**Tuggeranong**

**Tuggeranong Marsh**

Rowland Rees Cr, Greenway. This pond seems to be filled by runoff from the Greenway Oval. Access can be tricky. I walked straight over from the road, but some recent rain has cut off that access, so walking through the adjacent weedy paddock to a gateway further up appears to be the best way to get there. Parking is limited by construction workers’ cars. The marsh has a number of dead trees, almost every one of which had Little Pied Cormorant nests when I first visited (all are now fledged). There were also **Hardheads, Pacific Black Ducks, Grey Teal, Australian Wood Ducks** and a family of **Australasian Grebes**. On one visit I’ve seen a **Spotted Crake**. The grassy edges are also very popular with a number of large male Eastern Grey Kangaroos, who seem to be permanent fixtures.

**Tuggeranong Hill Nature Reserve – Fidge St, Calwell**

This is some distance from my usual entry point on Callister St in Theodore, and I’d never been on this side of the reserve. There is limited parking. There seemed to be plenty of bird activity from the hillsides, so I wandered upwards, off track. It is quite a steep area, rather rocky, so rather more of a challenge than the southern entry.

A lone **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo** flew over several times, calling constantly. Two **Wedge-tailed Eagles** were circling above the highest point I could see and, soon after I arrived,an **Australian Hobby**, with an **Australian Magpie** closely behind, flew down the hill and out over the suburb. A family of **White-winged Choughs** was moving up the hill, and **Spotted Pardalotes** were all around. There are some quite spectacular views from higher points, but it’s a rather challenging area!

**Hawkesworth Place Park**

Where is it: MacArthur, not far from Fadden Pines. This is a good sized park with some large trees.

Unfortunately I visited on a drizzly morning, but it is certainly worth a repeat visit. The most conspicuous birds were a group of 17 **King Parrots** sitting and looking miserable in the wet conditions, and an **Australian Hobby** dashed through the park. Those who look through eBird lists will know from Liam M's lists that there are also Tawny Frogmouths there, which I didn't see on my quick visit.

**Rose Cottage Horse Paddocks**

Where : there is a signposted entry road on Mugga Lane, just up from the solar farm.

There was no indication the paddocks are still in use. It appears to be quite a large area, adjacent to Wanniassa Hills Reserve. There was quite a cold wind blowing when I visited. A large group of **Australian Ravens** was flying between trees on the road in, and **White-winged Choughs** were pottering around the horse yards. A small fenced patch of trees not far from the parking area appears to have been visited by someone collecting firewood very recently. There were no unusual species at all in the area I walked.

**Mt Stranger, Bonython**

Where is it: there are several entry points on Ebenezer St in Bonython, although the one near No.5 is an access road (no public vehicle access) and by far the easiest. The Bicentennial Trail runs along one side of the reserve, so it is probably also accessible from that track. I walked up to the trig near the communications tower and water reservoir, then wandered in a wide arc through the wooded area back to the entry. Some notes on a geocaching site mentioned lots of thistles, but I encountered almost none, although it is quite weedy. A Satin Bowerbird making strange calls led me astray for a while, but then I returned to the very large Kurrajong tree downhill from the trig and followed the trees around the slope. Little Corellas were playing among the cables on the communications tower, and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were perched on the railing of the water reservoirs. A noisy gang of Pied Currawongs was moving around the wooded areas – up to six birds at a time flying from tree to tree and ripping bark. The Scarlet Robin heard was closer to the river, near the edge of the reserve.

**Mount Stranger – west**

Where is it: Woodcock Drive, track starting almost opposite Gordon Pond

I’ve walked to the trig on Mount Stranger from suburban Bonython, but this is a completely different approach. The Bicentennial National Trail itself runs between Mount Stranger and the Point Hut area. I walked along the Trail until a gate on the right into the Mount Stranger area appeared. The various well-vegetated areas are fenced, although some of the fences are in a poor state of repair, so I was able to gradually find my way to the trig. It’s a fairly steady uphill walk (no track) over rocky ground, and probably best to do in cooler months when snakes are not active. The most striking bird activity was the large number of **Pied Currawongs** as I got closer to the top – calling and moving around om small groups. The highlight of the walk was a **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, although a very cooperative **Australasian Pipit** on the fence of the Bicentennial Trail was a treat.

**Tuggeranong Hill - Handasyde St entry**

After a short walk uphill, there is a firetrail heading around the base of the hill. I headed left, following the trail for about 1km, then took a narrow foot track leading uphill. This took me to a dam, where a mixed flock included **Silvereyes, Weebills, Buff-rumped Thornbills**, a **Golden Whistler** and **Grey Fantails**. There were some wonderful views, and the fire trail passes the house which has been in the news recently for having a spectacular cubbyhouse in the back garden. Quite amazing.

**National Bicentennial Trail, Kambah.**

I have often driven past the entry onto the trail, between the golf course and the free-range chicken farm. The map showed the trail passing a large dam on the golf course, which was potentially interesting (but in fact had only a few **Eurasian Coots** and some **Australian Wood Ducks**). There is a sign at the golf course fence (about a kilometre from the road) giving local residents permission to walk on tracks within the golf course, so that's promising. Further on, the trail goes into Urambi Hills reserve. This area was more interesting, with a group of six **Southern Whiteface** on the track, and **Superb Fairy-wrens** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** among the cattle grazing near the track. In warmer months I'm guessing this part of the Trail would have many more small birds. I walked only 1.5km, so it's worth more exploration.

**Gilmore Horse Paddocks**

This site is well worth a visit, as there are a number of horse paddocks, so always several you can walk in without being in with the horses. There were several breeding species, with Dusky Woodswallow and Noisy Friarbird being the highlights. There were other sightings that were probably breeding-related, such as Willie Wagtails attacking an Australian Raven, Yellow-rumped Thornbills gathering in a bush, Striated Thornbills calling in a dead tree, and a male Mistletoebird sitting quietly in a dead tree above a very bushy patch. We started at Louisa Lawson Crescent and walked a wide loop around the area.

**Conder stormwater ponds (Conder Community Wetland)**

 This is a series of reedy ponds, with houses close by, but also bordering part of the Tuggeranong Hill Reserve. Some lovely large eucalypts unfortunately provided lots of hollows for the Common Mynas and Common Starlings, but also hosted Weebills and a single Fuscous Honeyeater on the morning I was there. Plenty of Australian Reed Warblers were flitting between the reeds, and also into nearby gardens. In 30 minutes, 26 species were recorded.

**Oxley Hill**

Where is it – right in the middle of the Tuggeranong suburb of Oxley. There is a parking area in McKibbin Place. There are quite a few scattered old trees, but unfortunately Starlings and Common Mynas are taking full advantage of the hollows. In one tree I saw a Crimson Rosella approach a hollow several times, only to be driven off by the mynas. There are a number of tracks, and there were a few walkers and dog walkers on the hill. There does not appear to be any permanent water, but the hill is surrounded by residential streets, so no doubt some water is available in gardens. There were a few bush birds around – my list included a Grey Shrikethrush, a Rufous Whistler, both pardalotes, Weebills, and a Black-faced Cuckooshrike. The most unexpected sighting was a female Flame Robin, perhaps just passing through.

**Point Hut Pond District Park**

Where is it: adjacent to Jim Pike Avenue in Gordon I’ve driven past this large pond many times on the way to Point Hut Crossing, but have never walked around it. Thursday 26 July was a beautiful, still morning, and I followed the 2.7km track around the pond. The highlight was a group of Yellow Thornbills in waterside casuarinas near the playground. It is apparent that locals feed many of the waterbirds – two Black Swans paddled close to the edge following me about half way around the pond, and Eurasian Coots, Australasian Swamphens and Pacific Black Ducks were also quite friendly. Several Red Wattlebirds were bathing in one corner.

**Kambah, around Vansittart Crescent**

I had noticed lots of shrubbery around the townhouses and many footpaths leading off the streets in this part of Kambah, so went for a wander. This is a nice leafy area of the suburb, so a pleasant walk. A large group of Silvereyes was moving around between the buildings, and a small mixed group of thornbills and Weebills was also quite active. A very large box tree on the corner of Vansittart and Ragless had a host of small birds, but also a couple of Red Wattlebirds, then a Yellow-tufted Honeyeater flew out and in several times. Lower in the same tree a male Golden Whistler also appeared to be chasing insects. I’ve not previously seen a Yellow-tufted Honeyeater in the suburbs.