Hooded Robins were reported from 4 locations (as in previous), with single birds from the Bracks Hole Fire Trail on 27 July and 14 August. To the S of Canberra, up to 4 birds were reported from the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd, with 1 bird at the nearby Apollo Rd on 27 July and 4 on 1 August. There was also a bird reported from private property (said to be the first since 2017) on the Clear Range on 22 August.

Restless Flycatchers were again reported from 2 known locations only during the period (1 in the previous), with one bird at the Nelanglo TSR on 4 and 8 August. To the S of the ACT, there were 2 birds reported from the Top Naas Rd on 8 August.

The **Brown Treecreeper** was reported from 4 locations during the period (as for the previous). Up to 4 birds were reported from the Nelanglo TSR from 4-8 August, up to 4 birds at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd to 16 August, with 1 bird at the nearby Apollo Rd on 27 July and 1 August. There was also 1 bird photographed at the Yankee Hut (a new location) on 2 August.

Reports of "unusual" species were very low over the period with again very few reports of pigeons/doves, raptors, parrots and honeyeaters and other passerines. The big surprise was the low numbers of waterbirds, especially ducks.

Breeding

With the spring breeding season about to commence I need to remind readers of the care that needs to be taken around breeding birds as outlined in the Canberra Birds' Ethical Birding Guidelines (go to [Home - Canberra Birds](#) and press the third button on the top right labelled Ethical Birding). In particular please read and follow the sections on Nesting Birds and Bird Photography.

Some late winter breeding has come to my attention:

On 7 August Matthew Larkin reported one very recently fledged **Red Wattlebird** in Cook, tracked down after hearing begging calls. Checking the BIRD INFO on the Canberra Birds web site indicates just 1 dependent young in August, but 16 of nest building, 2 nests with eggs and 1 nest with young. So, it is early, with just 2 nest building and 1 nest with young for July. However, there are no copulation records at all (cf mine for 11 July in my previous column) and it does not seem to include my fledgling that left the nest around 26 July 2004 in my still very bare garden after moving back to our rebuilt Chapman house at the start of July (see Gang-gang August 2004, p2). There is one on a nest in my GBS site at present.

Interestingly, given that the BIRD INFO records stop in 2017, well before **Eastern Koel** fledgling records increased sharply, they do not seem to support the theory that **Red Wattlebirds** are nesting earlier to avoid nest parasitisation. Already the most breeding records are for October, with the 211 dependent young records nearly double that in any other month.

On 23 August Cat Stanfield observed a group of about 7 **White-winged Choughs** building a nest at The Pinnacle NR. She was surprised how close to the trail they chose to build as it was busy with people and dogs. She wondered perhaps it was because it's conveniently located near the creek where they were getting their materials? She noted it was wonderful watching them fly back and forth to the creek bed to get mud and grass and then take turns adding it to the nest. They also added some dry material as they went, gathered from below the tree. It looked like a brand-new nest - only the base seems to have been built so far.

Also on 23 August Robin Hide posted that the **Tawny Frogmouth** was back nesting again in Corroboree Park, in the same position as in recent years. Given the mild autumn/winter conditions, he had been checking daily since early August, and that morning was the first appearance. Last year it was on 24 August (though he may have missed a day), in the 2 previous years it was slightly later in August.

I have checked my most reliable nest site in Chapman but found that the large branch on which they nested in recent years had completely broken off during the non-breeding season. However, **Tawny Frogmouth** researcher Stuart Rae indicated they will be close by. He also noted most are just beginning to build now, some ready for eggs.

Flocks, including of migrating birds

Apart from the one including the **Brown Gerygone** above, mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) continued to have been observed, including by Andrea and me in our local area, with the **Scarlet Robin** often present. However, if the warmer weather continues, they will break up soon.

In the absence of any notable single species flocks coming to my attention, the following observations by Shorty at his Symonston home are worthy of inclusion. On 28 July he posted that it has been an odd winter as he had not been hearing **Olive-backed Orioles** and was only able to record them if he saw them. That day that changed with a very vocal one, of which he took some recordings and added them to his eBird list. Listening to them revealed only around 5 short standard calls in the several minutes of recording, with lots of mimicry for which this species is well known.

On 3 August Shorty posted that after a couple of quiet winters the **Olive-backed Orioles** had made a comeback at his home. That day he recorded 5 individuals and going off plumage, he could confirm that he was getting at least 7 individual birds using his bird baths, noting that they do drink often. This is a remarkable number for a species that is often recorded singly.

September is the first full month of significant bird activity in the COG AoI. So please watch out for more of the returning spring/summer migrants mentioned above, for the last of the departing altitudinal migrants, for roost sites and flights, for any late MFFs or single flocks, and for early spring breeding activity. 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

Apply now for Canberra Birds funding to attend the 2027 Australasian Ornithological Conference.

Applications close September 30

BirdLife Australia and Birds New Zealand are co-hosting the 14th Australasian Ornithological Conference (AOC) in Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand in February 2027. The AOC is the primary conference for BirdLife Australia and is the largest biennial gathering of enthusiastic amateur and professional ornithologists from our region.

As in previous years, Canberra Birds will support one or two suitably qualified people to attend the Conference.

Applications for funding are open to anyone whose participation in the AOC aligns with Canberra Birds' objectives. This will include tertiary students as well as other people undertaking demonstrated research or projects that support our objectives. While giving a presentation or poster at the conference is not a requirement, it would be looked upon favourably in our assessment of applications.

For more information, including Canberra Birds' objectives and the application form, see the [AOC funding application page](#) on the Canberra Birds website.

Information about the Conference at <https://aoc.org.au/>



Canberra Birds Annual Bird Blitz, 24 and 25 October 2026

Spring is upon us, and with spring comes the Canberra Birds Blitz, now in its 21st year. The Blitz aims to provide an annual snapshot of the birds of the ACT, their abundance and breeding activity. We need as many participants as possible to conduct bird surveys across the ACT just as birds begin actively breeding and our summer bird migrants are arriving to contribute to this snapshot. It's a fun weekend, whether on your own or with a group of friends.

We will continue with our 'Blitz-lite' approach this year because we are still looking for a volunteer to take on the role of Blitz Coordinator. This involves organising access to part of Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla for which access to locked gates is required and coordinating site selection among participants to ensure the widest coverage of the ACT possible. Last year's records were primarily from urban sites, which gives us a snapshot within Canberra itself, although we'd like a larger spread of sites surveyed over the Blitz weekend, especially within Namadgi, to give us a broader picture of the distribution of the birds across our region.

The majority of Blitz records are now submitted via eBird, and we encourage this to continue. For eBirders, this is the easiest and quickest way to submit data and also for us to receive it. If you prefer to submit records on hard copy COG datasheets, we are happy to continue to receive them this way.

For more information about the Blitz, including details about submitting data and the list of long-term Blitz sites, see the [Blitz web page](#).

If you are interested in coordinating the Blitz or would like more information about what's involved, please get in touch with Kim Farley on kimlouiseFarley@gmail.com or on 0414 990 250.

Julie Hotchin

Summary of the 12 August meeting

Erratum - in the report of Philip Veerman's 8 July presentation to COG/Canberra Birds on p10 of the August 2026 issue of Gang-gang, the 2nd sentence of the 3rd last paragraph should have read (ie the two words underlined and in italics below should have been included):

"It was also inaccurate as it included the **Sarus Crane** and the *particular subspecies* of the **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo**, both of which do not occur in NSW".

Despite the closure of Coppins Crossing meaning attendees from the Northside having to make an extra effort and to travel further to attend, and one of the speakers having to withdraw at short notice, the 12 August meeting was well attended and very successful.

The short presentation was by Zachary Flegg on "[Canberra Bird Blitz Summary](#)".

Zac noted that the Canberra Bird Blitz aims to record as many species of birds in the ACT across as wide a variety of habitats as possible – all in the one spring weekend. It provides a yearly snapshot of the birds of the ACT, their abundance in different locations and their breeding activity.

It thus contains a very valuable long-term data set, allowing investigation of changes over time. However, he noted there has been no formal analysis of this set since its inception in 2005, and indeed no report to COG/Canberra Bird members since 2023, or a coordinator since 2024.

Therefore, Zac accepted the challenge to analyse the 2023-2025 data and provide an overview of the species detected, as well as changes in methodology.

He reported that in terms of total species recorded this fell from 175 in 2023 to 157 in 2025, with numbers of breeding species dropping from 33.7% to 25.4%. The **Eurasian Coot** had the highest numbers of individual birds in both 2023 and 2025, compared with the **Silver Gull** in 2024, both reflecting large numbers on our urban lakes and ponds. However, the **Noisy Miner** only made it to No 10 in 2024.

Interestingly there were still 14 new species that had not been recorded in 2022, with still 10 of these in the 2025 "Bird Blitz, *lite*" year. While the results show a real decline in bird numbers, it is unclear whether this is due to fewer observers in 2025, with Zac's maps showing surveying then at mainly urban locations and very few in the southern half of the ACT, including the Namadgi NP.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Zac for accepting this task and giving the very interesting presentation summarising the COG Blitz data for 2023-2025.

It was clear from the questions which followed there is still considerable interest in this program, and we hope his presentation will help to rekindle interest in it, possibly also leading to a coordinator for this year's Blitz scheduled for 24-25 October 2026.

Unfortunately, Dr Jurian Hoogewerf was unable to deliver his presentation on "Introduction to technical aspects of ecoacoustic recording."

So, the second and very interesting presentation was also Zachary Flegg on "Nightjars in the Cotter - Methods, Findings and Ethical Implications" which had been adjusted in part to cover some the above aspects.

Zac delivered this very confidently and enthusiastically, with very good humour and clear slides. He also handled the sensitive issues such as the ethical considerations around playback very well.

Following the many records from the Cotter area in the late summer/early autumn of 2024, Zac's examination of the available literature showed that the **White-throated Nightjar** was very poorly studied. So, for an independent research project through

the University of Canberra, he decided to study this species locally through audio-monitoring, based on, as he demonstrated, its very distinctive call.

Therefore, Zac set up Passive Acoustic Monitors using the commercially available and efficient Audiomoth to collect the raw sound at 10 sites in the Cotter area, with them being in place from 20 November 2025 to 5 April 2026.

Every fortnight Zac removed the cards for analysis for which the majority of the work occurred within the Birdnet GUI application, as well as, to a lesser extent, Chirpity. The Birdnet model enables the fast detection of calls, and was 95% accurate, but only at high confidence levels. Calls which matched >80% with Zac's training data were found with 95% accuracy, however, that figure dropped off significantly at lower confidence,

Thus, Zac found out that while it was good for most species, it was poor for the **White-throated Nightjar's** call which was often misidentified for the **Eastern Yellow Robin**. Therefore, he has been retraining the model, a continuing process, to remove false positives from a range of unusual sources.

A major factor that interfered and had to be removed from his recordings was the high extent of playback calls detected, not only for his study species, but also for others. This was sometimes for hours and also on many nights, over 25 of them in the study period, with the most of them in February.

Zac made very clear his concerns that this extent of playback could impact a number of species and mentioned that the Birdlife Australia Ethical Birdwatching Guidelines (<https://birdlife.org.au/how-to/ethical-birdwatching-guidelines>) covers the use of playback. This notes "It is important to recognise that call playback can cause distress to target birds and other nearby species, or disrupt their feeding or breeding. As a rule, BirdLife Australia does not support the use of call playback for recreational birdwatching or photography." Note that the Canberra Birds' Ethical Birding Guidelines (go to [Home - Canberra Birds](#) and press the third button on the top right labelled Mindful Birding) also has a section on playing calls.

In total Zac recorded 112 species (not including the silent **Emu**) of which quite unexpectedly the **Rufous Whistler** was by far the most dominant. The number of **Red-capped Robins** recorded in the area was also quite unexpected, as was the presence of the **Powerful Owl** in the Pierces Creek area. All the major nocturnal birds expected in the area were recorded.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Zac for giving a very interesting and wonderful presentation on the use of Passive Acoustic Monitoring to record the **White-throated Nightjar** and other nocturnal species in the ACT. It clearly illustrated the potential application of audio recording as an environmental monitoring tool. We also agree that the Canberra Birds Conservation Funds assistance, which Zac acknowledged, have been put to very good use.

We all wish Zac the very best for the future success of this very important research, including for the 2026-2027 season, and its subsequent publication. We would love to have him, as well as his supervisor Dr Jurian Hoogewerff, speak to us again once these are completed.

Jack Holland



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- **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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An Introduction: Selfish Gifts

Following his article about Wedge-tailed Eagles in the August Gang-gang, member Trevor Costa has contributed a thoughtful follow-up piece about what he has learnt about birds since taking up bird photography, what he has learnt about bird photography and, what he has learnt about how we should be interacting with wild birds. His advice can be taken to heart by all birders and photographers, both those new to the field and the more experienced.

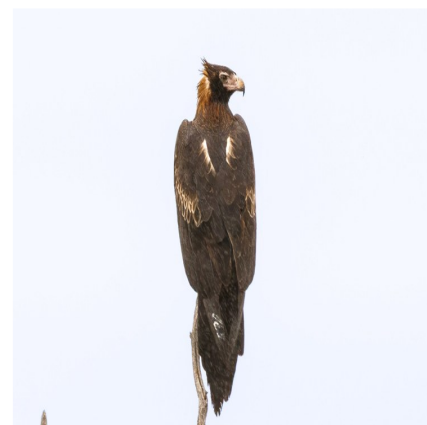
Thank you for sharing this with us, Trevor

Zachary Flegg—Editor

Selfish Gifts

Trevor Costa

When I first started bird photography in earnest a few years ago, I started noticing differences in not only the encounters with birds but also the results, the images captured. The best images to me were those that showed the birds behaving in a normal or natural manner such as feeding, interacting with other birds and animals, hunting or just resting. Photos that showed the bird on alert to my presence, or indicating discomfort in body movement or position had an edge that distracted from the image and the encounter. This dichotomy became more obvious as I became more familiar with the bird species I was photographing, their normal behaviour and how they communicated verbally and physically. Other more experienced wildlife photographers were also a good sounding board for reading bird behaviour.



It is one thing to capture an image it is another to be gifted one. The former you are a thief; the latter you are a guest. A guest through the bird knowing you are there but giving consent to your presence, that you are accepted as part of the world around and not a threat, a curiosity perhaps but not the predator. This to me quickly became my prime driver in my photography endeavours. I began to focus on that dark questioning eye that asks, “who are you”? Not the instant and startled response in instinctively knowing. But there is no getting over that there is some deception in this as a photographer’s intentions are sort of predatory in securing that image, but perhaps justifiable in that no physical harm or disturbance is intended.

It became obvious that quiet, slow walking was the go and to keep chatter to a minimum (even when alone). Often, just staying still and giving the birds the room to dictate the space they require, allowing them to come to you. To seek acceptance in a mutually agreed contract; that they will gift an acceptable image if you in turn offer them the space to feel safe to do so. This includes recognition and respect for their territory such as all-important nesting territory which can be a learning experience all on its own depending on the species and can turn the tables very quickly.

Unfortunately, humans by nature seem to be space invaders. We live in a close society where available space is depleting and at a premium. This consumption of space inevitably impacts on other beings. While other species operate as they always have, the lines that we would have once instinctively known between prey and hunter are now harder for us to read. To dance with a bird in their own space is a rewarding experience. To feel that sense of openness and ancient interaction is to reassert something that seems to be slipping away.

To offer the space a bird requires there is no escape from the fact a photographer needs the right equipment. Dark or green clothing that blends into the surrounds lowers the profile and detection and startle factor. Flapping or noisy gear and accessories should be avoided. And this is also where a good telephoto lens comes in. I would recommend a minimum of 400mm telephoto capacity. I even got one of those camo skins for my 150-600mm telephoto lens to help with the blending factor.

I can’t help but wonder with their different senses, particularly of sight, what a bird sees when a human approaches them, photography gear raised and that one large piercing eye pointed directly at them. Having photographed diurnal raptors, you can soon appreciate they are operating on a sensory and visual landscape we can only imagine. And it is this imagining, seeing through the eyes of another being, a being truly in the now that can bring the joy and awe. To extend our own inner world to meet and flow with an outer reality, to regulate our nervous systems to ancient rhythms and sounds that birds seem good at offering, is perhaps ultimately a selfish human endeavour. So, in this selfish pursuit we humans need to meet our feathered subjects halfway at least. You may never know what it is like to have wings, but when you get home and download the images, there can be some wonderful compensatory gifts on offer.

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 2 August – Percival Hill NR

Eleven birders met in Nicholls for a walk in Percival Hill Nature Reserve. We covered nearly two kilometres, much of it unfamiliar to most of us. The reserve borders a golf club, where quite a few **Australian Wood Ducks** were grazing, while several others were checking out possible nest sites in trees in the reserve. We walked down to the golf club dam, which had a variety of water birds, including a group of ten **Hoary-headed Grebes**. A raptor overhead was identified as a **Brown Goshawk**, when it finally showed itself briefly as it passed over the treetops. A pair of **Laughing Kookaburras** were hunting along the creek at one end of the dam. As we turned up the hill towards the trig, we were rather intrigued to see a small bird collecting loose fur from a reclining kangaroo. A good number of small birds in the same vicinity included **Brown-headed Honeyeaters**, **Weebills**, four species of thornbill, and **Silvereyes**. At the trig we started looking around for robins, since I'd seen both **Flame** and **Scarlet Robins** there earlier that morning. Male and female birds of both species obliged, taking advantage of the verbascum stalks and rocks.

By the time we'd checked out the revegetation of a cleared area and made our way back to Schow Place, we'd managed 44 species, a very respectable result. Many thanks to Margaret for leading the outing and to Lia for the birdlist.

Sandra Henderson



Brown-headed Honeyeaters with Eastern Grey Kangaroo, **Golden Whistler**, **Superb Fairy-wren**, Percival Hill, ACT, 2 August 2026, Photos: *Linda Wilson*

Sunday 16 August – Glendale Depot, Namadgi NP

A group of 14 (including two new participants) met on an overcast morning at the Namadgi National Park Visitor Centre to carpool to Glendale Depot, where those in the first car to arrive were treated to some great views of a **Fuscous Honeyeater** in the woodland surrounding the car park, but the later arrivals were soon rewarded with the sight of three more at the start of the gravel walk just beyond the car park.



Members at Glendale Depot, Namadgi NP, ACT, 12 August 2026, Photo, *Tee Tong Teo*

The group were then treated to the sight of two **Australian Ravens** mobbing two **Wedge-tailed Eagles** as they flew along the ridgeline to our right. One of the eagles had the lighter brown colouring of a juvenile.

On the grassy area just before the depot itself, we spotted our first **Scarlet Robin** male and female of the day “near the rocks”, which was to be a refrain throughout the visit. We departed ways with the gravel path shortly after passing the depot to veer left across some open grasslands studded with more rock

formations. Here a male **Flame Robin** sat up nicely for us, allowing us to see clearly his bright orange chest, followed by the female following suit.

We walked through a small woodland to a dam – no waterbirds were present, but we did see or hear **Spotted Pardalotes**, **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** and **Superb Fairy-wrens** in the woods. We zig-zagged our way across the grassland towards the far tree line to the southeast of the depot, spotting an **Australian Pipit** which appeared to be practising display flights. We heard a **Stubble Quail**, but it proved too elusive to spot. A pair of **Welcome Swallows** showed off their acrobatics swooping over the grass, and in the trees ahead a group of four **Eastern Rosellas** stood out with their bright plumage. We followed the tree line to the right and up a hill to some storage containers before heading back down the hill towards the depot, where we heard **Satin Bowerbirds**. As if hearing my wish to see a male **Scarlet and Flame robin** side-by-side for comparison, two males rested on a wire fence (see picture) before one chased the other off. We briefly made our way down a path towards the Gudgenby River, where one person spotted a **White-eared Honeyeater**. There were quite a few mobs of Eastern Grey Kangaroos across the site, and here we enjoyed the sight of a Red-necked Wallaby with a young joey in her pouch. We spotted a **White-throated Treecreeper** working its way up a tree and a group of seven **Red-browed Finches** lined up on a branch for us (see picture). Completing our circumnavigation of the depot back towards the carpark, we spotted a female **Golden Whistler** and, near the carpark itself, heard a **Buff-rumped Thornbill**.

The group decided to make an additional stop on the way back to the Visitor Centre at the intersection of Nass Road and Apollo Road. Those in the first cars to arrive spotted a group of **Double-barred Finches**, but they quickly disappeared out of view. Carefully crossing over Nass Road, we saw two **Nankeen Kestrels** and could hear **Red-rumped Parrots**. The group could also clearly hear the distinctive 'pink' call of the **Brown Treecreeper** and, after patiently waiting at a group of trees near a rocky outcrop in the pasture, some in the group were treated to the sight of the little brown bird itself. A few people also spotted a **European Goldfinch** and had a good view of a **White-plumed Honeyeater** before heading back to the cars and making our way back to the Visitor Centre.

Despite some threatening clouds, the group was delighted that the rain held off for all of the birding action. Many thanks to Mark Tindale for leading this very enjoyable walk and to Lia Battisson for keeping the bird list.

Photos by Julian Pratley

Stephanie Good



Clockwise: **Red-browed Finch**, Glendale Depot, Namadgi NP, ACT, **Flame Robin**, **Scarlet Robin**, Glendale Depot, Namadgi NP, ACT, 16 August 2027, Photos: **Julian Pratley**; **White-plumed Honeyeater**, Nass Road, Apollo Road, ACT, **White-throated Treecreeper**, Glendale Depot, Namadgi NP, ACT, **Double-barred Finch**, Nass Road, Apollo Road, ACT, 16 August 2027, Photos: **Tee Tong Teo**

Wednesday 19 August—Mount Rogers NR

A group of 10 joined Margaret Robertson at Mt Rogers for a walk on a beautiful day. While a few were very familiar with this reserve, for most of us it was new territory. A **Common Bronzewing** was calling nearby as we gathered in the carpark, so we set off to find it. The bird took off as we approached and landed on the ground not far away, and was soon joined by another. Birds are starting to think about breeding, and a **Pied Currawong** was seen breaking off some twigs to add to a nest. Small birds were in abundance, but as usual, getting a good look at them was tricky. A **Striated Pardalote** working its way through eucalypt foliage provided us with some excellent views. On the way to the trig we found **Australian Ravens** on the telecommunications tower, and a trio of **Laughing Kookaburras** in the nearby trees. Some members of the group encountered a **Scarlet Robin** while others admired the boulders beside the track. **Weebills**, **Spotted Pardalotes** and various thornbill species were plentiful, but we were surprised to see a group of five **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** fly by.

Many thanks to Margaret for leading, to Lia for keeping the bird list and to Mitchell for sharing some of his botanical knowledge.

Sandra Henderson



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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 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

Wednesday 16 September -

Sunday 20 September – private property north of Gundaroo

We will visit a private property where the landholders have undertaken significant revegetation over the last 10 years, and where we are likely to find a variety of woodland birds. We will be walking up to 4 kms depending on the weather and the birds, on different surfaces, including rough rocky tracks and off track with some hills.

Meet at Sutton Primary School at 7.30am for carpooling. We will be back there by 12:00.

Wear sturdy boots, a hat and appropriate clothing for the weather. Bring water and morning tea.

Register with the leader Nicki Taws by email ntaws@bigpond.com 0408210736, by Friday 18 September with name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. The trip will be limited to 20 participants.

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

Sunday 4 October - Lake Road and Bungendore Common

Description. Lake Road includes farmland, a large farm dam, woodland, grassland and the southern end of Lake George. Species observed include **Red-browed and Double-barred Finch**, **Swamp Harrier**, **Red-kneed Dotterel**, **Australian Shelduck** and **Rufous Whistler**. We will have lunch at Bungendore Common with wetlands that have contained **Australian Darter**, **Yellow-billed Spoonbill** and **Chestnut Teal**.

Meeting Time and place. Spotlight carpark, 6 Bungendore Road, Queanbeyan at 8.30 am (DST) for carpooling.

Suggested contribution to the driver \$10.

Degree of Difficulty: Easy.

Walking distance: Lake Road 1 km, Bungendore Common 2 km. Approx end time 3.00pm.

What to bring: Water, morning tea, lunch, hat and sunscreen

Participants must **register** with the leader by email to bsgraham1948@gmail.com by Friday 2 October with name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Bill Graham

Saturday 10 October - Australian National Botanic Gardens - beginners outing

This morning walk will be aimed specifically to help beginners and new members identify birds and to learn about their behaviour and calls. The Botanic Gardens are especially suitable for such an outing, as they allow the opportunity to observe a range of local bush birds in a variety of habitats. Due to the available food supply, they are also a relative haven for birds during spring. 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 11 October – K2C surveys – Bredbo area

Canberra Birds will continue with the K2C surveys that have been running since April 2010. 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 spring migrants have arrived. 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 7 October. Email: ntaws@bigpond.com or 0408 210 736.

Sunday 18 October – Bungendore Travelling Stock Reserves

At the March meeting, member Rainer Rehwinkel gave us a presentation on the birds of three of the Travelling Stock Reserves around Bungendore. Such was the interest, a trip is now offered to several of these Reserves. We will meet at 8:00am and drive on to Bungendore. The walks will be on flat ground, or near so. Wear sturdy shoes, bring a hat and a snack. Finish time is about 12.30pm.

As numbers are limited, please **register** by email to kimlouisefarley@gmail.com. Include your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. More detail on the meeting place, etc, will be sent when you register.

Kim Farley



MYALLA BIRDWATCHERS MID-WEEK SPECIAL

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.

A Birdwatcher's Retreat in the Capertee Valley - Escape to one of Australia's most remarkable birding landscapes. Set in the breathtaking Capertee Valley, between the Blue Mountains and inland NSW, Myalla Farm Stay offers quiet, space and exceptional birdlife right outside your door. One avid guest recorded 80 bird species before even leaving the houseyard. From honeyeaters and small woodland birds in the gardens to raptors riding thermals above the sandstone escarpments, the diversity here is extraordinary. The valley is also internationally recognised for sightings of the endangered Regent Honeyeater. Backing directly onto Wollemi National Park, Myalla offers immediate access to exceptional habitat. Guests can explore an easy 6km walk to our private picnic area and lookout with sweeping views across the valley — perfect for spotting raptors. Sleeps up to 10 guests — ideal for couples, small groups or birding clubs. Slow down, take your time, and immerse yourself in the birdlife of the Capertee Valley. Learn more at www.myalla.com.au

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:

Kenneth & Karen King
Maxine Cox
Judy Jones
Andrew & Colleen Graham
Luke Gordon
Larissa Dan
Neera Jain
Kate & Anthony Hallett
Joshua Megalli
Steve Styles
Lynette Potts
Richard Marris & Julie King
Hilay Shah
Shirali Dave
Julian Pratley
Sharon Koh
Carol Beynon

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for October 2026 edition:

Wednesday 30 September 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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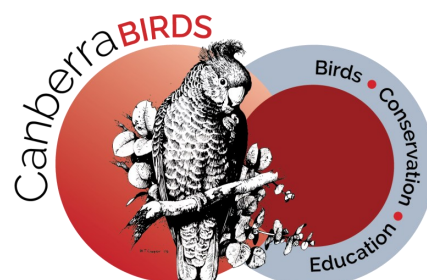
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