



Gang-gang

SEPTEMBER 2017

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Wednesday 13 September 2017

7.30 pm.

*Canberra Girls Grammar School,
Multi-media centre, corner Gawler Cres and
Melbourne Ave, Deakin*

The short presentation will be an overview by **Ryu Callaway** of the proposed **Roost Census**, including the observations currently being sought, what the survey will entail and what we hope to gain from the survey, along with an update on the current progress.

The main presentation will be by **Rahula Perera**, field biologist and active member (and a past president) of the Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka, on “**Mixed species foraging flocks in the Sinharaja Rainforest, Sri Lanka**”.

Wet lowland rainforest is considered to be the most diverse area on earth after coral reef. Sinharaja is the last vestige of Sri Lanka's rainforest. Considering its biological diversity and ecological value, it has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site. Among many natural wonders occurring in this ecosystem, mixed species bird flocks are a quite spectacular phenomenon. In these flocks, a large number of birds belonging to different taxa group together for daily chores.

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Summary/analysis of the past two months and what to watch out for this month

Very soon after last month's column was sent to the editor on 26 July the weather warmed up, and it also has been much wetter (62 mm at my place) over the 4.5 weeks covered by this column. While this led to an increase in bird activity in the COG area of interest (Aol), at the time of writing over the last weekend of August (and winter) it does not seem that the major influx of spring migrants has yet begun, as illustrated by my analysis below; for example, though this is usually much less noticeable than the quite spectacular autumn migration, the return of significant numbers of **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters**, to add to the small numbers that have overwintered, does not yet seem to have occurred. Perhaps this is because over August maximum temperatures have generally remained around the mid-teens, and towards the end of the period there were still a significant number of frosty mornings, interspersed with some cold windy days.

The first complete migrant reported to return was the single **Tree Martin** on 25 July, which I just managed to include in last month's column. This was after an

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Gang-gang Cockatoo, juveniles

Lindell Emerton

Everyone welcome

September Meeting ... continued

The research on mixed species flocks in Sinharaja is one of the longest, continuing to date since 1981. Rahula has worked as an active research team member for a number of years and has been a close associate of the project even after. In this presentation, he discusses why and how flocks are formed each day, factors that determine the size of the flock, mechanisms they use to reduce risk of predation and how they reduce the intra and inter species competition.

Summary/analysis of the past two months and what to watch out for this month —continued from Page 1

absence of over two months, but since that time it has been widely observed over the COG Aol. The related **Fairy Martin** did not return until mid-August, in smaller numbers and with sightings mostly confined to the Jerrabomberra Wetlands. About the same time, the first returning **Latham's Snipe**, a species I overlooked to alert readers to look out for in my last month's column, were reported from there. Similarly about a week later the first **Australian Reed-Warbler** was reported at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands and also at the North Watson Wetlands since then.

A species that returned surprisingly early was the **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, with the first report on 9 August at Mulligan's Flat by Steve Wallace. One was calling and started displaying when a second bird landed in the tree. Since then it has been reported quite widely, including of a second pair of birds displaying during the COG Wednesday walk to London Bridge on 16 August. In my experience this species returns to the COG Aol early when it is very dry inland, as does the **Pallid Cuckoo** which was first reported by David McDonald at Wamboin on 18 August, with again some further sightings in the ACT since. In contrast there has been only the single report, again from the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, of the **Shining-Bronze-Cuckoo**, which is a coastal/eastern species and thus not similarly affected. The same applies to the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** for which I can find only a couple of reports, despite it being the least migratory of the local cuckoos.

David also first reported the **Rufous Whistler** at Wamboin on 27 July. Interestingly there have been only two reports of single birds since, and only one of these in the ACT, so perhaps these were of overwintering birds. The **Dusky Woodswallow** also has been slow to return with the first report, after a more than 3 month absence, of a single bird at Scrivener Dam by Alastair Smith on 24 August. Kym Bradley reported over 20 to the south of Canberra the next day which, together with two birds at the Jerrabomberra Grasslands NR on 27 August, seem to be the only additional



Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo

Steve Wallace

ACT records. The same applies to the **Noisy Friarbird**, which I first heard calling in my local patch on the extreme NW slopes of Cooleman Ridge on 24 August. While I was alerted to a couple of other slightly earlier reports, interestingly at the time of writing the last report on eBird was over 4 months ago on 15 April.

So keep an eye out for the return of larger numbers of the above species, as well as for the **Fuscous Honeyeater**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, **Mistletoebird** and **Grey Fantail** of which small numbers have been reported throughout winter. This also applies to the **Superb Parrot**, which surprisingly seems to have been more numerous southside over the reporting period, with Liam Manderson reporting up to 16 at the Fadden Primary School and Sandra Henderson seeing a group of about half a dozen around regularly in Wanniasa. The few northside observations seem to have been restricted to Yerrabi Pond and Ginninderra Creek in Gungahlin.

Keep an eye out also for the first **White-throated** and **Western Gerygones** and the **Leaden Flycatcher** which usually first return in September, as well the **White-winged Triller** and **Rufous Songlark** towards the end of the month. If it continues to be dry inland the last two species may be present this spring/summer in larger numbers than in the past couple of years. Depending on the weather, the **Sacred Kingfisher** and **Rainbow Bee-eater** may also first return towards the end of September.

Of the altitudinal migrants that return to the mountains after over-wintering locally, the **Scarlet Robin** was widely reported in and around Canberra during August including 8 birds at Narrabundah Hill mid-month. The same applies to the **Flame Robin** for which there seem to have been many more reports than in July, though with some further evidence for it having started to move towards the mountains. Reports of the **Rose Robin** have increased in the past week, which would seem to suggest passage migrants moving through to the mountains. In contrast,

there still have been no reports of the **Pink Robin** since 5 May, or of the **Swift Parrot** since 1 May, though a **Brown Gerygone** was reported from the woodland loop at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 24 August, the first since 14 May.

The only local record of the **Crescent Honeyeater** I can find is of three birds at Casuarina Sands on 23 August, and of the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** one bird at the extreme northern border of the ACT on 20 August. In contrast, several observers have reported that the **Restless Flycatcher** has been present around the Tuggeranong Town Centre throughout winter. There have been only two other reports of this declining species elsewhere in the COG Aol in August.

Finally there have still been widespread records of both the **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Golden Whistler** over the reporting period, even though I haven't recorded either of them in my local patch of NW Cooleman Ridge and Narrabundah Hill during August. So please keep an eye/ear out for the above species which will all move out of the Canberra area by the end of September, except for the last-named, which is often present until early October.

As might be expected with the wetter (but certainly not flooding) conditions, the influx of waterfowl seems to have slowed, though Michael Lenz still counted 139 **Freckled Ducks** at the large "pond" on Lake Road on 20 August. David McDonald counted 130 **Pink-eared Ducks** there on 26 August. Numbers of both there continue to dwarf those present in the ACT, mainly at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands and the big dam at the Mulligans Flat NR. While widely reported across the COG Aol the numbers of **Hardheads** seen together continue to be much lower. During August there were a maximum of 47 **Australian Shelducks** and 24 **Plumed Whistling Ducks** at the Trucking Yard Lane dam at Bungendore, where David McDonald counted 200 **Pacific Black Ducks** on 18 August.

By far the most significant report of an "unusual" species over August has been the **Powerful Owl** in the rainforest gully at the ANBG on 15 August. Its roosting spot was obvious because of the profuse scats on the ground beneath, and I suspect it may have been roosting there for some time. Whether it is the same bird as the one in Turner last seen just over a year ago on 29 July 2016 is unclear, though it could well be. Since its discovery it has been observed by many people, and in fact



Flame Robin

John Bundock



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Good birding, good food ...

Tasmanian bird & mammal tour
Bruny Island, Melaleuca, pelagic trip
3 to 10 February 2018

Alice Springs & MacDonnell
Ranges birding tour. Includes Sandhill
Grasswren
21 to 28 April 2018

Top End birding tour includes Kakadu NP,
Kunnunurra & Mitchell Plateau
23 May to 6 June 2018

Gulf of Carpentaria, Cairns, Karumba,
Cloncurry, Mt Isa, Winton & Atherton
Tablelands. Includes Rusty Grasswren
2 to 20 July 2018

Atherton Tablelands & Iron Range
26 July to 8 August 2018 parts i & ii

New Caledonia birding tour
includes Lifou an Ouvéa Islands
18 to 25 August 2018

Strzelecki Track Outback tour
2 to 21 September
40 th tour!

Plains-wanderer weekends
20 & 21 October 2018
3 & 4 November 2018
17 & 18 November 2018
1 & 2 December 2018

Please see itineraries, checklists and
latest news on our website

www.philipmaher.com

has shifted its roost site a few times possibly due to all the attention. Also of interest has been that three **Barn Owls** were taken into wildlife care during August; two were subsequently released into more suitable habitat than the suburban conditions where they were found. This number in Canberra in winter may be the sign of an impending mouse plague in spring, so please keep an eye out for this species.

Another unusual species rediscovered (minus its tail) by Ash Allnutt on 30 July after nearly 6 months' absence is the **Apostlebird**. It had moved from the North Watson Wetlands to the Channel Nine studios in Aspinall St (about 500 m away as a bird could fly). It was still there on 23 August, no doubt hoping for a TV contract after being the centre of attention for so many months. The **Olive Whistler** at the ANBG was also still seen there several times and was last reported on 12 August. There have also been continuing reports of the **Musk Lorikeet** south of the lake. There were also a couple of late reports of the **Grey Goshawk**, at Lyneham Ridge on 21 August and Oakey Hill, Lyons, on 25 August, so please keep a close check on your **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** to see if any have yellow feet and a two-toned yellow with a black tip bill.

While flocks of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** have still been obvious feeding on road verges and median strips, etc, for most of the month, the lack of reports of mixed feeding flocks in August signals that the breeding season has begun, in keeping with the (slightly) warmer conditions. **Masked Lapwings**, **Brown Thornbills**, **Australian Magpies**, **White-winged Choughs** and **Australian Ravens** have all been reported displaying (see also **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos** above), nest building or on the nest during the reporting period. More details for some other reports are worth including as follows:

- There have been 4 reports in August of still begging juvenile **Gang-gang Cockatoos** being fed by their parents, in one case where they were quite capable of feeding



Powerful Owl (ANBG)

John Bundock

themselves. These are last season's offspring and are another example of how long the cockatoo family groups stay together.

- At the end of July Stephen Brand reported to me that he had **Galahs** gathering materials for a tree hollow in his garden that they (or their friends) had been preparing at least for the last two years. They had been doing all the things according to the books, and the hollow excavation and bark stripping had been pretty extensive. It now looked ready to go, as they could disappear into it, which they couldn't do before.
- Wayne Gregson reported that at the ponds near Kingston Foreshore on 10 August he watched a pair of **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** apparently feeding young, which he thought was surprisingly early. The same day John Harris reported large flocks of them around Percival Hill and the adjacent Ginninderra Creek, with several groups separate from the flocks feeding young, including in his GBS site. This species is a known early breeder (Isobel Crawford noted this is to avoid cuckoo predation), as shown on the pdf sheet in Bird Info on the COG website, with nest building reported from May, nests with eggs from June and both nests with young and dependent young during August. The pdf sheet also shows breeding was much more significant in the late 1980s, which accords with my experience and may be one reason why I don't seem to have mentioned it in recent years.
- Barbara Allan has found the **Scarlet Robin** nest building at the Pinnacle, and more recently Jean Casburn and I have confirmed this is also the case on Narrabundah Hill. These two locations seem to be the hot spots for breeding of this threatened species in peri-urban Canberra.

Finally there has been an influx of **Satin Bowerbirds** in my GBS site related to a bower built in my neighbour's garden for the first time, within a few metres from where one was destroyed by the January 2003 bush fires. This activity is not necessarily considered breeding activity unless copulation is observed, which I have seen very few times, if at all, in my many years of bower watching. They love my flowing water feature, with at one time up to seven seen bathing/drinking there.

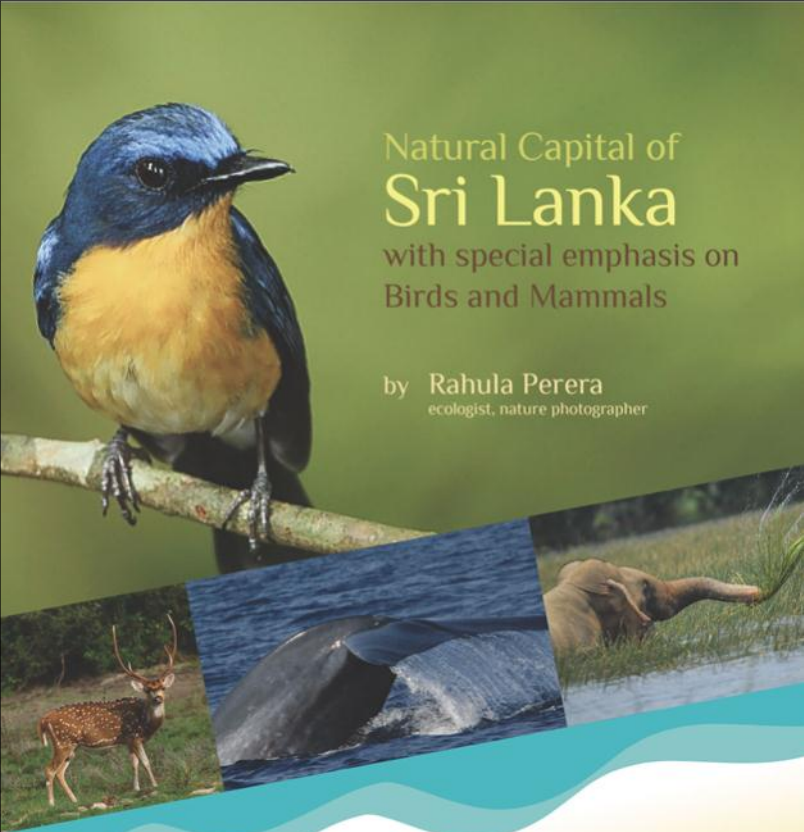
I'll leave an updating of roosts and roost flights for Ryu Callaway's presentation at the COG meeting on 13 September, except to note that during August I have had 3 separate active roost sites (one a new one) for the **Red-rumped Parrot** in Chapman/Rivett, involving at least 90 birds and some different behaviours which I propose to update in CBN.

So please keep up the reports for any overwintering or early arriving summer migrants or the departing altitudinal migrants mentioned above, for signs of further breeding, for

roosts and roost flights, and for the last single species flocks. As usual please ensure that all significant observations are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

Once again my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to my two main data sources, postings on the COG Email Discussion List ("COG chatline") and the eBird Australia website (my sincere thanks again for Ryu Callaway's help in allowing me to undertake a more in-depth analysis for the COG Aol), as well as some direct correspondence to me. As always I am very grateful to all involved for publishing this information without which it would not be possible to put this column together.

Jack Holland



Natural Capital of Sri Lanka

with special emphasis on
Birds and Mammals

by **Rahula Perera**
ecologist, nature photographer

Sri Lanka is a beautiful tropical island in the Indian Ocean, approximately the size of Tasmania. Sri Lanka's rich biodiversity includes 113 mammals, of which 16 terrestrial species are endemic. It is one of the rare locations in the world where one could see the largest land species (elephant) and the marine species (whale) in the span of a few days. Sri Lanka also hosts around 450 species of birds of which 235 are resident and 33 species are endemic to the country.

5.30 – 7.30 p.m.
on Thursday, 21 st September, 2017
at Sri Lanka High Commission,
61, Hampton Circuit, Yarralumla, ACT 2600
for registration, please email to
admin@slhcaust.org

Organized by
Sri Lanka High Commission, Canberra &
Aarunya Vacations Pty Limited

This interactive two hour session will include a 50 minute presentation by Rahula Perera, portraying natural beauty, different ecosystems and integrated wildlife of the country followed by a Q & A session. Rahula with B.Sc. (Biology), M.Sc. (GIS & RS), PG Dip. Biodiversity, Tourism & Environment Management, Certificate in Wildlife Conservation and Management, has more than 20 years of experience as a field biologist, trainer, nature photographer and a nature-based tourism product developer. He is a visiting lecturer at several universities in Sri Lanka and a past president of the Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka. His research interests mainly focus on bird and mammal behaviour.



Field Trip Reports

Tuesday 8 to Friday 11 August – Wonga at Bawley Point

Eight participants thoroughly enjoyed this excursion to the South Coast with the very comfortable and inexpensive accommodation. Due to the vagaries of the seasons the flowering of the gum trees at Wonga had barely commenced this year so we missed out on most of our target species, including **Glossy Black-Cockatoos**.

Once again we were very fortunate to enjoy the tireless local guiding services of Margaret Hamon who introduced us to several new locations, one of which, a wetland, provided a real highlight and was situated only minutes away from the main Bawley Point residential area. It was here that many small passerines, a pair of **Australian King Parrots** and a wide variety of waterfowl were observed and photographed. About 30 **Freckled Ducks**, according to Margaret, was an unusual sighting for this area and more than 10 **Nankeen Night-herons** were close at hand.

Perhaps it was too early to find any returning waders from the northern hemisphere on this occasion but one undoubted highlight was several close viewings of **Variegated Fairy-wrens**, with cuckoos also announcing their presence.

Several of us visited the Eurobodalla Botanical Gardens on our way home to record our very first **Crimson Rosellas** and one obliging **Bassian Thrush** to bring our total sightings to a very respectable 80 species.

Terry Bell



Lewin's Honeyeater (on Gynea lily, Wonga)

Geoff McVeigh

Wednesday 16 August – London Bridge Homestead

Five weather-resistant members participated in trip on a very windy day. This had some impact on the avifauna with very few smaller birds seen on the walk to the homestead. Good numbers of **Australian Magpies**, **Eastern Rosellas** and particularly **Crimson Rosellas** were evident at this stage, and 3 **Grey Currawongs** were a less common species observed.

On arrival at the homestead are, 4 **Flame Robins** (2 of each sex) were flying around from perch to perch. At least 6 **Southern Whiteface** were observed feeding on the ground before flying off downwind at fair speed. The classic descending call of a **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** alerted us to the presence of this species and 2 birds were observed together with one fluttering its wings in an obvious display activity. A female **Hooded Robin** then appeared with a male of that species seen soon after. They were observed over quite some time but again the wind kept them moving.

We followed the creek back down to the Bridge itself where a large(ish) flock of 26 **European Goldfinches** were seen. The final excitement was a flock of hirundines flying low over an open area. It was concluded that most (15) of these birds were **Tree Martins** - migrants are returning.

In total we recorded 31 species plus a distant accipiter and we couldn't decide whether it was a **Collared Sparrowhawk** or **Brown Goshawk**.

Martin Butterfield



Brown Gerygone (Monga)

Ryu Callaway

Sunday 20 August – Monga National Park

I had the privilege of leading 23 members and friends of COG to this delightful national park a little over one hour's drive from Queanbeyan. It was a perfect winter's day: still and sunny, albeit chilly in the shade. We remained on the southern side of the Mongarlowe River and did not venture into the higher, southern part of the park owing to the bad conditions of the Reidsdale Road near the Monga Settlement.



Olive Whistler (Wonga)

Ryu Callaway

Although bird abundance was fairly low, the species diversity was high. Specialties—including species not frequently seen in the Canberra region—included **Olive Whistlers**, easily seen by all feeding on the roads; **Pilotbirds** calling strongly and one photographed; **Red-browed Treecreepers**; **Lewin's Honeyeaters** calling strongly; **Brown Gerygones**; and **Eastern Whipbirds** in good numbers seen as well as heard. We marvelled at the tree ferns and Pinkwoods/Plumwoods of the Penance Grove, and many participants resolved to return in summer when they are in flower, and in spring when the waratahs are doing the same.

David McDonald



Pilotbird (Monga)

Ryu Callaway

Nature Lodge Optics

Nature Lodge Optics, a family owned business based in Huskisson, Jervis Bay, has been supplying quality binoculars to customers in the Canberra region since 2007.

Originally established in the UK in 1946, the owners established a branch in Australia several years ago and have become the region's leading independent binocular store.

Open 7 Days, the store always has over 100 pairs of binoculars in stock with a particular emphasis on Birdwatching products.



Major brands such as Steiner, Zeiss, Bushnell, Nikon & Pentax are represented together with smaller hi-tech brands like Weaver, Vortex, Forest Optics, Visionary and Vanguard.

A selection of Spotting Scopes, Night Vision & Tripods are always available.

As a family business and NOT a franchise the owners Daniel and Joanna Payne will always be happy to source the specialist or unusual products that individual customers require having established a global network of suppliers.

The store also specialises in polarised eyewear with brands such as Maui Jim, RayBan & Oakley to name just a few.

The helpful and informative website www.binoculars4u.com.au is regularly updated but is no substitute for personal service and recommendation which is always on hand.

**We welcome customers new and old to call us on
02 4441 7770**

COG'S BIRD BLITZ 2017

Yes, it is on again, on the weekend of 28-29 October - COG's annual effort to record over the last weekend in October all species of birds present in the ACT across as wide a variety of habitats as possible; and to record any breeding activity. All COG members and friends are warmly encouraged to participate, so that we can cover as much of the ACT as possible. COG members are encouraged to "adopt" one or more locations or entire grid cells, and those already adopted will be shown on our website canberrabirds.org.au and updated from time to time. But don't be perturbed if your favorite location has been taken - multiple surveyors per location are quite acceptable, though it would be good if you took on at least one unclaimed site as well. Think about giving an unknown area a try - it might prove exciting. In order to claim a grid cell, please put in your bid to Barbara Allan, the blitz organizer, on blitz@canberrabirds.org.au or phone her on 6254 6520.

If you are very familiar with a site and regularly survey there, or do BirdLife Australia-registered two hectare surveys there, you would probably be the best person to survey that site for the blitz if you can. But if last years' sites were boring or unpleasant or bird-free zones, pick somewhere new this time. Or better still, do a short 20-min survey to "cover" the site, then move on to somewhere more interesting. If you are a beginner, probably the easiest way to participate is to do a survey in your local park or nature reserve - but remember only to record the birds whose identity you are absolutely sure of. And if work or family commitments preclude you from doing much at all, be sure to try and do at least a 20-minute, 2-ha survey of your own backyard and environs, to support COG's blitz.

As usual, depending on the weather and Namadgi National Park management, we hope to be able to conduct surveys beyond the locked gates in the Park. The organizer is looking for more 4WDs and competent drivers to tackle the fire trails. Please contact Barbara if you'd like to be involved and/or if you have room in your vehicle and are willing to take passengers.

All standard eBird or BirdLife Australia survey methods are acceptable - just indicate on the electronic or hard-copy datasheet which one you used:

1. a 20-minute survey over 2 hectares (rectangle of 100 m x 200 m; or circle of radius 80 m)
2. a survey within 500 m of a central spot, time unlimited but 20 mins or more

3. a survey within 5 km of a central spot, time unlimited (though please stay within the one grid cell).

Remember to record the *abundance* of each bird species seen - e.g. 2 Laughing Kookaburra; plus any indication of breeding using the following codes: ih (inspecting hollow); co (copulating); nb (nest building); ny (nest with young); cf (carrying food); dy (dependent young). *Only* record species you are sure about. If you see a bird species on COG's "unusuals" list, take a photo of it, if at all possible; take copious field notes of all the details you observe and report any features you didn't see; then submit a completed "unusual bird report form" (available on the COG website) with your hard-copy datasheet or email it to rarityies@canberrabirds.org.au.

Datasheets are available at COG meetings; from the organiser; or from the COG website under "forms" - the COG observation record sheet is the general-use form. If you normally enter your records via eBird, please add 'COG Blitz' (no parentheses) to your eBird contacts then share by selecting 'Manage my checklists' page and click on 'share' - or simply click on 'share with others in your party' on the actual checklist page. If you use hard-copy datasheets, please mail them to COG blitz records, PO Box 301, Civic Square ACT 2608; deliver them to Barbara; or hand them in at the November COG meeting.

While most of us find the act of going out and recording birds rewarding enough in itself, it is good if we can offer modest incentives such as participation "lucky draw" prizes. If you are prepared to donate books, wine, DVDs, native plants or anything suitable as a blitz prize, the organizer would love to hear from you!

There will be regular blitz updates on the COG website, including lists of unloved sites awaiting adoption, so do check it out. And join us for a fun weekend of birding for a cause. Accounts of the outcome will be published in *Gang-gang* and *Canberra Bird Notes* in due course.

Iron Range 2018

The bird banding crew will be banding in the Iron Range National Park on Cape York Peninsula late November 2018. Anyone who is interested can contact me chollop7@bigpond.com for details. This will definitely be my last trip there but other banders will still operate over the coming years.

Mark Clayton

**Lachlan Fold Wildlife Action Group**



RANKINS SPRINGS **BIRDING WEEKEND**

FRIDAY 6 OCT – SUNDAY 8 OCT

- **FRIDAY EVENING:** 'FANNY LUMSDEN' CONCERT
- **SATURDAY:** EARLY MORNING & LATE AFTERNOON/EVENING BUS TRIPS TO LOCAL BIRDING HOT SPOTS. INCLUDES MORNING TEA & AFTERNOON TEA/SNACKS
- **SATURDAY EVENING:** BBQ - RANKINS SPRINGS HALL
- **SUNDAY MORNING:** TBA - BIRDING TRIP
- **ACCOMMODATION CHOICES**
 - * CAMPING/YOUR OWN VAN (POWERED & UNPOWERED SITES) AT THE CARAVAN PARK
 - * MOTEL
 - * LOCAL B&B & FARMSTAYS



FOR MORE INFORMATION / BOOKINGS – please email the Lachlan Fold Wildlife Action Group at :

lfwagroup@gmail.com

COG Trips

At the start of each trip, and before proceeding on the trip, each participant must sign a COG Field Trip Registration Form, which acknowledges the participant's responsibilities as follows:

- I declare I am capable of undertaking this trip having: discussed with the Trip Leader any limitations I have (e.g. medications, physical), assessed the risks to myself and my property, and ensured I am adequately equipped.
- I will follow the instructions of the Field Trip Leader, and advise them before moving away from the group.

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LATEST UPDATES AND CHANGES TO TRIPS are notified on the trips page of the COG website:

canberrabirds.org.au/
then select 'Our Activities' and 'Field Trips'.

and on the COG chat-line at:

bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds/2015-08/

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

Future Field Trips

Wednesday 6 September – mid-week Early Spring Mystery bus trip – day outing

Jenny Bounds and Jack Holland are planning another bus trip for this date. Some aspects are expected to be the same as previous trips; ie cost of \$20 for transport by two 12-seater buses, starting at 8 am, and running until mid-afternoon (please bring morning tea and lunch). However, as it's a week day it allows consideration of destinations which would not normally be visited on a weekend bus trip. The point of departure will also be different and we've been looking at relatively central places accessible by public transport and where the all day parking is free. Current places being investigated include adjacent to Cooleman Court on the western side of Liardet St Weston that abuts Streeton Drive, or the part of the Curtin shops car park adjacent to the Statesman Hotel. However, our attention has been drawn to the much larger, more central, free car park off Macgregor St Deakin behind (to the west of) the Fitness First Gym. Once the day's itinerary is more settled intending participants will be advised of the meeting spot.

To keep it fresh we are again looking at changing the specific objectives of this trip. These are still being discussed but we again plan to visit some spots where participants may not normally go and will be able to see some interesting birds. The final itinerary (and point of departure/parking) will depend on some reccies beforehand, as well as which birds have been reported around the time.

If you are interested in participating in this usually popular outing, please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840 H or by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com) to book your seats. Could you please advise when booking if you will be using public transport to get to the meeting point, and from where?

Jack Holland, Jenny Bounds

Saturday 9 September – Mt Rogers

Meet at the end of Wickens Place, Fraser, at 8.30am for a stroll through Mt Rogers Nature Reserve. **Superb Parrots** may have returned, as well as other migrants. Bring morning tea.

Angharad Dean

Sunday 17 September – Gigerline

I've been inspired by reports of the wonderful birding country in the eastern section of Gigerline Nature Reserve. The walk is about 2km from the Highway to the river, and the same distance to return. There is a hill to descend to the river, but the effort is worthwhile. Great woodland and riverine birds have been seen here, including **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters** and **Southern Whitefaces**. Meet at the old service station at Williamsdale (about 15km south of Tuggeranong on the Monaro Highway) at 8am. Contact David Dedenczuk on 0417 222 154 or at ddedentz@bigpond.net.au for more information.

Wednesday 20 September – Cotter Dam

We will meet at the carpark below the dam, look around the viewing area and then take the track to the top of the dam wall and walk around past the old



LOIRE VALLEY TIME TRAVEL

The Loire Valley is riddled with caves. They are not natural but the result of over 2000 years of limestone quarrying. In the winter they provide a perfect habitat for hibernating bats, but their constant humidity and temperature also provide perfect habitat for winemakers.

A visit to a small family run winemaker here can be a fascinating experience. The area excels in light tannic reds, crisp fruity whites and vintage sparkling wine. If you have ever wondered if the French concept of terroir really exists, a visit to any of our carefully chosen winery partners will convince you. Equally impressive is how open and honest the winemakers are. Ask a question about winemaking and vineyard management and you will get a direct and detailed answer.

Winemakers are very aware of their heritage, but are also open to improving their wine by adopting new practices. We highly recommend including a tasting on your itinerary with us.

Susan & Simon

www.tourtheloire.com

loirevalleytours.naturewalks

**Tel: 0261 00 7744
(Canberra)**

contact@tourtheloire.com

Pierce's Creek settlement and back to Cotter Reserve. Once people are up (note that word – but it's on a good track) to the rim of the dam, it's pretty easy walking.

Martin Butterfield & John Bundock

Sunday 24 September – Numeralla - day trip

This is a chance to see lots of **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters**, and many other species if we're lucky. When I was there a few weeks ago I also found three **Spotted Quail-thrush** on the road near the local rubbish tip!

Meet at the ACT Motor Registry in Couranga Cres, Hume at 8am for carpooling (the Motor Registry is not open at weekends and has a sealed offstreet parking area). We will then travel to Numeralla and check out an area along the Numeralla River, and the Badja River Reserve.

Bring morning tea and lunch, and if time and enthusiasm permits, we may check out a reserve in Cooma on the way back. We may be joined by several interested locals at Numeralla.

Registration essential. Please contact Sandra Henderson at shirmax2931@gmail.com

Saturday 30 September to Monday 2 October – Buddigower NR

I will be arriving on site on the Friday afternoon (29th) and will start to set up the nets. There are NO facilities on site and it will be a take everything in, take (almost!!) everything out, campout. If people want to "rough it" in a motel or caravan park in West Wyalong then that is OK but the reserve is about 15 km from town. People wishing to join the banders should contact me chollop7@bigpond.com and I will send them directions to the site. In the event of heavy rainfall in the days leading up to the campout then I may have to call it off as access can become difficult. Most cars should be able to make it in to the reserve with care.

Mark Clayton

Sunday 8 October – K2C surveys, Bredbo area

COG will continue with the K2C surveys that have been running since April 2010. The surveyed properties have healthy populations of many of the rarer woodland birds such as **Diamond Firetail**, **Hooded Robin** and **Speckled Warbler**. We will be visiting the same sites to continue the monitoring and see if we can add to the property lists with spring-summer migrants. The surveys will be undertaken in 'blitz' fashion; that is, observers in small groups will visit a number of sites on one or more properties before regrouping for lunch and a sharing of the survey's findings. Less experienced observers are welcome to join in the survey as each team will have at least one experienced observer. Anyone interested in participating is asked to contact Nicki Taws **before Wednesday 4 October**. Email: ntaws@bigpond.com or 0408 210736.

Monday 9 to Friday 13 October – Green Cape – accommodated

For some time now, COG has visited Green Cape every second year to stay in the former lighthouse keepers' cottages and enjoy the wonderful wildlife watching (birds and whales, in particular) in Ben Boyd National Park and in the surrounding seas. There are only 14 places available for this trip. The commitment is for a 4-night stay – no concession for shorter stays. Accommodation costs will be finalised once numbers are known. There is also a \$7 fee per car per day to enter Ben Boyd National Park. This can be paid at a self-registration booth on arrival. An alternative is a single park pass which costs \$22 and is available online.

To register, email smlashko@gmail.com. As with all COG trips, preference will be given to COG members. More detailed information will be sent to participants.

Note: this trip is now full but you are welcome to go on a waiting list in case of late withdrawals.

Sue Lashko and Peter Fullagar

Sunday 15 October – Berrabangalo TSR (Gunning), Wet Lagoon (Breadalbane) and Collector Reserve and TSR- day outing

Bill Graham will lead this trip to lesser known spots north of Canberra. Target species include **Pied Butcherbird, Latham's Snipe, Diamond Firetail, Whistling Kite, Glossy Ibis** and **Southern Whiteface**. Meet at 8.00 am in the carpark opposite the Sutton Bakery for carpooling. Suggested contribution to driver from each passenger: \$10. Bring morning tea, lunch and drinks.

Registration for this trip is essential: please phone Bill Graham on 0466 874 723 or email cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Bill Graham

Friday 13 to Sunday 22 October (approx.) – Northern NSW – extended camping trip

We will spend 3 full days in the Pilliga and then stay on a property near Moree, close to Gwydir Wetlands from the afternoon of Tues 17 to Sat 21. Participants can camp or stay in the shearers' huts at Moree. If you are interested please contact me by email smlashko@gmail.com

Sue Lashko

Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 October – Bird Blitz

(see notice on Page 8 of September *Gang-gang*)



MUDBRICK COTTAGE—MALLACOOTA

Our mudbrick cottage (Blue Wren Cottage) is available for rental. It is set amongst the trees in Mallacoota, Victoria (approximately 4 hours drive from Canberra).

10 minutes walk to the beach, 5 minutes walk to the golf course and about 15 minutes walk to town.

It sleeps 4-6 upstairs and there is a sofa bed downstairs. It is fully self-contained with a kitchen and laundry.

Contact: Barbara de Bruine (02) 6258 3531, or barbdebruine@hotmail.com

Woodland Surveys– Winter Round Part 2

compiled by Jenny Bounds

Jerrabomberra West NR

The winter survey was done on 29 June by Jenny Bounds and Alison Russell-French, with a delayed start near 9am. Unfortunately it was foggy on site in the Jerrabomberra Valley, with a noticeable frost on the ground except in the more sheltered woodland. Jenny could not recall starting a bird survey when the temperature was minus 1°; at the end of the survey, the sun was out, but it was still only around 7°.

The first two sites on the grassland edge were foggy but visibility was still OK to the 50 metre plot outer edge; **Common Starlings** making lots of calls were the feature species at both sites, Jenny had 8 species and Alison 6 species, more than was anticipated given the conditions. At the next four sites in the higher quality, more sheltered woodland, bird numbers were low, but **Weebills** and both species of pardalotes were around and **Buff-rumped Thornbills** at one site; mixed groups seemed to be small with only a couple of species.

Two **Grey Fantails** were recorded separately there which was interesting, as well as a pair of **Scarlet Robins** between sites in the general area where they are recorded most winters, and a **Double-barred Finch** was heard near the reserve edge not far from a house in a neighbouring leasehold. A **Grey Currawong** was heard and a rarely recorded **Common Bronzewing** was seen flying. Noticeable absentees were Willie Wagtail, Golden Whistler and Speckled Warbler, and raptors. The total species count was only 23, the equal lowest count since the survey started in 2006.

Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson surveyed on Saturday 24 June. By the time the first site was surveyed it was clear and still, so a pleasant winter's day. Sites 1 and 3 were the most productive, with eight and seven species respectively. Two **Rainbow Lorikeets** were seen at site 3, and two were also seen inside the spout of a hollow at site 2. They seem to be a permanent fixture at these two sites now. Thirty **Common Starlings** and 21 **Common Mynas** at Site 3 ensured that there were no small birds there. In fact, apart from a small flock of **Striated Thornbills** at site 4 and a few **Weebills** at sites 1 and 6, very few little birds were observed in the sites.

Two small mixed feeding flocks between sites, comprising thornbills, **Spotted Pardalotes**, **Weebills**, a pair of **Scarlet**

Robins, a **Grey Shrike-thrush** and a **Grey Fantail**, boosted the species numbers to 28 overall, with 17 in survey sites.

Rural leasehold near Tharwa

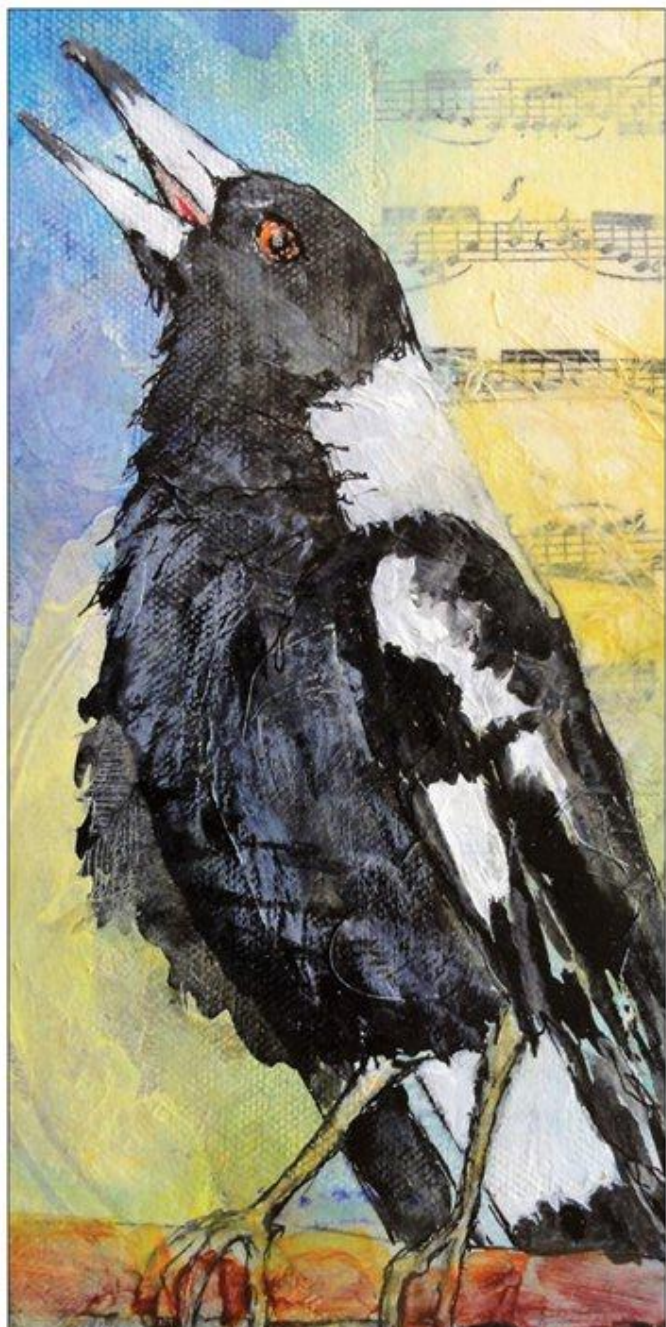
David McDonald surveyed on the morning of 25 June, commencing a little later than usual to allow time for the fog to lift. It was a beautiful winter's day: cold, clear and dead calm: perfect for birders but apparently not so for birds as both species diversity and bird abundance were disappointingly low.

Just 14 species were counted within the sites. The most abundant were **Australian Wood Duck** and **Buff-rumped Thornbill**, 14 of each, followed by **Weebill** and **Superb Fairy-wren**, 11 of each. The most widespread species were **Galah** and **Australian Magpie**, both observed at three sites. There were no Little Ravens and no honeyeaters and, disappointingly, no records of the vulnerable species usually recorded there.



Eastern Whipbird (Monga)

Ryu Callaway



Birdwatchers & nature lover's accommodation

Feathers'n'Friends cottage is fully self-contained with extensive facilities to ensure guests can enjoy short or extended stays.

The secluded lodging is surrounded by tropical rainforest and beautiful gardens with varying habitats and a large variety of birds and wildlife.

Activities in the area include birdwatching at nearby Mt Lewis and other birdwatching locations, as well as Daintree River nature tours and other attractions.

Discounts available for Birdlife Australia members.

Check our website for comprehensive details, rates, and bookings:

www.feathersnfriends.com.au

Fred & Jeanette Birkbeck

244 Clacherty Road
Julatten QLD 4871

Tel: 07 4094 1665

Email: freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au

Songbirds

An exhibition of paintings and works on paper by Anne Balcomb

31 August to 17 September 2017

You are invited to join me at the exhibition opening by Gary Humphries, Chair RSPCA
Australia

Saturday 2 September at 4pm

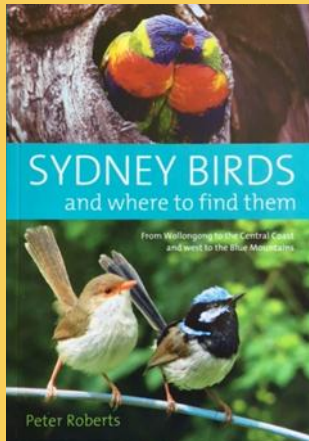


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Gallery + Shop
10am - 4pm Thursday to Sunday
Cafe
Open Thursday to Sunday till 4pm



BOOK OF THE MONTH



Sydney Birds and where to find them

Peter Roberts

A guide to where to see birds in and around Sydney - from Wollongong to the Central Coast and west to the Blue Mountains.

Sydney Birds and Where to Find Them features the 30 top bird-watching localities in and around Sydney. These birding hot spots stretch from Tuggerah Lakes on the Central Coast to Lake Illawarra near Wollongong and from the Blue Mountains in the west to some surprisingly accessible sites tucked away in the heart of the city.

Members' Price \$30.

Publications for sale

COG provides a range of bird watching related publications for sale to members at discounted prices (around 10-30% off RRP).

Below are highlighted a sample of popular publications available from the sales desk at COG meetings. We get new books in all the time and sometimes popular books sell out, but they can easily be re-ordered. If you are looking for a particular book, talk to the sales desk team at the meeting, as they can look at ordering it for you or contact Kathy on

sales@canberrabirds.org.au

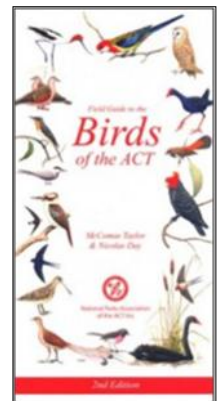
NEW BOOKS IN STOCK

Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT

McComas Taylor & Nicolas Day

Sized to fit in your pocket, this compact field guide describes 207 birds seen in the ACT. An ideal bird guide for the local area.

Members' price: \$20

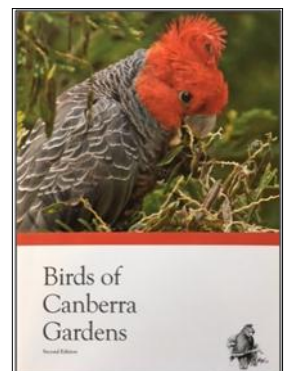


Birds of Canberra Gardens

Canberra Ornithologists Group

This book is based on the observation of more than 200 bird species in and around Canberra suburban gardens and in adjacent Canberra parks and open spaces. It describes the abundance and distribution of birds, and discusses how the birds are likely to be found at different times throughout the year, and in different places. The book also provides some ideas on how your garden may be made more attractive to native birds.

Members' price: \$20

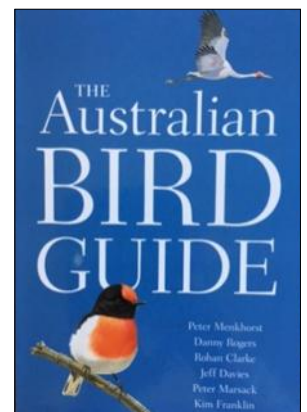


The Australian Bird Guide

Peter Menkhurst, Danny Rogers, Rohan Clarke, Jeff Davies, Peter Marsack, Kim Franklin

The most comprehensive field guide to Australian birds ever seen. The guide features around 4700 colour illustrations, with particular emphasis on providing the fine detail required to identify difficult groups and distinctive plumages. Comprehensive species accounts have been written by a dedicated team of ornithologists to ensure identification details, distribution and status are current and accurate.

Members' price \$38



Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

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

COG membership

2017-2018 memberships:

- Singles: \$40
- Family: \$45
- Institution: \$40
- School student (under 18) \$20

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

L Manderson
A Pan
A Milton
T Bonnet
P Achurch
R Stevens
S Gardiner
M Clarke
P Moyes
C Ratnayake
R Rehwinkel

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for October 2017 edition

Wednesday 27 September 2017

Please send articles, advertisements, updates etc. to the Editors at:

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

or

c/- The Secretary COG,

PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608

Articles should be less than 500 words (300 for reports of 1-day field trips) except by prior arrangement with the editor.

Photographs (prints or electronic) with or without articles are encouraged.

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COG E-mail Discussion List

COG has an email discussion list for members and friends: 'CanberraBirds'.

Join (subscribe to) the list by following the links on the COG website or by sending an email message to canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au. The subject line and body of the email can be empty.

To unsubscribe, either permanently or temporarily, send an email message to canberrabirds-unsubscribe@canberrabirds.org.au.

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