

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



February 2018 - Issue #256
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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



We seek it here, we seek it there - on the Long Plains Track
by Rowena Whiting

IN THIS ISSUE

Office Bearers and Subscriptions.....	2
Welcome to February / From the Inbox.....	2
Talbingo Summer Camp Report	3
Talbingo Summer Camp Insects and reptiles	5
Talbingo Summer Camp Birds	6
Talbingo Summer Camp Flora	8
Environmental Water	10
Painted Snipe Return	10
Bird Hides in NSW	10
Glossy Black Cockatoos.....	11
Members' Sightings	12
Cryptic Bird Quiz	13
Coming Events Calendar	14

CONTRIBUTIONS

For the March issue by
Wednesday 28 February

To Rowena Whiting

Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com.

Phone: 6953 2612

Glossy Black Cockatoos,
a local threatened species,
are being counted this month.
See coming events (last page) for
how to participate.

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

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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 another year

The year has started well with over twenty people enjoying a rewarding time in the high country over the long weekend. There is plenty to read about it with articles about the birds, flora, insect and reptiles. There is a bit of overlap with three scribes but I haven't edited as it loses the flow of the writing (as well as being time consuming on my part!). We all appreciated the work Dionea and Graham put in to cater for the many tastes in the field and the catering.

We hope you find plenty of interest to participate in during the coming year.

Enjoy reading Rowena.

From the inbox

Members would like to convey their sincere sympathy to **Nan Simpson** for the loss of her brother, Roger, and also wish her a speedy recovery after her recent hospitalisation. Hope to see you back on deck soon.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoos

Keep an eye out for Australia's [new \\$10 note](#), featuring several images of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos as built-in security features. Last year, Eastern Spinebills controversially featured on the new \$5 notes.

Some Field Naturalist activities in Victoria you may be interested in -

27-29 April South-east Australian Naturalists' Association (SEANA) Spring Camp Healesville area in the Yarra Valley. Hosted by the Field Naturalist Club of Victoria. Program is of half & full day excursions with speakers in the evenings. Further information from Rowena Whiting, Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com, Phone: 6953 2612 or www.fncv.org.au where registration forms can be downloaded.

29 September to 8 October Australian Naturalists Network get together will be held in Western Victoria. Travelling from Halls Gap in the Grampians to Geelong along the Great Ocean Road. Expressions of Interest are being sought to assist with planning. More information from Nella Smith Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

The Bird Atlassers 2018 Autumn Camp will be conducted from **Monday 30th April to Friday 5th May** and their base camp will be located at Ben Halls Campground in the Weddin Mountains National Park, approximately 32km west of Grenfell. This is to carry out bird surveys. The Grenfell area has a network of eleven Bird Trails which have yielded 151 bird species, some of which include Spotted Harrier, Little Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Bar-shouldered Dove, Black-eared Cuckoo, Hooded Robin, Speckled Warbler.

Summer Camp at Talbingo – 25 – 28 January 2018

On Thursday the 25 January we all gathered at the Talbingo Tourist Park and once everybody had settled into their rooms we set off to try and find Buddong Falls to have evening drinks and nibble, we didn't find the falls or even the camping ground where the walk to the falls starts. Instead after heading in the wrong direction twice we settled on having drinks and nibbles at the spillway from Talbingo Reservoir and then back to camp for dinner at 8pm. After all had eaten their fill and had a catch up chat it was off to bed for a 9am leave on Friday morning.

There were a few pre breakfast walks and outings either around the camp or further afield. We all met at the entrance to the Tourist Park at 9am and off to the first of our destinations for the day. Up the Snowy Mountain Highway, our first turn down Lobs Hole Ravine Road heading towards Jounama Heritage Walk specifically to look for an orchid that was found down near the end of the walk on our visit the year before, this year we knew where to look and thanks to some keen eyes we found it without having to walk more than half a kilometre (Eric will cover this in detail in his summary of the plants for the weekend) After everybody had a good look and a chance to take some photographs we headed back to the cars to set up and have morning tea.



Group having morning tea – Dionea Russell

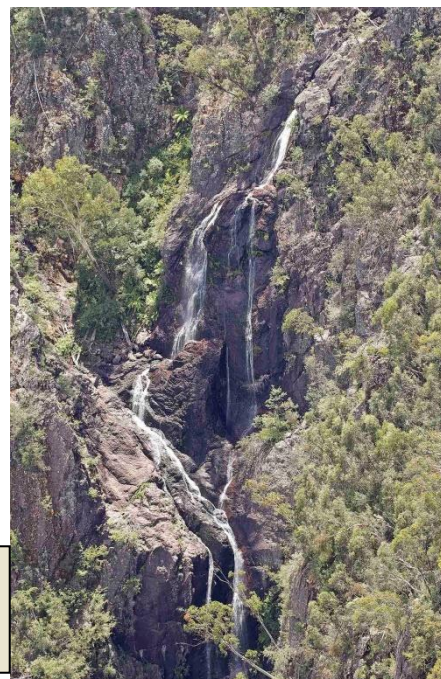
After morning tea we headed to the second of our planned outings for the day; back to the Snowy Mountain High Way and back towards Talbingo, turning down Cumberland Trail heading for Landers Falls. Once there some decided to do the walk to the two Landers Falls lookouts, some walked back along the track the same way that we had come in and others stayed around the car park and waited to see what would come to them.

We finished looking around by about 3:00pm and still had some time left in the afternoon so the majority of us decided to have another go at finding the Buddong Falls camp ground. After having had a bit of time to try and



interpret the very scant directions that are provided on the National Parks information and some of us having made a reconnoitre that morning, we headed up the dirt road that goes to the falls and only stopped to have a look around where the morning outing had seen Lyrebirds that morning. We didn't get to see a Lyrebird but we were treated to a rendition of his interpretation of the calls for around 20 different birds, it was hard to tell them from the real thing. The give away was that they all came from the same place. With this in our ears we reloaded into the cars and headed to the camp ground, it is a steep climb, rising from 391metres to 1143 metres in just 12 kilometres, and rough track but the scenery and the changing bush is worth the trouble. At the camp ground it was out for a quick look around and then back home for tea.

Limestone cliffs at Blue Waterholes – Virginia Tarr
Lander Falls – Rowena Whiting





The next morning was an early start at 8:00am for the trip up the mountain heading for Blue Waterholes along Long Plain Road. This trip to the Blue Waterholes should have only taken about an hour for most people but not for Murrumbidgee Field Naturalist; for us it was over 4 hours. The reason for the slowness of the trip was the usual birds to stop and let everybody have a good look, and a wander to look at the unique flora of the mountains and then there was morning tea and a look around the heritage Coolamine Homestead. Then on to the Blue Waterholes where we divided into groups and either looked around the local

Heritage Coolamine Homestead and The group at the Murrumbidgee River crossing on the Long Plains Road (only a few kilometres from the source) - Dione Russell

vicinity or headed further afield depending on how much energy we had left and our ability (or inability) to cross the knee deep creek. After a late lunch or early afternoon tea we had a bit more of a look

around and then met up again to start the trip home at 3:00 pm with the only 2 stops the last being to have a photograph at the crossing of the Murrumbidgee River.



The next morning was pack up time and then head to Log Bridge Creek on the way home. The time at Log Bridge Creek was spent looking for a view of the elusive White-throated Gerygone. We had heard it many times over the weekend but nobody had actually seen this little fellow at all. It looked as though it would stay that way until just before it was time to leave, we finally found a very cooperative one that gave us all a good view. So now we could all head our separate ways home after another jam packed weekend

There will be two separate articles in this edition of the newsletter one covering the flora, insects and reptiles and another covering the birds for the weekend.

I would like to give my personal thanks to all that attended, without you it wouldn't be the same, those that cooked and those that carpoled either giving up their own familiar surroundings to ride in another car or those that made space to take extra passengers, it not only makes the group easier to keep track of but is also more environmentally friendly.

Finally on the Saturday afternoon, I asked everybody to send me their highlight for the weekend some of these are below:

- 1) "at the Lady's Tresses a small pastel-coloured butterfly landed on my ring finger. For a few minutes I marvelled at its four wings and delicate patterns; then it flew off ... but came and landed again, as if to

say "Sayonara"; then off it flew away into the light of day."

- 2) "I've always wanted to see the elusive Richard's Pipit (I like the name). At last, with help from the ever-patient Meredith, I had success - only one, only once, but I loved it!"
- 3) "The highlight of the trip was finally identifying the Yellow-faced Honeyeater whose call I have been haunted by for some time but finally got a clear visual and audio proof of the bird. Also thanks for a great week-end which was wonderful."
- 4) "I reckon the thing I liked seeing best was the *Spiranthes australis*. I had no idea orchids could look like that."
- 5) "This Blue tongue lizard (which is really a skink) is the Southern Blue-

tongue *Tiliqua nigrolutea*. It was shot crossing the road on the way back from Blue Waterholes. The one we commonly see around our parts is Common Blue-tongue *Tiliqua scinoides*.

- 6) And for me, I couldn't narrow it down to just one. First is hearing the amazing mimicry of the Superb Lyrebird and the second is hearing, finding and then photographing a displaying Satin Bowerbird at his bower and a female in attendance.

Thanks to all that came and participated and either learnt something or shared some knowledge, that's what Murrumbidgee Field Naturalist camps are about.

Graham Russell



Richard's Pipit (above), Satin Bowerbird (below) Graham Russell



Summer Camp at Talbingo – Insects and Reptiles

Searching for insects and other macro-invertebrates takes just as much concentration as for birds and flowers. Well the latter 2 did preoccupy us nearly all the time so only the occasional wee thing caught our eye.

We did see plenty of butterflies, dragonflies and grasshoppers but they were far too busy or quick to get a real look at them. Of course nobody wanted to see the flies, especially the March variety.

What did catch our attention was the jassid – an insect in the frog hopper section of the True Bugs - that took a liking to being on Graham's arm. We were fascinated by the way it often walked backwards making it difficult to work out which end was the head at first.

Another arm lover was a tiny spider – probably a flower spider that waits on a suitable bloom for its meal to come along. On the other hand it could have been a web weaver – it was so small it was hard to tell.

One big black grasshopper was a bit more docile and easier to photograph. It was a Mountain Grasshopper. Pity it was not alarmed enough to show its bright red warning colour on its back.



Jassid, Elephant Beetle, A caterpillar hanging on by a thread, looking ready to pupate.



Another placid insect was an Elephant Weevil common at higher altitudes. It is recognisable with its green spots on a black background.

Of the reptiles, lizards (mainly skinks) saw us as fast as we saw them and were definitely quicker off the mark. Except that is for the Blue Tongue that Nella saw.

We are happier not seeing snakes – some can get quite aggressive in the high country. The one we did see was – well what was it?

Southern Blue Tongue by Nella Smith
Snake by Margrit Martin

Eric Whiting



Bird Report – Talbingo Weekend 2018

20 members took advantage of the possibility of cooler climes by attending the annual MFN weekend in the mountains over the Australia Day Long Weekend. Whilst not dramatically that different from the temperatures at home, it was marginally cooler – especially the nights.

Bird-wise, it was good but not as good as last year's list from Tumut. It seems the higher up you go the less birds you get and most took a lot of tracking down.

First report was from Nella of a **Great Crested Grebe** on Jounama Pondage right in front of our accommodation with a scattering of the usual ducks – Black, Hardhead and Wood Duck predominant on the lake's edge.

After people had settled into their various cabins we gathered to drive to Buddong Falls but missed the turn off and ended up above the wall of Lake Talbingo which feeds Tumut 3 Power Station below. Best birds seen was a fly-over of a pair of **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo** – a bird that was to be seen daily, with a flock of over 50 birds seen near the power station on our last day.

Graham was determined to find the right road to the falls and next morning at 6.30, 4 of us set out for the long drive up the mountain over pretty rough tracks to locate the falls. Great excitement when we rounded a corner and saw a **Superb Lyrebird** running ahead of us up the road. It went into the thick bush and started to call – no mimicry this time but later when the group made the trip, it went through a repertoire – including Crimson Rosella, Kookaburra, King Parrot, Whipbird and loads of others – at least a dozen different calls.



Juvenile Crimson Rosella
by Graham Russell

Further on, we stopped for a couple of robins on the road. They turned out to be all female **Flame Robins**. Because we were running late we headed back to Talbingo as we were to meet the group for the day's outing. On the rush down the hill – it took us an hour and a half to get to the falls but only 40 minutes to get back - we came across 2 more lyrebirds crossing the track and another lower down where we saw the first one. A **Wonga Pigeon** was also seen flying in front of us on the descent.

The morning stop along the road into Lobs Hole was for the orchid hunters but the next stop at Landers Falls was excellent for a few good birds – **White-naped Honeyeater**, **Satin Flycatcher** and **Spotted Pardalote** along with a group of **Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoos** calling noisily as we left before a threatened storm.

Most decided to follow Graham back up to Buddong Falls as they were keen to see the lyrebirds. Alas, the bird was not co-operating but did, as I mentioned earlier, sing his mimicry of other birds for all to hear. At the falls car park, Nella heard the call of the **Gang Gang** and we walked up the road to find a pair feeding very low down close to the road – lovely!

On the Saturday, we left early to do the long drive to the Blue Waterholes with many stops on the way once we got off the main highway. First, was for a pair of **Australian Pipits** on the edge of the road and then a little further along for a group of **Flame Robins** with several males showing off for all to see. An **Olive Whistler** was also seen but, because of the poor light, other LBJs couldn't be identified with certainty so we moved on to Cooleman Homestead for morning tea and then onto Blue Waterholes. More **Flame Robins**, **Welcome Swallows** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were seen there.

Images from left:
Yellow-faced Honeyeater - Phillip Williams
Flame Robin - Graham Russell
Gang Gang Cockatoo – Phillip Williams



After getting back to camp in the late afternoon, Graham and I went back down to the power station in search of finches and a gerygone we had seen briefly on the Thursday. Neither of those were found but Graham heard the call of a **Satin Bowerbird** and with great difficulty, he located not only the bird but his bower and a visiting female that set him off performing. Graham managed a few photos but it was difficult to get a clear view of the birds and bower.

Sunday, after pack-up, we headed back to Log Bridge Creek which had proved very good in 2017. Target birds were **Scarlet Robin** and **White-throated Gerygone**. Only a female robin was seen but the gerygone proved quite elusive for a time but, in the end, most people got a look at it as it flittered through the trees.

Thanks to Graham and Dione for the organisation of the weekend and for Thursday night's dinner and to Nella, Elenee and Glenn for their repast on Friday night.

Max O'Sullivan

Talbingo Weekend Birdlist – 25-28 January 2018

Satin Bowerbird	Red Wattlebird	Grey Fantail	Brown Thornbill
White-browed Scrub-Wren	Pied Currawong	Common Blackbird	Rufous Whistler
PeeWee	Eastern Rosella	Australian Raven	Superb Wren
Red-browed Finch	Kookaburra	White-winged Chough	Grey Shrike-Thrush
White Cockatoo	Wood Duck	Hardhead	Black Duck
Coot	Little Pied Cormorant	Great Cormorant	Masked Lapwing
Willie Wagtail	Australasian Grebe	Eastern Spinebill	Black Swan
Great Crested Grebe	Galah	Sacred Kingfisher	King Parrot
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Dusky Woodswallow	Welcome Swallow	Peregrine Falcon
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Superb Lyrebird	Flame Robin	Magpie
White-throated Treecreeper	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Crimson Rosella	Wonga Pigeon
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Striated Pardalote	Eastern Whipbird (H)	Spotted Pardalote
Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike	Tree Martin	Satin Flycatcher	Little Eagle
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo	Eastern Yellow Robin	Kestrel	Silvereye
White-eared Honeyeater	Gang Gang	Australian Pipit	Fairy Martin
White-naped Honeyeater	Olive Whistler	Yellow Thornbill	Jacky Winter
White-throated Gerygone	Common Bronzewing	Goldfinch	White-faced Heron
White-plumed Honeyeater	Emu		

Summer Camp at Talbingo – flora

The first day (Friday) of our High Country trip was mostly spent at around 1200 metre altitude in the Cumberland Range. The second day was at 1400 metres in the Long Plain area. That 200 metre difference showed a complete change in vegetation from montane wet sclerophyll forest to subalpine woodland. Both were in 'snow country', the difference being in the length of time the snow persists (up to a month compared to three months or more) and the related minimum average winter temperatures including the frequency of frosts. When the growing season is too short there is not enough time to sustain substantial tree growth.

The objective for taking the Lobs Hole Ravine Track as far as the Jounama Heritage Walk was to find the location of the Ladies Tresses Orchid, *Spiranthes chinensis*. One specimen was brought to our attention last year and there was a desire to see it in situ. But first as our group is want to do, a supposed brief birding stop along the track turned into a more prolonged flora viewing session. Here the tall forest of Narrow-leaf Peppermint, *Eucalyptus radiata* and Mountain Gum *E. dalrympleana* showed obvious signs of recent bushfires. A dense understorey of grey leaved bushes was at first sight taken as regrowth, but turned out to be Hop Bitter-pea *Daviesia latifolia*. A taste test by some proved the point

however Peter showed he was not a sweet-tooth by declaring the leaves were not all that bitter.

At this altitude most plants flower around November so very few flowers were seen. Even the ubiquitous Grass Trigger Plants *Stylidium graminifolium* had only a few flowers out at the tops of their spikes. Enough though to demonstrate their unique pollination mechanism. Finding Hyacinth Orchids, *Dipodium roseum* and Fringe Lilies, *Thysanotus tuberosus* made the stop well worthwhile.

On to the parking area for the heritage walk; the Ladies Tresses was reported to be from 'the end of the track', so we all set off to cover the 1.6km to find them. Shortly Alan turned back and headed a little bit off the track. He recognised their habitat, lower swampy spot. We were surprised to see so many of them, feet had to be carefully placed let alone how one crouched to get the that right photo.



Hyacinth Orchid (above), Fringe Lilies (below), Ladies Tresses (below left) – Eric Whiting;
The Group at the location of the Ladies Tresses Orchid - Phillip Williams



Afterwards we all retreated to shade under the trees for morning tea thankful that we did not have to walk in the sun. UV radiation increases 1% for every 100 metre rise in elevation and here were at 1200 metres and midday approaching.

Back-tracking down the Snowy Mountains Highway we turned off again to take the Cumberland Track. Marked as a 4WD track it was still good enough for all our vehicles to travel the 4.7km to the start of the Landers Falls Lookouts. Most of us made it up the steady climbing track to the first lookout through the Mountain Gum, Alpine Ash, *E. delegatensis*

and Brown Barrel, *E. fastigata* tall forest. The track up is a narrow foot track hemmed in by dense shrubs that change as one climbs so quite a variety of species can be seen. A November trip would be well worthwhile; we found most of these shrubs were in fruit and only a few flowers to be seen. What would have been missed with an earlier visit was the small deep blue flowered Tall Lobelia, *Lobelia gibbose* that frequented the start of the track.

Those that continued to the second lookout remarked on the small tree that protruded through an intentional hole in the decking of the lookout. This was a Tingaringy Gum, *E. glaucescens* that only occurs in a few widely scattered areas all in very rocky places.



Tall Lobelia (above) (Eric Whiting),
Tingaringy Gum (Rowena Whiting)
Common Everlasting (below) (Dione Russell)



The higher lookout has the view to the Landers Falls. The Tumut River has deeply incised into the schist and shale rocks along its path. The valley is now dammed as the Talbingo Reservoir with the full supply level at around 550 metres. The Cumberland Range consists of resistant granites so that streams plunge over near vertical edges where the softer metamorphosed sediments that butted up to the granites have been eroded away.

The time after lunch was taken up by the drive towards Buddong Falls – quite an experience for those of us in the smaller cars and rather difficult to observe the forest we were passing through. By the time we got to the car park there was none left to walk to the falls. A quick walk down to the stream did give us a chance to pick out at least three types of ferns not seen at the other sites.

In stark contrast to the previous day's montane forest, Long Plain is a treeless stretch some 20 or so kilometres long. It is fringed by Snow Gums and one would at first sight believe to be above the tree line and in a true alpine environment. In fact the Snow Gums are on the hills above the plain level, the plain being a very shallow valley (the headwaters of the Murrumbidgee River). It is treeless partly because drainage is poor

leading to waterlogged peaty soils and also because it is a frost hollow. Cold air being heavier flows down and collects in the valley. For four or more months a year herbs and low shrubs are protected from the frequent frost by a covering of snow and have adapted their life styles to accommodate the short growing season.

Once again a birding stop turned into a protracted flora stop as the group viewed the sea of Billy Buttons and other sub alpine herbfield flowers. Unfortunately also prominent were a number of invasive weeds particularly yellow Hawkweeds of various types. The pretty clustered white flowered plant disappointed many when told it was a garden escape. Along the Blue Water Holes Track in the open areas (Coolemon Plains) with underlying limestone rocks we found Golden Everlastings providing the sea of yellow.



The thin poor-looking trees on the low ridge opposite the Cooinbil Hut are a rare occurrence of Weeping Snow Gum *E. debeuzevillei*. I think they looked healthier seven years ago but that may be my memory playing up. At that time Jane Paul pointed out that there were four types of Snow Gum in the area – the Common Snow Gum or White Sallee, *E. paucifolia*, the glaucous variation *E. niphophila* (used to be a sub species of the former, both found on drier sites), Black Sallee, *E. stellulata* on less well drained sites often bordering frost hollows as along the Long Plains Track, and the Weeping Snow Gum.

Our destination that day was the Blue Water Holes for the attractions of the limestone karst country. I wonder if anyone else noted the rare Anchor Plants, *Discaria pubescens* near the first ford crossing of Cave Creek on the Clarks Gorge walk. No. Well perhaps next time.



Anchor Plant

Eric Whiting

Glossy Black-Cockatoo

The Glossy Black-Cockatoo is a small black parrot which is found in the Narrandera Hills very sparsely. It is critically endangered.

They feed almost exclusively on the seeds of Drooping Sheoak *Allocasuarina verticillata*, particularly those growing on rocky hills and valleys that have kernels in more than half their seeds. The cockatoos lay a single egg in hollows in tall trees, Grey Box, Yellow Box or Red Gum. Trees that develop nest hollows suitable for this subspecies are thought to be at least 100 years old and possibly much older. The cockatoos use both intact habitat and isolated Drooping Sheoaks and tall gums within the semi-cleared agricultural land and feed in the rocky hills nearby where the *Allocasuarina* is mainly found.

It often occurs in pairs, or in groups of 3, which comprise a breeding pair and their offspring. Solitary males and small groups of juvenile males are also observed, as are loose flocks, which typically consist of 25 birds or less, but may comprise 50 or more birds in the post-breeding period.

A generation time of 14.1 years, they first breed at age 3.

Threats are tree hollow and nest box competition. Numbers of possums and open country cockatoos are thought to have increased as a result of clearing which are also happy to use large hollows.

Fire is a threat to the species food tree, as Drooping Sheoak takes at least 20 years to produce seed: as is the clearing of Drooping Sheoak. This means that the Narrandera Hills that burnt in 2000 may soon be producing food. Grazing by domestic, native or feral animals can also reduce regeneration of sheoaks, as can bushfires.

Nella Smith

Glossy Black Cockatoos
Female (right), note the irregular yellow blotches on the neck
Male (left)



Why do we need water for the environment?

Contributed by Nella Smith with information from the OEH website.

Covering an area of 81,527 square kilometres, the Murrumbidgee catchment includes 26 storage or diversion structures, along with a 1690-kilometre stretch of the river, and surrounding wetlands.

Water for the environment targets fringing lagoons on the Murrumbidgee River, swamps and creeks; the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) wetlands, including Ramsar-listed Fivebough and Tuckerbil swamps; and the lower Murrumbidgee floodplain, which includes the Nimmie Caira and Redbank systems and incorporates Yanga National Park.

In the Murrumbidgee valley, water for the environment supports a range of wetland communities, providing habitat and breeding opportunities for flora and fauna, as well as refuge during times of natural flow-variation. Threatened species, including brolgas, the Australasian bittern, the Southern bell frog and the fishing bat, benefit from flows.

All water for the environment is carefully planned each year to achieve environmental outcomes depending on ecological conditions, climate, community support and water availability.

Painted Snipe Return

Last week, we hit the jackpot, the 'night parrot' of wetlands. There was at least three Australian Painted Snipe at this Yoogali rice field, just out of Griffith. It's a late crop, still short, with very shallow water, and some mudflat. It's been five years of waiting since their big 2012-13 summer in the rice. Please keep your eyes out and be sure to report your sightings. During spring, there was a bunch of records across south-eastern Australia, and it looked promising for a good season, but the sightings fizzled out. They are very special birds, only about 1500 remain.



These late rice crops, especially those with open areas from poor establishment, may not offer bittern breeding habitat but shorebirds love them. This site also has over 150 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers from Russia. It highlights the value of 'holes' and varying wetland management over time.

Matt Herring

Source: Bitterns in Rice web site



Bird Hides in NSW

An updated list published in Birding NSW Newsletter Issue #285 Feb-Mar 2018

Hunter Wetlands Centre, Shortland

Gum Swamp Forbes

Narrandera Wetlands

Campbell's Swamp, Griffith

Reed Beds, Murray Valley NPWS.

Putta Bucca Wetlands, Mudgee

Yanga Lake Red Gum Park, near Balranald

The Waterbird Refuge, Sydney Olympic Park

Lake Cargelligo Sewage Treatment Works

Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton

Lake Nadungamba, Mt Annan Botanic Gardens

Turkey Flat NPWS

Jerrabomberra Wetlands, Fyshwick ACT

Boyers Lagoon, Jerseyville

I would have thought there would be a lot more than this so let me know if you know of others and I can forward the location to their editor. Rowena.

MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

Goanna	Narrandera Showground	02/12/17	Warrick Bradney
Echnida	Old Wagga Rd, Narrandera	02/12/17	Warrick Bradney
Spotless Crake [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/12/17	Max O'Sullivan
Buff-banded Rail [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/12/17	Max O'Sullivan
Crested Shrike-tit [2]	Galore Hill Reserve	09/12/17	Max O'Sullivan
Superb Parrot [12]	Fivebough Wetlands car park	10/12/17	Wagga 4WD Club
Red-capped Robin	Cassia Rd, Leeton	10/12/17	Margrit Martin
Australasian Grebe [2 prs]	'Yarrabimbi', Leeton – nesting	10/12/17	Andrew Thompson
Tree Martin [huge flock]	'Yarrabimbi', Leeton	10/12/17	Andrew Thompson
Eastern Koel [male]	Karri Dr, Leeton – in Keith's yard	11/12/17	Keith Hutton
Silvereye [4]	Narrandera Wetlands	12/12/17	Susan Whitehead
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo	'Mountain Dam', Leeton	13/12/17	Graham Russell
Blue-faced Honeyeater [6]	East Narrandera	14/12/17	Alan Whitehead
Little Corella [4]	Leeton Library area	14/12/17	Alan Whitehead
Glossy Black Cockatoo [4+]	'Yarrabimbi', Leeton	15/12/17	Andrew Thompson
Wedge-tailed Eagle [2]	Irrigation Way near Whitton turnoff	16/12/17	Max O'Sullivan
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [5+]	'Mountain Dam', Leeton	16/12/17	Xmas Party group
Black Kite [12]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/12/17	Keith Hutton
Glossy Ibis [2000-3000]	Fivebough Wetlands – flying in to roost	24/12/17	Keith Hutton
Whiskered Tern [500+]	Fivebough Wetlands	24/12/17	Keith Hutton
Latham's Snipe [1]	Lake Wyangan	29/12/17	Vincent Mourik
Caspian Tern [1]	Tharbogang Swamp, Griffith	29/12/17	Max O'Sullivan
Australasian Bittern [male]	Wattle Rd, Murrumbidgee – rice farm	30/12/17	Vincent Mourik
Magpie Goose [6]	Fivebough Wetlands	30/12/17	Vincent Mourik
Pallid Cuckoo [juv]	'Yarrabimbi', Leeton	30/12/17	Andrew Thompson
Tawny Frogmouth [1]	The Basin Dam, Koonadan	31/12/17	Vincent Mourik
White-winged Wren [pr]	The Basin Dam, Koonadan	31/12/17	Max O'Sullivan
Plumed Whistling Duck [22]	The Basin Dam, Koonadan	31/12/17	Vincent Mourik
Pink-eared Duck [60+]	The Basin Dam, Koonadan	31/12/17	Max O'Sullivan
Black-eared Cuckoo [1]	Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest	31/12/17	Max O'Sullivan
Little Bittern [H]	Fivebough Wetlands	01/01/18	Keith Hutton
Magpie Goose [7]	Fivebough Wetlands	01/01/18	Keith Hutton
Painted Button-quail [2]	Wattle Dam, Binya SF on the road in.	02/01/18	Max O'Sullivan
Dollarbird [4]	Euroly Bridge boat ramp	03/01/18	Max O'Sullivan
Australasian Shoveller [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	04/01/18	Max O'Sullivan
Freckled Duck [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	04/01/18	P&P Williams
Blue-billed Duck [2 males]	Fivebough Wetlands settling ponds	04/01/18	P&P Williams
Common (Indian) Myna [2]	Corbie Hill Rd, Leeton	04/01/18	Max O'Sullivan
Brown Songlark	Boree Rd via Leeton	04/01/18	Max O'Sullivan
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Fivebough Wetlands	05/01/18	Keith Hutton
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [2]	The Winery, Whitton Stock Route Rd	06/01/18	Max O'Sullivan
Olive-backed Oriole {1}	Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest	06/01/18	Max O'Sullivan
Turquoise Parrot [5]	Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest	06/01/18	Max O'Sullivan
Buff-banded Rail [4]	Gum Creek Rd via Griffith – on road	09/01/18	Max O'Sullivan
Black-necked Stork [Imm]	Coleambally	11/01/18	Keith Hutton

The Jabiru was reported earlier by Mark Robb – a very rare sighting for the area.

Musk Duck with 5 ducklings Campbell's Swamp 16/01/18 Max O'Sullivan

This number of young is unusual for this duck species as they are supposed to lay only 2 – 3 eggs. I have only



ever seen just 1 or 2 ducklings until this group. The ducklings would have been over 2 weeks old.

Little Bittern	Fivebough Wetlands	19/01/18	CBOC Group
Spotted Harrier	Fivebough Wetlands	19/01/18	CBOC Group
Superb Parrot	Yanco Reserve	19/01/18	CBOC Group
Painted Honeyeater	Yanco Reserve	19/01/18	CBOC Group
Australasian Bittern [5]	Murrami and Griffith Rice Farms	20/01/18	CBOC Group
Black-tailed Godwit [Imm]	Fivebough Wetlands	21/01/18	Richard from CBOC
Little Eagle	The Winery site – Binya	21/01/18	CBOC Group
Nankeen Night Heron [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/01/18	Max O'Sullivan
White-bellied Sea-Eagle [juv]	Rocky Waterholes, Narrandera	23/01/18	Max O'Sullivan
Wood Sandpiper [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	27/01/18	Keith Hutton
Black-winged Stilt [57]	Fivebough Wetlands	31/01/18	Keith Hutton
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [47]	Fivebough Wetlands	31/01/18	Keith Hutton
Black-tailed Godwit [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	31/01/18	Keith Hutton
Red-kneed Dotterel [22]	Fivebough Wetlands	31/01/18	Keith Hutton
Black-fronted Dotterel [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	31/01/18	Keith Hutton
Red-capped Plover [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	31/01/18	Keith Hutton
Marsh Sandpiper [10]	Fivebough Wetlands	31/01/18	Keith Hutton
Masked Lapwing [23]	Fivebough Wetlands	31/01/18	Keith Hutton
Red-necked Avocet [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	31/01/18	Keith Hutton
Freckled Duck [8]	Fivebough Wetlands settling ponds	31/01/18	Keith Hutton
Wood Duck	14 Bella Vista Dr., Leeton	31/01/18	Kathy Tenison
Kathy discovered the adult birds with 10 ducklings in their backyard – quite a surprise.			
Tawny Frogmouth [pr]	Griffith Golf Course	01/02/18	Max O'Sullivan
This is the first time I have been able to locate the birds at their usual spot since mid-December.			
Australian Shelduck [8]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/02/18	Max O'Sullivan

CRYPTIC BIRD QUIZ contributed by Sue Chittick-Dalton

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1. What a coward does in the face of danger | 8. A monarch and a toiler of the sea |
| 2. An action performed in eating | 9. To sell goods |
| 3. Portion of a whole and range of hills | 10. Something bright and a moorland plant |
| 4. A famous English architect | 11. A vegetable and a male bird |
| 5. Equally and a state of decay | 12. A schoolboy frolic |
| 6. To dodge the head | 13. The name of a disease |
| 7. Slang term expressing boastfulness | 14. Abbreviated periodical and a popular dish |
- Answers next issue

**** COMING EVENTS ****

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

8 February Thursday **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.
Topic: Member's Show & Tell – 'Images of 2017' – Eric Whiting will co-ordinate.
Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.

Glossy Black Cockatoo counts will be held on different weekends during February to allow for the organisers availability

Timing will be from 6:30pm until the birds come in (or not) – probably need to stay until 8pm. Please record all species and numbers of fauna that come near the dam or down to drink.. If you are able please record sex of glossies. There are forms for this and they should be sent to Nella so she can collate the results. – Take a chair, a drink, your hat, a recording sheet (which she will give you) or paper and pencil and your binoculars. Some people will not see any targeted species as we don't really know where they are.

Remember the more dams we can cover the more accurate the count will be.

See Page 11 for information and images of the Glossy Black Cockatoo

10 February Saturday **Glossy Black Cockatoo count – Narrandera area**
Participants will be allotted a dam to go to at various properties in the Narrandera Hills Please contact Nella Smith 6959 1210 so you can be allocated a dam. Nella will be organising a sausage sizzle at her place afterwards; please bring something to share and let her know
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.

16/17 February
Friday/Saturday **Glossy Black Cockatoo count at Rankins Springs**
They are asking for people to help with this when the cockies come in to drink at dams in the late afternoon/early evening on both days. Limited accommodation is available at the pub and motel or camping in the caravan park at Rankins Springs.
Numbers are required so dams can be allocated.
RSVP to Helen Dwyer by Saturday 10 February if you are able to join them.
dwyerhelen@bigpond.com or contact Nella Smith or Graham Russell for more information. Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

24 February Saturday **Glossy Black Cockatoo count – Leeton / Griffith**
Participants will be allotted a dam to go to at various properties in the Brobenah Hills and Binya Forest. Please contact Graham Russell 0419350673 so you can be allocated a dam. See above for general information.
The Russells will be organising a barbecue at their place afterwards. Please bring a salad or desert.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.

28 February Wednesday **Copy for the March newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.

3 March Saturday **World Wildlife Day**

4 March Sunday **CleanUp Australia**

8 March Thursday **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.
Topic: To be announced.
Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.