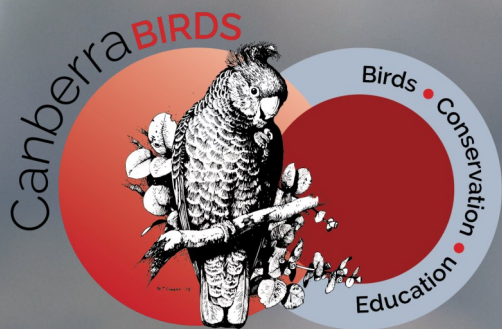




Gang-gang

Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc

Canberra Birds Newsletter

AUGUST 2025



IN THIS ISSUE

(to read, click on topic)

August Meeting—Wed 13 August *Everyone Welcome*

Billy Bray - Conserving song culture in the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater

Samuele Ramellini - Sociality across seasons: drivers and consequences in the Superb Fairy-wren

News from the Committee

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

Summary of 9 July meeting presentations

Membership renewal due

Leader wanted for U3A activity

Field Trip Reports

Future Field Trips

Eric—a poem

Woodland Surveys – Winter 2025

Contacts/Information

Photo: Glossy Black-Cockatoo -
Tuggeranong Hill NR - 6 July 2025 —

Chris Chapman

AUGUST MEETING

Wednesday 13 August 2025
7:30 pm

Canberra Girls Grammar School,
Chapel, corner Gawler Cres and Melbourne Ave, Deakin

The August 2025 meeting will be a normal face-to-face one held as usual at the Canberra Girls Grammar School but will again be held in the Chapel where we will be meeting for the rest of 2025 while the Multi-media Theatre (MMT) is being renovated (see details below).

Billy Bray - Conserving song culture in the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater

Samuele Ramellini - Sociality across seasons: drivers and consequences in the Superb Fairy-wren

The Chapel is much easier to find than the MMT. As for previous 2025 meetings entry and exit for the Chapel are from the main gates on Melbourne Ave, which automatically open and close. The Entry gate will be open, so please drive through and park in the main parking area to your left. Once parked proceed to the Chapel using main path as previously before turning left at the Admin Hub, or use the more direct (but darker) route keeping the Boarding House to your left – see the amended [map](#).

Limited parking will also be available using the Chapel Drive entrance on Gawler Cres and car park, this gate should also be open.

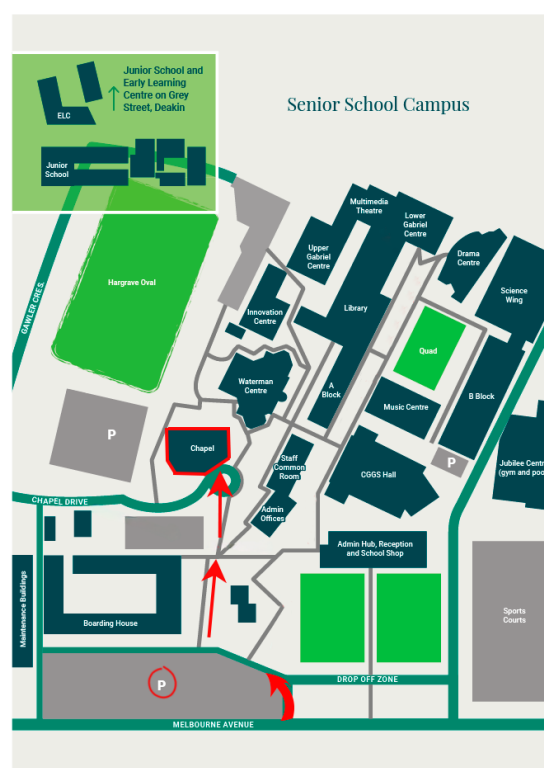
Though it is well lit, as it will be dark before and after the meeting, a torch for finding your way to the Chapel and back to your car is recommended. The Exit gate is on a sensor pad, so please drive up to the gate and it will open for you.

As COVID is still widespread in the community 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.

The first presentation will be by **Billy Bray**, a PhD student at the Research School of Biology at the ANU, on “**Conserving song culture in the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater.**”

Like other songbirds, the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater learns its song at a young age through interactions with conspecifics. However, due to severe declines in density resulting from a population crash over the last half century, young birds often lack crucial interactions with song tutors, causing them to learn abnormal songs which could impede their ability to attract a mate. To improve their breeding success in the wild, the Taronga Conservation Society now tutors their breed-for-release juvenile Regent Honeyeaters with a typical wild song. The release of tutored zoo-bred birds may have the added effect of stabilising the song culture in the wild, a crucial step towards arresting the catastrophic population declines which have the Regent Honeyeater on course for imminent extinction.

The main presentation will be by **Samuele Ramellini**, also a PhD student at the Research School of Biology at the ANU and a Canberra Birds Conservation Fund grantee and is titled “**Sociality across seasons: drivers and consequences in the Superb Fairy-wren.**”



Seasonal breeders concentrate their breeding efforts in a short life-history stage, during which they can show high territoriality. Conversely, many species become more tolerant of conspecifics during the non-breeding season and form social groups. Such seasonal differences in behaviours are thought to be a strategy to reduce the costs arising from year-round territoriality. However, it is also possible that sociality can reduce future reproductive conflict. In this talk, Samuele will present the research he is conducting for his PhD on the iconic Superb Fairy-wren (*Malurus cyaneus*). This represents an ideal study species as it is a seasonal territorial breeder and during the non-breeding season it forms a complex multilevel society. Samuele will present the results of some of his PhD chapters looking at the drivers and consequences of these changes in sociality across seasons.

News from the Committee

The committee met for their **monthly meeting** on the 19th of July. The agenda was broad-ranging, and included routine items, several more challenging matters and some simpler topics we could celebrate. A selection below:

- The committee will **not meet in August** as we won't have the quorum of six members required to run a meeting. With only seven committee members - who are all busy in their other realms of life - we have an ongoing balancing act to gather the quorum each month. Not surprisingly, we are keen to enlist several **more committee members** - both general members (those 'without portfolio', as it were), as well as a Minutes Secretary and a Treasurer. Margaret Robertson, our Secretary, is doing double duty in her role, and Prue Watters, our long-standing Acting Treasurer would like to step back from the role. Committee membership is a great way to get to know Canberra Birds people, to contribute to the management of Canberra Birds and to help guide us into the future. Deep knowledge of birds is not a requirement, as a wide range of skills and backgrounds is to our advantage. Members are very welcome to come along to a meeting to 'try us out' first.
- The committee is pleased to announce that **Kushini Kalupahana** and **Yiqing Chen** have been awarded Canberra Birds funding to support their attendance at the **Aust Ornithological Conference** in November 2025. Applications closed on the 30th June, with interviews on the 11th July. Kushini is undertaking a PhD project investigating vocal mimicry of Brown Thornbill. Her study site is the ANBG and Black Mountain, where she has banded large numbers of Brown Thornbill. Yiqing's work is on behaviour of species in mixed feeding flocks. This involves empirical studies based at Mulligans Flat. A short profile of the work of both successful candidates will be included in a future issue of Gang-gang and both will present their very interesting work at future Canberra Birds members meetings. Thank you, Julie McGuinness, who with Kim Farley, shortlisted and interviewed the applicants. Julie attended that part of the July committee meeting to present our recommendation.
- Canberra Birds will respond by mid-August to the **Public Consultation regarding Proposed Amendment to the Territory Plan to remove the Future Urban Area overlay from Bluetts Block**. This amendment will further secure Bluetts Block's protection as a Nature Reserve. After discussion in committee, Jenny Bounds will take the lead in preparing our response.
- The **proposed bird hide at Big Dam at Mulligans Flat** is progressing to the planning stage. The hide is to be funded jointly by Canberra Birds and the Woodlands & Wetlands Trust with funds bequeathed to both our organisations by the late Bruce Lindenmayer. ACT Parks and Conservation Service is managing the planning and building project, with Canberra Birds (Jenny Bounds and Kim Farley) having an active and enthusiastic advisory role.
- The committee is very pleased that our upgraded Excel based system for **managing membership information** is now in place after testing during July. The new system will streamline processes and reduce the workload of our Membership Officer and Acting Treasurer. Thank you, Julian Robinson, for building the new system and to Prue Watters for contributing strongly to the understanding of requirements.
- Kim Farley. *President*, Canberra Birds president@canberrabirds.org.au

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

There was another very frosty period at the start of the nearly 5 weeks from 25 June to 27 July covered by this column, but as July began the weather turned much more changeable, often cloudy and rainy interspersed with just a few shorter frosty periods, so that by the end conditions were very wet. Both my notes and analysis below confirm that again bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (Aoi) was low. Only a few of the spring/summer migrants known to overwinter were present, and the numbers of some of the autumn/winter altitudinal migrants remained low. Numbers of “unusual” species reported were again low, and the main feature seems to have been observations of the winter flocking behaviour of quite a few species.

Highlights – Little Wattlebird and Brown Honeyeater updates

In the absence of any other “special unusuals” during the period, the **Little Wattlebird** at the ANBG may have moved on, as it was last reported on 12 July.



Brown Honeyeater - 3 August 2025 - Queanbeyan

Luke Downey

The very good news is that based on Chris Chapman's excellent photographs the COG/Canberra Birds Rarities Panel was able to endorse their first COG Aoi record of the **Brown Honeyeater** from South Tralee NSW on 20 June. Surprisingly there are only 2 other additional records on eBird, one on 21 June and the other on 28 June (this time with Luke Downey's excellent photographs), the only one for the current period. I expect many birders would have dipped on this bird.

I have, however, been able to find Mark Clayton's previous post that I referred to in my July column. On 5 June 2020 he posted the following on the COG/Canberra Birds chat line: “On the Australian Bird Identification Group's Facebook page on Wednesday (3 June) was a series of photographs taken by a lady in Yass. One of the photos is clearly a

Brown Honeyeater. I have been in touch with her, and the bird was photographed in the town itself. To the best of my knowledge this is the first genuine record of this species in COG's Area of Interest. If I can find the record on my phone I will show the photo to two members of the rarities panel next week. I am certainly happy to accept this record.”

Unfortunately, it appears this record never came to the Rarities Panel's attention. Certainly, my experience is that it's very hard to retrieve photos from this Facebook page several days after it has been posted.

There have been no further reports of the **Striped Honeyeater** in Higgins, and this bird may have moved on.

Spring/summer migrants

Of the spring/summer migrants still present in June, there was another overwintering **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** heard and then seen following a loose flock of **Buff-rumped Thornbills** at Zosterops Corner on 5 July. There was also a further report of an **Australian Reed-Warbler** calling at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR) on 5 July. **Tree Martins** were still reported from 4 locations, 1 bird in Wakefield Gardens (Ainslie) on 27 June, one at the Anderson VC Rest Area on Lake George on 28 June, and 2 birds at Rows Lagoon and at the West Belconnen Pond on 23 and 25 July, respectively.

A **Rufous Whistler** was reported only from Esdale Rd Mullion on 4 July. However, the **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike** was still reported from 12 locations (compared with around 20 in June), all but one in urban/peri-urban Canberra. Despite my not having seen it in our local area, the **Grey Fantail** was reported from 30 locations, only slightly down from the 36 in June.

The **Dusky Woodswallow** has been reported from 3 locations, up to 10 birds at the JWNR to 12 July, 5 birds at the adjacent Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Ponds (FSTP) to 29 June (both showing its preference to be close to water in winter), but up to 11 birds regularly at the Nadjung Mada NR (between Wells Station Drive and the Federal Hwy) to 23 July. The **Olive-backed Oriole** was still reported from 4 locations (down from the 6 in June), all single birds except for up to 2 in Symonston.

The **Mistletoebird** was reported from 7 locations (well down from the 17 in June) but again the species with the highest number of locations for overwintering birds has been the **Superb Parrot**, reported from around 50 (slightly down from the 60 in June, with about half south of the lake) locations, with some big flocks being reported (see below).

So, during August please keep an eye out for the above spring/summer migrants. Towards the end of the month please also look out for the **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Pallid Cuckoo**, **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones** and **Fairy Martins**, which are amongst the first such species to return.

Autumn/winter altitudinal migrants

Of the species that come to Canberra and its surrounds from the mountains and higher country to spend autumn/winter here, the **Scarlet Robin** continued to be widespread, with reports from around 50 urban/peri-urban locations, similar to June. The **Flame Robins** are not as widespread, reported from just 18 locations, also similar to June. Andrea and I have found them difficult to locate at their usual spot on Cooleman Ridge, but we have found up to 14 in the horse paddocks off the SW corner of Narrabundah Hill, a spot at which they are sometimes present. They were part of a ground-based mixed feeding flock including up to 40 **Red-browed Firetails** and at least 6 **Double-barred Finches**.

There have been reports of the **Rose Robin** from 5 locations (down from the 7 in May), two of these were urban/peri-urban (single birds at the ANBG between 3-21 July, and at the Aranda Bushland NR on 17 July), 2 along the Murrumbidgee River, as well as a bird at Zosterops Corner on 14 July. Again, there have been no confirmed **Pink Robin** sightings during the period, the closest location being near Shepparton.

The **Crescent Honeyeater** has been reported from 5 locations, 2 of which were urban/peri-urban; a single bird at the ANBG from 27 June to 21 July and a single bird on Cooleman Ridge on 28 June, with 3 reported there on 22 July. However, up to 6 birds were reported from Vanitys Crossing Rd between 5 to 24 July, and up to 6 birds (25 in total) at 6 different evenly spaced spots along the Mulloon Firetrail in the Tallaganda Forest area on 25 July. The **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** was reported from 6 locations, 3 of which are urban/peri-urban, a single bird at the Queanbeyan River suspension bridge on 16 July, and one south of there the following day, as well as 1 bird at the Tuggeranong Hill NR on 7 July. While the most reliable spot has been Vanitys Crossing Rd where up to 4 birds have been reported between 5 to 24 July, this is still fewer than the 8 reported from the Scottsdale Reserve on 24 July.

A single **Bassian Thrush** was reported only from the Mulloon Firetrail (see above) on 25 July, and an **Olive Whistler** was reported only from the ANBG on 6 July. No **Brown Gerygones** were reported from anywhere within the COG Aol during the period, and **Swift Parrots** were again also not reported during the period, with eBird showing the closest sightings still being to the SW of Sydney.



Australian
Ornithological
Services P/L
PO Box 385
South Yarra
3141
Victoria
0417310200

enquiries@philipmaher.com

Plains-wanderer Weekend

6 & 7 December 2025

Wet Season
Kutini – Payamu
Iron Range NP

7 to 13 January 2026

Small personal tours in the
Denilquin district, Victorian
mallee, NE Victoria, Gippsland and
the Melbourne area or anywhere
you need to go to bolster your
Australia list.

www.philipmaher.com

During August, please keep an eye out for the species mentioned above (as well as the **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Golden Whistler** which are often quieter before they leave) anywhere in the COG Aol before they start to move away.

Unusual species

Apart from the **Little Wattlebird** and **Brown Honeyeater** described above there were no special “unusuals” species reported from the COG Aol during the period.

Again, there were no **Magpie Geese** or **Plumed Whistling Duck** reported during the period. **Freckled Duck** were reported from 3 locations, with up to 10 ducks continuing to be present at the JWNR throughout the period. Again, the highest number were the 55 ducks (up from the 33 in June) counted on the Lake Bathurst waterbird survey on 18 July, with 2 ducks also reported from SW Lake George on that day.

During the period, the **Australian Shelduck** was reported from 10 locations in an arc from the N through to the E of Canberra, with the highest numbers being the 78 ducks on the Lake Bathurst survey on 18 July (similar to June). Otherwise, the maximum number was the 50 seen on the Wollagorang Rd on 3 July, with the 32 and 26 seen there on 13 and 5 July being the only other sightings above single digits.

Blue-billed Ducks were reported from 4 locations during the period, with up to 8 ducks regularly reported from the Upper Stranger Pond. Single ducks were reported from the JWNR up to 8 July and the adjacent Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Ponds (FSTP) to 22 July, and up to 16 ducks were reported from Rowes Lagoon. However, this number was dwarfed by the 533 ducks recorded on the Lake Bathurst survey on 18 July, which is still well below the 932 ducks reported from the survey there on 15 June (this number did not seem to be available last month).

Apart from the Tidbinbilla NR Sanctuary, **Musk Ducks** were reported from 5 locations (down from 8 in June), with 60 ducks recorded at Lake Bathurst on 18 July when there were also 14 reported from the adjacent Morass (much higher total than in June). A single duck was reported from the Upper Stranger Pond on 1 July, with up to 3 ducks on Rowes Lagoon and 2 ducks on Lake Springfield on the Namina Rd on 4 July.

The **Great-crested Grebe** was reported from 1 location only, with a single bird reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 18 July (compared with 2 there on 15 June).

Stubble Quail were reported from just 1 location, with 6 reported from the Bullen Range Conservation Reserve (Paddys River) on 28 June. In contrast **Brown Quail** were reported from 9 locations, nearly double that in June. The highest number was the 9 quail from Cooleman Ridge on 22 July. While I have not been able to locate them there for nearly a year, I had a rare sighting of them at Narrabundah Hill the day before. Single **Painted Button-quail** were reported from 2 locations, heard at the Zosterops Corner on 3 July and photographed at Mt Painter NR on 6 July. Again, no **Little Button-quail** were reported during the period.

No **White-headed Pigeon**, **Brown Cuckoo-Dove**, **Brush Bronzewing**, **Peaceful** or **Diamond Doves**, or **White-throated Nightjars** were reported during the period.



Painted Button-quail - 6 July 2025 - Mount Painter, -
Michael Fenech

No **Baillon's Crakes** were again reported during the period. **Spotless Crakes** were reported from 3 locations (up from 1 in June), with 2 birds at the JWNR only on 22 July, whereas single birds were reported from the Mawson Ponds and the Eardley St Ponds (Bruce) on 14 and 19 July, respectively. A single **Australian Spotted Crake** was reported only from the Isabella Pond on 29 June.

A single **Buff-banded Rail** was reported only from the big dam at Mulligans Flat NR on 18 July, but no **Lewin's Rail** or **Black-tailed Nativehen** were reported during the period. The above is consistent with my understanding of low numbers of crakes and rails in the COG Aol during winter.

Twenty (compared with 25 in June) **Red-capped Plovers** were reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 18 July. Up to 20 **Pied Stilts** were reported from the NW end of Lake George and up to 9 from the SW corner, but no **Red-necked Avocets**, **Australian Painted-snipe**, **Pacific Golden Plover**, **Banded Lapwing**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Sharp-tailed, Pectoral** or **Common Sandpipers**, or **Red-necked Stint** were reported during the period.

Again, no **Caspian**, **Whiskered** or **White-winged Black Terns**, **Australasian** or **Australian Little/Black-backed Bitterns** were reported during the period.

No confirmed sightings of **Little** or **Plumed Egrets** were reported during the period. **Great Egrets** were reported from 6 locations (down from 12 in June, all singles except for 2 birds at one) during the past month. Single **White-necked Herons** were reported from 5 locations up from the 3 in June. Single **Royal Spoonbills** were reported from 3 locations (compared with 2 in June), at Lake Bathurst and SW Lake George on 18 July and the FSTP on 20 July. **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** were reported from 3 locations (up from 1 in June), 1 bird on the Sutton Rd on 4 July, 2 birds on the Wollogorang Rd on 9 and 14 July and 3 birds from the Lake Bathurst survey on 18 July. Again, no **Glossy Ibis** were reported during the period.

No **Eastern Barn** or **Powerful Owls** were reported during the period. **Black-shouldered Kites** were reported from 35 locations in the period, down from the 50 for the previous 3 months. A single **Spotted Harrier** was reported only from the Woolshed Creek Pialligo between 1-9 July. Two **Grey Goshawks** were reported from the Marked Tree Rd at Deep Creek (E of Gundaroo) on 7 July. However, no **Pacific Baza**, **Black Kites** or **Black Falcons** were reported from anywhere in the COG Aol during the period.

Single **Azure Kingfishers** were reported from 2 locations, the Cotter Reserve on 4 and 21 July, and the Lake Tuggeranong Weir (a new location) on 11 July. No **Red-backed** or **Forest Kingfishers** were reported during the period.

Two **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** were photographed at the Tuggeranong Hill NR on 6 July. I am surprised no-one else seems to have found them as they were the first reports from the ACT (as opposed to the COG Aol) since November 2022. No **Cockatiel**, **Turquoise Parrot**, **Scaly-breasted**, **Little** or **Purple-crowned Lorikeets** were reported over the period. A single **Musk Lorikeet** was reported only from the Red Hill shops on 6 July.

Apart from the special “unusual” honeyeaters described above, a **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** was reported from Allen Rd Springrange (close to where two were reported in April 2025) on 4 July. **White-fronted Chats** were reported from just 1 location in the ACT, a single bird at the Holborrow Ave Ponds on 19 July. Otherwise, 10 birds (slightly up from the 8 in June) were recorded at Lake Bathurst waterbird survey on 18 July, as well as 3 birds on the Sutton Rd on 4 July and up to 8 birds on the Wollogorang Rd between 4-13 July. No **Singing**, **Scarlet**, **Striped** or **Painted Honeyeaters** or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period.

Blue-faced Honeyeaters were reported from 2 locations, regularly from near the Wanniasa Hills Primary School where Sandra Henderson notes she has heard and/or seen up to 2 birds most days over last couple of months. The second report was from a very interesting location with John Hurrell hearing one calling very loudly and then seeing it briefly at the Mt Stomlo Observatory on 20 July. This represents a western extension of the species’ range in Canberra, noting that they have not yet been reported from Weston Creek despite its proximity to Curtin where many of the early observations were made.

For those interested there is a fascinating story in the Winter issue of the 2025 Australian Birdlife magazine of how this species is both a co-operative and plural (a breeding system in which multiple females within the same social group lay eggs, either in the same nest or with each female building her own nest in close proximity) breeder, especially favouring palm trees, at least in Brisbane where the research was based.

A single **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** was only reported from Bluetts Block on 21 and 24 July. However, no **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes**, **White-browed Babbler**, **Apostlebird**, **Spangled Drongo**, **Black-faced Monarch**, **Red-capped Robin**, **Tawny Grassbird** or **Zebra Finches** were reported during the period.

Jacky Winters were reported from 4 known locations (double that for June), with 3 birds seen on the Naas Rd at Spring Station Creek on 28 June, 3 birds on the Naas Rd less than a km S of there on 19 July, and single birds on the Top Naas Rd and at the Scottsdale Reserve on 14 and 21 July, respectively.

Hooded Robins were reported from 5 locations (up from 3 in June) to the S of Canberra, with up to 2 birds regularly from the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd, as well as a male and a female from the Apollo Rd itself on 18 and 27 July, respectively. There were also 4 birds on Top Naas Rd on 26 June, 5 at Colinton (the only new location) on 24 July and up to 8 birds recorded at the Scottsdale Reserve from 21-24 July.

Restless Flycatchers were reported from just 2 locations, a single bird at the Nelanglo TSR on 9 July and 4 birds at the Coolalie TSR, a new location to the NE of Yass on 28 June. The lack of reports at any locations to the S of the COG AoI in winter is most unusual.

The number of “unusual” birds reported is again very low, in particular very few reports of pigeons/doves, raptors, parrots or passerines including honeyeaters. However, this has been overcome, at least in part, by the many winter flocks of more common birds observed (see below).

Breeding

While July is the middle month of winter, some early breeding has come to my attention. On 18 July Mark Clayton posted that an **Australian Magpie** was carrying sticks up to a new nest site in a Eucalypt in his front yard in Kaleen, and on 24 July Rob Parnell reported that a pair had a half-built nest in Narrabundah. On 18 July Denise Kay posted that she had a pair of **Red Wattlebirds** nesting and being aggressive around Giralang Pond.

My local **Australian Ravens**, also early breeders, have built a second nest less than 1 metre above their one in a blue gum in Rivett where they moved to a few years ago after abandoning the nest, also in a blue gum, in Chapman, in which the **Australian Hobbies** unsuccessfully tried to breed in 2023.

A still last season’s record is the begging young **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** that has been fed in my garden and surrounds in Chapman.

Flocks, including of migrating birds

Including the **Flame Robin** mentioned above, Andrea and I have continued to see some large mixed feeding flocks (MFF) though from mid-July they seem to break up and/or become much smaller. On the cold and windy 9 July Christine D had a large and very active MFF of small birds (at least 60 birds) come through her garden in Flynn. They stayed around for about 15 minutes, and species she was able to identify were **Spotted Pardalote** (loud and numerous), **Weebill**, **Silvereye**, **Golden Whistler**, **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**, **Eastern Spinebill** (possibly the local residents joining in the fun), and **Brown**, **Striated**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Yellow Thornbill**, the last-named being special as she had not had them in her garden for six years! Christine noted it was delightful to stand there with them all flying about, calling and feeding, but not staying still. They came through again the next morning with one new species, the **White-plumed Honeyeater**.

For most of the period the MFF in my GBS site in Chapman has been an almost pure one of at least 16 **Striated Thornbills** (it’s always very hard to identify them all properly when they are moving around actively; it’s easiest when they are gathered at a bird bath of which they are very fond), which except for the last 2 winters have been quite unusual in my garden (I’ve also seen them more often in the local area). The only species regularly with them has been 1-2 **Eastern Spinebills**.

Large single species flocks have been a highlight of the period. On 1 July Brian posted about a very large group of **White-winged Choughs** (60+ individuals) foraging along one of the tracks at the National Arboretum. He stopped to watch at least 4 or 5 family groups spread out over 80 m making soft whistling calls. All of a sudden, they rose up as a single group and flew low to a small forest of bare deciduous trees. He felt guilty for disturbing them until the real reason swooped down from the sky, a **Peregrine Falcon**. It rose up and circled above the birds in the trees and made a few more attempts before it realized that all the choughs were now safely sheltering. Over the next period until it started to rain, Brian described in some detail the various unsuccessful attempts of the falcon to catch a chough as well as their behaviour during this time.

On 13 July Doug Liang posted that he had counted 53 **Superb Parrots** feeding on the ground that morning at the Waramanga ovals, with more heard nearby. On 20 July Doug noted that 76 birds were seen that afternoon, mainly

feeding in one small corner inside Arawang Primary School grounds, foraging (for roots, seeds?) under fallen leaf litter from a grove of deciduous trees lining the boundary fence. Initially he saw about 30, the remainder arriving at intervals in groups of no less than 10 at a time.

In response Kirsty Craven posted that there had been multiple sightings of **Superb Parrots** foraging on ovals and verges in the past weeks. A further sighting at the AIS carpark led her to question the seasonal nature of these observations. For most of the year Superbs could be seen/heard in the Eucalypt canopy at the AIS, but last week 13 were noted foraging in leaf litter on the verge under Eucalypts on several mornings. She wondered whether feeding opportunities in the gums were now low and that drove the ground feeding behaviour at this time of the year?

Nick Payne added that he saw 50-60 **Superb Parrots** a few days before still feeding in the Eucalypts between Federation Mall and Kings Ave just below Parliament House. It was difficult to get an exact count as they were in multiple trees and kept flitting between trees. Whatever the answer there is certainly sufficient food around in the ACT to allow this species to now overwinter in very much larger numbers than previously when they were largely absent over winter.

On 26 June Andrea and I counted at least 45 **Red-rumped Parrots** feeding just inside the dog park fence next to the bike path in Weston Park. This is by far the largest number I have seen here or anywhere for a species that 10 years ago was very conspicuous with its roost flights and roosts of up to 100 birds in Chapman/Rivett but is now largely absent. On 15 July we counted at least 55 **Australian King-Parrots** along the same bike path, again the largest number I have seen for some time. That same morning, we also counted 160 **Silver Gulls** in the nearby Orana Bay, most of them standing in water in a long line just off the western shore. They were possibly gathering pre-breeding on Spinnaker Island.

Late morning on 3 July Andrea and I counted at least 110 **Pied Currawongs** over 6 minutes at Narrabundah Hill. They were flying quite low singly or in small groups in a NW direction from trees on the E side of the large dam on the southern fence, with some feeding in pyracantha bushes on S side. They were surprisingly quiet, with hardly any calling. Over 5 minutes on 13 July, we counted at least 60 birds flying in the opposite direction, higher and a quite a bit noisier than those seen 10 days before. Interestingly we have seen very few there since despite often visiting.

Another interesting post was from Stewart Deans on 26 July noting there he had seen a flock of about 40 **European Goldfinches** several times in Central Park, Wright. We have been seeing small numbers of this species both in Molonglo and the Narrabundah Hill/Cooleman Ridge area recently, after them having become quite scarce locally in the past decade or so.

On 19 July John Brannan posted that he had a small mixed flock of honeyeaters visit his garden in Florey yesterday and today: **Yellow-faced** (5), **White-naped** (6?), **New Holland** (2), **Fuscous** (1) and **White-plumed** (1). He wasn't sure if this marked the start of the migration, or just over-winterers moving around. Around the same time, I have also had the first two species appear in my garden in Chapman, which I suspect are just moving around as the return migration usually doesn't start until towards the end of August. So, watch out for the return of these two species which together with the **Fuscous Honeyeater** (recorded from 7 locations in the period compared with just 2 in late May/early June) are the true migratory species of those above.

While the last month of winter, August is also the first month when movement usually starts to pick up. Hopefully things will improve from the very quiet winter and please watch out for any further overwintering spring/summer migrants as well as the first species returning, for the altitudinal migrants before they start to leave, for late MFFs and single species flocks, for roost sites and flights, and for any late winter breeding activity. As usual please ensure that all significant sightings are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

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

Jack Holland

Summary of the 9 July meeting presentations

With many thanks to Duncan for sorting out the projection problems just in time, the second COG/Canberra Birds monthly meeting was held in the Chapel, our new temporary venue at the Canberra Girls Grammar School.

First **Chris Davey** gave a very interesting and informative short presentation entitled “**Honeyeater migration along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor - Autumn 2025**”.

Chris started off by noting that there are 135 resident bird species in the ACT, of which 37 are migrants within Australia. However, very little is known about these species including changes to their migration patterns over time.

In this respect, he indicated the results of the main previous honeyeater surveys were published in 1984 and 1986, where Chris was the main coordinator, and in 1997 where Nicki Taws was. The results of the 2025 survey, carried out over 3 Saturdays in April using the same sites as Nicki Taws, were therefore of great importance and of interest to attendees who participated both in this survey (45 volunteers of which 80% were COG/Canberra Birds members) and/or in the earlier surveys.

Chris had already published Tables comparing the 1997 and 2025 results for same survey dates and the 9 sites for both **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** in the May 2025 Gang-gang newsletter. The important result was that, except for some isolated numbers for sites to the south of the ACT, all numbers for 2025 were lower, startlingly so in many cases.

Given that the surveys were carried out in good weather on all days, Chris wondered whether the significantly reduced numbers truly reflected many fewer honeyeaters moving through now, or whether there is annual variation in the passage, whether there has been a change of preferred sites or perhaps they are now coming through earlier, for which there seems to be some evidence.

Therefore, he proposed to carry out further surveys in 2026 but over a longer period; over 8 Saturday mornings from 21 March to 9 May but using only 4 sites. Depending on the number of volunteers, all nine sites will be covered over the period 11, 18 and 25 April.

Once again on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Chris for giving this very interesting and informative presentation exposing us to the seeming changes in the numbers of honeyeaters in the ACT migrating over time. We wish him the very best with his proposed further citizen science surveys aimed at establishing with more certainty whether the numbers of these honeyeaters undertaking migration have significantly declined.

The main presentation was a fascinating one on “**Birds of Bhutan: A Glimpse into the Avian Diversity of the Eastern Himalayas**” by Sonam Dorji, a Bhutanese birder, professional bird guide and the Bhutan eBird reviewer.

As shown by the large audience, attendees were very interested to learn about Bhutan’s birds, a country very few of us have visited. Sonam started by pointing out Bhutan is a very small country known for pristine nature and strong conservation values, where over 770 bird species have been recorded so far. Birds are an important part of Bhutanese culture, environment, and eco-tourism, and Bhutan is considered one of the top birding destinations in Asia.

Sonam indicated that the Phrumsengla National Park is the top birding hotspot, where **Ward’s Trogon**, **Beautiful Nuthatch** and **Wren-babblers** can be found. The Royal Manas National Park consisting of lowland subtropical forest, where the **Rufous-necked Hornbill** and **White-bellied Heron** occur, is also popular. Finally in the Subtropical forests of the East valley **hornbills**, **pheasants** and other species can be seen.

Coffee and Chat at the Gardens Tuesday, 12 August

You are invited to Canberra Birds monthly Coffee and Chat at the Australian National Botanic Gardens cafe.

Come along any time between 9:30 and 11:00 on the second Tuesday of the month.



All welcome – experienced birders, new and would-be birders, locals and visitors.

Look for the table with the binoculars on it.

He then covered Birding by Elevation and Vegetation. In the Subtropical Forests (150 m – 1,500 m) of Southern Bhutan: **hornbills, barbets, woodpeckers** and **broadbills** are found. In the Temperate Forests (1,500 m – 3,000 m) of the Central regions: **parrotbills, pheasants** and **Ward's Trogon** occur, while at higher elevations in the Alpine Forests and Meadows (3,000 m – 4,500 m) **monal, tragopan** and the spectacular **Blood Pheasant** occur. In the Wetlands and Rivers of the Phobjikha and Punakha valleys, **Black-necked Cranes** and **White-bellied Herons** are found.

In relation to Conservation and Protection Sonam noted that over 51% of Bhutan's total land area is under protected areas and biological corridors. This includes national parks, nature reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, and corridors connecting them. Bhutan also maintains around 71% forest cover across the country.

He then pointed out there has been an increase in international birdwatchers in Bhutan, with the best seasons being Spring (March - May, the active breeding season) and Autumn (September - November, where birds are at their peak migration). Local bird guides enhance the experience with expert knowledge and Eco-lodges and community-based tourism support conservation and local livelihoods, with Bhutan's pristine environment and conservation policies making it a top birding destination.

Sonam noted that birds are often seen near villages, monasteries, and human settlements, making for relatively easy observation, and that Bhutan's strong conservation policies protect natural bird habitats. The altitude variation (from 100 m to over 7,000 m) supports a diverse birdlife, with many birds migrating through Bhutan, making it a seasonal birdwatching haven.

Finally, Sonam showed a lovely short video he had prepared illustrating some of these species. The audience admired the demonstrations of the **Satyr, Blyth's** and **Temminck's Tragopans**, the **Himalayan Monal** and the **Blood Pheasant** with its remarkable display.

The audience was fascinated by the **Ibisbill**, with its long red down-curved bill, feeding among the rocks in a stream. This is a medium sized bird related to the waders, but sufficiently distinctive to merit its own family. Sonam noted that this species and the **White-bellied Heron** are the only near endemic species for Bhutan.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Sonam for giving this very fascinating insight into the Birds of Bhutan. We trust that that he might have enticed some of the audience and other COG/Canberra Bird members to visit his fascinating country. We also wish him the very best with birding, including with us, and his future career.

Readers might be interested to know that Sonam's presentation will be loaded onto the COG/Canberra Birds Facebook page.

Sonam has also indicated that if anyone is interested in visiting Bhutan, please let him know – he is a bird guide and also organises birdwatching tours in Bhutan. For more details, please visit: www.bhutanbird.com

Jack Holland

Front Cover Photo

Do you have a photo suitable for the front page of the Gang-gang newsletter?

This would be a bird photo that has high resolution with the head of the bird lower than one third from the top of the image. If so, the editors of Gang-gang would appreciate receiving it at:

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

Time to renew your Canberra Birds membership - and to fill in a new membership form

Membership payments are now due for the 2025/26 financial year.

This year, we are also asking all members to fill in the membership form on our website. This will take only a couple of minutes but will help ensure COG records remain up to date. [Click here](#) to open the membership page, or find it linked from our website [home page](#).

Annual completion of the membership form has not previously been required for renewals, but over time some details have slipped out of date - particularly email and street addresses and preferred phone number.

Information from the membership forms will be transferred to a new system which will provide an ongoing up-to-date record of our members.

If you have any queries about these changes, please contact prue.watters@gmail.com.

Prue Watters, Acting Treasurer
28 June 2025

Leader wanted for U3A Bird-watching Activity

U3A (University of the Third Age) in Canberra runs a wide range of courses and activities led by members on a voluntary basis. One of these activities was a popular birding group led by Lindell Emerton for many years. Since Lindell decided to retire, we have found it difficult to find another U3A member to take over. The demands of the group are not high as most members are not experts but keen to learn a little about the birds of our region and to discover new places of interest.

The leader of each U3A activity determines the time and frequency of their course which is advertised in newsletters and weekly bulletins. Course coordinators can assist with this process as required. The U3A Program Development team would love to hear from anyone who might be interested in reactivating this bird-watching group.

If you have an interest in this, one of us will be glad to provide more information and, if required, assist with suggestions for suitable birding spots and ideas for running this activity.

Marion Jones: 0412 832 479 email: marionj9532@gmail.com

Lindell Emerton: 0418 227 247 email: lindell.em@gmail.com

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

Shefali D., Kathleen S., Trish H., John H., Tony E., Claire M., Sandie J., Jeff M., Phillip B., Brad A., Julie K., Billy B., Shan S., Helen J., Jayden T., Jacqueline P., Richard M., Julie K., Esha S., Rhianne G. Fiona J., Duncan B.

Field Trip Reports

Sunday 6 July - Farrer Ridge

Eleven members and guests met at the Muresk St entry. The walk started with the track around the base, and continued on to the reservoir, returning via the track behind the houses. For quite some time we were hearing **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** over on Wanniasa Hill, but eventually four flew over to Farrer Ridge and could be included on our bird list. Large numbers of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and **Galahs** were seen feeding on the ground, as well as a few checking out possible nest hollows. A mixed feeding flock of small birds included **Buff-rumped**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Brown Thornbills**, as well as **Golden Whistlers**. **Spotted Pardalotes** were seen near the edge of the reserve, and up to six **Satin Bowerbirds** were flying across the track.

Thanks to Angela for leading the outing, and Lia for keeping the bird list.

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 13 July – Urambi Hills NR

Twelve COG members and local Park Care volunteers accompanied leader Lia Battisson on a 4.5 km stroll around the western side of Urambi Hills Nature Reserve, entering from Meredith Circuit, Kambah, and following in a loop management tracks to Tuggeranong Creek and return. This is an area of regenerating grassy woodland with patches of snow gum, and casuarina along the creek. A total of 35 bird species was observed (thanks to Sandra for recording the bird list).

The morning started cold and quite foggy, but we still managed to observe several woodland bird species in various mixed feeding flocks as the fog slowly lifted, including **Scarlet**, **Flame** and **Eastern Yellow Robin**; **Striated**, **Yellow** and **Buff-rumped Thornbill**; **Weebill**, **Superb Fairywren** and **Grey Shrikethrush**. A group of around 40 **Red-browed Finch** was seen near the creek. Parrots included many **Crimson Rosella**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** and **Galah**, a few **Red-rumped Parrot** and a couple each of **Little Corella** and **Eastern Rosella**. Only one raptor was seen, a **Nankeen Kestrel**.

Thanks to Evan's keen eyes, the highlight was a single **Southern Whiteface** seen in the northwest part of the reserve. This vulnerable species is infrequently observed in the ACT these days.

Thanks to Lia for an interesting walk on the less visited western side of Urambi Hills; and to the local Park Care Group which appears to be doing a great job of re-vegetating the woodland and thus improving the biodiversity linkage value of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor reserves.

Julie McGuinness

Wednesday 16 July - Queanbeyan River Corridor

The morning was a beautiful sunny, cold one. Sandra advised Monday 14th had been similar and she'd recorded 45 bird species. At least some attendees took note, and set out to record more. They did. However, considering the number of 'good' birders on the trip, and all observers didn't stay together, I wasn't surprised Lia recorded 50 bird species on the trip list.

The first 'extra' recorded, which I think everyone saw, was **Tawny Frogmouth**. One was sunning itself in the open on a dead branch near the top of a medium-sized Eucalypt, with the second in a fork to the left and lower.



Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Queanbeyan River Corridor,
16 July 2025,
Matthew Larkin

Yellow Thornbill were only seen by the roughly four people who had ‘lagged’ behind the rest of party, to sort out a mixed feeding flock. The **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater** was only seen by three people, again ‘lagging’ behind. It helped that Sandra had shown us a **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, downstream, near the NSW border on the June Wednesday walk. And as a good photo was obtained of the July bird, there was no dispute as to its ID. Unfortunately, the rest of party didn’t manage to see it on the return walk.

We saw waterbirds: **Australasian Grebe**, **Dusky Moorhen**, **Eurasian Coot**, **Little Pied** and **Great Cormorant**, **Australasian Darter**, and **Australian Wood** and **Pacific Black Duck**, but probably not as many as some of us expected.

Parrots and cockatoos were well represented. We heard **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo**, and saw **Rainbow Lorikeets**, **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosella**, **Australian King-Parrot**, a flock of **Gang-gang Cockatoo**, **Galah**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** and **Little Corella** (this was our 50th species but we only saw one!). A **Brown Goshawk** was seen by many of the party, but only a few saw it in flight.

Not surprisingly the habitat seemed to suit **Red-browed Finch**, **Eastern Yellow Robin**, **Satin Bowerbird** and **Common Blackbird**, as well as **Australian Magpie**, **Pied Currawong** and **Grey Butcherbird**. The river is a known platypus hotspot, and Miro came along hoping to see one – and his patience paid off, with a sighting and photograph. It seems the Queanbeyan River through the centre of town gives a pretty good idea of what can be done to encourage biodiversity in urban areas.

Michael Robbins



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

Canberra Birds 8-pack of greeting cards

Stock up on greeting cards, and be ready for all occasions!

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.

Greeting cards **\$6 each** or **8-packs for \$40**.

Shop directly via
stuartmcmillen.com/shop

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 5 days, or have any Covid, cold or flu symptoms.

Sunday 3 August – Kambah Pool to Red Rocks Reserve

Description: The narrow path to Red Rocks Gorge is fairly easy, with some undulating parts, and there are usually plenty of birds to see along the way. On our return walk, we will have an optional detour down a short, steep path to the river and aim to walk back to the carpark along the river bank. Members are welcome to instead take the main path back to the carpark. Please wear sturdy shoes, and bring water, sunscreen and a hat.

Meet at 9am at the Kambah Pool carpark (follow signs to the left to Kambah Beach). The path starts about 20m uphill of the carpark. There are toilets at the carpark.

Walking distance: Approx 7.5 kms.

End time (approx.): 11:30am to 12 noon.

Name of leader and contact details: Please register with the leader, Judi by email on JudithPaulM@gmail.com with your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. **Please register** before 7pm on Friday 1 August.

Sunday 17 August – Orroral Homestead

Meet at 8.30am at Namadgi Visitor Centre for carpooling. We'll then travel out to the old tracking station site parking area. After a wander around the site, we'll walk across to the Orroral Homestead. At times **Flame Robins** can be found at both places, and a **Swamp Harrier** is known to frequent the reed beds in the valley. If we have time we could call in at the Orroral campground on the way back, and walk the short bush track.

This is all easy walking. Dress warmly and bring morning tea.

Please register with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com) with your name and number, and name and number for an emergency contact. Sandra Henderson

Wednesday 20 August – Weston Park

Meet at 9am in the carpark near the miniature railway. The walk will be a loop taking in parts of the lake edge and fringing vegetation, then an area near the disc golf course and woodland. Much of the walk is on tracks, the rest on mown grassed areas. Margaret will lead the walk. **Register** with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com).

Sunday 24 August – Waterbirds for beginners – Jerrabomberra Wetlands

This morning walk will be aimed specifically to help beginners and new members identify waterbirds, as well as other birds in the surrounding treed and grassed areas, and to learn about their behaviour and calls. Jerrabomberra Wetlands is well suited to viewing ducks and other waterbirds at close quarters from the hides. Dress appropriately for winter conditions.

Meet at 9.00 am at the carpark at the end of Dairy Road. Registration is essential; please provide your name and mobile phone number, as well as an emergency contact name and number. **Book your place** with Sue (smlashko@gmail.com or text 0449 898 838), who will be happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you. Please make

sure to bring your binoculars, and the ACT field guide by McComas Taylor if you have it. **If you do not have binoculars, please let me know as COG can supply you with a pair to use on the day.** **Note that the aim of the walk is to introduce you to **bird-watching**, not bird photography, so please leave your camera at home.**

Sue Lashko

Sunday 31 August - Goorooyarroo NR

Meet at the carpark at 8.00am. The approach is via Horse Park Drive from the Throsby end. Continue until you see the road begin to rise towards the Federal Highway. There is a gravel turn off to the left before the rise begins. It is quite hilly with deep eroded gullies and open woodland. Highlights include, **Speckled Warbler, Grey Currawong, Superb Parrot, Diamond Firetail and Red-Capped Robin.**

Walking distance 5 km. Level of difficulty medium with some hill walking.

What to bring: Sturdy boots, hat, sunscreen, water and morning tea. Finish time 11.00 am.

Register with Bill Graham on bsgraham1948@gmail.com or mob. 0466874723 with your name and mobile number and name and number of your emergency contact by Friday 29 August. Numbers limited to 16.

Sunday 7 September – Namarag – Molonglo River Reserve

Meet at the carpark for Namarag, which is on a bend on Thancoupie Crescent, Whitlam, at 8.30am. Most of the walk will be on formed paths, with some great views of the Molonglo River. Namarag includes the area long-term COG members remember as Finch Central. The walk will take about three hours. Wear sturdy shoes and a hat, bring water and sunscreen. **Register** with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com)

Sandra Henderson



Feathers'n'Friends

Birdwatchers & nature lover's accommodation

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

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

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

Discounts available for Birdlife Australia members.

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

www.feathersnfriends.com.au

Fred & Jeanette Birkbeck

244 Clacherty Road
Julatten QLD 4871
Tel: 07 4094 1665

Email: freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au

Sunday 14 September – Bowning, Lamb's TSR and Manton

Description. These are sites not visited by Canberra Birds before. The cemetery is a delightful location across the Hume Highway from Bowning. Species seen include **Peaceful Dove, Black Kite and Rainbow Bee-eater.** Lamb's TSR is on the Wargiela Road, north of Yass. It has open woodland and views to the distance. Birds include **Dollarbird, Little Eagle and Jacky Winter.** We will return via Manton and the backroads to Murrumbateman.

Meeting time and place: 8.00 am at Hoskins St beside Hall Primary School for carpooling. A \$10 contribution to the driver is suggested.

Numbers will be limited to 16 people in 4 cars.

Walking distance: 3 kms

Degree of Difficulty: Easy

End time: 3.00 pm.

What to bring: Sturdy shoes, hats, sunscreen, water, morning tea and lunch.

Please register with the leader by email on

bsgraham1948@gmail.com with your name and mobile phone number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.
Bill Graham

Monday 15 to Thursday 18 September – Tathra

Description: This is a mid-week trip to Tathra staying for 3 nights in the Kianinny Bush Cottages located in bushland just outside Tathra. There will be bird walks around our accommodation as well as excursions to sites within Mimosa Rocks National Park and nearby wetlands. We can expect to see around 100 species including **Glossy Black-Cockatoos, Superb Lyrebirds, Crescent Honeyeaters, Hooded Plovers**, other shorebirds and seabirds.

Meeting time and place: Drive to Kianinny Cottages on the morning of 22 August. Expect a bird walk that afternoon from about 1.30pm.

Walking distance: 2-5 km each day

What to bring: Self-catering (BYO meals or dinner at Tathra Hotel or other eateries in town). Packed lunches some days. More detailed information will be provided to those who register.

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

Six cottages have been booked. Each cottage has 2 bedrooms, one with a queen-sized bed and another with twin beds, plus bathroom, kitchen and living area.

When you register, if you wish to share a cabin with particular people, please notify the leader. The cost will depend on the number in each cabin. The cost for one cabin for 3 nights with 3 people sharing is approximately \$600 (ie about \$200 per person for a 3 night stay).

Prue Watters - 0414 357 456

Sunday 21 September – Greenways of Bywong and Wamboin

Description: We will walk along some of the network of 'greenways' in semi-rural Bywong and Wamboin. These are pedestrian access pathways that run between residential properties, providing important wildlife corridors. They feature typical Canberra region woodland, and likely birds include thornbills, honeyeaters, treecreepers and robins. Note that the greenways are not paved and are gently undulating so hiking boots, trail runners or sneakers are recommended.

eBird hotspots: Les Reardon Reserve, Birriwa Rd, Bywong

Meeting time and place: 10am, Bywong Community Hall, 65 Birriwa Rd, Bywong. Participants may like to carpool from Canberra, if they know others who are attending. Spotlight carpark at Queanbeyan would be a good meeting place.

Walking distance: 5 km

Degree of difficulty: medium

End time (approx.): 1pm

What to bring: water, snack if desired, hat, sunscreen

Registration : Participants must **register with the leader by 5pm Friday 19 September**, providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Numbers limited: to 12

Lauren Reed

Sunday 28 September – Booromba Rocks to Apollo Road

This is a reasonably easy 7.5 km all day bushwalk in northern Namadgi National Park, involving a short car shuffle. From Booromba Rocks carpark we will use the Australian Alps Walking Track to slowly walk down Booromba Creek to Bushfold Flats. After lunch we will then walk out to the gate on Apollo Road via the southern end of the Mt Tennent Fire Trail.

The Booromba Creek section involves a descent on a narrow track, followed by a flat section around Bushfold Flats and a steep descent on the fire trail with loose gravel underfoot, and finally a short climb back to Apollo Road. It is suitable for reasonably fit folk who are steady on their feet. Walking poles optional. Please make sure to also bring a hat, water, sunscreen, lunch and binoculars, and wear sturdy shoes.

At the end of September, in these wet creek and dry forest habitats, we might expect to see, or at least hear, **Eastern Yellow Robin, Scarlet Robin, Golden Whistler** and **Rufous Whistler** and we've a good chance of hearing **Eastern Whipbird, Superb Lyrebird** and maybe **Pilotbird**. Raptors are a good possibility in the open country.

Registration essential to mrobbins (at home.netspeed.com.au, with your name and phone number, and name and number of an emergency contact. **Registrations close at 6pm on Friday 26 August so please register early.** Maximum 16 attendees.

Michael Robbins

Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 October – Eden pelagics

Two one-day pelagics have been booked, departing from Eden at 7am to approximately 3pm each day. Cost will be about \$164 per day. The boat holds just 12 passengers, so early booking is recommended. **Currently, there are two**

places available on Saturday and 7 on Sunday. To register, I require the following information (please reply by numbering 1 to 3 and providing your answers):

1. Name and mobile number
 2. Name and number of an emergency contact
- Which day do you wish to register for? Sat 18, or Sun 19, or both?

Register at smlashko@gmail.com

Sue Lashko and Julian Teh



NatureArt Lab
Learn - Be Inspired - Love Your Art

Galapagos and Ecuador

1 - 14 January 2026

Book your place now for this bucket-list nature adventure!
Journey through the remarkable Galapagos Islands and

Amazonian Ecuador and explore spectacular scenery, natural wonders and incredible flora and fauna of these world-renowned wildlife destinations!

Scan for further details:
natureartlab.com.au/



natureartlab.com.au
Image Credit: Alan Landford



kingfisher park
birdwatchers lodge

Julatten, 1½hrs. North of Cairns

**FOR THE BEST BIRDWATCHING
IN FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND**

Self-contained Units,
Bunk Rooms & Campground

www.birdwatchers.com.au
sootyowl@bigpond.com
Find us on Facebook

Ph: 07 40941263



NatureArt Lab
Learn - Be Inspired - Love Your Art

New Zealand

18 October - 10 November 2025

Explore the incredible natural beauty of New Zealand's South Island through this small group nature tour. From the UNESCO World Heritage alps to the ocean, follow the wild east coast of New Zealand's southern-most island. Beyond this we will take you to the remote Rakiura/Stewart Island and Ulva Island, and to New Zealand's impressive fiords of Doubtful Sound and Milford Sound.

Scan for further details:
natureartlab.com.au/



natureartlab.com.au
Image Credit: Alan Landford

ERIC. A POEM
BY EDWINA SMITH

Out in the Australian Bush
A land of grass and rocks
One sees all kinds of birds
Where galahs fly in flocks

Two eagles paired for life
In sync with Nature's scheme
Soaring over endless land
Together quite a team

They chose the tallest tree
Which bears a clump of sticks
On a strong and sturdy fork
A home to raise their chicks

Within this nest
You've probably guessed
There sits a lively chick
With fluffy white down
He's a bit of a clown
And doesn't miss a trick

Eric is just two weeks old
Hungry and ready to eat
In these times of plenty
A good supply of meat

Watchful, keen and growing fast
He gobbles with none to spare
Attentive parents hunt at pace
Sighting tasty prey by air

Eric's life will chart a course
To eat, rest and grow
Till the time is right
When he must take flight
And learns all he needs to know

It's a wild and windy wilderness
His chances could be slim
This country grants no certainty
The future may look grim
But Nature's played a helping hand
With what will serve him best
To give Eric a fighting chance
By the time he leaves the nest

"I've got perfect peepers
As many creatures do
But the sight of us eagles
Is especially made to
Spot the slightest move

From way up in the sky
Unbeknown to prey
We quietly circle by

"When it comes to meals
I've got the best of deals
A beak made to cut, tear and rip
Beware of its features
Found in raptor creatures
Now I can give a nasty nip!

"Dingos with jaws, possums have
claws
Look , my petite little feet!
What use would they be
When I need to catch a treat?
A sharp set of talons
Will make the matter right
Watch me swoop, fetch and carry
Prey snatched and out of sight

"This warm and cosy down
Gives way to feathers and wings
I'll have the gift of flight
With the freedom it brings!
Circling high and uplifted by
Thermal currents of air
Beholding such a beautiful view
Of the world we eagles share

"Should a meal be found
Already on the ground
Ah-ha! A scavenger's dinner!
I'll muscle in, never mind the din
And surely come out a winner

"My life will not be easy
An eagle never knows
If it's victory or defeat
When up against his foes"

With instincts sure and sharp
The day will come to fledge
"I'll have to flap my wings
While standing on the edge"

"If all goes well, when I grow up
I'll make a nest of sticks
And help raise the next in line
Of fluffy downy chicks

"If you're ever out this way
And see a wingspan sail
You can be sure it's me
It's plain to see
My stylish wedge-shaped tail

"Whether you're in town or bush
And feeling stressed and edgy
Close your eyes and fly with me
Australia's favourite 'Wedgie'!"

Edwina Smith

May 22nd 2023

Revised 17th January 2025

Canberra Birds Woodland Surveys – Winter 2025 survey round –

compiled by Jenny Bounds

The survey period included some very cold, frosty mornings, within a period of record low overnight (minus) temperatures in the ACT.

Note: not all sites are reported.

Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve:

Jenny Bounds and the team did the quarterly survey on Sunday 29 June, in cold, frosty conditions early (minus 6 degrees overnight), and localised fog which cleared before mid-morning. The number of species recorded was low, as expected for winter, at 38 species. However, this is not the lowest species number recorded on a winter survey, 27 is the record lowest in 2004, the second lowest being 30 species in 2019. There were several records of **Scarlet Robin**, pairs and single birds, as expected in winter, as well as **Golden Whistlers** and **White-eared Honeyeaters**, mostly heard. A good sighting was a pair of **Grey Currawongs** within site 21 (reserve eastern side). Groups of **Buff-rumped Thornbills** were active, including a group of 12 foraging on the ground near the Woolshed. On the large dam, where water level was lower than usual, 5 **Pink-eared Ducks** (a common record there now), 6 **Purple Swamphens**, and a **Royal Spoonbill**. A female **House Sparrow** made an appearance on the Woolshed roof, uncommon to see within the reserve especially in winter.

Goorooyaroo Nature Reserve (Southern Area)

Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley surveyed on 27 June. Conditions were cold but sunny with little to no wind. It was damp underfoot with a few puddles in creek lines, but dam levels were still low. Plenty of snow was visible on the distant Brindabellas. 30 species were recorded across the reserve (compared to 31 on the equivalent survey last year), with 29 of these found during the 10-minute point counts.

Interesting records included single **Wedge-tailed Eagles** at sites 3 and 5, a flock of 20 **Red-rumped Parrots** flying low through site 8, a dozen **Red-browed Finches** with a mixed flock at site 1, and **White-throated Treecreepers** at sites 2 and 7, the latter are uncommon in the surveys. Several mixed flocks were encountered, mostly consisting of four species of **Thornbills**, **Grey Shrike-thrushes**, **Golden Whistlers**, **Superb Fairy-wrens**, **Weebills** and **Spotted and Striated Pardalotes**, with a smattering of other species such as **White-eared** and **White-plumed Honeyeaters**. An interesting incidental observation was an **Australasian Darter** circling high overhead.

Mt Majura NR

Kathy Walter, John Goldie and Peter Miller conducted the surveys on 22 June, a frosty, but sunny, minus 7 degrees morning. Birds were quiet until the last site of the morning with a small mixed feeding flock, which included **Scarlet Robin**, **Brown Headed Honeyeaters**, **three Speckled Warblers**, **Superb Fairywren**, **Striated Thornbill** and **Golden Whistler**. Four of the nine sites were conducted when it was warmer conditions, but remained quiet, although good numbers of **King Parrots** and **Pied Currawongs** were observed. Total of 27 species were seen over the 9 sites

Majura Defence Training Area

Kim Farley had to undertake the survey on Friday 4 July, to fit in with Dept. Defence priorities/activities. The weather was atrocious, as the temperature hovered around zero until at least 9 am. In addition, the fog was so thick that it was hard to find some of the survey sites. Species numbers were low overall, as were counts of individual species. Just one or two species were recorded at several sites. In all, a total 22 species were recorded, which was a low count even for winter. The highlight species was five **Varied Sittellas** in a mixed flock with **Thornbills**. Just one **Scarlet Robin** was recorded during the morning.

A controlled burn had recently been conducted in parts of the Training Area, resulting in a patchy burning of the grassy understorey at some sites. These recorded more species than the

NATURE LODGE OPTICS
62 OWEN ST HUSKISSON 0415516616
108 QUEEN ST BERRY 0488004700
The region's most trusted source for
Binoculars and Spotting Scopes
Free advice and unique guest
accommodation in Jervis Bay..
Proud Official Stockists of
SWAROVSKI - LEICA - ZEISS - STEINER
BUSHNELL - VORTEX - SCHÖEFHAUSSEN
www.naturelodge.com.au

unburnt sites. One site that is always of interest is one that in the past has been dominated by **Noisy Miners**. These have been reported in smaller numbers at this site in recent years, and only a very few were present on this survey. On the other hand, the burnt ground was providing good foraging for 34 **White-winged Choughs** in two groups.

Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park

The winter survey of the 9 sites on the lower eastern slopes of Mt Ainslie was carried out by Michael Lenz on 21 June, a calm and mostly overcast morning (after severe frost overnight). Overall, bird numbers were low, small birds were largely absent. The most widespread species were **Australian Raven** and **Noisy Miner** (each at 5 sites), **Australian King Parrot** and **Crimson Rosella** (4 sites) and **Spotted Pardalote** (3 sites). Of note was a flock of 28 **Australian King Parrots** and a **Wedge-tailed Eagle**. Only a very small mixed feeding flock (4 species) was encountered, including 2 **Grey Fantails** overwintering. Four pairs of **Aust. Wood Ducks** were inspecting potential nest hollows. In total 22 species were recorded, 17 at sites, and an additional 5 between sites.

Newline

The survey was carried out by Sue Lashko on 21 June, in still conditions on a cold and frosty morning. As usual, the front paddock and the site near the quarry end were the most interesting with mixed feeding flocks in both, including both **Pardalotes**, **Golden Whistler**, **Silvereye**, **Grey Fantail** and **Grey Shrike-thrush**. There were small numbers of **Rainbow Lorikeets** around, as well as the more common **Parrots**. **Australian Wood Duck** were quite vocal in several sites, calling from hollow-bearing trees. Two raptors were recorded, **Brown Goshawk** and **Nankeen Kestrel**. A total of 33 species was recorded, about average for a winter survey at Newline.

Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson surveyed on 21 June, not surprisingly that the morning was very cold, after a heavy frost. However, it was still and sunny, so quite pleasant for the survey. A promising start, with a small mixed feeding flock at site 3 comprised of the usual species. Another mixed feeding flock on site 1 included a **Golden Whistler**, and another flock between sites had a **Speckled Warbler**, several **Red-browed Finch**, and two **Grey Shrike-thrush** amongst its numbers. **Weebills** and **Spotted Pardalotes** were active all over the Hill and a **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo** was heard in the distance. In all, 15 species were observed within survey sites and a further 13 elsewhere during the survey.

Naas Sites

Julie Hotchin and Julie McGuinness conducted the survey on this rural leasehold south of Tharwa on 30 June. Despite the cold morning (minus 3 degrees), there was little frost. By mid-morning the sun gave way to clouds and a light breeze. The site had been heavily grazed since the last survey. In total 30 species were recorded: 20 species observed at the six sites and a further 10 species between sites. A highlight was watching three species of robin: two pairs of **Eastern Yellow Robin** were active at site 1, a female **Scarlet Robin** was seen at site 2 and another four **Scarlet Robins** between sites, and a male **Flame Robin** was on the boundary fence. A male **Mistletoebird** was active and calling as it moved between trees to feed in mistletoe at site 1. The number of species recorded at the sites was 20, noting other low totals in winter surveys: 21 in 2024 and 16 in 2023.

Species recorded at the sites were predominantly medium-large woodland birds. Parrots included **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas** (including one flock of 14), **Galahs** (in large numbers) and **Red-rumped Parrots**. **Australian** and **Little Ravens** were vocal, as were **Grey Shrike-thrush** and **Grey Butcherbird**. A pair of **Pacific Black Ducks** joined **Galahs** in foraging amongst hay on the ground at one site, the first record of ducks at any site at this location. Smaller birds were observed in greater numbers between sites, including small flocks of **Striated Thornbills** and **Weebills** moving through the canopy, a flock of eleven **Yellow-rumped Thornbills**, and several **Spotted Pardalotes** were heard. The only honeyeater recorded was **Noisy Miner**. A **Wedge-tailed Eagle** soared over Mt. Tennant mid-morning.

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

2025-2026 memberships:

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

New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

[See page 12](#)

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for September 2025 edition:

Wednesday 27 August 2025

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.

COG information

President: Kim Farley

president@canberrabirds.org.au

Treasurer: Vacant

cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Secretary: Margaret Robertson

cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au

Address for correspondence

The Secretary
COG, PO Box 331
Jamison Centre, ACT 2614

Canberra Bird Notes

Editor: Michael Lenz

michael.lenz.birds@gmail.com

Sub-editor: Kevin Windle

Kevin.Windle@anu.edu.au

COG website

canberrabirds.org.au

COG Webmaster

Julian Robinson

cogwebmaster@canberrabirds.org.au

COG library

Membership Enquiries & Updates:

membership@canberrabirds.org.au

for change of address or other details.

Gang-gang Newsletter

Editor: Zac Flegg

Lay-out Editor: Gail Neumann

gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au

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.

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

If you wish to re-subscribe after being unsubscribed temporarily, simply follow the 'subscribe' instructions above.

Copyright in *Gang-gang* articles is retained by the articles' authors.

Gang-gang is published on COG's website in PDF format.

ISSN 2208-018X

