

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



September 2017 - Issue #252

Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.

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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



Haviland's Wattle
Acacia havilandiorum
in full flower at
Woolshed Flat,
Cocoparras
National Park
by
Rowena Whiting

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CONTRIBUTIONS

For the October issue by
Wednesday 4 October

To Rowena Whiting

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**Threatened Species Day is
the 7th September**
**Join an outing to Charcoal
Tank Nature Reserve on
9 September**

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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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Welcome to September and another full issue – so much, that I’m afraid I have had to hold over the second part of Max O’Sullivan’s article on his trip to Papua New Guinea. Many local happenings to include. This is the time of year to be out enjoying all the delights that Spring has to offer. See you on one of the walks or at the Yathong campout. Rowena.

DUSKY WOODSWALLOW *Artamus cyanopterus*

On 26 August 2017, Graham Russell photographed a flock of Dusky Woodswallows at Eagle Falls in the Cocoparras. These are nomadic birds and one never knows when or where they will turn up except at breeding time and they will return to the same place each year. The flocks could contain up to one hundred birds. The contact chattering can be heard while they are flying quite high.

There are two populations of Dusky Woodswallows. The “Easterners” range from the Atherton Tablelands in Qld. to Tasmania and South Australia and the “Westerners” confine themselves to the south-west of Western Australia. When the White-browed Woodswallows visit the less arid areas, they will often join up with the Dusky and form large flocks foraging for insects and are the farmer’s friends when plague locusts appear.

The courtship is a silent and romantic affair with the male offering his lady food then one will flutter the wings and fan the rotating tail displaying the white tips. The other will copy the movement and mating begins. Both will make the twig and grass nest and jointly share parental duties. The flock is very defensive and if predators appear during nesting, the very noisy flock will attack en masse .



Dusky Woodswallow - Graham Russell

OTHER NAMES: Bee bird, Jacky Martin, Skimmer, Sordid woodswallow.

Size 180cm.

Sexes similar. Breast, back and head dusky-brown, blue/grey wings with white edge, tail black with white tip.

Sue Chittick-Dalton

A slow walk after a long drive

Well, a relatively long drive – Taleeban Mining Reserve is one of the more distant venues for our day trips, particularly for our Narrandera members. So morning tea was in order as soon as we got to the mining reserve.

Graham, not being a tea or coffee drinker took the time to look around the area where we parked the cars. He was astonished to have a Shy Heath-wren come and check him out by landing in a bush barely two metres away. Of course when he came back and told us about it, we all trooped off to try to see these very secretive birds. Most were fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of two.



The feature of Taleeban in the past has been the presence of Malleefowl. A known mound is on the far side of the big dam, and naturally this was next on the list to check out. Sadly this mound like the rest in the reserve has not been used for several years and is clearly eroding away. It is hard to tell a Mallee Fowl mound from one of the many heaps of mining waste.

Diversions over we set off to walk to the south boundary through the mallee under the guidance of Penny. It soon became obvious that the unusual dryness and overnight frosts of the past two months had led to continued winter dormancy of the vegetation. Bird activity was very subdued and there were little in the way of flowers. One would expect a quick walk there and back, but no – we are Field Naturalists. Plant identification came to the fore.

Mallee generally has a rich flora and add on the fact that at Taleeban the vegetation grades into Ironbark country, in a good season it is easy to compile a list of 70 or 80 species. However as I have already said, this was not a good season. We were not going to be put out though. Many plants have distinctive vegetative parts – leaves, stems, even general shape. Just that it takes longer to put a name on any one plant; usually after much discussion. One plant in particular had us guessing White Cryptandra *Cryptandra leucophracta*. Thus the 1¼ km walk to the southern boundary took 1½ hours! A very slow walk.

The return journey did not take so long as for the most part it paralleled our outward route and so offered very little in the way of anything new. We were also heading back for lunch!

After lunch we took the northward track first to check out the Slender Velvet Bush *Lasiopetalum baueri*. We found a few small bushes. A little further on was the area where current mining is or has recently been taking place. It is always interesting to fossick around the old stuff miners leave lying around. After lifting a few sheets of tin we concluded it was too cold for any lizards to be under them.

Just before we got back to Erigolia we stopped to examine a large wattle bush in full flower by the side of the road. It was a Deanes Wattle *Acacia deanii* but not the usual subspecies that we see around but the subspecies *paucijuga*.

**The Taleeban scrub (above) and Deanes Wattle subspecies *paucijuga* - Penny Williams
One of the many Yellow-plumed Honeyeater we saw – Graham Russell**





**Wheethalle Silo Art Project
Rock Correa Rowena Whiting**

In a break from our usual drive home back through Erigolia, Penny lead most of us further along the Mid-Western Highway to Weethalle. The attraction was the freshly painted silos. All agreed the artwork was top-class. Well worth the extra few kilometres.

Whilst in the area Penny, Nella, Rowena and I continued on along the Highway a bit further to where the road crosses the southern tip of the Mt. Nariah ridge. A Correa is found here that is different to the ones we normally see. It is the Rock Correa *Correa glabra* which according to the Plants of Western New South Wales only grows in a few paces east of a line from Goolgowi to Roto. It did not take us long to find a few bushes fortunately still with the last of this season's flowers.

Eric Whiting

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Brown Quail | Eastern Yellow Robin | Inland Thornbill |
| White-eared Honeyeater | Brown-headed Honeyeater | Common Bronzewing |
| Peaceful Dove | Singing Honeyeater | Welcome Swallow |
| Shy Heathwren | Galah | Yellow-plumed Honeyeater |
| Grey Butcherbird | Little Raven | Grey Shrike-thrush |
| Rufus Whistler | Mallee Ringneck | White-plumed Honeyeater |
| Spiny-checked Honeyeater | Striped Honeyeater | Grey-crowned Babbler |
| Superb Parrot | Spotted Harrier (seen on the way in) | |

A Taste of Yathong

The last time we had a campout at Yathong was in September 2013. On that occasion we recorded a bird list of 84 (includes a few from the drive in/out). The plants in the mallee area we discovered were so varied and interesting that it took all morning with multiple stops to drive the 10 or so kilometres to the western boundary.

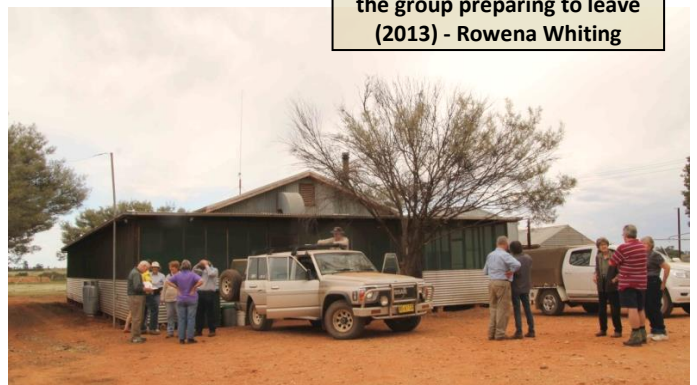
Mallee is in only half of Yathong Nature Reserve. We only made a brief visit onto the Merrimerrriwa Range for the hill country and never went to other vegetation areas in the Reserve.

Yathong Nature Reserve covers a large area (116,984ha), so we can only scratch the surface of what is there. The following year (2014) NPWS conducted a vegetation survey and set up 45 permanent plots. A comprehensive survey of the area would take around 110 plots according to current standards. Even so the NPWS survey increased the plant list from 416 to 561 species. Varieties and subspecies are not included in the list meaning the biodiversity is even greater, and some of the 'varieties' may be separate species in their own right. Around a dozen of the specimens they collected were sent to the taxonomists for evaluation.

So for those that have been to Yathong there is still much more to see and do. For those who have never been there it is a treat for you to experience. Add on MFN's penchant for socialising and feasting at campouts the coming trip is one not to be missed.

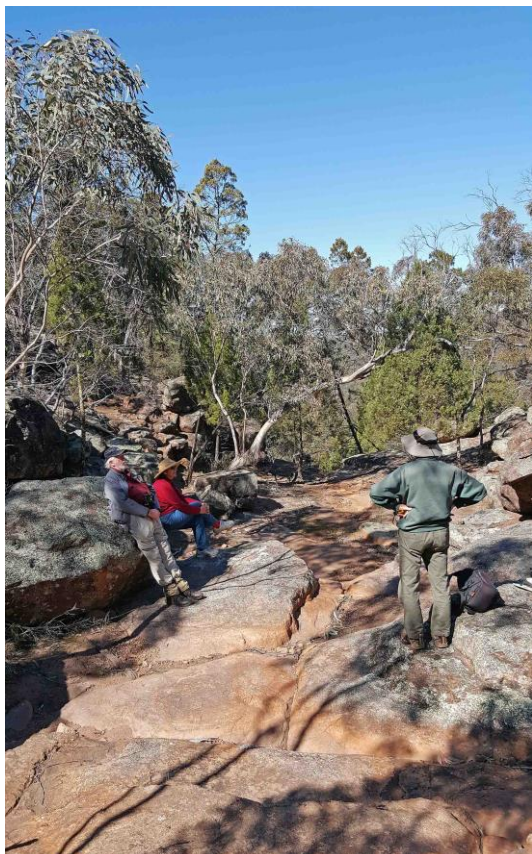
Eric Whiting

**Yathong Shearers' Quarters –
the group preparing to leave
(2013) - Rowena Whiting**



Our walk up to Eagle Falls

26 August 2017



Our Woolshed Flats to Eagle Falls bushwalking excursion in the Copoparra National Park, on Saturday 26th August was a success with a fine fresh sunny day and 7 energetic walkers.

The Hakea Wattles were out in full bloom. The Ironbarks *Eucalyptus sideroxylon* were in flower attracting the birds of all-sorts. Graham Russell captured a Dusky Woodswallow on camera, drinking nectar from a eucalyptus flower.

We weaved through the trees of White Cypress Pines, Hill Tea-trees, Heath Myrtle, an occasional Grevillea bush and Hedge Wattle, following the GPS that Eric had set up. We were careful not to step on the Blue Caladenia Orchids that were scattered all along the ridge. The Cranberry Heath was surviving the dry conditions. The Mulga ferns were surviving in small patches and Rowena found the Blanket fern tucked in a rock crevice at the falls.

We arrived to the Eagle falls to find that it was bone dry, except for a small isolated pool of water for the birds and animals to drink from. We rested by having a late morning tea and admiring



the distant scenery and the rocks around us, whilst listening to Eric's interesting account of the geological history of the area. We watched and listened to the birds flying by adding them to our list, (see below).

The way back was easier, avoiding a steep section through rocks, though we needed to be careful going through the pines with their many dead small limbs reaching out ready to scratch or take our hats off!



We decided to move onto Store Creek to join with the Narrandera Camera Club. It was a relaxing time of exchanging experiences and many more birds to observe. I'm sure that there were a greater number of birds there than there are on the list due to there not being an experienced birdo with us.



Some of the group at Eagle Falls
– Virginia Tarr
Blue Caladenia, Blanket Fern,
Hedge Wattle Rowena Whiting

We soaked up the sun's rays until the tree shadows and time forced us to move on, and blessing the wonderful day we had. Thankyou all.

Virginia Tarr.

Bird List – Graham & Virginia

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
Dusky Woodswallow
Brown Treecreeper
Willy Wagtail
Apostle bird
Yellow Thornbill
Peaceful Dove

Jacky Winter
White winged Chough
Silver eyes
White-plumed Honeyeater
Rufous Whistler
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill
Black Honeyeater

Mallee Ringneck
White-browed Babbler
Wedge-tailed Eagle
Australian Raven
Emu
Masked Woodswallow
Painted Honeyeater

Iron Range Report

On 1 July, I left Cairns along with a couple from Adelaide and our driver/guide Jun Matsui from Cassowary Tours. Our itinerary was to drive as far as Musgrave Roadhouse for the first 2 nights in order to look for the endangered **Golden-shouldered Parrot** that only exists in a very restricted area in the savanna grasslands around Artemis Station just to the south of Musgrave. Another attraction was to locate the nesting site of the very rare **Red Goshawk** in Lakefield National Park.



Both birds were eventually located – the goshawks were easy but the parrots took several attempts before we came onto a dozen or so in a tree beside the road. It was a special privilege to actually witness the Red Goshawks mating and afterwards watching the female gathering nesting material to complete her nest.



Birds seen over these three days included **Black-backed Butcherbird, Silver-crowned Friarbird, Star Finch, Black-throated Finch, Masked Finch, Red-browed Pardalote** and **Grass Owl**.

The road to Iron Range veers off the main Cape York Road north of Coen – this road continues to Bamaga at the tip of the cape and another branches west to Weipa. We were headed for Portland Roads which is the end of the road through the Iron Range National Park.

Portland Roads township consists of about 20 houses perched on the steep rain forest covered hills and has a permanent population of around 20 people! The nearest town is Lockhart River about 50kms away where there is an airport and a supply ship comes in weekly to deliver goods to the local community.

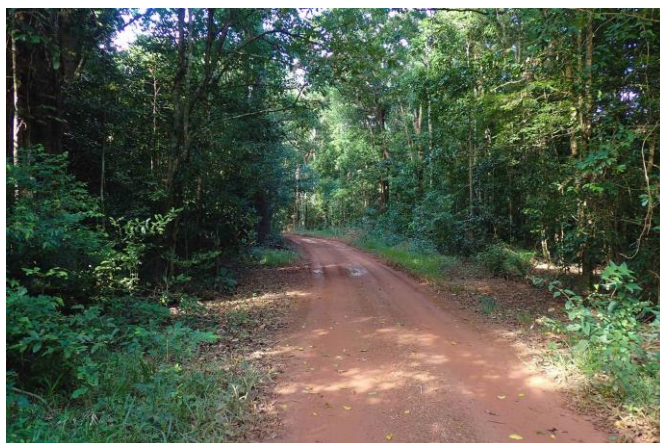
The first bird seen on arrival was the beautiful **Palm Cockatoo** that flew in just after we put our bags in our rooms so that was a good start to the next 4 days birding in the area. Jun, our guide, had an incredible ear for picking up bird calls as he was driving along the road.

He would have his window down just a fraction but would stop suddenly and announce a particular bird was calling from inside the forest. Being hearing challenged at the best of times but without hearing aids for the whole trip, there was no way I could pick-up any calls as subtle as a **White-faced Robin** or **Yellow-billed Kingfisher!**



The program for each day was basically the same – up for an early breakfast and then off until mid-afternoon with a packed lunch birding along the roads or along the beach at Chili Beach for sea birds. It was a good experience and one that I enjoyed as there would have been no way I could have found most of the birds without Jun's knowledge and hearing ability.

The roads in those parts whilst rough in parts are still accessible by 4WDs and even 2 wheel drives in the dry. Most campers were in off-road camper trailers but there were quite a few off-road vans there as well so it is now a very accessible place to most (adventurous) types. Again, to get onto the birds without an expert guide would take time and a great deal of patience not to mention doing lots of planning beforehand to find the best spots to locate the birds you wanted to see.





The main purpose of going into such a remote area is to see the birds that are endemic to Iron Range and occur virtually nowhere else south of there. Unfortunately, mid-winter or middle of the dry season is not the best time to go as so many of the birds have moved north to New Guinea and only return in late October so we missed a number of target birds like **Black-winged Monarch** and **Red-bellied Pitta**.

However, we did get most of the local endemics like **Red-cheeked Parrot**, **Eclectus Parrot** (male only), **Magnificent Riflebird**, **Trumpet Manucode**, **Frill-necked Monarch**, **Tropical Scrubwren**, **Northern Scrub-Robin**, **White-streaked** and **Tawny-breasted Honeyeaters**, **Fawn-breasted Bowerbird** and the newly classified **Black-eared Catbird**.

The trip ended at Lockhart River airport where we caught a plane back to Cairns but not before a departing look at a soaring **Black-breasted Buzzard** circling the plane as we were boarding – a fitting end to an excellent week.

Max O'Sullivan

Photos: **Golden-shouldered Parrots**, **Iron Range National Park**, **Red Goshawk**, **Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo**

[Those at the August meeting enjoyed hearing Max talk about his trip Ed]

Experiencing a Field Day at Oolambeyan National Park

On Thursday 31st August at the Oolambeyan homestead, 21 people gathered to learn about the Sandhill Pine Woodland restoration work in progress within the boundaries of the national park. These woodlands generally extend from west of Narrandera through to Hay, north of Narrandera to Wumbulgal where sandhills and light textured soils occur. The work is being undertaken by Greening Australia and funded by the current government 20 Million Trees Project, which thankfully includes shrubs. The majority of the attendees were from Local Land Services offices in Hay, Coleambally Narrandera, Leeton and Griffith as well as the ranger from NPWS Griffith, three local landowners, two MFN members and the Greening Australia officer in charge of the restoration work.

Sandhill Pine Woodlands are dominated by *Callitris glaucophylla*, which in the location of Oolambeyan have become degraded by past cutting of the pines for timber, overgrazing by sheep and rabbit infestation. Currently, overgrazing by a vast kangaroo population, rabbits and feral plant infestations are continuing the degradation that is being addressed by planting locally native trees and shrubs of the Sandhill plant community in fenced areas to increase their chance of survival.

The Field Day information included explanations of the techniques used for planting tube stock for some species and seeds for others in a manner suited to the arid conditions forecast for the season ahead. Both types of planting were done in early winter within steeply graded furrows that will trap rainfall and offer some protection for seedlings. Sowing seeds is far less costly and labour intensive than planting tube stock, but is only effective with seeds that have longevity due to the likelihood of long dry periods.

Species that were planted as tube stock, ie shorter viability, included White Cypress Pine *Callitris glaucophylla*, Sweet

Oolambeyan tube planting and seeder machine – Nella Smith



Bursaria *Bursaria spinosa* and Buloke *Casuarina luehmannii*. Needlewood *Hakea leucoptera* was also planted as tube stock because, although the seed has longevity, it is not commercially available in the quantities necessary for direct seeding. Direct seeding varieties included Hopbush *Dodonaea viscosa*, Bladder Saltbush *Atriplex vesicaria* and Spiny Saltbush *Rhagodia spinescens*. On inspecting the furrows, we saw that some seeds had sprouted and the tube stock on the whole were in good condition. There was much discussion about the vulnerability of all the seedlings without the prospect of water during the summer, but no definite plan of action was decided on the day.

In observing the fenced areas more broadly, we could compare the height and range of native grasses within as far superior than those struggling to survive over grazing by kangaroos and rabbits outside the fences. This provided evidence that the native grasses could compete with invasive species given longer growing periods, ie fewer grazers.

Martin Driver, a local landowner, author and activist for vegetation restoration, was very informative to the group on his experience in the area over a long period of time. He emphasised over and over again the necessity for persisting with the numbers game in planting and direct seeding massive quantities of locally native species to out compete invasive plants. Depending on seasonal conditions, mass plantings may need to be repeated to build the numbers of seed bearing survivors that will eventually repopulate degraded plant communities such as the Sandhills of the Southern Riverina. He spoke more broadly than about Oolambeyan, particularly of the importance of educating local landowners in restorative practices.

Other information demonstrated was for rabbit warren inhalation and destruction by various methods, emphasising the importance of reducing the population by 95% to gain a lasting impact. A demonstration of a machine to cut and spray African Boxthorn was impressive, giving a practical innovation in tackling a serious invasive species in that landscape.

Following the Field Day, Nella Smith and I used our learning to investigate a remnant Sandhill Pine Woodland at the Calorafield Sandhill on the Stock Route north of Whitton.

Margaret Strong

Fivebough Happenings

Fivebough hosted 120 Year 7 school kids from St Francis on Thursday 24th August, for an environmental/cultural field excursion. Many many thanks go to Max O'Sullivan, Penny and Phillip Williams for attending the day to inspire and educate the kids about the natural value of the wetlands and to Jimmy Ingram for sharing his wonderful knowledge of culture and great respect for the site as only Jimmy can do. {see separate article by Penny Ed}

In project news, the Work for the Dole Program is set to wind up at the end of September, having achieved some really amazing objectives. Visitors would all agree that the Budyaan Baamirra Picnic Area, Petersham Road Carpark and Wiradjuri Walk all look remarkably better and well-loved for having hosted the project. Given the amazing success of the 2017 project, plans are underway to create a second WFD program at Fivebough and Hooey's Road Lookout in 2018.

The National Landcare Grant project running simultaneously at Fivebough & Tuckerbil sites has also produced some incredible results ecologically so far, with extensive weed control and direct seeding of 8km of native shrubs and trees in the eastern extent of Fivebough (near Freckled Duck Shelter). Further regeneration works are scheduled to occur opposite the Budyaan Baamirra Picnic Area, with removal of existing weed mass and sowing of native grasses within the 2ha area.



Kids heading home after Fivebough visit.



New Wiradjuri Walk entrance and track.

Recreationally, the new Fivebough Brochure is nearing finalisation to provide visitors with a professional guide to the wetlands site. Additionally bird, wildlife and vegetation identification signage is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. The newly installed visitor's book has so far attested to the improved value of Fivebough to the public.

A second National Landcare Grant project, provided by Local Land Services, will also be running in 2018, supporting ongoing ecological works at both Fivebough & Tuckerbil and improvement of amenities at Fivebough.

Bec Byrne

Natural Resource Management Project Officer Dept of Industry



Upgraded Petersham Road Carpark.

MFN members help out at the St Francis Year 7 students visit to Fivebough

St Francis held a Geography Excursion to Fivebough Wetlands on the 24th August. MFN was asked to provide information to students about birds. Max O'Sullivan and Phillip Williams stepped forward and volunteered for the task.

A scouting expedition was undertaken on the Sunday before the excursion. Phillip, Max and Penny headed out to Fivebough. They came across a brown snake out sunning itself, providing a photo opportunity for Phillip. While taking the photo the snake decided to chase a small lizard which ran in the same direction as Phillip. A good laugh was had by Max and Penny as he rapidly retreated with camera and monopod. Attached are some of the photos taken on the Sunday.

Max and Phillip then headed to Fivebough on Thursday 24th with some MFN scopes and binoculars. Max set up the scopes focussed on birds near the Broilga Junction. The students were able to use the scopes to see pelicans, black swans, Avocets, and various ducks. Students were shown how to use the binoculars as well. About 130 students participated in the excursion. There were other activities organised for the students as well by Bec Byrne of the NSW Dept of Industry – Lands and Forestry.

Well done to Max and Phillip, the students enjoyed the day and the SFC staff thanked MFN for their assistance.

Penny Williams



**Photos: Little Grassbird, Purple Swamp-hen, Australian Spotted Crake and the snake
By Phillip Williams**



MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

Common Bronzewing	Alambie Hill via Leeton	25/07/17	Bill Draper
Glossy Black Cockatoo [1]	Mountain Dam, Leeton	01/08/17	Dionee Russell
Glossy Black Cockatoo [2]	Alambie Hill via Leeton	01/08/17	Bill Draper
Buff-rumped Thornbill [10]	West Lake Talbot, Narrandera	01/08/17	Alan Whitehead
Red-browed Finch [6]	Narrandera Wetlands	05/08/17	Betty Bradney
Darter [1]	Narrandera Wetlands	05/08/17	Betty Bradney
Grey Fantail [1]	Narrandera Wetlands	05/08/17	Betty Bradney
Baillon's Crake [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	05/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
Spotted Crake [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	05/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
Brown Honeyeater	Petersham Rd, Leeton	06/08/17	Penny Williams
Double-barred Finch [1]	Keith's backyard in Karri Rd Leeton	07/08/17	Keith Hutton
Eastern Rosella [2]	Narrandera East	08/08/17	Susan Whitehead
White-fronted Chat [2 males]	Fivebough Wetlands {Gibbs Rd area}	08/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
Double-banded Plover [3]	Fivebough Wetlands [Gibbs Rd area]	08/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
White-bellied Sea-Eagle [ad]	Fivebough Wetlands [Gibbs Rd area]	08/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
Water Rat	Narrandera Common	09/08/17	Warrick Bradney

Peter Draper also reported seeing more than usual numbers of Water Rats in the irrigation drains on his farm.

Echnida	Narrandera Common	09/08/17	Warrick Bradney
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Petersham Rd, Leeton	10/08/17	Penny Williams
Chestnut Teal	Sunrice Office Dam, Yanco Rd, Leeton	10/08/17	Penny Williams
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo	Mountain Dam, Leeton	10/08/17	Dionee Russell
Gull-billed Tern [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	10/08/17	Keith Hutton
Spotted Crake [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	10/08/17	Keith Hutton
Caspian Tern [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/08/17	Keith Hutton
Double-banded Plover [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/08/17	Keith Hutton
Red-necked Avocet [310]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/08/17	Keith Hutton
Red-capped Plover [11]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/08/17	Keith Hutton
White-bellied Sea-Eagle [Imm]	Fivebough Wetlands	13/08/17	Keith Hutton
Australian Reed-Warbler [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	13/08/17	Keith Hutton
Swamp Harrier [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	13/08/17	Keith Hutton
Australian Hobby [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	13/08/17	Keith Hutton
Barn Owl	Mountford Park, Leeton	14/08/17	Keith Hutton
Collared Sparrowhawk	Mountford Park, Leeton	14/08/17	Keith Hutton
Southern Boobook	Palm Ave near Woolworths, Leeton	15/08/17	Keith Hutton

The bird was being chased off by magpies, miners, currawongs and red wattlebirds.

Blue-tongue	On road near Nericon – early 'bird'	15/08/17	Neil Palframan
Fairy Martin	Fivebough Wetlands	19/08/17	Keith Hutton

The Fairy Martins were in a mixed flock of Tree Martins and Welcome Swallows.

Black-winged Stilt [280]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/08/17	Keith Hutton
Red-necked Stint [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/08/17	Keith Hutton
Whiskered Tern [47]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/08/17	Keith Hutton
Black Swan [>200]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/08/17	Keith Hutton
Spotted Crake [6]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/08/17	Keith Hutton
Red-kneed Dotterel [15]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/08/17	Keith Hutton
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
Red-necked Stint [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/08/17	Max O'Sullivan

The first arrivals of the migratory waders this Spring. Keith saw a single Red-necked Stint on 19/08/17.

Baillon's Crake [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/08/17	Keith Hutton
Black Falcon [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/08/17	Keith Hutton
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [20]	Smeeth Rd/Jones Rd, Lake Wyangan	21/08/17	Neil Palframan
Australasian Bittern	Campbell's Swamp, Griffith	25/08/17	Neil Palframan

Striated Pardalote [pr]	Neil's garden at Nericon – first record	August '17	Neil Palframan
Double-banded Plover [2]	Fivebough Wetlands (still present)	26/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
Black-tailed Native-hen [25]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
Baillon's Crake [5]	Campbell's Swamp, Griffith	30/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
Tawny Frogmouth [on nest]	Griffith Golf Course	30/08/17	Max O'Sullivan
Emu [1 male with 7 chicks]	Oolambeyan National Park	31/08/17	Nella Smith
Banded Lapwing [with chicks]	Oolambeyan NP – 4 separate broods	31/08/17	Nella Smith
Caspian Tern [8]	Barren Box Swamp	01/09/17	Neil Palframan
Whiskered Tern [30+]	Barren Box Swamp	01/09/17	Max O'Sullivan

Other birds seen by Neil and I at Barren Box: **Emu** (one male with 5 day-old chicks on the main bank), **White-winged Wren** (several groups seen with only one male showing himself), **Black-tailed Native-hen**, **White-fronted Chat**, **Wedge-tailed Eagle** and **White-bellied Sea-Eagle**.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle [ad]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/09/17	Keith Hutton
Brolga [5]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/09/17	Keith Hutton
Australasian Bittern [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/09/17	Keith hutton
Brown Goshawk [Imm]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/09/17	Keith Hutton

Sue Chittick's report from Mc Nabb Cres Griffith:

Variegated Wren appear to be nesting in her garden.

Blue-faced Honeyeater ever present.

Major Mitchell flyovers everyday.

Grey-crowned Babblers still trying to destroy her car on a daily basis.

Rainbow Lorikeets terrorising **Mallee Ringnecks** in the trees opposite on Scenic Hill.

Virginia Tarr's report from her neighbourhood of Palla St, Cutler Ave and Campbells St, Griffith:

Variegated Wren [2], **Weebill** [2], **Southern Boobook** [still being heard in early August], **Yellow Thornbill** [6], **Apostlebird** [6], **Mallee Ringneck** [3], **Blue-faced Honeyeater** [5], **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike** [2].

BEWARE: Attacking Magpie: There is a dive-bombing Magpie around the information shelter at Fivebough so be prepared for an attack. Maybe carry a stick to hold over your head if visiting.

Wetlands reconnection flow Murrumbidgee River and Yanco Creek

Delivery of environmental water

Contributed by Nella Smith with information from the OEH website dated 19 August 2017

River users in the Murrumbidgee Valley are advised that the delivery of environmental water from Burrinjuck and Blowering dams, to enable a reconnection flow to Murrumbidgee wetlands, has now successfully ceased.

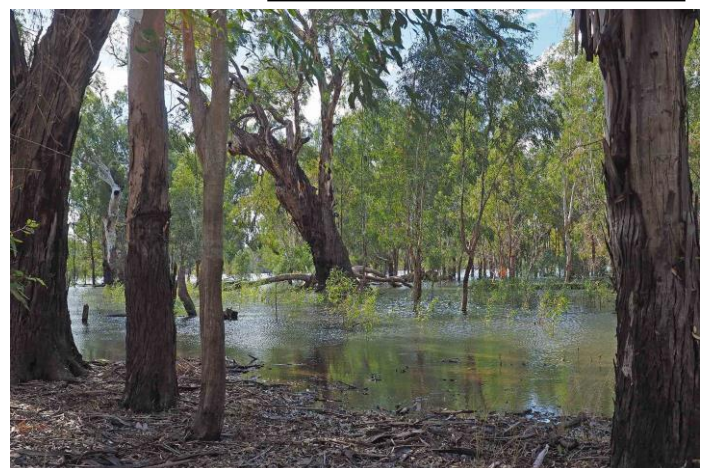
The flow commenced on 24 July 2017 with the peak of this release continuing down the Murrumbidgee and Yanco Creek systems. Numerous wetlands have been re-connected using nearly 220 gigalitres of water held by the NSW Government and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder.

This water has helped to improve breeding and foraging habitat for native fish and birds and to stimulate growth of wetland plants, which helps to improve water quality.

Water at Yarrada Lagoon - Nella Smith

Water managers from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), along with WaterNSW will continue to monitor the flow as it moves downstream. OEH ecologists have commenced monitoring the water delivery event and evaluating the responses of different animals and plants in the connected wetlands.

The delivery of this water has been a co-operative effort involving NSW OEH, WaterNSW, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, Murrumbidgee Irrigation Limited, Coleambally Irrigation, DPI Water and landholders along the Murrumbidgee River system.



**** COMING EVENTS ****

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

- 7 September Thursday** **Threatened Species Day**
This is commemorated across the country each year to raise awareness of plants and animals at the risk of extinction.
MFN have a display in the Leeton Library from 4 September
- 9 September Saturday** **Charcoal Tank Nature Reserve to celebrate Threatened Species Day**
This reserves conserves a woodland of mugga iron bark and black cypress pine growing on the lower slopes and green, blue and bull mallee on gravelly ridges. It contains several species restricted to the West Wyalong area in NSW, including the dagger leaf wattle. Endangered fauna present in the reserve include Gilbert's Whistler and the Shy Hylacola.
It is located adjacent to the Newell Hwy, this side of West Wyalong.
Meet: at 8:30am at the roadside stop; there is a small picnic area at entrance. Bring morning tea and lunch.
Contact: Graeme or Dione Russell – phone 0428 536 290 (Dione)
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 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** See article on page 4 for a taste of what is there.
Friday to Sunday **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.
- 4 October Wednesday** **Copy for the October newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 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.
- 12 October Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.
Topic: to be advised
Contact: Penny Williams 6953 3524.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 28 - 29 October Sat - Sun** **Birdlife Australia National Twitchathon 2017**
- Other events**
- 6-8 October** **Birding Weekend at Rankins Springs**
Friday - Sunday Friday night concert by Australian country music star – Fanny Lumsden
Saturday morning and afternoon and Sunday morning bus trips to local birding spots. BBQs on Friday and Saturday evening
For more information & to book your spot on the birding bus trips, email the Lachlan Fold Wildlife Action Group at: lfwag@gmail.com