

Bulletin

Birds Australia National Campout 'Scottsdale Reserve', Bredbo, NSW April 6-9 2011

Version 1, 21 Jan 2011

PART 1 Notes for participants

The Campout will be based at the Bush Heritage owned property 'Scottsdale' (S 35° 54' 48.6" E 149° 09' 17.39"), 4 km north of the township of Bredbo on the Monaro Highway, from midday Wednesday 6 to midday Saturday 9 April 2011. Scottsdale Reserve covers 1328 hectares just 45 minutes drive south of Canberra, ACT. The Reserve protects endangered grassy box woodlands and supports many declining woodland birds including Diamond Firetail, Hooded Robin and Brown Treecreeper. The Murrumbidgee River winds for four km along the property's northern and western boundaries and protects one of the last intact ecosystems on the river. Spectacular river gorge country is on the Reserve as well as sandy flats. To find out more log onto http://www.bushheritage.org.au/our_reserves/state_new_south_wales/scottsdale.

Registration costs will cover the periods from midday Wednesday to midday Saturday. For those interested in spending the weekend in Canberra after the Campout events free of charge will be organized for the late afternoon of Saturday 9 and for the Sunday morning and afternoon.

The field trips planned will cover a variety of vegetation types, from the endangered Box-Gum Woodlands to cool temperate forests and riverine habitats.

Accommodation options:

- Bush camping on Scottsdale – suitable for tents, campers and caravans – unpowered sites only. Toilets available. There is a woolshed with communal dining area/meeting place. BBQ available for use by campers. Campfires will not be permitted other than one communal fire at the woolshed, depending on conditions at the time, water is limited. The campsite can be reached by 2WD and is accessible for trailers
- Bredbo Inn – basic pub accommodation 4 rooms with shared bathrooms Phone 02 64544109.
- Feathers Bed and Breakfast in Bredbo – see www.feathersbb.com – phone 02 6454 4151

- Paddington Hills Farm Stay – railways carriages are used for accommodation – off Monaro Highway just south of Bredbo – see www.paddingtonhills.com.au – phone 02 6454 4207 or 0403 535 096
- Michelago Village Inn – motel with restaurant, bar and takeaway - phone 02 6235 9011
- Snowtels Caravan Park in Cooma – camping, caravans, cabins, powered sites - see www.snowtels.com.au – phone 02 6452 1828
- Extensive range of motel accommodation in Cooma – enquiries to Cooma Visitors Centre – www.visitcooma.com.au

Access to Scottsdale

For safety reasons if travelling from Canberra it is necessary to drive to Bredbo, complete a U turn and then drive back on the Monaro Highway. The camping area is then a short distance on a dirt road off the Highway.

Wednesday evening on arrival. The first evening of the Campout will be a BBQ to welcome all participants and to get to know each other. Drinks will be provided.

Phone reception. The nearest public phone is at Cooma 37 km away. There is good mobile phone reception (Telstra, Optus, others not yet tested) coverage at the camp site but could be limited once in the field.

Climate. The long-term average maximum temperature in Canberra during April is 20°C and the average minimum temperature is 6.6°C with an average of 46 mm of rain. Further south at 'Scottsdale' the temperature will be slightly lower so if the weather is clear be prepared for slight frosts in the mornings.

Sunrise: ~ 6:20am. **Sunset:** ~5.50pm Australian Eastern Standard Time. Note that Eastern Summer Time ends on 3rd April

Suggested Equipment

First aid kit, including pressure bandage for snake bite.

Appropriate personal protective equipment: raincoat, sturdy covered footwear, long sleeves and trousers, sock protectors, leggings or gaiters, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent.

Binoculars, telescope if you have one, field guide, camera, camp stool or chair, backpack to carry water and snacks, spotlight with red filter.

If at all possible, each car to be used on excursions should get or borrow a GPS and UHF (vehicle and/or hand-held).

Food and drinks for the duration of the campout, except for Wednesday dinner which will be provided

Fuel – Service stations with petrol and diesel are located at Bredbo (4 km south of Scottsdale), Michelago (29 km north), Williamsdale (44 km north) and Cooma (37 km south). To reduce fuel costs it would be advisable to fill up in Canberra if approaching from the north and Cooma if approaching from the south.

Food – At Williamsdale and Michelago there are basic groceries and take away food. At Bredbo there are limited groceries. Supermarkets and a variety of other food shops in Cooma.

Shopping restaurants, cafes etc

Bredbo

- Bredbo Inn, dining Thursday-Sunday
- Snowy Mountains Gourmet Foods, pies baked daily, all day breakfast, lunch, light refreshments, free-range eggs.
- Bredbo Pizzeria, wood-fired pizzas Thursday-Sunday

Michelago

- Michelago Village Inn, restaurant and take away
- Michelago General Store and Tea Rooms in Michelago Village off the highway open 8.00 am to 8.00 pm every day. Wide range of groceries, liquor, gas bottles filled.

Cooma

- Wide range of shops including supermarkets, bakeries, restaurants and cafes.

ATM. Available at Bredbo Inn or in Cooma.

Facilities at 'Scottsdale. Rainwater, tables, chairs BBQ and power in woolshed, small camp kitchen, sink, microwave and urn.

Those using 'Scottsdale' are asked not to wander outside the camp/shed complex unless on a guided activity

Campout Kit

A package of mud maps, information sheets, data sheets and birdlists will be issued on arrival.

Maps

'Scottsdale' can be found on the 1:100,000 Topographic Map No. 8726 Michelago. Surrounding maps in the same series that may be of use are: No 8826 Araluen, No. 8827 Braidwood, No. 8727 Canberra and No. 8725 Cooma.

Bird Lists

See COG website under 'BA Campout April 2011' for a list of birds for Scottsdale
For a list of native species (includes a bird list) recorded within the Cooma-Monaro Shire see <http://www.envcomm.act.gov.au/soe/soe2004/Cooma-Monaro/nativespecies.htm>

Places of interest

- For Bredbo, Michelago, Cooma, Snowy Mountains area, see Cooma Visitors Centre – www.visitcooma.com.au
- Snowy Mountains Scheme Information Centre, on the northern edge of Cooma, is particularly recommended.
- For Canberra – Canberra Visitors Centre is located at 330 Northbourne Ave, Dickson, phone 1300 554 114 or www.visitcanberra.com.au

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PART 2 Occupational Health and Safety

Participants are expected to abide by the Birds Australia rules for activities:

Responsibilities of Participants

1. Sign on and accept agreed aims, rules, conditions and reasonable directions from the leader of each activity.
2. Adhere to agreed return times and advise the leader if leaving the group.
3. Respect private property and legal obligations (permits, permissions, road rules etc)
4. Consider the enjoyment of others in the group.
5. Observe the bird-watching code of ethics.
6. Dispose of rubbish and human waste responsibly.
7. Keep track of your buddy.
8. Advance advice of potential health condition that may cause an emergency.
9. Carry water food first aid kit (minimum pressure bandage for snake bite)
10. Ensure that your vehicle is in roadworthy condition and has sufficient fuel
11. The driver has the skill for the vehicle and the terrain.
12. In convoy, ensure the following vehicle is aware of the route.
13. Dress for the conditions.
14. Carry appropriate equipment when required (map, compass, GPS, whistle, UHF, pocket knife, water, sunscreen etc)

Risk Assessment – Control of Risk.

General risks applying to the Campout.

(Detailed assessments will be done by the leader during the sign-on at the start of each activity.)

Road Conditions.

The Monaro Highway is busy – it is the main route from Canberra to Cooma. DO NOT make a right hand turn from the highway into Scottsdale. Instead, drive 4 km south to Bredbo, do a U-turn when safe and return to Scottsdale to make a left turn.

When travelling on side roads: beware blind corners and crests – keep left. Avoid high speed and sudden direction changes on loose gravel roads. Maintain a safe distance between vehicles. Beware kangaroos, wombats, especially at dawn, dusk and at night. Beware stock on unfenced roads (also on badly fenced roads!). Do NOT swerve to avoid animals (danger of overturning).

Terrain and Track Conditions.

Reserve and forestry tracks may require skilled driving and navigation. Some are steep, washed out and rough.

Camping

Avoid camping under trees where branches may fall. Avoid camping in dry watercourses.

Private property

Respect private property. Watch for electric fences. Assume they are live.

Animals

Snakes will still be active and may be difficult to see in long grass, so carry a pressure bandage. Always wear sturdy footwear.

Plants

Some understorey plants may have spines. Grassland may contain thistles.

Location

Have a map of the area with you. Mark a waypoint when you leave your vehicle, or leave the road or track. Have a GPS with waypoints set, and a UHF on the camp frequency. If going more than 1 km from the campsite, at least two vehicles must go together.

Convoys

Follow convoy procedures. Each convoy to have a lead vehicle and tail-end vehicle. Each vehicle should maintain sight with the vehicle in front and behind. This may not be possible in dusty conditions. Do a radio check before departure.

Rivers

Exercise caution at rivers. Be aware that snakes are more prevalent near rivers. Do not enter fast flowing or flooded rivers. If swimming, do not swim alone.

Personal safety

Do not leave camp on your own unless you leave a note on the notice board. Do not leave a group without telling the leader. Stick to agreed meeting times – always check how long until the group reassembles, and return on time. Always carry water.

Vehicle condition/ driver skills/ breakdown

The nearest mechanic is in Cooma.

Emergency Services

Police/Fire Ambulance call 000

Nearest Police Station is at Michelago call 02 62359131. If not attended calls will divert to Queanbeyan

Nearest Hospital Bent Street, Cooma call 02 64553222

Emergency Supplies

Fuel is available at Bredbo, Michelago, Williamsdale and Cooma.

Personal Protective Equipment.

Sturdy footwear, sunsmart/bush clothing, trouser socks or gaiters, pressure bandage, GPS, compass, UHF. (Channel to be determined)

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PART 3 Campout Program

Day	am	pm	Evening (bird call 7.30pm)
Wednesday 6 April	Arrival, set up camp	Strike-a-Light TSR - woodland	Welcome BBQ Talk: Sandy Gilmore on the birds of 'Scottsdale'
Thursday 7 April	1.Kelly Road, including Black Flat TSR – Yellow Box-Apple Box woodland – Brown Treecreeper, Hooded Robin, Diamond Firetail 2.North Ridge Reserve, Cooma – Callitris forest	Tallaganda Forest– depart 2pm, take picnic dinner – wet forest birding, evening search for Powerful Owl, Greater Gliders	At Tallaganda Forest
Friday 8 April	Bumbalong Valley – western side of Murrumbidgee River	Tharwa Sandwash – riverside birding	Quiz night (Mark Clayton)
Saturday 9 April	K2C (Kosciuszko to Coast) surveys – teams visit various private properties and reserves *	Australian National Botanic Gardens, Canberra, birdwalk 3-5pm	
Sunday 10 April	Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary– ranger-guided walk	Jerrabomberra Wetlands and Fyshwick Sewerage Treatment Plant - waterbirds	

*The campout officially ends after lunch. For participants who wish to visit Canberra, activities are listed for Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

During the campout, for those who wish to independently visit other sites, the following options are suggested:

1. Gungoandra TSR – woodland and grassland – 1 km north of Scottsdale
2. Baroona Road – 16 km north of Scottsdale
3. Ryrie Hill Road – 15 km north of Scottsdale

Activities (subject to change)

Strike-a-Light TSR

Conventional vehicles can be used for this late afternoon visit. A well vegetated box-gum woodland TSR with creek frontage. Off-road parking available at the entrance to the TSR. The road is sealed for most of the way with a small section of well formed dirt road. Location S 35⁰ 55' 23.4" E 149⁰ 14' 16.1"

Kelly Road

Conventional vehicles can be used for this morning visit. A favourite birding spot for COG members with an expectation of over 40 woodland species. A well preserved Apple Box woodland along a well formed dirt road. This outing will involve birding at the northern end of Kelly Road then driving further along to a second spot where we will then park and walk, birding as we go for a couple of km. Location S 35⁰ 36' 33.7" E 149⁰ 09' 04.7".

North Ridge Reserve

Conventional vehicles can be used for this morning visit. A Callitris woodland on the outskirts of Cooma. Well worth a visit, can also be self-drive but a good opportunity to get some birding in before or after restocking supplies. Location S 35⁰ 13' 11.73" E 149⁰ 07' 33.88".

Tallaganda Forest

4 wheel drive vehicles will be required for this outing. It is intended that the outing will start just after mid-day. The drive along sealed and dirt roads will take 1½ hours. We will do some birding on the way aiming to stop at the Lowden Forest Park where we will search for wet temperate forest birds during the late afternoon. We will have a picnic evening meal then go looking for Powerful Owls. The area is also well known for its Greater Gliders. Location S 35⁰ 30' 35.6" E 149⁰ 36' 12.0".

Bumbalong Valley

Conventional vehicles can be used for this morning visit. A visit to private properties which border the Murrumbidgee River. For this outing we hope to see the honeyeater migration as birds leave the higher county with the first frosts. Although variable and dependent on the weather with luck there will be a spectacular display of many thousands of honeyeaters passing along the river corridor. Location S 35⁰ 51' 31.19" E 149⁰ 08' 01.05"

Tharwa Sandwash

We envisage that conventional vehicles can be used for this afternoon visit but it will depend on the state of the river. We will need to ford a low-level crossing which may be under water. If so, we may need to use 4 wheel drive vehicles. This is another favorite COG birding spot along the Murrumbidgee River. The migrating honeyeaters will have stopped for the evening so views should be possible of the birds as they refuel for the next morning's movement. Location S 35⁰ 31' 33.62" E 149⁰ 04' 31.09".

K2C surveys

COG has been involved in collecting bird observations for the Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C) project for the last 18 months. Greening Australia coordinator, Nicki Taws, will run

this outing which will involve teams visiting various TSRs and private properties in the area. Teams will also include COG members who will travel down for the survey.

Self Drive

Gungoandra TSR

Conventional vehicles can be used for this self-drive visit. The TSR is just 1 km north of Scottsdale along the Monaro Highway. Parking at a nearby gravel dump on the side of the road will be required. A good example of a typical Apple Box woodland TSR with creek frontage. Location S 35° 54' 26.1" E 149° 09' 35.8"

Baroona Road

Sixteen km north of Scottsdale on the Monaro Highway. Location 35° 46' 27.2" 149° 09' 42.9". Drive for approx 2 km then park and walk along the road at 35° 47' 09.47" 149° 08' 41.73". An interesting woodland site well worth a couple of 2 Ha 20 minute surveys

Ryrie Hill Road

On the way to or from Baroona Road, fifteen km north of Scottsdale on the Monaro Highway. Location 35° 47' 18.9" 149° 09' 48.6". Drive for about 400 m then at a large dam take a short walk along the road. Possibly worth a couple of 2 Ha, 20 minute surveys.

For those intending to spend the weekend in Canberra the following outings are planned. Further details will be provided at the Campout

Australian National Botanic Gardens

The Gardens are an excellent birding spot with the possibility of many surprising species. This will be an afternoon outing as the gardens close at 5.00 pm. For additional information see <http://www.anbg.gov.au/gardens/index.html> Entrance is at S 35° 16' 47.13" E 149° 06' 37.85". There are ample paid parking sites.

Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary

The Sanctuary was the subject of BA President Alison Russell-French's Editorial in Wingspan Vol 20 Part 4, 2010. The morning's outing will be a guided walk through the Sanctuary from the Woolshed information centre. The carpark entrance to the Sanctuary is at S 35° 09' 57.67" 149° 08' 44.14" For further details see

http://www.tams.act.gov.au/play/pcl/parks_reserves_and_open_places/national_parks/mulligans_flat

<http://people.anu.edu.au/adrian.manning/mulliganssanctuary.html>

Jerrabomberra Wetlands/ Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant

An evening visit to the Jerrabomberra Wetlands and nearby Sewage Works is well worth a visit. This will be a guided walk. Bring your telescope if you have one. The carpark can be found at S 35° 18' 47.82 E 149° 09' 44.56". For further information see

http://www.tams.act.gov.au/play/pcl/parks_reserves_and_open_places/canberra_nature_park/jerrabomberra_wetlands

Evening Talks

Evening Review

Traditional Birdcall, review of the day's activities, any OHS issues, program for next day, organise car pool and any other issues of the day