

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



March 2016 - Issue #235

Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.

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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



Glossy Black Cockatoos are in favour with a count in the Rankins Springs area and a sighting at Wattle Dam in the Binya State Forest in February. March will see the club doing a count in the Narrandera/Leeton/Griffith area.

Female Glossy Black Cockatoo taken at a dam near Rankins Springs by Graham Russell

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CONTRIBUTIONS

For the April issue by
Wednesday 6 April

To Rowena Whiting

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**Glossy Black Cockatoo count
is on Saturday 12 March
see Page 2 for details**

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

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Secretary:	Penny Williams	6953 3524			
Treasurer:	Phil Tenison	6953 4869	Website Co-ordinator:	Phillip Williams	6953 3524

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.

INTENDING NEW MEMBERS, GUESTS AND VISITORS WELCOME.

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Glossy Black Cockatoo Count 12 March 2016



Female Glossy Black Cockatoo - Neville Bartlett

We will be holding a Glossy Black Cockatoo Count on Saturday 12 March. The birds must drink daily and will usually come to farm dams or dams in reserves in the evening. The dams are usually found close to the Cocoparra Ranges or the Narrandera Hills or the Brobenah Hills.

We have identified dams in Griffith, Leeton and Narrandera where there is a possibility these birds may come to drink. We want to cover as many dams as we can which means we need as many people to participate as possible,

To this end we require dam sitters from all of these towns to assemble quietly at the allocated

dam from about 6pm until dark. You must sit quietly a little distance away from the water so as not to frighten the birds. It would be good if you could also

record birds or mammals that may appear around the dam. If you able to spare a few hours can you please call Nella Smith and let her know so she can allocate a dam and directions to get to it. Please email results to Nella nella.smith0@gmail.com or phone 69591210

February Meeting

We were pleased to welcome Peta from the Ambulance Service to our meeting. She gave us a very informative talk on what to do in the event of a snake bite and other mishaps which could occur whilst out in the bush. She also informed us on what procedures occur when a 000 call is received. Information can be had from their website. She brought to our attention a phone app called EMERGENCY+ that is available and allows a 000 call to be made at the press of a button.

The Ambulance Service are a dedicated group of people and we much appreciated Peta's time to come to our meeting, many thanks Peta.



**Blue-faced Honeyeater
Photographed at Leeton High School in January
by Phil Tenison**

Our Rocky Waterholes excursion from the eyes of a 3 ½ year old

Sadie my 3 ½ year old granddaughter came with us on the Rocky Waterholes excursion. Before we left she was very excited because we told her if she was lucky, we might see some Koalas and she wasn't disappointed. The other highlights were the Garland Lilies and looking at almost perfectly formed Kangaroo foot prints that had been left in the dried mud on the track.

For Christmas last year Dionee and I gave Sadie an exercise book and told her it was her "Nature Diary" for her to record the things that she sees when she is out at the river with her family, catching bugs in the

back yard or with Dionee and I on the farm.

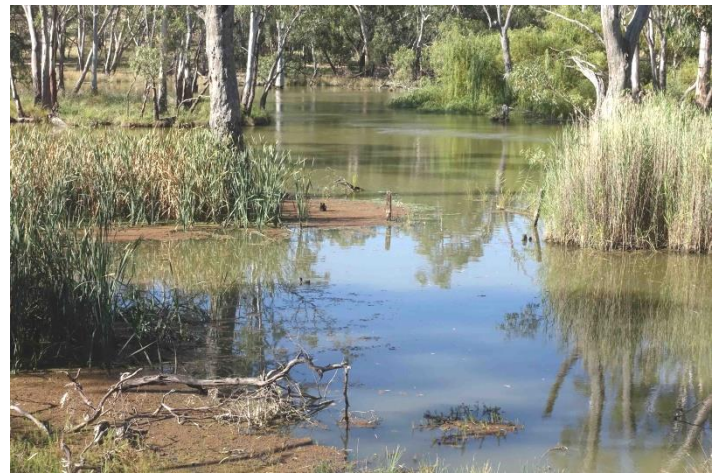
When Dionee and I turned up for lunch on the Tuesday after Rocky water Holes the first thing that Sadie showed us was what she had put in her "Nature Diary".

The writing is my daughter Joelle's but her words are exactly what Sadie tells her to write and of course the pictures are Sadie's.

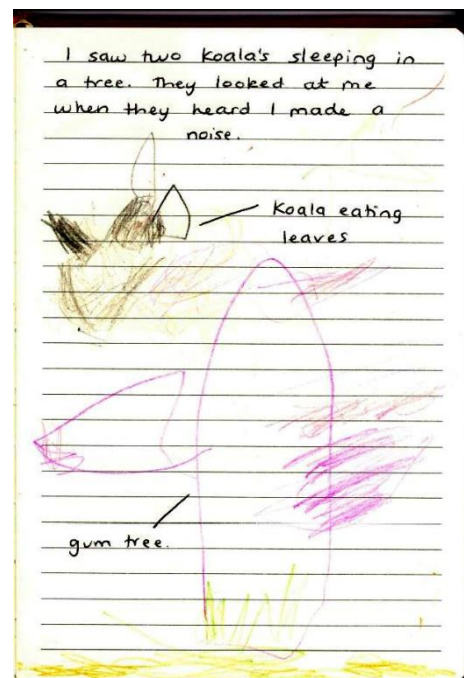
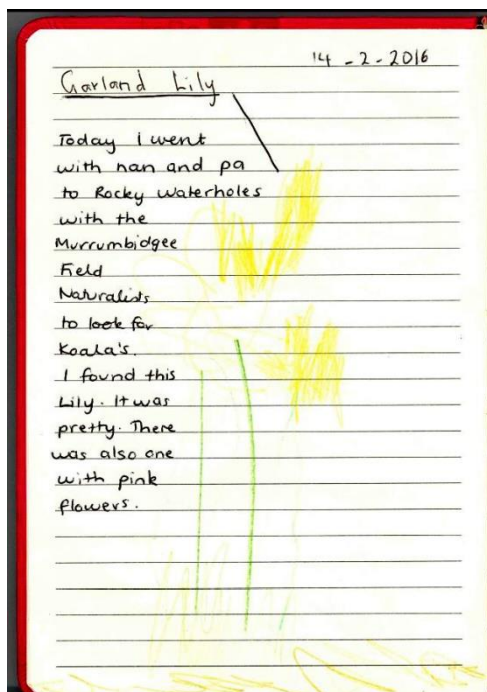
I have copied two of the three pages from the Rocky Water Holes excursion and hope that you will find them encouraging that there is hope for our natural landscape through our children. It is just our job to encourage and nurture them.

Finally I would like to thank those that were at Rocky Waterholes for taking the time to talk to and encourage Sadie.

Graham Russell



View across to Rocky Waterholes from the channel bank – Rowena Whiting



Rocky Waterholes Bird List 14/02/2016 compiled by Max O'Sullivan

White-faced Heron	Wood Duck	Black Duck
Purple Swamphen	White Cockatoo	Yellow Rosella
Laughing Kookaburra	Sacred Kingfisher	Tree Martin
Grey Shrike-Thrush	Superb Wren	
White-plumed Honeyeater	Australian Raven	
Brown Treecreeper	Koala [3]	



Garland Lily - Nella Smith

Lachlan Fold Glossy Black Cockatoo Count - 19 and 20 February 2016



Five members of MFN attended the count held over two evenings.

Glossy Black Cockatoos usually come in to drink every evening at about dusk. They prefer to drink at a puddle but as there had been no recent rain they drank at the dams. This is maybe because they have very short feet and in the open area of a dam they feel vulnerable to predation. They often hang around calling to each other before one is courageous enough to drink.

We established ourselves at the Rankins Springs Caravan Park and such a clean and green park it is.

The hall where co-ordination happened is just nearby.

After poring over maps of the region the Lachlan Fold Group assigned a dam to everyone.

Dams where Glossy Black Cockatoos were observed on the Friday night were also observed on the Saturday night to check if Glossies return to drink at the same dam on subsequent nights. I think they return as long as their food source is sufficient and then they move across the landscape and drink at the nearest dam.

We also recorded other visitors to the dams whenever possible.

Grunting of wild pigs alarmed me as I sat at a dam on the first night. My presence must have alarmed them also as they went thirsty that night. Black Wallaby were common visitors and surprised us by immersing themselves up to their armpits risking drowning their young in pouches. One mother spent a lot of time licking out her pouch and her youngster after doing this.

For some reason Eastern Grey Kangaroos appeared but did not generally drink. Perhaps they could smell us and historically they may have received a spear or a bullet between their ears.

The range of honeyeaters that visited the dams was interesting - Brown-headed, White-eared, Spiny-cheeked, White-plumed, Yellow-plumed and Singing Honeyeaters visited. As pigeons are seed eaters they need to drink regularly. Peaceful Doves, Bar-shouldered Doves and Common Bronzewing all drank. The Common Bronzewing were still frantically drinking at dark.

All the dams were fairly full due to February rain received earlier in the month. Fortunately it had been hot and dry since so the birds were forced to the dams.

Lachlan Fold Working Group's warm welcome, appreciation for help and hospitality would be difficult to match, enough encouragement to return for their next count. I thank them

We were even shown some great bush as potential field trips.

41 Glossy Black Cockatoos were counted on the Friday night and 44 on the Saturday night with one dam that had 7 visit on the first night not monitored on the second night.

Nella Smith

**Female Glossy Black Cockatoo (top) and
Splendid Wren – Graham Russell**



WORLD WETLANDS DAY

Narrandera Landcare held a very successful event at Narrandera Wetlands to celebrate the day. About twenty adults and children from Narrandera, Leeton and Grong Grong attended and one person from much further afield wandered in.

Narrandera Landcare Publicity Officer Kimberley Beattie (the organiser) was pleased with the day. Everybody seemed really interested and got involved in the activities.

Kimberly led a group around bird-watching while Erin Lenon from the Federal Environmental Water Office took a group bug-dipping.

Bug-dipping involved collecting a couple of buckets of water from the wetland, pouring some water into shallow white trays, identifying any creatures and finally putting them back. The first pour into a tray produced a large and active water scorpion. Everyone was hooked. A picture shows a group aged from three to ninety totally engrossed.



Kimberly said that she has already had a request to hold a similar event and will do so later in the year.

Congratulations to Kimberly and thank you to Erin for great support. Morning tea was nice too.

Bet Bradney.

Birds at our bird bath

Our birdbath has attracted a lot of visitors in the past couple of weeks. Brown Honeyeaters have been regularly visiting and one night we photographed 4 of them having a drink at once – 3 juveniles and one adult. Other birds visiting include the following; Silvereyes, Yellow Thornbill, White-plumed Honeyeaters, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Wattlebirds, a Singing Honeyeater and Grey Fantail. We can only conclude that the warm weather has drawn them to drink. We have also removed some old bottlebrushes that had been invaded by palm tree seedlings and were the home of many sparrows. There are very few sparrows visiting the bird bath and this may also mean other species are more likely to visit.



Penny Williams

Brown Honeyeaters (above), Singing Honeyeater (below right), Grey Fantail (below left) Penny Williams



AGOG about GLOSSIES

A contracted group of MFN members met at Wattle Dam on Saturday 27/2/16 late afternoon. The birdlife was pretty scarce at both the dam and the lengthy stroll through the bush, however, when we returned at twilight, things began to liven up. Firstly several kangaroos arrived and as though someone or something, had flicked a switch, in came the birds.



We too joined the party and as bottles popped and tasty snacks were shared we watched the passing parade of thirsty creatures....Then Nella whispered “Glossies!” and 2 beautiful large black cockatoos glided into a tree overlooking the dam.

My excitement at seeing these beautiful creatures surprised even ME. This is the very first time I have seen them and now completely understand why their presence is treasured by our members. They certainly are majestic.

Sue Chittick-Dalton

While we were watching the glossies Nella described their behaviour. They did not spend long in the tree before the male with all red panels in his tail waddled on his short legs to the edge of the dam. He was soon joined by the female known by yellow spotting or blotching around the head. These birds tend to drink at dusk and then perch near the watering site. In the morning they fly off at dawn to their feeding site nearby.

Nella Smith

Bird List for Wattle Dam 27th February 2016

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Striped Honeyeater * | Apostlebird * | Rainbow Bee-eater |
| White-eared Honeyeater * | Brown-headed Honeyeater * | Silvereye * |
| Red-capped Robin | Australian (Mallee) Ringneck * | Crested Pigeon * |
| Yellow-rumped Thornbill * | Bar-shouldered Dove * | Common Bronzewing * |
| Grey Fantail * | Rufous Whistler | Eastern Yellow Robin |
| Singing Honeyeater | Splendid Fairy wren | White-winged Chough |
| White-browed Babbler | Magpie * | Peewee |
| Mulga Parrot * | Male and Female Glossy Black Cockatoo | |
| Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike * | Turquoise Parrot [6]* | Kookaburra |
| Southern Whiteface | | |

**Kangaroo, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (below right) and Australian Ringneck
Photos: Phillip Williams**

Sunday 28 February 2016

Sue and Nan went out again on the Sunday evening – they drove in the track, just before the one with the ramp which really requires a 4WD now. They met the Williams and Russells there. Penny has supplied a bird list: in addition to the birds marked with a * above they also saw Peaceful Doves, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, Hooded Robin, Willie Wagtail, Galah, and Western Gerygone. So quite a few different ones. Rowena.



Bush Bananas

The hot dry conditions we endured on our pre-nibble walk from Wattle Dam on 27 February were not conducive to discovering anything exciting along the way, but sharp eyes did spot large green fruits hanging in one shrub. Closer examination revealed they did not belong to the shrub. Tracking down the long thin stems, partly coiled around the thicker stems of the shrub, led to a single stem no thicker than 1 centimetre rising from the ground some 20 centimetres away from the base of the shrub.

This delicate twiner was a Bush Banana *Marsdenia australis*. The thin stems with widely spaced narrow opposite leaves 3-12 centimetres long and 10-18 times longer than broad are barely noticeable despite reaching up to 4 metres from the ground. (Our specimen ran out of shrub to climb on at around 2 metres.) It is only when the clusters of creamy or greenish white bell shaped flowers with five short lobes around the lip appear in late spring to summer, or when the prominent green fruits develop later in summer that these plants become noticeable. What is more plants often occur as isolated specimens. They are more visible when they choose to climb up a wire fence as can often happen now.



The fruits can grow to 4-10 centimetres long – long ones really do look like green bananas. On maturity they split all down one side to reveal numerous flat seeds, each fringed on top with long white hairs. The hairs of course are to help in wind dispersal. I am told that the seed has to land a certain way up to germinate, but I cannot remember which way! A little bit of experimenting might be called for. I happened to get it right getting four to establish in pots last spring. At first they seemed to stall at about 5 centimetres high, then rapidly shot up to half a metre over summer.

Why Bush Bananas? Young fruits before the seeds begin to develop can be eaten – the Aborigines did. One Elder gave me some to try. Not a strong flavour but definitely not unpleasant. Apparently after a light cooking is the best way to have them.

Bush Bananas belong to the Asclepiadaceae family which are mainly tropical or sub-tropical. The genus *Marsdenia* have about 20 species in Australia, two of which occur in drier parts, the other being the Native Pear *M. viridiflora* found further north. These two used to be in their own genus *Leichhardtia* as their leaves are always long and narrow whereas the others are at least lanceolate to even circular.

Eric Whiting

Bush Banana fruits - Virginia Tarr
Close up of fruit & Nan checking out the fruits – Rowena Whiting
Kangaroo – Phillip Williams



Letter to the Editor

Re: Eric Whiting's article in the February 2016 MFN newsletter on Climate Change through History.

On reading this article, I felt that there was a dismissive overtone about the present scientific concern about man-made climate change. Statements like, 'Contrary to what present day media would like you to believe, the world's climate has always been changing'. True and no one is disputing that, the major concern is that man-made pollution is having an accelerating effect on the three major warming and cooling effects mentioned in the article – all of which are totally out of our control.

To imply that it is out of our control to do something about the present situation is to miss the point and we can and must do something about preventing the massive polluting of our atmosphere with the continuous burning of fossil fuels. Scientists worldwide agree that this is adding to the increase in global warming and, to ignore it, would be at our peril.

There is too much evidence that what we are doing today is having a detrimental effect on the world's climate and it is up to us as Field Naturalists to be constantly aware of what we can do to slow the process down.

Of course, it would only take a massive volcanic eruption to completely change everything but we still can't sit back and feel we have no responsibility towards reducing the rate of global warming today.

Max O'Sullivan

Eric's reply

My article was a commentary on a SBS TV programme that specifically highlighted the causes and effects of natural climate change. In no way did I deny that humans are causing global warming. In fact I stated that we can reverse some of the push that we have created by burning fossil fuels. (I used 'some' because burning fossil fuels is only one of the ways we are contributing to warming.)

To address the causes, effects and remedies of anthropogenic climate change warrants another article, more like a book in length.

My point was that even if we corrected our influence on climate tomorrow, change will still take place, and that we as a group can play a part in monitoring all changes.

Nella Smith has submitted a passage from Mary E White's book 'The Nature of Hidden Worlds' published 1990, page 32 in a chapter entitled Preparing the Earth for Air-breathing Life.

"At first the oxygen released by the earliest photosynthesisers was used up in the oxidation of many elements and minerals in the seas. As the iron dissolved in sea water was oxidised and precipitated out, ironstone formations were laid down in the shallow epicontinental seas and in troughs along continental margins. Banded ironstone formations worldwide and the Hamersley and other iron ore deposits in Western Australia, are evidence of the oxidation processes which were occurring between 3800 and 2000 million years ago as oxygen was generated.

"When the oxygen "sink" in the oceans has been satisfied oxidised continental sediments such as red beds (sedimentary layers coloured by oxidised iron) gypsum and marine evaporites suddenly became abundant, indicating that oxygen had invaded the atmosphere. For oxygen to accumulate in the air and sea it was necessary for carbon to be removed from the system otherwise oxygen would bond to it and no longer be free. The difference between earth being a dead and a living planet is the maintaining of the delicately balanced state where free oxygen is possible. Thus the burial of carbon in organic matter and its transformation into black shales, coal and oil deposits, together with the formation of limestone and dolomite (carbonates) were essential processes involved in creating an atmosphere suitable for breathing."

Nella's personal comment is 'So what are we doing? We are very busy releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere heading towards a dead planet.'

[For more on natural climate change including the great advances in knowledge since Mary White wrote the above [simplified] quote in 1990, I recommend reading 'The Emerald Planet' by David Beerling. Also search for Natural Climate Change on the internet. I found two very informative and detailed articles there. Eric]

Threatened Species Commissioner visit to Fivebough Wetlands

On February 16-18 2016 the Threatened Species Commissioner, Gregory Andrews visited the Riverina, at the invitation of the newly-formed Landcare Irrigation Collective. Over the three days of Gregory's visit, he packed in 11 engagements, meeting approximately 70 people doing work to help with the recovery of the Australasian Bittern and Plains Wanderer, both of which are nationally threatened birds, living in the productive landscapes of the Riverina irrigation areas. He was also keen to hear about the feral cat problems and what efforts were being done to tackle the problem on farms and in the towns. He also visited a property near Wanganella searching for Plains Wanderer unsuccessfully. This little bird co-exists with sheep grazing.

Gregory is passionate about supporting our threatened species and the custodians 'on the ground' who are working to conserve them. When he learned that two of the [Threatened Species Strategy's 20 birds by 2020](#) are living in the Riverina irrigation areas, he wanted to meet with the people who are living among them, and working to protect these birds whilst



Max O'Sullivan (left) with Gregory at the hide and Gregory with Keith Hutton at Fivebough Wetlands – Photos: Penny Williams



maintaining agricultural productivity.

Some MFN members were able to meet him for an evening walk around the Fivebough Wetlands. He was keen to add to his list of birds and wasn't disappointed; with at least 2 additions - Wood Sandpiper and Glossy Ibis. Earlier in the day he had visited a rice farm in Coleambally and was lucky to see a nest with 4 chicks. This nest was found on January 15th, with only half the clutch laid, and hadn't been checked since so Matt Herring was delighted (and relieved) that four healthy chicks were found. Gregory said he felt deeply privileged to find bittern chicks and kept thanking individual rice growers for being the custodians of one of the world's most threatened birds. Concern was expressed about the potential impact from foxes and cats

Rowena Whiting, with information from Murrumbidgee Landcare and Bitterns in Rice Web sites..

Falls Creek Summer Camp - A couple of items that didn't make the last issue

Jane's Story

Getting to Falls Creek for the camp was not going to be a possibility for me until the very last moment. Thanks to Nikki rising to the occasion we were there, and what an amazing time we had. I want to thank you all for the kindness and hospitality shown to my friend, as well as the endless supply of food and great cooking especially rice pudding and porridge for breakfast, wonderful company, and delightful children.

While up in the rare alpine air one wants to just keep walking, it's so stimulating, refreshing, challenging, beautiful, and fun.

Trying to think of the most memorable part - perhaps the beautiful frilled petals on the *Prasophyllum* orchid we found. Or maybe the view over to the western side of the Alps on the track up to Mount Cope. The mountains stretched forever with each layer changing - from deeper blue to blue tinged with grey and mauve to the softest baby blue, then another hazy blue to meet the azure sky and the white fluffy clouds. The lure of the mountains and the Bogong High Plain is always there.

Jane Paul



Jane has titled her photo 'The Explorer'

And another piece from Virginia Tarr

'Kosciuszko Alpine Flora' I received via Griffith library last Friday. It has great information of the history (Geography, settlement, botanists, erosion, establishment of the National Park and flora) It has some wonderful photos of the landscape and flora, the most popular being the ranunculus anemones (Anemone Buttercup) I've included the photo of what could've been the end result of that species or similar. It was taken on our walk to Pretty Valley along the track where water springs were flowing out from the edges under sphagnum moss and many other small plants thriving in the wet runoff.

Just read a page on 'introduced species' I remember Neil enquiring about the clovers that was prolific on the Pretty Valley walk. I wondered if it was due to the fact that there was stock grazing and they were supplemented with clover hay and the seeds spread, or were scattered by the settlers for extra forage!

This book mentions that: "Some were introduced by settlement and on the sheep's back, etc. Then a sharp increase post 1954 due to deliberate introduction of many species for soil conservation purposes during and since the Snowy Mountain Hydro-electric Scheme and activities associated with increased tourism."

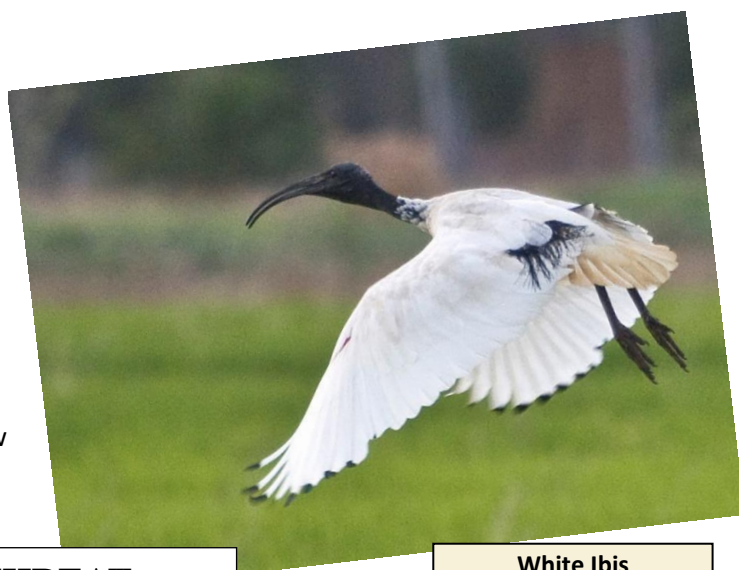
The photo I took of the Sheep Sorrell is one specie introduced.



The White Ibis Threat

The attached is a poem that appeared on Birding- aus after a series of irate postings from people about the destruction of a breeding colony of Australian White Ibis on the extension of the M4 or M5 motorway in Sydney. Everyone was horrified that the breeding colony could be just bulldozed away without any consideration for the birds. The conclusion was that most city people consider them 'rubbish' birds and plentiful so why worry about a few dozen or so being wiped out.

Max



THE WHITE IBIS THREAT

White Ibis
Phillip Williams

Non-human things that multiply to numbers seen and loud
Must be reduced, eliminated - they scar our vision proud
The vision of a landscape adorned with human themes
The products of our industry and noise of machines.
¶
If these creatures don't diminish our dominance or right
I-b'lieve they should be tolerated and not destroyed on sight
But if by lust they multiply to numbers seen or heard
Why suffer from their presence be it mammalian or bird.
¶
Perhaps the most annoying, attracting human hate
Are creatures that seek sustenance from landscapes we create
What right have these creatures to despoil the ordered charm
Of our cities, urban landscapes, orchards, parks or farms?
¶

Geoff Ryan 2015

One of two birds singing can be pleasant to the ear
But a flock of screeching birds or bats no one wants to hear
It's not just the cacophony, their faeces and their filth
But their spectrum of diseases that threaten human health.
¶
The ugly, bald white ibis has become a frightening pest
A bird of swamps and garbage tips, it now forages with zest
Around our parks and gardens where children play and eat
It probably carries disease and germs on its massive bill and feet.
¶
The Government should do something to stop this ugly zoo
From spreading pest and pestilence from garbage tip to you
Destroy their breeding colonies and drain those smelly swamps
And protect the parks and gardens where our pets and children romp.
¶

MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

These sightings are from members' observations. Please check with the relevant person before quoting any record.

Wombat	Yarrabimbi via Leeton	15/11/15	Andrew Thompson
Andrew set up the motion camera at an active burrow with fresh scats around it and finally hit the jackpot after months of trying to sight the animal although he knew they were there. The photos were shown at the February meeting so people could see proof positive of a wombat in residence on his property.			
Rainbow Bee-eater [20+]	Narrandera Common	21/01/16	Warrick Bradney
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Nericon township	01/02/16	Neil Palframan
This is the first time Neil has seen them at Nericon despite being common elsewhere in Griffith.			
Brown Goshawk [juv]	Cutler Ave, Griffith	04/02/16	Virginia Tarr
Blue-faced Honeyeater [4]	Cutler Ave, Griffith	04/02/16	Virginia Tarr
Hoary-headed Grebe [56]	Fivebough Settling Ponds	04/02/16	Keith Hutton
Plumed Whistling-duck [12]	Fivebough Settling Ponds	04/02/16	Keith Hutton

Water is now in the large ponds at Fivebough and should remain so from now on according to the Leeton Shire engineer.

Australasian Bittern [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/02/16	Nella Smith
Turquoise Parrot [2males]	Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest	10/02/16	Nella Smith
Mulga Parrot [10+]	Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest	10/02/16	Nella Smith
Grey Shrike-Thrush	(garden) Melbourne Ave, Narrandera	10/02/16	Betty Bradney
Grey-crowned Babbler [10]	Narrandera Common	10/02/16	Warrick Bradney
Magpie Goose [6+]	Campbell's Swamp, Griffith	10/02/16	Neil Palframan
Plumed Whistling-duck [20+]	Campbell's Swamp, Griffith	10/02/16	Neil Palframan
Blue-billed Duck [male]	Campbell's Swamp, Griffith	10/02/16	Nella Smith
Brown Honeyeater [2]	Petersham Rd, Leeton	10/02/16 & 1/03/16	Penny Williams
Singing Honeyeater [2]	Petersham Rd, Leeton	02/03/16	Penny Williams

The honeyeaters have been coming into Penny and Phil's birdbath – see photos page 4.

Turquoise Parrot [yellow]	Narrandera Wetlands	11/02/16	Nella Smith
The bird, an obvious escapee, was a yellow mutation of the Turquoise Parrot- very much an aviary species.			
Sacred Kingfisher [Ad and juv]	Gordon Ave, Griffith	13/02/16	June Sell
Freckled Duck [4]	Campbell's Swamp, Griffith	17/02/16	Neil Palframan
Restless Flycatcher [2]	Rankins Springs Dam 1	19/02/16	Virginia Tarr
Brown Treecreeper [2]	Rankins Springs Dam 1	19/02/16	Virginia Tarr
Common Bronzewing [6]	Rankins Springs Dam 1	19/02/16	Virginia Tarr
Turquoise Parrot [1]	Rankins Springs Dam 2	20/02/16	Virginia Tarr
Australasian Grebe [1]	Rankins Springs Dam 2	20/02/16	Virginia Tarr
Red Wattlebird [3]	Cutler Ave, Griffith	22/02/16	Virginia Tarr
Glossy Black Cockatoo [1M 1F]	Wattle Dam Binya State Forest	27/02/16	Sue Chittick-Dalton
This is the first time Sue has seen these birds at Wattle Dam.			
Turquoise Parrot [6]	Wattle Dam Binya State Forest	27/02/16	MFN Outing
Western Brown Snake	Whitton Stock Route Rd – Mt Elliot	28/02/16	Neil Palframan

Some interesting sightings from Manyana on the south coast:

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Wonga Pigeon	Ground Parrot
White-cheeked Honeyeater	Double-banded Plover	Hooded Plover
Terek Sandpiper	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Sanderling

The **Southern Bell Frog** has turned up for the first time in 40 years at Yarradda Lagoon in Darlington Point. We suspect they have returned to the area as the lagoon's vegetation is thriving! Post from the National Parks and Wildlife Facebook page.



**** COMING EVENTS ****

- 10 March Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.
Topic: Our week around Portland by Eric & Rowena Whiting
Kerri Keely Local Landcare Coordinator (Irrigation) will give a presentation on her new role
Contact: Penny Williams 6953 3524
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com
- 12 March Saturday** **Glossy Black Cockatoo Count**
Participants will be allotted a dam to go to at various properties in the Brobenah and Narrandera hills and Binya Forest. Timing will be from 6pm until the birds come in (or not) - say by 7.30pm. Bring a chair and water.
Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210
- 25 – 28 March Easter** **Currently no outing or other activity is planned. The SunRice Festival is on in Leeton.**
- 6 April Wednesday** **Copy for the April newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 14 April 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
- 16 or 17 April -** **Wild Pollinator Count** is over the week of the 10 to 17 April
An opportunity to participate in your local environment. Just spend 10 minutes watching any flowering plant and note the insects which land on it. Specific names are not required just general like ant, moth, hover, fly etc, Submit your observations. See last December' newsletter for an article by Eric Whiting. Details can be found at
<http://wildpollinatorcount.com/count-pollinators/>
- Other events**
- 17 – 20 March** **John O'Brien Festival at Narrandera**
22nd year of the "Australian Festival of Word and Song"
Poetry, writing, street parade, street markets, busking, bush dance, bush poetry.
6th NHMA National Tractor Week at the showgrounds
For program of events go to www.johnobrien.org.au
- 31 March (entries due)** **Leeton Shire Photography Competition**
A picture is worth a thousand words...or maybe \$300!
Details and entry form can be found on the Shire's web site www.leeton.nsw.gov.au
- 9 – 10 April** **Photo Twitch**
An event where participants are invited to spend any eight-hour period over the weekend to venture out to photograph as many species as possible.
Organised by the Hunter Bird Observers – contact is Robert McDonald 4964 1389.
- 1 – 10 October** **Australian Naturalists Network** Get-together for 2016 will be held in at Woodman Point Recreation Camp, Western Australia. Details from Penny Williams
murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com