Gang-gang

Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc

Canberra Birds Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2026



Scarlet Honeyeater, ANBG Canberra, November 2026, **Photo:** ***Peter Ravlich***

November Meeting

Wednesday - 11 Novemberr 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 11 November meeting will be:

AGM – see details under Annual Reports and Administrative Papers

Lori Gould - The Journey of Ponyo Snipe

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.

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.

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After the AGM (for details see p 7 or Annual Reports and Administrative Papers - Canberra Birds) there will be a single main speaker, Dr Lori Gould on "The Journey of Ponyo Snipe"

This presentation will follow the journey of a tracked **Latham's Snipe** from Canberra to Russia and back via Japan. Lori has been studying this species starting from her time as Program Manager, Woodlands and Wetlands Trust at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) from around 2015. Many COG/Canberra Birds members will be familiar with her work including those who have helped in some capacity such as trapping the Snipe. Lori will present an overview of the extensive research she has carried out, both at the JWNR and elsewhere, which culminated in this successful tracking. Over the past few years Lori has been putting this all together for her PhD thesis, which she submitted earlier this year. So come and hear the fascinating story Lori has to tell.

News from the Committee

The committee's monthly meeting was held by Zoom on Thursday the 22nd of October. Points of interest from the meeting and more generally during October include:

- In October we moved the website to a new hosting organisation. The aim was to improve the support and performance of the site following ongoing issues with the performance of the website. Indications are that the change has been a positive one for users and for our web team, notably Julian Robinson and Alison Mackerras. Even better, the change was pretty much cost neutral.

- Zachary Flegg, who spoke at the August member's meeting about his acoustic monitoring of nocturnal birds is now extending his project in partnership with the ACT government. He is seeking volunteers to go out to sites in the Lower Cotter, Tidbinbilla and Namadgi to change the batteries of his acoustic monitors. Read more elsewhere in this issue of Gang-gang.

- The registration with the Aust Securities & Investment Commission of 'Canberra Birds' as our second Business Name. In reality we have been using the name since the decision in the early 2020s to adopt it. 'COG Inc' remains our Business Name for formal purposes (eg bank accounts, insurance, MOUs, Agreements etc) but for informal purposes and where convenient, we can also use Canberra Birds (eg on the website, in speech, or promotional materials etc). Thank you, Sandie Jones for successfully wrangling the ASIC website to complete the registration process!

- Last but very much not least, a reminder about the COG Annual General Meeting on Wednesday the 11th of November. Attend in person or by Zoom. More here https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/

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

Field trips – January-July 2027
Volunteers required

It is time for me to start planning the field trip programme for the first half of 2027. Firstly, I would like to thank all of those who volunteered to lead trips in 2026 and for coming up with such an interesting and diverse variety of destinations. I try to NOT repeat a location for 3 years (with exceptions for a few outings like the Campbell Park nest workshop).

Field trips can take several forms:
- morning (usually Sunday but Saturday is also fine)
- all day
- weekend or long weekend, camping or accommodated
- extended trip of 7-10 days

It is always wonderful to visit somewhere new, including private property where the owners may welcome a visit from birders. For a list of places that we have visited previously, look at Past Events on the website at https://canberrabirds.org.au/past-events/

If you are prepared to lead an outing, remember that you do not need to be an experienced birder as there are always others on the outing who will be only too willing to help you. Please contact me, preferably within the next 10 days, if you can help.

Sue Lashko
Field trip organiser

AGM on 11 November and Nominations for the Committee

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc. (Canberra Birds) will be held on Wednesday 11 November at 7.30 pm at the Denman Village Community Centre and via Zoom.

The AGM will be followed by a presentation by Lori Gould on 'The Journey of Ponyo Snipe' (see page 2).

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

Members will also be asked to approve a Special Resolution to update our Constitution with the amendments that were made available to members in September. The revised constitution underpins the charitable status of the Canberra Ornithologists Group, is consistent with the ACT Model Rules for incorporated associations, and incorporates procedural changes that streamline how our organisation is run.

We encourage you to read the proposed amendments before the meeting, here. If you have any questions or comments, please email Julie Hotchin at julie.hotchin@gmail.com.

Interested in joining the Committee?

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

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.

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). The members of the Committee bring diverse skills and interests to the work they do.

To nominate, please complete this form: Committee Nomination Form and either email it to the Secretary, Sandie Jones, on cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au or bring it with you to the AGM as you can nominate on the night.

If you'd like to find out more about who we are and what's involved, get in touch with Julie Hotchin or Kim Farley, or come along to the AGM and chat with one of us:

President:	Kim Farley (KimLouiseFarley@gmail.com)
Vice-President:	Julie Hotchin (julie.hotchin@gmail.com)
Secretary:	Sandie Jones
Treasurer:	Peter Miller
General members in 2026:	Jenny Bounds, Chris Davey, Bill Graham and Prue Watters.

White-throated Nightjar Monitoring—Volunteers Wanted

After a successful pilot study in the Cotter last year (presented to Canberra Birds in August), I am running a much larger acoustic monitoring project aimed at nocturnal species across the ACT. We are expanding from 10 recorders to 65 with a goal of recording Canberra's nocturnal birds from the lower Cotter and into Namadgi. That's a lot of data to collect, and we can't do it alone!

What we're looking for:

Volunteers to assist with swapping batteries and backing up data from Song Meters and AudioMoths.

What's involved:

- Each volunteer (or group) will be assigned between 5-10 recorders to manage, according to your preferences
- Roughly every 6 weeks (45 days), you'll go out and replace the batteries/SD cards for each of your assigned units. The project runs from November to April, with ~4 visits required.
- You'll check that each unit is in good condition and report any faults
- You'll then return SD cards to me at the next Canberra Birds meeting
- Equipment and training will be provided

How will the data be used?

All data gathered by this project will be analysed as part of my Honours project, which aims to determine the calling periods, number of groups and possible breeding patterns of **White-throated Nightjar** and other nocturnal species locally.

Last year, we recorded >110 species, including notable records of **Powerful Owl, White-throated Nightjar, Brush Bronzewing** and **Red-capped Robin**.

This is a great opportunity to get involved in some local science and have a walk/drive/explore around Canberra's nature reserves and national parks.

Want to get involved?

You can send me an email prior to the end of November with your availability and preferred sites (Cotter, Namadgi or other reserves)

For any questions or queries you can contact me at:

Zwflegg@gmail.com

Zachary Flegg (University of Canberra)



White-throated Nightjar, Canberra Birds Photo Gallary, Photo: ***Barbara Allan***

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

It remained dry at the start of the just over 4 weeks from 28 September to 27 October covered by this column until a very significant rain event (73 mm at my place in Chapman) at the start of October. After this it was largely dry and warmish, but the moisture from this managed to keep conditions quite green until another major rain event towards the end of the period. It is not clear why these conditions led to a significant increase in bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (AoI). As detailed below, the later spring/summer migrants have been slow to, or have still to, arrive, and, except for the **Golden Whistler**, the altitudinal migrants have largely departed Canberra. Reports of "unusual" species seem the main reason for the much higher bird and birder activity, with high numbers for some species including unprecedented ones for the **Musk Lorikeet**.

Highlights

Amongst the special "unusual" species that drew much of the attention during the period two species really stood out. The first, a big surprise as I hadn't alerted readers to look out for them, was the **Painted Honeyeater**, five of which were first reported and photographed by Patrick Cox at Campbell Park on the morning of 4 October. He noted "One initially heard and seen in mistletoe. Then a second one joined the first. Sometime later another group of three arrived in the same tree, with all five visible at the same time." Following between 1-5 birds were seen by many, many, observers (there are around 100 reports for them on eBird), including those from interstate up to the time of writing.



Painted Honeyeater, Mt Ainslie NR, Canberra, ACT, 7 October 2026, Photo: ***Julie Clark***

Very interestingly during this same period 3 **Painted Honeyeaters** were initially reported on the afternoon of 5 October by Luke Downey at the Gambles TSR, Sutton, with another 8 eBird records of 1-3 birds there to 18 October. Considering these locations are about 10 km apart I suspect these are different birds, though them being the same can not be definitely ruled out. The 2018-2019 ABR lists this species as a rare, breeding visitor for which there was a major influx into the region in 2002-2003, with then a few records in 2007, 2008-2010 and 2013.

eBird shows the most recent records were single birds by single observers from Clancy's Walking Track in the Mt Majura NR on 23 November 2023 and at the Tidbinbilla NR Visitors Centre on 20 October 2023, with only 5 other locations since the start of 2018. These include up to 2 birds at the Namadgi NR Visitors Centre during the severe drought conditions between 27 October 2019 and 1 January 2020. However, the most interesting previous sightings of **Painted Honeyeaters** during this time was also from Campbell Park where up to 3 birds were reported from 5 October (note almost the same date as above) to 28 December 2020. Even more interesting is that David Dedenczuk who first reported them in 2020, has confirmed to me that they were in the very same trees, in particular a large old yellow box heavy with mistletoes, the fruits of which are known to be a dietary staple for them.

As I noted at the time in my Gang-gang columns, it was surprising that the birds appeared in Canberra at that time, as it had been a wet spring, like this year has been. In the past I have had quite a bit of experience with this species and my understanding has always been that the **Painted Honeyeater** visits when the inland is under severe drought conditions as the ABR records above support, but perhaps the presence of fruiting mistletoe is more important. What is clear is that having this species turn up at 2 different locations at the same time is unprecedented in recent years and based on the 2019 and 2020 records they may stay for quite a bit longer.

Interestingly the closest other record on eBird in the period is from West Wyalong over 100 km to the NW.
The second which is on my list of "unusuals" but again was very unexpected was a female **Turquoise Parrot**. It was first drawn to my attention by Shorty's post on the COG chat line that a tip off had allowed him to locate it at 10:28 am on 23 October on Frith Rd that runs around the rear (N side) of the CSIRO on Black Mountain. However, Jack Hunter very soon posted that he believed it was also seen at the ANBG that morning near the famous owlet-nightjar hollow, which eBird shows was Nathan Finger's observation from 8:40 am. After this Sandra Henderson noted that she had actually observed this bird mid-morning at the ANBG the day before (22 October) but had failed to follow it up and include it in her eBird list.



Turquoise Parrot, Frith Road, Canberra, ACT, 23 October 2026, Photo: ***Shorty***

This now appears as the first record on eBird, with another 9 eBird records at Frith Rd later on 23 October but none since. In my experience this is typical of the species which COG's 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR) lists it as a non-breeding vagrant/escapee, an occasional nomadic visitor from eastern coastal areas. eBird shows that the most recent **Turquoise Parrot** record was at the Uriarra TSR on 19 April 2024 with 10 other records dating back to the start of 2018, the closest to the above very central location being at the Hospice Ponds at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) in January 2020. These are all records of single birds seen on a single day except for over several days at the Ingledene Forest in April 2023 and the very long staying bird at the Glendale Depot seen by many observers from 14-26 November 2022.

Spring/summer migrants

Of the spring/summer migrant species which had not yet arrived during the previous period, there have been reports of the **Channel-billed Cuckoo** from 3 locations, one seen at Red Hill on the morning of 21 October, one heard that afternoon at Hawker, and another heard at Watson on the morning of 24 October.

The **Dollarbird** was first reported from Campbell Park on 11 October, quite late for this species, with the next locations being the nearby Northcott Dr on 16 October and then Goorooyaroo NR and O'Connor Ridge the next day, with a total of 14 locations by the end of the period.

There have been no reports to date in the ACT of the **Horsfield's Bushlark**, with the only reports within the COG AoI being from 3 locations in NSW, the first a bird on the Wollogorang Rd on 5 October, and with 2 at Lake Bathurst and 1 at the adjacent Morass during the survey there on 18 October. There have been confirmed reports of the **Brown Songlark** at a single location only, 2 birds from the Parkwood Rd Macgregor on 19 October and 1 there on 23 October.

Of the passage migrants a male **Satin Flycatcher** was first reported from the known location Warks/Blundells Creek Roads in Namadgi National Park on 1 October, from where up to 3 birds have been reported since. A late report was of 4 birds (2 pairs) at Gate 7 of the Gibraltar Forest on 26-27 October, at one point on the first day the two males engaging in a very physical aerial dispute above the fire trail. The only other report has been an urban one, a male photographed at the Eardley St Ponds in Bruce on 20 October, and also nearby within 500 m shortly after. A reminder that particularly for urban/peri urban reports special care needs to be taken with your identification.

Surprisingly there has only been a single report of the **Australian Rufous Fantail**, a bird at Campbell Park on 9 October. There has also been a report of the **Sahul Cicadabird** at only one location, a male bird at the Stony Creek NR, Carwoola on 24 October.

There have been no reports in the COG AoI so far of the **Black-eared Cuckoo** for which the closest location was near West Wyalong, well over 100 km to the NW, or of the **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallow**, with the closest reports for these two species being around Cowra about 100 km away.

Of the spring/summer migrants present only at a few locations in the previous period, the **Sahul Brush Cuckoo** (just one location) has been reported from a remarkable around 20 locations, only 4 of these being in its breeding territory the mountains to the W of the Murrumbidgee River. The very high presence of the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** has continued with it being reported from close to 100 locations (75 in previous period). The **Pallid Cuckoo** has also been reported from over 40 locations. So, it appears to have been a very good spring for them (see breeding observation below)

The **Eastern Koel** (7 locations) continued to come in slowly so by the time I heard my first birds in Rivett on 1 October there had been reports from 15 suburbs. Reports continued to come in slowly until around 10 October, after which there was an explosion of reports with at the time of writing well over 100 locations on eBird. In keeping with this in the final week they were very active around my area, giving not only their usual male *ko-els* and *whoas* and female *kek kek* calls, but also in noisy aggregations other calls such as the fast *wek weks*, the male's *wow folaus* (with differing numbers of each) and the female's scratchy call when nearby in a tree etc or when flying past when it also can become quite cackly.

The Rainbow Bee-eater (just 2 locations) has now been reported from 12 locations during the period, so is reasonably well established, as has the **Rufous Songlark (**just 3 locations) reported from 20 locations. The **White-winged Triller** (6 locations) is well established with reports from close to 40 locations.

So, during November please keep an eye out for those species mentioned above which have yet to reach the COG AoI in numbers, especially the inland ones; and the two **Woodswallows** and the **Black-eared Cuckoo** and **Red-backed Kingfisher** which have yet to be reported.



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enquiries@philipmaher.com

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 6 and around 40 urban/peri-urban locations (17 and 50 in the previous period), respectively. So, continue to keep an eye out for them, in particular the latter which has delayed its departure as often is the case.

The **Scarlet Robin** has continued to move out, reported from just 6 urban/peri-urban locations (9 in the previous period), again with none at all in the southern half of Canberra. The **Flame Robin,** which usually moves away earlier, was reported from just 1 such location (5 in the previous period), up to 2 brown birds (from the photos and comments) at Campbell Park between 5-12 October.

Up to 3 **Rose Robins** have been reported from 2 urban/peri urban locations in the period (well down from the 9 in the previous), with an immature male at the Umbagong District Park on 27 September and a female in Flynn on 2 October. Surprisingly there were only 2 other locations from their breeding area in the mountains to the W of the Murrumbidgee River, with up to 6 birds from the Warks/Blundells Creek Roads from 1 October, and also a single bird at Blundells Creek Rd on 2 October. Again, there have been no confirmed **Pink Robin** sightings during the period, with the closest location being the Croajingolong NP on the SE coast just across the Victorian border.

The only possible close to urban/peri-urban report for the **Crescent Honeyeater** was one bird at the Stony Creek NR on 10 October, with reports of up to 2 birds being from 4 locations to the W of the Murrumbidgee River. **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters** were reported from only 1 location on eBird (1 location in the previous period), 1 bird at the Yerrabi Walking Track on 11 October, though it was also reported from an unclear number of locations from the K2C surveys on that same day.

A single **Bassian Thrush** was last reported from the ANBG on 25 September, with the only reports being from 3 locations to the W of the Murrumbidgee River, their more usual habitat. An **Olive Whistler** was only reported from the Brindabella Rd close to Piccadilly Circus on 28 October compared with 3 close together spots around there in the previous period.

However, there have been no confirmed reports of the **Brown Gerygone** or of the **Swift Parrot**, with none for NSW for the latter during the period, clearly, they have migrated back to Tasmania hopefully to breed.

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

Unusual species

Apart from the special species reported above there were two other “unusual” species from the COG AoI during the period that deserve special attention.

The first of these was an **Australian Masked-Owl** for which photos were posted on the COG chat line on 13 October by Manuela Benson, a very experienced wildlife carer. Unfortunately, it was deceased on arrival when she was called out to rescue it that morning from a cul de sac in Kambah. As a dead bird it is not possible to list this bird on eBird, the locality would also be a problem as it appeared to have been hit by a car and may have been carried for some distance.

This species is not included in the 2018-2019 ABR, though Steve Wilson’s book Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change lists one record of a bird killed by a car at the site of Lake Burley Griffin on 11 March 1960. eBird includes 3 recent records from the COG AoI, all by Zeb Muller, one at an unspecified location in Namadgi NP on 27 February 2024, as well as 2 different locations in the Tallaganda area on 6 March 2024 and 24 July 2025. There are no further records on eBird from the start of 2018.

The second of these is the pair of **Scarlet Honeyeaters** first recorded at the ANBG by Julie Clark on 20 October and subsequently by other observers (16 on eBird, as well as 2 at the adjacent CSIRO) up to the time of writing. This is a known spot to observe this species within the COG AoI, from where it was most recently reported from 13-17 October 2025, as well as from 7 other locations within the COG AoI since the start of 2023, most recently from the JWNR on 13 September 2026.

Compared with the previous period there was a Lake Bathurst survey on 18 October which affects numbers below, in particular for waterbirds.

Again, there were no **Magpie Geese** or **Plumed Whistling Duck** reported during the period. **Freckled Duck** were reported from 4 locations (1 in the previous period), with 6 ducks at the big dam at Mulligans Flat on 26 September, up to 3 ducks from the JWNR from 20 October, a single duck at the Upper Stranger Pond on 21 October, and 8 and then 4 ducks at SW Lake George on 18 and 19 October, respectively.

Australian Shelducks were reported from 8 locations (10 in previous period), all in NSW stretching from the N round to the E of the ACT, with the highest numbers easily being the 108 ducks recorded at Lake Bathurst, plus 18 at the adjacent Morass, with the 30 ducks on the Wollogorang Rd on 5 October the next highest. There were also up to 19 ducks at the Trucking Yard Lane, and while there was a maximum of 4 ducks at all other locations, these numbers are significantly higher than in September (maximum anywhere of 18 ducks).

Blue-billed Ducks were reported from 6 locations during the period (4 in previous period), with the highest numbers being the 29 ducks on the Lake Bathurst survey on 18 October. There were up to 6 ducks at the Upper Stranger Pond from 10 October, and one on the nearby Isabella Pond on 23 October, with up to 5 ducks at the Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Ponds (FSTP), and up to 4 ducks at the JWNR. There was also 1 duck at the Greg's Hole on the Barton Hwy just N of the ACT on 17 October.

Musk Ducks were reported from 10 locations in the period (8 in previous period), with three of these being in the ACT (6 in previous), single ducks at the Patrick White Pond on 27 September, and on the Gungahlin and Upper Stranger Ponds on 27 October. The maximum number was 19 ducks on the Lake Bathurst survey on 18 October with up to 3 ducks at the other locations.

Stubble Quail were reported from 3 locations during the period (none in previous), with 2 birds at Lake Bathurst on 18 October, and single birds at Lake Jerrabomberra on the same day and on Parkwood Rd Macgregor on 23 and 25 October. **Brown Quail** were reported from 12 locations (11 in previous period), with the maximum being 3 quail reported from the Coree on 24 October. **Painted Button-quail** were reported from 2 locations (none in previous), 1 at the Scottsdale Reserve on 30 September, and one at the Gambles TSR, Sutton on 6 October. Again, no **Little Button-quail** were reported during the period.

A **White-headed Pigeon** was reported from Symonston on 3 October, and a single **Brush Bronzewing** was reported from the Vanitys Crossing Rd in Pierces Creek Forest on 11 October. Two **Peaceful Doves** were reported from the Cotter Rd on 30 September, but no **Brown Cuckoo-Doves** or **Diamond Doves** were reported during the period. A **White-throated Nightjar** was heard after dark close to the ACT border W of the Tidbinbilla NR on 23 October.

There were again no **Baillon's Crakes** reported during the period, but **Spotless Crakes** were reported from 4 locations (6 in previous period), with just single crakes at the JWNR up to 4 October. There were also single crakes reported from West Belconnen Pond on 2 and 16 October, and at the Yass Wastewater Plant on 24 October, with 2 birds on Googong Common on 23 October. **Australian Spotted Crakes** were reported from 3 locations during the period, up to 3 birds at Paddys Park Strathnairn from 30 September to 1 October, at least one bird at the JWNR on 18 and 20 October, and a single bird on Googong Common on 23 October.

Up to 2 **Buff-banded Rails** were reported from 8 locations during the period (5 in previous period), but **Lewin's Rails** were reported from 2 locations (3 in previous period) with single birds at West Belconnen Pond 2 October, and at the Googong Common on 23 October. Again, the **Black-tailed Nativehen** was not reported during the period, and it will be interesting to see whether the one at the big Dam at Mulligans Flat for the past couple of late springs/summers will return.

Pied Stilts were reported from 11 locations (6 in previous period) including 3 spots on NW Lake George with a maximum of 120 birds from the Badcoe VC Rest Area on 4 October (6 times the 25 stilts there in the previous

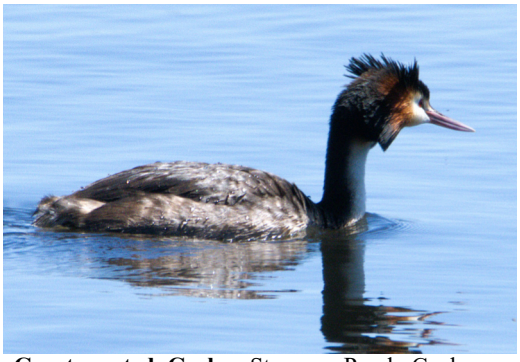
period). There were also 90 birds at the Wheatley VC Rest Area, comparable with the 34 and 42 seen at Lake Bathurst and The Morass at the survey there on 18 October. There were also up to 80 birds (on 4 October) reported from the SW corner of Lake George, indicating a significant influx of this species during the period. Up to 9 birds (at the FSTP and Lake Ginninderra) were reported from the other locations, 6 of which were in the ACT.

On the other hand, **Red-necked Avocets** were reported from only one location, the same as in the previous, with 5 and 2 birds, on 4 and 14 October, respectively, at the Badcoe VC Rest Area.

Twenty-five **Red-capped Plovers** were reported from Lake Bathurst on the survey on 18 October, and a single **Banded Lapwing** on the same day, as were 10 **Pacific Golden Plovers**. However, no **Double-banded Plovers, Australian Painted-snipe, Red-necked Stint, Pectoral** or **Common Sandpipers** were reported during the period.

Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were reported from 5 locations, the most I can recall for some years, with up to 2 birds at the FSTP from 17-22 October providing another highlight for local birders during the period. However, the 124 birds reported from Lake Bathurst was the highest number reported and eclipses the 110 reported from there on 20 October 2021, so a very significant sighting listed in 2025 as a Vulnerable Species in NSW. Numbers at the other locations were a single bird at the Morass on 18 October, at the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 19 October and 4 birds at the Badcoe VC Rest Area that same day.

Up to 2 **Caspian Terns** were reported from or near the Badcoe and Wheatley VC Rest areas between 4-14 October, and **Whiskered Terns** were reported from 7 locations (none in previous) with up to 2 terns from the above 2 Rest Areas from 4-10 October. There were also 10 birds reported from Lake Bathurst on 18 October, and 4 from the SW of Lake George on 19 October, with the surprise record being one perched in a dead tree at the Greenwood Rd Murrumbateman on 13 October. Late reports were one bird at the Coombs Pond from 26-27 October, possibly the same bird at the nearby Edgeworth Pond on 26 October, and a further bird at the FSTP on 27 October. No **White-winged Black Terns** were reported during the period.



Great-crested Grebe, Stranger Pond, Canberra, ACT, 29 October 2026, Photo: ***Graeme Austin***

Great-crested Grebes were reported from 6 locations during the period (1 in previous, again a significant increase), with up to 16 birds from 26 September at the Bracks Hole Rd/Fire trail area. There were also 8 birds at Lake Bathurst on 18 October, up to 2 birds at the West Belconnen Pond between 2-14 October, and single bird at Black Mountain Peninsula on 28 September, the Isabella Pond on 3 October and at the Upper Stranger Pond on 24 October. Again, no **Australian Little Bittern** or **Australasian Bittern** were reported during the period.

Again, no confirmed **Little Egrets** were reported during the period, but **Plumed Egrets** were reported from 3 locations (0 in previous), with the one at the JWNR from 13-22 October proving to be a highlight for quite a few observers. There was also a bird reported from the Parkwood Horse agistment on 13 October and from the West Belconnen Pond between 16-20 October. Sightings of **Great Egrets** were also increased to 27 locations during the period (12 in previous), all but six within the ACT. Up to 2 **White-necked Herons** were reported from 17 locations (again well up from 9 in the previous period), all single birds except for 8 at SW Lake George on 4 October and 2 at the Wamboin Community Association Hall on 27 September.

Up to 2 **Royal Spoonbills** were reported from 12 locations (also well up from 7 in the previous), with 11 reported from the Morass on 18 October. The remainder were all in the ACT and from the JWNR to the N, with a maximum of 4 in the Percival Hill NR on 11 October. In contrast **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** were reported from 2 locations (1 in previous), with 1 bird at Rowes Lagoon on 10 and 19 October, and at Lake Bathurst on 18 October. **Glossy Ibis** were reported from 3 locations during the period (0 in previous), with 1 bird at the FSTP on 18 October, 2 at The Morass the same day and 2 at Rowes Lagoon on 8 October.

An **Eastern Barn Owl** was heard calling after dark at the Mulligans Flat NR on 10 October, and a **Powerful Owl p**hotographed at the upper Cotter on the W edge of the ACT on 23 October (see also **Masked Owl** above). **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from 12 locations in the period, an increase from the 8 in the previous period, but still well below numbers in recent years.

Single **Black Kites** were reported from 4 locations, single birds from 2 well separated locations on the Hume Hwy Yass on 10 and 12 October, at the Anderson VC Rest Area at Lake George on 17 October and on the Barton Hwy W of Springrange on 20 October. A **Black Falcon** was reported from Campbell Park on 11 October but again there were no confirmed reports of **Spotted Harriers**, **Grey Goshawk** or the **Pacific Baza** from anywhere in the COG AoI during the period.

Reports of **Azure Kingfishers** were available from 2 locations (as for the previous period) during the period with single birds from the Cotter Reserve on 30 September and 5 October and one at SW Lake George, a new location well away from other known spots, on 4 October. Again, no **Red-backed** or **Forest Kingfishers** were reported during the period.

No **Glossy Black-Cockatoos, Cockatiel, Scaly-breasted** or **Purple-crowned Lorikeets** were reported over the period (for **Turquoise Parrots** see Highlights above**)**. Two **Little Lorikeets** were reported from the Gundaroo Common and Cemetery on 17 October. **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from 17 locations (all within the ACT, all northside except one, and double the 8 in the previous period), with up to 10 reported from Campbell Park from 4-11 October while birders were looking for the **Painted Honeyeaters**. Otherwise, the maximum was 15 (more like 15-20!) at the nearby Campbell Offices on 6 October, as well as near the big dam at Mulligans Flat NR (said to be an underestimate) and at the Mt Painter NR, both on 16 October, with 4 birds also at several locations. In my experience these are unprecedented numbers for this species.

Up to 2 **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters** were reported from the known Rock Valley Homestead location in the Tidbinbilla NR between 30 September and 17 October, as well as one seen and then heard at Greenwood Rd, Murrumbateman on 14 and 19 October, respectively (for the **Scarlet Honeyeater** see above). **White-fronted Chats** were reported from 3 locations in the period (2 in previous), with one bird at the Holborrow Ave Ponds on 20 October, 6 birds at Lake Bathurst on 18 October, and 2 birds on the Wollogorang Rd on 5 and 14 October.

Blue-faced Honeyeaters were reported from 4 locations (7 in previous period) with single birds at the Earley St Pond on 10 and 19 October, nearby in Bruce on 17 October and at the AIS on 23 October (possibly all the same bird). Southside there was 1 bird at the Stirling District Playing Fields on 3 and 10 October. However, no **Singing, Lewin's, Brown** or **Striped Honeyeaters (**for **Painted Honeyeaters** see Highlights above**), Little Wattlebirds** or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period.

Four **Chestnut-rumped Heathwrens** were reported from the Yerrabi Walking Track on 17 October with the eBird Comments: "Two adults and at least two recently fledged young. The juveniles were mostly on the ground, had a very short tail and a fleshy gape". They were also reported from another 4 locations (1 in previous period), with 1 bird from the Cuumbeun NR S of Captains Flat Rd on 2 October and the Link Trail there on 10 and 16 October, 1 bird from Whiskers Creek Rd Carwoola on 18 October and 3 birds on the Black Mountain NR on 24 October.

Red-capped Robins were reported from 2 locations (3 in previous) with 2 birds (a female seen and the other heard) at the Nadjung Mada NR on 27 September and heard calling at the Zosterops Corner on 16 October. However, 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 at least 3 known locations over the period (7 in the previous). There was a single bird at the Gambles TSR, Sutton on 5 October, 2 birds at the Namadgi NP Visitors Centre on 17 October and 1 bird at Karool, a private property, during the K2C surveys on 11 October, where they were said to be on several properties.

Hooded Robins were reported from 7 known locations (4 in previous), with a single bird from the Bracks Hole Rd on 24 October. To the S of Canberra, 2 birds were reported from the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 29 September, and one on 5 October, with 2 birds at the nearby Top Naas Rd on 3 October. There were also up to 2 birds reported from Ingelara during the K2C surveys on 11 October (when they were also said to have been on another property) as well as 3 birds on the Murrumbidgee River at Colinton on 23 October and at the Scottsdale Reserve from 28 September to 2 October.

However, the most exciting report was one by John Leonard finding an immature male behaving territorially along the SW fenceline of the Nelanglo TSR on 11 October. This is a very rare sighting of this species to the N of the Uriarra TSR of the COG AoI, with eBird showing since the start of 2023 only 2 birds on Lake George Rd Currawang on 2 April 2023 and 1 bird on 8 August 2023.

Restless Flycatchers were reported from 3 locations during the period (5 in the previous), two of them known with up to 2 birds at the Nelanglo TSR from 11 October and a single bird at Scottsdale on 29-30 September. However, the most remarkable was David Rosalky reporting one from his GBS site in Deakin on 25 October. This is the most urban sighting since 2 were reported from the ANBG on 18 October 2024, with also reports of one at the JWNR in March and April 2024.

The **Brown Treecreeper** was reported from 6 known locations during the period (4 in the previous). Up to 5 birds were reported from the Nelanglo TSR from 11 October, up to 3 birds at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd from 29 September to 9 October and a single bird at the nearby Apollo Rd on 28 September. There were also single birds from 3 locations S of Michelago during the K2C surveys on 11 October.

While reports of "unusual" species were significantly higher compared with previous periods there were still relatively few reports of pigeons/doves, raptors, and passerines.

Breeding

With the spring breeding season peaking 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****.*

Being the mid spring month there has been much reported breeding, and it seems to be a very good season. Some highlights follow (note also the **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** comments above)

On 10 October Steve Read posted on the COG chat line that he has been reading the **Painted Honeyeater** eBird checklists and noticed the comments about the two **Pallid Cuckoos** at the same site, in particular the interaction between these cuckoos. These were well described and often photographed, including one adult feeding another (presumably the male to the female), as well as in one case an adult feeding a young bird. He noted that from his reading of HANZAB, either was a possibility.

I responded that it was very early for a young **Pallid Cuckoo** to be around, given that (from my October Gang-gang column) "After the very early report of the Pallid Cuckoo on 5 August, there were reports from 15 locations during the period (up to 27 September)." Interestingly Campbell Park was not one of these locations, with the first report from there on eBird being of a single bird on 4 October. Also, the BIRD INFO on the Canberra Birds web site shows 3 cases of copulation in September, also 3 of display that month as well as 6 in October, and while there are 2 records of dependent young in October, there are also only 2 in November but 11 and 19 in December and January, respectively.

This supports that it would be a very early dependent young, particularly that the bird being fed seemed close to full size. Looking at the illustrations in both HANZAB and the ABG, I noted that Julie Clark's photos (https://ebird.org/checklist/S399918130) could support the clearer lighter coloured male passing food to a dark rufous morph

adult female, but this was less clear in the other photos. However, taking also into account that the ABG in particular shows the juvenile as a much darker bird, I concluded that it is most likely a case of courtship. This is also supported by consideration of around a 30-day egg laying to fledging period (based on the around 35 days for the larger **Eastern Koel**), which would mean any fledgling would need to be less than a fortnight old, which seemed clearly not the case. A fascinating set of observations indeed.

Campbell Park, where I hold my annual Nest Workshop, is known to be a very good breeding area with the **Painted Honeyeaters** site proving to be the case with reports of multiple other breeding species including an **Australian Magpie** on a nest, a well-grown **Wedge-tailed Eagle** chick on a nest, **Red-rumped Parrots** copulating and other breeding activity for *inter alia* the **Superb Fairy-wren, Rufous Whistler, Dusky Woodswallow** and **White-winged Triller**.

On 22 October Jack Hunter provided updated information regarding the two potential breeding pairs of **Azure Kingfishers** at separate locations of the Molonglo. One pair was again seen performing courtship bowing, while the other pair was seen carrying either food or nesting material to a specific (but unobservable) location. Both pairs were also reasonably vocal while under observation. Unfortunately, one of these pairs was located in an area that experienced an unusual surge of human activity when the weather improved, and he stopped seeing or hearing them around this increase, which included trash, speakers, swimming; the works. The area soon after experienced light flooding, which washed away one of their regular perches. While the second pair remained active during this time, they were located in an area where the river soon broke its banks, and the main habitat in which he had routinely seen them was completely submerged. While he hadn't made it back down since, it seemed highly unlikely that they were unaffected by this. Both show the hazards birds face while breeding and a very good example that the ***Ethical Birding Guidelines*** should be followed while observing breeding.

On 24 October Robin Hide posted that morning, a pair of **Gang-gang Cockatoos** chose their back deck in Ainslie to mate, for the second time in a week, if they were the same pair. The difference that morning was the interesting initial behaviour. For several minutes, with both birds down on the deck, the male walked a few slow steps and then did a small hop (both feet off the deck), before walking again, and then repeating the hop. His red plume seemed to be raised and more prominent. The female remained close - less than 40 cm away from him and would then approach him and appear to nuzzle the back of his neck. After a few minutes of this, they mated. Robin noted it was a very attractive duet "dance", performed right in front of their glass door.

Finally with all the **Eastern Koel** activity I have been keeping a close eye on **Red Wattlebirds** (RWB) first brood activity around my GBS site and locally in Rivett/Chapman. After the failed first nest reported last month, my house pair have raised 2 chicks from an unknown nest site along my back fence as often is the case. They were first detected on 6 October and were very noisy and active, with a bird on another on a more exposed nest in my garden at the end of the period (they are very quick builders!). Otherwise during my twice daily dog or other walks in the local area I have found at least 7 RWB first brood breeding events with others (Margaret Robertson and Jack Hunter) also informing me of successes in their areas.

On 20 October Alison Mackerras posted that there was a female **Eastern Koel** at her place in Weston that morning on the ground in the strawberry patch eating all the ripe strawberries. A short time later a RWB flew at the Koel repeatedly and chased it out of the yard. She noted "This particular wattlebird seems to recognise that Koels are bad news." I pointed out that in my article in the June 2026 issue of Canberra Bird Notes (CBN), I list many examples of RWBs attacking Koels, particularly females, for the 2025-2026 season. Despite RWBs seeming less "naïve" than they once were thought to be, as I also published in CBN, there were more Koel fledglings raised by RWBs last year than in any season since the bumper one of 2020-2021.

So far this season I have 3 examples of RWBs pursuing adult (one a female) **Eastern Koels**. Jack Hunter has detailed 2 instances of RWBs chasing away male Koels this season, with Alison Milton also posting a photo of a female Koel being repeatedly bombarded by a pair of RWBs. I have also witnessed one standoff between two males during which a **Pied Currawong** tried to harass them.

Flocks, including of migrating birds

With the breeding season in full swing, species of birds seen together are more likely to be those taking advantage of the variety of species by breeding together as seems to be the case in Campbell Park above.

On the afternoon of 4 October Mitchell Kelly and Cybele McNeil noticed a large but silent aggregation of approximately 200 **Silver Gulls** above the Caswell Drive carpark area of Black Mountain, where Red Box was in heavy flower. They were in the air 20 or so metres above the canopies, in a dense but uncoordinated feeding event, and were low enough to see that they were preying on the flying Bogong Moths. To do so, they noted that the gulls displayed some extraordinary aerobatics, executing tight changes of direction, abrupt mid-air stops, brief hovering, and fast but brief dives above the treetops.

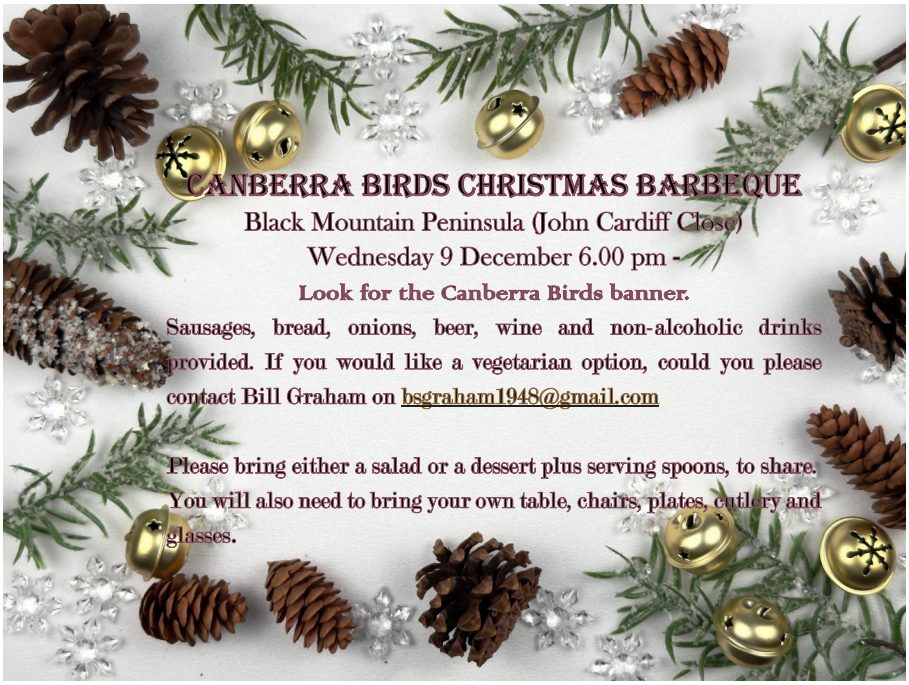
The feeding event was watched for twenty minutes and was still happening when they had to leave. Throughout the earlier walk they had seen dense aggregations of Bogong Moths above, below and amongst the canopy of each flowering Red Box, presumably feeding on the nectar of the blossoms. They had also witnessed occasional aerial predation by individual **Red Wattlebirds** and **Grey Fantails**, usually between canopy and ground level.

At the meeting on 14 October Alistair Drake mentioned that he had still been seeing noisy aggregations of **Pied Currawongs** in his local area of Cook/Mt Painter. During the period Andrea and I have also witnessed this at least 3 times, with flocks of at least 20-30 birds doing so on Farrer and Cooleman Ridges, as well as in the Isaacs pines.

November is the last month of the spring 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 leaving altitudinal migrants, for roost sites and flights, for any single species flocks, and 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



Summary reports of the 14 October meeting

The first short presentation was by Chris Davey on "Honeyeater migration along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Autumn 2026".

Chris began by noting that the 2026 survey differed from those carried out in 1997 and 2025 by four of the 9 sites being covered for 10 Saturdays between the 2nd week of March and 3rd week of May, rather than just the 3 Saturdays in April. The purpose of this change was to determine whether the lower numbers in 2025 compared with 1997 were due to the honeyeaters now migrating earlier, or perhaps later.

The surveys covered 9 sites for a total of 58 km of river from Uriarra Crossing upstream to Angle Crossing. The results showed that while numbers of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters were 50% greater in 2026 (highest at Casuarina Sands and Angle Crossing) than in 2025, they were still well below 50% of those in 1997. In contrast numbers of White-naped Honeyeaters were <50% of 2025 and <10% of 1997.

Analysis of the 15-minute intervals for 2025 and 2026 (unfortunately the 1997 raw data is no longer available) suggests that birds did seem to come through a bit earlier in the day in 2026. While there was no clear pattern in the numbers moving through on the 3 Saturdays in April for the 3 years, there has been a relative change in numbers in some but not all sites. Overall, poor weather does not seem to have restricted numbers, with no obvious effects of climate change.



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Fred & Jeanette Birkbeck

244 Clacherty Road
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Tel: 07 4094 1665
Email: freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au

Finally for 2027 Chris proposes to resurvey the 9 sites again for the 3 Saturdays in April to further examine the variation between years, but also to survey one site between 08:00 and 10:00 h on each day between mid-March and mid-April to try to determine the variation between days.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Chris for giving this very interesting presentation summarising the 2026 Honeyeater migration survey and comparing it to previous years. We are very grateful for his leading role in trying to determine the change in migration patterns over the years and wish him the very best for the proposed further surveys in 2027.

The second slightly longer presentation was by Geoffrey Dabb on "Exactly which magpie is that?". He delivered this in his usual entertaining style with very good slides with a number of memes, such as several images of local signs warning about magpies swooping that showed the **Eurasian Magpie**.

Geoffrey indicated that Canberra lies in a zone where the resident **Australian Magpies** show a range of different plumage types. The term 'hybrid zone' is often used and he showed this is a relatively small part of the vast 'intergrade' area identified by Black *et al* in 2024.

The end points of the plumage range are often referred to as 'black-backed' and 'white-backed', with in Canberra the patterns of magpie backs forming a continuum, as supported by the work in the local area by Carrick, Burton and Martin (B & M), and McComas Taylor in the 1960s to 1980s. In particular B & M used a

classification that gave the 'completely white back' a value of 0 and the 'completely black back' a value of 5, which Geoffrey illustrated.

However, for his early 2026 study photographing Canberra's birds he preferred to use a simplified 5-category (from 0-4) classification based on that published by Hughes *et al* in 2002, with the back plumage of each individual classified 'by observing it in a normal standing position, with wings folded.'

In total Geoffrey photographed 132 magpies mainly in the central part of Canberra south of or near to Lake Burley Griffin, and once classified he compared the results with those from a separate, smaller survey of 32 birds from Tuggeranong, all at least 6 km from the original photos.

Using his classification and comparing them with the B & M results showed that nearly 75% were BBW (more black than white) from which he concluded the current Canberra population is different from 50 years ago when B & M recorded more than 50% as all-black-backed.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Geoffrey for giving this very interesting presentation, showing how much there is still to learn about our most familiar birds. Attendees all thoroughly enjoyed another excellent example of his very acute bird observation and research skills which he has demonstrated to us on many occasions for many different subjects over many years.

For those interested in more details Geoffrey has published this research in Canberra Bird Notes 51 (1), 52-68 (2026).

Jack Holland

Canberra Birds and Birdlife Australia bird walks at Parliament House

On October 14 and for the third year, Canberra Birds and Birdlife Aust folk led bird walks at Parliament House. Along with other interested people, ACT Senator David Pocock came along and certainly knows his local birds. He showed Kim a phone video recorded in his neighbourhood and was pleased to be able to confirm a group of Musk Lorikeets.



L to R: Trish Cook (Bullwinkle MP), Sean Dooley (Birdlife Aust), Kim Farley (Canberra Birds), Murray Watt (Minister for the Environment & Water), Kate Millar (CEO, Birdlife Aust) David Pocock (ACT Senator), Susan Templeman (Macquarie MP). Photo: ***Birdlife Australia***

Future field trips

Canberra Birds 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, Canberra Birds can lend you a pair, so please advise the trip leader when you register.

Changes to trips are notified on the Canberra Birds email chatline: http://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/discussion-email-list/ and trips page of Canberra Birds website http://canberrabirds.org.au/category/trips/.

A reminder that Canberra Birds has a long-standing policy to give preference to members for field trips that can accommodate only a limited number of people.

Do NOT attend if you have tested positive for Covid, have been a close contact within the past 5 days, or have any Covid, cold or flu symptoms.

Sunday 8 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 – Gundary 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 Gundary Travelling Stock Reserve, on Windellama Rd, opposite Goulburn Airport. Gundary 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 Kooringaroo 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 the 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

Description: This outing will be a repeat of the very popular and practical nest workshops held over for over 22 years. As usual it will be a very informal outing which has been timed to coincide with the peak of the breeding season. The morning will start with the usual very short presentation, including tips on the types of nests built by different species of birds, and how to find nests or nesting behaviour. This will be followed by several hours putting this into practice, with participants looking for breeding behaviour, signs of nests etc. This will also allow plenty of opportunities for bird watching.



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 at https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/#Ethical. In particular, please read and follow the sections on Nesting Birds and Bird Photography.

Walking distance: While we haven't walked very far in the past as there has usuallybeen 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 reccies beforehand. Maximum distance = 3.0 km of easy flat walking.
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.
End Time: Between 11 am and 12 pm. Please remember to take morning tea which we will have out in the field
Registration is essential no later than Friday 13 November. To participate, please contact Jack Holland by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com with your name and mobile number, and the name and number of an emergency contact. Could any new members who need to borrow binoculars please advise when you register?

Wednesday 18 November - Gibraltar Forest, Corin Road

Meet at the main parking area for Point Hut Pond District Park, on McGilvray Close in Gordon, for the drive out to Corin Road. There is very limited parking near Gate 7 into Gibraltar Forest. We will walk up a firetrail, then back to a walking track across from Woods Reserve. In the past year I've seen quite a few great birds along these trails, including **Spotted Quail Thrush, Wonga Pigeon, Eastern Shrike Tit, Superb Lyrebird** and **Sahul Cicadabird**.
Sturdy shoes are essential, and bring water, hat and sunscreen. If you use walking poles, they might prove handy too.
Register with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com) with your name and phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact.

Sandra Henderson

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.mcguiness@gmail.com providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Numbers limited to 12 people.

Julie McGuiness

Saturday 29 and Sunday 29 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

Sunday 6 December - Rural property on the 'Western Edge'

We will visit a property bought in 2016 by the ACT government for future development. The nine properties in the suite of acquisitions are currently leased for rural activities, and while the original intention was suburban development, there is now some controversy over future plans. This is an opportunity to visit one of the properties.

Register with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com) with your name and phone number, and the name and number of an emergency contact. Details of the meeting place and time will be provided closer to the outing. Numbers limited to 15.

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 13 December - Lake Ginninderra

Description: We will do a loop of the main body of water of Lake Ginninderra, commencing in Diddams Close and walking anti-clockwise.

Meeting place: Meet in the carpark which is at the right-hand end of Diddams Close.

Meeting time: 8am

Walking distance: 7/8 kms. If it gets too hot we will exclude the last section of the water's edge and return to the cars via the road.

End time (approx.): 12 midday

What to bring: A snack if desired, sunscreen, hat and sturdy shoes and plenty of water.

Name of leader and contact details: Please **register** with the leader, Lia Battisson by email to liabattisson@outlook.com, providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Please do so before 7pm on Friday 11 December, as numbers will be limited to 15.

Lia Battisson

Field trip reports

Sunday 20 September - Eden Pelagic

The spring COG pelagic departed Eden on a clear morning with light winds, following a couple of flat, calm days. The trip began on a sombre note, with a dead **Crested Tern** floating in the harbour – presumably an early mortality of H5N1 avian influenza.

The mood brightened as we left the heads, with a quick visit from a **Brown Skua** and a smattering of fluttering-type shearwaters. A trawler appeared on the horizon, steaming back to port with a crowd of birds in tow. We moved to intercept and poached a healthy following from the flock of ~250 **Shy Albatross** to accompany us on our journey out to the shelf.

Our drift at the shelf was well-attended, with five species of albatross (including two **Antipodean Albatross**, finally breaking my four-year curse for wandering-types off Eden!), a very showy **White-faced Storm Petrel**, and fantastic close-up views of both **Northern** and **Southern Giant Petrels**. Non-avian taxa were not to be forgotten, with Common Dolphin, Australian Fur-seal, a Sunfish and many spectacular breaches from Humpback Whales.

Julian Teh





White-faced Storm Petrel, Wandering Albatross, Humpback Whale, Eden Pelagic, 20 September 2026, Photos: ***Julian Teh***

Monday 28 September – Wednesday 7 October - Camping Trip to Macquarie Marshes and Binnaway

Marcus Hellyer lead 6-7 birders on this wonderful two-phase 10-day camping trip to the NSW northern central west, exploring a couple of areas watered by the Macquarie and Castlereagh Rivers. Luckily for us we dodged a significant rain band that passed south of us (drenching Canberra) and had lovely warm-hot day weather and cool evenings for our birding and camping activities.

Phase one was the Macquarie Marshes, a very large Ramsar-listed wetland on the Macquarie River, much of it on private property. We camped at Willie Retreat, on a cattle station with accommodation and camping facilities north of Warren on the western edge of the Marshes. Grassland and eucalypt woodland in and immediately surrounding the camp was chocka with active and vocal bush birds, many breeding. Highlights included **White-winged Fairy-wren, Brown Treecreeper, Southern Whiteface, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, White-winged Triller, Varied Sitella, Jacky Winter, Fairy Martin** and **Spotted Bowerbird**. The **Brown Treecreepers** were so confiding that you almost tripped over them as you exited your tent of a morning, with multiple active nests in the small trees we camped under.

We filled our days birding along roadside swamps (one had 29 **Brolga**, 102 **Glossy Ibis**, and **Red-winged Parrot**); checking out a wetland hide at Monkeygar Crossing (200 Australian Shelduck); and a couple of walks around the Burrima boardwalk (a 2km privately-built boardwalk through the Marsh, highlights being wading **Emu, Pale-headed Rosella, Restless Flycatcher, Plum-headed Finch** and an unseen but booming **Australasian Bittern**). A lucky couple of people briefly saw the back-end of a **Pink Cockatoo** as it flew off into the distance.

Other activities undertaken by some of us were a 2 hour guided wading and nature walk through the Marshes lead by a NPWS Ranger (muddy wet shoes and trousers, 3 Red-bellied Black Snakes!); and a sublime late afternoon



Clockwise: **Magpie Goose, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater Eater, Willie Wagtail, Australian Raven** and **White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Jacky Winter, Pale-headed Rosella, Fairy Martin**, Binnaway & Macquarie Marshes, 28 September - 7 October 2026, Photos: ***Marcus Hellyer***

Canberra Birds members kayak tour, Macquarie Marshes, Photo: ***Macquarie Marshes Kayak Tours***

kayak guided tour through another part of the Marshes, returning just as 9 **Brolga** flew over us (**Magpie Geese, Whiskered Tern, Pelican, White-bellied Sea Eagle** and **Swamp Harrier**).

For the second phase we re-located to Bilby Blooms, a private property near Binnaway, south of Coonabarabran which is run by the welcoming and generous owners as a native flower and plant nursery. As well as exploring the property, where many flowering shrubs and trees were in bloom and full of honeyeaters and other nectar lovers (**Brown, Spiny-cheeked, Blue-faced, White-plumed, White-eared** and **Singing Honeyeaters, Noisy** and **Little Friarbirds, Red Wattlebird, Noisy Miner, Mistletoebird**), we also explored the creek lines and woodland surrounding Binnaway (**Eastern Shrike-tit, Dollarbird**), and had a day in the Warrumbungle National Park (4 cuckoo species observed there – **Horsfield's** and **Shining Bronze** , **Sahul Brush** and **Fan-tailed**; as well as **Grey-crowned Babbler**).

In all around 160 bird species were seen on the trip. Spotlighting contributed Sugar Glider and Common Brushtail to the nightbirds heard. Raptors of note were **Wedge-tailed** and **Little Eagle**, **Swamp Harrier**, many **Black** and **Whistling Kites, Brown, Black** and **Peregrine Falcon** and **Australian Hobby**.

Enormous thanks to Lia Battisson who undertook the lion's share of the eBird recording; to the Bilby Blooms owners who gave very generously of their time and access to their home; and, of course, to Marcus who organised and lead a great trip with unique and memorable birding activities.

Julie McGuiness

Sunday 4 October - Lake Road and Bungendore Common

Eight COG members headed out to the southern end of Lake George on a magical spring Sunday morning. The first part of our day was spent meandering along Lake Road and we were rewarded with a total of 42 birds. Highlights for our group included the sighting of a **Wedge-tailed Eagle** sitting on the ground on the side of a hill, guarding its captured rabbit from attacks by ravens. We eventually got terrific underwing views of its glorious markings when it took off with its mate. We estimated 40 **Pied Stilts** wading along the shore, 40 **Australian Pelicans** riding the thermals, and 80 **Black Swans** drifting by. Some of our group were lucky enough to spot an **Azure Kingfisher**.

Other species observed included **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Dusky Woodswallow, Nankeen Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Straw-Necked** and **Australian White Ibis, Rufous Whistler, Pacific Black Duck** and **Masked Lapwing**.

The Bungendore Common is an area at the back of Bungendore with three ponds and walking paths amongst eucalypt woodland and public gardens. We observed a total of 26 species in this area. We had excellent views of a **Great Egret** feeding by a patch of waterlilies that were in full bloom. We were able to watch a pair of **Australasian Swamphen** building their raft amongst the reeds. **Australasian Reed Warbler, Dusky Moorhen, Hardhead, White-plumed Honeyeater, Little Black Cormorant, Pacific Black Duck, Eurasian Coot** and **Australian Wood Duck** were also enjoying the sunshine.

Many thanks to Bill Graham for leading us on an excellent outing.

Claes Fahlander



Pied Stilts, Great Egret, Australian Raven and **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, Lake Road and Bungendore Common, 4 October 2026, Photos: ***Claes Fahlander***

Sunday 11 October – K2C surveys – Bredbo area

The majority of the K2C sites were surveyed on a warm and relatively still morning, with a couple of sites covered a few days later. A total of 91 species was recorded which is fairly typical for the spring surveys. Good numbers of spring migrants were recorded: **Pallid, Fan-tailed, Horsfields** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos, Sacred Kingfisher, Western** and **White-throated Gerygone, White-winged Triller, Rufous Whistler, Olive-backed Oriole, Leaden Flycatcher**, and **Noisy Friarbird**. Several small flocks of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were moving through. One **Flame Robin** was recorded but two of the other altitudinal migrants - **Golden Whistler** and **White-eared Honeyeater** – were not.

Threatened species included **Dusky Woodswallow** (6 properties, including breeding), **Diamond Firetail** (5), **Brown Treecreeper** (4), **Speckled Warbler** (3), **Hooded Robin** (2), **Varied Sittella** (2), **Southern Whiteface** (1) and **Scarlet Robin** (1). Other highlights were **Jacky Winter** at several properties, **Pied Butcherbird** (which is becoming regular in the region), and **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**. We enjoyed having our lunch in the new office/ accommodation facilities at Scottsdale. Thanks to our helpers with the survey, the landholders for their ongoing participation and Bush Heritage for the lunch venue.

Nicki Taws

Sunday 18 October – Bungendore Travelling Stock Reserves

At the March members' meeting, Rainer Rehwinkel gave us a presentation on the birds of several of the Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs) around Bungendore. His talk was based on his surveys of several local TSRs, and partly funded by the Molonglo Conservation Group and the NSW Environment Trust. Rainer noted that TSRs are very important for conservation purposes, with many containing critically endangered ecological communities. Due to changing methods of moving cattle and sheep - from droving to motor transport - many TSRs have had only light usage by stock in recent decades.

Such was the interest in his talk, and in TSRs as birding destinations more generally, that Rainer and Kim organised a trip to several of these TSRs. As well as being a Canberra Birds member, Rainer is a plant expert and long-term member of Friends of Grasslands (FOG), so the trip became a joint activity with that group. We were delighted to have 21 people come along. Most were Canberra Birds members or guests, some were FOG folk and several belonged to both groups. The outing was a full-day affair, divided into a morning session, with lunch at Bungendore Park and a further TSR treat in the afternoon. Some people made a full day of it and others departed after the morning's outing. All the sites we visited offered interesting birds along with outstanding grassy woodland and grassland vegetation.

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In the morning our first visit was to the charmingly named Duck Flat TSR, though we encountered no ducks! However, we did have a soaring **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, a nesting **Australasian Grebe**, and an **Australian Magpie** nest with young near a **Little Raven** nest with young. We also heard and saw two **Olive-backed Orioles** and a **Rufous Whistler**, along with **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** feeding fledged young. We recorded 26 species in total here.

Our next stop was Sweeney's, a large TSR bounded by the trainline and Tarago Rd. Here we were tantalised by the calls of one, and likely two, **Pallid Cuckoos**. Try as we might we could not lay eyes (or binoculars) upon them, despite their constant calls. We also recorded **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** and at least 18 **Striated Pardalotes**, some feeding young. We recorded 19 species in total.

After lunch we visited Six Mile TSR, south of Bungendore on the Bungendore-Hoskinstown Rd. This site was a treat. We encountered a pair of very vocal and active **Brown Goshawks**, a pair of **Sacred Kingfishers**, both **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones**, witnessed a copulating pair of **Leaden Flycatchers**, heard and saw **Speckled Warbler** and noted a **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** nest nestled under a larger stick nest (bird species unknown). We recorded 26 species at this site.

For those interested in visiting NSW TSRs, this Travelling Stock Reserves - State Classification Map page is well worth a look.

Kim Farley

Wednesday 21 October – Narrabundah Wetlands and Geoscience Australia

Twelve members, including three new members, met Sandra and Margaret on Matina St to walk through the Narrabundah Wetlands. A few people had caught sight of a **Brown Goshawk** while we were gathering, but we were all able to observe a pair of **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** nesting in a nearby eucalypt. **Australian Reed Warblers** were seen and heard as we walked around. **Welcome Swallows, Superb Fairywrens** and **Pacific Black Ducks** were numerous around the wetlands. A **Sacred Kingfisher** was calling, and we had a good view of a male **Satin Bowerbird** perched on a dead branch. A number of species were exhibiting breeding and courtship behaviour, including **Red-browed Finch, Australasian Swamphen, Australian Reed Warbler** and **Welcome Swallow**. A total of 33 species was observed.



Australasian Grebe, Geoscience Australia, ACT, 21 October 2026, Photo: ***Linda Wilson***

Ten of us then drove over to Geoscience Australia where we walked the Geological Timewalk through the grounds, watching for birds as we admired the geological specimens. The highlight in terms of birds was a pair of **Australasian Grebes** with two tiny chicks on a nest. While watching them on the pond a pair of **Australian Wood Ducks** with three small ducklings arrive for a swim. We observed 19 species in the grounds. Most of the group ended the outing in the Blackstone Café in the main foyer.

Tina Bromhead



Woodland Surveys – Spring 2026 survey round –

compiled by Jenny Bounds

After an overall mild winter and reasonable winter rain, September started fairly dry, with little rain. The woodland survey period in late September had mild to warm days, then a front with cooler weather and some rain coming through early on Sunday 27 September.
Note: not all sites are reported.

Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds and the team did the quarterly survey on Sunday 27 September in fairly cool/coldish conditions (max. 10 degrees). This was after warm weather in the mid-20s the week before, with a weak frontal system moving through early morning and some showers around. However, conditions there for the survey were dry, and fairly still. Several of the spring migrants had returned, **Sacred Kingfisher, Leaden Flycatcher, Rufous Whistler, Olive-backed Oriole, Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, 2 White-throated Gerygone** heard, one **White-winged Triller** heard, and one cuckoo heard – a **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo. Several active White-winged Chough** nests were seen and several **Grey Shrike-thrushes** were calling actively. Other highlights included: one **Scarlet Robin** near site 12; a pair of **Mistletoebirds** in courtship display at site 22 where there is a lot of mistletoe; a **Superb Parrot** at site 9 on the west ridge and 3 **Superb Parrots** flying over the Woolshed; a pair of **Wedge-tailed Eagles** and 2 **Nankeen Kestrels**. Several ducks and other waterbird species were at the large dam, including one **Pink-eared Duck** and one **Royal Spoonbill**, with the highlight a pair of **Black Swans** and two cygnets sheltering in the reeds within site 14 (next to the dam).

The total species for the survey was 61, a reasonable total given the conditions (compared with spring surveys in recent years, 62/2025; 51/2024; 54/2023).
Thank you all who turned out for the survey despite the weather.

Goorooyarroo NR (north)

Nicki Taws did the woodland bird survey at Gooroo north on the same morning (27 September) as the Mulligans Flat survey, cool and damp. The winter rains had given a good display of the early spring flowers - fields of Early Nancy and Creamy Candles. The grass was green but cropped short by a myriad of macropods.

Highlights of the morning included nearly stepping on a Bettong, and finding a young **Bush Stone-Curlew** still with its downy plumage. Plenty of spring migrants – **Pallid** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos, Noisy Friarbird, Rufous Whistler, Sacred Kingfisher, Olive-backed Oriole, Leaden Flycatcher, Western** and **White-throated Gerygones, White-winged Triller, Dusky Woodswallow**. Other interesting records were **Superb Parrot, Varied Sittella, Speckled Warbler,** several **Mistletoebirds** and a couple of active **White-winged Chough** nests.

Goorooyaroo NR (southern area)

Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley did the survey on 23 September in pleasant conditions. The reserve was looking green after decent winter rainfall, with dams partly full and some creeks still with puddles. There were plenty of wildflowers out, with Early Nancy prominent, and, amongst others, Creamy Candles, Billy Buttons, Tall Sundew and Common Woodruff. They recorded a total of 48 species for the morning with 38 of those during the 10 minute counts, a bit lower than last year's totals of 54 and 41.

Interesting records included a **Nankeen Kestrel** at site 5 where they have nested in previous years, 3 *Varied Sittellas* at site 9, and a **Grey Currawong** at site 8. Spring/summer migrants present were **Noisy Friarbirds, Western** and **White-throated Gerygones, Rufous Whistler, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, and a **Sacred Kingfisher. Grey Fantails** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were in good numbers at some sites. Other small birds noted included **Striated** and **Spotted Pardalotes, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Weebill, Superb Fairy-wren, Buff-rumped Thornbill** and **White-throated Treecreeper**. There were single records of **Golden Whistler** and **White-eared Honeyeater**. Interesting incidental records included **Mistletoebirds**, a **Straw-necked Ibis** flying over, a

Common Bronzewing and two **Wedge-tailed Eagles**.

Mt Majura NR

Peter Miller conducted the survey on 24 September. The weather was mild to warm. Sites 4 and 5, which are usually the most productive, yielded a small flock of **Silvereyes**, a **Mistletoebird, Buff-rumped** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Grey Fantail, Superb Fairy Wrens** and a **Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo**. Outside of these sites, the only small birds recorded were a single **Striated Pardalote** and a small flock of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**. **Noisy Miners** were recorded at most sites, **Noisy Friarbirds** at three sites. A **Brown Goshawk** at site 8 was the only raptor recorded.

Several parrots were observed occupying hollows but the only other nesting behaviour was a **Pied Currawong** carrying nesting material. A lone Shingleback was observed on the fire-trail between sites 8 and 9, near the Mackenzie Street Gate. In total, 27 species were recorded over the 9 sites with an additional 2 species recorded between sites.

Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park

The spring survey was conducted on 24 September by Brian Grinter. The morning started overcast but the clouds disappeared as the morning progressed. The most widespread species were **Crimson Rosella, Eastern Rosella**, and **Noisy Miners** which were detected in at least 7 of the 9 sites. Other notable species were quite active during the survey, including **Rufous Whistlers, Noisy Friarbirds, White-throated Gerygone, Grey Fantails** and **Mistletoebirds**, and whose noisy calls could be heard frequently during the morning. There was also a significant flock of **Gang-gang Cockatoos**, 8 birds at site 3.

45 species were observed during the survey (similar to spring 2025). 27 species were observed during the site surveys, and a further 18 species while walking between sites – including a pair of **Nankeen Kestrels** investigating a tree hollow.

Newline

Sue Lashko surveyed on Saturday 26 September on a calm, mild morning. The mulching of the woody weeds in the front paddocks has greatly reduced the number of small birds there and, with no follow-up spraying, the weeds are sprouting. Most of the migrants were back, with **White-throated Gerygone, Dusky Woodswallow, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Tree Martin** and **Grey Fantail** seen, but no cuckoos were recorded. Parrots and cockatoos were abundant, as were **Striated Pardalote** and **Weebill**, especially in the back paddocks. Unusual records for Newline were a **White-throated Treecreeper** and a **Peregrine Falcon**. A pair of **Brown Falcons** was seen perched, one pale morph and one dark morph. In total, 36 species were recorded.

Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson surveyed on Saturday 19 September 2026. It was a mild, sunny and still morning. The three most active sites had nine or ten species. The only breeding records were all on site 3, where three species were active at hollows: **Eastern Rosella, Common Starling** and **Rainbow Lorikeet**. Small numbers of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were heard in several places, accompanied occasionally by **White-naped Honeyeaters** and a **Noisy Friarbird** or **Red Wattlebird**. An **Eastern Spinebill** was heard in an adjacent home garden. Highlight of the morning was a **Common Bronzewing**. In all, 32 species were observed, 19 on sites and a further 13 between sites. These numbers are about average for Tuggeranong Hill in spring.

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Naas Sites

Julie Hotchin and Julie McGuiness conducted the spring

woodland survey on this rural leasehold south of Tharwa on 25 September. The morning was overcast and warm initially, with a welcome light breeze later. The dams held water and parts of the property were green; it was also well-stocked with cattle (that were very curious) and sheep. The bird diversity was high, with several returning spring migrants recorded. In total they recorded 53 species, of which 39 species were in the six sites. This total species is higher than in the past three years (45 in 2025, 42 in 2024, 31 in 2023), perhaps reflecting the late-winter rain.

Highlights included a group of **Diamond Firetails**, one carrying nesting material. This species had not been recorded there for several years. A **Jacky Winter** was active between sites, a **Mistletoebird** was heard, and a **Hobby** flew over the first site. The only other raptor seen was a **Nankeen Kestrel**. Spring-summer migrants present included **Dusky Woodswallows**, and **White-throated Gerygones** were seen or heard at every site, **Western Gerygones**, a male **White-winged Triller, Rufous Whistlers**, two **Olive-backed Orioles**, and **Fan-Tailed** and **Shining Bronze-cuckoos**.

Honeyeaters were present in greater numbers than usual, with several groups of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** moving through, and **Brown-headed** and **White-plumed Honeyeaters** observed at one site. A **Satin Bowerbird** (green bird) was a surprise sighting. Low numbers of small birds were recorded at most sites, including a **Brown Thornbill, Grey Fantails, Weebills** and **Willie Wagtails**. The exception was fourteen **Striated Pardalotes**. Breeding activity included nest building by **Diamond Firetail, Dusky Woodswallow** and **Grey Fantail**, and a pair of **Tree Martins** going in and out of a hollow.



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Youngsters

Trevor Costa

I reluctantly turn from the ridge line and the advancing clouds and begin to make my way down. That's when I finally see an eagle. Well kind of heard it as the sulphur crested cockatoos are screeching and squawking in complaint as the predator moves around in the canopy. I get a few good photos of the male eagle as he sits like a deadly popsicle on top of a barren branch. I linger just long enough in my awe for the advancing clouds to catch me. The now drizzling rain salting his ashen feathers and the wind raising his golden crest in defiance as he turns away. I make my way lower.

Then I see the dark shape ahead in a dead gum tree that could only be the female. I don't get to see her that much as it's the male who does most of the hunting and engaging in the territorial disputes, so it is a real treat. The chick in the nearby nest is bigger now, so she is probably joining the male in some of the hunts and may explain the complaining cockies. A much bigger animal than her mate, with a heavy hooked beak and oh, those talons. I fire off a few shots.

Again, pleased with my now soaking self, I turn to see a family group trudging up the hill. They stop at the log bench seat below the ridge summit. A young mother and two kids, a boy and a girl around 8 or 10 years old. The boy has a small pair of binoculars that he twirls deftly in his wet hands scanning the landscape below. Like me they have no rain gear, and the little girl looks miserable, and the mum a bit worried.

As I draw alongside, I ask if they have ever seen a Wedge-tailed Eagle? The mum answers "I don't think so", the girl looks up interested, the boy spins like a top on the seat. I point out the clearing where they may be able to see the female. The mum's face brightens and they all hurry higher to the viewing spot. I continue down and hear squeals of joy. The sound floods my heart with so much volume it weighs me down for a second and I stop to recalibrate my footing. Young minds experiencing the awe and just perhaps, eyes looking forward, forging a better future. A future yet to be faced by another youngster, still in the nest.



Wedge-tailed Eagle - female Photo: ***Trevor Costa***



Wedge-tailed Eagle - male Photo: ***Trevor Costa***

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

Canberra Birds membership

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

New members

Canberra Birds welcomes the following new members:

Jordan Rodger
Bill & Nicci Raffle
Wendy Keeley
Conor Carman-de Jong
Nick Thorne
Glen & Debra Lawrence
Chris Hallett & Kim Hughes
Meryl Joyce

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for December 2026 edition:

Wednesday 25 November 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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