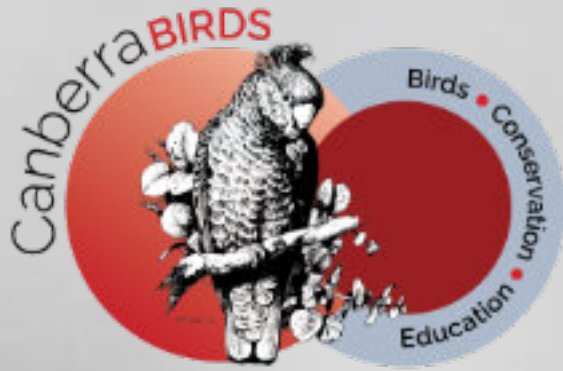




Gang-gang

Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc

Canberra Birds Newsletter

OCTOBER 2026



White-throated Gerygone
Photo: *Julian Robinson*

October Meeting

Wednesday - 14 October 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 and beyond.

Speakers for the 14 October meeting will be:

Chris Davey – the 2026 Honeyeater Migration Survey

Geoffrey Dabb - Exactly which magpie is that?

Meeting venue for COG/Canberra Birds

Until further notice the venue for our monthly members' meetings will be 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.

To help guide you once there the Canberra Birds Sandwich Board will be outside the front door.

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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 October meeting there will be two presentations of roughly equal length.

The first presentation will be by **Chris Davey** on the “**Honeyeater migration along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Autumn 2026**”.

From mid-March to mid-April many members and friends were involved in a survey of honeyeater movements along the Corridor. Chris will present the results of the survey and compare results with a similar survey conducted in 1997 and in 2025.

The second slightly longer presentation will be by **Geoffrey Dabb** on “**Exactly which magpie is that?**” - A riffle through the magpie literature, from the First Fleet to AviList, and a stroll with a camera through Canberra’s magpie-rich suburbs.

The Australian Magpie is our most recorded bird species. Moreover, as we can see from the long entry about the species in the online

HANZAB, much effort has been devoted to gathering information about it. Now, for eBird purposes, observers have been given an opportunity to record not only different subspecies but also apparent hybrids. So, there's reason to consider more closely the variations in the appearance of the local magpies. This talk looks at different views about variations, and at attempts to classify plumage types. A recent collection of photos of magpies in Canberra streets is used to show the range of types, and to show there is still a lot for students of magpie plumages to think about.

News from the Committee

The Committee met on the 24th of September. Key highlights this month included:

- The signing of an Agreement with the ACT Government's Office of Nature Conservation to supply selected COG data from our long running Woodlands Survey. The data will be used to create an ACT Threatened Species Index. The application for data access was made during 2025. The Agreement was signed on the 11th of September and the data supplied on the 23rd September. For those interested in what the Threatened Species Index provides, click on [this link](#) for the national version of the Index.
- Following Steve Read's overview of proposed changes to the COG Constitution at the September members meeting, members were emailed with more detail, and feedback invited. The proposed changes are also shown on [this webpage](#).
- Canberra Birds aligns its bird naming and taxonomy with that of Birdlife Australia, but for the everyday birder, the main effect will be that a number of bird names will change on our Bird Info pages on the website, as will the order in which some species will appear, due to likely taxonomic changes.

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

Coming up soon. The Canberra Birds annual Bird Blitz 24-25 October

Spring is here, and with spring comes the Canberra Birds Blitz, now in its 21st year. The Blitz is a great way to enjoy the outdoors, while also contributing data to our annual snapshot of the birds of the ACT. We invite you to contribute your sightings for your own backyard, your favourite birding spot, or indeed anywhere in the ACT.

Read more about taking part on the Blitz web page at <https://canberrabirds.org.au/observing-birds/cog-bird-blitz/>

The Committee is still looking for a member to take on the role of Blitz Coordinator. This is very much a part-time role requiring organisational effort for just a few months a year. It can also be fun, as in the past there was a great social and team aspect to the Blitz. It would be very good to bring that back. For enquiries about being 'boss of the Blitz', send an email to Blitz@canberrabirds.org.au. Or have a chat with any Committee member at a member meeting, or at Coffee and Chat at the Gardens.

Canberra Birds Committee

Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc. Annual General Meeting

Members are warmly invited to participate in the forthcoming COG Annual General Meeting:

- When: Wednesday 11 November, 7.30 pm
- At: Denman Village Community Centre, 5 Felstead Vista, Denman Prospect
- And online via Zoom.

Further details, including links to the meeting papers and details to join via Zoom, will be emailed to all members in the second week of October.

The business at the AGM will include the presentation of the President's Report on our activities for the year, the adoption of the annual financial accounts, the presentation of the Steve Wilson Medal, and the election of the office bearers and general committee members.

Members also will be asked to consider and vote on changes to the COG Constitution through the following motion:

'Special business: That the Association alter its Constitution as per the revised Constitution that has been made available to members'.

An email that outlined these changes and their rationale was sent to all members on 14 September. A brief recap of the reasons for the changes and what they cover is included in the summary of the report of the September members meeting on [page 15](#).

The proposed new constitution, along with a document explaining the changes to the Rules and their rationale, can be downloaded from: <https://canberrabirds.org.au/proposed-updates-to-our-constitution-2026/>

The revised constitution underpins the charitable status of Canberra Ornithologists Group and reflects changes to the legal and regulatory framework that govern how our organisation is run. Your input into these changes is valued. Please email any comments or feedback to cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au by 10 October.

Julie Hotchin, Vice-President

julie.hotchin@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you did not renew your membership by 30 September your membership has lapsed. You will no longer receive notifications from Canberra Birds and you will not be eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

Renewal forms can be found at <https://canberrabirds.org.au>. If you do not wish to renew your membership, we would appreciate being advised of this.

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

Prue Watters
Membership Officer

Have you considered nominating for the Canberra Birds Committee?

Would you like to contribute to the future directions of Canberra Birds? Are you passionate about birds? Do you want to contribute to the conservation of and education about the birds of our region? Would you like to share ideas and keep Canberra Birds fresh and current?

Committee membership is one of the ways you can contribute to Canberra Birds, and we are seeking nominations for 2027.

About the Committee

The Committee provides leadership, direction and governance for Canberra Birds – and consists of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and up to ten general members. In 2026 we have only four general members meaning the committee has only eight people in total. This hinders our ability to progress some of the important and interesting work of Canberra Birds.

Committee work needs people with a broad range of skills and experience. You don't need specialist skills or experience with birds or bird conservation (though this would be highly valued).

What's involved in being a Committee member?

Participate in a Zoom meeting once a month for 1.5 hours and contribute to our discussions and decision making.

Prepare for the meeting by reading the meeting papers.

Take part in any out-of-session email discussions and decisions, as these arise

After settling into the Committee, consider contributing to a working group or leading an activity that interests you.

And in 2027?

In 2027 we are looking for people to serve as general committee members. This is a great opportunity to gain an understanding of the breadth of Canberra Birds activities and where you might like to get involved.

Our areas of focus for next year include a renewed focus on rebuilding how we store, access and publish bird data, developing a policy on Indigenous Recognition, promoting our community profile through social media and publications, and reviewing and updating the content on our website.

Interested?

To nominate, please complete this form: [Committee Nomination Form](#). Email your completed form to the Secretary at cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au or post it to Canberra Birds at P. O. Box 331, Jamison Centre A.C.T. 2614. Completed nomination forms must be received by the Secretary no later than 3 November 2026.

Members may also nominate at the AGM, but those nominations will only progress if vacancies remain following the nominations received by 3 November.

Or, 'Try Before you Buy'

If you're interested, but not sure whether the Committee is for you at this stage, you are welcome to come to one or more of our meetings as an observer. Or you can shadow another Committee member for a month or two to get a feel for Committee work. To discuss, email cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au or chat to Julie at a meeting or by email.

Julie Hotchin, Vice-President

julie.hotchin@gmail.com

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

There was another significant rain event at the start of the close to 5 weeks from 25 August to 27 September covered by this column. After this it was dry, and warm, with essentially no rain at all in the final 3 weeks leading to conditions starting to dry out. While my analysis below supports that this led to an influx of spring/summer migrants, with a few early exceptions, mostly on time, otherwise bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (AoI) remained very low. With two exceptions the altitudinal migrants have largely moved away or were in low numbers this autumn/winter, and reports of “unusual” species remained very low, this time also for ducks and other waterbird species.

Highlights

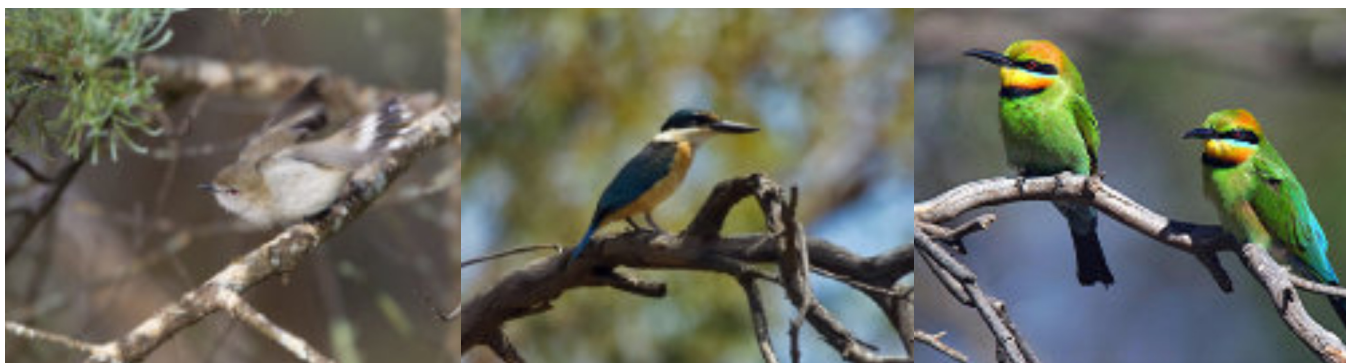
Again, there were no special “unusual” species that drew much of the attention during the period. However, a very significant discovery was a Crested Tern suffering from Avian Flu in Goulburn on 11 September. The inevitable question is what was it doing there as based on the eBird map since 1 January 2018, the closest sighting for this species is at Burrier on the Shoalhaven about 80 km to the E, and the closest sightings in the previous month being from the Shoalhaven Heads Inlet about 100 km distant.

The discovery was perhaps a little more likely than the one found very early on at Wentworth on the confluence of the Darling and Murray Rivers, though the eBird map shows a rare record of 3 birds at Calperum Station in SA about 100 km to the W on 16 June 2026, as well as other records of this species moving up the Murray River, the closest being a bird at Bowhill over 200 km away on 14 July 2026. A possible explanation relates to one of the neurological effects influencing species' behaviour being the virus messing with their internal navigation to the point of causing them to move long distances outside where they would normally go?

Spring/summer migrants

Of the spring/summer migrant species which had not yet arrived during the previous period, the White-throated Gerygone was first reported from 5 separate locations on 6 September, and from around 55 locations by the end of the period. The Western Gerygone, first reported on 16 and 20 August, has been recorded from 25 locations, so by now both species are well established.

The earliest Sacred Kingfisher was reported on 1 September from Yeumburra on the Murrumbidgee River to the NW of the ACT, with the earliest in the ACT being from Tidbinbilla on 6 September, and reports from 28 locations by the end of the period. The first report of the Rainbow Bee-eater was of 2 birds flying over Molonglo Gorge on 12 September, but the only further report was from private property on the Gundaroo Rd at Lada Vale on 20 September, so unlike the former this species still needs to establish this spring.



Western Gerygone - Tobias Hayashi, **Sacred Kingfisher** - David Cook - **Rainbow Bee-eater** - Geoffrey Dabb

The first Leaden Flycatcher was reported from Aranda Bushland by an experienced observer on 9 September with the second heard at Uriarra East Reserve on 14 September, with reports from 8 other locations since. The first report of the White-winged Triller was one heard at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) on 23 August, with the next at the Gungaharra Grassland NR on 12 September, but only 6 locations in total so far. The first report of the Rufous Songlark was from Lake Ginninderra on 21 September, with reports from Campbell Park on 22 September and the JWNR on 24 September the only other reports so far.

After the very early report of an Eastern Koel heard on 19 August, there were further reports of a bird heard by experienced observers at Macarthur on 28 August and the ANBG on 1 September, but then not until one was heard on Oakey Hill on 24 September (more usual timing), with one heard in Stirling the next day, and with reports from 3 other locations since. This suggests the sometimes-raised possibility that the earliest records were of birds moving through, but the most southerly record on the S coast was from Narooma on 25 September, with the only one in Victoria so far being one heard in Orbost on 24 September.

After the very early report of the Pallid Cuckoo on 5 August, and 2 other locations in the previous period, this species seems relatively well established with reports from 15 locations during the period. This is also the case with the Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo first reported on 8 and 22 August and also reported from 15 locations during the period. The Shining Bronze-cuckoo, previously reported from only one location from 16-19 August, has been reported from over 40 locations, so is very well established.

The remarkable presence of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo has continued with it being reported from around 75 locations (35 in previous period). In contrast a Sahul Brush Cuckoo was only reported from Zosterops Corner NE of Murrumbateman on 26 September. This is said to be the earliest record for this site to date, about in line with all the other cuckoos arriving >1 week earlier than usual.

The Latham's Snipe, for which the only previous report was from the JWNR on 18 August, was first reported for this period by Kathy Cook of 2 birds flushed from a very soggy section of their paddock at Wamboin on 6 September. It was not further reported until from the JWNR on 17 September, with the first from the 6 other locations being at Isabella Pond on 22 September.

However, there have been no reports so far of the White-browed and Masked Woodswallow, their presence this year will depend on how dry it is in the inland.

All earlier arriving or overwintering spring/summer migrants, the Superb Parrot, Noisy Friarbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Rufous Whistler, Olive-backed Oriole, Dusky Woodswallow, Grey Fantail, Tree and Fairy Martin, Australian Reed-Warbler and Mistletoebird, were all well established by the end of the period.

So, in October please keep a lookout for the species mentioned above which have only arrived so far in small



Eastern Koel - *Geoffrey Dabb*, **Sahul Brush Cuckoo** - *Julian Robinson*, **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** - *Julie Hotchin*

numbers, or have yet to be reported, as well as the Channel-billed Cuckoo, Black-eared Cuckoo, Dollarbird, Horsfield's Bushlark and Brown Songlark, and the passage migrants, the Satin Flycatcher (please be very careful of your identification), Australian Rufous Fantail and Sahul Cicadabird.

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 17 and around 50 urban/peri-urban locations (40 and 60 in the previous period), respectively. So, continue to keep an eye out for them, in particular the latter often delays its departure.

In contrast the Scarlet Robin has clearly moved out, reported from just 9 urban/peri-urban locations (up to 40 in the previous period), with none at all in the southern half of Canberra.

The Flame Robin, which usually moves away earlier, was reported from only 5 such locations (14 in the previous period), most recently at Wandiyali Environa on 20 September.

Up to 3 Rose Robins have been reported from 9 urban/peri urban locations in the period (close to the 11 in the previous). This often-considered passage migrant seems to have made an early return with reports from another 4 locations from the mountains to the W of the Murrumbidgee River, and with also an early breeding record (see below). Again, there have been no confirmed Pink Robin sightings during the period, with the closest location being the Baw Baw NP to the E of Melbourne.

The only possible close to urban/peri-urban reports (it has been a very poor autumn/winter for this species in such locations) for the Crescent Honeyeater were 3 birds at the Uriarra East Reserve on 5 September, with one also at the nearby Stony Creek NR the day after. There were also reports of up to 3 birds being from 4 locations to the W of the Murrumbidgee River. Six Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters were reported only from the Strike-a-Light TSR on 15 September (2 locations in the previous period), it has been a poor autumn/winter for this species anywhere in the COG Aol.

A single Bassian Thrush was reported from the ANBG on 3 occasions from 4-25 September, with an unusual location being a report of one foraging in a garden in Wamboin on 21 September. There were also reports from 3 locations to the W of the Murrumbidgee River, their more usual habitat. Olive Whistlers were only reported from 3 close together spots near Piccadilly Circus/Bulls Head, again their usual habitat.

However, there have been no confirmed reports of the Brown Gerygone or of the Swift Parrot, with the closest



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location for the latter being the ANU's Coastal Campus at Kialoa on 14 September. It has been another very poor season for them in inland NSW.

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

Unusual species

As for August there were no "unusual" species reported from the COG Aol during the period that deserve special attention. Note that numbers of birds and locations, in particular for waterbirds, have been affected by no Lake Bathurst survey being conducted during the period.

Again, there were no Magpie Geese or Plumed Whistling Duck reported during the period, though a single Freckled Duck was reported from the JWNR on 30 August.

Australian Shelducks were reported from 10 locations (9 in previous period), all in NSW stretching from the NE round to the E of the ACT, with the highest numbers being the 18 ducks (up from the 10 there in previous period) on the Wollogorang Rd on 30 August. There was a maximum of 2 ducks at all other locations.

Blue-billed Ducks were reported from 4 locations during the period (6 in previous period), with up to 7 ducks regularly at the Upper Stranger Pond, up to 3 ducks at the Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Ponds (FSTP), and up to 3 ducks at the JWNR from 29 August to 11 September. There was also 1 duck at the Mitchell Pond on 19 September.

Musk Ducks were reported from 8 locations in the period (3 in previous period), with 6 of these being in the ACT (none in previous!). All were single ducks except for the 3 at Rows Lagoon on 26 August.

There were again no Stubble Quail reported during the period (1 location in previous). Brown Quail were reported from 11 locations (6 in previous period), with the maximum being 6 quail reported from the JWNR on 7 September. Again, no Painted or Little Button-quail were reported during the period.

A dead White-headed Pigeon was found at Mt Ainslie on 27 August, and single Brush Bronzewing were reported from the Vanities Crossing Rd in Pierces Creek Forest on 13-14 September, and at the Rock Valley in the Tidbinbilla NR on 13 and 20 September. Up to 3 Peaceful Doves were reported from the Cotter Rd from 21 August, but no Brown Cuckoo-Doves or Diamond Doves were reported during the period. Again, there were no White-throated Nightjars reported.

There were again no Baillon's Crakes reported during the period, but Spotless Crakes were reported from 6 locations (4 in previous period), with up to 4 birds at the JWNR during the period. Single crakes were reported on single dates at the other 5 locations. There were again no Australian Spotted Crakes reported during the period.

Buff-banded Rails were reported from 5 locations (2 in previous period), with up to 2 birds from the JWNR, and single rails at the Eyre St Wetlands, the East Basin of LBG, the ANU and the ANBG. Lewin's Rails were reported from 3 locations (1 in previous period) with up to 2 heard at the JWNR and the West Belconnen Pond, and a single rail heard at the Wheatley VC Rest Area on Lake George on 26 August. Again, the Black-tailed Nativehen was not reported during the period.

Pied Stilts were reported from 6 locations (1 in previous period) including 3 spots on NW Lake George with a maximum of 25 birds from the Badcoe VC Rest Area on 26 August (comparable with the 30 stilts in the previous period). There were also 5 birds at the SW corner of Lake George on 5 September, with a maximum of 2 birds at the other 4 locations. There were up to 12 Red-necked Avocets reported at the Badcoe VC Rest Area from 26 August to 6 September.

No Red-capped or Banded Plovers, Pacific Golden Plovers, Banded Lapwing, Australian Painted-snipe, Red-necked

Stint, Sharp-tailed, Pectoral or Common Sandpipers were reported during the period. Up to 2 Caspian Terns were reported from 3 spots on NW Lake George to 8 September, with one also reported from the JWNR on 6 September, but no Whiskered or White-winged Black Terns were reported.

Great-crested Grebes were reported from 1 location only during the period (2 in previous), with a single bird on 16 September and 6 grebes (3 pairs) on 23 September at the Bracks Hole Rd, Coree. 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. Up to 2 Great Egrets were reported from 12 locations during the period (8 in previous), all but four within the ACT. Up to 2 White-necked Herons were reported from 9 locations (well up from 3 in the previous period), all in the northern half of the COG Aol.

Up to 2 Royal Spoonbills were reported from 7 locations (also well up from 1 in the previous), all in the ACT and from the JWNR to the N. In contrast Yellow-billed Spoonbills were reported from just 1 location (as in previous), with 1 bird at the Wollogorang Rd on 30 August. Again, no Glossy Ibis were reported during the period.

An Eastern Barn Owl was reported only from Flynn where it was heard calling while flying past very early in the morning of 3 September, but no Powerful Owls were reported. Black-shouldered Kites were reported from 8 locations in the period, well down from the 15 in the previous period. Single Black Kites were reported from the Hume Hwy at Yass on 14 September and at Callum Brae NR on 27 September, but for the first time for a while there were no confirmed reports of Spotted Harriers. There were also no Grey Goshawk, Pacific Baza or Black Falcon reports from anywhere in the COG Aol during the period.

Reports of Azure Kingfishers were available from 2 locations (3 in the previous period) during the period with up to 2 birds regularly from the Cotter Reserve and 2 birds at the Shepherds Lookout walk on 5 September. Again, no Red-backed or Forest Kingfishers were reported during the period.

No Glossy Black-Cockatoos or Cockatiel were reported during the period. Up to 3 Musk Lorikeets were reported from 8 locations (all within the ACT and well up from 3 in the previous period), but no Turquoise Parrots, Little, Scaly-breasted or Purple-crowned Lorikeets were reported over the period.

Up to 3 Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters were reported from the known Rock Valley Homestead location in the Tidbinbilla NR, as well as one seen at North Mulligans on 2 September and another heard on private property on the Gundaroo Rd at Lada Vale on 20 September. A male Scarlet Honeyeater was observed at the JWNR on 13 September. White-fronted Chats were reported only from 2 locations in the period (5 in previous), both in the ACT, with one bird at the unnamed ponds at the end of Roy Corrigan Close, Coombs on 29 August, and 2 birds in Makinson View, Denman Prospect on 20 September.

Blue-faced Honeyeaters were reported from 7 locations (5 in previous period) with up to 2 birds from 3 different spots in Hawker between 10-20 September, 1 in Scullin on 13 September, 1 at the University of Canberra on 21 September, and 2 in Bruce on 1 September. Southside there was 1 bird in Wanniasa on 16 and 26 September, and at both the Waramanga and Stirling District Playing Fields on 26 September. However, no Singing, Lewin's, Brown, Striped or Painted Honeyeaters, Little Wattlebirds or Little Friarbirds were reported during the period.

A Chestnut-rumped Heathwren was reported on 7 September. Red-capped Robins were reported from 3 locations (as in previous) with at least 1 bird continuing to be at the Nadjung Mada NR to 19 September, and a female seen near the big dam at Mulligans Flat NR on 4 September. There were also one bird and a pair reported on the Bracks Hole Rd on 16 and 23 September, respectively.

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 7 locations over the period (4 in the previous). In the S of the ACT there were

2 birds in the Rock Valley of Tidbinbilla NR (the only new site) on 31 August, 1 bird at the woodland site S of Tharwa on 25 September and 4 birds at the Glendale Depot on 1 September. Further S there were 2 birds at Scottsdale on 25 September and 1 bird at the Strike-a-Light TSR on 15 September. To the N of Canberra there were single birds at Mulligans Flat NR on 5 September, and one bird at the Namina TSR on 6 September.

Hooded Robins were reported from 4 known locations (as in previous), with a single bird from the Bracks Hole Rd on 23 September. To the S of Canberra, up to 6 birds were reported from the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd to 6 September, with 1 bird at the nearby Top Naas Rd on 2 September. There were also up to 2 birds reported from Scottsdale on 24-25 September.

Restless Flycatchers were reported from 5 locations during the period (2 in the previous), with up to 2 birds at the Nelanglo TSR on 18 and 20 September. A bird was also reported from the SW corner of Lake George on 6 September, and one photographed at the Cotter Bend on 13 September. To the S of the ACT, a bird was heard giving its scissor-grinding call on the Boboyan Rd at the Gudgenby River south crossing on 28 August, and another was reported from the Strike-a-Light TSR on 15 September.

The Brown Treecreeper was reported from 4 known locations during the period (as for the previous). Up to 3 birds were reported from the Nelanglo TSR on 18 and 20 September, and 2 birds at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd from 29 August to 6 September. There were also 2 birds at the Scottsdale Reserve from 24-25 September and one was reported from the Strike-a-Light TSR on 15 September.

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.

Breeding

With the spring breeding season starting to peak 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.

The most remarkable breeding report coming to my attention in the period was by Julie Hotchin at Bluetts Block on 22 September. Julie was surprised to see two Rose Robins there, a female and a young bird among the eucalypt regrowth. The young bird moved about on the branches, dropping its wings once, while the female sallied for insects and fed the youngster once. They were not calling and were among a loose mixed flock with White-throated Gerygone, Grey Fantails and Striated Thornbills for several minutes.

This is a very early Rose Robin breeding record with the BIRD INFO in the Canberra Birds web site showing only one record of dependent young in October. However, there is a paucity of breeding records for this species with only 9 other records to 2017, none before October where there are just 2 records of nest building and one of Breeding (BLA code).

Some other early spring breeding has come to my attention:

The White-winged Chough seems to be having a very good breeding season with the pair Andrea and I saw copulating on/above the nest on 6 September being on the nest on 24 September. During the Mulligans Flat NR woodlands survey on 27 September Steve Holliday and I saw 3 different groups at varying stages of nest building. Other surveyors saw at least one on the nest and Nicki Taws surveying the nearby Goorooyaroo NR on the same day also saw a couple of active nests.

Nicki also recorded a young Bush Stone-Curlew still with its downy plumage, and a pair of Black Swans and 2 cygnets sheltering in the reeds were recorded next to the big dam during the Mulligans Flat NR survey. A pair of Mistletoebirds giving a courting display was also observed during the latter. At their woodland survey of the rural

leasehold south of Tharwa on 25 September Julie Hotchin and Julie McGuinness reported nest building by Diamond Firetails.

The Red Wattlebirds on a nest in my GBS site noted in the previous column hatched some young but unfortunately one of the adults was found dead on the road about a week later and the nest has been quiet since. With the expected arrival soon of the Eastern Koel in Rivett/Chapman I have been closely watching for possible other first brood Red Wattlebird behaviour, but so far none has been fully confirmed.

Finally, Steve Holliday informed me that a pair of White-browed Scrubwrens feeding young under their deck in Ainslie were recently predated by a Brown Snake, another example of the hazards birds face while breeding and which underlines the need for human observers to take particular care (see above).

Flocks, including of migrating birds

Mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) continued to have been observed, with Peter Miller during the Majura Woodland survey on 24 September recording a small flock of Silvereyes, a Mistletoebird, Buff-rumped and Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Grey Fantail, Superb Fairy Wrens and a Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo. Andrea and I have also continued to see some smaller and less structured MFFs, similar to that Julie Hotchin observed with her Rose Robin breeding record above.

However, we have seen very few returning Yellow-faced and no White-naped Honeyeaters, in our local patch of Cooleman Ridge, Narrabundah Hill and the Molonglo River at Coombs. Even taking into account this is never as spectacular as their autumn migration, this spring has been very quiet, though I understand it may have been more noticeable in other parts of Canberra.

In the absence of any notable single species flocks coming to my attention, on 1 September Shorty posted that Satin Bowerbirds are a species he has only seen once in a blue moon at the JWNR, but during August they had been a daily sighting and in good numbers. He had only seen green birds, but he was informed of a bower, so had a look and found it. The day before he had spotted the male who owned it. I found the presence of this species there rather surprising given my interest in this species, including a 2000 paper published in CBN with Philip Veerman of their spread into Canberra's suburbs and their activity in similar situations below.

Shorty asked, "does anyone know of any other records of a bower at the wetlands?" While no-one responded, at least publicly, Alberta Hayes posted that she was going to write to the chat line about just how berserk the Satin Bowerbirds at Umbagog District Park were going. She had found two bowers so far (with another she was 90% sure is there but it was not as accessible), and the birds had been very active when she had walked through in the late afternoons. She asked perhaps it is perfect conditions for them this year? Did the mild Winter help?

Jack Hunter also posted that they were definitely going a little bit crazy. There had been 8-10 very brazen Satin Bowerbirds popping off around the Fassifern pond in the Dunlop Grasslands recently, where also he'd found a practice bower and a pretty advanced one down by the creek. There was also the rowdy bunch from the ANBG that have spilled onto the CSIRO side. Jack had noticed at least two practice bowers in the bush through there. He had also had them in their yard for the first time, which he noted was not in an area you would expect them to visit frequently. All green birds, with only two exceptions.

I found this very interesting as Satin Bowerbird activity in my GBS site in Chapman has been very quiet in September, including at the bower which has been down during this time.

October is the middle month of the significant spring 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 leaving altitudinal migrants, for roost sites and flights, for any late MFFs or single species flocks, and especially for any 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



Leaden Flycatcher - *David Cook*, **Rose Robin** - *Lindsay Hansch*, **Superb Fairywren** - *Lindsay Hansch*

Summary reports of the 9 September meeting

The first short presentation was by Neil Hermes on "The COG Garden Bird Survey. History, thoughts and musings".

Neil began by noting that in the 1960s and 1970s during the first years of COG there were no formal surveys of Canberra's birds. Instead at monthly meetings members wrote their sightings in an exercise book which was passed around and from which the Annual Bird Reports were largely written. It was a very different bird scene then with no Crested Pigeons, Noisy Miners or Eastern Koels and the Pied Currawong only came into the suburbs during autumn/winter, spending summer in the mountains.

Therefore, Neil along with the late Prof Henry Nix, and COG President at the time Dick Schodde, designed and set up the Garden Bird Survey (GBS). This began in July 1981 and is now in its 45th year. The GBS aims to record the species and abundance of birds in suburban gardens with participants counting the maximum number of individual bird species on a weekly basis. Counts were designed to be made from the kitchen sink window, with the records entered on a large chart.

Over its time the GBS 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. Neil strongly encouraged people to use this data base to study, for example, the rise or declines of certain species, or how the birdlife of particular suburbs has changed as their vegetation matured.

Neil noted that, unfortunately, participation in this very valuable project has declined in recent years from a one-time maximum of 100 participants, partly due to the current lack of a GBS coordinator. He hoped that one could be found so the survey could at least complete 50 years.

When asked how he would do it differently today, Neil indicated that it would certainly be electronic, and also

that the 1-week survey period is largely incompatible with current survey methods.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Neil for giving this very interesting presentation summarising the history and development of the COG Garden Bird Survey, including his very central role. We also thank Neil for still making himself available after a very recent serious medical procedure and wish him the very best for a full recovery.

The second slightly longer presentation was by Rachael Grigson, the Biosecurity Veterinary Officer in the ACT Government, on “Your Avian Flu questions answered”. This included a question and answer (Q & A) session and was a very important update on her previous presentation in March 2025 given that the H5N1 Clade 2.3.4.4b Avian Flu had now reached Australia.

Rachael first provided an update of the National Situation, with confirmed detections now from WA, QLD, NSW and Tasmania, but by far the most detections being from Vic and especially SA. These were all coastal detections except for a surprise one a long way inland at Wentworth near the confluence of the Murray and Darling Rivers.

At the time of her presentation there were now 498 positive events and 39,324 Hotline reports. Rachael stressed that it is very important to note that from 12 August 2026, confirmed H5N1 bird flu detections were changed and that reporting is now based on events, rather than individual detections. The number of positive events captures all previously reported individual confirmed detections. This information, including updates, is available on [H5 bird flu - DAFF](#).

At the time the Greater Crested Tern was by far the most impacted species, with 324 positive events, followed by the Silver Gull on 55 and the Black-faced Cormorant on 11. All other species were below 10. Consistent with the avian flu preferring wet and cold conditions, most were waterbirds but did include the Australian Magpie, three species of Raven, the Peregrine and Brown Falcons, as well as the Long-nosed Fur Seal and the Red Fox.

From the ACT perspective there have been no cases so far in wildlife, poultry or people. Preparations for H5N1 included surveillance activities through the National Avian Influenza Wild Bird (NAIWB) Surveillance Program, testing of suspected wildlife cases including sick/deceased wild birds, engaging with wildlife groups, rangers and the Zoo etc, with work occurring across the jurisdictions. This follows the Avoid, Record, Report advice from the Australian Government, though it is important to understand risk to people is low.

Rachael also gave some insights from her recent experience in Adelaide where she was the Surveillance Lead for the Incident Management Team which received >220 Emergency Animal Disease Hotline calls and triaged their responses into high versus low risk.

The first question in the Q & A session was about garden bird baths and ponds. The former should be kept clean by replacing the water and scrubbing every day. This is particularly important if birds excrete droppings into them, or if large groups of birds are sharing them. During cleaning bleach or sodium carbonate (washing soda) can be used.

Feeding of birds both at home and at waterways is highly discouraged consistent with Canberra Birds’ policy. She also outlined the range of Personal Protective equipment (PPE), again available from government sources, that can be used for Wildlife Carers and rangers.

Importantly Rachael stressed that not all birds are affected to the same degree. As mentioned above the virus prefers cold and wet conditions with waterbirds thus being the most susceptible. In particular ducks are natural reservoir hosts of the virus, as they can carry the virus often with fewer or no clinical signs, and thus can act as “super spreaders”.

Species which flock are much more vulnerable than those which are largely solitary. Thus, most backyard birds

including honeyeaters, thornbills and fairywrens, are at low risk of catching or spreading the virus. A dry summer may also help lessen its impact in Australia.

Finally, Rachael was asked if the virus had mutated and she responded that different genotypes/clades may have been involved in the infection of animals etc. The virus seems to have a 2-14 day incubation period, after which the infected bird or animal dies quickly.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Rachael for giving some of her very valuable time to give this very important update and Q & A presentation on “Your Avian Flu questions answered”. She clearly demonstrated her very wide knowledge and understanding of the Avian Flu situation in Australia, helped by her recent experience at the front line in Adelaide, which should stand the ACT in very good stead if and when it reaches us, hopefully never.

Rachael’s presentation has been included on the Canberra Birds Facebook page, and we will keep in touch with her through our President Kim Farley. Also, the following are the key links to the Australian Government ([H5 bird flu - DAFF](#)), Birdlife Australia (<https://birdlife.org.au/h5n1-avian-influenza/>) and Canberra Birds ([Avian Influenza - Be aware - Canberra Birds](#)) web sites.

The third presentation was by Steve Read outlining proposed Changes to our constitution.

Steve noted that these updates are proposed to match the legal and regulatory changes made by the Commonwealth to underpin our charitable status and requirements as a Deductible Gift Recipient, and by the ACT in relation to our status as an Incorporated Association. He stressed that updating our constitution to reflect the new requirements is considered good governance and practice. The proposed changes are not radical; do not alter our purpose or how we govern ourselves; clarify and reinforce existing good practice; and codify and introduce new good practices.

COG is a charity registered under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, and our Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 allows gifts to be a tax deduction.

Registration requires a Principal Charitable Purpose and Sub-type, and for COG these are linked to the environment and education with particular reference to wild native birds and their habitats in Canberra and surrounds. However, the COG Rules do not state this explicitly. The main change that the COG committee proposes is to move into the body of the Rules the object relating to the Canberra Birds Conservation Fund and add at the start of the constitution an over-arching statement of our principal charitable purpose, to make the DGR status of the whole organisation clear.

The changes proposed to match the Associations Incorporation Regulation 2023 Schedule 1: the ACT Model Rules (Update March 2024) are mostly procedural matters around purposes, membership, committee, meetings etc and do not cover policies or guidelines as are developed from time to time.

Examples of these were given, as was a timeline for the mailout, with a date for member feedback to the Committee, with the final proposals as Special Resolutions in the AGM papers emailed to members for consideration at our 11 November AGM.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Steve for outlining these very important changes to our Constitution. Many thanks also go to Julie Hotchin and David McDonald for also undertaking the unenviable task and very hard work in preparing these.

Jack Holland

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 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 7.30 am 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. This outing is a joint activity with Friends of Grasslands, so if you are also interested in plants, this is the trip for you. All these sites offer outstanding grassy woodland and grassland, with opportunities to see floristically diverse, grassy ground layers, and woodland and grassland birds.

We will meet at 8:30am at Bungendore Park. However, before that, those wanting to car pool to Bungendore can meet at 8:00am at the Spotlight carpark in Queanbeyan.

This outing can be a half day or a full day outing. Participants can decide on the day. In the morning, Rainer will guide us through several TSRs, after which we will return to Bungendore for lunch at 12:30. After lunch Rainer will take us through several more sites.

If planning a full day out, bring your own lunch or partake of the treats at the Bungendore Gunna Do Bakery, or elsewhere in town.

The walks will be on flat ground, or near so. There may be a gate or two to climb at a couple of sites. Rainer will advise on this if you let Kim know when you register. Wear sturdy shoes and bring a hat.

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. Let me know if you need a lift. More detail on the meeting place, etc, will be sent in the week before the outing.

Kim Farley and Rainer Rehwinkel

Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 October – Bird Blitz

See item elsewhere in [the newsletter](#)

Sunday 1 November - Namadgi National Park – Settlers Track

On this trip to the southern end of the ACT, we will explore one of the most historically significant parts of Namadgi National Park: the Settlers Track/Grassy Creek area. This section of Namadgi was unburnt in the 2020 bushfires. We will walk the 6 km loop through eucalypt woodlands that opens into a valley offering great views. We will also visit two settler huts showing how people lived in the area from the mid-1850s to the 1980s, when the land was incorporated into the National Park.

A brochure covering the track and its historical



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.

features is available on the ACT Parks website:

https://www.parks.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/404591/the-settlers-track-self-guided-walk.pdf

The track is mostly flat with gentle slopes, making for generally easy walking. If we're lucky, we may see Eastern Shrike-tit and/or Spotted Quail-thrush, along with high country spring/summer migrant species.

Meet at the car park at the Namadgi Visitor Centre at 8.00 am for carpooling. The walk commences at Brayshaw's Hut, which is about a 40-minute drive from the Visitor Centre, the last section on unsealed road. We will walk for around three hours and return to town in the early afternoon.

Dress for possible changeable weather conditions and bring water, morning tea and lunch.

Register with Julie Hotchin by email to julie.hotchin@gmail.com by Friday 30 October with your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. This trip will be limited to 15 participants.

Sunday 8 November – The Pinnacle Nature Reserve

This walk will pass through some of the lush woodlands in the reserve en route to the reserve's main dam. The area around the dam is a regular nesting hot spot for the summer migrant species, and we will be hoping to see nesting pairs of Noisy Friarbird, Leaden Flycatcher and possibly Olive-backed Oriole. Other target species would include White-throated Gerygone and Sacred Kingfisher.

The walk should cover around 2-3 km and be fairly easy going, mostly along established walking tracks with occasional ventures off-track. Please dress appropriately for the weather, including sturdy footwear.

Meet: Car park on Springvale Drive, opposite De Salis St, Weetangera
Time: 9.00 am (to finish around 11.30 am)

Register with leader John Brannan by email (johnbrannan@tpg.com.au) or mobile (0405 331 405) by Friday 6 November with your name and mobile number, and the name and number of an emergency contact. The walk will be capped at 20 people.

John Brannan

Saturday 14 November – Gundry TSR and Goulburn area

This is a joint Friends of Grasslands (FOG) and Canberra Birds outing; it is hoped that Canberra Birds participants will gain a deeper appreciation of grassland flora, while FOG attendees get some greater insights about birds.

Canberra Birds participants will meet at The Netball Centre carpark, off Northbourne Ave, Lyneham for carpooling at 8.00am before driving to Belmore Park, Montague St, to meet with FOG, ready for a 9:30am start. There are toilets at the park, and cafes for those who want to refresh, before visiting the sites.

Our first stop will be Gundry Travelling Stock Reserve, on Windellama Rd, opposite Goulburn Airport. Gundry is South-eastern NSW's premier Natural Temperate Grassland site, with this time of year being a great time to visit for wildflowers, including the largest population of the endangered Button Wrinklewort. While birdlife may be a bit sparse, I have recorded Little Buttonquail there, and there is a possibility to see the true quails, pipits, cisticolas and other grassland birds, including various birds of prey. Beware that there will undoubtedly be snakes about, so please be prepared to take care, and dress appropriately.

The second stop will be at Souths TSR, a reserve with open woodland, and a chance to see woodland birds. Souths is also floristically diverse. Souths is at the intersection of Mountain Ash Rd and Koorngaroo Rd, east of Goulburn.

The plan is to assemble back at Goulburn, at Belmore Park. Here participants can have their lunch, and either peel off and return home, or after lunch, proceed to another site, as follows.

Goulburn Wetlands is a great example of community action that spurred the development of this system of ponds and the native plantings that surround them. This is a well-known birding site. The wetlands are on Lower Sterne St, with the entrance near Henry St.

If there is time after visiting the wetlands at Goulburn, there are a couple of other sites that are well worth a visit: Rowes Lagoon, an excellent local wetland, where there are always great birds. This is where I collected our region's first record of Comb-crested Jacana, and also my first record of Australasian Bittern!

Collector TSR on Breadablane Rd, just north of the village, is also worth a stop, with its old-growth Snow Gums and floristically rich ground layer. Of note here: I recorded a very large congregation of Latham's Snipe here when I was doing my surveys of TSRs in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Participants must **register** with Kim Farley by email to kimlouiseFarley@gmail.com providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Kim Farley, Margaret Ning and Rainer Rehwinkel

Sunday 15 November – Campbell Park nest workshop

The workshop is particularly suitable for beginners or those relatively new to bird watching, though more experienced members and repeat customers are also very welcome.

Proposed attendees are reminded 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.

Walking distance: While we usually haven't walked very far in the past as there has usually been a "hot spot" where most of the breeding activity occurs around 500 m from where we park, in the past couple of years this has been different and we may need to cover a bit more ground based on the rekkies beforehand. Maximum distance = 3.0 km of easy flat walking.

End Time: Between 11 am and 12 pm. Please remember to take morning tea which we will have out in the field.

Meeting time and place: Meet at 8:00 am at the far end of the car park. Take Northcott Drive up to the start of the Campbell Park Offices, where you take the right fork and keep to the outside of the very large car park, skirting it until you get to the end. Intending participants might also like to look at the Campbell Park map on the COG web site under the Maps, Forms and Lists button.

Name of leader and contact details: **Registration** is essential no later than Friday 13 November. To participate, please contact Jack Holland by E-mail on jandaholland@bigpond.com — please include your mobile and emergency contact name and numbers. Could any new members who need to borrow binoculars please advise when you register?

Sunday 22 November - Mt Ginini to Stockyard Spur track head, Brindabellas

The walk is through snow gum forest with a subalpine shrub layer interspersed with snow grasses and (hopefully) wildflowers; combined with good views east to the Tinderries and south to Mt Gingera.

We will stop for lunch at either Stockyard Gap or Pryor's Hut (depending on our progress on the day) and then retrace our steps back to the carpark.

Possible birds include Gang-gang Cockatoo, Olive Whistler, Flame Robin, Spotted Quail-thrush, Grey Currawong and Little Raven.

eBird hotspots: Namadgi National Park – Mt Ginini; Stockyard Gap

Meeting time and place: 8:30am at the Bulls Head picnic area carpark on the Mt Franklin Road.

We will carpool from here and drive to the start of the walk at the Mt Gingera Walk Trail Head carpark (at the locked gate approx 21 km south of Bulls Head).

Walking distance: Approximately 9-10km in total

Degree of difficulty: Medium; track is an undulating vehicle track with some steeper sections. End time: 2-3pm.

Note that this is a remote location with no mobile reception or facilities. Ensure you bring sufficient water and food (including lunch), rain and sun protection, and warm clothing just in case. At 1700m, even if it is forecast to be sunny and warm, weather in the mountains can change quickly and you need to be prepared. The nearest toilet is at Bulls Head picnic area.

Participants must **register** with the walk leader by email to julie.mcguinness@gmail.com providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Numbers limited to 12 people.

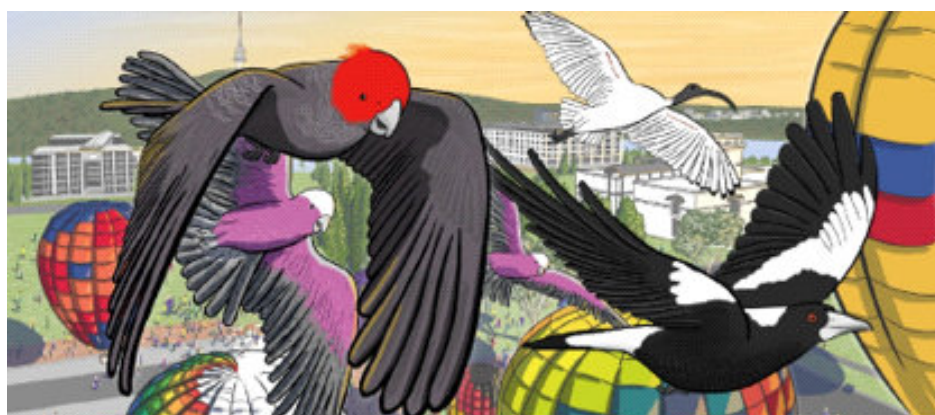
Julie McGuinness

Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th November – weekend camp in Bumbalong Valley

It is many years since Canberra Birds last camped in Bumbalong Valley, about 70 km south of Canberra, off the Monaro Highway. A number of property owners have extended an invitation to us to visit the valley, camp outside their community centre and bird on a number of properties, some of which have frontage to the Murrumbidgee River. Expect a variety of woodland and grassland species, as well as waterbirds.

On the Saturday, **meet** at 8.00am at the beginning of Bumbalong Road, just off the Monaro Highway. Participants must **register** with the walk leader by email to smlashko@gmail.com providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. More details will be sent to those who register.

Sue Lashko



The eight card designs:

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

Canberra Birds
8-pack
of greeting cards

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

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

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

Shop directly via
stuartmcmillen.com/shop

Field trip reports

Sunday 30 August – Umbagog District Park.

Sixteen birders met at the carpark for an 8:30 start, on a gloriously sunny, mild and still morning. We were joined by a young lady who had met Sandra in the carpark and was invited to come along with us. We had intended to proceed in an anti-clockwise direction, but changed our minds so that we could hopefully see the **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** that had been heard off to our left. We did have nice views of a couple, but not until we were halfway round the loop.

Our first breeding record of the morning was a **Red-browed Finch**, dancing for his lady with a twig in his beak. He was suitably rewarded! Other breeding records included a **Tawny Frogmouth** sitting on a nest, many **Red-browed Finch**, a **Dusky Moorhen** and a **Grey Fantail** building nests, a **Satin Bowerbird** tending to a bower and a **Spotted Pardalote** carrying nesting material. One of the **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** was in poor condition and we suspected that it probably had Beak and Feather Disease. There were lots of **Weebills**, **Grey Fantails**, **Red Wattlebirds** and **Superb Fairywrens** about, and a few **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** and a couple of **Noisy Friarbirds**. In all we saw 38 species.

It was also nice to see a couple of Black-tailed Wallabies and a Cunningham Skink.

Lia Battison

Sunday 13 September - Gale Precinct, Queanbeyan

On a clear, sunny spring morning, Sandra Henderson led a group of 18 on an outing in an interesting area including native dry forest in good condition near Googong in Queanbeyan's Gale Precinct. It includes a rock-climbing site called White Rocks. The walk started at the roadside parking area about 500m along Wickerslack Lane from Old Cooma Rd.

Before we set off, Sandra explained that Gale Precinct was named after John Gale (1831–1929), an influential pioneer, journalist and politician. He advocated strongly for choosing the Canberra-Queanbeyan region for the new national capital and was known as the 'Father of Canberra'. A large bronze statue stands near Queanbeyan's courthouse to commemorate his contribution to the district.

A total of 37 species was observed. The sighting of several **Mistletoebirds** was a highlight of the morning along with a good view of a pair of **Common Bronzewings**. Small birds included **Superb Fairywrens**, **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalotes**, **Weebills**, **White-browed Scrubwrens**, **Silvereyes** and a **White-throated Gerygone**. **Eastern Spinebills**, **Yellow-faced**, **White-naped** and **White-eared Honeyeaters**, **Red Wattlebirds** and **Noisy Friarbirds** were observed or heard.

Other birds included **Golden Whistlers**, **Olive-backed Orioles**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes**, **Grey Shrike-thrushes**, **Satin Bowerbirds**, **White-throated Treecreepers** and an **Eastern Yellow Robin**. **Grey Fantails** were numerous. **Fan-tailed Cuckoos** were heard. **Australian Ravens**, **Australian Magpies**, **Pied Currawongs** and a **White-winged Chough** were observed, along with **Pacific Black Ducks** and **Australian Wood Ducks**. Parrots were represented by **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas**, **Gang-gang Cockatoos**, **Galahs** and a **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**. A **Nankeen Kestrel** was the sole raptor for the day.

Along the way, Sandra drew the group's attention to a striking display of purple Waxlip Orchids and also the more common Blue Finger Orchids.

Thanks to Sandra for organising a very pleasant outing and to Lia Battison for keeping the bird list.

Evan Bitmead

Wednesday 16 September - Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station

Fourteen members met at the very cold and windy Namadgi Visitor Centre before continuing on to the former Honeysuckle Creek tracking station. Conditions were cool but quite pleasant. We have done this walk before, but

the latter part of the loop track has been rerouted through some impressive boulders before emerging onto the site of the famous satellite dish (now relocated to Tidbinbilla Tracking Station). **Fan-tailed Cuckoos** were heard before we started out, and a pair of **Flame Robins** were seen near the parking area. A **Brown-headed Honeyeater** was seen gathering some nest lining from the fur of an Eastern Grey Kangaroo, an interesting tactic we'd also seen recently at Percival Hill. **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were plentiful throughout, and we also found **Scarlet** and **Eastern Yellow Robins**. Most heard a **Spotted Quail-thrush**, and a couple of us saw it fly through the bush up from the track. A pair of **Gang-gang Cockatoos**, a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** and good numbers of **Striated Thornbills** also contributed to a satisfying 28 species for the morning.

Sandra Henderson

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COG membership

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

Ben Donaldson & Liling Huang

Ingrid Anderson

Carine Borel

Graham Moss

Cassandra McLeod

Jenny Spears & Ian Johnson

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for November 2026 edition:

Wednesday 28 October 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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