

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



April 2015 - Issue #225

**Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.
PO Box 541, LEETON 2705 ISSN-1327-1172**

Website: www.mfn.org.au

Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

Objects of the Club

To facilitate and promote the knowledge of natural history, and to encourage the preservation and protection of the Australian natural environment, especially that of the Murrumbidgee River Valley

Variegated Wren by Neil Palframan

**A magical moment
for Neil when he
encountered a few
at Rocky
Waterholes**

See page 2 for more



IN THIS ISSUE

Office Bearers and Subscriptions.....	2
Neil's Variegated Wren Experience	2
Koonadan/Tuckerbil Outing.....	3
Interesting Finds at Koonadan.....	4
A Red Splash – Bracket Fungi.....	4
Wattle Dam Outing.....	5
Malaysia with Neil and Johanna	6
Ferns of the Northern Riverina Part 5 - Two small species	5
Waterfalls in the Cocoparra Ranges	6
Birding on the South Coast near Ulladulla.....	9
Members' Sightings	11
Coming Events Calendar	12

CONTRIBUTIONS

**For the next issue by
Wednesday 6 May
To Rowena Whiting**

Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com.

Phone: 6953 2612

**Annual Koala Count at
Narrandera - 19 April**

**Explore a Reserve on McCann
Road, Lake Wyangan - 26 April**

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

President:	Max O'Sullivan	6953 4726	Editor:	Rowena Whiting	6953 2612
Vice President:	Nella Smith	6959 1210	Committee:	Johanna Botman	6963 4855
Vice President:	Eric Whiting	6953 2612		Phillip Williams	6953 3524
Vice President:	Neil Palframan	6963 4855		Betty Bradney	6959 2901
Secretary:	Penny Williams	6953 3524	Web Co-ordinator:	Johanna Botman	6963 4855
Treasurer:	Phil Tenison	6953 4869			

MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE SECOND THURSDAY EACH MONTH, EXCEPT JANUARY, AT THE Yellow Room, Leeton Library, Sycamore Street at 7.30 PM

FIELD TRIPS NORMALLY TAKE PLACE ON THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND AND SECOND WEEKEND AFTER INTENDING NEW MEMBERS, GUESTS AND VISITORS WELCOME.

Membership enquiries:

Leeton	Eric Whiting	6953 2612	Griffith	Johanna Botman	6963 4855	
Narrandera	Nella Smith	6959 1210	Coleambally	John Wilkinson	6954 4129	
Annual Subscriptions:	Family	\$45.00	Adult/Single	\$35.00	Journal only/Concession	\$25.00

Opinions expressed by authors are their own and do not necessarily represent the policies or views of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.

A Magical Moment for Neil

There is no substitute for a good DSLR camera, especially for bird photography where a long and clear zoom is necessary, but just sometimes you can get lucky with the little pocket job.

At Rocky Waterholes on 15th February I ventured away from the after walk social picnic to the bushes where the wrens were squeaking. A short whistle had me instantly surrounded, at close quarters, by 6-8 Variegated Wrens, three of them full colour males, 'mousing' around my feet and eyeballing me from the bush. What zoom did I use? Don't remember (what does focal length 73 mean? Two to three times?) but it was not huge as the wrens were very co-operative for me.



Neil Palframan

Neil has supplied the details of his camera and settings for these shots.

Original date/time: 2015:02:15 18:35:17, Exposure time: 1/100, F-stop: 6.0, ISO speed: 400, Focal length: 73.1000, Camera make: Panasonic, Camera model: DMC-TZ30

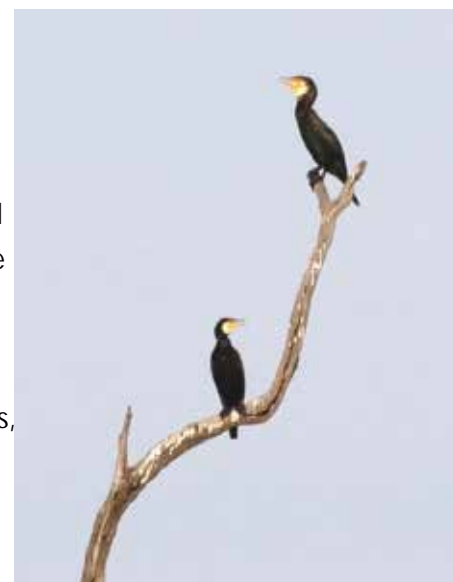


Koonadan/Tuckerbil Outing 14 March 2015



This was the last of the late Summer outings when 11 members met at the picnic shelter at Koonadan around 5pm. The weather was still hot so it was a good choice of timing to do the planned walk.

Because of the catheads everywhere we made our way up through the area that had been planted when the area was made into the Koonadan Historic Site. First seen was a very co-operative pair of **Red-capped Robins** that allowed



Images by Phil Tenison:
The Basin at Tuckerbil with Pelicans on the water and ducks flying over (above)
Great Cormorants (right)
Enjoying nibbles at the picnic / info area (Kathy Tenison) (bottom)

close views for everyone. Also there were **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** and **Willie Wagtails** on the way to the Basin Dam at the top of the sand dune.

On the dam itself there were lots of ducks, ibis, spoonbills and pelicans and out in

Tuckerbil itself there was a gathering of pelicans and stilts where there was still remnant water holes and ponds from the Environment inflow from earlier in the summer.

Having gained permission from the leasee and owner of the cattle on the dam paddock itself, we climbed through the fence and walked towards the channel bank picking up **Red-kneed Dotterel**, **Marsh Sandpiper** and **Black-winged Stilt** on the way to the recently erected regulators on the western side of the dam. These now allow water to be directed into The Basin Dam before being released into the Tuckerbil Wetlands itself when environmental water is available.

After the walk, the group gathered in the picnic shelter off Cantrill Road for nibbles and a chat, hoping that the **White-backed Swallows** that nest in the adjacent sand quarry would make an appearance – sadly they didn't whilst we were there. However, a few days later I found 6 sitting on the fence near the quarry – pity they didn't perform on the day!

The bird list for the outing:

Great Cormorant	Pelican (well over 100)	Great Egret
White-faced Heron (lots)	White-necked Heron	Royal Spoonbills
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Straw-necked Ibis	Australian White Ibis
Black Duck	Grey Teal	Collared Sparrowhawk (male)
Swamp Harrier	Whistling Kite	Little Eagle
Black-shouldered Kite	Australian Hobby	
Eurasian Coot	Magpie	
Masked Lapwing (30- 40)	Galah	
Black-fronted Dotterel	Black-winged Stilt	
Marsh Sandpiper (4)	Crested Pigeon	
Cockatiel/Eastern Rosella	Red-rumped Parrot	
Welcome Swallow	Rufous Whistler	
Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike	Zebra Finch	
Red-capped Robin	Starling	
Willie Wagtail	Pee-wee	
Yellow-throated Miner	Nankeen Kestrel	
Red-kneed Dotterel	Australian Raven	
Yellow-rumped Thornbill		

Max O'Sullivan



Interesting Finds at Koonadan



Belah tree Images by Phil Tenison. Other images by Rowena Whiting: Preying Mantis egg case (top centre), Pupal moth case (right), Lerp shelter (bottom).

A Belah tree caught our attention on the way back to the Koonadan shelter. It was covered in white globular clusters that gave the appearance it had snowed. They were probably the homes of a lerp or lerp-like insect of the order Hemiptera – true bugs. Lerp are sap-suckers and use the excess of sugar in the sap to convert into protective shelters. Being nearly pure carbohydrates they are a wonderful food for our small birds.

In the same tree we found the scaly egg case of a Preying Mantis and a woody-looking cocoon that could have been a pupal case of a moth.

Eric Whiting

A Splash of Red

Cypress Pine woodlands are rather dull in late summer / early autumn with practically none of the undershrubs in flower. So the bright red brackets of the scarlet Bracket Fungus *Pycnopous coccineus* stand out like way marking flags. Such a group was noticeable at the start of the track to Moss Dam.

This bracket fungus is very common on dead wood throughout Australia. It is a saprophyte steadily breaking down the already dead branches and trunks (even though they may be still attached to living trees). Not all of the wood is broken down, lignin is not attacked, so they only produce a soft rot.

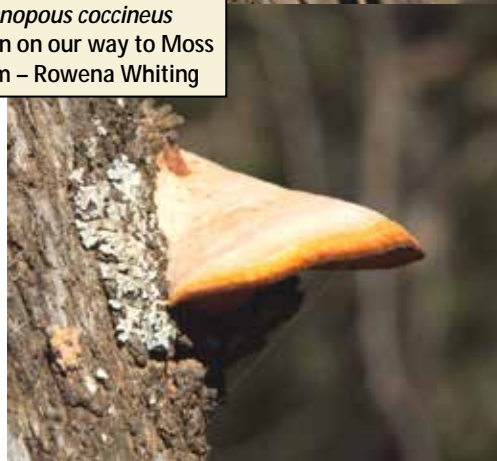
What you see is only the fruiting bodies – there is usually a series of them along one branch. Most of the fungus is in the form of a bright red fine threads of hyphae penetrating right through the dead wood. *Pycnoporus* means small pored and comes from the mass of small openings on the underside of the brackets. Each pore leads into a tube along which the white spores develop. Most of the toadstool form of fungi produce their spores on plate like grills radiating from the stem.

The bright red top side of the bracket often fades with age and generally shows annual growth rings. The whole bracket soon becomes dry and leathery – too tough to even think about being edible.

Eric Whiting



The Bracket Fungus *Pycnopous coccineus* seen on our way to Moss Dam – Rowena Whiting



Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest Outing 28 March 2015

A little confusion on my part with daylight saving time change resulted in a few stragglers to the 8am start at Wattle Dam. However, I arrived before 7.30am in the hope of catching sight of the early morning **Turquoise Parrots**, but even then, I missed them. There were numbers of **Mulga Parrots** and **Mallee Ringnecks** along with **Spiny-cheeked** and



Striped Honeyeaters that came down when Virginia arrived and we saw a very active period before the rest of the group came.

The water level in Wattle Dam had dropped considerably since my last visit and I expect that it will be totally dry within the next couple of weeks if we don't get any worthwhile rain in the next week or so.

After watching a group of 6 **Jacky Winters** flying about the dam close to us, we decided to walk to Moss Dam to see if there was any activity there. As



Wattle Dam by Rowena Whiting
Mallee Ringneck (above)
and Jacky Winter (right)
images by Phil Tenison:

expected the dam was totally dry and apart from a fly through of a pair of **Mallee Ringnecks**, no other birds were seen. Except, on the walk out Phil Tenison did spot an **Eastern Yellow Robin**.

Back at the Wattle Dam, we decided to have a late morning tea as several members wanted to get into Griffith before the shops closed – the Camera Shop, that is!

Near the cars, a couple of **Grey-crowned Babblers** were feeding near the dam and the usual birds kept coming in to drink at the dam itself.

A bird of note was the appearance of a **Blue-faced Honeyeater**. I can't remember recording one there in recent times and was quite surprised to see one on the day.

Bird list for the outing:

Common Bronzewing	Peaceful Dove	Bar-shouldered Dove
Galah	Mallee Ringneck	Mulga Parrot
Kookaburra	Eastern Yellow Robin	Jacky Winter
Grey Fantail	Willie Wagtail	Grey-crowned Babbler
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Chestnut-rumped Thornbill	Southern Whiteface
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Yellow-throated Miner
Brown-headed Honeyeater	White-eared Honeyeater	White-plumed Honeyeater
Striped Honeyeater	Pee-wee	Grey Butcherbird
Australian Raven		

Max O'Sullivan

March Meeting

The topic for last month's meeting was Malaysia, of Neil and Johanna's recent trip there. Despite being titled 'Non Birding' they seemed to feature quite prominently! He gave us a good insight into the life of the cities, travel, the culture particularly the food and drink, as well as taking us into the hills of the hinterland with their cloud enshrouded forests interspersed with plenty of travel tips.

Neil had a number of information leaflets, a bird book and maps which we were able to browse over a cuppa. Many thanks Neil and Johanna with her additional comments.

An account of their trip follows on the next page. Rowena.

Malaysia with Neil and Johanna

We spent three weeks in Malaysia in November. Apparently this is winter, but if so I can't imagine what summer is like. You could see the humidity in the air, even in photos.

This was not a birding holiday but of course I packed a few less pairs of undies to fit the bins in, just in case. Perhaps tossing the undies was reckless as the Qantas check-in chick laughed about "the lightest pack in weeks".

Birding in a foreign land – where do you start? Well you can go to one of the numerous guide companies. They will take you the best places without wasting time and show you the best range of birds. But of course I didn't do that. No, we simply blundered from one town to the next and I would step out the hotel door to see what I see. Totally inefficient, but what fun. It takes me back to year zero of my birding career where I struggled to even identify a Common Starling in the neighbour's back yard. In a new country everything is new. Even the names in the book (*A Photographic Guide to the Birds of SE Asia*: Morten Strange) give no clues. Barbet? Laughing Thrush? Munia? Trogon? Where are the Honeyeaters?

There are exciting birds to be seen even in mid town, and I was constantly ripping out the book with a "what the hell is that?". A sunrise walk along the riverbank on our 'sleep-in' day in Ipoh netted a dozen new birds, while an extremely sweaty half day forest walk in Penang netted almost nothing. In total I managed to pin down around 75 birds in the guide book, while a heap more disappeared without being i'ded.

Natural Highlights. Red Jungle Fowl and Collared Kingfisher enjoying what was being flushed out in a down town Singapore park during a long rain storm. A variety of Woodpeckers. Pond Herons in the rice

fields. Common Sandpipers on any small patch of

beach, even in the town centres. Some stunning colour combinations like the Red-bearded Bee-eater, or the Black & Crimson Oriole. A variety of primates, none of which showed any inclination to steal my food. Very lush forest and gardens. No ducks – have they all been eaten? Water Monitors were everywhere - is that in response to rubbish everywhere?

Cultural Highlights. Fresh street food, especially rotis. Seek out the massive variety of icy fruit drinks and

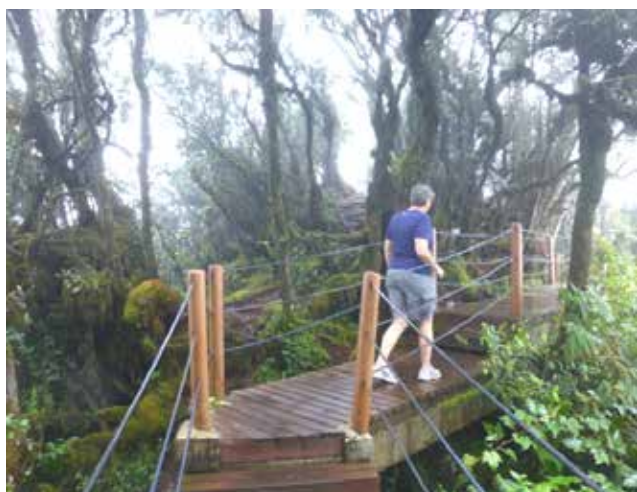
icy coffees, wonderful relief from the heat in a low alcohol Muslim country. Fresh crushed sugar cane juice.

Hints: Get a window seat for the flight across the Red Centre (and hope for no cloud). Buy an umbrella on arrival at the supermarket - we used them every day for both sun and rain, and so did the locals. Get all your info before you leave home. Visit Fraser's Hill, famous and fabulous but crumbling.

Neil Palframan



Black-naped Oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*) was a conspicuous town bird (above)
Long-tailed Parakeet (*Psittacula longicauda*) at Changi Point in Singapore (below)
The cloud forest of the Cameron Highlands at 2000m (left)
Yummm, again, fifteen times a day (bottom)



Ferns of the Northern Riverina, Part 5 – Two Small Species

To cover these two species I have taken a very broad meaning of fern. One of them Rock Quillwort is a closer relative to the Club-mosses than to those generally recognised as ferns. It is still in the artificial grouping Pteridophyta, but in a class that includes the Club-mosses (Lycopsida). The usual ferns are in the class Filicopsida. The other fern I want to discuss here is Adder's Tongue *Ophioglossum lusitanicum* is classified within the Filicopsida but in a very distinct family that has only three genera worldwide. It is common to describe both of these species as 'fern-allies'.

[To put this in perspective reptiles and mammals are in different classes in the phylum Chordata. Unlike Chordates where classes evolved in sequence, plant classes are now thought to have evolved separately from one common ancestor and not the sequence Angiosperms from Gymnosperms from Pteridophytes from Bryophytes from Algae.]

Rock Quillwort *Isoetes muelleri* is not only hard to recognise as a fern relative, it is also hard to recognise in the field full stop. Each plant has a tuft of 5-15cm long grass-like fronds and to many would be taken as a young grass or possibly a small sedge. The difference is in the enlarged base of each frond that encloses a spore forming body (sporangia). There are two types of sporangia, ones producing large megasporangia on outer fronds and small megasporangia on inner fronds.

Another confusion in recognition is the similar growth habit (but not habitat) of Grass Cushions. *Isoetopsis graminifolia* in the Daisy family Asteraceae which has its flowerheads at the base of the tuft of grass like-leaves. *Isoetopsis graminifolia* is 'Isoetes-like with grass-like leaves'. Each tuft of fronds grow annually in spring (or sometimes in autumn if the season is wet enough) from a perennial corm. The favoured habitat is in shallow water, usually ephemeral (similarities here with Pillwort *Pilularia novae-hollandiae*, see part 4 last month).

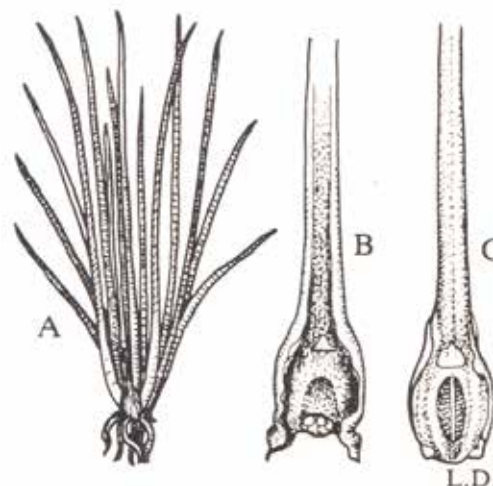
Being inconspicuous and not easily recognised Rock Quillwort is rarely recorded. I have only four records (Willbriggie State Forest, Binya State Forest, Yarrabimbi and Bungabil State Forest) all in the very wet years of 1990 and 1991. A second species Plain Quillwort *Isoetes drummondii* occurs in New South Wales but only south from Goulburn.

The other species is Adder's Tongue *Ophioglossum lusitanicum*. It too can be confused with young plants this time seedlings. Each plant of Adder's Tongue has only one frond consisting of a fleshy infertile narrow lanceolate leaf-like lobe and a fertile spike-like lobe arising from the base of the infertile lobe. The fertile lobe has two rows of large sporangia embedded in the axis. Most of the plants I have seen have lobes up to 5cm long. The infertile lobes are often flat on the ground or nearly so, whereas the fertile lobe is always erect.

As in *Isoetes* the fronds grow from an underground base, this time a rhizome. The fronds also do not unfurl from a coiled initial as is usual in typical ferns. *Isoetes* does not unfurl either, something that distinguishes it from *Pilularia*. The habitat of Adder's Tongue is very different to that of Quillwort. It can be seen scattered or in small groups in spring in many of our dry sclerophyll woodlands.

There are three other *Ophioglossum* species all of a similar structure in New South Wales, two north-coastal and the other in drier northern parts.

Eric Whiting



Isoetes. A, habit. Sporophylls; B, *Isoetes muelleri*; C *Isoetes drummondii* Illustration from Flora of South Australia – JM Black



Adder's Tongue
Ophioglossum lusitanicum



Waterfalls in the Cocoparra Ranges

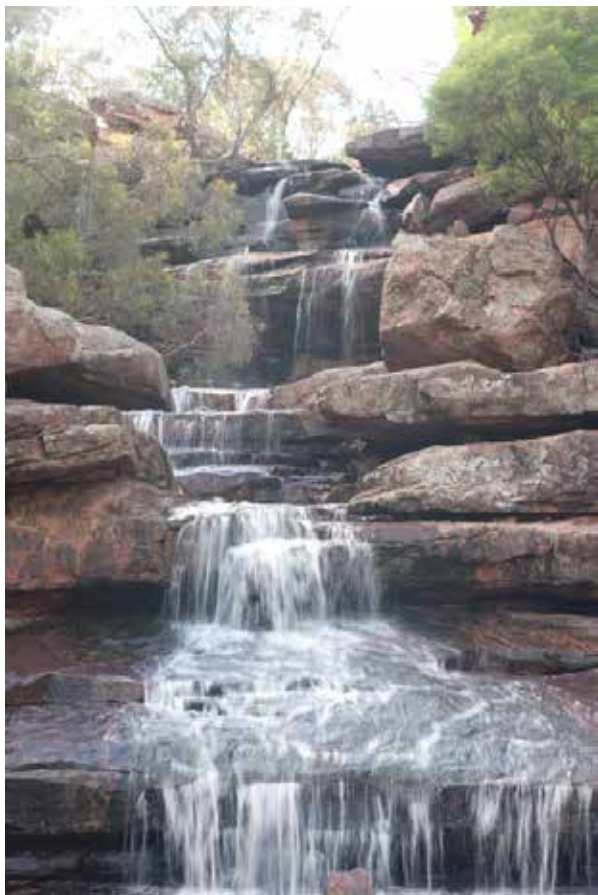
The finding of another fern at Falcon Falls has set me thinking about waterfalls. They always seem to be special places. Of course we rarely see our local ones actually flowing, our streams being so ephemeral. Nevertheless they always have that feeling of a cool moist micro-habitat. We should examine them more thoroughly.

I think there are only five waterfalls recognised in the Cocoparra Ranges, all reasonably accessible. The easiest of course being Woolshed and Falcon Falls with their maintained tracks from carpark to base. Both are south



facing and therefore mostly in permanent shade – just right for tender plant species. However both have small catchments principally of a single stream.

Eagle Falls is harder to get to being a few kilometres from the Woolshed camping ground – the closest public car access point. There used to be a marked but unformed walking track to these falls but now totally obscured. A few years ago the Club proposed the re-marking of this track and continuing it up onto the Bluff and down via Woolshed Falls. A nice, not too strenuous walk that featured several times on the excursion programme. Is this still a feasibility?



Another regular walk is to the Store Creek Falls. Here the formed



track only goes part way from the carpark. One short section is a little bit more difficult to negotiate but the effort is well worthwhile. The view westwards back down the valley is terrific. That is if you don't mind standing out on that fantastic rock overhang!

**Woolshed Falls
Falcon Falls
Eagle Falls
Store Creek Falls, flowing
Store Creek Falls, Rowena
on the overhang.**



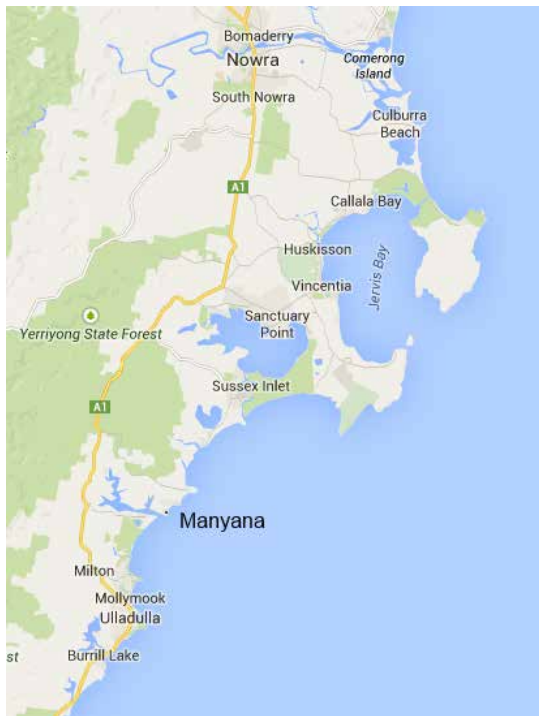
Goat Creek Falls also face west but does not have the same lookout as Goat Creek takes a sharp left turn below the falls, the direction of its course being dictated by fault lines in the sandstone rocks.

Why are there not more waterfalls in the Cocoparras? There are plenty of cliff faces for streams to tumble over.

Eric Whiting

Goat Creek Falls, MFN group

Birding on the Southern Coast near Ulladulla NSW



Recently I have spent two separate weeks (one late January and the other late March) staying at a friend's holiday house at a place called Manyana on the northern side of Lake Conjola (see map). The house overlooks the beach and has uninterrupted views right down the coast past Ulladulla.

On both occasions I was able, in spite of the stormy weather, to go birdwatching each morning and only got caught in the rain squalls once. At the point just north of the lake is a headland which is part of the Conjola National Park and State Forest that stretches along the coast just south of Jervis Bay (St Georges Basin) to just south of Lake Conjola itself. This headland was a regular spot for me to visit and provided lots of new birds for my 2015 year list (see list below).

Just between Manyana and north to the next beach at Bendelong there is a breeding pair of **Hooded Plovers** that were successful in raising a chick this season despite the huge numbers of beach goers and dogs that frequented the beach in January. There are many warning signs about the highly threatened shore birds nesting, including **Pied Oystercatchers**, **Little** and **Fairy Terns**. To try to keep people and dogs away from the nests on the beach National Parks

and the local Councils have erected fences around the nest sites when they are discovered in Spring. The plovers nest in single pairs on the sand dunes just above the high tide line, but when hatched, the chick wanders along the tide line to feed and this is where the newly hatched birds come to grief, having to compete not only with people and dogs but also with marauding Silver Gulls and other air borne predators. It is no wonder the plover is on the threatened species list!

The terns, on the other hand, nest in colonies just above the high tide line and at Lake Conjola they breed every year on the sand beside the tidal channel entrance to the lake and right beside the hugely popular Lake Conjola Caravan Park!

Fortunately, the local conservationists guard the fenced-off enclosures daily to ensure no one interferes with the nesting colony. They even provide makeshift shelters to protect the half-grown chicks from the blazing sun in January – little wooden shelters and even plastic buckets are used as sun shades for the growing chicks.

In January, we made a day trip to Culburra Beach to see the very rare **Grey-rumped Sandpiper**. A vagrant shorebird from North

Hooded Plovers



Sooty Oystercatcher - Lorna Mee



America. It was a fortuitous visit as my friend Marilyn a non-birder discovered when we stopped for lunch at a local cafe that the owner was from Cyprus and made her own haloumi which she sold in the shop. Marilyn was able to get a supply for her return to Canberra. However, on the second trip recently, the place was closed on the Thursday we called and Marilyn wasn't able to buy anymore this trip – pity!

On the way home, we called into Jervis Bay for a look at the beautiful beaches in the bay with soft white sand. Marilyn had stayed at Hyams Beach many years back and took me there to see the place. By this time, it was getting close to 6 o'clock so we decided to head for home. On the way into the beach I had noticed a road sign indicating that it was a crossing point for **Eastern Bristlebird** so I asked her to drive slowly along the road on the way out. I saw beside the road ahead, a bird and thought it was the bristlebird but to my surprise and delight, it was a **Ground Parrot**, an even rarer bird. We stopped close to it without it moving and I had excellent views from my side window. A car came behind us and Marilyn had to move off the road and surprisingly, the bird didn't move. By that time we were so close I didn't need my binoculars! As we drove off the bird stayed feeding on seeding grasses beside the road and just a bit further along another one was doing the same thing. So I had my best views ever of this elusive bird but forgot about my mobile phone camera so didn't get a close-up photo of either bird.



Images by Lorna Mee
Superb Lyrebird (right)
Black-faced Monarch

On the way back to Manyana we spotted



a **Superb Lyrebird** on the roadside

but it scurried into the forest when we stopped to get a better look. On the day we left, it was overcast and we saw 3 lyrebirds beside the road scratching away but disappearing into the bush until we passed.

The other good sighting was on Saturday afternoon 21 March after cyclonic-like conditions the previous day when in the late afternoon 40+ **White-throated Needletails** zoomed over the whole area – they were so fast but low flying that it was hard to get focused on them to make a positive identification. They flew

low over the house but just so fast it was amazing to see them in such aerobatic display.

I stayed a couple more nights in Canberra hoping to see the **Powerful Owl** that is there close to the Botanic Gardens at the Turner Bowling Club but it wasn't in its roost tree the day I was there. It was there the next day though from a report in the Canberra Times that Marilyn sent -typical!

New birds for my 2015 list:

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Common Mynah | Rainbow Lorikeet | Satin Bowerbird |
| Spotted Dove | Eastern Spinebill | Little Wattlebird |
| New Holland Honeyeater | Grey Butcherbird | Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo |
| Red-necked Stint | Eastern Whipbird | Pied Oystercatcher |
| Noisy Friarbird | Grey Goshawk | Lewin's Honeyeater |
| Eastern Koel | Lesser Sand Plover | Broad-billed Sandpiper |
| White-rumped Sandpiper | Bar-tailed Godwit | Red Knot |
| Great Knot | Crested Tern | Caspian Tern |
| Little Tern | Fairy Tern | White-winged Black Tern |
| Australian Gannet | Red-browed Finch | Olive-backed Oriole |
| Figbird | Brown Gerygone | Buff-rumped Thornbill |
| Eastern Curlew | Large-billed Scrubwren | Hooded Plover |
| Black-faced Monarch | Golden Whistler | Wonga Pigeon |
| Crested Shrike-tit | Musk Lorikeet | Green Catbird |
| Leaden Flycatcher | Sooty Oystercatcher | King Parrot |
| Ground Parrot | Superb Lyrebird | White-headed Pigeon |

Max O'Sullivan

MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

These sightings are from members' observations. Please check with the relevant person before quoting any record. This list has been compiled by Max O'Sullivan

Barn Owl [6]	Brobenah Hills via Leeton	06/03/15	Phil Tenison
Yellow Thornbill	Cutler Ave, Griffith	10/03/15	Virginia Torr
Mallee Ringneck	Cutler Ave, Griffith	10/03/15	Virginia Torr
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [6]	McNabb Cres, Griffith	11/03/15	Sue Chittick-Dalton
'28' Parrot (Ringneck)	McNabb Cres, Griffith	11/03/15	Sue Chittick-Dalton
Sue has reported seeing the '28' form of the Ringneck Parrot around her place on many occasions over the past couple of years. It is assumed these birds were originally escapees from a local aviary and have joined with the Mallee Ringneck form that is common in the Riverina.			
Blue-faced Honeyeater	McNabb Cres, Griffith	11/03/15	Sue Chittick-Dalton
Wood Sandpiper [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	11/03/15	Nella Smith
Speckled Warbler	'Myalstone', Beelbangera	12/03/15	Melanie Baulch
Brown Falcon	'Myalstone', Beelbangera	12/03/15	Melanie Baulch
Grey-crowned Babbler	'Myalstone', Beelbangera	12/03/15	Melanie Baulch
White-backed Swallow [8]	Koonadan via Leeton	13/03/15	Max O'Sullivan
Ground Cuckoo-Shrike [3]	Cantrill Rd, Leeton	13/03/15	Max O'Sullivan
Marsh Sandpiper [4]	The Basin Dam, Koonadan	14/03/15	Group outing
Noisy Friarbird	Nericon (1st record for the area)	21/03/15	Neil Palframan
Brolga [9]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/03/15	Max O'Sullivan
Pectoral Sandpiper [5]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/03/15	Max O'Sullivan
Marsh Sandpiper [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/03/15	Max O'Sullivan
Darter [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/03/15	Max O'Sullivan
Unusual to see a Darter in what appears to be very shallow water now that the wetland is drying out.			
Spotted Harrier [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/03/15	Max O'Sullivan
Red-necked Avocet [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/03/15	Max O'Sullivan
Blue-faced Honeyeater [1]	Wattle Dam Binya State Forest	28/03/15	Group outing
I can't recall having seen this honeyeater at Wattle Dam before and nor has Melanie and Nella.			
Spotless Crake [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	29/03/15	Max O'Sullivan
This is the first sighting of a Spotless Crake that I have managed to see despite hearing their whirring call everytime I have been out there this year.			
Superb Parrot [several groups]	Waddi (Darlington Point)	29/03/15	Nella Smith
Orange Chat	One Tree, north of Hay	29/03/15	Nella Smith
Spotted Harrier	Carathool	29/03/15	Nella Smith
Brolga [3]	Riverina Beef, Yanco	01/04/15	Ben Kschenka
Blue-winged Parrot [2]	Riverina Beef, Yanco	01/04/15	Ben Kschenka
Ben reports that the parrots were seen in the same flowering gum two days running.			
Pink-eared Duck [1,000+]	Riverina Beef, Yanco	01/04/15	Ben Kschenka
Plumed Whistling-duck [3,000+]	Riverina Beef, Yanco	01/04/15	Ben Kschenka
Golden-headed Cisticola [10+]	Fivebough Wetlands	03/04/15	Max O'Sullivan

NOTE: The aim of the sightings list is to record interesting and unusual sightings. Because of space, I have to make decisions as to what goes on the record for the newsletter and what does not. I do repeat monthly sightings which, although regular, still represent what I consider 'interesting or unusual' and also for the record that these birds appear when they do and for the months they are recorded. Sometimes that choice is arbitrary but it is important for example to see if **Superb Parrots** are seen by someone every month locally or are there months when no one reports them. Likewise, for migratory waders. I feel it is important to record sightings for the record and, if any, overwinter here.

I appreciate all regular submissions from members and apologise if some birds reported don't get on the list. So please don't stop sending lists. If you think a particular bird is unusual for the site you are reporting, like a butcherbird or honeyeater or whatever or if a bird is new to your local area/backyard then mention that when you send in your list next time. I hope this helps explain why some submissions don't make it on the list.

**** **C O M I N G E V E N T S** ****

- 9 April Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.
Topic: Members' photo night – bring along your latest shots.
Contact: Penny Williams 6953 3524
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com
- 11 April Saturday** **Outing** to Fivebough Wetlands

CANCELLED

 Due to a clash with the Camera Club planned outing we have changed the date of this MFN outing to 19 April, the Koala Count. Also the water in Fivebough is also disappearing rapidly and any waders are difficult to see so we will leave this outing until Spring when the waders return.
- 19 April Sunday** **Annual Koala Count at Narrandera Common**
Meet there at 10:00am where you will be assigned to a team
Follow the signs from Lake Talbot canal bridge (just before the swimming complex).
Barbeque lunch available at a small cost.
Contact: Rowena Whiting on 6953 2612 if attending.
- 26 April Sunday** **Reserve on McCann Rd near Lake Wyangan Picnic Area** and beside the almond orchard.
Meet at the entrance of the Lake Wyangan Picnic Area at **8am**.
Bring morning tea and lunch.
Contact: Neil Palframan on 6963 4855 if attending.
- 6 May Wednesday** **Copy for the May newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 14 May Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.
Topic: TBA
Contact: Penny Williams 6953 3524
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com
- 17 May Sunday** **Outing to Tom Bullen Water Reserve, Sturt Highway**
Meet at the side road intersection with the highway to the east of the reserve at **9am**.
Bring morning tea and lunch.
Contact: Max O'Sullivan if attending on 6953 4726.

Other Events

12 April Sunday - Fungi workshop at Wagga Wagga – Murrumbidgee Landcare

An introduction to the diversity, ecology and curiosities of the fungi kingdom

It will include an interactive and illustrated seminar on the major fungal groups, the basics of fungus identification and fungal ecology. Fungal specimens from the local area will be displayed, discussed and examined during the workshop. The importance of soil health and fungal conservation will also be discussed. Following the indoor session we will make an exciting foray through various local habitat types to search for species of interest. Supplementary notes will be provided.

The workshop is presented by research ecologist and fungal enthusiast Alison Pouilot.

RSVP Karen Jamieson, Murrumbidgee Landcare ph (02) 6933 1443 or office@mli.org.au to book your place.

[I will be going so happy to share transport, Rowena]