

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



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Objectives

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



Community tree planting at Fivebough Wetlands by Penny Williams

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CONTRIBUTIONS

For the September issue by
Monday 4 September

To Rowena Whiting

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*Outings this month to
Taleeban Mining Reserve
and
Cocoparra National Park*

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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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Planting Trees at Fivebough Wetlands

The National Tree Day event held at Fivebough Wetlands on Sunday 30th July was a fantastic morning, thanks to over 50 enthusiastic volunteers who braved the early start to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty planting 800 trees at the site.

Elijah Ingram gave a wonderful welcome to the site, which looked stunning in the fresh morning air. The weather behaved very well for the event, with enough sun peeking through the cloud cover to warrant hats and sunscreen and the wind politely staying away until the morning wrapped up at 11am.

Attendees made the effort to travel from Griffith, Narrandera and even Wellington however the majority of tree planters were local community members, enthusiastic to make a difference in their backyard and assist in the improvement of the wetlands reserve for the benefit of Leeton. The green-thumbs ranged from 1 to 72 years old, all actively contributing in their capacity.

The involvement of several Leeton community organisations – Lions Club, C.W.A. and Rural Fire Service (Fivebough Brigade) showed how important Fivebough Wetlands and the local natural ecosystems are to the area and ensured that all were well fed and watered (including the trees!). The support and presence of Murrumbidgee Landcare and Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists was much appreciated, as always.

The success of the event is thanks to Greening Australia and Riverina Local Land Services who provided funding, materials and expertise to support NSW Department of Industry – Lands & Forestry, in coordinating the day.

With some follow up weed control and watering, hopefully the trees planted will grow to be a wonderful, ecologically productive legacy of National Tree Day 2017 and all the amazing volunteers who worked hard made it happen.

Photos of the day and more information about Fivebough Wetlands are available on the Facebook page and website (fiveboughwetlands.org.au)

Bec Byrne - Natural Resource Management Project Officer



Photos by Penny Williams

A few additions to Bec's report....

The area where the plantings took place was on the western side; adjacent to the track (extension of Gibbs Road). It is accessible from the Petersham Road entrance by turning left after crossing the foot bridge and walking a short distance along this track. The species planted were River Red Gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, Black Box *E. largiflorens*, Grey Box *E. microcarpa*, Bimble Box *E. populnea*, River Cooba *Acacia stenophylla* and Belah *Casuarina cristata*. Some grasses will also be planted nearby. The Field Naturalists had a table displaying the Club banner and various leaflets, our Flora book and newsletters. There was quite a bit of interest and the members there (Eric, Rowena, Penny & Alan) were able to talk with many of the participants; some families with young children.



Bec did a wonderful job with her helpers she has mentioned. We were certainly well fed and with the recent rain we hope the trees are off to a good start.

Rowena Whiting

Spiders

At the last meeting, Andrew produced a spider (dead!) that he had found on his property and asked for an identification. As none of us have any expertise in spiders, I took it home to photograph, sending the images away for help.

It is a pity we do not have any real knowledge of spiders as they are a major part of our environment. Of course as most of them are rather secretive in habit either hiding away especially during the day or just not being obtrusive. The only ones we normally see are the common house or garden ones. In the bush it's normally only the bushwalkers terror, the Golden Orb Spider.

Most people would call anything with eight legs a spider, six legs is an insect, but Harvestmen, Mites and Lice also have eight legs. The difference is in the body shape. The latter three have their heads, thorax and abdomen as one unit. Spiders have the abdomen separated by a waist. (Insects have all three parts clearly separated.) Scorpions also have four pairs of walking legs but like crabs have a front pair of limbs modified as claws not for walking. Scorpions also differ in that their abdomens are clearly segmented.

It is thought that spiders evolved from primitive sorts of scorpion-like arthropods when they first began to invade dry land around 400 million years ago in the Silurian period. It seems from the fossil record wingless insects followed 20 million years later in the early Devonian.

Spiders also differ from insects in having simple eyes not compound ones. Usually there are eight or sometimes six unless more pairs are lost by



'Andrew's' spider above
Photo by Eric Whiting



adaption like the extreme case of cave spiders. The lens in these simple eyes cannot be accommodated like ours and are mostly of short focal length. Jumping spiders often have eyes of differing focal length and are also slightly moveable. They have to see where they are going to jump.

There are two main divisions in spiders. The smaller group have their fangs in a vertical position. They bite by a downward lunge. This group contains the Funnel-web and Trap-door Spiders.

The fangs of the larger division move in a pincer-like horizontal motion. This makes them harder to bite large animals like us but they are still poisonous (the Red-Back Spider is one of them). Spiders are always carnivorous, mostly insectivorous, and use poison to kill their prey. Digestive enzymes are also injected to break down and liquefy their food so it can be sucked into the spider. To some extent harder parts can be chewed by simple mouth parts. The hard chitinous exoskeletons of insects are rather indigestible and not worth the effort of being eaten.



Golden Orb Spider
Photo by Eric Whiting

The striking achievement of spiders is the production and use of silk. They are not the only animals to produce silk, many insects do. It is the variety and uses of the silk by spiders that is outstanding. Silk is an amazing substance, or to be correct a number of allied substances each with its own set of properties. Overall they are one of the strongest and most elastic substances found in nature.

Silk is secreted in several glands in the lower part of the abdomen of spiders. Essentially it is made from waste products – now there is a lesson for recyclers. It is secreted as a viscous fluid and is passed as such to the two or four or sometimes more spinnerets situated under the tail of the abdomen. Silk does not solidify by being in contact with the air or by any sort of chemical action. It has to be drawn from the spinnerets the action realigning the molecules very much like spinning yarn from wool. Each spinneret has multiple pores each one issuing its own type of silk. Any one spider can produce several types of silk at will depending on its ultimate use.

The prime use of silk and probably its origin is to make a cocoon to encase the mass of eggs laid by the female. There is clearly

two lines of development of webs starting from a coating of the nest layer. One line leads to sheet webs where the spider is usually on top of the web. The other line leads to the geometrically perfect orb webs where the spider

is usually found on the underside or lower side of the web. Developments from the orb web have led to the net-casting spiders.

Another use of silk is the safety line where a spider can drop suddenly if threatened but still in a controlled way like an abseiler. It also means the spider can easily return when the danger has passed. Spiderlings also use a single long line of silk as a parachute to float them away for dispersal.

Silk lines are also used as communication lines and guidelines. Hunting spiders leave a trail of silk to follow back to their hidey-hole.

So spiders are not the animals to be feared in the bush, though some should be handled with caution, but as another branch of the fascinating world of invertebrates. Start by taking a closer look at the ones you can find in your garden or hiding in the bushes close to where you park the car for a nature ramble.

Eric Whiting

After reading the trip report of the Whroo weekend in June issue Kathy Mathews sent me this photo of a Spiny Spider



Orchids found within 100 km radius of Narrandera

Pterostylis- The Greenhoods

Greenhoods take their common names from the hooded flower which is usually in shades of green. The dorsal sepals and petals are joined to form the hood and the lateral sepals are fused to form a single unit.

Pterostylis orchids are masters of deception for pollinators. Attracted from far away by the orchid's female-mimicking smell, the male gnat lands on the flower and attempts to copulate with the labellum. But he is in for a shock. His movements cause the labellum to swing up like a drawbridge, shutting it in the chamber.

The fungus gnat now tries to squeeze his way out. On its way, the gnat smears its load of pollen onto the orchid's stigma, and then picks up a new parcel of pollen. To ensure that the orchid doesn't get pollinated with its own pollen, the gnat's prison is precisely shaped and lined with angled bristles, so the insect can only move in one direction through a hole in the top of the hood.

Species I have found:

Pterostylis laxa Antelope greenhood - Flowering: April-June

This is **usually a single dark green and slender flower with some white striping and brownish tones**. Lateral sepals are long and often curved or coiled. This is a distinctive species with a slender flower and back coiled lateral sepals which remind you of an antelope. I have seen these at The Rock and at Narrandera.



Pterostylis revoluta - Flowering: April to July Autumn Greenhood

Flowers are relatively large to 45mm long, pale green and white with brown to sometimes reddish brown toning. Flower is tipped forward, the pointed labellum protruding prominently when in the set position. Flowering stem is up to 25cm tall, often shorter. Found in grassy open forest, sometimes in bare, gravelly or sandy well drained locations. It is widespread but not common. I have seen it in the Cocoparras and at The Rock NR.

Pterostylis striata - Flowering March to August Striped Greenhood

The flowers (20cm long) are distinctly green and white striped and brownish towards the apex, tips of the upright lateral sepals are curled forward, the labellum is oblong lanceolate and is short and barely visible. The dorsal sepal has a filiform point about 5mm long. The flower stem is up to 25cm which has several pointed stem leaves along it. **The edges of rosette leaves tend to be frilly.**



Pterostylis nutans - Flowering July to October Nodding Greenhood.

The plant has a rosette of 3-6 oval shaped leaves that grow to a length of 9cm at the base. The green hooded flowers droop downwards and are about 2.5cm long and produced on a stem about 30 cm tall. It grows in damp protected areas in eucalyptus forests and woodlands. I know of only one location at The Rock NR

Pterostylis robusta Sharp-leaf Greenhood - Flowering: April to August.

Flowers are 30mm -35mm long, erect, green and white with red-brown to brown suffusions and stripes. They are not as striped as *P. striata*. The dorsal sepal has a filiform point 3–6 mm long. Petal margins are not flared. Lateral sepals tightly embrace the galea; the sinus is flat with a shallow central notch, protruding in a shallow curve when viewed from the side. Rosette leaves are petiolate.

The labellum is oblong-lanceolate, the tip just visible from the sinus in the set position. *P. robusta* is taller and has a larger flower than the *P. striata* and flowers a bit later. This orchid is found at Galore Hill and The Rock. It has been recorded at Mt Binya and Mt Brogdon.



Pterostylis rubescens- Red-tip Greenhood
Flowering May to July

This orchid is on a wiry stem 15-30cm tall with 3-6 closely sheathing stem leaves. There are usually 5-15 ovate rosette leaves which are 0-6 to 2.5cm long and are petiolate and bluish green but not usually present when flowering. **Flowering plants have up to 10 flowers, tiny to 10mm long, green and white striped with reddish brown to brown colouring about the apex. Flowers point inwardly towards the stem.** I have seen them at Spring Hill, Bogolong and The Rock.

Pterostylis mutica Midget Greenhood Flowers July to September

Has 4-20 small green flowers, each about 1 cm long. The upper part of the flower forms a small blunt hood and the lower sepals form a shallow pouch. The small green lip has a prominent green recurved appendage visible when the labellum is set. The basal rosette of 5-12 crowded ovate green leaves can sometimes be withered by the time the flowers emerge. The central stem can be 35cm high and has several stem hugging sheaths. Occurs in open woodland and grassy forests.



Pterostylis nana Dwarf Greenhood
Flowering April to August

Grows to 20 cm. It is a small hood-like green and white-striped flower with antennae-looking sepals. Egg-shaped leaves are green, smooth and grow in a cluster. It grows in colonies and is widespread and common in areas of good vegetation.

Pterostylis cycnocephala Swan Greenhood Flowering August to October

This is a miniature sized, terrestrial orchid with a 6 to 12, ground hugging elliptical, dark green, marginally flat leaves that blooms on a terminal, erect, 4" [10 cm] tall, racemose inflorescence with several [2 to 20] flowers. **It is more robust than *P. mutica* and has an inverted T shaped labellum tip.** I have seen it at Gillenbah and Buckingham State forests. It grows in grassland, grassy forest and woodland in well drained soils.



Nella Smith

SPOTTED AND SPOTLESS CRAKES

How lucky the Tenisons were to see those two Crakes at Fivebough Wetlands as they are quite secretive, especially the **SPOTLESS *Porzana tubensis*** which rarely feeds in the open, preferring dense cover of reeds and other foliage of streams and swamps searching for insects and vegetable matter. The nest is of dried grass stalks built in a low grass tussock where she lays 4-5 (and sometime more) creamy-brown tan-flecked eggs.

These birds can be found east and south-east Australia, south-eastern West Australia, Tasmania, Tonga, New Zealand and Chatham Islands.

Other names: Leaden Crake, Little swamphen, Putoto.

Size is 17-20cm. Dark slate-grey head, chin and underparts, rest of upperparts chocolate brown, barred undertail and legs red. Voice: a selection of sounds including a sharp kirrik, blop-blop-blop similar to a motorbike starting up, bubbling and trilling whistling.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Ponzana fluminia*, is slightly bigger than the Spotless, and slightly less secretive, however very cautious and skittish, dashing for cover if it knows it is being observed. It too frequents the streams and swamps and diet, nesting and habitat is similar, but eggs are stone-brown, spotted and blotched purplish-brown and grey.



Spotless Crake – Phil Tenison
Spotted Crake Kathy Tenison (below)
Spotted Crake Phil Tenison (bottom)



These birds are found eastern and south-eastern Australia, southern South Australia, south-western Australia and Tasmania.

Other name: Australian Spotted Crake.

Size is 19-22cm. Crown, neck and upperparts dark olive-brown streaked with black with white spots. Face and chest: pale slate-grey, belly black striped with white, undertail white. The voice is a selection of whirring, kirrik, kirrik, kirrik, and a descending chack-ak-ak-ak.

Sue Chittick-Dalton

Amendment - It appears we got over excited and included a non-existent bird, Grey Woodswallow, on the bird list at Falcon Falls / Mt Caley walk in the June issue. Thanks for pointing that out, Max.

Mt Isa and Back Again in search of Ticks

Trip to Mt Isa and Back Again in search of Ticks with my sister

First stop was Round Hill for Red-lored Whistler. Plenty of Shy Heathwren, Southern Scrub Robin but no Red lored Whistler. Spotted Bowerbirds everywhere.

Next stop Gundabooka National Park. Spotted Bowerbirds everywhere all on the ground



Third stop Bowra,- An Australian Conservancy Reserve. Orange Chats, Bourke's Parrots and Major Mitchells Cockatoos, Halls Babbler and Spotted Bowerbirds.

Fourth Stop- Noccundra for Grey Grasswren in the lignum. Too dry- he left 5 years ago

Fifth Stop Eromanga for the fossil facility. Excellent- We should have known that the inland sea filled with sediment together with the bones of megafauna and dinosaurs.

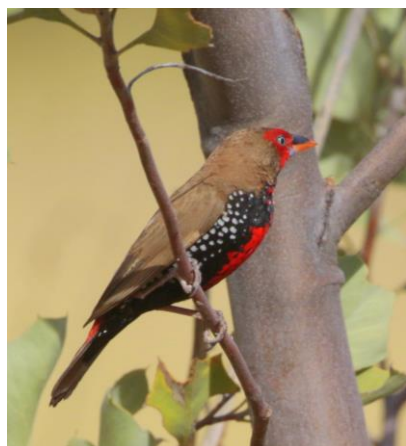
Next decent stop was Bladensburg National Park near Winton. Interestingly some of the plant species were the same as the Great Victoria Desert



Boulia next, with a pair of broilgas dancing in the main street.

Mt Isa searching for Carpentarian and Kulkadon Grasswren. We didn't find them either.

However some interesting birds were seen at the water reservoir – Pratincole, Orange Chat and flocks of Painted Finch out where the Carpentarian Grasswren might have been. Mt Isa is an interesting landscape and the remains of the Mary



Kathleen uranium mine and township can be seen.

Central West Queensland is worth a visit and it doesn't feel as remote as it used to as there are more bitumen roads.

Nella Smith



Clockwise from top: Bowra Wetland, landscape near Middleton, Mary Kathleen mine, Painted Finch

What are those Monkeys in the Gum Trees ?

Whilst camping at Alligator Creek near Townsville in Queensland we were intrigued by what you would swear were monkeys in the trees. On the first night just after last light was the first time that we heard them and then again just before sun up the next morning. Whilst sitting having breakfast on that first morning we heard it again so I had to go and investigate and to my surprise what I found was that the noise was being made by a Kookaburra. It definitely wasn't the Laughing Kookaburra that I had grown up with so a quick look in the bird book identified it as a **Blue Winged Kookaburra**.

The Description from "Pizzey and Knight" is "Distinguished from Laughing Kookaburra by Streaked white head 'fishy' white eye; blue wings uniform pale blue rump; tail deep blue (male); red-brown barred darker (female)".

The voice is described as, "appalling; a guttural 'klock klock', developing into a cacophony of mechanical squawks, screeches in chorus."



Or From "Simpson and Day "Harsh crackling scream"

or From me a troupe of monkeys that if you listen to very hard you can just make out parts of the Laughing Kookaburra's call

There were at least three pairs living around the camping area and we also saw a Laughing Kookaburra's around camp. Showing that there is shared habitat and overlapping distribution between the two.

The Blue winged Kookaburra's habitat is woodlands, open forest and paperbark swamps across northern Australia south to around Brisbane in the east and the equivalent latitude in the west.

The reason for the title of this article is that we were camping with our middle son who is working up there and he was telling us that the Phillipino's that he works with think that they are monkeys and not birds.

Graham Russell

Papua New Guinea trip 10-16 July 2017

PART 1: Port Moresby and Varirata National Park

Johanna Botman, Neil Palframan and myself joined 7 members of the Cairns Bird Group on the Papua New Guinea trip organised by Andy Anderson. This was his 25th trip to PNG so he should know what travelling to that country is all about, not to mention the birds we expected to see.

The first 3 nights were spent in Moresby staying at a very comfortable (and safe) hotel and the days we spent birdwatching around the lowland areas. The next 3 nights (Part 2 of this report) were spent at Kumul Lodge which was an hours drive out of Mount Hagen at an altitude well over 2000m.



Raggiana Bird of Paradise - Johanna Botman
"looks too good not to eat" Bird of Paradise
Black Forest Cake – Neil Palframan

The main reason for my going was to see what our nearest neighbour was like and to hopefully see one of their most spectacular Birds of Paradise that live there. My quest was for the **Raggiana Bird of Paradise** – the one featured on the PNG flag. I was assured by Andy that it would be seen on the first afternoon's birding! I was a little sceptical about this claim but, true to his word, we saw 6 males and a couple of female birds at the display tree in the Varirata National Park, an hour's drive out of Moresby.

But I am jumping ahead of myself – more of that later.

The group flew out of Cairns at 7am on the Monday morning via Air New Guinea's Fokker F100. The flight was less than 90 minutes and getting through customs at the airport in Moresby was easy including a free visa! From the airport we started our list of new species with **Singing Starling** and **Pied Chat** on the fence just outside the terminal building.

The International Terminal is heavily protected and the general public are prevented from coming close to the building obviously

with good reason. The PNG authorities don't want to give the wrong impression too soon and so maintained a high degree of security in and around the airport buildings.



Once outside the airport precinct reality struck and I realised to my horror that I was back in a Third World Country again. I knew it would be different but I wasn't prepared for such a shock. I thought I was back in Africa! I had been to Thursday Island and had visions of PNG being similar, but not so. It was littered with garbage and plastic bags everywhere you looked. Not only that, all the garbage was piled into heaps and burnt everywhere with such a stench that your nostrils only cleared once you were away from the smoke. Enough said about such a negative aspect to seeing a culture I had so often read about and seen

many times on TV. The best part of such a cultural shock is that after 24 hours in such an environment you tend to accept it and take no notice of what shocked you on first seeing the state that the vast majority lived in. After that you just looked at the people and what they did to survive and felt pretty much a voyeur in the place.

Most of the birds we saw at the beginning were the same as we see here – egrets, ducks, Bee-eaters and White-breasted Woodswallows - that's where they disappear to for our Winter.

In the afternoon we made the mountainous drive up to Varirata National Park about an hour out of Moresby but up 800m. The scenery was quite spectacular with deep valleys and volcanic rims of solid basalt. Once in the park, we drove straight to the spot where the **Raggiana Birds of Paradise** display and to our collective amazement that is exactly what they did – at least 6 males at any one time. When they had finished they would fly off and preen until a female bird arrived and the show recommenced in earnest with each male competing for her attention. It was a sight I had hoped to see but didn't quite expect to see it so soon and so close to us. From the photo you can see that the display plumes are part of the underwing and trail behind the bird when in flight. They play no part in the bird's general activity.

After such a show, I felt I could go home as that was what I came to see - so anything else was a bonus.

I was also prepared for the fact that New Guinea birds are difficult to see – especially the multi-coloured ones which are hunted relentlessly for their feathers. So they have learnt to be very wary of humans and are difficult to get good clear views of even with a telescope.

Unfortunately our guide was not all that helpful – no bins and no playback equipment. He indicated he heard lots of good birds but most we didn't see so I very much doubt they were really in the bush as he indicated. We did see some significant birds including a number of colourful fruit doves and Imperial Pigeons but very few lorys or lorikeets – plenty of Rainbow Lorikeets everywhere but not much else. One bird the guide did manage to find for us was a male **Emperor Fairywren** – very similar to our **Splendid Wren** but much



Emperor Fairywren

darker and very iridescent even in the gloom of the forest.

The hotel we stayed at in Moresby had an Indian chef so the evening meals were very good. Traffic was pretty chaotic in the city and the roads once outside the main areas were atrocious which made travel very slow until you got well out of the city limits into the countryside. It seems there has been little money spent on maintaining infrastructure since Australia gave up the administration of the place. It appears that the country like most Third World countries is being courted by China with Chinese engineers involved in massive building projects. One wonders what payback deal has been struck to allow them in – I just hope the pristine rainforests will be safe but I doubt it as the whole country is mineral rich. With unemployed at around 78% you can't blame the country selling out to foreign exploitation – just look at what happens here in Australia!

Max O'Sullivan

Photos by Johanna Botman
Max with a fave bird (below)
Pair of Rufous Owls, a treat in Cairns
before we left (left)



MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

Swift Parrot	Temora	01/07/17	Nella Smith
Australian Spotted Crake [8]	Fivebough Wetlands	01/07/17	Keith Hutton
Spotless Crake [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	01/07/17	Keith Hutton
White-bellied Sea-eagle [adult]	Fivebough Wetlands	01/07/17	Keith Hutton
Australian Spotted Crake [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/07/17	Keith Hutton
Spotless Crake [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/07/17	Keith Hutton
Turquoise Parrot [2]	Spring Hill Binya State Forest	09/07/17	Nella Smith
Brolga [2]	Urana Rd via Narrandera	09/07/17	Warwick Bradney
Red Wattlebird [4]	Cutler Ave, Griffith	10/07/17	Virginia Tarr
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater [2]	Cutler Ave, Griffith	10/07/17	Virginia Tarr
Yellow-rumped Thornbill [6]	Cutler Ave, Griffith	10/07/17	Virginia Tarr
Mallee Ringneck [4]	Cutler Ave, Griffith	10/07/17	Virginia Tarr
Blue-faced Honeyeater [2]	Cutler Ave, Griffith	10/07/17	Virginia Tarr
Chestnut Teal	Sturt H'way Galore via Narrandera	11/07/17	Alan Whitehead
Pied Currawong [28]	Fivebough Wetlands	16/07/17	Keith Hutton
European Goldfinch [40+]	Fivebough Wetlands	16/07/17	Keith Hutton
Whiskered Tern [1]	Fivebough Wetlands – first arrival	23/07/17	Keith Hutton
White-bellied Sea-eagle [Imm]	Fivebough Wetlands	23/07/17	Keith Hutton
Red-necked Avocet [79]	Fivebough Wetlands	23/07/17	Keith Hutton
Black-tailed Native-hen [11]	Fivebough Wetlands	23/07/17	Keith Hutton
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [30]	Rankins Springs Rd Lake Cargelligo	25/07/17	Neil Palframan
Southern Boobook	Palla St, Griffith	27/07/17	Virginia Tarr
Plumed Whistling Duck	Dam on Round Hill Rd, Murrumbidgee	29/07/17	Max O'Sullivan
Cockatiel [5]	Evans Smyles Rd	29/07/17	Max O'Sullivan
Hooded Robin [pr]	Evans Smyles Rd	29/07/17	Max O'Sullivan
Diamond Firetail [1]	Evans Smyles Rd	29/07/17	Max O'Sullivan
Southern Whiteface [3]	Evans Smyles Rd	29/07/17	Max O'Sullivan
Nankeen Night Heron [8]	McCaughy Lake Yanco	30/07/17	Max O'Sullivan
Buff-banded Rail	Mirool Creek, Whitton Stock Route Rd	01/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
Baillon's Crake [3]	Campbell's Swamp near the hide	01/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
Freckled Duck [2+]	Campbell's Swamp	01/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
Rufous Songlark	Boree Rd via Leeton - 1 st for season	02/08/17	Max O'Sullivan

Keith's quarterly survey at Fivebough Wetlands on 27 July produced the following bird numbers:

Black Duck [43]	Black Swan [153]	Chestnut Teal [32]
Grey Teal [913]	Australian Wood Duck [52]	Australasian Shoveller [34]
Pink-eared Duck [41]	Australian Spotted Crake [2]	Purple Swamphen [73]
Masked Lapwing [53]	Black-winged Stilt [69]	Red-necked Avocet [167]
Red-kneed Dotterel [62]	Red-capped Plover [27]	Black-fronted Dotterel [16]
DOUBLE-BANDED PLOVER* [3]	Little Pied Cormorant [33]	Black Falcon [1]
White-bellied Sea-eagle [1]	Swamp Harrier [2]	

*These birds are still at the northern end of Fivebough off Gibbs Road and are in near full breeding plumage.

Keith reported that prior to the weekend of 28 and 29th July, Fivebough was in perfect condition for waders with plenty of mud flats exposed by the receding water level. However, on the Friday and Saturday workmen had accidentally left one of the stops open after routine maintenance and water flooded into the swamp inundating the mudflats. As a result of this Keith feels there will be no need for any environmental water inflow to the wetlands for the next 2 years.

Max O'Sullivan

**** COMING EVENTS ****

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions please phone if you intend to come.

- 10 August Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.
Topic: Trip to Iron Range – Max O’Sullivan
Contact: Penny Williams 6953 3524.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 12 August Saturday** **Taleeban Reserve and Weethalle Silo in the afternoon**
Whilst a mining reserve of around 575 ha, 18km east of Rankins Springs, and 4 km south of the Mid-Western highway it is a significant sample of mallee vegetation. Wattles should be starting to flower.
Meet at the Cnr Erigola Rd and Burley Griffin Rd near Binya at 8.30am.
Bring morning tea to carry and lunch back at the cars.
Contact: Penny Williams 6953 3524.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 26 August Saturday** **Cocoparra National Park**
Travelling to Woolshed Flat picnic area and walking up to Eagle Falls (no track for part of the way). Woolshed Falls can be reached along a short track. -
Meet at Yenda Post Office at 8.30am.
Bring morning tea to carry if you are doing the walk. A BBQ lunch is planned with the Narrandera Camera Club at Store Creek – from 1pm (BYO everything) followed by a walk up Store Creek for landscape photography.
Please contact: Eric or Rowena Whiting 6953 2612 if you intend to come.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 4 September Monday** **Copy for the September newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 14 September Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.
Topic: Sri Lanka – Rahula Prerea, a field biologist from Sri Lanka has offered to talk to the club. He is an expert on the Asian Elephants as well as a bird photographer.
Contact: Penny Williams 6953 3524.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 22- 24 September** **Yathong Nature Reserve**
Staying in the shearers’ quarters or camping.
Graham & Dionne are organising the catering, Eric and Nella the walks.
Contact: Graeme or Dione Russell – phone 0428 536 290 (Dione)
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 9 October – Monday onwards - A biodiversity survey at Yathong of the reserve is planned.**
Please contact Nella Smith 6059 1210 if you are interested in participating.
- Other events**
- 31 August Thursday** **Sandhills Management & Rehabilitation Field Day at Oolambeyan National Park**
Contact Nella Smith for more information – phone 6959 1210
- 13-15 October** **South-east Australian Naturalists’ Association Spring Camp**
Little Desert area, Western Victoria. Further information from Penny Williams
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.