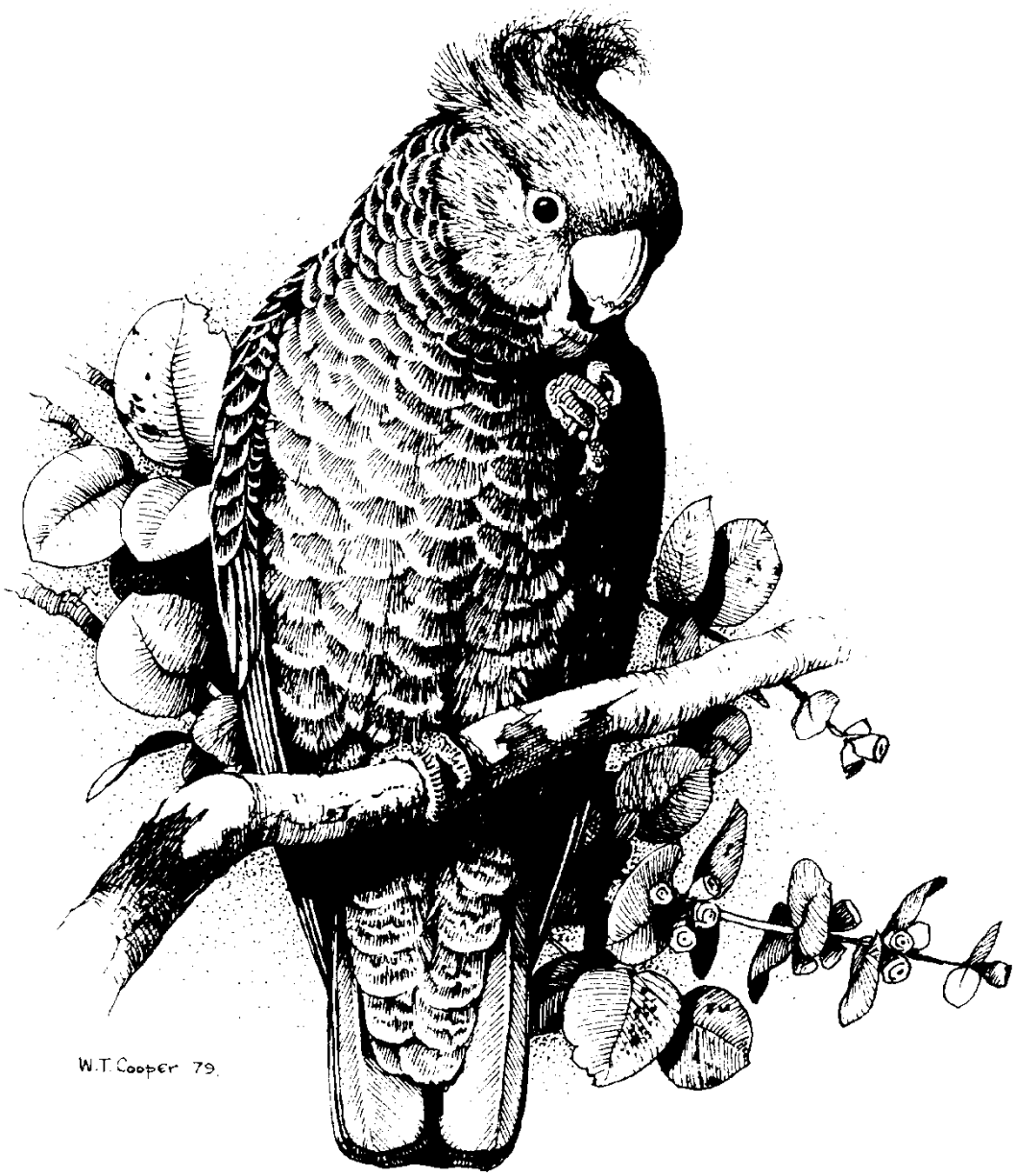
canberra bird notes

ISSN 0314-8211

Volume 36
Number 3
February 2012



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STATUS OF THE LITTLE CORELLA IN THE CANBERRA REGION SINCE 1995

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Abstract: This paper describes the pattern of sightings of the Little Corella Cacatua sanguinea *between 1995 and 2009. The number of reports of the Little Corella in the COG databases has been increasing notably since about 2006/07. The status of the Little Corella for the Canberra region can currently be defined as permanently established and a common breeding resident.*

1. Introduction

Recent informal discussion among some COG members of the growing prevalence of the Little Corella *Cacatua sanguinea* in and around Canberra gave cause to evaluate the status of this species based on the records held by COG. There has also been some discussion of the Long-billed Corella *Cacatua tenuirostris* and the difficulties of differentiating between the two when in mixed flocks. However, this paper deals only with the Little Corella.

Figure 1: Distribution of Little Corella (Wikipedia 2011).

The status of the Little Corella in Canberra, based on 21 years of COG's Little Corella was originally distributed across much of the drier inland and northern and western parts of the continent (Figure 1). This map also shows populations in and around the more densely populated areas on the eastern seaboard, probably indicating they had originated from escapees of a popular caged bird. As latest editions of field guides indicate, e.g. Pizzey and Knight (2007), the Little Corella is now found all over continental Eastern Australia except for the most southern parts of Victoria. It is also of interest to note that the Little Corella is nominated for the ACT as an escapee or a released bird in Taylor and COG (1992), but there is no discussion of the species as being a resident in the ACT. Wilson (1999) states that the first reported sighting was at Yarralumla on 17 June 1973, and since then there had been flocks of about 24 seen in 1994 and 1998 at Mulligans Flat. Dabb (1996) gives a comprehensive account of Little Corella activities in the Narrabundah/Mugga Lane area. Wilson (1999) came to the conclusion: "*Probably permanently established and breeds in the area; an uncommon species. Its origin is uncertain and may have started from escaped cage birds.*"

The status of the Little Corella in Canberra is also discussed by Veerman (2003) without that definite conclusions could be drawn from the available data.

2. Methodology

Two sets of data are used to examine the status of the Little Corella in the ACT and surrounding New South Wales (i.e. the COG Area of Interest [COG AOI]). One is the Garden Bird Survey (GBS) data set, and the other (termed General Surveys in this paper) is a combination of data comprising the main COG database (Atlas) together with the Woodland, the Greening Australia, and the Birds Australia survey data for the COG AOI. The GBS data set must be treated separately from the General Surveys, mainly because the GBS data consists of the maximum numbers for each species seen at any one time within a week and has other specific rules (see Veerman 2003, Canberra Ornithologists Group 2009), as distinct from the different methods and shorter survey periods ranging from 10 minutes to several hours in the General Surveys. Importantly, the GBS data is mainly concerned with the suburban gardens of Canberra whilst the data from General Surveys have been generated from diverse sites within the total COG AOI with most coming from non-urban areas.

The statistics used in the analysis of both GBS and General Surveys are similar, and are meant to show the relative abundance of the species over the years in question. These statistics include:

1. The A value as is calculated for GBS data in COG's Annual Bird Reports (see Canberra Ornithologists Group (2011) for the most recent example); the Reporting Rate (RR) in the General Surveys, which is similar to the A value, but based on the percentage of observation sheets submitted that include the species in question;
2. the Group Size (G) which is the average group size from a given number of records

3. Results

The results are presented in three sections: (1) The prevalence of the species in the COG AOI and in suburban Canberra for the whole period of the study; (2) the abundance and distribution of the species from 1995/96 to 2005/06 with General Survey and the GBS data treated separately; and (3) the two datasets compared for the period between 2006/07 and 2009/10.

There appear to be two phases: The first phase 1995/96 to 2005/06) is characterised by relatively few sightings of Little Corellas. In the second phase (2006/07 to 2009/10) the species shows a significant growth in the number of sightings, albeit the timing of the increase differs somewhat between non-urban and urban areas.

3.1. *Abundance in COG's Area of Interest (General Surveys) and in suburban Canberra (GBS)*

For the wider COG AOI, the species was recorded at a low rate (RR between 0.5 to close to 2%) until 2005/06 From then on the reporting rate increased steadily to just above 5% in 2009/10 (Fig. 2). The R^2 value is a measure of the trueness of fit of the trend line to the actual data. From the several available methods of calculating the trend line, the polynomial to the 4^{th} degree was selected as providing the truest fit.

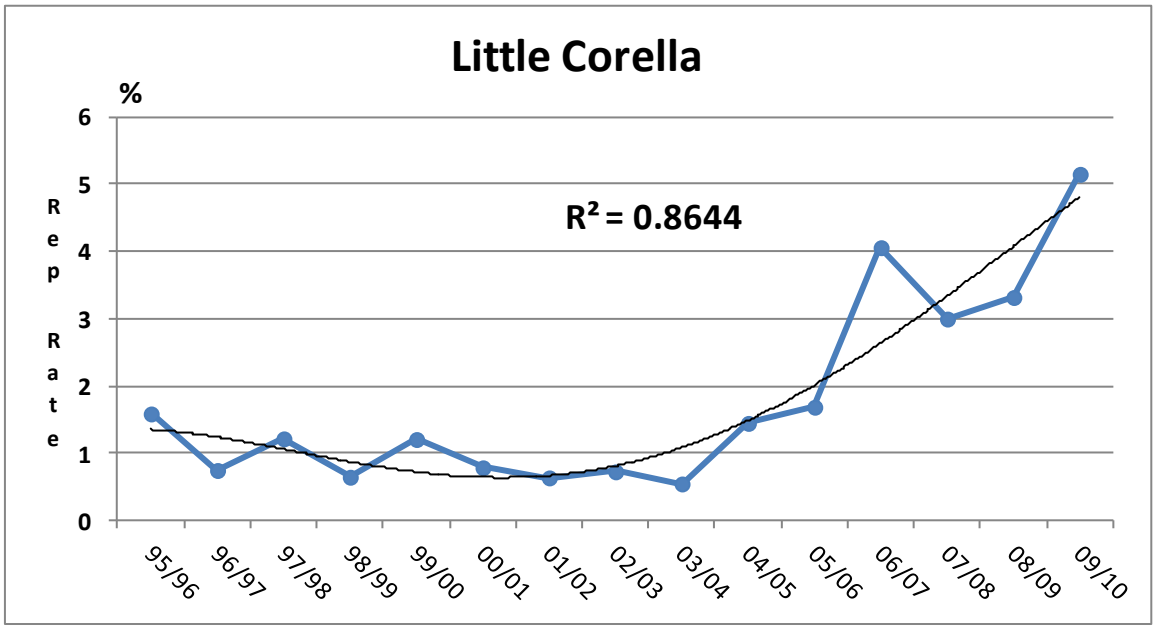

Figure 2. General Surveys: Reporting Rate for the Little Corella 1995/96 to 2009/10.

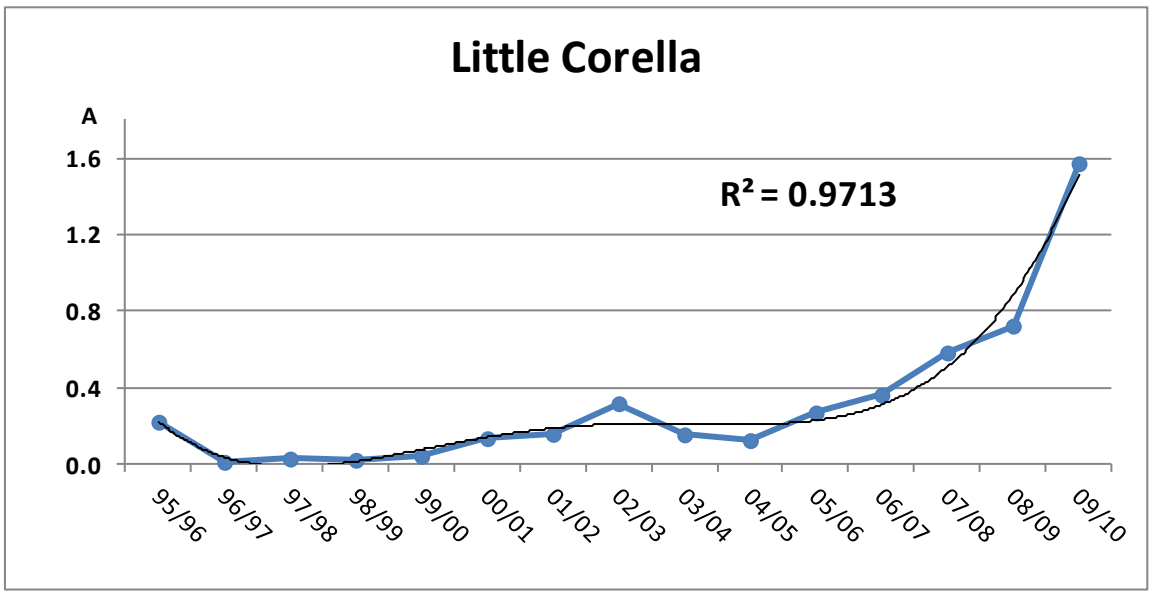

Figure 3. GBS: Abundance values for the Little Corella 1995/96 to 2009/10.

These two graphs support one another, although the results from the General Surveys (Fig. 2) covering largely the areas outside suburbia indicate that the start of the major growth phase was after 2005/06, about two years before the notable increase in Little Corella sightings in suburban Canberra (Fig. 3).

3.2. *Distribution and Group Size during the low population phase in COG's AOI (General Surveys)*

During this 11 year period (1995/96 to 2005/06) Little Corellas were reported more than five times in only nine Grid cells, with significant numbers being reported in only three Grid cells (see Table 1). The significant observations of the species were restricted to a limited

area, mainly in South Canberra around Kingston and Mugga Lane, the area discussed by Dabb (1996) and at Murrumbateman. There were also some reports of birds at Mulligans Flat, inner North Canberra and Yarralumla and Red Hill.

Table 1: General Surveys: Abundance and distribution of the Little Corella 1996/97 to 2005/06 in the COG AOI.

Area	Grid	Location	Species Sheets	Total Sheets	RR %	Total Bird Nos	G
North of ACT	I06	Murrumbateman	11	165	6.7	95	8.6
Northern ACT	M11	Mulligans Flat Goorooyarroo	7	479	1.5	33	4.7
North Canberra	K13	Acton Turner O'Connor	7	1298	0.5	80	11.4
	L13	Civic C'wealth Park Ainslie	7	374	1.9	207	29.6
South Canberra	K14	Yarralumla Red Hill	7	508	1.4	64	9.1
	L14	Area	30	1030	2.9	199	6.6
	L15	Callum Brae area	26	325	8.0	430	16.5
Weston	I15	"Kerrabee" on the Cotter Rd	8	505	1.6	16	2.0
NSW	Z08	The Morass via Tarago	6	89	6.7	38	6.3

Table 2: GBS: Abundance and distribution of Little Corella 1995/96 to 2005/06.

Area	Grid	Suburb	Species Site Weeks	Total Site Weeks	A	Total Birds	G	R
Belconnen	I12	Holt	63	1405	0.0932	131	2.1	4.48
South Canberra	K14	Yarralumla Deakin Red Hill	74	1101	0.4114	453	6.1	6.72
	L15	Narrabundah	26	44	2.6136	115	4.4	59.09
	L14	Griffith	33	252	0.5754	145	4.4	13.10
Weston Creek	I15	Chapman Duffy	117	955	0.5330	509	4.4	12.25
Woden	J14	Curtin	32	971	0.4099	398	12.4	3.30
	K15	Hughes Pearce	119	1714	0.3903	669	5.6	6.94
Tuggeranong Valley	J16	Kambah	39	1909	0.1131	216	5.5	2.04
NSW	O07	Gundaroo	10	73	0.7534	55	5.5	13.70

3.3 *Distribution and Group Size during the low population phase for the GBS*

Little Corellas were reported during early years in only a few suburbs (Table 2), with quite low A values except for Narrabundah (2.6136). The Narrabundah A value is significant, and the count of birds reported is much higher than in other areas. The sites are not far from each other in Brockman and Sprent

Streets Narrabundah. These addresses are quite close to open areas within the suburbs and not far from the southern edge abutting Mt Mugga Mugga. The only site in Holt (Bardsley Place) reporting the species was not far from the southern edge of the suburb, bordering open pasture land. In Chapman, there were two sites in Percy Crescent and Chauvel Circle reporting the species, both sites are near the western edge of the suburb, abutting Cooleman Ridge Nature Park. The two sites in Duffy however, were in Burdekin Street and Tinaroo Place, both sites towards the middle of the suburb but not far from Duffy Oval. Similarly the site in Curtin (Peacock Place) is at the northern edge of the suburb.

The Garden Bird Survey data set has many hiatuses, because continuity is lost when sites stop reporting either permanently or for different periods. The data from Griffith comes from one site in 2002/03 and another in 2004/05. Similarly, all except one of the sightings at Gundaroo were at one site in 2005/06.

When the information in Tables 1 and 2 are considered together it would appear that the species was distributed while overall numbers were still low as follows:

1. The highest A/RR values in Grid L15 in the Narrabundah-Red Hill-Callum Brae area, with some representation in the Kingston/Jerrabomberra Wetland area
2. Significant A/RR values from Chapman/Duffy and at "Kerrabee" along the Cotter Road
3. Similar A values in Holt from the GBS and very occasional sightings of large groups at Mulligans Flat
4. A number of sightings around Murrumbateman, but no GBS data because there were no sites active in that area during this period.
5. Group size (G) is much more variable in the General Survey database

3.4 *Distribution and Group Size after notable increases in reporting rates*

A comparison of Tables 1 (General Surveys) and 2 (GBS), covering the years of low population size, with Tables 3 (General Surveys) and 4 (GBS), proving information on the distribution and group size during more recent years indicates that the species is now much more widely distributed and occurs often in quite large flocks.

3.4.1 General Surveys

Table 3 outlines the distribution and abundance of Little Corellas in COG's AOI after 2005/06. In northern ACT there appears to be an expansion of the species from the Mulligans Flat area to now including Goorooyarroo, Moncrieff and Jacka. There were 25 reports from the Mulligans Flat / Goorooyarroo area, and with sightings from three Grid cells compared to the single Grid cell in the earlier period.

In North Canberra the main areas are now in Grid K12, Kaleen and Lyneham Ridge, but with the largest group size being reported from areas just north of Lake Burley Griffin. The species is now seen in four Grid cells, compared to two previously, with an expansion to Kaleen and Campbell.

The most prolific locations are still in South Canberra adjacent to Mt Mugga Mugga: Callum Brae, Red Hill, Kingston and Jerrabomberra Wetland, but the Little Corella has now spread further afield to include Garran and Symonston and Jerrabomberra Grasslands.

Table 3: General Surveys: Abundance and distribution of the Little Corella 2006/07 to 2009/10 in the COG AOI.

Area	Grid	Location	Species Sheets	Total Sheets	RR	Total Bird Nos	G
Northern ACT	K10	Moncrieff Jacka	7	97	7.22	13	1.9
	L11	Mulligans Flat	12	407	2.95	24	2.0
	M11	Mulligans Flat Goorooyarroo	13	340	3.82	33	2.5
North Canberra	K12	Gungahlin Hill Kaleen Lyneham	15	98	15.31	164	10.9
	K13	Acton Turner O'Connor	17	647	2.63	206	12.1
	M13	Campbell Park	11	309	3.56	16	1.5
South Canberra	L14	Jerrabomberra Wetlands area	51	717	7.11	292	5.7
	L15	Callum Brae area	44	206	21.36	291	6.6
Woden Weston	K15	Hughes Garran Phillip	13	218	5.96	21	1.6
	I15	Cooleman Ridge	29	364	7.97	105	3.6
Tuggeranong	J16	L Tuggeranong Urambi Hills	11	158	6.96	553	50.3
	J17	Point Hut	6	64	9.38	34	5.7
	J19	Tharwa area	17	217	7.83	75	4.4
NSW	O05	TSR 48 N of Gundaroo	6	36	16.67	14	2.3

Table 4: GBS: Abundance and distribution of Little Corella 2006/07 to 2009/10.

Area	Grid	Suburb	Species Site Weeks	Total Site Weeks	A	Total Birds	G	R
Belconnen	K12	Lyneham Giralang	50	457	0.4595	210	4.2	10.94
North Canberra	K13	Turner	138	324	10.3765	3362	24.4	42.59
	L12	Watson	81	488	1.3730	670	8.3	16.60
South Canberra	K14	Red Hill Yarralumla	65	872	0.5768	503	7.7	7.45
	L14	Griffith Kingston	98	204	3.6176	738	7.5	48.04
	L15	Narrabundah	17	48	3.2708	157	9.2	35.42
Woden	J14	Curtin	35	503	0.3797	191	5.5	6.96
	K15	Hughes	107	1085	0.3189	346	3.2	9.86
Weston	I15	Chapman	197	501	1.6567	830	4.2	39.32
Tuggeranong	J16	Kambah Oxley	83	844	0.9917	837	10.1	9.83
	K16	Wanniassa	91	412	1.4393	593	6.5	22.09
	K18	Gordon	76	163	2.1840	356	4.7	46.63
NSW	I08	Murrumbateman	26	166	2.2831	379	14.6	15.66
	O07	Gundaroo	10	55	0.7534	115	5.5	13.70

In the Woden and Weston area, the sightings which were initially at "Kerrabee" on the Cotter Road now appear to be represented by sightings at Cooleman Ridge. There are no records of searches at "Kerrabee" since August 2002

There have been only 45 Record Sheets returned for the Murrumbateman area since 2001/02 and of these there were only 2 sightings of Little Corella.

Most likely a different group was observed around Lake Tuggeranong, Urambi Hills and as far south as the Tharwa Sandwash. The highest group size has been reported from this area.

Further afield flocks were seen at The Morass, and at Travelling Stock Route 48 on the Gundaroo – Gunning Road.

3.4.2 Garden Bird Survey

Table 4 outlines the abundance and distribution of the species as reported in the GBS for the period 2006/07 to 2009/10.

In Belconnen the species has appeared to have spread to a limited degree to Giralang and Lyneham.

A values and group size increased significantly across the suburbs in both North Canberra and South Canberra. The most marked increases have been in North Canberra at Turner, and South Canberra in suburbs adjacent to the original hot spot of Narrabundah/Red Hill/Callum Brae.

However, during this period, there was only one site reporting the species in Grid L15 for a single year (Year 26) in Jerrabomberra Avenue, Narrabundah, but even so the A value (62.5) has increased that of the previous years and remains at a relatively high level.

Little Corellas expanded in a southerly direction from Narrabundah into the Woden Valley (Hughes). In Chapman the A value increased from 0.5330 to 1.6567, which parallels the increase in sightings at Cooleman Ridge in the General Surveys.

Further south, in the Tuggeranong Valley, there has been a large increase in A values, particularly in the suburbs of Gordon and Wanniassa. Most sightings in Gordon have come from a single site on the western boundary of the suburb. This is supportive of the data returned in the General Surveys showing significant increases in the Urambi Hills, Point Hut and Tharwa areas.

The inclusion of several sites in New South Wales in the Garden Bird Survey has confirmed the presence of the species in Murrumbateman, and Jerrabomberra Estate and Gundaroo.

4. Discussion

The rapid rise in Little Corella sightings as described by Figure 2 and Figure 3 is confirmed when the details of abundance and distribution are explored in more detail over the period 1995 to 2010 (Tables 1 to 4).

Information from both the General Surveys and the Garden Bird Survey provides supportive evidence of significant growth in numbers of the Little Corella, apparently expanding from small beginnings centred on Narrabundah/Mugga Lane.

A comparison of Australia wide Atlas data collected between 1977 and 1981 (Blakers et al., 1984) and data collected between 1998 and 2002 (Barrett et al, 2003) indicates that the Little Corella was recorded from one grid cell only of the nine that includes the ACT and surrounding New South Wales in the first

Atlas whilst all nine cells contained records in the second Atlas.

The COG data base contains only 21 records of breeding activity for the Little Corella, nearly all from the Callum Brae area. This is not unusual, since there are fairly sketchy breeding records for most species in the COG database.

The question arises as to whether the significant increase in numbers is due to local breeding, or whether the recent years of drought have encouraged migration from the west. This is an interesting question, but one very hard to answer.

It would appear that over the last decade the Little Corella has become a regular sight in and around Canberra. Up to the reporting period 2006/07, for the purpose of the COG Annual Bird Report, the status of the Little Corella was defined as 'Uncommon, breeding resident'. Since the 2007/08 reporting period the status has been changed to that of 'Breeding resident'. Based on the results from this paper it is appropriate that the status description of the species be upgraded to: *"A permanently established, common, breeding resident species. Its origin is uncertain and may have started from escaped cage birds, and perhaps augmented by migration from drought affected areas."*

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE AND BREEDING STATUS OF THE SUPERB PARROT DURING THE 2010-11 BREEDING SEASON, GUNGAHLIN, ACT

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1. Background

An unprecedented number of Superb Parrots (*Polytelis swainsonii*), including many dependent young, were observed in the northern Belconnen suburbs over the summer of 2005-06 (Lashko, 2006). Since then increasing numbers have been reported from the northern suburbs of Canberra, the Goorooyarroo/ Mulligan's Flat Nature Reserve and in particular from the Gungahlin suburb of Harrison. Occasional reports are now received from as far south as Hoskinstown, NSW.

The Superb Parrot is a threatened species listed under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Within the ACT the species is declared as vulnerable under the ACT's *Native Conservation Act 1980*.

Concerned about the possibility of unknown breeding sites within areas set aside for future development within the township of Gungahlin, the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) approached the ACT Government for approval and support to survey those areas under consideration for future suburbs. This was provided and surveys were conducted within the proposed suburbs of Kenny, Throsby, Moncrieff, Jacka and Kinlyside between early September and mid-December 2009 that is from the time of arrival of this migrant species to the ACT until the end of the breeding season. In addition, a survey was conducted in selected areas to determine the condition of the tree hollow estate within all areas except Kinlyside. The results of the Superb Parrot survey and the tree hollow survey were provided by COG to the ACT Government in April 2010, see Davey (2010). In addition, an abridged version of the report was written up in Canberra Bird Notes, see Davey (2010a)

In early November 2010 the ACT Government Department of Territory and Municipal Services, Conservation Planning and Research approached COG for an additional survey to determine the distribution and abundance of the Superb Parrot's breeding activity within the Goorooyaroo Nature Reserve-Throsby area, the proposed suburb of Moncrieff and a site under construction for the Harrison School Secondary Campus. In addition, it was agreed that COG would resurvey the proposed suburb of Kenny. The extent of the survey area is shown in Fig. 1.

2. Methods

Survey work did not start until 15th November due to delays in the contractual agreement between the ACT Government and COG. COG members had observed Superb Parrots in the ACT since early September and the breeding season had commenced. All those involved in the survey were familiar with the Superb Parrot and at least one member of each team was familiar with the calls. The location of all Superb Parrots seen was recorded with a GPS unit, their behaviour was recorded and any tree that from behaviour of the birds suggested a possible breeding site was photographed for identification purposes.

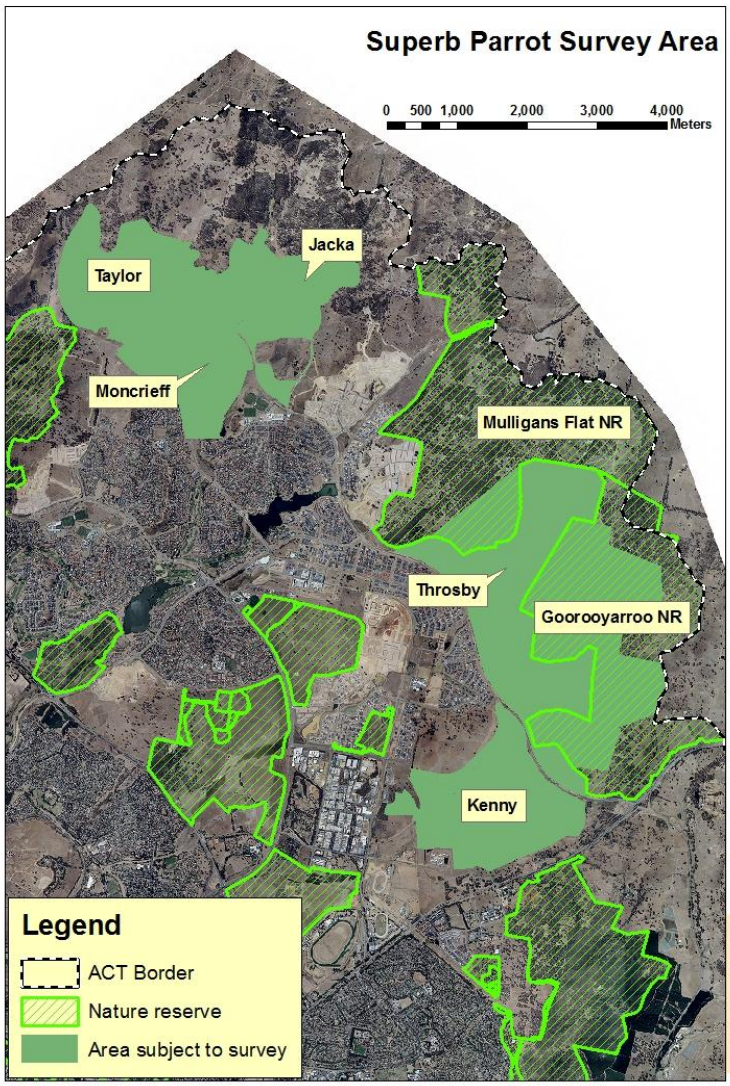

Figure 1. Map of the Superb Parrot survey area, 2010-2011.

Signs of breeding included the following:

- A reluctance by either sex to leave the vicinity of a tree with suitable hollow nearby;
- female or male observed entering or leaving a hollow;
- copulation;
- aggressive interactions between pairs with a potential nest hollow nearby;
- a male 'on station' indicated by the presence of a lone bird perched quietly in a tree occasionally making a soft call with a possible nest hollow in the same or nearby tree; and
- feeding by adult birds of young with very short tails and limited capacity of flight with a possible breeding hollow in the same or nearby tree.

The sighting of any other ACT threatened bird species was recorded during the course of the survey.

<u>Goorooyarroo/ Mulligan's Flat Nature Reserve</u>.

For the last six years, over a 10-day period in October, members of the Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University, with help from members of COG, have conducted

bird surveys within the Mulligan's Flat and Goorooyarroo Nature Reserves. Observations of the Superb Parrot from the 2009 and the 2010 ANU surveys were plotted and this determined the areas that were surveyed by COG in 2010 for signs of breeding. These included parts of the Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve and an area within Mulligan's Flat that includes the 'Big Dam' located at S 35^0 10' 45.28" E 149^0 09' 30.29", see (Fig. 2).

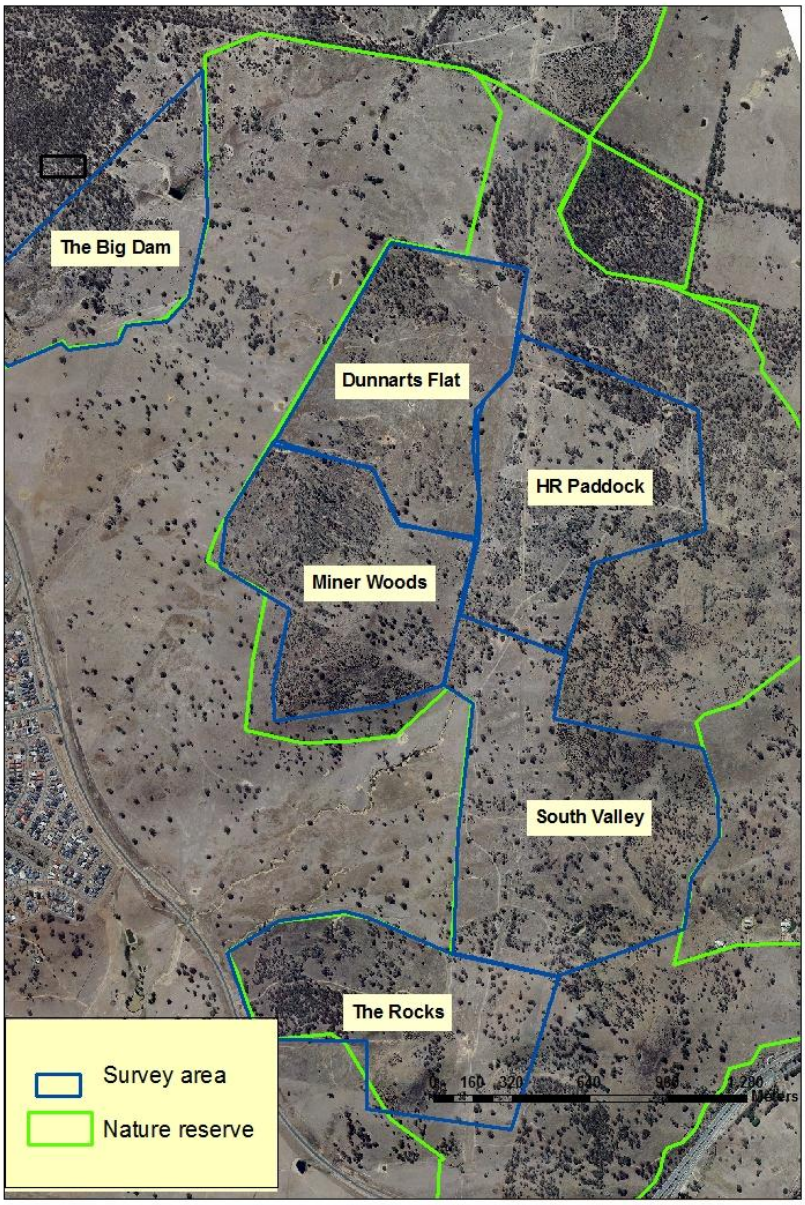

Figure 2. Location of Superb Parrot survey areas within the Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve.

Starting 15 minutes after sunrise on 20 November and again on 11 December 2010 five teams of two to three individuals each searched allocated areas within the Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve for a four hour period or until each team was satisfied the areas had been thoroughly covered. For the November survey it was possible to drive to the allocated areas. This was not possible in

December as roads within the Reserve were impassable due to wet conditions, so observers walked in to their respective search areas.

Superb Parrots were infrequently recorded from Mulligan's Flat Nature Reserve during the ANU surveys and this could be confirmed from ad hoc reports collected by COG members. Breeding has occurred in the past around the 'Big Dam' and this area was surveyed on 23 November and 5 December. During the latter visit the COG quarterly woodland bird survey was conducted with survey teams scattered throughout the reserve and sanctuary.

Moncrieff

The entire area covered by the proposed suburb of Moncrieff was searched on foot over a period of four hours starting at 6:30am on 26 November and again on 14 December 2010.

Kenny

Similar to 2009, two areas defined by likely Superb Parrot habitat. were surveyed in Kenny. The smaller western area adjacent to the Mitchell Recycling Centre was surveyed in a similar manner to Moncrieff on 24 November and again on 9 December. The larger eastern and northern section of Kenny was surveyed on 24 November and again on 11 December.

Harrison School Secondary Campus

The construction site was visited on 24 November, 3 December and again on 9 December with a minimum of 45 minutes spent during each visit. On each occasion the Heritage Lane to as far south as the end of the suburb and as far north to where the Gungaderra Creek flows below Horse Park Drive was surveyed.

Throsby

In this report an area where the majority of breeding was found in 2009-10 is referred to as 'Throsby Ridge' located in the general area of S 35^0 11' 43" E 149^0 10' 15". A woodland between Mulligan's Flat and Goorooyarroo Nature Reserves in the general area of S 35^0 10' 46" E 149^0 10' 10" is referred to as 'Throsby Neck'.

The area north of a fence running north-east, south-west and stretching from Horse Park Drive to the north-western facing Goorooyarroo boundary fence and including the 'Throsby Neck' area was searched on 17 November, 25 November and 15 December. This area is referred to as North Throsby. The area to the south of the fence and involving the 'Throsby Ridge' was searched on 16 November, 18 November, 12 December and 22 December. This area is referred to as South Throsby.

During early November 2009, two areas on 'Throsby Ridge' were assessed for tree hollows (see Map 2, areas 2b and 4 in Davey (2010)). On 4 and 6 January 2011, additional surveys were conducted to ensure that the area between 2b and 4 was also assessed together with two additional areas adjacent to area 2b and 4 respectively. These surveys ensured that all trees within Throsby Ridge were assessed. The abundance, activity and location of Superb Parrots were also recorded at that time.

All surveys at Moncrieff, Kenny, the 'Big Dam' at Mulligan's Flat Nature Reserve, Throsby and Harrison School were conducted by Chris Davey with occasional help from other COG members.

3. Results

3.1 *Superb Parrot observations*

Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve

During the 20 November survey there were 12 sightings of between one or two birds in the general area of Dunnarts Flat (see Table 1). There was much general activity but no conclusive signs of breeding.

Table 1. Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve Superb Parrot observations, 20 November 2011.

Location	Time	No. birds	No. males	Flight direct'n.	Lat. Deg. Min. Sec.	Long. Deg. Min. Sec	Behaviour
Dunnarts Flat	7.25	1	0	NE	35 10 38.1	149 10 43.7	Flying, chased by others
Dunnarts Flat	7.30	1	1	SW	35 10 38.1	149. 10. 43.7	Flying
Dunnarts Flat	7.38	2	1	SW	35 10 40.0	149 10 37.9	Flying to tree
Dunnarts Flat	7.40	1	1	NE	35 10 39.2	149 10 40.6	Flying
Dunnarts Flat	7.41	1	1	NE	35 10 39.2	149 10 40.6	Flying
Dunnarts Flat	7.42	1	0	SW	35 10 39.2	149 10 40.6	Flying, chased by Miners
Dunnarts Flat	8.28	2	1	SW	35 10 54.5	149 10 31.7	Roosting
Dunnarts Flat	8.32	1	0	SW	35 10 52.2	149 10 30.2	Flying
Dunnarts Flat	8.34	1	0	SW	35 10 52.2	149 10 30.2	Flying
Dunnarts Flat	8.43	1	0	SW	35 10 38.1	149 10 43.2	Flying
Dunnarts Flat	9.01	1	?		35 10 39.3	149 10 49.0	Heard calling
Dunnarts Flat	9.45	1	1	NW	35 10 49.9	149 10 35.8	Flying
Miner Woods	7.20	1	1		35 11 13.0	149 10 32.0	Male on station
Miner Woods	7.50	1	?	NE	35 11 12.0	149 10 13.0	Flying
Miner Woods	8.10	1	1	S	35 11 5.0	149 10 28.0	Flying
Miner Woods	9.15	1	1		35 11 13.0	149 10 32.0	Male still on station
H.R.Paddock	7.40	1	?	SW	35 11 7.0	149 10 44.0	Fly to tree
H.R.Paddock	8.00	4	3	E	35 11 10.2	149 10 40.6	Fly from tree copse
H.R.Paddock	8.20	1	1	NW	35 11 5.6	149 10 54.6	Fly from tree
South Valley	7.12	?	?		35 11 56.9	149 10 57.2	Heard
South Valley	8.12	1	?	SE	35 12 4.9	149 11 18.8	Fly to tree
South Valley	8.16	2	1	SE	35 12 5.7	149 11 17.7	Fly to tree, enter hollow
The Rocks							No sightings

In the Miner Woods area four single birds were observed. One male was on station and still present just under two hours later. A male appeared to be reluctant to leave a tree and although the tree had no hollows it is possible that some nearby tree contained a breeding site.

In the general area of the HR (Hooded Robin) Paddock there were three sightings of between one and four birds. Within the South Valley area there were three sightings of one or two birds. A single bird was observed flying into a

tree, then four minutes later a pair flew in to a nearby tree and after an altercation with a pair of Crimson Rosella the birds took turns to enter a tree hollow.. Interest in the tree hollow lasted for over 15 minutes. The pair eventually departed towards the suburb of Harrison, in the direction they came from.

No Superb Parrots were seen in The Rocks area

The following day, the Miner Woods area with a male on station was revisited but no signs of activity were observed. At 35^{o} 11' 06.7" 149 ^{o} 10' 59.76" a male Superb Parrot was observed in a tree flying to the ground to feed, then on being disturbed returned to the tree from which it was most reluctant to leave. This observation would confirm that there is a high probability of at least one breeding site in the area.

During the survey of the Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve on 11 December there birds in the general area of Dunnarts Flat (Table 2). As with the November survey there was much activity but no conclusive indications of breeding (but see later, North Throsby, 25 November and 15 December).

Table 2. Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve Superb Parrot observations, 11 December 2011.
Note: Geo-locations were not taken in the Miner Woods area.

Location	Time	No. birds	No. males	Flight direct'n.	Lat. Deg. Min. Sec.	Long. Deg. Min. Sec	Behaviour
Dunnarts Flat	7.08	1	1	SW	35 10 51.0	149 10 33.0	Flying
Dunnarts Flat	7.18	1	1	NE	35 10 46.0	149 10 29.0	Flying
Dunnarts Flat	7.33	2	1	NE	35 10 39.0	149 10 41.0	Fly from tree
Dunnarts Flat	7.46	2	1		35 10 34.5	149 10 47.0	Roosting
Dunnarts Flat	8.28	1	0		35 10 47.0	149 10 34.0	Roosting
Dunnarts Flat	8.42	1	1	NE	35 10 41.0	149 10 35.0	Flying
Miner Woods	7.00						Heard
Miner Woods	7.05	2	2	SE			Flying
Miner Woods	7.07	2	2	NE			Flying
Miner Woods	7.12	3	2	NE			Flying
Miner Woods	7.25	2	2	SE			Flying
Miner Woods	7.32	4	2	NE			Flying
Miner Woods	7.50	3	1	SW			Flying ?juvenile
Miner Woods	7.55	2	1	E			Flying
Miner Woods	9.00	1	1	NE			Flying
H.R.Paddock	7.38	1	1	E	35 11 7.3	149 11 1.0	Perch in tree briefly
H.R.Paddock	7.50	3	1	W	35 11 7.3	149 11 1.0	Flying
H.R.Paddock	7.40	1	1	NE	35 11 18.0	149 11 8.0	Flying
H.R.Paddock	7.50	3	2	SW	35 11 18.0	149 11 8.0	Flying
H.R.Paddock	7.51	1	1	NE	35 11 18.0	149 11 6.0	Flying
H.R.Paddock	8.45	1		SW	35 11 0.0	149 11 3.0	Flying
H.R.Paddock	8.50	1	1	NE	35 11 0.0	149 11 3.0	Flying
South Valley							No sightings
The Rocks							No sightings

In the Miner Woods area there were nine sightings of between one and four birds but all were flying overhead and no signs of breeding were reported.

There were seven sightings of Superb Parrots in the HR Paddock area. None of the sightings gave any indication of breeding.

Despite an intensive search of the South Valley and The Rocks areas there were no signs of Superb Parrots and there was no activity at the site where birds had been seen entering a hollow in November.

Mulligan's Flat

During a visit to the 'Big Dam' area on 23 November for one hour period from 8:20am no Superb Parrots were observed. On 5 December during the COG Woodland Survey of Mulligan's Flat over a 1 ½ hour period from 7.50am there were no signs of breeding and the only Parrots seen were of a group of eight flying overhead in a north-east-east direction. No other observers recorded any Superb Parrots except for a single bird flying west to east over Mulligan's Flat.

Moncrieff

During a visit on 26 November and again on 14 December, with a total of eight hours spent in the area, no Superb Parrots were detected. This is similar to the previous year when also no Superb Parrots were found.

Kenny

In four visits to the general area only one Superb Parrot was observed. The bird was heard on 11 December in the general area of S 35^{o} 13' 10" E 149 ^{o} 10' 00". An examination of the area did not locate the bird which may well have been passing through. These observations support those collected in 2009-10 and confirms that breeding within the surveyed area of Kenny is unlikely.

Harrison School Secondary Campus

During the COG survey on 20 November a team of observers walked the Gungaderra Creek from Horse Park Drive to the Harrison School construction site via the Heritage Lane and no Superb Parrots were reported.

Initial observations by the Site Manager suggested that Superb Parrots had been observed visiting the tree at S 35^{o} 12' 3.24" E 149 ^{o} 9' 11.13" during the period September-October 2010 where breeding had been reported in previous years. Subsequent events indicate that these observations by the Site Manager may well have been of Red-rumped Parrots (*Psephotus haematonotus*). There is no doubt though that Superb Parrots were flying into and out of the wooded area on the school grounds. During a morning visit on 24 November over a period of 1 ½ hours a single bird was observed entering the woodland copse and another heard in the general area about 10 minutes latter. A walk up and down the Heritage Lane revealed no signs of activity.

During a second visit to the area on 3 December over a two hour period starting 7.30 am, singles and pairs of a total of nine birds was observed flying to the copse from the area of the Franklin Woods and then departing across Harrison to the general area of 'Throsby Ridge'. A total of 13 birds were recorded flying in the opposite direction and again landing in the copse. No birds were seen on walking the Heritage Lane.

During a visit on 9 December starting at 8.15 am for 45 minutes, three Superb parrots were seen flying from 'Throsby Ridge' to the copse , one was observed leaving the copse heading towards Franklin Woods whilst eight birds were seen flying from the Franklin Woods into the copse and then on to the 'Throsby Ridge'.

Throsby

North Throsby. In 2010, there were no signs of breeding activity within the North Throsby area in contrast to signs of breeding activity in three trees in 2009 (see Davey 2010, 2010a). However, there was much Superb Parrot activity in the general area with birds regularly seen flying back and forth from the 'Big Dam' area in Mulligan's Flat through the 'Throsby Neck' area and on to Dunnarts Flat in Goorooyarroo and again back and forth from the 'Big Dam' area through the copse and on to 'Throsby Ridge'. In contrast to 2009, there were no signs of birds flying from the North Throsby area along Gungaderra Creek and into Harrison.

On 17 November over a 3 ½ hour period from 6.15am a total of 11 birds were seen as individuals or pairs flying over the wooded area. No signs of breeding activity were observed.

On 25 November over a 4 hour period from 6.00am a single male on station was disturbed from a tree next to the Goorooyarroo boundary fence at 35^{o} 10' 40.6" 149 ^{o} 10' 30.8". On climbing through the fence into the Reserve, a second male was disturbed from a tree at 35^{o} 10' 43.6" 149^{o} 10' 35.0", and was most reluctant to leave. The male eventually flew to a nearby tree where it remained.

On 15 December over a 3 1/4 hour period from 6.50am a total of 14 birds in singles or as pairs were recorded in trees and/or flying back and forth between the 'Big Dam' and Dunnarts Flat or between the 'Big Dam' and 'Throsby Ridge'. At the site of 35^{o} 10' 43.6" 149^{o} 10' 35.0", an adult pair was observed feeding two young with very short tails and just able to fly. This tree was most likely the breeding site.

South Throsby. On 16 November over a 3 ½ hour period from 6.20am, a total of 10 individuals were seen in the area with individuals flying into or reluctant to leave five trees (see Table 3). Individual birds were either disturbed and then flew a short distance reluctant to leave or individuals flew in, landed in a tree and again were reluctant to leave. All activity was confined to the 'Throsby Ridge' area.

On 18 November over a period of 3 ½ hours from 6.20am nine birds were recorded in the general area flying into or out of Harrison. Birds were interested in three trees. In one case a male was seen entering and leaving a hollow, in a second case a male flew in, entered a hollow, a female appeared from the same hollow flew off and quickly returned and in the third case a pair was most reluctant to leave. As with the previous visit to the area all activity was confined to the 'Throsby Ridge' area.

On 12 December over a 3 ½ hour period starting 6.30am again all activity was concentrated around the 'Throsby Ridge' area. A total of 22 individuals were present, some with young, with about 12 birds seen at any one time. Some birds were passing through, others had young and at least two pairs were likely to have nest sites as they were most reluctant to leave the area.

On 22 December there was much activity in the area of 'Throsby Ridge'. From 7.50am for a period of two hours approximately 8-10 pairs, some feeding young, were observed. Pairs were reluctant to move from three trees containing hollows. In one tree, where a pair had been observed entering a hollow on 18 November, a female arrived and disappeared into a hollow, whilst in a second tree a pair that had been observed leaving a tree on 18 November, was now feeding newly emerged young in the same tree. At a third tree a pair was sitting quietly next to a hollow, they then

aggressively chased off a nearby pair and returned to the tree.

Birds were still present during the tree survey conducted on 4 January 2011 with an estimated 15-20 birds with young not specifically associated with any tree but feeding in the canopy within the general area. On 6 January, whilst finalizing the tree survey and despite being in the area for 2 ¼ hours, no Superb Parrots were seen or heard.

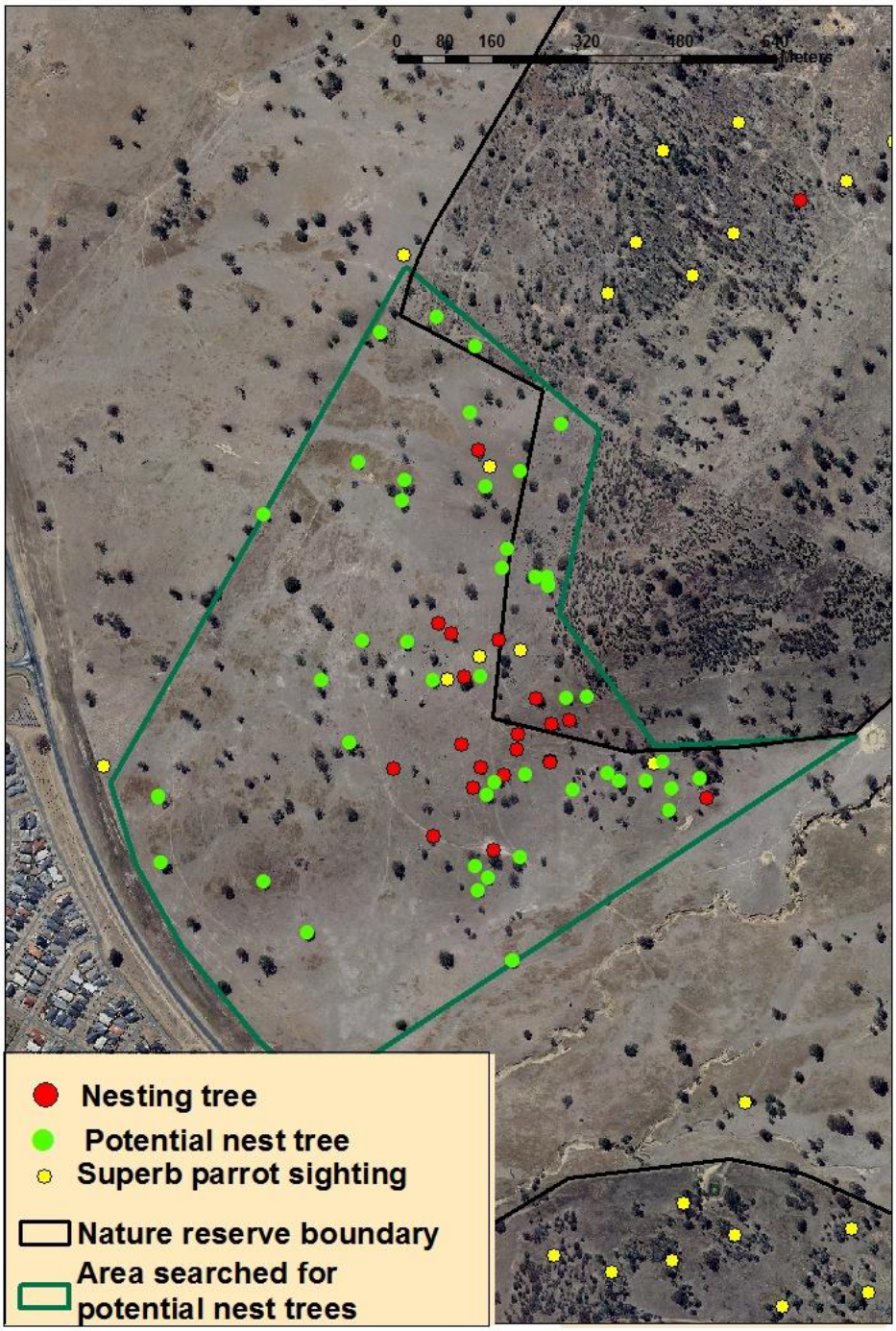

Figure 3. 'Throsby Ridge' showing potential Superb Parrot nesting trees and trees that probably contained nesting hollow during the 2009-10 and 2010-11 breeding seasons.

Table 3. Possible nest sites of Superb Parrots in South Throsby.

Date	Time	Lat. Deg. Min. Sec.	Long. Deg. Min. Sec	Behaviour
16 Nov. 10	8:36	35 11 39.7	149 10 0.87	Male interested in tree, photo taken
16 Nov. 10	9:02	35 11 44.9	149 10 0.58	Male interested in tree, photo taken
16 Nov. 10	9:07	35 11 45.7	149 10 11.2	Male interested in tree, photo taken
16 Nov. 10		35 11 44.7	149 10 11.7	Male interested in tree, photo taken
16 Nov. 10	9:16	35 11 43.3	149 10 10.4	Male interested in tree, photo taken
18 Nov. 10	8:50	35 11 41.9	149 10 17.9	Male into hollow
18 Nov. 10	9:16	35 11 44.0	149 10 16.3	Male into and female out of hollow
18 Nov. 10	9:29	35 11 43.6	149 10 14.0	Pair fly out of tree, photo
12 Dec. 10		35 11 45.0	149 10 13.4	Pair sit quietly in tree
12 Dec. 10	7:40	35 11 37.5	149 10 9.60	Female not wanting to leave tree, male nearby
22 Dec. 10	8:34	35 11 44.0	149 10 16.3	Female flies into tree and disappears
22 Dec. 10	8:42	35 11 43.5	149 10 14.0	Pair feeding young just outside hollow
22 Dec. 10	9:21	35 11 46.1	149 10 26.9	Pair drive off another pair, return to sit quietly

3.2 *Potential Superb Parrot nesting sites on 'Throsby Ridge'*

With the additional tree survey conducted in January 2011 at 'Throsby Ridge', all trees on the Ridge had been assessed for diameter at breast height (DBH), height to first main branch, tree species and number of hollows of varying size (see Davey (2010) for details of Methods). In addition, the all trees with a DBH > 30 cm were located off Google Earth and a geo-location recorded.

Manning et al. (2004) investigated the nest tree requirements for the Superb Parrot. After modeling the various measured attributes they concluded that the best predictor for Superb Parrot nest hollows was DBH, Blakely's Red Gum and Dead Trees and Tree Condition; the latter attribute was not recorded in the present survey.

Taking the 25% quartile as 90 cm, (see Figure 2, Manning et al. 2004), 75% of nests were found in trees with a DBH greater than 90 cm. Excluding multi-stemmed trees, there were 67 trees with a DBH of greater than 90 cm and with at least one hollow of more than 5 cm diameter at 'Throsby Ridge' (see Fig. 3).

Within the 'Throsby Ridge' area observations obtained during the 2009-10 and the 2010-11 breeding season identified 19 trees as likely to have been used as nesting sites by Superb Parrots. Of these, one tree appeared to have been used in both seasons. All but one had a DBH of greater than 90 cm (see Fig. 4), so falling within the range predicted by Manning et al. (2004). The number of hollows of greater than 5 cm in diameter in any one tree varied between one and four (see Fig. 5).

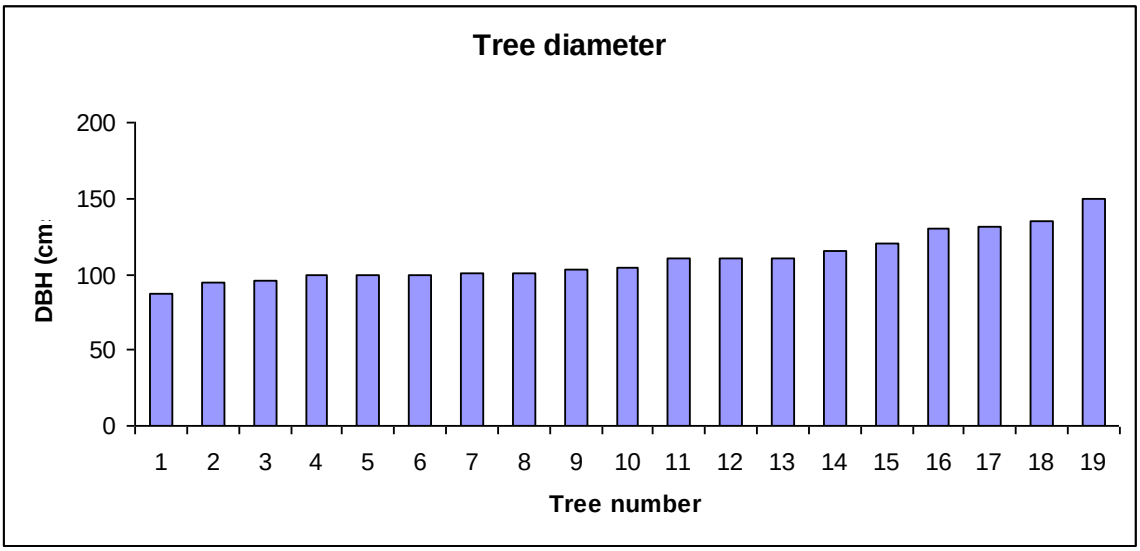

Figure 4. Diameter of nineteen trees identified as possible Superb Parrot nest sites at 'Throsby Ridge'.

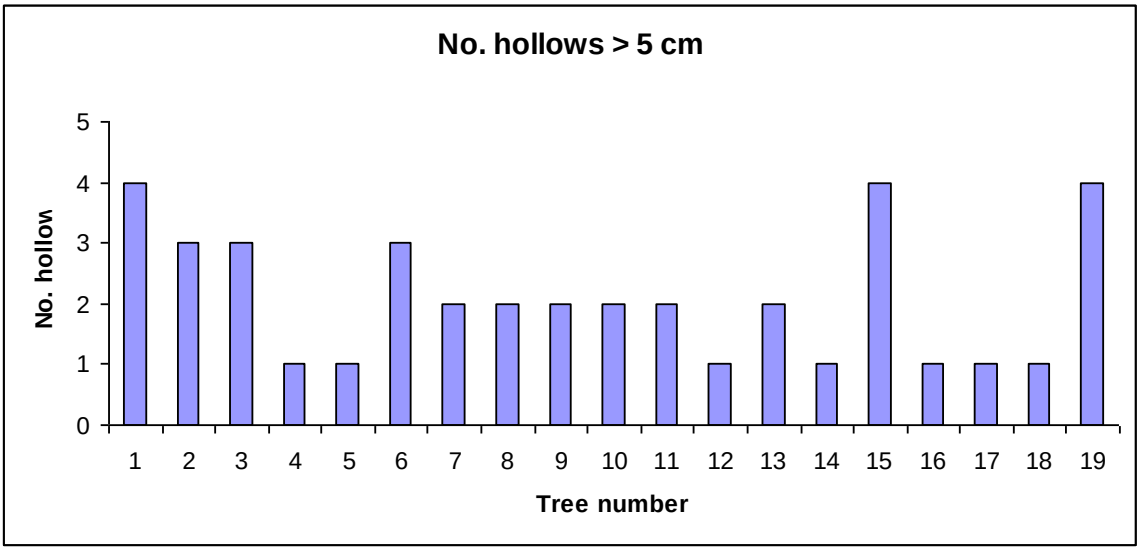

Figure 5. Number of hollows with a diameter greater than 5 cm from 19 trees identified as possible Superb Parrot nest sites at 'Throsby Ridge'.

3.3 *Other threatened bird species*

In addition to the Superb Parrot, there were two other threatened bird species recorded during the 2010-11 survey. The Varied Sittella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*) was located at three sites whilst the Brown Treecreeper (*Climacteris picumnus*) was reported from two sites on two occasions. One bird was a translocated banded bird released into Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve (see Table 4).

The ACT Flora and Fauna Committee lists the Crested Shrike-tit (*Falcunculus frontatus*) and the Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*) on a watching brief of species described with 'insufficiently known' status. The species are suspected to be endangered or vulnerable but there is inadequate information to make an assessment of risk based on distribution, population status or other attributes.

Table 4. Observations of the Varied Sittella, Brown Treecreeper, Crested Shrike-tit and Diamond Firetail during the 2010-11 Superb Parrot survey.

Species	Date	Abundance	Lat. Deg. Min. Sec.	Long. Deg. Min. Sec	Behaviour
Varied Sittella	20 Nov. 10	2	35 10 39.0	149 11 16.0	Nest building
Varied Sittella	9 Dec. 10	6	35 12 50.6	149 9 1.04	4 adult, 2 dep. young
Varied Sittella	11 Dec. 10	3	35 10 57.0	149 11 12.0	2 adult, 1 dep. young
Brown Treecreeper	24 Nov. 10	1	35 12 45.1	149 8 57.7	Banded bird
Brown Treecreeper	26 Nov. 10	1	35 9 11.11	149 7 32.0	
Brown Treecreeper	9 Dec. 10	1	35 12 45.1	149 8 57.7	Banded bird
Brown Treecreeper	14 Dec. 10	1	35 9 11.11	149 7 32.0	
Crested Shrike-tit	11 Dec. 10	1	35 11 12.0	149 11 10.0	
Diamond Firetail	18 Nov. 10	1	35 11 42.25	149 10 36.81	

4. Discussion

Observations collected during the 2009-10 breeding season suggested that the Superb Parrot was widespread throughout the proposed suburb of Throsby with breeding occurring in an area between the 'Big Dam' at Mulligan's Flat and Dunnarts Flat, Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve and referred to here as 'Throsby Neck' and in an area referred to as 'Throsby Ridge', (Davey, 2010). The purpose of the 2010-11 survey was to confirm these observations and to compare with observations collected from within the adjacent lands in Mulligan's Flat and Goorooyarroo Nature Reserves.

General observation from members of COG suggest that, for reasons unknown, the Superb Parrot is much more frequently recorded within the Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve than within the Mulligan's Flat Reserve. These observations are supported by data

collected from the quarterly Woodland Survey conducted by COG over 24 sites at Mulligan's Flat and eighteen sites at Goorooyarroo in part to satisfy requirements of the ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy (ACT Government, 2004). These observations are further supported by observations collected by COG members for the Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University, collected once a year in October from 48 sites in Mulligan's and 48 sites in Goorooyarroo. In Mulligan's Flat, with the exception of the area around the 'Big Dam', most records were of birds flying through the area.

It would have been desirable to commence the 2010 surveys earlier in the Superb Parrot breeding season, in September/October, when birds would be more active around selected nesting areas/tees and early breeding signs can be detected. Due to the late start of the survey and the number of observers that would have been required to cover the entire Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve it was decided that the survey would concentrate on those areas where Superb Parrots had been observed during the ANU surveys conducted in October 2009 and October 2010. Observations collected by COG members for the Woodland Survey conducted at a similar time of the year since 1998 confirmed the observations collected by the ANU surveys.

The 2010-11 survey confirmed the observations of the previous year with the Superb Parrot again not being recorded in the proposed suburbs of Moncrieff or Kenny, although in both areas the threatened Brown Treecreeper was reported. The Superb Parrot was again present in the proposed suburb of Throsby, particularly in the 'Throsby Neck' and the 'Throsby Ridge' areas, throughout the survey period.

In 2010-11 signs of breeding were not observed at either the 'Big Dam' or at 'Throsby Neck'. In addition, there were no confirmed signs of breeding at the Harrison School site or along the Gungaderra Creek in Harrison.

There is a general lack of knowledge concerning the nesting habits of the Superb Parrot. No work has been conducted on banded birds so it is unknown whether pairs return to breed in the same hollow as the previous year or whether a failed attempt early in the season will lead to an abandonment of the site or the relaying of a second clutch. It is unknown whether pairs breed each year or return to the same area and the breeding success is unknown. It is therefore not possible to determine the reasons for the lack of breeding at sites where breeding had been observed the previous year.

From the observations collected in 2010-11 it is possible to say that the 'Throsby Ridge' is a most favoured breeding site and that no other such area existed within the surveyed area of Mulligan's Flat or Goorooyarroo Nature Reserves.

Where resources allow, Superb Parrots will breed in close proximity to each other. This appears to have been the case at 'Throsby Ridge' where old *Eucalyptus rossii* and *E. blakelyi* provide an abundance of hollows, many of which appear to be suitable for Superb Parrot breeding.

The association between disturbance and nesting success in eucalypt woodlands similar to that found in the ACT has not been examined. In the Riverina it is recommended that no logging occurs within 100 m of nesting trees within the Barmah and Millewa State Forests (R. Webster *pers. comm.*). Given the known area for nesting and the location of

potential nesting sites along 'Throsby Ridge' it is suggested that the entire Ridge area from the western edge of the Goorooyarroo Reserve to Horse Park Drive be set aside as an extension of the Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve. In addition, the 'Throsby Neck' area situated between the 'Big Dam' and Dunnarts Flat should be set aside as an area where breeding occurred in 2009-10 and as a very important movement link between known breeding sites at the 'Big Dam' and at Dunnarts Flat.

It is unfortunate that observations were not collected during September-October at the Harrison School site. The observations collected later in the season could not confirm whether birds intended to breed earlier in the area but were deterred by construction activity. There were no signs of breeding during November-December but there was no doubt that the construction activity appears to have had little effect on the birds using the area as a feeding site or as a stop-over between the 'Throsby Ridge' area and the suburbs of Harrison and Franklin and beyond.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thanks Sharon Lane (Manager, Research and Planning, Dept of Territories and Municipal Services) for discussions that led to the survey and to Dr. Michael Mulvaney (Research and Planning, Dept of Territories and Municipal Services) for his role as Liaison Officer between TAMS and COG and for his assistance in map preparation. I would like to thank Alan Pattinson (Horse Park) and Frank Kaveney for allowing access to their land.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the 15 members of the Canberra Ornithologists Group for participating in the bird surveys.

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NOTE

LITTLE EAGLES, WHISTLING KITES AND SWAMP HARRIERS IN THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY 2010

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Abstract. In 2010 we surveyed Little Eagle, Whistling Kite and Swamp Harrier territories in the Australian Capital Territory by searching former territories and soliciting reports from COG members and ACT Parks, Conservation and Lands personnel. We found two successful Little Eagle nests -Uriarra East, and Dunlop. Each pair fledged one young. We found no Whistling Kites or Swamp Harriers breeding. We recommend that the Whistling Kites and Swamp Harriers be listed as Vulnerable in the ACT. We also recommend that Pindone and other chemicals used to control rabbits in the ACT be investigated as possible causes of declines in these raptor species.

Introduction

In previous reports (Olsen & Fuentes 2005, Olsen & Osgood 2006, Olsen et al. 2007, 2008, 2010 Debus and Ley 2009) the collapse of breeding Little Eagles *Hieraaetus morphnoides* in the ACT was discussed. Since then we have also noted a decline in breeding pairs of Wedge-tailed Eagles *Aquila audax*, Whistling Kites *Haliastur sphenurus* and Swamp Harriers *Circus approximans*. Our aims in the current study were the same is in Olsen *et al*. 2010.

Methods

See Olsen *et al*. 2010.

Results

Little Eagles

The nest at Dunlop (Roger Curnow pers comm.) had one young. The Black Mountain nest was abandoned and a dead Little Eagle was found in November 2010 along Lady Denman Drive (David Mallinson pers comm.) that was misidentified on a COG network as a dead Powerful Owl. The nest at Uriarra East (Bill Mannan and Felicity Hatton), believed to be an alternative nest of the Pegasus pair, had one young. The pair at Lions Youth Haven in Kambah was not present (Nick Webb). The total then, for 2010, was two young fledged from two territories, lower than the productivity for 11 territories in the early 1990's (see Olsen 1992), and lower than the four young from three territories in 2009.

Whistling Kites

Previously at least three pairs of Whistling Kites bred in the ACT, around Pialligo and Duntroon. We found no active nests in 2010.

Swamp Harriers

Previously Swamp Harriers had bred at Mitchell, Jerobomberra Wetlands and in the Orroral Valley (Olsen 1992, and unpublished). In 2009 Oliver Orgill found one breeding pair at Gudgenby. None bred there in 2010.

Discussion and Conclusions

Wedge-tailed Eagles are iconic, flagship species used by conservationists to focus public attention on wildlife causes. They have generated considerable interest and many publications in Australia since the early 1960's. But sometimes other species can decline un-noticed, while flagship species receive all the attention. This has happened in the ACT with The Little Eagles, Whistling Kites and Swamp Harriers. These three species continue to decline in the ACT.

In 2011 we made recommendations to the ACT Government for a Little Eagle Action Plan. These include: retain woodland, begin radio-tracking studies of Little Eagle to determine home range size and habitat use, and investigate the chemicals Pindone (2-pivalyl, 3-indandione) and '1080' (sodium fluoroacetate) used to poison rabbits in the ACT. At higher doses, Pindone is fatal to raptors, or disables them for a time, which can be fatal if the raptor is incapacitated and cannot forage or evade predators.

We will continue this survey in the 2011 season.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to COG members, especially Con Boekel, Steve Holliday, Chris Davey, Barbara Allan, Michael Lenz, Roger Curnow, Rod Mackay and Graeme Clifton. Thanks also to Oliver Orgill, Nick Webb, and John McRae who passed along Little Eagle and Swamp Harrier sightings for the survey and Christie Gould, David Shorthouse, Murray Evans, Bernard Morris, Brett McNamara, Tony Bell, Mark Rodden, Marty Gardner, Trish D'Abrera, Monica Muranyi, Paul Higginbotham, Kate Boyd, Meg Doepel and Darren Roso, and to the New South Wales Parks and Wildlife Service especially Luke Bond and Greg Hayes. Sue Trost and Les Boyd gave invaluable assistance in the field; Stephen Debus and McComas Taylor gave much appreciated advice.

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Little Eagle *(Stuart Harris)*

Whistling Kite *(Harvey Perkins)*

Swamp Harrier *(Stuart Harris)*

ODD OBS

Australian Owlet-nightjar taken by Australian Raven

On Monday 22nd August 2011 I was taking a lunch time walk on the eastern side of Lake Tuggeranong, south of the foot bridge near Drakeford Drive, when I was alerted to an odd occurrence by the sight of some larger birds (possibly ravens or currawongs, or both) pursuing a smaller brown bird. The bird being pursued dived sharply to the ground, in amongst the fallen bark at the base of a eucalypt. The pursuing birds alighted in a branch above. The commotion also drew the attention of about five White-winged Choughs, which were on the ground nearby. The White-winged Choughs approached the tree and the pile of fallen bark in which the bird was hiding, and made lots of noise, as well as puffing up and spreading their wings. While acting very aggressively the Choughs did not attack the bird. After a short time the White-winged Choughs ceased their interest in the brown bird and resumed their ground activity and I was able to move in and get a closer look at the bird. I was still unsure which species it was and I initially thought that it may have been killed, but I was then able to make out a blinking eye indicating that it was still alive. The birds in the branches above did not appear to want to engage with the bird on the ground, possibly because of myself or the choughs. I then moved further away and continued to observe. The brown bird on the ground then took off and was immediately pursued by an Australian Raven and the White-winged Choughs into the upper parts of nearby trees. A couple of magpies and currawongs also joined in the chase. The next thing I saw was the brown bird flying away from the cover of the trees, in the direction of the lake, with a single Australian Raven in pursuit. Both were zigzagging in flight until the raven caught the brown bird in its feet. The raven flew to the foot bridge across Lake Tuggeranong and landed. A group of three pedestrians were walking across the bridge and caused the raven to drop the brown bird on the bridge. I was then able to get a photo of the bird (shown below). The bird appeared as though it may have been injured, as it lay relatively motionless on the bridge. The raven remained some distance away watching, having been scared off by the pedestrians and myself. The small brown bird remained on the bridge for a short time and then was able to resume flight again. The Australian Raven again pursued the small brown bird and caught the bird in its feet and flew towards Drakeford Drive, with an Australian Magpie following. At this point I lost sight of the involved birds. At the time of the event I was unsure of the species of the attacked bird, but later comparisons of my photograph with the illustrations in my ACT field guide indicated that it was an Australian Owlet-nightjar *Aegotheles cristatus*.

In relation to the known behaviour of this species, HANZAB reports that "one, in Tas., chased and killed by Grey Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus* (North)."

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Tawny Frogmouths and Pied Currawong nesting at Carwoola 2011

A pair of Tawny Frogmouths (*Podagus strigoides*) have again nested at our property in Carwoola. The most significant change to past breeding events by this species at the site has been the nest site being moved approximately 50m West. In both cases the site was in a fork in a large Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus meliodora*) and approximately 5m above the ground.

The timing of the breeding cycle was similar to past years.

	2008	2009	2010	2011
On nest	~2-Oct	5-Sep	2-Sep	7-Sep
Hatch behaviour	?	?	1-Oct	7-Oct
Hatch visible evidence	6-Nov	18-Oct	4-Oct	15-Oct
Nest empty	27-Nov	5-Nov	4-Nov	5-Nov
Total period	56	61	63	61

The term "Hatch behaviour" refers to the roosting male being very restless, constantly stirring on the nest, rather than being almost static for the entire day. "Hatch visible evidence" refers to the first sighting of a chick (2008 -10) or eggshells in the nest fabric (2011)

In each of these years a pair of Pied Currawongs (*Strepera graculina*) have also nested in the original Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus meliodora*) used by the Frogmouths.

While the two species shared the tree (2008 – 2010) they largely ignored each other: on occasion a Currawong would swoop the Frogmouth but not with real intention. The same could not be said of the Currawong's reaction to the author, who was swooped any time he walked across the lawn underneath the nest tree.

Following the move of the Frogmouth nest the author was not swooped at all by the Currawongs. It is unclear whether this is linked to the move of the Frogmouth nest or merely coincidence. The Currawongs did still defend their 'turf' from other birds seen as a threat, including

- flying past the Frogmouth's nest to drive off a White-faced heron (*Egretta novaehollandiae*) perched in a tree some 20m past the Frogmouths nest; and
- joining in mobbing a Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*) which overflew the site.

There continued to be very little interaction between the frogmouths and the currawongs. On one occasion when the frogmouth chicks were well grown a currawong perched near, but below, the frogmouth nest which caused a burst of "ooming" from the female frogmouth perched in a nearby tree. The male frogmouth and the visible chicks all adopted the dead stick pose.

On 2 November 2011 a Noisy Friarbird (*Philemon corniculatus*) perched in the frogmouths' nest tree approximately 3m from the nest and called loudly. The male frogmouth ignored this intruder but one of the chicks reacted by drawing itself up to full height and making a loud clicking noise. The friarbird left hurriedly.

Strong winds on 10 November, 3 days after the frogmouth chicks fledged, blew one chick to the ground. Despite efforts by the author to persuade it to roost in a tree (away from snakes and foxes) it refused to do so and eventually hid in a place unknown. On 11 November it was back with the rest of the group: presumably fed overnight and encouraged to fly back by the parents.

As at the date of writing (24 November 2011) the frogmouth family has moved from the vicinity of the nest site and has not

been located for 3 days. This is usual behaviour interpreted by me as teaching the juveniles how to survive in a larger area. The currawongs are still feeding the (very vocal) chicks in the nest.

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Little Eagle takes Pied Currawong

On 9.2.2010 at 09.35h a Little Eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides* struck a large bird and flew with it a few metres horizontally into a tall eucalypt. The tree was about 150m NE of the power substation in Gilmore. A closer view of the prey revealed it to be a Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina*. It hung upside down, flapped, called and poked upwards with its bill. The eagle held it for 17 minutes jostling, resting and sometimes calling. From 09.53h till 10.00h it plucked occasionally just a few small feathers from the currawong. In this time the eagle held its wings up and realigned the prey. The currawong's call became weaker. A Red Wattlebird *Anthocaera carunculata*, White-plumed Honeyeater *Lichstemostomus pencillatus* and Willie Wagtail *Riphidura leucophrys* approached but did not harass.

At 10.00h I moved from the East side to the West for a better view. Both birds had ceased calling by then. The colour of the eagle's flank was a rich orange, indicating a first year light morph. I left at 10.15h. A week later I returned to the site and found some small body feathers under the tree. A search under another large eucalypt about 60 metres NE, revealed that the prey had been consumed there with Pied Currawong body, wing and tail feathers present. That tree would have provided better cover for the eagle.

Why did the Little Eagle take so long to start eating? Was it allowing the prey to stress and exhaust itself? Had it bitten off more than it could chew?

HANZAB (Marchant and Higgins 1993) indicates that the diet of Little Eagles consists mostly of rabbits where they occur and other live vertebrates. In the Northern Territory and the Kimberley, W.A., where rabbits are absent, predominantly birds (77%) are taken. Little Eagles can kill prey >1.6 kg and carry 500g. Large birds like Australian Raven *C. coroniodes* and Australian Magpie *Gymnorhyna tibicen* have been reported as prey, but there was no record of a Pied Currawong.

In a study of food and hunting of eight breeding raptors near Canberra from 1990-1994 Olsen et al. (2006) recorded the Pied Currawong only once as prey (for the Peregrine Falcon). But a more recent investigation by Olsen et al. (2010) of the diets of Wedge-tailed Eagles *Aquila audax* and Little Eagles breeding near Canberra found a number of Currawong spp. as prey: 10 for the Wedge-tailed Eagle and 2 for the Little Eagle. Both eagles consumed birds, but Little Eagles consumed a greater portion of smaller birds such as Rosellas *Platycercus spp*., Magpie-larks *Grallina cyanoleuca* and European Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris*, while Wedge-tailed Eagles took larger species, and this could even include the Little Eagle as the carcass of an adult in a Wedge-tailed Eagle nest indicated (Olsen et al. 2006).. Olsen et al. (2010) thought it unlikely that competition for the same prey by both eagle species was a cause for the decline of the Little Eagle in the ACT.

The ecology, including the diet of the Little Eagle is poorly known. From the data available it was more likely that Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* and Australian Hobbies *F. longipennis* may be in competition with the Little Eagle (Olsen et al. 2010). My observations of Little Eagles

in eastern Tuggeranong over the last 25 years indicate that Australian Magpies often harass them and hunting is made difficult at times.

One month earlier on 13.1.2010 a juvenile Little Eagle flew in from the North just above the shrubs beside our house on the West side. Reaching the front of the house it turned left and skimmed the shrubs and trees along the South side then turned right and moved through the suburb still flying low towards Tuggeranong Hill. This is the only time I have seen a Little Eagle so close to houses in our suburb. At other times they are seen up high or patrolling grasslands and horse paddocks. Have there been other reports of Little Eagles patrolling at low level in the suburbs?

Traditionally Little Eagles nested along the railway lines to the East of Gilmore and Chisholm (J.Olsen pers. comm.). In spring 2006 they nested on Tuggeranong Hill and fledged one young. Prey under the tree included Magpie Lark, Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius*, Rabbit kitten and Starling.

Acknowlegements

I would like to thank Jerry Olsen for providing references, support and local knowledge of Little Eagles in Tuggeranong, and Sue Trost for finding old data on the Tuggeranong Hill Little Eagles. Stephen Debus provided comments and pointed out flight patterns which will help me diagnose raptor behaviour in the future.

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A horde of Black-shouldered Kites

Early in August 2011 a single Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus axillaris*) [BSK] was sighted on our 16 hectare property in Carwoola (approximate centre point 35^0 23' 51" S, 149^0 22' 49" E). This had been the first observation of the species here since June 2007.

On 16 September while working at the lower (eastern) end of the property I was joined by two BSK. Within minutes, the party had surprisingly grown to six birds, including one immature. They stayed nearby, perched either in the dead limbs of a Snow Gum (*E. pauciflora*) or circling low overhead for the three hours I remained at the site. This party was regularly observed around the property over ensuing days.

Then, out of the blue, an eruption of sorts occurred and in the early evening of 29 September a group of 14 BSK was sighted perched together in a single Broad-leaved Peppermint tree (*E. dives*). This extraordinary sight was photographed from a distance.

A nearby neighbour and ardent COG contributor, Martin Butterfield, aptly named the sighting "A Horde of Black-shouldered Kites".

Over subsequent weeks this large group of birds typically "hawked" over our paddocks (predominantly native grassland) during the day before taking up stations late in the afternoon high in the dead branches of trees

spread along a ridge line about 400 metres long. Around dusk they would leave to resume their feeding activity in and around the immediate vicinity of our property. A number of observations of birds carrying prey clearly indicated that the principal food source was mice, the presence of which was also evidenced by large numbers of this pest present in and around our residence.

On 30 October, just when I was expecting that the birds would begin to move on, a group of 16 BSK was observed perched together in the same tree as that where 14 birds were counted on 29 September. This number grew to 20 with another extraordinary observation on 5 November. On this same day, eight Brown Falcons (*Falco berigora*) were observed on the nearby Hoskinstown Plain almost certainly feeding on mice. Interestingly, only one BSK was observed in the vicinity of this group of falcons and none of this latter species was being observed on our property. Had the birds come to an accommodation of sorts on the sharing of the spoils?

The heavy presence of the species continued with an observation of 11 BSK on 14 November. But then, almost as quickly as the spectacle had begun, the birds began to disperse. On 15 November, just three BSK were present here with another three being sighted on the Hoskinstown Plain. Three BSK remained on our property until 21 November before numbers finally declined to one bird over the following fortnight and then none. The last sighting occurred on 5 December, almost 11 weeks after the eruption began.

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Unsuccessful nesting of White-faced Herons in Campbell Park in 2011

On 27 August 2011, two White-faced Herons *Ardea novaehollandiae* were seen perched near last year's nest (see Compston 2011) in a tree adjacent to the car park at Campbell Park.

On 3 October, an adult bird was seen again, this time it was sitting on the nest. It was photographed by Robin Eckerman.

On 16 October, we found eggshells under the nest. Presumably the chicks hatched, just before or on that day. I have the eggshells.

On 23 October, Lindell Emerton photographed two small chicks, perched on the edge of the nest. There were no reports of the chicks being seen again.

Although we do not know exactly when the eggs were laid, we do know when the chicks hatched, on 16 October. The previous year, egg shells were found under the nest on 27 December. Presumably the chicks had hatched about that day.

So, this year, the White-faced Herons nested 10 weeks earlier than in 2010. Unfortunately, this year, 2011, they did not survive.

Reference

Compston, E. (2011). White-faced Herons nesting in Campbell Park 2010—2011, *Canberra Bird Notes* 36: 123-125.

Elizabeth Compston

Swamp Harrier attacking Eurasian Coot

Whilst surveying waterbirds at the Morass (Lake Bathurst) on 31 August 2011, I noticed an adult Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans* 'sitting' on the water in the middle of the ephemeral lake. After 15-20 seconds the bird tried to raise itself off the water, failed and sat back down. It repeated this exercise several times and was observed to be grasping a medium-sized, dark waterbird; clearly the weight of this waterbird was restricting the harrier from taking off. Several Silver Gulls *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae* now proceeded to mob the Swamp Harrier and it was forced to let go of the prey item and then easily took off from the lake's surface. The Swamp Harrier circled the area with the gulls in close pursuit before alighting again on the listless waterbird and submerging it for a further 30 seconds. Again the Swamp Harrier tried and failed to take off with the heavy load. The Silver Gulls, now joined by several Masked Lapwings *Vanellus miles*, started to dive at and swoop the Swamp Harrier and they drove it from the catch for a second time. They continued to chase and harass the Swamp Harrier until it moved to the far end of the Morass and landed amongst the tall grasses. The apparently dead waterbird continued to bob on the water surface for several minutes before raising its head, shaking itself off and swimming away; it was an adult Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra.* It soon rejoined a small, loose group of Eurasian Coot and proceeded to vigorously preen and shake itself

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COLUMNISTS' CORNER

Waders:
Canberra's long-distance visitors

As a label for a group of birds, neither 'waders' nor 'shorebirds' is completely apt. Both terms are used in Australia, and refer to the same thing, perhaps confusingly. A well-known guide to the group (1986) was titled *Shorebirds: An identification guide to the waders of the world*.

In the foreword to that book, Roger Tory Peterson wrote: 'Two hundred and fourteen species of waders or shorebirds swarm over the beaches, marshes, mudflats, plains and tundras of the world'. About 80 of those 210 are on the Australian list.

The waders that attract most interest (perhaps 'passion' is a better word when it comes to the true wader enthusiast) are the long-distance migrants that breed in the northern hemisphere and head south for the southern summer. Excluding the significant number designated as 'vagrants', there are 35 species in that category on the Australian list.

This column looks at the occurrence of those migrants in the Canberra area. First, though, note two considerations. The number of individuals present in Australia varies greatly from species to species. At Werribee, the main wader haunt in south-eastern Australia, three species are classified as 'abundant', meaning there will be more than 1000 individuals at the peak time. However, no migrant waders are in the next category ('common'), meaning that those not 'abundant' are either 'uncommon' (less than 100 – e.g. Bar-tailed Godwit) or 'rare' (less than 10 – e.g. Whimbrel).
(The 'abundant' species are Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, and Red-necked Stint.)

The second consideration is that the main wader sites in the broader Canberra area are outside the ACT at certain wetlands, really watery depressions, to the east and north-east: Lake George, Lake Bathurst, and Rose Lagoon, and associated wet places. Whether or not one applies the term 'ephemeral' to those eastern wetlands, conditions at them vary greatly according to the rainfall cycle. This is typical of sites in inland Australia.

Any discussion of local occurrence must begin with Steve Wilson's *Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change* (1999), based on records up to 1995. The list therein gives the following:
'Common': Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
'Uncommon': Latham's Snipe, Common Greenshank, Curlew Sandpiper
'Rare': Bar-tailed Godwit, Eastern Curlew, Marsh Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Red-necked Stint, Pectoral Sandpiper, Pacific Golden Plover .

The current ACT list, to be found through the COG website, maintains Wilson's assessments of occurrence and adds the following two species based on subsequent single records:
'Rare': Red Knot, Long-toed Stint.

Some further updates might be added to the records mentioned by Wilson: from 2001, high numbers of Latham's Snipe records in each year eg 45 in 2006-07; a single Common Sandpiper in each of 4 years; records at Jerrabomberra Wetlands of (single) - Marsh Sandpiper (in 3 years), Curlew Sandpiper (2), Red-necked Stint (3), Common Greenshank (2), Pectoral Sandpiper (1), Bar-tailed Godwit (1).

The annual report for 2010-11 is not available at the time of writing, but the following were recorded in Spring 2011 at

Fyshwick Sewage Ponds: 1 Red-necked Stint, 1 Pacific Golden Plover.

Beyond the ACT, what we know of waders in the eastern wetlands comes from regular surveys conducted by Michael Lenz – described in each annual bird report (ABR) with results given under 'WBS'. Surveys at Lake George began in June 1979, although in later years reduced and less regular due to lack of water, but those at Lake Bathurst (begun September 1980) have been continuous.

Over the years, wader occurrence at the eastern wetlands has been extremely variable according to conditions. The report for 1995-1996 records 13 species of long-distance migrants at the eastern sites, including Buff-breasted Sandpiper, designated a vagrant on the Australian list. The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (about 5000 in December) and Red-necked Stint (over 1000 in January) were in numbers you might expect at Werribee. On the other hand, with those sites now mostly dry, only a handful of northern hemisphere waders have been recorded in recent years.

So, how can we usefully describe the occurrence of the long-range migrants in the Canberra area?

This raises the uneasy issue of COG's twin focus on (a) ACT birds and (b) birds of the broader area of interest (AOI).

To start with, there is no definitive list of species for the AOI. The ABR does not serve that purpose. The ABR for 2009-10 covers the whole AOI, as usual. It lists species recorded in that year *and* those for which there was no year record, in some cases no record for some years. However the list omits Great Knot and Ruff, both recorded in the ABR 1995-96 (a big year for waders in the local area). The list also omits Little Curlew which is shown in the equivalent 'not recorded' list for 2006-07. More puzzlingly, the list along with previous ABRs omits Wood Sandpiper, which is in the Wilson/ACT list – also missing is Eastern Curlew, which is perhaps less of an issue.

There is an occurrence notation ('uncommon' etc) for each species in both lists (Wilson/ACT and ABR). In the ACT list, does the notation refer only to the ACT or to the broader AOI? This is particularly significant for waders, whose appearance depends on suitable habitat, which is limited in the ACT.

(The occurrence notation in the ABR differs for some species from the notation in the Wilson/ACT list, given *second* in the following: Bar-tailed Godwit 'Vagrant'/ 'Rare'; Common Greenshank 'Rare'/'Uncommon'; Curlew Sandpiper 'Rare'/'Uncommon').

There is a more basic question: what do the notations mean? Do they reflect numbers (as for Werribee), frequency of appearances over time, or chances of seeing a species on a visit to suitable habitat at the right time of year? One sympathises with the need to provide a quick short label to help the casual observer, but the label should mean something.

For these waders in particular, there is the matter of *inferred* occurrence as distinct from *recorded* occurrence. This point is strikingly illustrated by a comparison of the record maps in *Shorebirds of Australia* (Geering and others, 2007) with the range maps in field guides, for example Simpson and Day (8th edition, 2010).

The following conclusions on wader occurrence are suggested.

For present purposes the AOI, including as it does the eastern wetlands, should be treated separately from the ACT. In the eastern depressions there are extreme variations in conditions, governing the appearance and numbers of all wader

species. Therefore the occurrence notations hand there are sufficient data, if anyone wishes to do so, to construct a simple table long period of surveying. It should be noted that the available data, valuable though they are, represent counts at particular sites rather than a search of the whole area where the relevant species might occur.

Photo: Red-necked Stint (left) and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers at the Fyshwick Sewage Ponds, October 2011 (Photograph by Geoffrey Dabb).

The following comments apply *to the ACT*. Latham's Snipe is a visitor that stays throughout the warmer months, frequenting marshy ground at various locations within the Canberra area. While it is sometimes visible at long range, it is mainly observed when flushed by the walker. It is common in the sense that it is present in small numbers every year and, during its seasonal presence, can be found at any time (given enough time) by persistent effort at suitable sites.

Other trans-equatorial migrants occur in the ACT in the warmer months in transit, more usually in Spring. However, suitable cannot be sensibly applied. On the other habitat for these is limited. Typically their stay is short, from overnight and early morning to a few days. Because of that, and of those migrants, the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper is by far the most-reported, singly or in small groups in most years.

At the next level, the following can be expected to be recorded as single birds perhaps once every two to five years on average: Red-necked Stint, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Curlew Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper.

The following are less likely but can be expected occasionally by reason of past ACT records or their recording in more favourable habitat within 50km of the ACT: Pacific Golden Plover, Red Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Wood Sandpiper. There have been single or historical records of the following: Eastern Curlew, Long-toed Stint.

In addition, the long-range migrants are known for making appearances at unexpected places remote from any previous records. The ACT is within the transit zone for several species in this group not so far recorded here. Any wader species could turn up here if our area is within its inferred range. However, true coastal species, such as Sanderling or Grey-tailed Tattler, would only be possible if storm-blown.

Stentoreus

Birding in Cyberspace, Canberra-style

Over the years this column has drawn attention to the impacts of new technologies on birding and birders. Whether or not you use a so-called 'smartphone', without doubt you are aware that hundreds of thousands of apps—applications—are now available for both Apple smartphones and those using other operating systems. While this is not a place to review those that are most relevant to Australian birding, it is worth recalling that among some of the more popular birding apps are as follows:

- The Morcombe e-Guide to Australian Birds http://www.michaelmorcombe.com.au/
- Birdsight Australia http://www.freshapps.com/birdsight-australia/
- Oz Shorebirds http://www.shorebirds.org.au/
- Australian Birds http://iniinspire.com/australian-birds/
- Field Guide to Victorian Fauna http://museumvictoria.com.au/about/mv-blog/mar-2011/field-guide-app-out-now/
- Birds of Australia http://orgalim.org/iphone/AUSTRALIA_BIRDS.html

If you are new to the world of smartphone apps, do not be confused if you do a web search and get thousands of hits concerned with 'Angry Birds'. This refers to a suite of games exceedingly popular with young children!

The apps that I listed, and others, largely fall into two categories: tools for identifying birds and tools for recording and transmitting bird observations. Some of the apps do both. If you have been on field trips with COG or any other birding organisation over the last 12 months or so, you have undoubtedly seen birders equipped with their iPhones or iPod Touches, using the Morcombe e-Guide to help identify birds, including listening to the bird calls that are included in the apps as an identification tool. That is fine, but what about those of us who also have loudspeakers attached to our digital devices, meaning that we can readily use them to attract birds by loudly playing their calls?

Over many years there have been discussions about using call playback. The general principle that we must not do anything that will adversely impact on the birds applies as much in this domain as in any other aspect of birding. My point, however, is that the ready availability, at an inexpensive price, of the calls of most Australian birds in apps such as the fine Morcombe e-Guide means that many more Australian birders (both novel and experienced) now have this resource to hand, and are therefore likely to be using it to attract birds. My concern is that many are not associated with birding organisations and therefore have not been sufficiently briefed on birding ethics in general and the potentially adverse consequences of using bird call playback in particular. I wonder, then, what role organisations like BirdLife Australia (www.birdsaustralia.com.au and www.birdlife.org.au) at the national level, and the Canberra Ornithologists Group regionally, might have in trying to protect wild native birds in the context of the more ready availability of call playback resources?

The strength of birding and bird tourism in Australia is highlighted by the continuing production of more and more bird routes brochures. COG has developed some useful products of this kind: http://canberrabirds.org.au/MapsFormsLists/MapsFormsLists.htm. In 2011 the website covering the Bird Trails of the Riverina and South-West Slopes of NSW was launched: http://www.riverinabirds.org.au/. It includes bird trail/bird routes information covering the many local government areas in the Riverina and south-west slopes and has been produced with support from local

government councils and the Environmental Trust of New South Wales. Other resources at that website include bird lists and the capacity to engage in discussion with other birders about the birds and birding in the area, including reporting sightings.

The ethics of using spotlights for night-time birding is a perennial discussion topic among birders and professional ornithologists. Some argue that the spotlight should never be used; others say it makes little or no difference. In some national parks spotlights are prohibited, in others a maximum global wattage is set by the authorities, whereas in others no restrictions are in place.

The matter was raised (yet again) on the national birding discussion list Birding-Aus in January this year. Somebody replied, in response to a question about do spotlights cause damage to birds eyes:
Probably the best answer is to have someone shine the spot into your eyes (after they have adjusted to the dark) from a distance of some 10 m. If you find it uncomfortable, there is a good chance that nocturnal birds or mammals will be similarly affected.

Murray Lord gave a different response, drawing attention to the professional opinion on the matter documented in 1997 on Birding-Aus by vision expert Professor Jack Pettigrew:
:\http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/birding-aus/1997-04/msg00006.html .

Pettigrew pointed out that bird retinas can tolerate the sun and that "…the sun produces a brighter image on the retina that is orders of magnitude brighter than that produced by a spotlight", meaning that it is unlikely that bird retinas will be permanently damaged by the use of the spotlight. He goes on to point out, however, that birds whose eyes have been exposed to spotlights are likely to be blind for the next hour and are therefore likely to be "out of action" for that time. This could impact on their feeding and care of young, for example, and also expose them to predation. Readers interested in this topic are encouraged to read Professor Pettigrew's full assessment. Noting that it was drafted in 1997, I am sure that the editor would be happy to receive any updated information on this topic that could constitute helpful guidance to those of us who enjoy night-time birding.

Have you caught up yet with the website xeno-canto Australasia: bird sounds from Australia and the Pacific http://www.xeno-canto.org/australasia/ ? It describes itself as
…the community database of shared bird sounds from Australasia and the Pacific. Search through the growing collection, identify or discuss unknown sounds and download freely. Do you like what you see? Share your recordings and knowledge.

The main menu items for exploring the collection of sounds are All species, Area checklist, Species overviews, Locations, Conservation, Wanted, Random and Statistics. At the time of writing, the site had sounds of 1,046 species that occur in Australasian and the Pacific which it points out is 10% of the 10,400 bird species globally. Clicking on the name of a species of interest takes you to a page that shows the number of recordings in which the bird's sounds are in the foreground or (separately) the background. The sounds are labelled as being calls, songs, songs and calls, alarms, other, and 'not mentioned'. For each sound, information is given about the person who made the recording, the date of recording, time, place and type of call, along with additional remarks. You can hear the calls online or download them as MP3 files. It also includes, for each species, a link to Avibase which gives the detailed taxonomy of the species, showing subspecies http://avibase.bsc-eoc.org/ . Although there are many repositories of bird calls on the web, the fact that this one aim

to develop a comprehensive collection of the sounds of the world's birds, and makes the sound files publicly available through a Creative Commons license, makes it of particular interest.

Just before Christmas 2011, Birding-Aus subscriber Brian Hawkins wrote to the list stating
I am running a couple of walks, dealing with poetry about birds, at the upcoming Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival (http://bellingenwritersfestival.com.au/). I have many poems already, but there must be thousands of good bird poems that I don't know about. So I was wondering what are your favourite bird poems?

Understandably, that precipitated a flurry of responses. Who does not have their own favourite bird poem? The first response came from someone who is particularly fond of Mark O'Connor's poem *Rainbow Lorikeets*
http://www.australianpoet.com/poems.html#rainbow .

Naturally, someone came up with *Spring in the Bronx*, you know the one: 'Der spring is sprung, Der grass is riz, I wonder where dem boidies is?' and so it goes on! Also nominated was one group of poems that are new to me: those by CJ Dennis in *Jim of the Hills*, particularly *Red Robin* and *Grey Thrush*. The correspondent pointed out that, '…actually they are not really bird poems but use the calls of birds very well'. Something that I will follow-up for sure. Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* was mentioned, as were a number of delightful pieces by Rabindranath Tagore. And I must mention A. D. Hope's *The Death of the Bird* that got a guernsey. I was little surprised to see that no one nominated any of Judith Wright's poems, not even her wonderful *Birds*:
Whatever the bird is, is perfect in the bird.
Weapon kestrel hard as the blade's curve,
thrush round as a mother or a full drop of water,
fruit-green parrot wise in his shrieking swerve—
are all what bird is and do not reach beyond the bird
…

To see all the suggestions, visit the Birding-Aus archive for December 2011
http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/birding-aus/2011-12/threads.html and search on 'Favourite Bird Poems'.

T. Javanica

This column is available online at http://cbn.canberrabirds.org.au/. There you can access the web sites mentioned in the column by clicking on the hyperlinks in the online version of *CBN*.

Details on how to subscribe to *Birding-Aus*, the Australian birding email discussion list, are on the web at http://www.birding-aus.org/ . A comprehensive searchable archive of the messages that have been posted to the list is at
http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/birding-aus.

To join the *CanberraBirds* email discussion list, send an email message with the word 'subscribe' in the subject line to canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au. The list's searchable archive is at <http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2010-11

It is with pleasure that I present my fourth President's Report covering the period November 2010 to September 2011, that is, over the last 11 months.

Forward Plan:

As in the past the Committee's activities have been guided by the COG Forward Plan. The plan was revisited and published in the March 2011 Gang-gang, covers the period 2011 to 2013 and takes into account core COG objectives recognising two categories of tasks; major and minor. Major projects are likely to need more man-power and/or money to come to fruition whilst the minor tasks need only modest resources.

Of the major tasks progress has occurred on various fronts:

1) Update the COG website

To date we have not been able to progress this major item. After defining the requirements for the new website and COG signing a contract with a web design company they unfortunately decided to pull out as key personal moved overseas. To date we have been unable to locate another company that is prepared to cover our specifications and so this item has been put on hold for the time being

2) Encourage the recording of local bird calls

Calls from the CD 'Calls of the Birds of the ACT' have now been placed on the Photo Gallery on the COG website. This will not only add value to the site but it will hopefully encourage members to borrow the COG recording equipment and collect the calls that are missing.

3) Undertake a scoping study to examine the feasibility of updating the ACT Bird Atlas

Talks with various members interested in this item have been held to discuss the possibility of initiating a long-term survey that will examine the distribution and abundance of birds in the ACT in relation to habitat type. It has been recognised that an update to the 1992 publication 'Birds of the ACT- an Atlas' is not possible and we have not been able to find anyone who could drive this large project. An additional major problem involves differences in habitat classification between the ACT and surrounding NSW. The ACT vegetation map is in the process of being redefined to bring it in line with NSW classifications and until this has been done it is not possible to develop a survey based on habitat. This project has therefore been put on hold for the time being.

4) Continue to improve sets of display materials

Before embarking on the updating of display material the Committee decided that a first priority was to look at the possibility of improving and/or updating the present COG Gang-gang logo. With the help of Julian Robinson we are in the process of talking to graphic designers to get their ideas and possible costs associated with this item.

5) Birds Australia Campout- April 2011

This item has been successfully completed with a summary written up in the May 2011 Gang-gang. I would like to thank Sandra Henderson, Jenny Bounds, Lia Battisson, Sue Lashko, Nicki Taws and Alison Russell-French who made up the organising committee and to Jack Holland, Mark Clayton and Martin Butterfield for help during the Campout.

6) Nominate species in decline in the ACT as threatened in NSW but not listed in the ACT

This work is in progress with Jenny Bounds working on the nomination for the Scarlet Robin

7) Redesign of the 'COG Observation Record' data sheet

Michael Robbins with help from Martin Butterfield, Paul Fennell, Steve Wallace and Geoff Alves has put a considerable effort into this task. This apparently relative simple item has opened up other areas of data collection that need to be examined including the need for a gazetteer. This task is on-going and progressing well.

Of the smaller tasks:

1) Bird Routes Brochures No 2 covering Black Mountain to Callum Brae is now available and can be found on the website. Many thanks to Sue Lashko for running this project. Work is now advancing on Brochure No. 3.
2) COG continues to support the initiatives of the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group (CIMAG) to reduce populations of the Indian Myna. In particular, we continue to support their website and during the year COG members continue to help in the surveys required by the on-going Ph.D. project into the impacts of the Indian Myna.
3) An improved map to support COG atlassing has been placed on the COG website.

Committee:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 2010-11 Committee. The Executive consisted of Matthew Frawley as Vice-president, Sandra Henderson, who completed her fifth year as Secretary and Noel Luff as Treasurer. Many of the other members of the Committee have been involved in other roles essential to the running of the Group. Jenny Bounds continued as Conservation Officer with help from both Con Boekel and Michael Robbins. Sue Lashko continued as editor of Gang-gang and meeting-room organiser, Dan Mantle as Outings Officer and Beth Mantle as CBN Editor. Beth due to work commitments had to resign from the Committee in February but was able to continue as Editor. As mentioned previously Michael Robbins has been busy with the redesign of the 'COG Observation Record' data sheets. Lia Battisson was able to stand in for the Treasurer whilst he was away for a number of months. Many thanks also to Tony Lawson and David Rees for their contributions to the working of the 2010-11 Committee.

Conservation:

The many items of conservation concern have this year been dealt with by a sub-committee consisting of Jenny Bounds, Con Boekel, Michael Robbins and myself. COG has had an input into many issues including the following:

Submissions to various Federal, NSW and ACT government departments

- Planning the Eastern Broad-acre Area. Discussion Paper- Majura and Jerrabomberra Valleys
- ACT Legislative Assembly Inquiry into the ecological carrying capacity of the ACT and region
- A review of the use of ACT Nature Reserves
- Development of the suburb of Throsby
- Review of the ACT Nature Conservation Act 1980 Discussion Paper
- Comments on the Draft ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy 2011-21
- Molonglo River Corridor. Investigations by the Office of Commissioner for Sustainability and Environment. Input to the Conservation Council submission
- Representation on a working group for the ACT Woodland Restoration Implementation Plan

There have been meetings with the Federal Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts concerning the proposed development of the suburb of Throsby and likely effects on the Mulligan's Flat/Goorooyarroo Nature Reserves with additional talks on the proposed Molonglo

River Park and development within Molonglo in general.

The Birds Australia Campout made a small profit and this will go towards the purchase of *Allocasuarina* seedlings specifically for the threatened Glossy Black-Cockatoo. The seedlings will be planted at the Bush Heritage property 'Scottsdale' where the Campout was held. We have received a grant to pay for fencing and tree guards and the planting will go ahead later this month.

Outings: Once again COG has been able to run a very comprehensive outings program. I would like to thank Dan Mantle who has been responsible for this very important task.

In addition to the scheduled outings, the *ad hoc* group of 'Wednesday Walkers' has once again operated most successfully and have managed to attract a most enthusiastic group of followers with outings every month of the year. These mid-week walks are very popular and many thanks to Martin Butterfield and others for organising these events

Not including the Wednesday outings, there have been 24 outings this last year. In addition to visiting local hotspots in the ACT and surrounds, members paid a visit to the Australian National Wildlife Collection based at CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences, Gungahlin whilst further afield there was a pelagic trip out of Eden and a visit to Willandra National Park and the Little Forest Plateau near Ulladulla. We ran 2 outings for children, both to the Jerrabomberra Wetlands. The first, organised by Sandra Henderson, was for the Jerrabomberra Joey Scouts and the second, organised by Matthew Frawley, was for the ACT Down Syndrome Association.

Many thanks to the organisers and leaders and to those who wrote up the trip reports for Gang-gang.

Communications and Publications:

Gang-gang. Many thanks to Greg Ramsey and Sue Lashko, with occasional help from Tanya Rough, who have continued with the editing and publishing of our newsletter. Also, I would like to thank Brian Fair and helpers for the mailing of newsletters and Canberra Bird Notes. I would particularly like to again thank Jack Holland, Ian Fraser and Martin Butterfield for their regular contributions.

Canberra Bird Notes. This year there have been three editions of CBN produced by Beth Mantle as Editor. Due to work pressures Beth will stand down as Editor and I am delighted that Michael Lenz has put his hand up to take over the position for the December 2011 (Volume 36 Number 3) issue. I would again like to thank *Tyto javanica* and *Stentoreus* for their regular contributions over the past year.

Annual Bird Report. Paul Fennell was responsible for the 2009-10 ABR published in Volume 36, March 2011 Canberra Bird Notes. Thanks to the ABR compilers Barbara Allan, Dan Mantle, Con Boekel, Steve Holliday, Matthew Frawley, David McDonald, Ian McMahon, Harvey Perkins and Paul Fennell with each contributor, as usual, responsible for a group or groups of species.

Website. David Cook continues to provide an excellent website. Over the year there have been 136,839 visits to the site, a reduction of 2% over the previous year. Overall there has been a reduction in traffic to the Photo Gallery, Canberra Birds Conservation Fund and Canberra Bird Notes pages and an increase to the Birds of Canberra Gardens and to the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group pages.

Over the past 12 months the traffic has been consistent throughout the year. The low September figure is due to an incomplete reporting period.

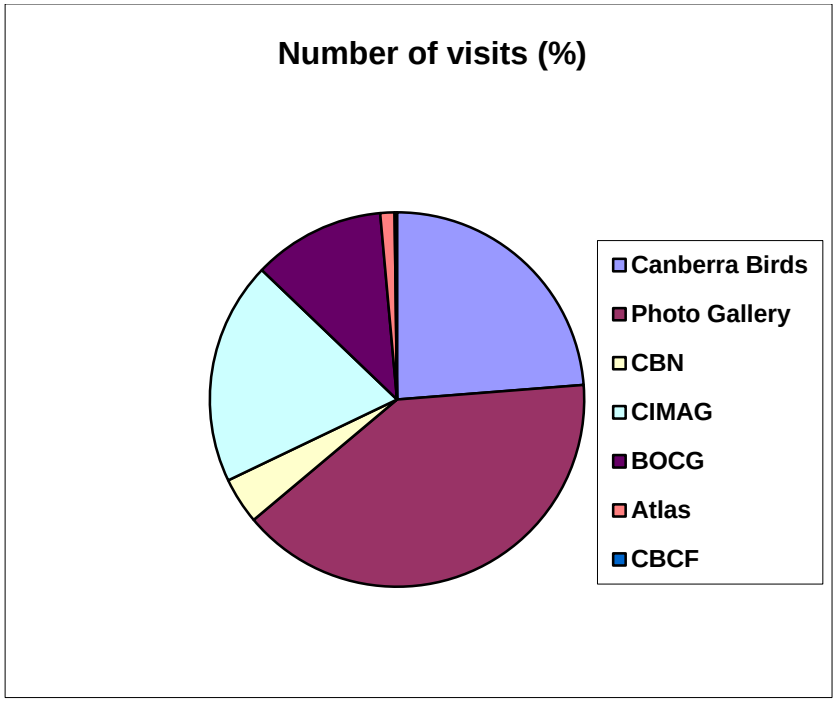

Figure 1. Visits to sites on COG website

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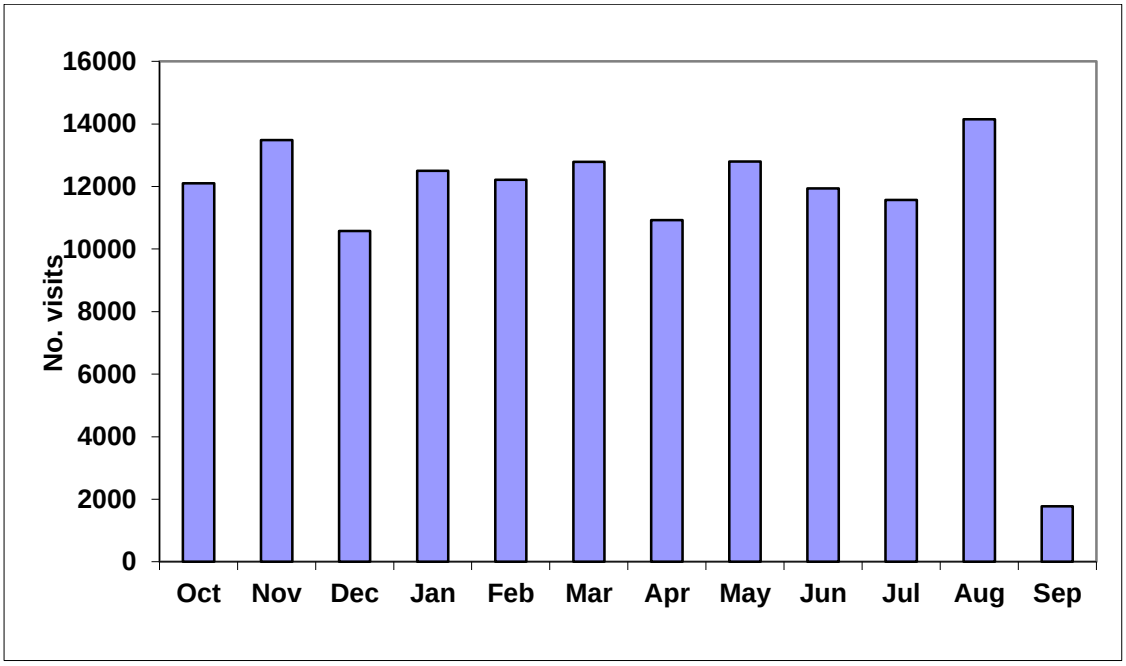

Figure 2. Number of visits to COG website over the year

Discussion list and email announcements.
COG's Email Discussion Forum 'Canberrabirds' continues to be managed by David McDonald. The membership to the list stands at 259, an increase of 16 from the previous year. The Discussion Forum or 'Chat-line' is an excellent forum for the latest sightings, points of interest and provides an invaluable starting point for those wishing to discuss their unusual sightings.

Surveys and record management:

Surveys undertaken by COG members over the past year include the continuation of the woodland surveys at 15 sites across the ACT that documents species in the threatened Yellow-Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodlands. Dr. Ross Cunningham of Statwise Pty Ltd. has completed the data analysis of bird observations and habitat changes and a report is now being prepared by Jenny Bounds, Nicki Taws, Alison Rowell and Ross Cunningham. The project continues to be run by a management group comprising, Jenny Bounds, Nicki Taws Alison Rowell and myself with data entry by Helen Mason.

A second survey of possible breeding habitat for the threatened Superb Parrot in the proposed Gungahlin suburbs of Kenny and Throsby was completed with help from COG members. In addition, a large area of Goorooyarroo was also surveyed. A report titled 'Report on the distribution, abundance and breeding status of the Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*) during the 2010-11 breeding season, Gungahlin, ACT' was compiled by Chris Davey and provided to the ACT Government. The Superb Lyrebird survey at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve was run for the eighth year, as usual on the third weekend in June.

The GBS is now in its 31st year. Martin Butterfield continues to manage the project providing feedback through regular items of interest in Gang-gang. Kay Hahne and Anne Hall continue to enter the GBS data. Many thanks to all. Over the past 12 months there were five requests for data. In May a Data Provider Agreement was signed between COG and the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) for the transfer of GBS data to the ALA portal.

The Blitz was run again for the sixth year in late October. Many thanks to Barbara Allan for all the hard work she puts into this project and to the many surveyors.

COG members were again involved in the Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C) bird surveys in April and again in October covering 23 properties in the area between Williamsdale and Bredbo. The April survey was run to coincide with the BA Campout

The COG database continues to expand with 556,593 observations from 36,175 datasheets in the General Observations database. There were 1320 sheets added during the year down from 2726 the previous year with 57% entered on-line. It needs to be remembered that last year 1040 datasheets from the ANU Women's Club were processed which greatly added to last year's total. Even so, a reduction in observations entered to the database is of concern and it is hoped that the redesigned 'COG Observation Record' data sheet will go some way to reversing this trend. The databases continue to be managed by Paul Fennell and Martin Butterfield. Essential support for the COG database is provided through the Records Management Team and the Rarities Panel. I would again like to acknowledge the contributions provided by Nicki Taws as Records Officer, Tony Harding, Helen Mason and many others for data entry and to the members of the Rarities Panel consisting of Richard Allen, Jenny Bounds, Grahame Clark, Dick Schodde, Nicki Taws and Barbara Allan (Secretary), all who have offered to continue in their various roles.

Monthly meetings:

Jack Holland has again been responsible for a most successful and varied program of speakers. The Members Night held at the January meeting was a great success, despite the fire alarm, with presentations covering trips by members to Dirk Hartog Island WA, a trip from the U.K. to Australia via the Trans-Siberian Railway and visits to Madagascar, NewHaven NT and Lake Eyre.

The COG policy covering costs for those speakers from interstate has again been worthwhile with very popular presentations on Palm Cockatoos, Swift Parrots, nectarivory in Sunbirds, Tasmania's endemic and threatened species and conservation issues for bird life on Lord Howe Island.

Other subjects covered have included presentations on the Greening Australia project 'Bringing Birds Back', Plains Wanderer, South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program, Birds at Moruya, coevolution between Australian cuckoos and their hosts and reintroducing Brown Treecreepers to the ACT. Members have provided presentations on the Quail and Button-quail, the Koel and Channel-billed Cuckoo, visit to the Connie Sue track, two video presentations on the birds of North Island NZ, the Garden Bird Survey and the 2010 Blitz.

My thanks to all of the speakers for giving their time.

A continuing feature of the monthly meeting is the Sales Desk. The Desk this year has been managed by Roy Harvey, greatly assisted by Annie Holmes. Many thanks to them both for providing such a valuable service to COG members.

I would also like to thank Roy and Annie for coming to the rescue of the December COG Christmas party. Roy and Annie offered the use of their house after unfavourable weather at the last minute caused a cancellation at Black Mountain Peninsular.

I would once again like to thank Julienne Kamprad with occasional assistance from Lia Battisson who have worked quietly behind the scenes to provide the refreshments after the monthly meetings and to Sandra Henderson for taking on the responsibility of providing the raffle prizes and selling the tickets.

Canberra Birds Conservation Fund (CBCF)

There have been 274 visits to the CBCF web page this past 12 months. This is a reduction from the previous year. There were no grants made during the year. The fund continues to be managed by David McDonald with a Committee of Management consisting of David, Geoffrey Dabb and Penny Olsen.

Summary:

In summary, 2010-11 has been a busy year for COG with income from membership similar to previous years. I believe though that our audience is much greater as free public access is provided both to the Chat-line and, via the COG website, to facilities such as Gang-gang, CBN and the Photo gallery.

Outings and meetings continue to be the most popular activities with conservation issues continuing to be an area of increased activity.

I note from last year's President's Report that there was a summary of where COG was heading for the 2010-11 year and I am pleased to report that a tick can be placed alongside most proposed activities.

But what for the 2011-12 year?

- As in the past the committee will review the COG Forward Plan. Suggestions are always welcome from the membership but as usual

items can only progress given the financial and more importantly personnel inputs required.

- It is becoming obvious that we need to revisit ways to encourage members to contribute to the General Observations database. We need to review the methods for data collection and look at ways to provide facilities that members require to access data in a more user-friendly way.

- Financially we continue to hold our heads above water and it is of interest to note that in this regard the small bird groups continue to progress better than the larger national organisations.

- Membership appears stable or on a slight decline. Whether this decline is due to a lack of appeal or because those interested in COG activities can access all that COG has to offer without becoming a member is unknown. The COG Committee will need to examine this issue more carefully in the coming year.

- As you may all be aware COG is affiliated with BOCA. With the merger of BA and BOCA to create a new bird organisation 'BirdLife Australia' in January 2012 there will be major changes to the structure of the new organisation. COG, as with other affiliated groups, share the insurance cover provided by BOCA. Despite requests to BOCA we are still unsure of the position that COG could find itself in at the end of the year. There are three possibilities:

  – Insurance will continue to be provided through the new organisation,
  – Insurance will be provided but the cost will need to be shared,
  – COG and other affiliated groups will need to find their own insurance

Letters expressing our concern have been sent to BOCA and BA and the issue has been raised at the 'BIGNET' meeting held at Ulladulla last month. We wait to hear the position that will be taken by BirdLife Australia on this issue.

COG in our own way continues to be a very active volunteer organisation on the Canberra scene. We have worked hard to educate the general public, managers, planners and developers on the benefits of caring for our birds and the natural environment. I wish to thank the many individuals who have worked tirelessly in their various ways to provide services to members. Finally, I would again like to thank the 2010-11 Committee for all their hard work and support over the past year.

Chris Davey
COG President
12th October 2011

BOOK REVIEW

Birdscaping Australian Gardens. A guide to native plants and the garden birds they attract.
By **George Adams**
D & G Publishing, 2011. 364 pages, over 500 photographs and drawings, plant tables, index.

This extensive and detailed book is the result of many years of observation, experiment and documentation. George Adams published *Birdscaping Your Garden* in 1991 for Australian bird lovers, and *Birdscaping for Garden Spaces* for American audiences in 2009, so has many years of experience with birds and gardens on both continents. He is a photographer, illustrator, architect, garden designer, conservationist and devoted bird watcher.
The first thing you notice about this book is the wealth of illustration. It seems as if every important piece of information has its own relevant photo or drawing. The illustrations are not selected to be just generally applicable, but to particularly and exactly demonstrate the point in the text. Adam's fine drawings add a different dimension of detail from the photographs. The photographs themselves are stunning, of both plants and birds. When you first open the book the inside cover of *Eucalyptus caesia* and the frontispiece of an Eastern Spinebill in *Eucalyptus ficifolia* let you know that you are in capable hands. The general page of photographs of Grevilleas (p.143) celebrates both the flowers and the birds drinking their nectar. The Scarlet Honeyeater feeding on the butterscotch yellow flowers of *Grevillea* 'Honey Gem' is a striking study in contrasts, p. 286.
Adams wants us to create gardens which conserve biodiversity wherever possible and attract and retain as many different species of Australian birds as we can. He points out that birds and plants have evolved together and the isolation of Australia has resulted in a particularly close interdependence between the two groups. We need to pay attention to the needs of both native plants and birds. He shows photographs of several native gardens from different areas of Australia to demonstrate the sort of gardens he is describing.
All bird attracting gardens must provide water, food and protection. Birds need safe sites to nest, protection from enemies and places to perch. They need foods such as insects, seeds and nectar. Water must be freely available in a safe environment. Adams demonstrates in great detail how to achieve these effects in your own garden using native plants. The detail is such that you could use the book as an introductory guide to both birds and native plants. Each bird chosen receives a page of text and a photo and illustration with a short list of recommended plants to attract the species. Each plant has its own photo and a short description of how to grow this plant and its attraction for birds.
This book gives the reader excellent information on birds, native plants and gardens and the interactions among them. It is highly recommended for those wanting to see more birds in their gardens.

Rosalind Walcott
10 Wickham Crescent
RED HILL, ACT 2603

RARITIES PANEL NEWS

The Panel has endorsed eight records and is still considering one further record.

There were two undoubted highlights during this reporting period: the Osprey and the Australian Painted Snipe. Duncan McCaskill's Osprey obligingly circled Giralang Pond for 25 minutes, enabling him to take photographs of this mega-rarity for the ACT. This is the first endorsed record for the species, though there has been an unconfirmed report from 1966; an endorsed record from 1988 was later rescinded. As Steve Wilson so presciently wrote in *Birds of the ACT: two centuries of change* in 1999, [the Osprey] "could occur here in the future" – and it now has. Ospreys are more typically recorded in coastal areas, where they are relatively easily identified by their prominent dark eye stripe. Young birds may wander extensively and it is probable, from its darker chest colouring, that this Osprey was one such.

The Australian Painted Snipe is listed as a vulnerable species under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.* A party of up to four of these birds graced Kellys Swamp for several weeks in October. Unfortunately no report was presented to the Panel, perhaps in the mistaken belief that the numerous photos posted on the chat line would suffice. In this instance the Panel had no hesitation in agreeing that the birds depicted were Australian Painted Snipe and is reconsidering its policy in this regard. Unlike the previous one-day appearance of a single individual of this species at the same location in October 2007, this time the little group remained in the same general area for about a month, prompting local authorities to erect a "Painted Snipe viewing area" sign and to become concerned about individuals disturbing the birds.

The remaining "unusuals", while still unusual, are becoming less so. The Plumed Whistling-Ducks were recorded in summer in the previous year. The Red-backed Kingfisher was not recorded in its previously usual location in West Macgregor but has been recorded from time to time in Namadgi NP. The Striped Honeyeater rarely drifts into the COG area of interest but is regularly recorded just to the north-west. The Lewin's Honeyeater, a coastal species, can be found in the wetter forests to the east of COG's area - it was recorded in Queanbeyan in 2008 and more recently in Deua NP in November 2010. The Spangled Drongo too has been recorded once or twice in most recent years but generally in summer so this record from early winter is particularly interesting, though it seems probable it was just a case of delayed migration.

ENDORSED LIST 79, January 2012

Plumed Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna eytoni*
32; 6 Jan 2012; Steve Holliday; Kellys Swamp GrL14

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
1; 7 May; Duncan McCaskill; Giralang Ponds GrK12

Australian Painted Snipe *Rostratula Australia*
1-4; Oct 2011; various observers; Kellys Swamp GrL14

Scaly-breasted Lorikeet *Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*
1; 25 Apr 2010; Kim McKenzie; off Plains Rd, Hoskinstown GrS16 – escapee?

Red-backed Kingfisher *Todiramphus pyrropygia*
1; 22 Sep 2011; Anastasia Dalziell; Settlers Track, Namadgi NP GrG27

Striped Honeyeater *Plectorhyncha lanceolata*
1; 17 Sep 2011; Nicki Taws; "Wyevale", Yass R Rd GrI04

Lewin's Honeyeater *Meliphaga lewinii*
2; 6 Nov 2011; Barbara Allan; COG Woodland site 3, Majura Firing Range, GrN13

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus*
1; 7-8 Jun 2011; Jonathon Kearvell; Wanniassa Hills NR GrK16

Female Australian Painted Snipe at Kellys Swamp, October 2011 (Photograph by Geoffrey Dabb).

Canberra Bird Notes

Canberra Bird Notes is published three times a year by the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc and is edited by Michael Lenz. Major articles of up to 5000 words are welcome on matters relating to the distribution, identification or behaviour of birds in the Australian Capital Territory and surrounding region. Please discuss any proposed major contribution in advance. Shorter notes, book reviews and other contributions are also encouraged. All contributions should be sent to cbn@canberrabirds.org.au.

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