



Gang-gang

NOVEMBER 2022

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

NOVEMBER MEETING

Wednesday 9 November 2022

7.30 pm

Normal face-to-face meeting

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

The November meeting will again be a normal face-to-face one held at our usual venue, but as the revised ACT Public School COVID Management Plan September 2022 (https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/2075573/ACT-Public-School-COVID-Management-Plan-September-2022.pdf) states under **Hiring a school facility**: "For a hirer to access a public school facility they must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan which must include adhering to physical distancing and hygiene requirements. Private events held at a school facility must also comply with any applicable public health restrictions for events." Therefore, meeting attendees will need to continue wearing masks.

After the AGM ([for details see pp 8 and 9](#)) or <https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/>), there will be a single speaker, long time COG member **Con Boekel** on "Dark Secrets of the Bush Capital."

Con will talk about bird species disappearing from urban reserves in the inner northwest of Canberra. During three decades of walking on

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

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

The weather over the 4 weeks from 26 September to 24 October inclusive covered by this column has been very wet with rain events every week, with two very significant falls causing local flooding in the middle and end with just a few drier days in between. It only warmed up in the final week. My impression that, despite the saturated conditions, activity in the COG Area of Interest (AoI) was higher than in August and September is only partly supported by my deeper analysis below. The much greater birder effort during the COG Blitz on the final weekend added quite a few sightings to the recently arrived coastal spring migrants. However, it hardly added to sightings of the inland spring migrants, for which there have been few if any records, in keeping with the very wet conditions there. Again, there have been relatively few "unusual" birds reported.

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Blue-faced Honeyeater—adult near nest

Shorty

Everyone welcome

Black Mountain, Con thought he noticed that some birds had disappeared altogether or had reduced in numbers. Con gathered the available data and then used Covid to complement it with extensive new field data. The results show that the claim to be the 'Bush Capital' glosses over some terrible trends. (This talk will substantially cover the same ground as that given at the ANBG).

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

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The undoubted highlight during the period and the one which garnered the most attention was the **Blue-faced Honeyeater** breeding event. This was first reported on 2 October by Rob Magrath who, when cycling along the bike path in Acton Park, saw an adult with a full blue face feed a fledgling with a tail about 40% grown. The fledgling was calling regularly, and he heard another one higher in the tree. He also saw an adult fly out of the tree, presuming it was the second of the breeding pair.

The next morning Shorty followed up this sighting and near the footbridge over Parkes Way found a total of 9 **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** (the most by anyone, the next highest being 7 birds) comprising 3 adult birds with distinct blue eye patches, 1 juvenile with a full length tail, 1 juvenile with a half-length tail, 2 juveniles with short tails (one of which one was still at the nest) and 2 immatures, 1 with a green eye patch and 1 with a green and blue eye patch. Shorty noted he could see at least two nests in separate trees, but they were different in appearance. Interestingly the young were being fed by 2 adults and the 2 immatures, so he assumed they were from the same parents from another recent (see below) nesting.

Many observers were able to follow up these sightings until at least 19 October, though over time the juvenile/immature birds became harder to find. I thought it might have been a very early breeding event but Morecombe's Field Guide to Australian Birds notes that they nest from July to January, often in loose colonies as seems to have been the case here. HANZAB indicates that breeding has been recorded in all months with, in NSW, eggs found from June to February, though it notes only that co-operative breeding "seems to occur sometimes".

As far as I am aware this is the first breeding event for the **Blue-faced Honeyeater** in the ACT, but not within the COG AoI. The BIRD INFO data on the COG website contains only a map of sightings to 2013, and a graph on the side showing no breeding records up to then. COG's 2018-2019 Annual Bird report (ABR) lists it as a vagrant, very rare breeding resident which to then had been reported in 7 years since the first record in 2006, and with reports mainly from Yass and Hall in that year.

Breeding in the COG AoI seems to have been recorded a few years earlier with eBird containing a number of records from Yass. On 16 September 2016 Benjamin Serafin saw a bird sitting on a nest in the middle of town, and the next day he photographed a pair at the Yass High School on the north bank of the Yass River. One bird was sitting on the nest (on the limb



Blue-faced Honeyeater—juvenile

Shorty



Blue-faced Honeyeater—immature

Shorty

of a pine tree!) with one bringing food to the nest. On 24 October he noted that while the nest had gone, the pair was still in the high school area, and on 5 February 2017 he observed 3 birds in pine trees along the Yass Public School fence. He noted he hadn't seen them for a while now, but they appeared to be 2 adults and a juvenile, so he assumed they may have successfully reared at least 1 young from their nest at the high school about 500 m to the east.

Breeding records have continued to come from Yass with on 11 January 2019 Brian Grinter observing several adults and juveniles in trees on the Yass River's southern bank near the bridge. At the Riverbank Park in Yass on 10 January 2022 Frank Antram saw 5 **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** flying out together and he could see 2 more still in a flowering eucalypt by the bridge. He thought there may well have been more than 7 birds, both adults and juveniles, two of which were begging for food. He noted there seemed to be **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** everywhere, flying to and fro across the river, and dipping into it.

While the 2018-2019 ABR indicates that the COG AoI lies a little to the east of the normal southernmost range of this bird, I am certain that the above will not be the last breeding record for this species in the ACT. Indeed, there have been many more records since that year, particularly in inner Canberra and around Curtin. It is interesting that this inland species should be first recorded breeding in the ACT during the third of three wet winters/springs, when you might expect fewer here like the other inland species as noted in the next paragraph.

Of the inland spring/summer migrants not yet recorded during the previous period, the first the **White-winged Triller** (a male) was first photographed on 26 September at West Belconnen Pond, and remarkably there have been reports at only 3 locations to 15 October since, including none it seems during the COG Blitz. Likewise, the **Rufous Songlark** was first reported from Yankee Hat carpark and track on 2 October, but from only 3 locations (including one K2C property) to 17 October since (and again no reports during the Blitz). There have been no reports so far this spring of the **Brown Songlark** or the **Horsfield's Bushlark**, or of the **White-browed** and **Masked Woodswallows**. The few or lack of any reports for these six species is as may be expected given the very wet inland conditions.

Of the more coastal spring migrants not yet recorded in the previous period, the first **Rainbow Bee-eaters** were reported from 3 locations on 3 October, from another on 4 October, and then from only 4 more locations before surprisingly only another 2 during the Blitz, possibly indicating that they are still moving through. The first **Channel-billed Cuckoo** was heard giving its raucous call and then seen flying northwards over the eastern edge of Black Mountain NR on 28 September, with further aural records from Bonner on 6 October as well as a possible one at Russell Offices on 19 October. There were 2 further sightings during the Blitz weekend, at Kingston Foreshore and at Gigerline NR on 22 and 23 October, respectively. There was a further aural record from Red Hill on 24 October. These 6 records, about as many as during a usual spring and summer, perhaps are the first signs of an increase in reports? In contrast the **Brush Cuckoo** was not reported until the Blitz Sunday of 23 October, when there were 4 reports of single birds, two in the mountains and two well to the east of there, at Campbell Park and Cumbern NR.

Of the passage migrants moving through Canberra to breed in the mountains, a male **Satin Flycatcher** was photographed at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 14 October, with another male reported from the ANBG on 18 October before a pair were observed on Corin Road in the Brindabellas on 21 October. There were another 5 reports during the Blitz, three of them in the mountains of males and females together, as well as a male at Callum Brae, and a female at West Hume woodlands and wetland. The difficulty in correctly identifying female flycatchers is very clearly illustrated by the one photographed in Victor Braguine's Kaleen garden on 11 October (see attached photo). While this showed some characteristics consistent with a female Satin Flycatcher, the one photographed in his garden 4 days later was less clear, though it might have been a different bird.

Four **Rufous Fantails** were first reported from Sherwood Forest on 2 October, but up to the Blitz weekend there had been reports of only single birds at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 12 October and North Mulligans on 15 October. A further 5 locations were added during the Blitz weekend, three in the mountains and the



Satin Flycatcher

Victor Braguine

others at the ANBG and Black Mountain. The only report to date of the **Common Cicadabird** was of the male photographed at North Mulligans on 15 October.

The **Eastern Koel**, a coastal species, certainly arrived early and in good numbers, with reports from another 4 suburbs before the end of September and another 10 by 4 October, making it 17 suburbs in total, the highest number I can recall for so early in the season, and with many more reports following. While I didn't hear my first clear **Eastern Koel** call (the female kek kek kek, with more distant whoas given in response) from my GBS site in Chapman till the evening of 11 October, for the next 10 days there was much calling activity, more so than I can remember for mid-October, and interestingly much of it the ko-el call. On 20 October I located a black male ko-eling in my garden when it suddenly called wek wek/wow wow and then flew off making the same call. A short time later a black bird returned and gave a very loud fast continuous animated wek wek wek for a least 30 seconds before stopping and giving a few well-spaced ko-els. This is another example of a male giving all three main calls in quick succession.



Eastern Koel - female

Victor Braguine

So please watch out for the remaining spring/summer migrants noted above which are here only in small numbers or still haven't arrived.

Of the species that move from the mountains and higher country into Canberra and its surrounds in autumn/winter, there were still reports of the **White-eared Honeyeater** and the **Golden Whistler** from 10 and over 40 urban and peri-urban locations, respectively, during the period, underlining that the latter is often slow to leave. The **Scarlet Robin** is still moving away, still reported from 7 urban/peri-urban locations of the around 19 total locations during the period. In contrast **Flame Robins** do seem to have moved away, reported from just a single such location (Campbell Park where it has bred in the past) of the total of 14.

Rose Robins have been reported from around 10 locations in the period, 5 of which may be described as urban/peri-urban (on passage migration?), and with the remaining locations from west of the Murrumbidgee River. Unsurprisingly, there were no reports of the **Pink Robin** during the period. The **Red-capped Robin** was reported calling from just 1 location; the wet conditions are clearly not favouring this inland species.

The **Crescent Honeyeater** has moved well away as it was not reported from anywhere in the COG Aol over the period, and the **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** from just one location, Scottsdale

Reserve on 15 October. The latter has been recorded from only 5 locations well to the south of Canberra so far in 2022. There were no reports of the **Swift Parrot** over the period; this species is now expected to be back in Tasmania to breed. While there were also no reports of the **Brown Gerygone**, the **Bassian Thrush** was still present at the ANBG up to 1 October, when it was again photographed carrying food.

So, during November please keep an eye out for the above species as they continue to move away from Canberra.

Apart from the **Blue-faced Honeyeater**, the "unusual" birds that received the most attention towards the end of the period were the pair of **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** first reported by Peter Miller at Mt. Majura on 12 October. They had been occasionally reported from the area over the past couple of months and Peter



Glossy Black-Cockatoo

Shorty

wondered if they were breeding in the area. However, this seems unlikely as subsequently many observers have always found the 2 birds together, often feeding quietly.

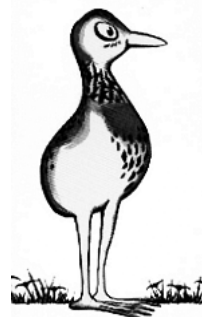
There were no **Plumed Whistling Ducks** reported during the period, the first time I can recall this occurring for a number of years. Again, no **Freckled Ducks** were reported during the period. While **Australian Shelducks** were reported from 15 locations to the east and northeast of Canberra during the period, these were mostly in small numbers, a maximum of 4, except for the 12 ducks seen at Trucking Yard Lane Dam on 9 October. A **Blue-billed Duck** was reported from Upper Stranger Pond on 2 October, and up to 3 at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR on 10 October. **Musk Ducks** were reported from only 4 locations, on single occasions from 3 spots but with up to 8 birds reported from Wet Lagoon, Breadalbane, in the extreme northern part of the COG Aol, between 2-21 October.

Up to 3 **Stubble Quail** were reported from 4 locations (I haven't heard them calling yet), and **Brown Quail** were reported from 16 locations, significantly up from September. Up to 2 **Painted Button-quail** were reported from 11 locations in the period (also significantly up from September), but again there were no reports of **Little Button-quail**, **White-headed Pigeon**, **Brush Bronzewing** or **Diamond Doves** during the period. Up to 3 **Great Crested Grebe** were reported from Bracks Hole on Cotter Dam between 2-17 October and a single bird was observed on the farm dam on Lakes Road on 16 October. A **Peaceful Dove** was heard in Yankee Hat carpark and track on 2 October.

Up to 4 **Spotless Crakes** were regularly reported from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR over the period, as well as up to 3 from the nearby Eyre St wetlands. A **Baillon's Crake** was heard from the latter on 19 October, as was an **Australian Spotted Crake** for which single birds were also reported from Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR between 11-23 October. A **Lewin's Rail** was flushed at the latter on 21 October, whereas single **Buff-banded Rails** were reported from Eyre St and North Watson wetlands, both on 19 October.

Ten **Banded Lapwings** were reported from Wollagorang Lagoon on 26 September, and 6 birds were there on 19 October, but no **Red-necked Avocets**, **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers**, **Caspian Tern**, **Intermediate Egret** or **Australian Little Bittern** were reported during the period. The **Common Sandpiper** was recorded only from the northern end of Lake Tuggeranong including Village Creek gross pollutant trap, suggesting there is possibly only one bird present, though the high water conditions may have made observing it difficult. Apart from its usual spots, a **Pied Cormorant** was photographed on Lake Jerrabomberra on 6 October (it was conveniently next to a **Little Pied Cormorant** to allow correct identification).

A single **Barn Owl** was observed on a fence post at night (so possibly hunting) at Tirrannaville in the northeast corner of the COG Aol on 1 October. Numbers of the **Black-shouldered Kite** also seem to be dropping, reported from around 30 locations compared with over 50 in September. However, numbers of the **Nankeen Kestrel** seem to have remained steady, reported from around 75 locations (similar to September) during the period. There were no reports of the **Grey**



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2022

2022 Plains-wanderer Weekend
29 & 30 October 2022
A few places available

2023 tours

Kutini - Payamu
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4 to 10 January 2023
11 to 17 January 2023
Cairns to Lockhart River
flight included.

Gulf of Carpentaria
16 June to 3 July 2023
Cairns – Georgetown – Karumba –
Burketown – Cloncurry – Mt Isa – Winton
– Hughenden – Cairns

2023 Plains-wanderer Weekends
07 & 08 October 2023
21 & 22 October 2023
04 & 05 November 2023
18 & 19 November 2023

Contact Patricia Maher for
information and itineraries.

www.philipmaher.com

Goshawk, Spotted Harrier, Pacific Baza (where has it gone?) or **Black Falcon** during the period, and a single **Black Kite** was reported on 3 occasions only from the Hume Highway northwest of Yass.

There were no reports of the **Azure Kingfisher, Greater Bluebonnet** (again, where has it gone?), **Musk, Scaly-breasted** or **Little Lorikeets** during the period. A single **Cockatiel** in wild colours was photographed at Condor Community wetlands on 2 October, and a **Turquoise Parrot** was photographed on the woodland loop of Jerrabomberra NR on 10 October.

The **Red-browed Treecreeper** at Mt Ainslie was photographed again on 10 October, and one was also reported from the ANBG on 27 September and 3 October. No **Singing, Scarlet** or **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters** were reported during the period. A probable **White-cheeked Honeyeater** (similar to the New Holland but it had a dark eye, long brow line with white cheek patch) was reported from the grevilleas in the front garden near the bus stop at the ANBG on 12 October. According to eBird it has been previously reported from there, but more frequently at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, most recently in August 2019.

Two **White-fronted Chats** were reported from Wollogorang Road on 27 September, and 4 from there on 19 October, the only location within the COG Aol during the period. Single **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes** were reported from North Mulligans on 8 October (and 2 from there on 10 October) and from Tuggeranong Hill on 12 and 15 October, but no **Little Friarbirds, Zebra Finches** or **Tawny Grassbirds** were reported during the period.

Of the birds I have continued to ask readers to keep a special lookout for in 2022, there were reports of **Jacky Winters** from 4 locations during the period. Two birds were recorded from the known spot at the rural lease near Tharwa on 25 September, 4 birds (all seen in one view, giving display and territorial flights showing the white outer tail feathers nicely) from Glendale Depot (a new spot for 2022) on 2 October (also one from there on 23 October), a single bird from a new spot near Clear Range on 10 October, as well as an unclear number of birds from an unknown spot during the K2C surveys around that time..

There are reports on eBird of **Hooded Robins** from only a single location, Scottsdale reserve, for between 2-5 birds from 11-15 October, though they were also recorded on 3 properties on the K2C survey around that time. Single **Restless Flycatchers** were reported from 3 locations (the known Scottsdale Reserve and the Mullion, as well as the new spot, Tuggeranong Hill) was well as 1 or 2 birds at the known Nelanglo TSR. They were also reported from 2 properties during the K2C surveys.

In terms of other interesting bird observations, as part of her **Latham's Snipe** update, Lori Gould posted that on 6 September one of the wonderful Jerrabomberra Wetlands' photographers had sent them a photo of a Snipe with leg flag number 58. This bird had been captured in September 2020, photographed in January 2021, then photographed again that day. The significance of this is that this particular bird had now been sighted at Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR for 3 seasons. It also shows how important these community photographic records can be.

On 2 October John Layton noticed a flock of about **15 European Goldfinches** (very rare in my local area these days) combing through the foliage of a tall Casuarina tree outside Kippax library. Two metres lower, a similar number of **Red-browed Firetails** were working away. He watched for 10 minutes but at no time noticed one species enter the feeding range of the other. He had no idea what they were gleaning, probably tiny invertebrates to increase protein intake for their nestlings. Two **Willie Wagtails** appeared, one hovering either side of the bole as they took some of whatever it was that was available. Four **White-winged Choughs** came mincing along and promenaded around the base of the tree with necks stretched upwards as if doing an avian maypole dance, or maybe they were just doing the ole soft shoe shuffle. Anyhow, every couple of seconds one leapt upwards, appearing to snatch a prey item and sending the wagtails packing.

On 8 October Robin Hide was walking on the lower west slopes of Mt Ainslie, when at a gully with strongly running water, he saw several **Pied Currawongs** flying down to exposed yellow clay on the gully side. They jabbed their beaks into the clay, then smoothed their beaks onto feathers/under wings etc. A quick google search found only a report of this behaviour for **Black Currawongs** from the 1960s; he wondered, is this common behaviour for the **Pied Currawong**?

Despite the wet conditions it seems to be a good breeding season, and apart from the **Blue-faced Honeyeater** and **Jacky Winter** mentioned above, some interesting observations follow:

- On 10 October Michael Lenz observed a **Restless Flycatcher** incubating at Nelanglo TSR, its partner nearby. He noted that unfortunately the nest is more exposed than previous nests and hoped they make it.
- **Australian Magpies** seem to be having another good breeding season. On 1 October Christine D noted that those at the ANBG were putting the finishing touches to their nest and were very proud of the "Master Finish" they had applied (her photos

showed an orange tag containing these words hanging from the bottom of the nest, and also a smaller blue one and assorted plastic-coated wire).

- On 24 October Sandra Henderson posted that along the Molonglo River behind the RSPCA only one tree appears to be being used by the darters and cormorants for nesting this year. The thicker than usual leaf growth made it difficult to identify nests, but both **Australian Darters** and **Little Pied Cormorants** were nesting.
- The excellent **Black-shouldered Kite** breeding season has continued, with one of the most recent reports being the adult and two juveniles photographed on Wollogorang Rd on 19 October.
- A fourth pied species, the **Willie Wagtail**, has built a nest within my GBS site, the first time I can remember, at least since the January 2003 fires. Whether it will be successful is unclear as it is low in a bush right over a busy path and the bird leaves the nest quietly each time I approach.
- The male (as it did not seem to share the brooding duties) **Pied Currawong** feeding young in a gum next to my study window has half the top of its bill missing, and also its breast and belly feathers are all sticking out like a skirt. Despite this it is proving to be a very active dad, including feasting its young with earthworms from around my compost bin. It has also taken to caching food (bread etc) in the top of my rain gauge, very inconvenient under the current wet conditions.
- On the morning of 16 October, an **Eastern Koel** flew kek kekking through our GBS site towards some whoas, the birds then circled back and landed on wires and a bare tree in a neighbour's back yard. Very soon the black male mounted the female and they copulated, before again giving both calls and flying off. While the copulation event is about as early as I can recall, it does fit in with the first Koel fledgling for late November/early December as has happened over the past few years. Certainly, these days females arrive around the same time as males, and breeding activity commences almost as soon as they arrive.
- The first **Red Wattlebird** (RWB) fledgling of the season was noticed in my garden about 6 weeks ago. The juvenile is still begging very loudly and restricted to around 50 m of my bushy back fence even though I suspect it has been independent for at around 3 weeks. This month I have observed different RWB fledglings being fed or begging in at least 7 separate other local spots (plus a new pair in my garden), so the Koels would appear to be targeting the second brood – watch out wattlebirds!

Several mixed feeding flocks (MFF) continue to have been reported even in the last week of the period. In addition to John Layton's above, I observed one consisting of 7 species at Farrer Ridge NR on 4 October, the surprise species being 2 **Brown Quail** in the grass tussocks under them (while the habitat was possibly more suitable, I ruled out **Painted Button-Quail** due to the even brown colouring with fine white streaking, as well as the lack of platelets; in fact there was very little leaf litter around). During the COG Blitz on 23 October Nicki Taws went early to Black Mountain, with the vague hope of picking up a **Painted Button-quail**. One did scuttle across the path in front of her, and nearby she noticed a MFF of small birds including a **Rufous Fantail** "heading for the hills".

Red Wattlebirds have certainly moved into my local area with on 23 October a conservative 85 attracted to the 3 species of gum profusely flowering on Cooleman Ridge during my Blitz survey. Numbers of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were also good, and they seemed to come into my Chapman GBS site in two waves during the two significant rain events.

So please watch out for more of the remaining returning spring/summer migrants mentioned above, for the last of the leaving altitudinal migrants, and in particular for spring breeding activity. Please also continue to keep a special look out for the **Restless Flycatcher**, **Jacky Winter** and **Hooded Robin**. 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

Committee News

The Canberra Birds (COG) committee met by Zoom on 20 October.

Members are reminded that the Annual General Meeting will be held at Canberra Girls Grammar School at 7:30 pm on Wednesday 9 November. Please come along: it is important that we have a quorum. While new members on the committee are most welcome, no-one will be pressured into volunteering for a task they aren't happy to do.

Only financial members of COG will be eligible to vote. Renewal forms can be found at <https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/joining-cog-and-renewing/>.

The regular members' meeting will follow the AGM.

Garden Bird Survey

As advised last month, we need to update the list of surveyors. If you haven't already done so, it would help if people who have been or are keeping GBS records could email cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au with answers to the following questions:

Did you keep records in 2021-2022?

Have you handed in your 2021-22 chart or spreadsheet or do you need someone to collect it?

Are you keeping records in 2022-2023?

Do you need a chart for this year's records?

What suburb do you live in?

Recent Submissions

Canberra Birds has made submissions in relation to the proposed developments at Whitlam Stage 4 in relation to the buffer between the suburb and Kama NR, and the Dairy Road development next to Jerrabomberra Wetlands. The submissions can be found here: <https://canberrabirds.org.au/conservation/cog-conservation-strategy/>.

Vale Ian Anderson

It is with regret that we note the passing of Ian Anderson. Ian was a long-term member of COG and, with his friend Tony Willis, was a passionate defender of the environment and birds in particular. Ian was also a major contributor to the COG database and to the Annual Bird Report. His observations and knowledge will be sorely missed.

Neil Hermes *President* Alison Mackerras *Minutes Secretary*

Notice of the COG Annual General Meeting for 2022

Wednesday 9 November 2022, 7.30pm

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc. (a.k.a. Canberra Birds) will be held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 9 November 2022 in the usual venue at Canberra Girls' Grammar School.

The agenda and call for nominations are elsewhere in this edition of Gang-gang ([pp 9](#) and [27](#) respectively). Financial statements will be published on the website before the meeting (<https://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/>).



ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE COG CHRISTMAS BARBEQUE

Black Mountain Peninsula
(John Cardiff Close)

6.00 pm Wednesday 14 December 2021

Sausages, bread, onions, beer, wine and non-alcoholic drinks provided.

Please bring either a salad or a dessert, plus serving spoons, to share. You will also need to bring plates, cutlery, glasses, table and chairs.

There will be the usual monthly raffle.

Annual General Meeting, 9 November 2022

Agenda

- Opening
- Apologies
- Confirmation of minutes of 2021 AGM
- President's Report
- Adoption of President's report
- Presentation of annual statement of accounts
- Adoption of annual statement of accounts
- Appointment of auditor for 2022-23
- Election of office-bearers (President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer) and ordinary committee members
- Other matters for which notice has been given
- Close of meeting.

The minutes of the 2021 AGM are available on the website and financial reports will be published before the AGM (<http://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/>).

Please advise any apologies to cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au.

Call for Nominations

The committee consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and up to 10 general members. Nominations for positions on the COG Committee are invited from interested members. [The form](#) is available in this issue of Gang-gang at page 27 or from <http://canberrabirds.org.au/about-cog/annual-reports/>. Nominees, proposers and seconders must all be financial members of COG.

Completed forms can be submitted by mail or scanned and emailed to cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au. If you need any additional information please contact a committee member or the COG office.

It would be helpful if nominations are received by 2 November. However, nominations can also be taken from the floor during the AGM.

COG's cogs

Peter Fullagar is one of the longest standing members of COG, and his involvement in Canberra birding stretches all the way back to the 1960s.

Not long after arriving in Canberra in 1964, Peter joined the recently formed ACT branch of the RAOU (now known as Birdlife Australia). The group was small but grew fast. Under the leadership of Steve Wilson and Stephen Marchant, Peter was involved in some of the earliest bird banding and nest recording schemes in Australia.

One of the biggest projects COG undertook in those early days was to produce a Field List for members to record their observations in a more organised way. Peter prepared the first *Pocket List of Australian Birds* with help from John McKean on the sequence we should adopt for the listed species and decisions on selecting the most appropriate English names of birds for Australians. One of the intents of the list was for it to be used to tally the species recorded in a particular area but, with intelligent use, it can be of much more value in building up information such as the occurrence of breeding and seasonal changes in distribution and numbers of birds seen in the localities visited - more or less an analogue form of eBird.

Another project that COG supported was to rectify the problem that in the 1960s there was no up to date field guide to Australian birds. This was a massive undertaking, involving people with a range of specialities to lend their expertise to the project. Peter covered the penguins and seabirds, including gulls and skuas (jaegers). This represented the first big update to the field guide of oceanic Australian birds since 1928.

Another aspect of Peter's involvement on the COG committee was to promote field trips and run courses, particularly on wildlife sound recording. COG members were particularly frequent participants, but they were nothing like the number we see on today's calendar of COG outings.

More recently, Peter has enjoyed working with fellow COG colleagues, Chris Davey and Nick Nichols, organising more than 30 COG members in surveys of landbirds on Lord Howe Island. The Lord Howe Board commissioned them to do these surveys as part of the programme to eradicate the introduced Black Rat and House Mouse. Five surveys were done before the baiting program occurred in mid-2019 and the last survey was in September this year – three years after successful removal of the rodents. Their findings, fully analysed and reported each year, provide significant data on the response of landbird populations after successful removal of rodents.

Peter remained on the COG committee for nearly 20 years until the mid-1980s when it was then time to do other things, but the whole experience was great fun.



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

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Vale Muriel Brookfield

Muriel was a stalwart of COG from the 1970s. A geographer by trade, she worked at the then CSIRO Division of Land Research, at Concordia University in Montreal as Associate Professor of Geography, followed by a stint at Melbourne University and finally in several roles at the Australian National University, concluding with the People, Land Management and Environmental Change Project with her husband Harold, until well into her 70s.

Birding was always a major part of Muriel's life. McComas Taylor recalled: "She was an ardent and conscientious contributor to the ACT Atlas project during the data collection phase, and she applied the same care and enthusiasm during the production phase. Muriel read and edited the entire draft and thankfully prohibited me from overusing the word 'ubiquitous'."

The Regent Honeyeater breeding event in North Watson in 1995-96 was a highlight for Muriel, who observed it closely and co-authored a paper on it for *Canberra Bird Notes*. She followed this up by working closely with Steve Wilson, editing his *Birds of the ACT: Two Centuries of Change* which COG published in 1999.

Though born and educated in England, Muriel took to the Australian bush and its floral and faunal inhabitants with great pleasure. She and her husband Harold had for many years a bush block at Burra, renowned for its Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters which at the time were difficult to locate in COG's AoI. On several occasions Muriel invited me to enjoy them with her, over a picnic lunch, and they never disappointed.

While she was able to, Muriel participated in excursions with the ANU women's birdwatching group and ensured its observations reached the COG databases. She continued supporting COG's October bird blitz until her late 80s. She passed away at Clare Holland House on 18 August 2022 after a long illness, and just three months after her husband Harold, leaving one son, John.

Barbara Allan

Unidentified membership payment

On 4 October \$50 was deposited into COG's account, from IMB Bank, with no identifying information. We have received no membership form which would let us know who has paid this money. If you paid on or about 4 October, use IMB Bank, and did not submit a membership form, please check with Sandra shirmax2931@gmail.com or Prue prue.watters@gmail.com so that we know about your payment.



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Future Field Trips

COG Trips

With the arrival of spring, field trips will be held every weekend.

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.

Be Covid safe on COG field trips:

Maintain social distancing of 1.5 metres

Maintain hand hygiene

Wear a mask in shared cars if carpooling (Note: carpooling is voluntary)

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 6 November – Sherwood Forest

Meet at 9.00 am at the Sherwood Forest car park on Mountain Creek Rd at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/bQMmyUEatcWjUdzZA>. Our slow walk will take us up the forestry road through woodlands to the hill top. There are nice views to be had across to Canberra and a good range of woodland birds to be found, including the chance of **Spotted Quail-thrush**.

To register, send your name, mobile number and the name and number of an emergency contact to KimlouiseFarley@gmail.com

Kim Farley

Sunday 13 November – Campbell Park nest workshop

Description: This outing will be a repeat of the very popular and practical nest workshops held over the past nineteen years. As usual it will be a very informal outing which has been timed to coincide with the peak of the breeding season. The morning will start with the usual very short presentation, including tips on the types of nests built by different species of birds, how to find nests and nesting behaviour. This will be followed by several hours putting this into practice, with participants looking for breeding behaviour, signs of nests, etc. This will also allow plenty of opportunities for birdwatching. The workshop is particularly suitable for beginners or those relatively new to bird watching, though more experienced members and repeat customers are also very welcome.

Walking distance: While every year has been different, we often don't walk very far as there is usually a "hot spot" where most of the breeding activity occurs around 500 m from where we park. Maximum distance - 2.0 km of easy, flat walking.

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

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

Name of leader and contact details: Registration is essential no later than Friday 11 November. To participate, please contact Jack Holland (6288 7840) or preferably by email on jandaholland@bigpond.com – please include your mobile number and emergency contact name and number.

Sunday 20 November 2022 - Woodstock Nature Reserve

Description: Woodstock Nature Reserve is a reserve of 356 ha, spanning both sides of the Murrumbidgee River and stretching from Uriarra Crossing to the NSW border. We will walk along the northern shore of the River, from Fairlight Road to Giorgos Sandwash. The walk is along a fire trail with some uphill sections. Species observed there recently include **Australian Hobby, Double-barred Finch, Satin Bowerbird and Gang-gang Cockatoo**.

Meeting Place: As car parking is very limited, we will meet at Stromlo Forest Park, in the first section of the main carpark and carpool to the entrance to the Reserve.

Meeting Time: 07:30

Walking distance: 5 kms return.

End time: Approximately 10:30

What to bring: Water, sunscreen, a hat and sturdy shoes. Wet weather gear if considered necessary.

Name of leader and contact details: Please register with the leader, Sandra Henderson by email to shirmax2931@gmail.com providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Please do so **before 7pm on Friday 4 November 2022**. Numbers will be limited to 18.

Sunday 27 November – private property near Hoskinstown

Description: Mixed-eucalypt forest, including post-burn regeneration; garden around house. A range of forest species expected including **Eastern Yellow Robin, White-throated Treecreeper, Superb Lyrebird**, thornbills, **Australian King Parrot**, rosellas, **Wonga Pigeon** and **Laughing Kookaburra**, as well as spring/summer migrants.

Meeting time and place: 8.00 am, Spotlight car park, Queanbeyan for carpooling.

Walking distance: 4 km

Degree of difficulty: medium

End time (approx.): 12.00pm

What to bring: water, morning tea, hat, sunscreen, sturdy shoes

Registration: participants must register with the leader at least 36 hours in advance, providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact

Numbers limited: maximum of 16

Name of leaders and contact details: Peter Smith 0427 879 774 smith.peter899@gmail.com

Sunday 4 December – Grassy Creek, Namadgi NP

Meet at 7am at the Kambah Village Shopping Centre carpark (corner Drakeford and Marconi) for carpooling. **Maximum** 16 participants (four cars). Some driving through the day will be on a dirt road, best suited to AWD/4WD.

We will travel southwards towards and then through Namadgi National Park until we nearly reach the NSW border, parking at the junction with the Grassy Creek Firetrail.

Bring morning tea with you, as well as the usual water, sunscreen, sunglasses, hat and sturdy shoes.

We will explore the birds around the firetrail and creek, noting that at the time of writing in September, conditions are still a bit soggy. This soggyiness may affect our progress. We should see a good range of woodland birds, including honeyeaters and thornbills.

Register by COB Friday 02 December, with David at david.dedenczuk@gmail.com or at 0417222154, with your name and number, as well as name and number of an emergency contact.

David Dedenczuk

Sunday 11 December - Barren Grounds NR, NSW

Description: We will walk through the heath and forest of the Griffiths Loop track from the carpark, stopping for morning tea at stone bridge that crosses Lamonds Creek and for lunch at Saddlebacks Trig. Previous highlight species include **Gang-gang Cockatoo, Pilotbird, Eastern Ground Parrot, Eastern Bristlebird, Beautiful Firetail, Southern Emu-wren, Black-faced Monarch** and various honeyeaters and cuckoos. We will also stop for any interesting wildflowers, butterflies and other wildlife

we might encounter on the walk, with Varied Sword-grass Brown, Macleay's Swallowtail, Eastern Water Dragon and various orchids recorded here on previous visits.

Please note there is limited mobile reception at Barren Grounds and there are toilets at the carpark where we will meet. In the event of rain, this walk will be cancelled.

eBird hotspots: Barren Grounds Nature Reserve, Barren Grounds Nature Reserve -- Griffiths Trail

Meeting time and place: 9 am at the Barren Grounds carpark, with a carpooling option from Canberra.

Walking distance: Approximately 8 km (return)

Degree of difficulty: Medium; track is an undulating vehicle track with some small hill sections.

End time (approx.): 3 pm

What to bring: This is an open exposed location with little to no mobile reception. Ensure you bring sufficient water and food (including morning tea and lunch), and rain and sun protection.

Please register your interest by Monday 5 December, to Suzi Bond, email chowchilla29@yahoo.com providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Carpooling arrangements will be advised once registrations have been received.

Numbers limited: Yes, limited to 12 people.

Advance notice of a 2023 camping trip

Friday 10 to Wednesday 15 February – Capertee National Park

Capertee National Park is situated NNW of the Blue Mountains near Lithgow. We will do plenty of exploring around the National Park and areas near Glen Alice and Glen Davis. We will camp at Capertee campground which is pleasantly situated along a Casuarina-lined river. Target species for the trip will be **Black-chinned Honeyeaters, Rock Warbler, Plum-headed Finch, Diamond Firetail, Turquoise Parrot, Barn Owl, Barking Owl** and Squirrel Glider among others. Numbers limited. To book for this trip and receive further information please contact Kathy and John on walter.goldie@gmail.com



Neil Hermes Safaris – birding tours this year

Nov 10-12	ON TRAIL OF THE PLAINS WANDERER A days birding in the Deniliquin area followed by a night-time watching the elusive Plains wanderer. Great for lifers list. 3 day 2 nights \$895pp Led by Philip Maher and Neil Hermes Includes motel accommodation Ex Canberra
2023 June TBA	PARADISE BIRDS - TASTE OF NEW GUINEA 7 day 6 nights exploring the birds of Cairns and Port Moresby Highlights Birds of Paradise, bowerbirds and Palm Cockatoos Led by Mark Clayton and Neil Hermes Tour is open for expressions of interest, details to come.

Book at neilhermes.com.au/safaris/
Enquiries at neil@neilhermes.com.au

Draft Field Trip Programme January to June 2023

Date	Venue	Duration	Leader
January 15	Venue required		Leader required
18	Wednesday walk	morning	
22	Rose Cottage Horse Paddocks	morning	Sandra Henderson
29	Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (World Wetlands Day)	Morning	Sue Lashko
February 5	Mulligans Flat NR, Border track	Morning	Bill Graham
10 to 15	Capertee Valley	camping	Kathy Walter & John Goldie
12	Molonglo boat trip	Morning	Jack Holland
15	Wednesday walk	Morning	
19	Wanna Wanna Nature Reserve, Carwoola	Morning	Sandra Henderson
26	Stromlo Forest West	Morning	Kim Farley
March 5	Casuarina Sands - walk along Murrumbidgee	Morning	Prue Watters
12	Venue required	Morning	Leader required
15	Wednesday walk	Morning	
19	Googong Western Foreshores	Morning	Sandra Henderson
21 to 24	Ulladulla	Mid-week accom- modated	Bill Graham
25 & 26	Eden pelagics	2 x 1 day	Sue Lashko
April 2	Weston ponds	Morning	Doug Lilley
8 (Sat)	Narrabundah Hill	Morning	Jack Holland
7 to 10	Leeton area	Easter camp	Sandra Henderson
16	K2C	Morning	Nicki Taws
19	Wednesday walk	Morning	
23	Stony Creek Nature Reserve, Carwoola	Morning	Sandra Henderson
30	Venue required	Morning	Leader required
May 14	Venue required	Morning	Leader required
17	Wednesday walk	Morning	
20 (Sat)	ANBG beginners	Morning	Anthony Overs
28	Queanbeyan Bush Cemetery	Morning	Sandra Henderson
June 11	Superb Lyrebird survey	Morning	Chris Davey
21	Wednesday walk	Morning	
25	Venue required	Morning	Leader required

There are 5 dates in the programme that require a leader and a venue. If you would be prepared to take COG members to one of your favourite birding spots on one or more of those dates, please contact Sue Lashko at smlashko@gmail.com

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 2 October - Corin Road

Nine COG members joined me for a morning out on Corin Road in glorious weather. First stop was Woods Reserve, where we had great views of a **White-naped Honeyeater** and several **White-eared Honeyeaters**. The campground was packed with campers.

Next stop was one of the Corin Road entries onto Smokers Trail. It was very quiet, with no sign of the usual robins. At Square Rock carpark it was also quiet, but three **Gang-gang Cockatoos** flew over our heads.

At Corin Dam we walked across the dam wall and down to the river. An agitated male **Golden Whistler** probably had a nest next to the track, as the female was in the same area and he kept diving down into the undergrowth. Another male was further down the track. On the way back up the track the unmistakable call of a **Rose Robin** was heard, and some members of the group saw two of the species near the track. We enjoyed morning tea next to the cars, after an enjoyable morning in areas some had not visited for years.

Sandra Henderson



Galah

Sandra Henderson



White-naped Honeyeater

Tee Tong Teo



Golden Whistler

Tee Tong Teo

Tuesday 4 October to Friday 7 October – Grenfell area

Eight keen birders set out on Tuesday morning for two full days and two part days in the Grenfell district in central west NSW. With heavy rain forecast for the rest of the week we all got wet at least once during the trip but, despite that, we recorded 104 species in all. This included life birds for some of us.

Our first stop was lunch at **Lambing Flat Chinese Tribute Garden** in Young. As well as familiar water and woodland birds we also had good views of **Little Friarbird** and **Sacred Kingfisher**.

On Wednesday, the rain poured down as predicted, but we set off early and drove over very rutted and wet roads to **Bimbi State Forest** west of Grenfell. This wonderful SF adjoins the western side of Weddin Mountains National Park. Its habitats consist of White Callitris/eucalypt woodland with a grassy understorey and patches of cassia and acacia shrubs. Birding was hard work in the poor conditions but our spirits stayed high and we saw some great birds, including **Blue-faced Honeyeater**, **Turquoise Parrot**, **Bluebonnet**, **Australian Ringneck**, **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater**, **Red-capped Robin**, **White-browed Babbler** and **Chestnut-rumped Thornbill**.

We lunched at the nearby **Ben Hall's Campground** in Weddin Mountains NP and were entertained by the very tame **Apostlebirds** in the picnic area. A climb to Ben Hall's Cave gave us lovely views over Bimbi State Forest and across the plains to the west.

Thursday saw a slight improvement in the weather for our visit to **Warraderry State Forest** north of Grenfell. The driving in the SF was somewhat adventurous, with two wet creek crossings, slippery mud and overhanging vegetation by the tracks. It was worth the effort though, as we saw some fabulous birds. These included excellent views of a male **Gilbert's Whistler**. Other highlights were **Striped Honeyeater**, **Hooded Robin**, **Grey-crowned Babbler**, **Painted Button-quail** and **Varied Sitella**. Several of us were lucky enough to hear (though not see) **Black-chinned Honeyeater**.

An evening drive on Thursday to **Holy Camp** in Weddin Mountains NP produced close-up views of a very cute **Australian Owlet-nightjar** on the roadway plus two **Southern Boobook** heard calling.

Our final outing was a Friday morning walk at **Company Dam** in Grenfell. It was very wet underfoot, but we recorded 36 species in one hour - including **Peaceful Dove**, **Rainbow Bee-eater**, **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Little Friarbird**, **Varied Sitella** and **Hoary-headed Grebe**.

All the trip's sightings were recorded on eBird (thank you Lia) and, for subscribers, can be seen by viewing the Weddin Shire bird list.

Kim Farley



Australian Owlet-nightjar, Red-capped Robin, White-necked Heron, Apostlebird
Black Swan, Bearded Orchid

*Tee Tong Teo
Sandra Henderson*

Week following 9 October – K2C surveys, Bredbo area

La Nina has played havoc with many plans this year and the K2C bird surveys were no exception. The forecast for the scheduled 9 October promised substantial rain, so for the first time in 12 years I postponed the event due to the weather. As it turned out 50mm of rain did fall but it cleared by sunrise; however, it left a coating of snow over the Michelago-Bredbo landscape so I wasn't disappointed to have made the call.

The surveys were carried out by various helpers over a few fine mornings during the subsequent week. We recorded a total of 92 species over the 38 sites (20 properties), a good haul for the spring surveys even though few waterbird species were present. Bird activity was high at the majority of sites, most pleasingly those severely burnt 2½ years ago and the younger revegetated sites which have put on significant growth over the past 2 years.

Most of the expected summer migrants were recorded but several species were in low numbers, possibly due to the cool spring so far - **Noisy Friarbird** (2 records), **Sacred Kingfisher** (1), **Olive-backed Oriole** (2), **Mistletoebird** (1), **Leaden Flycatcher** (2) and **Rufous Songlark** (1). The migrants present in good numbers were **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Dusky Woodswallow** (8 properties), and the **Cuckoos** (**Pallid**, **Fan-tailed**, **Shining Bronze**-, but no Horsfield's). Honeyeater migration was subdued, and although **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were widely recorded, they were only noted migrating at one site.

Threatened species were in good numbers including **Brown Treecreeper** (7 properties), **Speckled Warbler** (5), **Hooded Robin** (3), **Scarlet Robin** (3), **Varied Sittella** (3), **Flame Robin** (1), **Gang-gang Cockatoo** (1). The one threatened species that was largely missing was the **Diamond Firetail** with only 2 records of single birds. Other interesting records were **Southern Whiteface** (3 properties), **Restless Flycatcher** (2), **Grey Currawong** (1) and **Jacky Winter** (1).

A big thank you to the volunteers who were flexible with their plans and helped complete the surveys. And thanks as always to the landholders who continue to support the program. The next surveys will be in April 2023.

Nicki Taws

Sunday 16 October - Bungonia National Park

A small group of five COG members left Canberra early on a fine October morning, arriving at Bungonia National Park 90 minutes later, deep in Gundagurra Country, in perfect sunny, still and mild conditions. The group registered at the office, before proceeding to the Lookdown Lookout carpark to take in the spectacular view over Bungonia Creek Gorge and the Shoalhaven district beyond. **Welcome Swallows** and **Dusky Woodswallows** glided overhead, and the calls of summer migrants, including **Leaden Flycatcher**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Mistletoebird**, **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, **White-throated Gerygone** and **Noisy Friarbird** filled the cliff-top woodland soundscape. We made our way, at a birding pace, along the Green Track, hearing as many birds as were seen, appreciating that the birdsong chorus, while lovely to hear, was not so busy as to overwhelm the birding senses. Only **Jacky Winters** making some unfamiliar calls caused some momentary uncertainty. Jerrara Falls presented a wondrous sight, as La Nina-swollen creek waters thundered over rock orchid-decorated limestone cliff faces into a furious Bungonia Creek hundreds of metres below. At this site, a **Brown Goshawk** circled overhead – the first eBird listing for the park's hotspot. We entered and descended into Mass Cave for a unique birding experience, hearing the calls of **White-winged Choughs** through an opening in the cave roof above; COG can now add subterranean birding to its list of activities. The seven hours of the visit flew by, as we made the best of its time in this scenic, but under-bird-surveyed national park – recording some 44 species for the day. Many thanks to Ned Johnston for leading this outing.

David Dedenczuk

Sunday 16 October - Urambi Hills Nature Reserve

Fifteen, mostly strangers, gathered for this joint NPA/COG outing on a cloudy morning to enjoy the soggy hills of Urambi, under the guidance of NPA's Cynthia Burton and COG's Michael Robbins.

The brief introduction by Michael stressed the importance of call recognition because birds are more often heard than seen. He encouraged all to listen attentively and in no time we had our bird call 'antennae' up and ventured sharing an identification with the group. It was a good suggestion because this outing often demanded eyes down to navigate the wet and uneven terrain.

Before even going through the gate into the reserve we had immediately identified one green **Satin Bowerbird** and a small flock of **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**. Michael explained the migration habits of the latter. We saw and heard many more, some making the contact call typical of flying birds, but many the call of birds which were enjoying the several species of eucalypts in flower.

We visited several of the sites Michael surveys four times a year and in doing so covered a good portion of the reserve. Several birds were checking out or inhabiting hollows, including a pair of **Galah**. Several people thought maybe an older common name - Rose-breasted Cockatoo - is more apt. Viewing of the several **Australian Raven** and **Little Raven** was accompanied by advice as to discerning their differences.

The dams were not very productive, there being only a pair of **Australian Wood Duck**, three **Dusky Moorhen**, and the clear call of **Australian Reed-Warbler**. The one **White-faced Heron** seen was taking advantage of the edibles available in the very soggy flat terrain of the paddock next to the largest dam.

Our keen long lens photographers obtained some great images: a pair of **Striated Pardalote** (many others were heard), **Eastern Rosella**, **Nankeen Kestrel**, a female **Leaden Flycatcher** displaying orange-buff throat and breast. Our camera-ready crew proved particularly helpful in identifying a **Little Eagle** in the vicinity of Tuggeranong Creek, and took a nice photo of a 2nd year immature male **Rufous Whistler**.

Near the end of the outing a **Brown Goshawk** circling above made it three raptors for the morning. Beside **Eastern Rosella**, we also saw several **Crimson Rosella**, a couple of **Red-rumped Parrot**, a flock of **Little Corella** and several **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**. Michael drilled us on the calls of **Grey Fantail**, **Willie Wagtail**, **Grey Butcherbird**, **Maggie-lark**, **Laughing Kookaburra**, **Silvereye**, **Red Wattlebird** and **Noisy Friarbird**, in the hope we'll remember some.



Rufous Whistler, Striated Pardalote
Eleanor Cotterell



Leaden Flycatcher

Zachary Flegg

Unfortunately, while he heard and/or saw **Buff-rumped**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Brown Thornbill**, they were few in number or, like the **White-throated Treecreeper**, weren't calling and he wasn't able to drill us on these. He did offer ID clues to differentiate the **Tree Martin** from other martins and swallows which we didn't see.

found in Canberra's nature reserves. Michael encouraged all to check out the COG website for information and further guidance in preparation to trek out once or many times more to see or hear our wonderful Capital Region avifauna.
Lou Alaimo

For many the walk proved a good introduction to the bird life to be found in Canberra's nature reserves. Michael encouraged all to check out the COG website for information and further guidance in preparation to trek out once or many times more to see or hear our wonderful Capital Region avifauna.

Wednesday 19 October - Lake Tuggeranong

Nine members gathered to walk around Lake Tuggeranong, parking by the Sea Scouts Hall on the eastern side of the Lake. It was overcast, but pleasant. The **Common Sandpiper** was our target species, so we spent some extra time by the inlet channel from Wanniasa, where it has been seen frequently in the past, but it didn't show. Most of us did manage to get glimpses of a Rakali foraging below the dam. As we continued in an anti-clockwise direction, participants were given the option to do the whole 6.2km circuit, or return to the car park the way we had come if they preferred. Only one person opted to do the latter. There were two pairs of **Black Swans**, one with three cygnets. Other highlights were **Noisy Friarbirds** and **White-faced Heron**, of which we possibly saw two pairs.

Lia Battison



Day 4



Day 7



Day 8

When do Spinebill Chicks Get Their Long Beaks?

For eight years on our study site on Maulbrooks Road, Moruya, we found an average of 5 (1-9) Spinebill nests each year, which progressed to at least the 1-egg stage. But without exception these nests were at least 4 metres high. We were able to look into some nests with a mirror on a long pole, but the others were so high that their status had to be determined by the birds' behaviour. Taking a series of photographs was never possible. So we were always left wondering about when the chicks acquired the long bill. We often saw young birds that had fledged that season, but they always already had an unusually long bill.

This bizarre season, however, a pair nested in some ti-tree at about head height. The nest was found with two eggs, which hatched on either September 29 or 30. The birds fledged on October 11. Photos were taken of the chicks on October 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and of the fledged young on October 11. Because we didn't want to get too close to the nest, and because the chicks were often partially obscured by foliage, which we didn't want to move or remove, the length of the beaks is not always easy to discern. The last picture of the fledged young was particularly difficult as they were deep in the ti-tree, obscured by a lot of foliage, and we maintained an even greater distance than usual, as the chicks are very vulnerable, and the parents very anxious at this stage.

The photos below are numbered in days, taking September 29 as Day 1. We have a few chick development series, as we used these to age chicks when we found nests after the birds had hatched. So based on our other series:

We would rate the beak length as normal on Day 4.

There is slight evidence of an unusually long beak on Day 7.

There is no discernible change from Day 7 to Day 10.

On Day 11 the beak is longer, but you need to look closely as the tip is obscured.

On Days 12 and 13 there is no significant change from Day 11, but again, you need to look closely on Day 13 as the tip is obscured.

Based on these pictures, we suggest that a lot of the beak length is produced after fledging. This might make sense as the long and slender beaks would simply get in the way in the nest, when the young birds are being fed insects.

Michael and Sarah Guppy



Day 12



Day 13—fledged

Murrumbateman wildlife artwork project

Murrumbateman Lions Club has committed to a new project: a major artwork on the new large concrete water tank within the Murrumbateman Bush Cemetery precinct. The beautification of the cemetery is a foundation project of the Club which commenced in 1991. So far the Club has created a bush garden, a memorial walkway, built a columbarium, erected a wooden perimeter fence and installed seating.



Inspiration for the project was drawn from the now extensive ‘Silo Art’ trend that has seen installation of artwork on silos and water tanks in many country towns and villages across Australia. This will not only add to the beautification of the area, but also provide a new opportunity for tourism in Murrumbateman due to the location in an accessible multi-use public area with walking and cycling pathways that are linked to the existing winery trail.

The project has been developed in collaboration with Murrumbateman Landcare, Murrumbateman Progress Association, and Southern Tablelands Arts, all of whom have provided their support for the project.

This artwork is designed to showcase local endangered flora and fauna for the community and tourists to our area. It includes the **Gang-gang Cockatoo** and the Golden Sun Moth in a Box Gum - Grassy Woodlands setting.

The selected artist is Jimmi Buscombe, an Australian regional artist who specialises in photo realistic wildlife art, public art, mural and street art, and has been commissioned by community groups, councils, private clients and organisations, both locally and internationally, to create street art and public art of native flora and fauna.

It is envisaged that the proposed project design will provide an opportunity for facilitating increased community knowledge on endangered flora and fauna in our local area and create a visible educational tool to complement events such as history and conservation talks.

The total cost of the project will be \$50,000. To date, the Murrumbateman Lions Club has committed \$10,000 to the project and received a \$10,000 grant from the Australian Lions Foundation. Additionally, the Club has applied for several State and Federal grants.

We are now asking for donations from our community and local business to help make this a reality.

Please refer to the [donation flyer on page 26](#) for details or contact murrumbateman.nsw@lions.org.au or call 0401 900 704 for more information

New Places: October 2022

Sandra Henderson

Warraderry State Forest

Where is it? In the Weddin Shire, visited as part of COG's recent trip to the Grenfell area.

We visited a few locations in the Forest, but the undoubted highlight was fantastic views of a **Gilbert's Whistler**. The forest also yielded **Black-chinned Honeyeaters**, **Grey-crowned** and **White-browed Babbler**s, **Striped Honeyeaters** and several **Rufous Songlarks**.

Ben Hall's Cave Campground, Weddin Mountains National Park

Some interesting wildflowers were seen along the walk up to the cave, and a good variety of bush birds. When we returned to the picnic table for morning tea, we were joined by a group of 14 **Apostlebirds**, obviously very accustomed to visitors. They squabbled over the smallest crumbs and kept us entertained for quite some time. We also had **Rainbow Bee-eaters** passing overhead.

Bimbi State Forest

Another location visited during the Grenfell trip.

When we pulled up at 'birding corner', the first birds sighted were a small group of **Turquoise Parrots**. This species was a 'lifer' for some in the group. Although the birds were heard in other places, some of us got nice views of this group on the ground. **Red-capped Robins**, **Chestnut-rumped Thornbills**, **Apostlebirds**, **Greater Bluebonnets** and **Australian Ringnecks** were also seen in the forest.

Lake Talbot – Bundigerry Walking Track

Where is it: Lake Talbot is in Narrandera, a popular resort-style location. I bypassed the accommodation and the swimming pools, and walked 1.5km along the Bundigerry Track on one side of the lake. In places it was narrow, rocky and muddy, but it was the fairly precipitous 5m drop on one side straight down to the water which made me a little uneasy. I managed 26 species, nothing I wouldn't see in Canberra, apart from the yellow subspecies of the **Crimson Rosella**, but a good mix of water birds and bush birds.

Superb Fairy-wrens at the ANBG

The ANU College of Science has recently produced an article and video about the long-term project that the ANU Cockburn Group has been doing on the ANBG **Superb Fairy-wrens**.

You can view the article (with the video embedded in it) here: <https://science.anu.edu.au/news-events/news/under-her-wing-thirty-years-observing-secret-lives-superb-fairy-wrens>

Olivia Congdon

Senior Communications Officer
Communications and Marketing
College of Science
The Australian National University



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.

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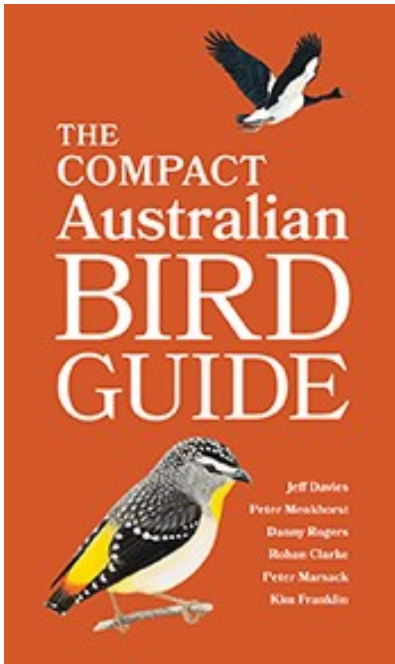
Fred & Jeanette Birkbeck

244 Clacherty Road
Julatten QLD 4871
Tel: 07 4094 1665
Email: freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au

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!

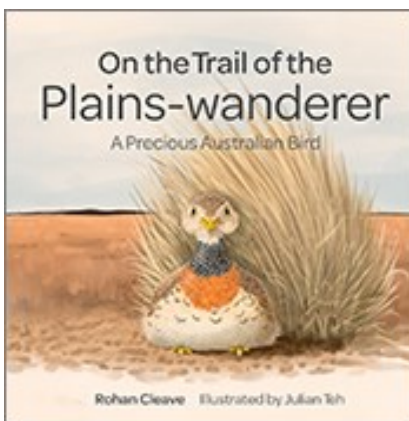
THE COMPACT AUSTRALIAN BIRD GUIDE

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

The Compact Australian Bird Guide is an easy-to-use and beautifully illustrated quick identification guide to all bird species regularly occurring in Australia. The content has been carefully designed to provide the reader with key information to enable rapid identification of a bird, in a convenient form. 264 pages | 198 x 120 mm

Based on The Australian Bird Guide.

Members' Price \$28.00 RRP \$34.99.



ON THE TRAIL OF THE PLAINS-WANDERER

A Precious Australian Bird

By: **Rohan Cleave** Illustrated by: **Julian Teh**

The story of the Plains-wanderer, a critically endangered Australian bird that is truly unique!

The Plains-wanderer is unlike any other bird on Earth – it's one of a kind!

On the Trail of the Plains-wanderer tells the true story of one of Australia's most critically endangered bird species. This unique, quirky and precious bird faces many threats, but continues to survive against the odds. Discover more about this fascinating bird and see how people are providing hope for their future.

Reading level varies from child to child, but we recommend this book for ages 5 to 9.

Members' Price \$20 RRP \$24.99.

Woodland Surveys – spring 2022 survey round

compiled by Jenny Bounds

Note: not all the woodland survey sites are reported.

Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds and the team were lucky to get a fine (no rain) day for the survey on Sunday 25 September. The morning was fairly sunny, with only a light breeze for a short period. A total of 57 species was recorded, above average for a September survey, but there were noticeable absentees, with no cuckoos and no Western Gerygone, (as well as no Common Starlings or Common Mynas – not a bad thing!). Highlights included: 2 records of **Bush Stone-curlews**, 3 birds on the western ridge circuit, and 2 birds on the eastern side of the reserve; **Varied Sittellas** nest building, **White-winged Trillers**, and several **Olive-backed Orioles** and **Golden Whistlers** calling actively. There was only 1 **Scarlet Robin** record around site 19 on the central quartz ridge. Both **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** were moving around, especially at sites on the western side of the reserve. A pair of **Brown Goshawks** appeared to be displaying in flight. **Buff-rumped Thornbills** were numerous, recorded at quite a few sites. As the survey group had morning tea afterwards at the Woolshed, there was a group of **Buff-rumped Thornbills** very close, with a **Speckled Warbler** which gave its musical warble call. The reserve was very wet underfoot once off the main gravel vehicle road. Thank you to those who helped with the survey, a smaller than usual group this time. The next survey is Sunday 4 December.

Goorooyarroo South NR

The survey was done by Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley over the mornings of 20 and 21 September. Monday was mostly sunny but with a strong, cold wind. Tuesday was perfect, sunny with light winds. On both mornings plenty of snow was visible on the distant Brindabellas. As has been the norm in recent times, there was water everywhere with dams full and creeks flowing. They recorded a total of 59 species with 37 of those during the 10 minute counts, compared to 56 and 43 last year.

Monday covered the northern sites with highlights including 4 species of raptor; 2 **Wedge-tailed Eagles**, a **Brown Falcon**, and displaying pairs of **Nankeen Kestrels** and **Brown Goshawks**. Spring/summer migrants present were **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Western Gerygone**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Tree Martin** and **Olive-backed Oriole**. Small birds were generally in good numbers and included 2 **Yellow Thornbills**, not often recorded during our surveys. Apart from displaying raptors, breeding records included a **Tawny Frogmouth** on a nest, **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** nest building, **Australian Magpies** (with a bit of swooping) and a female **Australian Wood Duck** leaving a hollow.

On Tuesday they covered the southernmost sites. It was an excellent morning for cuckoos with **Horsfield's** and **Shining Bronze-Cuckoos** both in good voice, and a silent **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** was seen. Several **Noisy Friarbirds** were seen and heard, after none the previous day. Other good records were a **Speckled Warbler** (at site 2) and 4 **Black-shouldered Kites** including 2 noisy and rather clumsy juveniles. Breeding records included **White-winged Choughs** on a nest, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** mating and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** carrying food to a nest in a large mistletoe.

Mt Majura NR

The spring bird survey on Mt Majura was done by Kathy Walter (Sept 18) and Peter and Natalie Miller (Sept 21). Sunday was sunny but blowing a gale while the 21st was mild and overcast with little wind. A total of 30 species was recorded over the 9 sites. Highlights were a **Tawny Frogmouth** on nest. On the 21st there were a limited number of **Yellow-faced Honey-eaters** moving east as well as a couple of **Noisy Friarbirds**. A single mixed flock of **Buff-rumped**, **Yellow-rumped**, and **Brown Thornbills**, along with **Silvereyes**, **Grey Fantails**, **Superb Fairy-wrens** and a single **Speckled Warbler**, accounted for almost all the small song birds. They did manage to record a single **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**. Not on the survey, but in area was a lone **Collared Sparrowhawk**.

Mt Ainslie NR /Campbell Park

The survey of the nine sites on the lower eastern slopes of Mt Ainslie was conducted on 21 September by Michael Lenz. It was overcast, calm for a long period, and later with just light wind. Notable is the poor state of many mistletoes. Many areas of the ground are very weedy. The most widespread species were **Crimson Rosella** (8 sites), followed by **Weebill** (6), **Spotted Pardalote** and **Noisy Miner** (5 each). Spring arrivals included **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, **Rufous Whistler** and **Mistletoebird**. A few **Noisy Friarbirds**, and **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped**

Honeyeaters were passing through. Other species of interest included **Varied Sittella**, **Speckled Warbler**, a pair of **Little Ravens** at their nest, a **Brown Goshawk**, and a first record of a **Common Blackbird** singing near one of the sites. A total of 36 species was observed at sites, with another 14 in between sites.

Newline

Sue Lashko surveyed on 17 September, a fine and mostly sunny morning with a light breeze that picked up as the morning progressed. The proliferation of woody weeds, mainly boxthorn, since the fire last year is clearly benefiting small birds. For example, at site 7, which is usually dominated by **Noisy Miners**, the surrounding area had a mixed feeding flock of **Superb Fairy-wren**, **Grey Fantail**, **Golden Whistler**, **Red-browed Finch**, and **Yellow-rumped**, **Buff-rumped**, **Striated** and **Brown Thornbills**, as well as a **Common Blackbird**. Although there were **Noisy Miners** in the eucalypts above, the small birds had plenty of cover. There was lots of activity in flowering trees in three sites, with **White-naped**, **Fuscous**, **Yellow-faced** and **White-plumed Honeyeaters**, as well as plenty of **Grey Fantails**. **Olive-backed Oriole** and **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** were recorded, as well as **Brown Goshawk** and **Nankeen Kestrel**. The ducks appeared to have taken to the trees, with **Australian Wood Duck**, **Grey Teal** and **Pacific Black Duck** perched in the branches. A total of 47 species was recorded, similar to the previous two wet years.

Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson surveyed Tuggeranong Hill on Friday 16 September. It had rained overnight, so it was very wet underfoot. There was a lot of activity all over the Hill. Four sites had ten or more species. The most productive was site 2, with thirteen species in a frenzied mixed feeding flock. Twenty-five **Silvereyes** were accompanied by 4 species of **thornbills**, **Rufous** and **Golden Whistlers**, **White-naped** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**, **Grey Fantails** and **Superb Fairy-wrens**. The only breeding record was a pair of **Australian Ravens** carrying sticks to their new nest. Highlights were a **Collared Sparrowhawk**, **Speckled Warbler**, **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** and two **Common Bronzewing**s, although they were not all within the site counts. A record number of species was observed, 32 in sites and a further 13 between sites.

Naas Sites

The woodland survey on this rural lease south of Tharwa was conducted on 25 September on a cool, calm, but overcast morning, following rain over the previous couple of days. The ground was very wet underfoot, the drainage lines were running and the hilltops were misty. Species diversity and species numbers were low. A total of 23 species was observed within the sites and another 14 species between the sites. Notable observations were two **Jacky Winters**, a **Diamond Firetail**, **Dusky Woodswallows**, **Tree Martins**, **Olive-backed Oriole**, and **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones**. No honeyeaters were observed moving through, besides the resident **Noisy Miners**, although their absence was likely due to the cool, overcast conditions.

Jerrabomberra West NR

Alison Rowell did the survey on 29 September, filling in again for Jenny Bounds. This time, due to soaked ground/a wet vehicle track, it was a long walk in from the gate on the Monaro Hwy. Alison recorded 24 common and mostly regular species, on the low side for spring. It was good to see two **Dusky Woodswallows** in the usual spring area near site 2, in the Blakely's Red Gum patch. A group of 14 **Silvereyes** were at site 7 and 14 **Silver Gulls** flew overhead in transit. Notable absences were White-winged Trillers (most years recorded in the same area as the Dusky Woodswallows), and none of the cuckoos.



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo—
Urambi Hills outing
Zachary Flegg



LIONS CLUB OF MURRUMBATEMAN INC

The Murrumbateman Lions Club Water Tank Artwork Project

The Lions Club is raising funds to have this beautiful proposed artwork created by the artist Jimmi Buscombe installed on the new water tank in the Bush Cemetery precinct.

The cost is \$50,000. The Lions Club has contributed \$10,000 and received a grant for another \$10,000 from the Australian Lions Foundation.

We are asking for donations from our community and local business to help make this a reality.

Donations can be made to by electronic funds transfer to:

The Commonwealth Bank

BSB 062-901

Acc no: 1001-6319

Acc name: Lions Club of Murrumbateman Inc

Please ensure you include:

Water Tank and your NAME on all donations.



OR keep an eye out for The Murrumbateman Lions Water Tank Artwork go-fund-me page

Please contact murrumbateman.nsw@lions.org.au or call 0401 900 704 for more information



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Please contact murrumbateman.nsw@lions.org.au or call 0401 900 704 for more information

COG Committee Nomination Form

I hereby nominate for the position *

of on the COG Committee.

(*Positions: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, General Members)

(Name):

(Signature): Date:.....

I second the nomination.

(Name):

(Signature): Date:.....

I accept the nomination.

(Name):

(Signature): Date:.....

Nomination forms can be submitted until the date in the call for nominations. Send by mail to COG at PO Box 301, Civic Square, ACT 2608 or by email to cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au.

All nominators, seconders and nominees must be financial members of COG.

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

2022-2023 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

M Oorebeck
R Turnbull
S Goodwin

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for December 2022 edition:

Wednesday 30 November 2022

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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