

# The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



August 2018 - Issue #262

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



Livingstone National Park - Red Box, Scribbly Gum and Grasstrees - inserts show the new shoot of a

Grasstree and the scribbles

by Rowena Whiting

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

For the September issue by  
Wednesday 5 September

To Rowena Whiting

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***Oolambeyan National Park***  
*is the place to be this month for  
our Spring Campout*

## 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.

### Membership enquiries:

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**Bank details for direct deposit:** 062 564 account no. 10039396, a/c name: Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Include your own name and description of payment in the reference box.

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**August is here already** and our Spring Camp is not far away. With scarcely any rain this year you wonder what the coming Spring holds for us. No doubt the group attending will find something of interest, as usually seems to happen.

Some sad news to convey this month, the death of Dot Eurell. Dot was always a joy to have as a travelling companion and a wealth of knowledge on history around the area. Sue Chittick-Dalton has written a beautiful vale of her friend. See page 8.

### An Introduction to Insects

Our speaker at the July meeting was one of our newer members, Nick May, who is working with an agribusiness in the field of pest control, advising farmers. His well-illustrated presentation introduced us to the many orders of insects pointing out the various features like the number of legs, placement of wings, by which to identify them. They all have their place in the biodiversity; we learnt that ladybirds eat pest species. He also showed a short video of an Ant Lion larva. His talk was followed with quite a number of questions which Nick was happy to answer. Many thanks for sharing your knowledge, Nick.

Nick had also brought along a couple of trays with some of his specimens.

**Show and tell** began with **Alan Whitehead** telling us of his visit to the **Narrandera Fisheries Centre** where they show videos of their research work and breeding program. There are tanks showing various species including a big yabbie and a large Murray Cod. There is also a touch tank to feel species. He was impressed with the information sheets that were available and showed us one of a map of the whole Murray Darling Basin.

**Eric Whiting** showed a **map** of Andrew Thompson's property "Yarrabimbi" showing flora distribution he had compiled using software from his plant lists.

**Nella Smith** had specimens of some **Cypress Pines** and Eric explained how the cones differ between the Black, White and Mallee species. Also that while they are called pines they are not related to the European species. See his article on page 7 for more information on the details of these species from our local area including distribution maps for NSW.

**Rowena**



## Livingstone – a Winter Walk

A forecast of a cold foggy morning did not deter four of us as we met at Glenn's place for the Livingstone Forest excursion. We travelled in one car to the advertised meeting place at the Uranquinty Bakery. Despite being foggy all the way, Nella found that by keeping the speed down as did all the other drivers on the road, the driving wasn't at all onerous. We had allowed for slower travel and in fact arrived at the Bakery with 10 minutes before the meeting time of 9am. Naturally we waited for others to turn up with a coffee.

Encouraged by the friendly service – advising us to sit at the warmest table – we waited until 9:30 before continuing on minus more company. Approaching the National Park we encountered gaps in or rose above the fog. In one of the gaps Nella spotted a number of Flame Robins scattered along the roadside fences. Thoughts were that we should see more in Livingstone.

Arriving at the park entrance we were greeted by Marcus Wright, the Regional Project Officer, Biodiversity Reforms for Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (RERO). He was there organising a 16<sup>th</sup> birthday camping experience for a small group of boys. Marcus gave us an insight into the operations of the New Biodiversity Act and its implications for land clearing and the offsets required. He offered to give us a talk one evening if we provide him some questions first (subject to his bosses approval).

It was more like ten when we started walking but we did not get far before stopping to admire the Spreading Wattle *Acacia genistifolia* in full blossom.

The bird list was beginning to grow as well.

The walking track from the entrance takes a well graded route up one side of a valley to near the saddle and then back down the other side. It is a shared route – bicycles and horse riding are permitted so there are no rough bits. It may have been a shared route but we had it all to ourselves.

Being midwinter there were not many flowers out and as we gained in height the bird life decreased. Nevertheless there were plenty of orchid leaves around and other plants not usually seen by us but unfortunately not in flower. So much temptation for another visit later in the year. Moreover there was sunshine for the whole time we were there – idyllic walking conditions.

It was around one when we got back to the car for lunch. The camping party had left so it was pleasant sitting in the sun to eat and watch the antics of a few friendlier birds forage just a little distance from us. Unfortunately they did not include the mixed group of Red-browed and Diamond Finches we had great pleasure in observing soon after starting the walk.

All was peaceful until we had finished eating when a gun club member began practising at the adjacent shooting range. The first shot made us jump, but not the birds – they took no notice at all.

Instead of back tracking to Uranquinty, we took the drive through the park right through to the southern end. The track is quite feasible for a four-wheel drive vehicle – the only obstacle being several erosion control humps.

Vegetation changes along the route with Red Box *Eucalyptus polyauthemos*, Inland Scribbly Gum *Eucalyptus rossii* and Tumbledown Gum *Eucalyptus dealbata* featuring.

**Eric Whiting**



Spreading Wattle in flower  
A large Ironbark tree with Red Box and  
Cypress Pine along the track  
Rowena Whiting





Basal leaves of a greenhood orchid, Calocera sp, a jelly fungus  
Rowena & Eric Whiting



**Bird List compiled by Nella Smith**

- |                      |                             |                          |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Flame Robin          | Eastern Yellow Robin        | White-plumed Honeyeater, |
| Red Wattlebird       | White-throated Treecreeper, | Brown Treecreeper        |
| White-browed Babbler | White-naped Honeyeater      | Fuscous Honeyeater       |
| Red-browed Finch     | Diamond Firetail.           | Eastern Rosella,         |
| Weebill              | Kookaburra                  | Grey Shrike-thrush,      |
| Australian Raven     |                             |                          |
- Where were the Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters and the Crested Shrike-tit?? And the Flame Robins.

**MFN Display at the Grong Grong Small Towns Festival on 21 July**

Visitors to our display which we held together with Narrandera Landcare.

Members – Glenn, Meredith & Peter checking out the skulls.



**Mallee Emu-wren Revival**

Recently 40 Mallee Emu-wrens have been translocated back to their old haunts in Ngarkat, South Australia where regenerating clumps of spinifex that these tiny birds rely on, have become their new home. These birds originated from surviving populations from various sites in Victoria. .

The Mallee Emu-wren was potentially one bushfire away from extinction in 2014 after raging fires ripped through Ngarkat and Billiatt Conservation Parks. In one tragic weekend, it became extinct in South Australia. A Mallee Birds Conservation Action Plan was designed to protect threatened mallee species with BirdLife, Australia being a key member.

A team of experts will be keeping an eye on these birds, with the second translocation of 40 birds into the same release site scheduled for winter 2018.

## Landcare's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Narrandera

Narrandera Landcare Group (NLG) was formed in June 1998 and to celebrate their 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary they held a National Tree Day planting event on July 8<sup>th</sup> this year. They re-visited a site they originally planted in 2001 on Manderlay Road, Narrandera and added to its biodiversity by planting more trees and shrubs but concentrated on introducing forbs and grasses.

This site is a good demonstration of the benefits of revegetation. The 2001 plantings were trees and shrubs, and most have grown well. Bird nests and mistletoe are now evident in some trees, echidnas are inhabiting the site, insect activity is very visible and some of the original plantings are self-seeding and multiplying.

In the week leading up to the community planting day three school groups came to the site. They were shown the plantings NLG did 17 years ago and the importance of biodiversity was explained. The kids were then invited to explore the area and ask questions about what they found. They were very keen participants in this.

They found and asked about some skeletal remains, nest boxes, spider webs, a fox hole, some chrysalis, a multitude of holes in the ground from some mass moth hatching and the distinctive fruit and seeds of some Hakea shrubs growing there.

They were also shown camera trap images of wallabies, kangaroos, foxes and an echidna we had recorded on the site. They were very interested in these. Each group also helped sow the seed in a direct seeding trial NLG is doing on the site involving some heat-treated and non-treated seed of three species of Acacia.

After this Narrandera Public School helped plant Belahs after being told it was a vital food source for Glossy Black Cockatoos, a threatened species. Some of the kids admitted being fussy eaters and sympathised with the Glossy Black.

When St Joseph's had their field trip they planted *Lomandra longifolia* along a depression which runs through the site. They have already learnt about erosion at school, so this tied in well with their school work.

On the Sunday community planting day 21 people in total turned up, young and old, from Narrandera, Leeton and Coleambally and we planted over 500 seedlings. Tree guards were installed, and everything was watered in.

There's been a few showers of rain since the event, so the plants are off to a good start. This site should provide a handy seed collecting area for the propagating NLG wish to do in the future.

Glenn Currie



## A visit to Cocoparra National Park

July 26 – 28 2018

Recently we camped at Woolshed Flat Camping Ground for 3 nights and enjoyed the peaceful surrounds without flies or mosquitoes.

We went on a number of walks including a memorable walk to The Bluff beginning at The Pines Picnic Area.

Sadly at Jacks Creek, Store Creek and Mt Brogden there was a high percentage of dead trees, shrubs and ground covers, especially on top of the western ridge at Jack's Creek. Numerous patches of Dwarf Greenhood florets were seen and a few flowering.

Highlights included

- a Pair of Wedge Tailed Eagles soaring above The Bluff.
- 'Fairy-lights' from the full moon's reflection in the leafy tree tops
- a Blue Flyer (red kangaroo)
- the majestic rock formations of Jack's Creek, Store Creek and The Bluff. Comparable to Central Australian landscapes.

We are concerned however, to see the ongoing environmental damage caused by the drought conditions and feral goats. In addition some walking tracks require substantial maintenance.

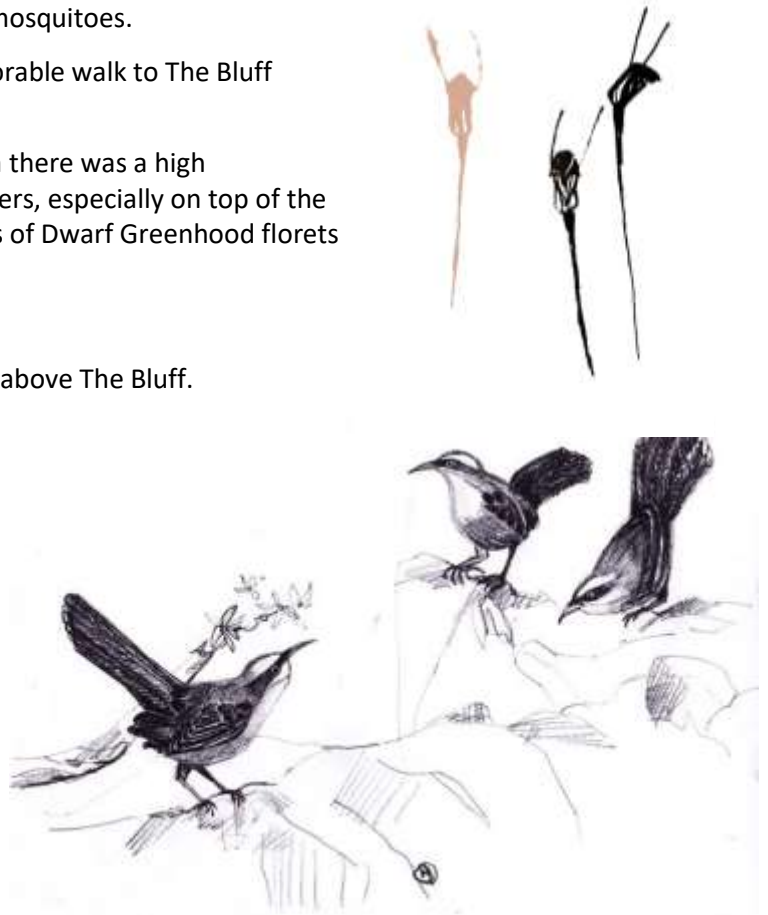
More Wiradjuri cultural signage would also enhance the appreciation and understanding of the park.

**Melanie Baulch & Richard Green**

### Bird List

Mulga Parrot	Blue Bonnet	Mallee Ringneck	Peaceful Dove
Crested Pigeon	White-winged Cough	Apostlebird	Galah
Bronzewing	Striped Honeyeater	Grey-crowned Babbler	White-browed Babbler
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Kookaburra	Eastern Yellow Robin	Speckled Warbler
White Plumed Honeyeater	Pee Wee	Grey Shrike-thrush	Jacky Winter
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Yellow-throated Miner	Australian Raven nesting	Little Raven
Turquoise Parrot –heard	Red-capped Robin	Bar-shouldered Dove	Superb Fairywren
Striated Pardalote	Wedge Tailed Eagles	Western Gerygone	Richard's Pipit
Restless Flycatcher –nesting	Grey Fantail	Noisy Miner	Magpie
Pied Butcher Bird	Grey Butcherbird	Weebil	Yellow Thornbill
Crested Pigeon	Southern Whiteface		
<u>On Fowler's Road</u>			
Black Shouldered Kite	Little Eagle	White faced Heron	Pied Cormorant
Sulphur Crested Cockatoo	Willy Wagtail		

Dwarf Greenhoods,  
White-browed Babbler



### THREATENED SPECIES DAY -7 SEPTEMBER

Threatened Species Day (TSD) takes place on 7 September each year – the day when the last-known Tasmanian Tiger died in captivity in 1936.

It's time now for Save our Species and our local NSW communities and schools to start thinking about and planning this year's activities to mark this special day during Biodiversity Month in September.

Be inspired by some of the [TSD 2017 events and activities](#).

## Which Cypress Pine is it ?

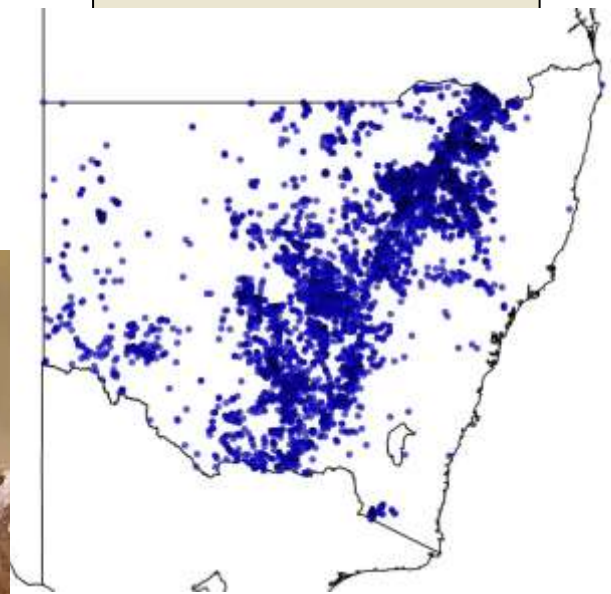
There is a tendency to identify our local Cypress Pines by the colour of the foliage. White Cypress Pine, *Callitris glaucophylla* has leaves with a waxy coating giving the trees their pale grey-green colour. Black Cypress Pine *Callitris endlicheri* does not have much of a coating so the leaves are dark green. However some White Cypress Pine trees have leaves with only a little coating and appear green.

So how can you definitely tell the difference? The best way is to look at the cones. White Cypress Pine cones have a central column (a previous name for our ones was *Callitris columellaris* but that name is only used for a north coast to Queensland species). Black Cypress Pine have three small lobes that support the seeds in the centre of the cone. In addition the scales of White Cypress Pine are fairly smooth on the outside. Black Cypress Pines cones have a noticeable knob at the top of each cone.

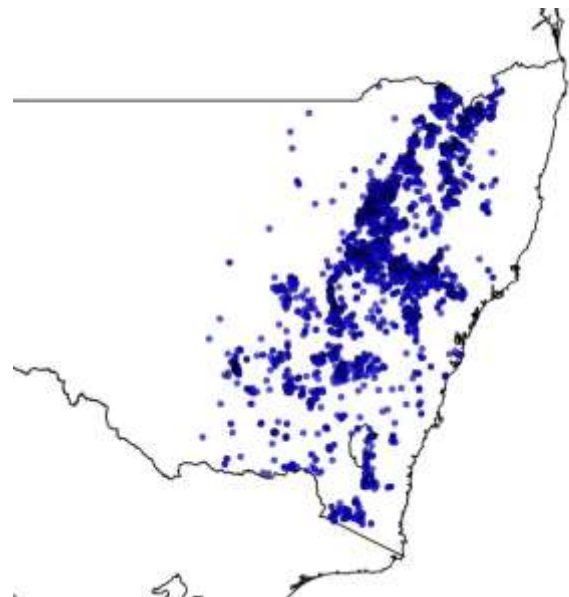
In the absence of cones (they are often out of reach) the leaves of White Cypress Pines are rounded on their backs – the fronts are closely appressed to the stems. Black Cypress Pine leaves had a distinct angled keel.



White Cypress Pine – open cone, leaves, closed cone.



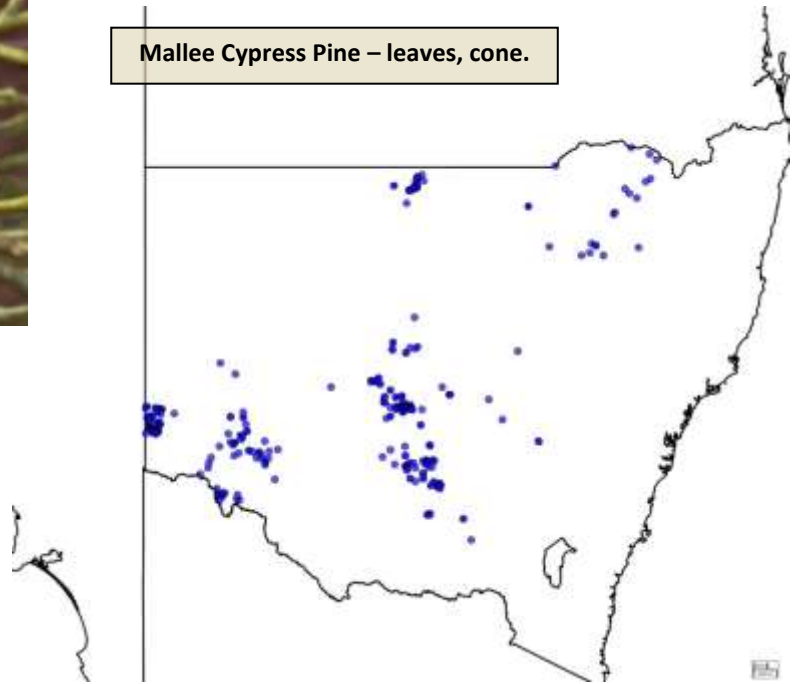
Black Cypress Pine – leaves, cone.



There is a third Cypress Pine in our local area, the Mallee Cypress Pine *Callitris verrucosa*. This one has leaves that are dark green with rounded backs. The centre of the cones has a single stout column supporting the seeds like the White Cypress Pine. However the cone scales are covered in knobs making them instantly identifiable. As the name suggests it is confined to mallee areas.



Mallee Cypress Pine – leaves, cone.



White Cypress Pine can be found in or around mallee areas but even green forms are readily distinguished by the tall erect, usually single-trunked tree form. The Mallee Cypress Pine is a rather bushy often multi-trunked tall shrub.

The waxy coating of the White Cypress Pine leaves is an adaption to survive in much drier climates and trees can be found well into semi-arid and even arid areas. The trade-off is a slower growth so that it cannot compete with the Black Cypress Pine in moister areas. Hence there is roughly a west-east divide between these two species. The distinct rain shadow region in the Snowy River valley which sports a disjunct population of White Cypress Pine highlights the moisture relationship.

**Eric Whiting**

## Vale Dot Eurell

Farewell dear friend. In the mosaic of my mature life, you have always represented a lovely turquoise tile spasmodically shining through to me.

Your tireless dedication to whatever task you undertook was admirable, remembering your photography when the subject, light and angle were



studied with such patience. Your scrapbooking was always an amazing travelogue concocted from a container of bits and pieces. You are a legend regarding the work you have done through and for the Genealogy Society.



As a friend and travelling companion, your company on the many Field Naturalist excursions and camp-outs, the amazing Amazonian trip, the flight over the South Pole, the Coach trip to Cape York and Thursday Island was such a great pleasure.

Lastly and most importantly was your absolute love and devotion for your two beautiful daughters.

You gave your utmost to everything you touched yet remained unassuming and modest. Thank you for being YOU and my friend.

**Sue Chittick-Dalton**

Lunch time at Hunthawang camp  
Dot and Sue looking at a Hopbush at Pulletop Reserve – Oct 2013 - Rowena Whiting



## Myall Park Botanic Garden (a hidden treasure)

Myall Park Botanic Garden is located in South-east Queensland at Glenmorgan. The garden is a couple of Kilometres outside of Glenmorgan on Riverglen Road.

The garden was established in the 1940's by Mr David Gordon on the Myall Park sheep station. In the 1950's an area of 132 hectares was fenced and an irrigation system installed. The Garden included a glass hot house, hardening bays, potting shed and a seed storage area with Silky Oak draws to maintain the providence of the collected seed. The garden was run by a series of nursery men between the 1950's and the 1980's. Dorothy Gordon a botanic artist and wife of David Gordon was involved in the garden as a companion, communicator and provider of moral support.



In the 1950's many of the Grevilleas hybridised and three of these persisted, the most famous of these is Grevillea Robyn Gordon named after one of their daughters the other two are Grevillea Sandra Gordon and Grevillea Miranda Gordon. More recently there has been a further hybrid the Grevillea Dorothy Gordon,

Grevillea Robyn Gordon was the first plant registered by the Australian Plant Cultivar Registration Authority as a specimen of this had been given away before registration no royalties were received for G. Robyn Gordon but they are received for the other two.

After the death of Dorothy in 1985 family and friends were approached to run the garden and in 1988 a committee was formed, in 1992 an incorporated limited company was form to run the garden. Also in 1992 the garden was added to the Register of National Estates and in 1994 the 132 hectare garden was excised from the surrounding property and gifted to the company. The Garden is maintained using donations and sales from the gift shop and accommodation.



When you walk through the garden it doesn't look like the botanic gardens that we are used to seeing in the capital cities. It is more like walking through the bush. The garden consists of a collection of plants from throughout the arid and semi-arid regions of Australia. We have visited twice over the last couple of years one in July and once at the end of March, the garden has been different both times and there was something interesting to look at. My botanical knowledge isn't good enough to give you a detailed description of the plants in the garden but if you look at the Web address there is



more detail. The birding within the garden was good so it is worth visiting just to do the birding thing.

There is a variety of accommodation available at the gardens ranging from camping and caravan sites to Shearers quarters and the Avochie Cottage. Both the shearers' quarter and the Avochie Cottage are renovated 1950's buildings. I have stayed in both the cottage and the shearers quarters. Though they are by no means 5 star they are comfortable and provided us with all that we needed for the nights that we stayed there. The first time that we stayed it was only for one night so the second time we made sure that we stayed for 3 nights so that we had enough time but I still don't think we saw it all. It is also a good place to base yourself to explore the Brigalow belt so a stay of a couple of weeks wouldn't be wasted

I would encourage anyone passing through the region to take the time to stop in and stay a couple of nights or a fortnight, it is a place that I know I will visit again on my trips north and every night that you stay adds money towards the running and maintenance of the garden that truly is a hidden treasure.



Graham Russell

## MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

<b>Crested Shrike-tit</b>	Nangar National Park via Forbes	24/06/18	Graham Russell
<b>Black Swan</b> [18]	Boat Ramp Lake Talbot, Narrandera	01/07/18	Alan Whitehead
<b>Tawny Frogmouth</b>	Narrandera Wetlands	01/07/18	Susan Whitehead
<b>Tawny Frogmouth</b>	Fivebough Wetlands	02/07/18	Nella Smith
This is the first record of this bird at Fivebough that Keith is aware of since taking records.			
<b>Nankeen Night Heron</b> [3]	McCaughey Lake, Yanco	05/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Weebill</b> [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	05/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Brolga</b> [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	05/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Turquoise Parrot</b> [7+]	'The Winery' site Binya State Forest south	07/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike</b> [10]	'The Winery' site Binya SF in the one tree	07/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Double-banded Plover</b> [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/07/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Red-capped Plover</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/07/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Red-necked Avocet</b> [25]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/07/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Red-kneed Dotterel</b> [>250]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/07/18	Keith Hutton
It is interesting to note that these birds suddenly disappeared from Sunday 29 July – Why?			
<b>Collared Sparrowhawk</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/07/18	Keith Hutton
<b>White-headed Stilt</b> [10 only]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/07/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Koala</b>	Narrandera Wetlands	09/07/18	Susan Whitehead
<b>Pied Butcherbird</b>	Narrandera Wetlands	09/07/18	Susan Whitehead
<b>Blue-faced Honeyeater</b> [6]	Palla St, Griffith	09/07/18	Virginia Tarr
<b>Superb Wren</b> [6]	Narrandera Common	10/07/18	Warrick Bradney
<b>Flame Robin</b> [male]	Opposite Narrandera airport	11/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>White-fronted Honeyeater</b>	In David's garden in Griffith	17/07/18	David Parker
<b>Australian Spotted Crake</b> [5]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Ground Cuckoo-Shrike</b> [3]	Carver Rd, Stanbridge	18/07/18	per Paul Maytom
<b>Major Mitchell's Cockatoo</b> [30]	Nericon	19/07/18	Neil Palframan
<b>Major Mitchell's Cockatoo</b> [15]	Walnut Orchard Colinroobie Rd, Leeton	20/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Speckled Warbler</b> [1]	Evans Smyles Rd via Leeton	20/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Hooded Robin</b> [fem]	Evans Smyles Rd via Leeton	20/07/18	Max O'Sullivan

<b>Tawny Frogmouth</b> [pr]	Koala Reserve Narrandera	21/07/18	CBOC members
<b>Wedge-tailed Eagle</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	21/07/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Buff-banded Rail</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	21/07/18	Keith Hutton
<b>White-winged Chough</b> [40]	Rifle Range Rd Griffith	22/07/18	Neil Palframan
<b>Grey-crowned Babbler</b> [2]	Mc Nabb Cres Griffith – regular	23/07/18	Neil Palframan

Neil has seen these birds daily whilst working in McNabb Cres but Sue reports they have not been seen at her place for a few weeks.

<b>Little Corella</b> [500 to 1000]	Petersham Rd, Leeton	23/07/18	Keith Hutton
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Also seen by Max flying over Petersham Rd in a huge noisy flock. There were no Long-bills among them.

<b>Ground Cuckoo-Shrike</b> [5]	Oolambeyan National Park	24/07/18	David Parker
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Let's hope they hang around until our camp there on 17th August!

<b>Golden Whistler</b> [male]	Pendula St, Leeton	28/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
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<b>Yellow-plumed Honeyeater</b> [2]	Fivebough Wetlands Carpark	30/07/18	Keith Hutton
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Also in flowering eucalypts – White-plumed, Singing, White-eared and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters.

<b>Glossy Ibis</b> [1]	Tuckerbil Swamp	30/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
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<b>Wedge-tailed Eagle</b> [1]	Tuckerbil Swamp	30/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
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<b>Pee Wee</b> [9]	McNabb Cres, Griffith	30/07/18	Sue Chittick-Dalton
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<b>Australian Ringneck Parrot</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	30/07/18	Sue Chittick-Dalton
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Sue has regular visits from both Australian Ringneck forms – **Mallee** and the '**28'** Ringnecks. The western '28' Parrots have been in the area for some time and are originally aviary escaped birds that have established themselves around Scenic Hill and successfully bred there over the years. It is thought they escaped as a result of a fire in a Griffith Pet Shop several years ago.

Sue has just sent a text on 1 August to say her Babblers are back trashing her car again!

Keith Hutton's quarterly survey of **Fivebough Wetlands** (30/7/18) have yielded the following numbers:

<b>Black Swan</b> [99]	<b>Red-capped Plover</b> [35]	<b>White-headed Stilt</b> [122]
<b>Flame Robin</b> [4]	<b>Brolga</b> [4]	<b>Glossy Ibis</b> [1]
<b>Black Falcon</b> [pr]	<b>Australian Shelduck</b> [50]	<b>Little Eagle</b> [1]
<b>Australasian Shoveler</b> [79]	<b>White-bellied Sea-Eagle</b> [1]	<b>Wedge-tailed Eagle</b> [1]

And **Tuckerbil Swamp** (31/07/18).

<b>Straw-necked Ibis</b> [142]	<b>Red-necked Avocet</b> [50]	<b>Spotted Harrier</b> [1]
<b>Australian Wood Duck</b> [38]	<b>Black Falcon</b> [1]	<b>Peregrine Falcon</b> [1]

**Brolga** [22]

<b>Double-barred Finch</b> [3]	Fivebough Wetlands carpark	01/08/18	Max O'Sullivan
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<b>Superb Parrot</b> [pr]	Turkey Flat River Rd via Yanco	02/08/18	Max O'Sullivan
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## The Joys of Birdwatching 5 August

There is something Soul-satisfying about actual bird WATCHING, rather than just TWITCHING. It transports me into another dimension.

We all know that non-breeding Magpie larks (*Granilla cyanoleuca*), congregate in the Spring to sort themselves out. Often large flocks can be seen on power lines and fences and I was Blessed to have a group of 9-11 visit my back yard this past week, where there are 2 water stations a few metres apart, and lots of foliage.

The scene reminded me of the Roman Baths where the occupants would bathe, lounge around, chat and bathe again but these birds were all rotating in the same direction right to left. Were they playing or is there some sort of order?

I am wondering if they were invited by an off-spring of a constant pair of Magpie Larks that treat garden as their own territory?

Sue Chittick-Dalton

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

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

- 9 August Thursday**      **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.  
**Guest Speaker: Fred van Gessel Topic: Birds of Borneo. –**  
**Bring along any ‘Show and Tell’**  
**Contact:** Nella Smith 6959 1210.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 17-19 August Weekend**      **Spring Camp**  
**This will be held at Oolambeyan National Park**  
Accommodation is available in the homestead.  
Cost is \$15 per night for food. This should have been paid by participants but let Dione Russell (0428 536 290) if you haven't advised her and want to come.  
There may still be room.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 25 August Saturday**      **Stackpoole National Park for Spring Flowers**  
**Bring morning tea and lunch.**  
**Meet:** at the Aeroplane by the Griffith Tourist Information Centre at 8:30 am.  
**Contact:** Eric Whiting 6953 2612  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- September is Biodiversity Month**
- 5 September Wednesday** **Copy for the September newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**  
**Email:** [ericwhiting4@bigpond.com](mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com). Phone: 6953 2612.
- 7 September Friday**      **Threatened Species Day**  
**This is the day when the last-known Tasmanian Tiger died in captivity in 1936.**
- 13 September Thursday**      **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.  
**Topic:** To be decided – Bring along ideas for topic or possible guest speakers.  
**Contact:** Nella Smith 6959 1210.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 15 September Saturday**      **Outing: Brobenah Hills Crown Land**  
**Bring:** morning tea and lunch packed to walk. Walk will be reasonably hard no track free walking through the bush.  
**Meet: at 9:00am** opposite Milbrae Quarry entrance on the Colinroobie Road  
**Contact:** Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536 290  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 29 September Saturday**      **Outing to the Mallee around Rankins Springs**  
**Bring: morning tea and lunch – will be by the cars. Walk should be easy.**  
**Meet:** the Caravan Park in Rankins Springs  
**Contact:** Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536 290  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).