# Spotted Harriers on the COG Chatline

Philip’s message raised a number of interesting points, and having a few moments on hand I decided to have a look at what has been reported on the chatline, using the archives.

I searched for “Spotted Harrier” (using quotes to remove references to pimpled Pardalotes, Quail‑thrush, Crakes etc) and sorted the results by reverse chronological order.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Calendar  Year | Cumulative count | Annual count |
| 2012  (to date) | 56 | 56 |
| 2011 | 63 | 7 |
| 2010 | 70 | 7 |
| 2009 | 76 | 6 |
| 2008 | 97 | 21 |
| 2007 | 109 | 12 |
| 2006 | 120 | 11 |

Clearly there have been many more mentions of Spotted Harriers this year than in the recent past. As will be noted below most (if not all) the reports in 2008 come from one location.

I next searched the archives for the text string Spotted Harrier (sorted by relevance). I then went through the first 40 entries to look for the year and location of the sightings as quoted. A few ‘boundary issues’ arose immediately since about 6 of the entries were not about Harriers but were (eg) responses to other elements of messages which had contained those words. The ‘erroneous’ messages are counted in the results of the simpler count covered above: I don’t see that as an issue since the appearance of the phrase adds to the perception of a high volume of discussion of the species.

Of the 34 ‘on-topic’ entries 11 came from 2008 and another 11 came from 2012. For other years since 2006 there were 1 -5 messages in **this subset of the archived records**.

**All** the entries in the subset from 2008 related to Fyshwick Sewage Ponds (FSP) or Jerrabomera Wetlands while for 2012 they cover 7 locations including Hoskinstown Plain (1 record); Hume(1); FSP (3); and Coppins Crossing (3). I have seen the Hoskinstown Plain bird many times but have not reported it to the Chatline every time. It is difficult/impossible to analyse these data to estimate the number of birds involved but as the Hoskinstown Plain bird appears to be resident in that locality I would be certain that there are 2 or more birds present. It is possible that the bird at the grasslands at Hume travelled up and down Jerrabombera Creek so is the same one seen at FSP/Jerrabombera, and the one at Coppins Crossing was also reported from Scrivener Dam and Duffy. I would take a punt at a minimum of 3 birds.