

# The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



**October 2017 - Issue #253**

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Website: [www.mfn.org.au](http://www.mfn.org.au)

Email: [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com)

## 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



**All eyes on a Major Mitchell's Cockatoo;  
coming in to drink at Red Tank Dam  
Graham Russell and Rowena Whiting**

## IN THIS ISSUE

Office Bearers and Subscriptions.....	2
Twitchathon 2017.....	2
Outing to Charcoal Tank Nature Reserve .....	2
Spring Campout at Yathong .....	4
Yathong Birdlists .....	5
Yathong from a non-birdo's perspective .....	6
Yathong – Red Tank Dam.....	7
Sri Lankan Talk – elephants and birds .....	8
Papua New Guinea Report Part 2.....	9
Members' Sightings .....	10
Coming Events Calendar .....	12

## CONTRIBUTIONS

For the November issue by  
Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November

To Rowena Whiting

Email: [ericwhiting4@bigpond.com](mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com).

Phone: 6953 2612

**Be part of the  
Twitchathon this year on  
28-29 October**

## Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

<b>President:</b>	Graham Russell	0419 350 673	<b>Editor:</b>	Rowena Whiting	6953 2612
<b>Vice President:</b>	Nella Smith	6959 1210	<b>Committee:</b>	Johanna Botman	6963 4855
<b>Vice President:</b>	Eric Whiting	6953 2612		Phillip Williams	6953 3524
<b>Vice President:</b>	Virginia Tarr	6962 5614		Betty Bradney	6959 2901
<b>Secretary:</b>	Penny Williams	6953 3524			
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Phil Tenison	6953 4869	<b>Website Co-ordinator:</b>	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.

### Membership enquiries:

<b>Leeton</b>	Eric Whiting	6953 2612	<b>Griffith</b>	Virginia Tarr	6962 5614
<b>Narrandera</b>	Nella Smith	6959 1210	<b>Coleambally</b>	John Wilkinson	6954 4129

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## Birdlife Australia National Twitchathon 2017

The Twitchathon is a race in which teams aim to tick off as many species as they can in the allotted time. This year there are three categories so anyone (no matter how experienced or time-restricted), can compete!

- The **'Big Weekend' race** is a marathon of overnight driving and massive species totals – winning teams see over a quarter of all Australia's birds, driving hundreds of kilometres and stopping only to twitch!
- The **12hr 'Champagne' Twitchathon** caters to those with less time, wherein teams have half a day to tick up their species. It also removes the need for overnight driving, and teams have the option of a lunch break.
- The **Birdathon** is a super-strategic event that could take teams all day, or as few as three hours.

You will find the **Registration Forms** and **Rules** for each race category available for download at the website: <https://www.birdlifetwitchathon.org.au> which includes rules for the different race categories, fundraising targets and information, details on how to donate, the official species list, and a digital copy of the flyer!

**Get involved by joining or forming a team. See coming events for MFN contact.**

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## Outing to Charcoal Tank Reserve on 9 September 2017

On the 9<sup>th</sup> September on a cool morning 6 of us met 12 kilometres south of West Wyalong on the Newell Hwy at Charcoal Tank Nature Reserve.

Charcoal Tank Nature Reserve is 86.4 hectares in size and was originally established as a Travelling Stock and Camping Reserve on 9 August 1911, and established as a Public Watering Place on 8 November 1911. In 1960 it was proclaimed as 'Charcoal Tank Wildlife Refuge No. 2' and the land was dedicated as 'The Charcoal Tank Nature Reserve No. 46' under section 9(1) of the Fauna Protection Act 1948 on 6 May 1966.

It is one of only three reserves that contains the critically endangered ecological community "Mallee and Mallee-Broombush dominated woodland and shrubland, lacking *Triodia*". There have been 26 endangered animal species recorded in the reserve some of these have become extinct within the reserve over the last 30 odd years, these include Malleefowl, Chestnut Quail-thrush, Gilbert's Whistler and Southern Scrub-robin

We all met at 8:30 and after an hour and a half in the car it was decided that a cup of tea was required. While we did this the first three birds made their appearance. Once we had finished our morning tea we headed off, planning to walk to the north east corner of the reserve and then walk down the dry water way that travels diagonally to the south west corner. We found the first of the three dams that are along this waterway but I led everybody up a wrong gully and we found ourselves at the fence line on the northern side so we headed back south looking for the water course, we missed it again so had to head back the other way. Missing the



waterway was not that bad a thing as in this part of the reserve we picked up around 10 birds for the list and walked in and out of both the Mugga Iron Bark/Grey Box/Cypress Pine Woodland and areas of Broom Bush/Mallee Shrubland.

While we were finding our way back to the waterway we came across a flock of feeding White-browed Woodswallows. This was a new bird for some in the group so we spent some time watching these and noticing the difference between the males and females. It was interesting to note that while we were looking at the Woodswallows there were no other birds so maybe they had pushed everything else out of the area that they were feeding in. After we had finished watching the Woodswallows we found our way back to the waterway and continued along its course until we could see the fence at the south western corner.



Wandering through the bush (prev page) – Virginia Tarr  
 White-browed Woodswallow (female) – Graham Russell  
 Wylong Wattle *Acacia cardiophylla*  
 Virginia Tarr

There was some debate on if we would jump the fence and walk back up the road or if we would bush bash our way to the cars straight back through the reserve.

Decision made we headed into the Mallee and Mallee-Broombush, this led to a zig zagging route back to the cars without much to see other than the broombush that we were working our way through. Birds were few with the exception of a Grey Fantail. Eventually the bush opened out and the going was a bit easier

By the time that we got back to the cars everybody was looking to eat so we grabbed our lunch and chairs and walked a couple of hundred metres back into the reserve to sit in the sun and eat. There were lots of birds around as we ate lunch and it wasn't until then that we noticed the Quandong

When the food and discussion was finished we said our farewells happy with the bird list even if we didn't get any of the mallee birds that we had hoped to see and content with having spent a day in the bush with good company having seen a vegetation community that we hadn't seen before.

**Graham Russell**

**Charcoal Bird List 09-09-2017**

White-browed Woodswallow  
 Inland Thorn bill  
 Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater  
 Grey Butcherbird  
 Pee Wee  
 Weebill  
 Wood Duck  
 Peaceful Dove  
 Little Raven  
 White-winged Chough

Little (Yellow) Thornbill  
 White-eared Honeyeater  
 Brown-headed Honeyeater  
 Grey Fantail  
 Eastern Rosella  
 Western Gerygone  
 Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike  
 Grey Shrike-thrush  
 Australian Raven  
 Rufous Whistler



Yellow-rumped Thornbill  
 White-plumed Honeyeater  
 Pied Butcherbird  
 Willy Wagtail  
 Mallee Ringneck  
 Striated Pardalote  
 Crested Pigeon  
 Kookaburra  
 Galah

## Spring Campout at Yathong Nature Reserve - 22-24 September 2017

Despite the dry season and the many suffering crops along the way, and despite the prediction and arrival of hot and windy and dusty weather, Yathong again showed us what a special place it can be with its variety and abundance of life. We did not manage to spot any of the “rare and endangered” species but we did spot a good variety.

Perhaps because of the dry conditions we were spoiled by an interesting list of birdlife directly around the living quarters which are well treed with Mulga, close by a dam, and not far from the homestead dam. The Quarters dam was effectively fenced, while the Homestead dam was fenced but had the gates open and available to wildlife. Considering the number of kangaroos and emus in the vicinity I would assume they drink here in the evenings, but elsewhere in the reserve some dams have been decommissioned and wildlife numbers are more reduced.

The Friday afternoon walk was to the eastern side of the homestead in the grassy riverine woodland and rocky hills of the Keginni Creek, finishing with sunset at the Homestead dam. It is quite a pretty area with the sandy creek and a low rocky ridge, although the birdlife doesn't agree as there wasn't much evident. Ground cover was sparse, the Wonga Vine was flowering among the rocks, and there was an active group



of Brown Treecreepers. An echidna made his way through the rocks and across the open ground to the dam for a drink.

The usual suspects came in to drink including Red-rumps, Major Mitchells, Blue-faced, masses of Noisy Miners, and a herd of goats, but the roos and emus I guess would visit after we left.

Saturday promised to be challenging weather and did not disappoint, but we got out early. On our first trip out here ten years ago there was evidence of past cropping along the Cobar Road but not so now, except that the open

grassland might be the result, while further off the road is woodland. The Western Fire Trail was quite pleasant in the protection of the mallee and thanks to Dionne's harsh driving the group explored, wandered, inspected, listed, and got back to the road intact. GPS was a backup but the sun was sufficient on this occasion.

Birds included White-breasted and Masked Woodswallow, and Rufous Whistler. The most productive area was the dune top where there had been a controlled burn around 2006. At the time we noted the different birdlife in the burnt and unburnt areas, and this time some of that regrowth was flowering, but more likely it was also attracting more insects. We found a Black Honeyeater pair, Variegated Wrens in wonderful colour and the only wrens of the trip, White-fronted, White-eared, Brown-headed, White-plumed and Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters, and a little further down the road were a few Crimson Chats sheltering from the dust, also the only ones for the weekend.

Tracks on the sand indicated a variety of land based animals crossing and the group spotted several Lace Monitors and Mallee Dragons while a legless lizard got away unidentified.

A retreat was made to the Quarters to eat lunch in more comfy environs, which became even more comfy when we worked out that own up ... had mistaken the light

someone ... who were you ... switch for the water switch of



Echidna drinking at dam,  
Lace Monitor (left)– Graham Russell  
Bearded dragon - Rowena Whiting  
Mallee Dragon *Ctenophorus fordii* -  
Johanna Botman

the cooler. Once located we managed to get clean cool air inside while the dust filled up the verandah area.



Still, you don't want to stay comfy for too long so we headed back out to the dams, surely a good spot on a hot day, first to the Quarters dam which was so impossibly windy that we could not even hold the bins steady, and then to the Homestead dam which was more sheltered. This is where the Dingos made an appearance. Without getting into the huge discussion about what are dingos and what are dogs, these appeared to be the classic dingo, one sandy and the other black and looking like well fed siblings.

The Galahs lived up to their name with their antics of landing on the poly pipes which then proceeded to sink under their weight while they drank, a Little Eagle circled for quite a time before landing briefly by the water edge, and Olive-backed Oriole and Sacred Kingfisher dropped in.

**Dingos – Neil Palframan**  
**Striated Pardalote Johanna Botman**  
**Red-winged Parrot – Graham Russell**

The group also visited Red Tank Dam where a similar list of suspects were found well protected from the wind. The day was topped off by a spectacular sunset through the dusty sky.



Sunday dawned cool and clear, and some did a revisit of the Western Fire Trail while others birded productively around the Quarters which gave close and photogenic views of the solo Budgerigar, solo Rufous Songlark, two Red-winged Parrots, White-breasted Woodswallows, a pair of Lapwings with chicks, and a Striated Pardalote nesting with the Swallows, "consensual" said Johanna.

It took quite some time to sweep out the dust (thanks Elene and Alan)

and pack up, and then off, stopping at a cute little gorge off Yathong Road for a look and lunch. Here we saw our first and only Wedgie, and Robins - Yellow and Red-capped. And then our final stop at the wild limes, in bud, under the spectacular Merrimerrriwa Range before heading home.

Thanks from all of us to Yathong for supporting us, and Dionne, Graham, Eric and Nella for organising, herding, leading and feeding us.

**Neil Palframan**

**Bird Lists for Yathong - compiled by Nella Smith**

**Shearers Quarters and nearby Dam**

- |                            |                           |                     |                    |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 39 emus and chicks         | Blue Bonnet               | Welcome Swallow     | Mallee Ringneck    |
| Spiny cheeked Honeyeater   | White plumed Honeyeater   | Black Kite          | Little Friarbird   |
| Masked Lapwing +2 chicks   | Striped Honeyeater        | White faced Heron   | Little Corella     |
| Willy Wagtail              | Restless Flycatcher       | Galah               | Noisy Miner        |
| Magpie                     | Peewee                    | Red-rumped Parrot   | Budgerigar         |
| White-breasted Woodswallow | White necked Heron        | White-winged Chough | Striated Pardalote |
| Tree Martin                | Major Mitchell's Cockatoo | Peaceful Dove       | Grey Shrike-thrush |
| Bar-shouldered Dove        | Red-winged Parrot         | Pipit               | Hard Head          |
| Rufous Songlark            |                           |                     |                    |



**A pair of Red-winged Parrots were feeding on an introduced weed Wild Sage. Native birds are relying more heavily on introduced species.**  
**Photo by Graham Russell**

### Dam at the Homestead

Coot	Tree Martin	White-faced Heron	Black-winged Stilt
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo	Grey Teal	Black-fronted Dotterel	Peaceful Dove
Noisy Miner	Australasian Grebe	Hoary-headed Grebe	Wood Ducks
Restless Flycatcher	Hard Head	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Little Corella
Black-eared Cuckoo	Starling	Mallee Ringneck	Crested Pigeon
Little Eagle	Goshawk	Striated Pardalote	Blue Bonnet
Common Bronzewing	White-faced Heron	White-necked Heron	Sacred Kingfisher
White-plumed Honeyeater	Horsfields Bronze-Cuckoo	White-breasted Woodswallow	
Blue-faced Honeyeater	Little Friarbird	Peewee	Apostlebird
Olive-backed Oriole	Little Eagle	Australian Raven	Mallee Ringneck

Also seen were 20 goats, Goanna, Echidna, Red Kangaroo, Western Grey Kangaroo, Echidna drinking, black Dingo, red Dingo.

### Western Fire Trail

Grey-crowned Babbler	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird	Raven - nesting
Crested Bellbird	Chestnut-rumped Thornbill	Brown Falcon	Crimson Chat
Black Honeyeater	Willy Wagtail	White-eared Honeyeater	Crested Bellbird
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	Variiegated Fairy-wren	Masked Woodswallow	

These reptiles were seen - Pink-tailed Worm Lizard *Aprasia parapulchell*, Nobbi?? *Amphiborurus nobbi* + 4 dead and a frog in a very old pitfall trap and Lace Monitor *Varanus varius*

### Red Tank Dam

Apostlebird	Mallee Ringneck	Bar-shouldered Dove	White-backed Swallow
Blue-faced Honeyeater	Noisy Miner	Little Raven	Australian Raven
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Common Bronzewing	Red-rumped Parrot	Blue Bonnet
White-breasted Woodswallow	Willy Wagtail	Weebill	Striped Honeyeater
Spotted Bowerbird	Kookaburra	Crested Pigeon	White-winged Chough
Peewee			

### Mawonga

Rufous Whistler	Weebill	Red-capped Robin	Grey-Shrike-thrush
Brown-headed Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin	Wedge-tailed Eagle	

## Yathong – a non-birdo's perspective

For those that went on the 2004 campout the sparsity of flowering this time due to the dry conditions was a bit of a disappointment. Nevertheless the vegetation there is so different from our usual fare, it is always interesting. Without the plethora of flowers to try to identify, attention turned more to the vegetation types.

The first stop along the Western Fire Trail was intended to be a brief introduction to the mallee, staying close to the cars. It turned out to be a two hour eye-opener to the variability of mallee. What we blandly describe as mallee country is in fact an intricate patchwork of vegetation types sometimes imperceptibly changing, sometimes abruptly as if a distinct line ran across the country even though we could not see any difference in soil, slope, etc.



Mallee is of course a general term for a growth form of eucalypts with several species involved. If we had taken the time to identify them we could have named four within 50 metres of the cars at the first stop and at least another two that Saturday morning.

In that two hours we encountered mallee with ground cover, mallee with the distinctive rings of Porcupine Grass, mallee with pea-flowered shrubs and mallee with dense broombush which is best skirted around, and mallee mixed with Mallee Cypress Pine. Then there were the

patches of tall woodland with *Eucalyptus intertexta* (variously call Gum-bark Coolibah or Red Box), of Needlewood *Hakea tephrosperma* so old and tall it was hard to readily identify, and that wonderful patch of Belah *Casuarina cristata* delightfully sighing in the strong wind from which the mallee thankfully protected us.

Driving further along the Trail and at the Malleefowl Pen our furthest point we saw several types of wattles in flower – we should have made a list. There were several bushes of a Daisy-bush in full flower also along the



Trail and a few red Eremophilas. However it was a tall shrub with the last remains of flowers that caught our attention at one stop. It took a lot of searching through our reference books and a very close look at the flowers to come up with a name – Shrubby Riceflower *Pimelea microcephala*. It was a new sighting for me.

The afternoon walks in the Bimble Box woodland country closer to the Merrimerriva Range were disappointing with the ground cover all dried and shrivelled. There were some areas though, with good shrub regrowth showing that the reduction in the number of goats has started to take effect. The mass flowering of the Kunzea and Tea-tree in the

Photos by Rowena Whiting  
Porcupine Grass in a circle (top),  
Kunzea (left), Green Tea-Tree  
Wild lime with saplings in foreground



gully off the Yathong Road is always a spring delight and this year was no exception. The Tea-tree is the Green Tea-tree *Leptospermam coriacea* not our Hill Tea-tree *L. divaricatum*.

Just to prove how far north we had travelled we had to visit the Wild Lime *Eremocitrus glauca* site. Yathong is about the southern limit for this species. It was pleasing to see the spread of new growth around the original clump of trees, though it was hard to convince many that the half metre high, nearly leafless spiny shrubs were the same species as the leafy trees.



Plants do have their surprises.

Eric Whiting

Bird Watching at Red Tank Dam – Dione Russell  
Blue Bonnets – Graham Russell

## Red Tank Dam

The dam had plenty of water as a result of last year's rains. Thank goodness said the birds. Birdwatching around a dam is a lazy but effective way of doing great birdwatching especially when it is as dry and windy as it was. Birds appeared to be doing return visits for a drink and a bath and even the Ravens appeared gasping from heat.



White-backed and Welcome Swallows hawked and dived. What we thought were the last were Common Bronzewings, almost waiting for the sun to disappear. Just as we were leaving a couple of Major Mitchell's flew in putting the cream on the evening.

I like the way birds take it in turns to use the water's edge, a pecking order??

Nella Smith

## Talk on Sri Lanka – MFN meeting 14 September 2017

The club was very fortunate to have Rahula Perera from Sri Lanka as our guest speaker for the September meeting. He is the Director of Planning and Development at Aarunya Vacations a nature based tour company. His main topic for the evening was on his long term study of the Sri Lankan Elephants that have been living on the island in total isolation from the rest of their Asian cousins for many thousands of years – ever since the island became separated from India and the land bridge cut the island off. So all animals



and resident bird species have evolved in isolation from their mainland cousins and have developed differing characteristics. And the elephant is no exception in that it differs from its Asian cousin in many ways. Even within Sri Lanka, there are three distinct elephants that are recognisable by their different characteristics developed over the millennia in total isolation from each other on the island. Keep in mind that Sri Lanka is a tiny island – just over 430km from top to bottom and about 225km wide. So it is quite remarkable how such differences evolved in such a restricted area.

Rahula outlined the difficulties faced by elephants today with the ever increasing encroachment of humans and the inevitable land clearing for agriculture. This has forced the elephant population to be herded into National Parks but even with some parks being surrounded by electrified fences, the animals still manage to break out and wander the countryside causing havoc and sometimes death in villages that stand in their way.

Elephant's social structure is based on the matriarch who leads the other females and young to feeding and watering areas. Males generally live a solitary life roaming the countryside in search of females to mate with. Immature males, once pushed out of the herd by the matriarch, will often gather in small groups until they reach maturity and

start the long lonely search for females, often encountering other males with the same thing in mind. Hence, there are often vicious fights for male supremacy.

Rahula and his team have radio-tracked large numbers of animals and have detailed maps of where they go in their search for food. An interesting map of the distribution of members of a large herd over a 24 hour period showed large dispersion of the animals especially during the night – the herd separating but coming back together in the early morning.

(above) Asian Elephants  
(below) Sri Lankan Blue Magpie (left)  
Paradise Flycatcher (Rufous male) (right)

After a supper break Rahula gave a short talk on the birds of Sri Lanka with shots of some the endemic species on the island. In total, Sri Lanka has recorded over 480 species of birds of which 33 are endemic to the island.



The club is very grateful to Rahula for making time to come to Leeton to speak to us and to Stanley Piyatilake from the Canberra office of the tour company who organised the whole trip. Whilst here in Leeton, Keith Hutton and I took the visitors on a cold and windy tour of Fivebough Wetlands on the Thursday afternoon whilst Neil Palframan and I accompanied them to Wattle Dam very early on the Friday morning before they returned to Canberra.

**Max O'Sullivan**



## Papua New Guinea report – July 2017

### Part 2: Kumul Lodge Mt Hagen

After the first 3 nights in Port Moresby, we were to fly out in mid-morning to Mt Hagen. All went well until 20 minutes into the flight when the pilot announced a minor technical fault and that we had to fly back to Moresby to have it checked. We were told to wait on board whilst the engineers fixed the problem – which took all of 15 minutes. We were then preparing to taxi out on to the runway when the pilot announced we had to hold as there had been a grass fire outside the airport that had got out of control and was now burning furiously at the end of the runway!

We sat in the plane for another 50 minutes or so waiting for clearance and eventually took off for the hour flight. All went well and we arrived without further incident and were met by the manager of Kumul Lodge which was another hours drive up the mountain above Hagen township.

The trip out of town was no better than what we saw in Moresby – once again I was quite shocked as Hagen has an international reputation because of the famous Sing-sing that is held there each year. Large crowds had gathered outside the tents that had been set up for the count of votes in the recent elections – everyone was ensuring that the count was done according to custom. There was a large military and police presence just in case the crowd got out of control. We drove past without incident.



Kumul Lodge is owned and run by the local community and they have put aside a huge tract of cloud forest to preserve for future generations. As a result, the birds are very numerous and varied so it was an excellent spot to spend the next 3 days. The accommodation was a series of cabins constructed in the local style of platted bamboo walls with 2 beds and ensuite bathrooms in each. Some, like Johanna and Neil had the luxury of hot water all the time whereas the rest of us had to contend with lukewarm to freezing showers! In the typical New Guinea communal house, there was a balcony overlooking a grass-covered platform on which loads of fresh fruit had been laid out for the birds to feed on all day. This was a wonderful spot to see the local species at close range and was difficult to drag yourself away from as every now and then a very rare bird would come in to feed and you were afraid, by going walking in the forest you would miss something exceptional. Needless to say we did and had to rely on someone else's photos to drool over what we missed!

Johanna was feeling a bit off colour most of the time we were there so had good views of some birds that most of us missed because we were off elsewhere and she spent a lot of time on the balcony watching the birds. The feeder itself attracted several common honeyeaters – **Common Smoky Honeyeater** and **Belford's Meledectes**. They were by far the most common birds present and, needless to say, we hardly gave them a second look after the first day – they were everywhere. By far the most impressive visitor to the feeder was the **Ribbon-tailed Astrapia** – the male of which has a long trailing white tail about a metre long – quite an impressive bird.

Photos by Johanna Botman and Neil Palframan - Bird spotting in rainforest, (from left: Common Smoky Honeyeater, Belford's Meledectes, Brehm's Tiger-Parrot, Papuan Flycatcher (next page))



Other regular visitors to the feeding table were a number of **Brehm's Tiger-Parrot**, **Island Thrush** and **Friendly Fantail** - very similar to our Grey Fantail. In the grounds there were several beautiful **White-winged Robin**, stunningly coloured **Regent Whistler** and a lovely **Crested Berrypecker**.



An afternoon outing in search of the **Blue Bird of Paradise** ended in a massive downpour that drenched us all and frightened off the bird that only some of us (not me!) got a very brief glimpse of – pity.

Despite my negative comments about my impressions of the country, I was very pleased to have gone on the trip. I'm not sure I would go again unless it was a specific trip to locate as many Birds of Paradise as possible. But then, I'd need convincing it to be worthwhile. I have always wanted to go there and this trip satisfied that urge – so, been there done that!

**Max O'Sullivan**

**Footnote:** 3 days after we returned to Cairns, another group flew in from Cairns in the early morning to find the country was on a general strike because of the disputed election results and were locked up in the airport as there were no customs officials working and no power! They were put on the late afternoon flight back to Cairns and were faced with trying to get their money back from their respective travel insurance policies. A sober warning about taking out travel insurance especially when visiting third world countries after an election!

## MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

<b>Red-capped Robin</b> [2]	Narrandera Nursery	20/08/17	Alan Whitehead
<b>Dusky Moorhen</b> [4]	Narrandera Wetlands	20/08/17	Alan Whitehead
<b>Common Greenshank</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	03/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>European Goldfinch</b> [55]	Fivebough Wetlands	03/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Gull-billed Tern</b> [7]	Fivebough Wetlands	03/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Double-banded Plover</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	03/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Collared Sparrowhawk</b> [fem]	Pendula St, Leeton	07/09/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Sharp-tailed Sandpiper</b> [52]	Fivebough Wetlands	07/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Red-kneed Dotterel</b> [48]	Fivebough Wetlands	07/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Little Friarbird</b>	Fivebough Wetlands	07/09/17	Keith Hutton

This is the first sighting for the season.

<b>Australian Bustard</b> [1]	Private property near Leeton	07/09/17	Keith Hutton
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This is only the third sighting of a bustard in the Leeton area in the 36 years Keith has been taking records.

The bird seemed to remain only for a day at Pam and Scott Williams farm at Murrami as it couldn't be located on 9<sup>th</sup>.

<b>Australasian Bittern</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	07/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Variegated Wren</b> [3]	Narrandera Wetlands	08/07/17	Susan Whitehead
<b>Ground Cuckoo-Shrike</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands northern side	08/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Brolga</b> [5]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Whiskered Tern</b>	Fivebough Wetlands	08/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Australian Shelduck</b> [38+]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/09/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Major Mitchell's Cockatoo</b> [5]	Gum Creek, Sandigo	09/09/17	Peter Draper

This is the first time Peter has seen these cockatoos at this location.

<b>Freckled Duck</b> [1]	Campbell's Swamp Griffith	09/09/17	Neil Palframan
<b>Baillon's Crake</b> [6+]	Campbell's Swamp Griffith	09/09/17	Neil Palframan
<b>Black Swan</b> [100+]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Japanese (Latham's) Snipe</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands car park drain	10/09/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>White-winged Triller</b> [1]	Binya State Forest southern section	12/09/17	Max O'Sullivan

<b>White-browed Woodswallow</b>	Binya State Forest southern section	12/09/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Masked Woodswallow</b> [1]	Binya State Forest southern section	12/09/17	Max O'Sullivan
The above 3 species are the first record for this spring.			
<b>Major Mitchell's Cockatoo</b> [2]	Colinroobie Rd via Leeton	12/09/17	Phil Tenison
<b>Superb Parrot</b>	Cnr Murrami and Trunk Rd 80	13/09/17	G&D Russell
<b>Grey Crowned Babbler</b> [8]	Griffith Golf Course	13/09/17	Alan Whitehead
<b>Blue Bonnet</b> [8]	Griffith Golf Course	13/09/17	Alan Whitehead
<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	14/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b> [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	16/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Sharp-tailed Sandpiper</b> [76]	Fivebough Wetlands	16/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Blue-billed Duck</b> [Pr displaying]	Fivebough Wetlands	16/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Nankeen Night Heron</b> [juv]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/09/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Spotless Crake</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/09/17	Max O'Sullivan
This crake hasn't been seen or heard at Fivebough for some time. It was with a couple of Spotted and a Baillon's.			
<b>Japanese (Latham's) Snipe</b> [1]	In irrigated wheat at Koonadan	18/09/17	Peter Draper
<b>Golden Whistler</b> [male]	11 Pendula St in my bird bath	18/09/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Blue-billed Duck</b> [pr]	Fivebough settling ponds	19/09/17	Allan Richards
<b>Glossy Ibis</b> [5]	The Basin Dam, Koonadan	19/09/17	Max O'Sullivan
The first return for this season.			
<b>Freckled Duck</b> [2]	Campbell's Swamp	24/09/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Blue-billed Duck</b> [2m 1f]	Campbell's Swamp	24/09/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Little Friarbird</b>	11 Pendula St, Leeton	24/09/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Red-winged Parrot</b> [pr]	Yathong Nature Reserve campout	24/09/17	Andrew Thompson
<b>Budgerigar</b>	Yathong Nature Reserve campout	24/09/17	Neil Palframan
<b>White-breasted Woodswallow</b> [270+]	Evans Smyles Rd, Leeton	24/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Masked Woodswallow</b> [15]	Evans Smyles Rd, Leeton	24/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>White-breasted Woodswallow</b> [60]	Petersham Rd Car park Fivebough	24/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Black-winged Stilt</b> [1000+]	Fivebough Wetlands	24/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Marsh Sandpiper</b> [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	24/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Caspian Tern</b> [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	24/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Brolga</b> [6]	Fivebough Wetlands	24/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Little Eagle</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	24/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Black Falcon</b> [fem]	Fivebough Wetlands	24/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Barn Owl</b>	9 Karri Rd, Leeton	25/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Spotted Nightjar</b> [possible]	Peter's place Koonadan Rd, Leeton	26/09/17	Peter Draper
Peter saw the bird in flight just on dark at his place and he feels it had to be a nightjar.			
<b>Latham's Snipe</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>White-winged Triller</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Swamp Harrier</b> [displaying]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Baillon's Crake</b> {4}	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Spotless Crake</b> [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Marsh Sandpiper</b> [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Glossy Ibis</b> [29]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Peregrine Falcon</b> [adult]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Pelican</b> [99]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Red-necked Avocet</b> [88]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/17	Keith Hutton
Keith estimated over 4000 ducks at Fivebough of which 85-90% were <b>Grey Teal</b> as well as 1500 to 2000 <b>Black-winged Stilts</b> .			
Keith has also recorded juvenile <b>Sharp-tailed Sandpipers</b> now amongst the adult birds – they usually arrive later than the adults.			
A <b>Ruff</b> was reported by a visiting birder on eBird recently but on regular visits by Keith both in the early morning and late afternoon in the following days he failed to re-locate the bird.			
<b>Freckled Duck</b> [7]	Campbell's Swamp	03/10/17	Allan Richards
<b>Magpie Goose</b> [2]	Campbell's Swamp	03/10/17	Allan Richards
<b>Bar-tailed Godwit</b> [juv]	Fivebough Wetlands	03/10/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Australian Pratincole</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	04/10/17	Allan Richards

# \*\*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\*\*

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

- 12 October Thursday**      **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.  
**Topic:** Nella Smith will talk about her trip to Central West Queensland.  
**Contact:** Penny Williams 6953 3524.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 2<sup>nd</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> week of October**      **Ingalba Nature Reserve - Spring vegetation survey**  
Nella is organising this with the Friends of Ingalba Group, with dwindling numbers they are relying on help from MFN.  
**Please contact Nella Smith 6059 1210** or [nella.smith0@gmail.com](mailto:nella.smith0@gmail.com) if you are interested in participating, she will be able to contact you when the dates are confirmed.
- 23 – 29 October week**      **National Bird Week**  
**Aussie Backyard Bird Count is held during this week.**  
Participating in the survey contributes to a vital pool of information from across Australia that helps to see how our birds are faring. Participants are asked to spend 20 minutes in their favourite patch and record all birds seen on the Aussie Bird Count App or the form on their website [www.aussiebirdcount.org.au](http://www.aussiebirdcount.org.au) to record the types of birds you see and roughly how many.
- 28 - 29 October Sat - Sun**      **Birdlife Australia National Twitchathon 2017**  
The idea is to see how many species of birds you can find in the 30, 12 or just 3 hours. For more details see page 2. There is a minimum of 3 hours.  
If you have a team or would like to be part of another team and/or for further details contact Penny Williams 6953 3524.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com)
- 1 November Wednesday**      **Copy for the November newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**  
**Email:** [ericwhiting4@bigpond.com](mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com). Phone: 6953 2612.
- 9 November Thursday**      **Annual General Meeting and 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](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 12 – 19 November**      **Wild Pollinator Count**  
A national citizen science project that encourages people to record local pollinators by watching a flower for 10 minutes during the count week and recording what insects land on the flower during that time. <https://wildpollinatorcount.com/>

**Threatened Species Day** is held on the 7 September each year, to commemorate the death of the last remaining Tasmanian Tiger at the Hobart Zoo in 1936. Across the country it is used to raise awareness of plants and animals at the risk of extinction. The image shows a section of the display MFN set up in the Leeton Library. Thanks to Eric & Rowena Whiting, Phillip Williams & Nella Smith for organising it.

