



Gang-gang

MARCH 2023

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

MARCH MEETING

Wednesday 8 March 2023

7.30 pm

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

The March meeting will be a normal face-to-face one held at our usual venue. Attendees should heed social distancing and good hygiene practice etc, and use their common sense and stay home if they have COVID symptoms. Mask wearing is recommended.

This month there will be 3 presentations expected to take up the same time as the usual short and main talks.

Silvia Colombo - Evolutionary drivers and thermal consequences of nest architecture in birds

Sue Beatty - Extreme Birding on Cocos Island

Michael Guppy and Peter Fullagar - An Analysis of the Dawn Chorus Song of a Male Grey Shrike-thrush

The first presentation will be by **Silvia Colombo**, a Ph D student at the University of Melbourne and a recipient of funding

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Everyone welcome

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

The weather over the 4 weeks from 25 January to 21 February inclusive covered by this column has been warm to hot, but with sufficient rain falling in four main events to keep the grasses, etc, reasonably green. However, bird (but not necessarily birder!) activity in the COG Area of Interest (Aoi) again seems to have been rather quiet, at least rather low in terms of bird variety with, except for two very unexpected species, few "Unusual" birds reported.

The first of these was the **Comb-crested Jacana** observed at Rowes Lagoon northeast of Collector. After some initial alerts it was first reported on eBird from there by Rainer Rehwinkel on the afternoon of 31 January and subsequently relatively easily found by many observers up to 19 February, with Martin Butterfield noting it was his second easiest twitch ever; he found it within 3 minutes of pulling off the highway. This is a species

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Victor Braguine

Comb-crested Jacana

from the Canberra Bird Conservation Fund, with the title: **“Evolutionary drivers and thermal consequences of nest architecture in birds.”**

Nests evolved in birds to create a suitable environment to lay eggs and raise nestlings. Building an appropriate nest structure that can protect from environmental conditions and harsh ambient temperatures is a fundamental behaviour that increases offspring survival. We still ignore the drivers underlying the global evolution of nest architecture as well as the variables driving the transition from domed to open nests. We aimed to investigate whether nests with a roof (domed nests) (i) evolved as an adaptation to extreme temperatures, (ii) offer different thermal environments compared to open nests, and (iii) have specific traits that make them better adapted to extremely cold or hot arid environments.

We collected data on nest microenvironment in domed and open nests in Campbell Park, Canberra. We opportunistically included all the open and domed Passerines nests available during the breeding season belonging to the following species: Weebill, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Yellow-rumped Thornbill and Superb Fairy-wren. This project is expected to allow us to understand how nest architecture can protect eggs in a future scenario of harsh temperatures caused by contemporary climate change.

The second talk will be by **Sue Beatty** on the **“Extreme Birding on Cocos Island”**, the second half of her February presentation on her recent trip to Christmas and Cocos Islands.

Michael Guppy and **Peter Fullagar** will then present on **“An Analysis of the Dawn Chorus Song of a Male Grey Shrike Thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*).”**

The vocalisations of the Grey Shrike-thrush are loud, clear, pleasing to the ear, and a stand-out feature of the bird song in areas in which they occur. However, almost nothing is known about the character of this very obvious song. We have made some recordings of the dawn song of a male individual down near Moruya. The song comprised discreet groups of notes which we call syllables. The syllables are sung about every 5-10 seconds, and the individual produced 20 different syllables over the course of the eight recordings. Various analyses revealed that new syllables were added gradually over the recording period. The frequency of use of particular syllables varied markedly; it was common for some syllables to be used as repeats, particular syllable couplets were commonly used as alternations, and the sequence of syllables could be remarkably similar between different recordings. We suggest a way forward to determine whether these patterns are a common feature of the vocalisations of this species.

Committee News

The Canberra Birds (COG) committee met by Zoom on 16 February and in person for a planning session on 11 February. If you have ideas about how we can celebrate COG’s 60th birthday next year, and the energy and enthusiasm to help make those ideas happen, please let the committee know.

The committee is keen to fill the vacant treasurer’s position.

Building work at Canberra Girls Grammar – we have been asked to keep clear of the building work near the Boarding House on Chapel Drive. There is parking in La Trobe Park, Bedford Street if the school areas are full. It might be useful to bring a torch as the evenings get darker.

Neil Hermes *President* Alison Mackerras *Minutes Secretary*

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

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that doesn't feature in COG's 2018-2019 Annual Bird Report (ABR), the November 2017 Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the Australian Capital Territory on the COG website, or in Steve Wilson's Book: Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change. This is no surprise as it is a species mainly of the northeast and north coasts of Australia, with the nearest sighting since 2018 (and where it has also been regularly observed in 2023) being the MacPherson Road Swamp at Wyong over 200 km to the northeast. Why this species would extend its range by such a distance and in particular find the conditions at Rows Lagoon suitable is unclear to me.

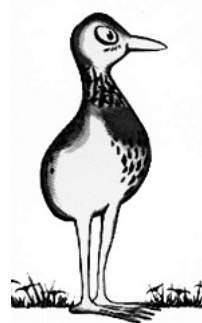
The second unusual species was the **Purple-crowned Lorikeet** first reported from Bowen Park by Shorty on 10 February, and subsequently seen by many observers, including 2 birds by several, the best spot being the large flowering gum tree at the back of the café there. COG's 2018-2019 ABR lists this as a non-breeding vagrant, a nomadic species feeding mainly on flowering eucalypts, with the ACT being well to the east of its normal range. It notes a number of previous records in 2013 and 2014 (observers recalled that these were from around Lyttleton Crescent in Cook), but only one record before that in 1968.

Shorty has informed me that the COG Rarities Panel has determined they were vagrants (as they were in 2013-2014). It is noted that (by far) the closest record to date in 2023 is 2 birds on 15 January from Lake Moodemere off the Murray River near Indigo in Victoria around 220 km away. In contrast to the above this species has not been reported since 13 February despite considerable observer effort. This again poses the question, to where have these birds gone, similar to the **Pacific Baza**, **Greater Bluebonnet** and **Turquoise Parrot** that were the subject of intense focus in 2022? Compared with the jacana, observers often had to be very patient before they appeared, and I suspect they are not far away in this case and it's worth checking your local flowering eucalypts very closely.



Purple-crowned Lorikeet

Shorty



**Australian
Ornithological
Services P/L**

PO Box 385
South Yarra 3141
Victoria
04173 10200

enquiries@philipmaher.com

Good birding, good food

2023 tours

Gulf of Carpentaria

16 June to 3 July 2023

Plains-wanderer Weekends

7/8 & 21/22 October 2023

4/5 & 18/19 November 2023

2024 tours

Kutini - Payamu

(Iron Range NP) Wet Season

4 to 10 January 2024

Cairns to Lockhart River

Far North Queensland

1 to 14 May 2024

Part 1: Atherton Tablelands,

Part 2: Musgrave, Archer River

Kutini – Payamu (Iron Range NP)

Top End

Late June/July 2024

Darwin, Kakadu NP, Pine Creek,
Katherine, Victoria River, Timber
Creek, Kununurra.

Optional Black Grasswren air
charter to Mitchell Plateau

Please contact Patricia Maher for
information & itineraries.

www.philipmaher.com

As predicted, there were no reports during the period of the **Brown Songlark**, or of the **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallows**, and the first COG AoI reports for 2023 would now not be expected until spring, particularly if conditions have dried out.

Sightings of the **Horsfield's Bushlark** have been only at Parkwood Rd Wallaroo, where two (possibly more) birds were heard on 26 January, and another bird reported on 29 January. During the period **Rufous Songlarks** were still reported from 5 locations, with the last of 4 being heard on 1 February. However, on 10 February Kym Bradley photographed one, clearly identified by its rufous rump and all black tail, from her patch to the south of Canberra. Based on its dark bill it appeared to be a male still in breeding plumage; otherwise the bill is pale as for the smaller female. In contrast the **White-winged Triller** was reported from just 2 locations, with the last one reported from Kama NR on 21 February. The possible reason why these inland species have left relatively early compared with previous spring/summers, despite the similar good conditions, is because of how few there have been in the COG AoI this year.

Likewise, the **Pallid Cuckoo** for which the only report during the period was one heard on Captain's Flat Rd on 25 January. However, the coastal species, the **Channel-billed Cuckoo**, also has not been reported so far in 2023, despite the many reports before the New Year. Of the other less common spring/summer migrants, the other coastal species the **Common Cicadabird** was reported from 5 locations during the period and was last heard on 12 February.

The **White-throated Needletail** has been reported only at 2 locations during the period, including from Warks Rd where on 26 January James Churches photographed several of the many, many dozen (it could have been 100+) that came with the cloud front. They were very fast from very, very high all the way down to canopy level. The other location was Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR where 4 were photographed on 7 February with a further bird reported on 19 February. The related **Fork-tailed Swift** was not reported during the period, and it seems that again it is a poor season for them, despite the conditions. So, until early April please keep a lookout for the above, especially the last two species, particularly (but not exclusively) when there are storm clouds around.

During March please also keep an eye out for the other departing spring/summer migrant species such as the **Dollarbird**, **Rainbow Bee-eater** (listen for them calling overhead as they migrate north) and **Sacred Kingfisher**, which all usually leave, in that order, by mid-March (all three were still widely reported during February, up to the time of writing).

Other birds that mostly have left by the end of March/early April include the **Shining** and **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Brush Cuckoo**, **Eastern Koel**, **Latham's Snipe**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Australian Reed-Warbler** (often very quiet in March), **Tree** and **Fairy Martins**, all of which were still widely reported in February. Towards the end of March, the first **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** will start their migration. The passage migrants, the **Satin Flycatcher** and **Rufous Fantail**, were both still reported from the mountains to the southwest of Canberra or around Tallaganda NP, an indication that they had not yet started to move, except for a report of 1 of the latter at Jerrabomberra Wetlands on 15 February.

Of the species that return to Canberra and its surrounds from the mountains and higher country to spend autumn/winter here, there have been a few reports from urban and peri-urban locations of the **White-eared Honeyeater** and the **Golden Whistler** (5 and 3, respectively), during the period, indicating they are yet to come in in numbers. However, there were reports of **Scarlet Robins** from around 10 such locations indicating they have already started to move closer, but none of the **Flame** or **Rose Robin**. There have been no further reports of the **Pink Robin** following the rare observation of an immature or female in Tallaganda NP in January. There were again no reports of the inland species, the **Red-capped Robin**, anywhere in the COG AoI during the period: in fact the closest recent report seems to be from Bimbi SF near the Weddin Mountains, over 150 km to the northwest.

There was still a report of a **Crescent Honeyeater** (heard at the ANBG on 27 January), but no reports of the **Yellow-tufted**



Rufous Fantail

Victor Braguine

Honeyeater anywhere in the COG AoI during the period. So please look out for the above species as they move into Canberra and surrounds. Towards the end of March please also look out for any early **Swift Parrots** migrating from Tasmania; it will be interesting to see if they visit Canberra this autumn/winter, and this is likely to depend on the amount of flowering available.

There have been no reports of **Plumed Whistling Ducks** or **Freckled Ducks** during the period, with the closest reports being from Forbes 100 km away and Seymour over 300 km away in Victoria, respectively. In fact, there seem to be only two reports for the latter in NSW or Victoria during the period, the other being at Fowlers Gap, in the extreme northwest of NSW. **Australian Shelducks** were reported from 7 locations to the east and northeast of Canberra during the period, with by far the highest numbers being at the Wollongorang Lagoon, where a maximum of 400 were counted on 31 January.



Blue-billed Duck

Shorty

Single, and on one occasion three, **Blue-billed Ducks** were reported from 4 well-separated locations during the period. On 11 February at Jerrabomberra Wetlands, Shorty spotted a male **Blue-billed Duck** walk up on the dead reeds and preen and flap its wings for about 10 minutes. He noted it was the first time he had seen this species not in the water; it certainly is most unusual behaviour in my experience. Apart from Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary up to 7 **Musk Ducks** were reported from 7 locations. Other than a single bird on the farm dam on Lakes Rd on 10 February, **Great-crested Grebe** were reported only from Cotter Dam, with an adult with 3 half-grown chicks reported from Bracks Hole on 16 February.

Stubble Quail were reported from around 17 locations, down from the 28 locations in January, probably indicating less calling. **Brown Quail** were reported from

24 locations, similar to that in January. Just a single **Painted Button-quail** was reported, heard from Cuumbeun NR on 25 January, a significant drop in reports compared with the past several years. There were no reports of **Little Button-quail**, **White-headed Pigeon**, **Diamond** or **Peaceful Doves** during the period. A single **Brush Bronzewing** was reported from 2 close together spots in the Brindabellas during the period.

Single (except for two on one occasion) **Spotless Crakes** were reported from 4 locations in the period. A single **Baillon's Crake** was reported only from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 5 February, from where 2 **Australian Spotted Crakes** were also reported on 20 February. Single **Lewin's Rails** were reported only from 2 locations, from Ginninderra Creek at Giralang on 8 February, and from the Old Federal Highway near Bywong on 31 January. Single **Buff-banded Rails** were reported from only 3 locations, Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 5 February, North Watson Wetlands on 26 January and 18 February, and near the big dam at Mulligans Flat NR on 29 January.

Twenty-six **Banded Lapwings**, were reported from Braidwood Road, Turrumbidgee (just south of Goulburn) on 19 February but no **Red-necked Avocets**, **Red-necked Stints** or **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** were reported during the period. The **Common Sandpiper** was regularly recorded from the northern end of Lake Tuggeranong including the Village Creek gross pollutant trap. On 11 February Christine photographed it on the floating vegetation beds in the lake. She noted it was initially snoozing, but when awake was seen to bob several times. It was "hobnobbing" with a **Black Swan** but noted as smaller than the swan's foot!. No **Caspian** or **Whiskered Terns**, **Australian Little Bittern** or **Little Egrets** were reported during the period, but up to 3 **Intermediate Egrets** were reported by many observers at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR from 30 January up to the time of writing, with 1 or 2 seen at West Belconnen Pond on 5-6 February.

Single **Barn Owl** were reported from 3 locations by Zebedee Muller, all on Uriarra Rd on either side of Uriarra Crossing, and all just after midnight on 31 January. Up to 2 **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from 9 locations during the period, similar to January. The **Nankeen Kestrel** was reported from around 35 locations during the period, down from the around 50 in January. There were no reports of the **Spotted Harrier**, **Grey Goshawk**, **Pacific Baza**, **Black Kite** or **Black Falcon** during the period.

An **Azure Kingfisher** (and on one occasion two birds) was reported from Cotter Reserve, mainly at Cotter Bend, by a number of observers from 2-21 February, with a further one seen at the Sanctuary at Tidbinbilla NR on 12 February. No **Glossy Black-Cockatoos**, **Turquoise Parrots**, **Greater Bluebonnets**, **Cockatiel** or **Little Lorikeets** were reported over the period. However, two **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** were reported from Drakeford Drive on 31 January, whereas **Musk Lorikeets** were reported

from 4 locations, most of these while **Purple-crown Lorikeet** watching at Bowen Park, but with a maximum of 12 birds feeding in flowering gums at the nearby St Marks and Barton grasslands.

No **Singing, Spiny-cheeked** or **Scarlet Honeyeaters**, or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period, but separately 1 and 8 **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** were reported from Yass on 8 February. Two **White-fronted Chats** were reported from the main dam at the National Arboretum on 17 February. While there were no **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes** or **Tawny Grassbirds** reported during the period, on 30 January John Layton looked out of his kitchen window in Holt and saw four **Zebra Finches** feeding among short-mown grass. One bird was in juvenile plumage. The status of this species in the COG Aol is very unclear, with eBird showing reports from only 2 locations in the COG Aol since 1 January 2018, with up to 6 birds reported from Jerrabomberra Wetlands early in January 2019, and 2 birds at Tuggeranong Hill on 14 February 2021. The closest report so far in 2023 is from Bickley Vale southwest of Sydney, around 170 km away.

Of the birds I have continued to ask readers to keep a special lookout for in 2023, a single **Jacky Winter** was reported from Glendale Depot only on 25 January, and also single birds were observed at Gambles TSR near Sutton on 7 and 14 February. However, Kym Bradley reported that 2 pairs both had 2 young at her patch to the south of the Canberra. Also disappointing were the reports of **Hooded Robins** only at Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 26 and 28 January. However, the 2 birds photographed by separate observers on the former date both included a rather scruffy male and a clearly very spotted juvenile. Kym Bradley also had a pair with two young at her patch. **Restless Flycatchers** were reported from just 3 locations, single birds at the Glendale Depot on 25 and 26 January, and at Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary on 8 February, but again most sightings were at Nelanglo TSR where up to three birds were reported between 1 and 14 February.

So, while the reports of breeding for two of these three species are welcome, that they have each only been reported from a maximum of 3 sites is cause for continuing concern. Apart from the **Great-crested Grebe** and **Zebra Finch** breeding reports above, other interesting breeding observations include:

- In addition to the above Kym Bradley has indicated successful breeding of **Fan-tailed Cuckoos**, **Wedge-tailed Eagles**, **Rainbow Bee-eaters**, **Dusky Woodswallows**, **Tree** and **Fairy Martins** and **Double-barred Finches** from her patch, indicating a very successful breeding season there and elsewhere.

- Also drawn to my attention has been the successful breeding of several pairs of **Australasian Grebes**, and reports of a number of **Southern Boobook** families roosting in trees.

- After the very slow start, breeding reports of the **Eastern Koel** increased significantly, especially in the second half of the period, with my count at c.o.b. on 21 February being 105 fledglings, with all the known hosts being **Red Wattlebirds** (RWB). My personal tally in my local patch in Chapman/Rivett is 7 fledglings (with a couple to be fully confirmed), well down on this time last season. Very interesting is that locally adult Koels have been calling much longer than usual, with a pair or even more still calling regularly up to the time of writing. So I expect the season to be an extended one, as were the past two. There have been a couple of instances of two fledglings together, a couple of them being fed from a food table or when food was presented to the host, and several of them first seen in the nest or seen drinking at a bird bath. However, the following are well worth including in more detail:

- Terry Munro's RWBs had built a second nest quite close to their first and were brooding a featherless chick when it was attacked by a female **Eastern Koel**. Terry saw it shaking the chick and found it shortly afterwards at the bottom of the tree along with lots of feathers from the parent. The RWBs built a further nest (he had no way of being sure but believed it was the same RWB pair) and early in February he confirmed they were feeding a juvenile Koel in the nest, which fledged on 6 February. To my knowledge this has never been reported for the **Eastern Koel**, certainly not in the ACT, or even eggs seen removed for that matter. My checking shows that while Virginia Abernathy studied parasitised nests both here and in Sydney in her Ph D studies it's not clear from her papers whether she ever actually witnessed the removal of RWB eggs or fledglings.



Southern Boobook

Robin Eckermann

- For a second season Julie Clark had an **Eastern Koel** fledgling present in her Amaroo garden for an extended period, this time for 35 days (it was last seen on 11 February). She has again been able to take a series of photos of its development, a suspected female this time as she didn't develop the dark patches on the chest, wings and back like the previous one. She also appeared to be getting lighter underneath and developing white spots on the wings and back, although changes seemed to be somewhat slower than with the male juvenile. It was very interesting that an adult male was present the day before she left, visiting the bird bath and lingering for some time. The juvenile was taking food from Julie - chopped fruit a couple of times a day but it was obviously feeding itself as the RWBs stopped feeding her before the end of January. She was pretty confident and often out in the open, happy to land on the grass, tiled pergola floor, outdoor table, shed roof etc and all the other birds were very wary of her. She chased away cockies, currawongs, magpies, king parrots, etc.

Finally, the report in my previous column of a young **Eastern Koel** in the middle of the wooded ridge in Glenoval Rd Lake Bathurst on 3 January was the result of a transcription error on eBird, and therefore was not a very rare rural breeding record.

Apart from the small one in my garden (mainly comprising **Superb Fairy-wrens**, **Brown Thornbills**, **White-browed Scrub-wrens** and **Eastern Spinebills**, with **Willie Wagtails** around the edges) over the period, no reports of mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) have come to my attention. So please look out for this autumn phenomenon especially for the unexpected species often quietly feeding in amongst all the activity. A **Common Myna** roost has also again been forming just outside my GBS site, with at last count around 85 birds (plus 20 **Common Starlings**) utilising it.

March is the middle month when there is lots of bird movement and activity in the COG AoI. So please watch out for the last of the departing spring/summer migrants mentioned above, particularly the **White-throated Needle-tail** and the **Fork-tailed Swift**, and for the first of the returning autumn/winter altitudinal migrants, MFFs and single species flocks, as well as roosts and roost flights. Please also continue to keep a special look out for the **Restless Flycatcher**, **Jacky Winter** and **Hooded Robin**, as the continuing low number of reports, especially for the latter two, is disheartening. As usual please ensure that all significant sightings are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

Once again, my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to my two main data sources, posting on the COG email Discussion List ("COG chatline") and the eBird Australia database, as well as direct correspondence with me. As always, I am very grateful to all involved for publishing this information without which it would not be possible to put this column together.

Jack Holland

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday 23 April from 4.00 pm onwards

The COG committee invites

COG VOLUNTEERS AND POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS

to an event to celebrate and thank our dedicated volunteers and welcome new potential volunteers.

A fun event is planned with details to be provided in the April issue of Gang-gang and on the chatline.

Future Field Trips

COG Trips

Each participant must register prior to their chosen trip with their name and contact number and, before proceeding on the trip, must comply with the participant's responsibilities (wording follows). An emergency contact name and phone number are required.

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

New birders and visitors are welcome. If you do not have your own binoculars, COG can lend you a pair, so please advise the trip leader when you register.

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

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

DO NOT ATTEND if you have tested positive for Covid,
have been a close contact within the past 7 days,
or have any Covid, cold or flu symptoms.

Sunday 5 March - Casuarina Sands

Description: Walk along Murrumbidgee River towards Kambah Pool. Some uneven ground but relatively flat. Birding is usually good and can include **Dollarbird, Rainbow Bee-eater, Shining Bronze Cuckoo**.

Meeting time and place: Casuarina Sands carpark 8.30am

Walking distance: 3-4 km

Degree of difficulty: Easy/medium

End time (approx.): 11.00am

What to bring: Water, snack

Participants must register with the leader prue.watters@gmail.com, providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Numbers limited: to 15

Sunday 12 March - Red Rocks Gorge

Description: We will walk from Kambah Pool to a point along the track where we can look out at Red Rocks Gorge, then return along the same track.

eBird hotspots: <https://ebird.org/australia/hotspot/L4650287>

Meeting time and place: 8:30 am at the carpark at Kambah Pool.

Walking distance: 6.4 km

Degree of difficulty: Easy walking along a formed track, which is part of the Canberra Centenary Trail.

End time (approx.): 11 am

What to bring: Wear sturdy walking shoes and bring water, sunscreen and a snack, although there are no seats along this stretch of the river.

Registration: Essential. Please register with the leader, providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact, for each person that you wish to register, before 5pm, Friday 10 March 2023.

Numbers limited: 15 participants

Name of leader and contact detail: Lia Battisson liabattisson@grapevine.com.au

Wednesday 15 March - Stony Creek Nature Reserve/Uriarra East Reserve

Meet at Uriarra East Reserve at 8.30am.

We will walk around Uriarra East Reserve first, then venture into Stony Creek Reserve, which follows the river south. Both reserves have significant bird lists.

Wear sturdy shoes, bring a hat, water and sunscreen.

Uriarra East is a picnic area and easy walking. The walk into Stony Creek has a couple of steep, short sections. I will check the conditions a few days ahead of the outing date to see what the track is like - if it has been mown it should be quite OK. The walk will be about three hours.

Register with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com) with name and phone number, and name and number for an emergency contact.

Sunday 19 March - Googong Foreshores

Description: we will walk the western foreshore of Googong Dam. A good range of waterbirds and bush birds can be found, and over 100 species have been reported here.

Meeting time and place: Meet at the carpark for the foreshores at 8.30am. You need to get onto Old Cooma Road out of Queanbeyan. Once on Old Cooma Road, continue on to the left turn onto Googong Road. Follow Googong Road past the Googong township all the way to the Googong Foreshores carpark. This is just before the locked gate.

eBird hotspot: <https://ebird.org/australia/hotspot/L3877216>

Walking distance: 2km

Degree of difficulty: easy

End time (approx.): 11am

What to bring: water, sturdy footwear, hat, sunscreen. Bring morning tea.

Participants must register with the leader, providing their name and mobile number, and the name

and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Name of leader and contact details: Sandra Henderson, shirmax2931@gmail.com

Tuesday 21 to Friday 24 March – Ulladulla/Milton, NSW South Coast

Ulladulla/Milton is in the Shoalhaven district south of Nowra. Sites will include South Pacific Heathland Reserve, Morton National Park, Mt Bushwalker Track and Garrad Reserve. We will stay at Holiday Haven, Ulladulla. Target species for the trip will be **Glossy Black Cockatoo**,

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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

Beautiful Firetail, Rockwarbler, Square-tailed Kite and Southern Emu-wren. Numbers limited. **To register** for this trip and receive further information, please contact **Bill Graham** at graham.br63@grapevine.com.au
Please register asap as accommodation is likely to be in high demand and bookings will need to be made very soon.

Sunday 26 March – Tinderry Nature Reserve

The Tinderry Nature Reserve is a large reserve to the east of Michelago and to the south of Burra in NSW. It is well-frequented by bushwalkers visiting the great Tinderry peaks. I propose to visit a little-known and rarely-birded section of sub-alpine woodland in the Cassidy's Creek area, accessed from Burra Road.

The woodland has a range of good bush birds, including pardalotes, thornbills and honeyeaters.

Meet at 8.00am at the Kambah shops (corner Marconi and Drakeford). Please note that there is a wire fence to step over at the outset to this walk and which marks the boundary of the reserve. The fence is waist-high for me. As usual, bring water, hat, sunscreen and wear sturdy shoes.

Register with David (david.dedenczuk@gmail.com or by text to 0417 222 154 by COB Friday 24 March 2023) with your name and number, and name and number of an emergency contact. Numbers limited to 12 as there is limited parking at the entrance to the reserve.

Sunday 2 April - Weston Ponds

Meet at 8.30 am at a sitting area by the side of Coombs Pond, adjacent to Terry Connolly St Coombs. Kerbside parking is available on this and adjoining streets and on Madgwick St on the opposite side of the Pond. This will be a relaxed circular walk taking in some urban ponds in this new housing development area, and nearby bushland along the margin of the Molonglo River - an ideal walk for beginners. Amongst a mix of water and bush birds we may encounter **White-fronted chat**, which are not uncommon in this area. Bring morning tea with you, as well as the usual water, sunscreen, hat and good walking shoes. There are no difficult tracks to be negotiated.

Register with Doug Laing at lilley@iimetro.com with your name and phone number, as well as the name and phone number of an emergency contact.

Easter Saturday 8 April - Narrabundah Hill - morning outing

Description: Those members who will be staying at home this Easter and/or who will have visiting birder friends are welcome to join this outing to the Narrabundah Hill reserve. It has again been timed for the autumn honeyeater migration season, with the northern and western boundaries of the reserve being known local migration routes. We will walk along these two boundaries, depending on conditions and the species seen, and we will either return by the same or a different path. This will be around 4 km on relatively flat ground. We will also look for other autumn birds such as the **Scarlet Robin** and mixed feeding flocks, or late departing summer migrants such as the gerygones.

Meeting time: As it is Daylight Savings, **this walk will start at 8:30 am** to maximise the opportunity to see the honeyeaters which generally come through late in the morning in early April (we saw over 2500 birds there at a similar timing in 2019).

Meeting place: Meet at the parking area and stile at the northeast end of the reserve, at the corner of Warragamba Avenue and Eucumbene Drive, Duffy. **Please note that the entry to this parking area is a little tricky and is in fact about 25 metres past (on the Mount Stromlo side) the T-junction with Warragamba Avenue, and for those driving along Eucumbene Drive from Duffy involves a quite tricky 180 degrees turn, so please take care. Please take water and morning tea to have on the track.**

Name of leader and contact details: To participate, please contact Jack Holland by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com – please include your mobile, and emergency contact name and number.

Sunday 16 April - K2C surveys near Bredbo

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 Tuesday 11 April**. Email: ntaws@bigpond.com or 0408 210736.

Sunday 23 April - Stony Creek Nature Reserve, Carwoola

Meet at the entry to the reserve at 9am. Stony Creek NR is on Captains Flat Rd, at the Clydesdale Rd turnoff (about 5km along from the Kings Hwy intersection). Stony Creek NR entry is directly opposite Clydesdale Rd, but the sign is well hidden by vegetation. Numbers limited to 16 attendees.

Bring: sturdy shoes, water, hat, sunscreen.

When I was last there the track was quite rough, and much of the time I was off track. There are no visitor facilities.

Stony Creek was gazetted as a Nature Reserve in 2001, but had been a Camping Reserve since the 1870s. It covers 80ha, and hasn't burnt for at least 50 years. **Speckled Warblers, Painted Buttonquail, Varied Sittella** and **Grey Currawong** are among the more than 75 species seen there.

Register with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com), with name and phone number, and name and number for an emergency contact.

Sunday 30 April 2023 – Reedy Creek TSR, Mt Fairy/Boro area

Description: We will visit this fine Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) in the Mount Fairy/Boro area. It is located along the Goulburn Road north of the Kings Highway. It is a beautiful woodland area that is part of a five-year TSR conservation and restoration project being conducted by the Molonglo Conservation Group. The iconic **Scarlet Robin** is a possibility, along with other box/gum woodland birds. The TSR is currently leased, but South East Local Land Services are arranging for us to have access.

eBird hotspot: <https://ebird.org/australia/hotspot/L3895125>

Meeting time and place: 8:00 am at the Spotlight carpark, Bungendore Road, Queanbeyan, for optional carpooling

Walking distance: 5 km approx.

Degree of difficulty: Easy

End time (approx.): 12:00 noon

What to bring: Water & morning tea

Need to register: Yes, by email or text to the trip leader, giving name, mobile number, and your emergency contact's name and phone number.

Name of leader and contact details: David McDonald, email David [at] dnmcdonald.id.au, phone 0416 231 890.

Numbers limited: Yes, maximum 15.

Advance notice

Saturday 3 June and Sunday 4 June – Eden pelagics

COG will run two one day pelagic trips out of Eden. Departure time is likely to be 7am with arrival back at the wharf about 3pm. The boat holds 12 participants. This winter trip should give us the chance to see more albatross species as well as a variety of petrels and shearwaters. Cost will be approximately \$150 each day.

As there is usually a high demand for these trips, initially registration will be accepted for **one day only**. Please contact Sue Lashko at smlashko@gmail.com, with your name, mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact. Please state whether you prefer Saturday, Sunday or either day.



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Field Trip Reports

Sunday 29 January - Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR – World Wetlands Day

Seventeen people at 7:30 am for this field trip to celebrate World Wetlands Day. We split the group temporarily whilst we went into hides but we regrouped at the south-east corner of Kellys Swamp. There was some light rain as we set out in a clockwise direction, but fortunately we were in the hides when the heaviest shower occurred. Grass and reeds were very dense in the water, but in the open patches of the swamp we managed to see all three species of waterhen, several **White-faced Herons**, **Little Pied** and **Little Black Cormorants** and a few ducks. A pair of **Black Swans** were busily feeding five very new cygnets and there were lots of recently fledged **Dusky Moorhen**. No **Latham's Snipe** were seen until we were on the Billabong Loop Track. Four flushed from the burnt grass on the left of the track and a further two were seen by the creek just before we arrived at the boardwalk. **Australian Reed-Warblers** were active across the Nature Reserve and several **Australasian Darters** and a couple of **Australian Pelicans** were observed on the Creek. The leader narrowly escaped an embarrassing incident when she was attacked by meat ants whilst scanning for the elusive **Tawny Frogmouths**. In all, 50 species were recorded, including a **Dollarbird** on the wires at the Kingston end and two **Royal Spoonbills**, which flew over whilst we were saying our goodbyes.

Lia Battisson

Sunday 12 February - East Basin/Molonglo Reach electric boat cruise

Under perfect sunny, warm conditions, with little breeze, 15 members and guests joined me on COG's 20th annual trip to view the water and land birds of this area. As usual we left from Kingston Harbour on the electric boat, EL Gull and 'as the entrance to Jerrabomberra Creek is now barred' moved slowly along the east bank of East Basin into Molonglo Reach and along the south bank to the far (third) bridge, and then retraced our route back.

When gathering to board participants already had very good views of a female **Australasian Darter** resting with its wings widespread near the boat. In total we saw around 10 of this species, mostly on Molonglo Reach where around 3 males were seen including one that allowed a very close approach. We also had very good views of one in the water, clearly illustrating why they are sometimes known as snake birds. Several immatures were identified by their dirtier necks, but for the fifth year in a row no older nests could be seen in previously favoured spots, despite the water levels expected again to have been more conducive to breeding this season.

As usual cormorant species were much more inclined to take flight, though we did manage to see three species including around 6 **Little Pied** but only single **Little Black** and **Great Cormorants**, mostly seen flying away or high over. There was no sign of the **Pied Cormorant** which often used to be found sitting at the entrance to Jerrabomberra Creek. This is now the eighth



The eight card designs:

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

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year that no darter/cormorant breeding could be observed, confirming that the breeding of these species in the area, first discovered in 2003, is well and truly over. At the time it was the main breeding area in the ACT but which now seems to be that along the Molonglo River west of the Tuggeranong Parkway overpass for about a kilometre downstream. Breeding here is continuing with eBird reports in mid-January indicating 3 of the above species breeding there, and possibly also the **Little Black Cormorant**.

Probably due to the third wet season in a row allowing them to spread more widely, numbers of waterbirds were again low. Most common was the **Australian Wood Duck** with around 34 counted, most of them together well upstream between the three bridges. Most of the 25 **Pacific Black Ducks** were also on Molonglo Reach. No other duck species was seen, though there were some scattered pairs of **Black Swans**. Very few of the three larger Rallidae species were seen, the main species being 8 **Dusky Moorhens**, quite a few of them juveniles/immatures. Surprisingly no **Eurasian Coot** were recorded.

Most of the land birds were also well-known species, with the highlight being a **Sacred Kingfisher** on Molonglo Reach, with most participants managing to get reasonable views as it moved around. Only two **Dusky Woodswallows** were seen. By far the most common land bird was the **Welcome Swallow**, with well over 60 observed mainly on the eastern shore of East Basin. Also prominent from the start of Molonglo Reach were close to 20 migrating **Red Wattlebirds**. More than usual **Australian Reed-Warblers** were spread along the reach; at least 12 were mostly identified by call though some brief glimpses were sometimes obtained. A surprise was 3 **European Goldfinches** near the mouth of the reach, a rare record for this trip.

At 41 the total number of species was well down from the three previous years. Despite it being quiet, participants again enjoyed the trip which remains a popular and very pleasant late summer outing, even though this time leading seemed an even more difficult task than usual. Just a few larger birds showed themselves well (with again no raptors seen) and, while lots of smaller birds were flitting around, it was again quite frustrating not being able to point them out and get good looks at them, especially for the less experienced participants, as the boat glided slowly past.

So, it is very likely that after 20 years this was the last such trip. Many thanks to Sandra Henderson for having done the very tricky task of keeping the eBird lists. Many thanks also to Jim Paterson for again skippering the boat, as he has done for the past 20 years.

Jack Holland

Friday 10 to Wednesday 15 February - Camping trip to Capertee Valley

From Friday 10 February to Wednesday 15 February, COG visited one of Australia's best known birding destinations, Capertee Valley situated on the western side of the Blue Mountains near Lithgow. There were 12 participants in total, made up of a mix of very experienced birders and relative newcomers. We made good use of the Capertee Valley bird trail map, issued by the state government, that identifies numerous hotspots.



COG members on camping trip to Capertee Valley

Marcus Hellyer

In the lead up to the trip John and Kathy had been careful not to inflate our hopes of seeing the valley's most iconic bird, the endangered **Regent Honeyeater**—and in that regard, their caution was warranted. Despite visiting most of the best-known hotspots for the Regent Honeyeater, we dipped on the species. Nevertheless, we did see a total of 119 species including many on the expedition's target list.

We were based in the campground in Capertee National Park and had the whole campground to ourselves for almost the whole time. Those camping in tents benefited from the extensive shade offered by mature casuarina trees. The campground has a resident population of **Jacky Winters**, **Willie Wagtails** and **White-throated Treecreepers**. We also spotted **Sacred Kingfishers**, **Dollarbirds** and a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** from our camp chairs. One of campground's more attractive features is the Capertee River, a small creek that flows past the campground. The

group made good use of the river on the Saturday and Sunday afternoons when the temperatures went well into the 30s and cooling off in the river took priority over looking for elusive birds that were themselves seeking respite from the sun.

On Saturday morning we birded on foot along the Port Macquarie fire trail from the information signs in the middle of the park. This trail runs parallel to the river. **Musk Lorikeets** and a single **Scarlet Honeyeater** near the start of the trail were new sightings for several participants. All the way along the trail were **Noisy Friarbirds**, which were to become the signature bird of the trip. Before turning round we got a good view of a female **Brown Goshawk** being harassed by **Tree Martins**.

We then drove back along the road that leads into the national park and stopped by a dam opposite the start of the Wallaby Creek Management Trail. This spot proved to be very productive over the course of our visit, with numerous species coming into drink. On this occasion there was a **Leaden Flycatcher** as well as **Fuscous Honeyeaters**.

We then walked along the Wallaby Creek trail, seeing **Yellow-faced, Yellow-tufted** and **White-plumed Honeyeater** and had a good view of a female **Cicadabird**.

As the temperature rose we took refuge in the river, but once the heat moderated after sunset we went spotlighting. A pair of **White-throated Nightjars** were hawking over the paddock near the campground, their huge eyes reflecting our torchlight. At times they flew right overhead. Back out on the Wallaby Creek trail, Kathy's night vision monocular detected an **Australian Owlet-nightjar** and a **Southern Boobook** was heard but not sighted.

On Sunday the group headed out of Capertee National Park to explore the valley into the small village of Glen Davis that once housed mine workers. We parked in the small council campground where large numbers of **Noisy Friarbirds** and **Musk Lorikeets** were in the large gum trees overhead. We walked through the ruins of former houses towards the sandstone cliffs that ring the valley. Here we saw **Brown Treecreepers**, in contrast to the White-throated that were more common in the valley. There were also several **Black-chinned Honeyeaters**.

Once again birding activities were cut short by the heat, and we headed back to the campground, first making a short detour to the bridge on Genowlan Road that is identified in several birding guides as the best spot to see Regent Honeyeaters. Again there were none, but we did see **Little Pied Cormorant, Red-rumped Parrot** and **Double-barred Finches**. The huge casuarina tree trunks piled up along river indicated how severe recent flooding had been.

In the evening a small group headed up the trail to the valley lookout several kilometres past our campground. They were lucky enough to see a **Black-eared Cuckoo** and several **Hooded Robins**. Later attempts to find the cuckoo again by those who missed out were unfortunately unsuccessful.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Jacky Winter, Musk Lorikeet,
Brown Goshawk, Leaden Flycatcher

Marcus Hellyer





On Monday we headed back to Glen Davis but followed the track along the river that heads into Wollemi National Park rather than heading into the village. A short stop among the reeds to investigate a **Brown Quail** sighting resulted in several **Golden-headed Cisticolas**. Several kilometres further along we stopped and walked along the river searching for **Rock Warblers**, one of the trip's targets and a new species for several participants. We were rewarded with a clear sighting of four birds. This area produced a large number of bush birds including **Weebills** and **White-throated Geryones**.

We continued on to the very pretty Coorongooba campground set at the base of the sandstone cliffs which offered a similar range of birds to Capertee campground. On the way back we took a short hike that led up to a lookout over the abandoned Glen Davis industrial site that produced petroleum from oil shale mined underneath the cliffs during the Second World War. Several **Silvereyes** were in a tree near the sealed-up mineshafts that ran under the cliffs.

We explored along Crown Station Road, investigating several sites shown on the Capertee Valley birdwatching map that offered the promise of Plum-headed Finches, but we failed to find them or any other new species.

On the way home we stopped at a large dam on Glen Davis Road near the turn off to Capertee National Park and saw many **Eurasian Coots** and some **Australasian Grebes** feeding their young. Martin's keen eyesight made out three **Black-fronted Dotterels** on the far side of the dam. Back inside Capertee National Park, the ever-reliable dam opposite Wallaby Creek trail provided a large flock of 15 **Turquoise Parrots**.

Tuesday morning started with a walk along a fire trail off the main track through the national park that produced a large range of bush birds including several that had only been seen in small numbers until then such as **Eastern Spinebills** and **Varied Sittellas**. Another stop by the Wallaby Creek dam was particularly rewarding with a large flock of **Gang-Gang Cockatoos** passing through as well as several coming down to drink. **Diamond Firetails** were also drinking and **White-browed Babblers** were also seen here.

After this we walked again along the Port Macquarie fire trail from the information board, seeing many of the same birds as on Saturday, but also **Bar-shouldered Dove**, **Peaceful Dove** and **Common Bronzewing**. There were also **Olive-back Orioles** and two **Restless Flycatchers**. Large number of **White-winged Choughs** sat in the trees above the trail.

On Tuesday afternoon the group explored the Dunville Loop Road, including several sites highlighted on the Capertee Valley birding map. On Wednesday, the last participants headed off.

As always the more experienced participants shared their insights and expertise, particularly in the arcane art of identifying bird calls. Thanks

Fuscous Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, Cicadabird, Rockwarbler, Australian Pipit

Marcus Hellyer

go to Kathy and John for organising and leading the trip and to Lia Battisson for recording eBird checklists. These can be found on eBird under COG Outings.

Marcus Hellyer

Wednesday 15 February - Mulligans Flat NR

Most attendees for the 7 pm outing arrived early and congratulated Sandra on the excellent weather and sensible choice of start time. They'd also noted the numerous rabbits, feeding on the short grass, near the parking area, and the kangaroos inside the fence among the long grass, as well as **Eastern Rosellas**, **Crimson Rosellas** and **Noisy Miners** flying around.

We walked along to the gate through the electrified fence and, once inside, our first highlight of the evening was an Echidna. Shortly after we had excellent views of a young **Australasian Grebe** with a beautiful striped head, and of one of its parents, and rather more distant views of a few **Pacific Black Ducks**. During observation of the water birds we also saw **Pied Currawong**, **Noisy Friarbird**, **Australian Magpie** and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**, and heard **White-throated Treecreeper** and **Grey Butcherbird**.

We had good views of several of the many Red-necked Wallabies in the reserve.

The second highlight of the outing was also not a bird; unfortunately the Spotted-tailed Quoll was seen by only a few of the party as it moved into cover very quickly.

Following that the light faded and hence the several **Grey Fantail**, **Laughing Kookaburra** and more **White-throated Treecreepers** were heard but not seen.

It didn't get really dark until we were a fair way on our return journey.

We also saw Ring-tailed Possum and Brush-tailed Possum. Attendees agreed Sandra's idea of an evening Wednesday walk was excellent and should be done again next summer.

Michael Robbins

Sunday 19 February - Wanna Wanna Reserve, Carwoola

Five members met at 8.00 a.m. at the reserve entrance along Pony Place to explore a site new to most of us. Sandra Henderson led us on a circular tour of the reserve, which consists of native dry forest, bordered in places by pines on adjacent private properties. Weather conditions were warm and still.

At first, birds were few, apart from some cackling **Noisy Friarbirds** and the odd **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, but butterflies were plentiful everywhere. A **Sacred Kingfisher** was calling in the distance and a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** showed itself nicely in a eucalyptus along our track. A moist gully in the forest proved more productive for small passerines: **Grey Fantails** were active everywhere and difficult to count but the agreed estimate was 25. **White-Throated Treecreepers** called regularly and one or two showed themselves. Thornbills were represented by good numbers of **Buff-rumped** and a few **Brown Thornbills**. Later we added **Yellow-rumped Thornbills**. Honeyeaters were not numerous, but a few **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** and **Eastern Spinebills** were heard as well as a single **White-Eared Honeyeater**.

The undoubted highlight of the morning was a **Southern Boobook**, seen well by all and photographed by some as it cast a baleful glare over the assembled observers. We inspected two small dams just outside the boundaries of the reserve but found them empty of birds. A total of 26 species was recorded. Our thanks to Sandra for leading the walk and sharing her knowledge of the area.

Kevin Windle

Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Southern Boobook

Tee Tong Teo



Bring Back the Bunyip Bird – an update on the Australasian Bittern project

In early February I (and over 100 other people) attended a summit in Leeton about **Australasian Bitterns**. Some COG members will have attended the talk Matt Herring gave to COG back in 2017 about the Bitterns in Rice project. His work continues, and this summit gathered a range of speakers from various parts of Australia, and New Zealand. Matt has recently completed his PhD, which looked at Bittern-friendly rice farming.

Speakers included Matt, Chris Purnell (Birdlife Australia), Damien Cook (Wetland Revival Trust), Bob Green (Birdlife SE SA), Emma Williams and Colin O'Donnell (NZ Dept of Conservation), Ali Borrell (Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group), Jen Spencer (NSW Dept Planning and Environment), Sarah Comer (WA Dept of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions) and Liz Znidarsic (Charles Sturt University).

It is thought the Riverina probably supports up to 1000 Bitterns, or 60% of the Australian population. Satellite tracking has revealed the Bitterns disperse after the summer breeding season, sometimes moving up to 600km. The tracking studies continue, and other studies are using acoustic monitoring and drones with thermal imaging for nest detection, as well as general surveying of known Bittern habitats. There has also been some surveying of rice consumers, to see what level of acceptance there might be for more expensive "Bittern-friendly" rice.

After a day of fascinating presentations, we had the option of bus trips to local wetlands and a rice farm. With a 5am meet-up, we set off for Campbells Swamp near Griffith, a place well-known to many COG members. The boardwalk to the hide is currently under water, so we wandered along the edge of the swamp for a few hundred metres. There were thousands of **Straw-necked** and **Australian White Ibis**, as well as many other waterbirds. We did not see Bitterns there, but had many other species on our bird lists. From there we went a short distance to Nericon Swamp where there were many hundreds of ducks and other water birds, but it was the Australasian Bittern booming from a patch of reeds right on the fenceline that was really exciting.

We then went to one of the rice farms where Matt has been working with the owners to grow rice in a Bittern-friendly way – no clearing of vegetation off the banks between bays, fox/cat control, appropriate water levels and flooding times. We saw no less than five Bitterns in a single rice field as we drove around the perimeter, including one which took to the air, as well as **Australian Spotted Crakes**, a **Stubble Quail**, **Baillon's Crakes**, **Australasian Swamphens**, and I noted a group of 14 **White-necked Herons** flying over. We felt very privileged to have access to this private property with such obliging Bitterns – one was within 20m as the bus drove past.

The following day saw some participants head to Balranald, while a few of us went to Deniliquin. The field trips planned for this day had been disrupted by flooding, so with just a few others I went to the Mathoura Reed Beds (also familiar to many COG members). National Parks ranger Brady spoke to us about the monitoring they do there, and we heard a Bittern booming in the reeds.

Of course I did some other birding around Leeton and Deniliquin, and on the trips there and back. I submitted 34 eBird checklists in total, and 123 species.

Sandra Henderson



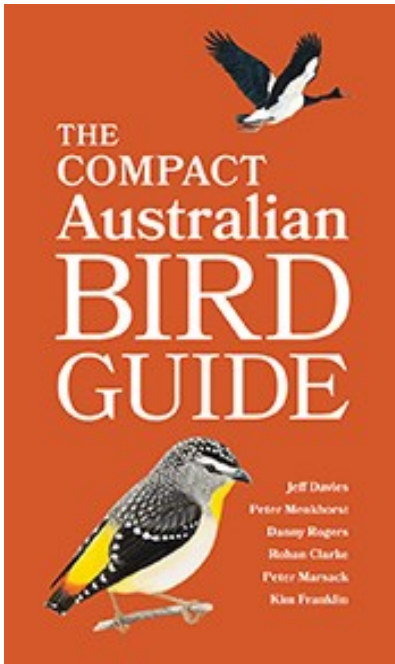
Australasian Bittern

Sandra Henderson

Publications for Sale

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

Below are some of the most popular books and latest publications. 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



RELEASED AUG 22!

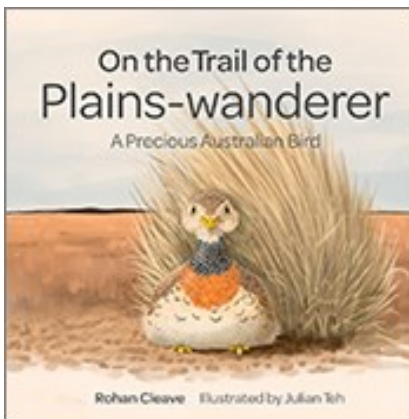
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Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

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COG membership

2022-2023 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

L Duncan
P Jackson
A Booth
L Benson

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for April 2023 edition:

Wednesday 29 March 2023

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

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

or

c/- The Secretary, COG,

PO Box 331, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614.

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

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

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COG E-mail Discussion List

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@lists.canberrabirds.org.au. The subject line and body of the email can be empty.

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