**Observations on an influx of Musk Lorikeets (*Glossopsitta concinna*) into two Woden Valley suburbs in June-August 2014**

Musk Lorikeets are a very occasional visitor to the ACT, with only 15 records between 1981-2013. However, there was an influx into southern Canberra during autumn and winter 2014.

Musk Lorikeets were observed in Wanniassa in March 2014, and recorded up until August 27.

These observations relate to the other area that Musk Lorikeets were observed in by the author and others—the suburbs of Hughes and Deakin.

**Hughes**

Musk Lorikeets were first observed in Hughes 10 June by the author, flying across a road nr Hughes Oval (-35.3318, 149.0894). Another observer confirmed them feeding in one large *Eucalyptus meliodora* and nearby *Eucalyptus cinerea* at that site the next day.

Musk Lorikeets continued to be observed feeding at that site regularly until 30 June by the author and others, during this period they were also observed several times flying over the author’s house in Jensen Street, Hughes, approximately 300 meters away.

Observations from this site:

* Musk Lorikeets were observed at all times of day from 08:00 to 17:00, though never present for long stretches.
* They were feeding in very undeveloped blossom at first (at the beginning of the period it was not even obvious that the trees were flowering).
* Towards the end of the period Rainbow Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) were also present, and they continued to be observed at that site into July. They appeared when the blossom was more fully developed and persisted longer. Rainbow Lorikeets have become increasingly common in this area in recent years.
* No antagonistic relations were observed between Musk Lorikeets and Rainbow Lorikeets though antagonistic relations were observed between Musk Lorikeets and Rainbow Lorikeets and Noisy Miners (*Manorina melanocephala*) and Red Wattlebirds (*Anthochaera carunculata*).
* The Musk Lorikeets appeared to travel in pairs, as they were always observed in multiples of 2, up to a maximum of 8 birds. The usual number present at this site was 4.
* The Musk Lorikeets appeared to travel to and from the site from various directions; they were observed flying off due east, north-east and south-east, and arriving from due east and south-east. Wanniassa is to the south-east and only 15 minutes or so flight time so these birds could have been the same birds as observed in Wanniassa.

**Deakin**

After the last Hughes feeding tree sighting Musk Lorikeets continued to be seen or heard every few days in Jensen Street. On 16 July they were observed by the author in flowering Mugga Ironbarks (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) at the north end of Alfred Deakin High School Tennis Courts off Kent Street (-35.3232, 149.0970).

They were observed by the author at this spot on the next three days at various times of day (the photo accompanying was taken at the time). Other observers observed them up until 27 July. At this spot the maximum number recorded at any one time was 6.

Observations from this site:

* In contrast to the Hughes feeding site, the blossoms here were already very well developed by 16 July and the Musk Lorikeets were already sharing the site with Rainbow Lorikeets, with no antagonistic relations, which were always present with the MLs during observations.
* At one point during the auhtor’s observations the feeding Lorikeets were startled and flew off in a flock together consisting of 2 Musk Lorikeets and 4 Rainbow Lorikeets. After circling the trees several times they returned to feeding.
* As at the Hughes site there were antagonistic relations with Red Wattlebirds and Noisy Miners.
* Musk Lorikeets were not observed either arriving at or leaving this site.
* At this site one observer noted mutual preening between two Musk Lorikeets.

During later August Musk Lorikeets continued to be observed flying by every few days in Jensen Street.

**Hughes again**

At around 07:30 on 29 August 2014 (a cold, misty morning) 4 Musk Lorikeets were observed seemingly waking up from roosting (preening and flying about calling) around a dead standing tree in a plantation on the ridge between Carruthers Street and Millen Street, Hughes (-35.3281, 149.0934).

The fact that this site is equidistant (approx. 600 m) from both previously mentioned sites is probably a coincidence, although the fact they were observed flying by every few days in Jensen Street continuously from June to late August might indicate that this was a regular roosting spot.

**General Conclusions**

* Flock of 8 or more Musk Lorikeets were present in the Hughes/Deakin area from June to August 2014.
* They utilised two known feeding sites in the area and probably others.
* Both the sites discussed here consisted mainly of planted eucalypts, indicating the importance of planted nectareous trees for native birds in Canberra urban areas.
* These individuals may have been the same birds as observed in Wanniassa in the same period.
* During observations in this area in this period no antagonistic relations were observed with the more common and resident Rainbow Lorikeets.
* There was no obvious reason why 2014 should host an influx of Musk Lorikeets into the ACT, other than that the past four years had seen above average rainfall for coastal areas and Musk Lorikeets may have had good breeding success, leading to roving flocks searching for new flowering outside their usual range. It is noteworthy that of the 15 records from 1981-2013 in the COG database, the month with the greatest number of sightings should be May (late autumn).

**Observers**

This paper details the author’s own observations supplemented by those of Andrew Cadogan-Cowper, Ace Frawley, Sandra Henderson, Nick Payne and

Kevin Windle. All conclusions are mine, not those of the other observers.