

**NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT INC.**

**GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, 21 July 2022, 19:30

Uniting Church Hall, Scrivener Street, O'Connor

**1. Welcome**

President Esther Gallant welcomed about 40 members and guests to the meeting.

*Esther acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, learn and work, and paid respects to the First Nations Peoples and their Elders, past, present and emerging.*

**2. Presentation**

The President introduced the guest speaker for the meeting, Dr Michael Mulvaney, who is a respected ecologist and part of a citizen-science project that is helping in the fight to save the endangered Gang-gang Cockatoo – our Territory's emblem. His topic was:

*Saving our region's Gang-gang Cockatoos*

The Gang-gang Nesting Project is gathering information about the nesting and feeding behaviours of these charismatic cockatoos in the ACT and the south coast of NSW. This research is being coordinated with work being undertaken elsewhere across the Gang-gang's range, in order to identify ways to conserve the species. The project is a collaboration between the Atlas of Life Coastal Wilderness, Budawang Atlas of Life and Canberra Nature Map.

The reporting rate of the Gang-gang Cockatoo has crashed in NSW and Victoria to 69% of their numbers 20 years ago. This citizen-science project is investigating their plight in the ACT. The estimate is there may only be 150 birds within the Canberra area. Monitoring data by the Canberra Ornithologist Group suggests that the Canberra population has been steady or slightly increasing over the last two decades. The project has studied their breeding habits by enrolling Canberra volunteers to report sightings to Canberra Nature Map and all apparent nesting hollows have been investigated. However, only 10% of those reported where Gang-gangs were showing interest were found to be actual breeding hollows.

Their study has shown that in the ACT:

- Gang-gangs nest in largish hollows, usually in old remnant trees. They are not known to have ever bred in the wild in nest boxes;
- hollows are clustered and at an average height of 6.5m above the ground;
- most of their breeding hollows are in trees on the urban fringe, probably due to food availability;
- over half of the hollows investigated by Gang-gangs remained empty of any hollow nesting/roosting animal across the breeding season;
- the used hollows are lined with wood chips in a distinctive manner and unique in the Canberra area, and an average clutch is 2 chicks;
- a pair may prepare multiple hollows (usually two) though they only breed in one of them;
- food sources are many ranging from eucalyptus nuts and acacia seeds to insect larvae; and the diet changes from season to season depending on availability. Surprisingly, the nuts of Sydney Blue Gums are the favourite for Canberra birds, so they are quite adaptable;
- the biggest threat to eggs and chicks are Brush-tailed Possums.

This project has been highly successful in learning about the current state of Gang-gangs in the ACT, now a management plan must be put in place with real resources to ensure their survival and a nursery perhaps for NSW.

After answering questions from the floor Michael was thanked by Esther for his interesting and thought-provoking presentation and Esther closed the meeting at about 20:30.

Chair: ..... Date: .....