

# The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



March 2020 - Issue #279

Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.

PO Box 541, LEETON 2705 ISSN-1327-1172

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



## IN THIS ISSUE

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Office Bearers and Subscriptions .....             | 2  |
| Welcome to March.....                              | 2  |
| Big Tree Soliloquy – Outing to ‘Sunshower’ .....   | 3  |
| Narrandera Landcare activities .....               | 5  |
| Narrandera Landcare update on 2019 plantings ..... | 6  |
| Narrandera Common .....                            | 7  |
| Can Plants Hear? .....                             | 8  |
| Garland Lily .....                                 | 8  |
| MFN group in Wagga Wagga .....                     | 9  |
| Member Profiles – The Whiteheads.....              | 10 |
| Members’ Sightings.....                            | 11 |
| Coming Events Calendar.....                        | 12 |

Outing to ‘Sunshower’ Group enjoying the wildlife by the lagoon in the late afternoon  
Vince Bucello

## CONTRIBUTIONS

For the April 2020 issue by

Wednesday 1 April

To Rowena Whiting

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

Phone: 6953 2612

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

**President:** Alan Whitehead 6959 3779      **Editor:** Rowena Whiting 6953 2612  
**Vice President:** Warrick Bradney      **Committee:** Phil Tenison 6953 4869  
**Vice President:** Max O'Sullivan 0434 923 766      Glenn Currie 0488 563 321  
**Vice President:** Virginia Tarr 6962 5614  
**Secretary:** Graham and Dione Russell 0419 350 673 (Graham) 0428 536290 (Dione)  
**Treasurer:** Ellené Schnell 0488 080 866      **Website Co-ordinator:** Kathy Tenison 6953 4869

**MEETINGS** ARE HELD ON THE SECOND THURSDAY EACH MONTH, EXCEPT JANUARY, AT THE Yellow Room, Leeton Library, Sycamore Street at 7 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               |         |
| <b>Annual Subscriptions:</b> | Family       | \$45.00   | Adult/Single       | \$35.00        | Journal only/Concession | \$25.00 |

**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.

Opinions expressed by authors are their own and do not necessarily represent the policies or views of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.

## Welcome to March

At our February meeting we were treated to a pre-launch showing of the recently completed short video about visiting the Fivebough Wetlands. See Alan's article *Big Tree Soliloquy* for other pleasures of the evening. The club contributed to the cost from the environment fund. It will be a great asset to Leeton' tourism promotion. It can be seen at the Leeton Visitor Information Centre and should be on Youtube.

Another significant step for the Club is the proposed formation of an affiliated group in Wagga Wagga. See page 9 for more about this a World Wetland Day event at the Murrumbidgee Wetland instigated by Melanie Baulch.

It is good to see some people have been putting in some research to write their pieces for this month and maybe not so good a lack of bird photos. I have include a couple that I haven't previously used.

With the recent rain and cooler temperatures it is time to step out and enjoy what nature has to offer.

### Enjoy your month, Rowena

#### From the inbox

Here are few items of interest you may like to check out:

**Murrumbidgee Landcare's February newsletter** has links to

**How to make and use seed bombs** - *Seed bombs are made from a mixture of clay, compost, seeds and water, and can provide a low-cost solution for revegetation after bush fires or drought.*

**Pulling out weeds is the best thing you can do to help nature recover from the fires!** *Many Australians feel compelled to help our damaged wildlife after this season's terrible bushfires. But one of the most important ways to assist is weeding.*

**Hunter Bird Observers** February newsletter contains an article on 'Bird Watching as a Therapy'.

**BirdLife Australia** - Some good news stories have come to light after the flames, and it's not only birds in the bush Swift Parrots/Regent Honeyeaters. The comings and goings of Swifties and Regents last year are documented in a new report, revealing both species turned up in some unexpected places.



Actually, the genesis of our trip to Vince Bucello's farm at Darlington Point on Saturday afternoon, February 15, was two days earlier, at our first Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists' meeting for the year.

Here we invited Vince to show us his new short film on Fivebough Wetlands. And what an uplifting example of the cinematic arts it was.

Among the most striking aspects were the aerial shots, where as detail diminished, the majesty of the broad patterns and colours came into focus. These grand, dreamlike vistas rival any human-made masterpieces, whether from the surrealist, or any other *plein air* art movement. This is especially the case in their tone and colour nuances, resplendent with tangerines, lilacs, aquas and ochres.

Then there were the bird studies. These alone must entice any number of ardent nature pilgrims to visit this remarkable place. One of the best of these was an egret; wide, white wings outspread as it speared a small fish.

And there were bonuses, in the form of several other videos. Like the one featuring the Mile Marker Trees along the Murray River. These were, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, carved as navigation aids into the boles of large River Red Gums. Quite a few are still visible, and remain precious historical relics of a simpler age.

With Vince there was a story to tell with every film; some tall I suspect, but all highly entertaining. One of the most interesting, and relevant to today, was an account of his enterprise in laying large, carp-inhibiting polypipes to redirect environmental water into a lagoon on his property. This beautiful body of water nestles in an open forest of River Red Gums, many of very ancient origin.

One rather poignant story he told was of a giant of the species which had happily survived - and provided habitat and food for countless generations of creatures - perhaps from the Age of the Cathedrals. Poignant? Within a couple of years of Vince purchasing the property, it died!



The lagoon at 'Sunshower' – Rowena Whiting

So on a beautiful sunny (after recent good rain) windless afternoon we were convoyed out to *Sunshower*, his euphiously-named piece of paradise. Here we were deposited on the shore of the aforesaid lagoon. Or would that be "billabong"?

And it was huge, in terms of private property ownership, at least, its clear, sparkling water rippling in the slanting evening sunlight.

Here Vince had set up tables, chairs, complimentary drinks – and a barbeque. As he twiddled with the fancy camp oven's knobs, this oft-recondite raconteur regaled us with even more stories, mostly about the wonderful land- and waterscape in which we found ourselves.

Then we went for a walk along the edge of the brimming lagoon, binoculars ready in case of bird sightings; of which there were few. This included waterbirds; as the lagoon had only been filled a month or so ago: but long enough for a pair of Pacific Black Ducks to bless the world with six fluffy ducklings; about two weeks old, already.

At one point I confidently identified a Jackie Winter.

"Where?" said Max sidling up beside me.

"There! You can tell by its big brown eye."

"Sorry, that's a female Red-capped Robin."

"Oh ..."

Soon after, I wandered away from the group to soliloquise with a spectacular arboreal giant. This again must have occupied that particular piece of real estate for many centuries.

Then my Magic Moment; a Brown Tree Creeper (no-one to contradict me this time!) landed on a log just a couple of meters away. After hopping about for a bit, he regarded me in a friendly way, and flew off.

Later I encountered my daughter, Aanya Whitehead (brand new member of the MFN) contemplating another mighty Red Gum.

“That looks like a scar tree.” she mused.

And I had to agree; the ‘scar’, again of ancient origin, was more than a meter high and 50 centimeters wide, with a clear signature curve at the top. But the bottom went straight into the ground? Obviously the ancestral shield (coolamon, canoe, whatever?) maker could not have cut the slab of bark from underground.

The secret turned out to be in the soil at the base of the tree, a deep, rich loam; so different from the packed clay of the surrounding area. Over the centuries, the tree, with the help of animal detritus and the like, had created its own highly fertile soil, which gradually built up over the years, burying the bottom of the scar. True recycling. Vince later confirmed that there are quite a few scar trees scattered around the riverside property; which, mercifully, had never been clear-felled.

A totally memorable find.

The Scar Tree, like my Soliloquy Tree, and many others in the forest, had the curious combination of not being especially tall, but of having massive girth. These timeless survivors of everything nature and man can throw at them have a unique tortured growth habit. Aussie Ents, indeed.

Finally we all repaired to the camp site to enjoy the fine fare with which we have all become accustomed. This was spiced by animated discussions of all manner of things, from the burial practices of the original inhabitants, to whether horses can see in the dark (they can, apparently).

Not so we humans, alas: so reluctant were we to break out of our cocoon of conviviality that Phil Tenison had to set up a camp light in the gloom so that we could pack up.

So concluded yet another enriching and enlightening outing for we lucky MFNs. Thank you Vince.

### Alan Whitehead



Scar tree – Aanya Whitehead



Group enjoying the barbecue and conversation – Barry Allen

Group by the lagoon - Vince Bucello

Lace Monitor, Keith spotted this as he wandered back to where we parked a little behind the group.





## A note on the 'Sunshower' Lagoon

Over a decade ago Vince turned the 'Sunshower' property into a conservation area. Protective fencing was erected about this time enabled by a grant from the Murrumbidgee Wetlands Working Group just prior to it winding up. The Millennium drought obstructed further rehabilitation. Water was absent from the lagoon until the 2012 floods when the Murrumbidgee River overflowed.

A further natural filling would depend on another big flood. However pumping from the river has been feasible as only a narrow neck separated river and lagoon, and Vince was successful in gaining environmental water over this last summer, having met all the other relevant conservation conditions. The lagoon was filled barely six weeks prior to our visit and as Vince pointed out, has hardly had time to respond.



## Eric Whiting

### Bird List compiled by Max O'Sullivan

|                      |                       |                         |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Australasian Grebe   | Little Pied Cormorant | Great Cormorant         | Black Duck        |
| Grey Teal            | Australasian Shoveler | Common Bronzewing       | Peaceful Dove (H) |
| White Cockatoo (H)   | Corella Sp (H)        | Yellow Rosella          | Kookaburra (H)    |
| Red-capped Robin (f) | Brown Treecreeper     | White-plumed Honeyeater | Pee-wee           |
| Magpie               | Starling              | Jacky Winter            |                   |

On leaving around 9pm we heard a flock of Plumed Whistling Duck fly overhead.

## Narrandera Landcare Mailing List

Narrandera Landcare has compiled an emailing list of people who have expressed interest in being notified of their Upcoming Activities. These include their propagating and planting days, bird surveys and nature walks. They also include events held by other organisations in the region that Landcarers and Field Naturalists may be interested in.

They try and keep their email short and to the point. If you would like to receive these emails please contact [narranderalandcare@gmail.com](mailto:narranderalandcare@gmail.com) and ask to be put the list.

For anyone into Facebook they maintain two pages which may be of interest

<https://www.facebook.com/NarranderaLandcare/> and  
<https://www.facebook.com/NarranderaFoodGarden/>

### Glenn Currie

#### Here is the most recent one:

Hi everyone

**Murrumbidgee Landcare** are holding a **workshop on getting the best out of your soils** The workshop will be held at **Commemoration Hall – Balaro St Grong Grong, Friday 27th March.**

This workshop is free, with lunch and morning tea provided. **RSVP essential by 20 March to Kathy Tenison – 0428 396 826 or [bidgeeirrigation@mli.org.au](mailto:bidgeeirrigation@mli.org.au)** For more information please see [mli.org.au/events/soils-made-simple-good-dirt-for-all-farmers/](http://mli.org.au/events/soils-made-simple-good-dirt-for-all-farmers/) or the attached brochure.

And **advance notice** of our **National Tree Day community planting**. We'll be planting **17th May** this year to give the seedlings time to establish before winter. Please see <https://treeday.planetark.org/site/10023461> or <https://www.facebook.com/events/280834769577652/> for more information. It would be great to see you there!

Thanks, Glenn





## Narrandera Landcare update on how their July 2019 plantings are faring

As MFN provided great support and many of the Field Nats helped Narrandera Landcare Group (NLG) with their 2019 National Tree Day community planting, I thought an article detailing how the plantings fared might be appreciated.

NLG, local schools and the community planted around 1500 seedlings at Narrandera Wetlands in late July. On the evening after the planting a nice 11mm of rain fell which was great for the seedlings, but very little rain was received over the following months. The hot, dry summer was brutal, and we were resigned to a very low survival rate. NLG watered a few times, but it was obvious many plants were perishing.

Late January brought respite with 30mm of rain. Another 35 then 24mm were received in February. Some NLG members spent a morning late February straightening tree guards and collecting superfluous ones from dead seedlings. There were a lot of these and when we were done, we evaluated that 40% have survived. The forbs survived better over the summer than the trees and shrubs which helped the percentage, but overall the group is happy with the result.

When we plant that many seedlings, we don't plan to water them all regularly – the logistics are too difficult. We definitely need help from the weather, so consider 40% quite acceptable given the conditions. As I write this up to 100mm is forecast over the next two days so we should be happily relieved of having to water them again for quite a while (and I don't expect too many more superfluous tree guards will have to be picked up in the future).

While evaluating the results we noticed the plantings by Narrandera Public School had something like 90% survival. This school had an extra visit a month later to teach the pupils about follow-up care and they watered their plantings again and spread mulch around them. This obviously helped immensely.

We've talked to all the schools this year about planting in May to give the roots time to establish before winter and then a follow-up visit at the end of July to water and mulch. The schools are keen to help us with this endeavour and we hope the local community will get on board with the idea as well.

**Glenn Currie**

**An omission from the last issue** were the names of Alan's photos of the eucalypts that he submitted to include in his article about Narrandera's trees. The names were included in his email which I'm afraid I overlooked. Rowena.

From Left: Whipped cream blossoms of Bloodwood; Red enamel buds and blossoms of Pink-flowering Mallee; Giant crimson inflorescence complements powder-blue foliage of Red-flowering Mallee.



**Top: *Acacia deanei* Deanes Wattle  
Below: *Maireana pyramidata***





## Narrandera Common

Congratulations to Rowena and the contributors to the last MFN newsletter; it was an outstanding issue. I was particularly impressed by our President's article on Narrandera's trees. It's a hard act to follow but I want to add to Alan's comments on the River Red Gum forest on The Common south of the town.

We certainly have our forebears to thank for retaining the giant trees, hundreds of years old, scattered through the forest, but the rest of the trees are 70 years old maximum.

How did The Common change and suddenly become forested? The answer was Myxomatosis, a viral disease introduced in the late forties to control the plague of rabbits, plus the 1950 flood, which happened 70 years ago this month. A flood always germinates thousands of Red Gum seeds and since there were no rabbits to eat them, many of the seedlings survived. All the smaller trees can be dated by subsequent floods. Koalas seem to prefer middle sized trees.



**A burl-esque tree – Rowena Whiting**

Trying to find out what the common was like 70 plus years ago, I was lucky to contact Jeffrey Osmond. Jeffrey and Lorraine took me for a drive around The Common, which he obviously knew in detail because he and his brothers rode their horses there, went fishing and grew up with a wonderful play area. Their father owned an adjoining property.

Jeffrey said that in the fifties The Common was an open grassy area with big scattered shade trees, pensioners' huts and their orchards and a horse yard on the sand hills. A ring of posts is all that remains of the horse yard and Jeffrey pointed out a single fig tree, lone survivor of the orchards which were removed when fruit fly took over the town, a sad end to part of our history. The billabongs along the canal embankment were scooped out to build the channel banks, obvious when you think about it. The ridge that the pensioners used to walk out during flood time is still visible.

Narrandera Common's official title is Narrandera Flora and Fauna Reserve but most people still use its former name. Town commons or village greens were part of the landscape in England centuries ago and some Australian towns seem to have followed this practice. Narrandera was declared a village in 1863 and The Common was probably a place for villagers to keep their horse or cow.

The Great Depression of the 1930s brought The Common into history as a place where homeless people built a hut or humpy, trapped rabbits, grew vegetables, planted fruit trees and lived a subsistence lifestyle. Rabbits kept a fair proportion of our population alive in the 1930s.

I have not been able to find out how or when The Common was cleared originally: We know that the early settlers built timber huts or better and everyone used firewood up until the end of the Twentieth Century. I can remember our council banning the collection of firewood there relatively recently. Was The Common used as a fuelling station for the paddle steamers that kept the early river towns alive? Another possibility is that the Wiradjuri People had already cleared the area for duck hunting. If I find the answers to these questions I will keep you posted.

The introduction of koalas is another story associated with The Common as is the invasion of many species of weeds, burrs, briar roses etc all brought by floods. We need a "clean up The Common" or a "Friends of the Common" campaign. (Margrit's account of the work on Hawkweed in Kosciuszko National Park is inspiring).

A happy note to end on: Did you see the wonderful display of Wilcannia Lilies on The Common last week? All yellow, no pinks etc as at Rocky Waterholes just across the channel.

**Betty Bradney**



## Can Plants Hear?

A popular refrain from a 1950's musical show was "I talk to the trees, but they don't listen to me". They do listen, just not to the frequencies of the human voice. Nor do they have obvious structures to hear sounds or any vibrations (as that is what sounds fundamentally are in fact)

When an insect chews a leaf the closing of the mandibles at each bite results in giving off a sound with a distinct frequency. By recording this sound and then playing it back to untouched leaves, researchers discovered the leaf responds by starting to produce chemicals obnoxious to the insect. These chemicals are also stimulated as a result of the mechanical damage to the leaf or by the saliva from the insect. However the stimulation is slow. An insect would be able to eat a lot of leaf or probably lots of leaves before it got sufficient of the nasty taste to desist. The vibrations travel faster and further though. Not only the undamaged part of the leaf starts to respond but all those around. The plant as a whole (and maybe other plants around) begin to fight back.

Plants can sense vibrations emitted from close quarters as in leaves being eaten or those emitted from afar and transmitted through the air or soil. It has been shown that seedling roots respond to the vibrations arising from running water, and turn to seek out that water.

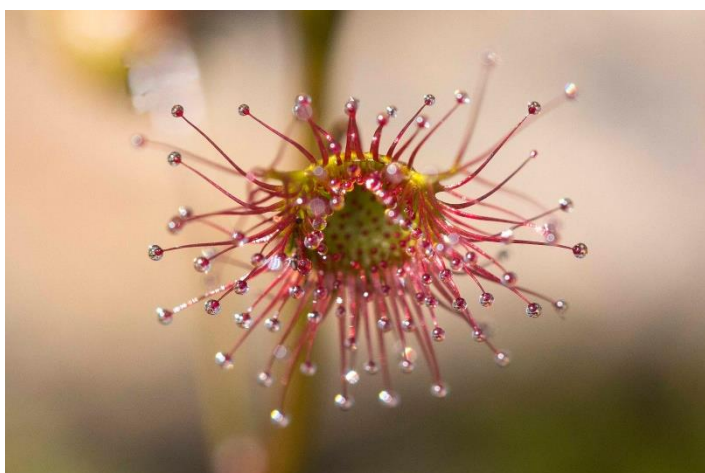
In some flowers pollen is not released from the anthers until the latter are stimulated by the vibrations of the wings of an incoming bee. Pollen is not wasted by an accidental brushing by a non-pollinator.

The realisation that plants sense and actively respond to outside stimuli dates back to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Prior to then plants were considered impassive and there is still a general notion that this is so. In my early biology lessons it was common to consider a plant as inactive and passive whereas an animal was mobile and sensed its environs! Movements such as occurs when carnivorous plants such as sundews trap prey were considered as purely mechanical. This is despite the work done by Charles Darwin and published in 1875 in his book 'Carnivorous Plants'.



Spitfires chewing a leaf

A sundew leaf –open on the left and closed on right



It has only been in the last decade or two that in depth studies have gained recognition. The great advances in technology are helping unravel why's and wherefore's. Darwin had the questions but not the means to fully explain the complex reactions that exist in the plant world. In the coming years we will learn much about plant behaviour and their interaction with the rest of the world.

**Eric Whiting**



Keith Thompson has sent these photos of *Calostemma purpurea*. The common name is Garland or Wilcannia Lily. These were taken on a property to the south of Oolambeyan National Park. Keith's was the "Biggest patch I've seen in the area so far".



## The makings of a MFN group in Wagga Wagga

Long time MFN member from Giffith, Melanie Baulch has put forward the proposition for forming an affiliated group in Wagga Wagga. After moving there a few years ago she hasn't found a group that fits with the way she likes to see nature so wants to rectify that and become part of MFN. Field naturalist groups are quite unique. It is proposed to have a sub-committee with a vice president and other positions to organise events around Wagga. Current members will be encouraged to participate in these activities. This will be a similar setup to when Griffith held meetings and organised outings.

Melanie with some other wildlife enthusiasts organised a breakfast at the Murrumbidgee Wetlands for World Wetlands Day on 2 February. They spent a couple of hours there and saw about 37 bird species. A highlight was the Black-shouldered Kite which they watched diving for a mouse which it ate perched on a tree branch. The event featured coverage by The Daily Advertiser.

Melanie also reports that she heard via Facebook of three Glossy Black Cockatoo sightings at Pomingalarna Reserve in mid-February. No doubt the fires and drought played a part in their recent visit. No trace of them could be found the next morning or any noticeably eaten seed cones dropped from the Hill-oaks. Perhaps they came in to drink from sprinkler puddles in nearby gardens.

Currently a small group gathers on a Wednesday morning at Lake Albert for an hour to identify birds.

**Rowena Whiting, photos of the wetlands day by Melanie Baulch**





## Member Profiles

These were featured at the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner last October and will appear periodically in the newsletter as space permits, starting with our President, Alan and his wife Susan. They were in response to the question – ‘why did you join the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalist Club?’

### **Alan Whitehead**

My first awareness of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists after arriving, in winter 2016, from the Blue Mountains, was the club’s mention on the sign at the Rocky Waterholes Bridge.

I then accessed the website, where my interest was sparked by the high quality of Rowena’s Newsletter. It totally accorded with my own environmental values. As well, it had scientific rigour, and a beautiful aesthetic.

My interest was next sparked by a phone chat with Terry Smith who, while no doubt in considerable pain from late-stage cancer, patiently illuminated me on the club, its values, and its good works (like the ‘bridge’ above!).

The spark became a flame when the indefatigable Nella Smith, Terry’s wife, escorted Susan and me on a visit to local flowering orchids – no less than six species in a quarter acre patch of bush.

From that sunny day, in many meetings, outings and camps in which I have been privileged to be part, I have seen legion wonders, animal, plant and mineral, which I have never seen before. And without the existence of the MFN, I would probably never see. Priceless.



---

### **Susan Whitehead**

It’s amazing what one sees / In the famous Town of Trees.

Waiting at Narrandera Wetlands / One sunny Autumn day  
Watching birds from water-hides / Reading signs and what they say.

Then on to Rocky Water Holes / Rising River Red Gums of royalty  
Their reflections wavering in breeze  
We walked across an impressive bridge  
Bordering the canal-lined ridge.  
A sign told of the bridge construction  
By The Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists  
Work and instruction.

We were inspired by what we saw  
Amongst the koala trees we held in awe.  
And as the flowing river rides its destiny a’bend  
We joined this group of people to befriend.

With understanding, love and care of nature as its goal  
Many walks exploring,  
Birdwatching lifts our souls  
And often we all go and visit  
At the well-remembered  
Rocky – Water – Holes.



Left: Juvenile Red-kneed Dotteril  
Right: White-browed Babbler  
Photos by Graham Russell





# M E M B E R S ' S I G H T I N G S

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

|                                       |  |          |                     |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------|---------------------|
| <b>Tiger Snake</b>                    | Belah St, Leeton – bailed up by her dogs | 06/12/19 | Joy Young           |
| <b>Australian Pratincole</b>          | Wargam Lakes via Balranald               | 20/12/19 | Keith Thompson      |
| <b>Southern Bell Frog</b>             | Wargam Lakes via Balranald               | 15/01/20 | Keith Thompson      |
| <b>Laughing Kookaburra</b> [2]        | Belah St, Leeton – learning to laugh     | 01/02/20 | Joy Young           |
| <b>Goanna</b> [yellow and black]      | Near Barellan                            | 08/02/20 | Aanya Whitehead     |
| <b>Pied Butcherbird</b>               | Leeton backyard                          | 09/02/20 | Jo Roberts          |
| <b>Spotted Harrier</b>                | Lockhart turnoff on Sturt H'way          | 10/02/20 | Keith Hutton        |
| <b>Yellow Rosella</b>                 | Leeton backyard                          | 12/02/20 | Jason Richardson    |
| <b>Koala</b> [large]                  | Narrandera Wetlands                      | 12/02/20 | Susan Whitehead     |
| <b>Garland Lily</b>                   | Coleambally – everywhere                 | 12/02/20 | Keith Thompson      |
| <b>Cattle Egret</b> [5]               | McCaughey Park, Yanco– flying over       | 13/02/20 | Susan Whitehead     |
| <b>Little Pied Cormorant</b>          | McCaughey Park, Yanco                    | 13/02/20 | Susan Whitehead     |
| <b>Bluebonnet</b> [6]                 | 'Mountain Dam', Colinroobie Rd           | Daily    | Dionee Russell      |
| <b>Sacred Kingfisher</b> [1]          | The Basin Dam, Koonadan                  | 13/02/20 | Max O'Sullivan      |
| <b>Brolga</b> [26]                    | Fivebough Wetlands                       | 14/02/20 | Max O'Sullivan      |
| <b>Emu</b> [9]                        | Sturt H'way & Innisvale Rd intersection  | 15/02/20 | Joy Young           |
| <b>White Ibis</b> [70]                | Fivebough Wetlands                       | 16/02/20 | Keith Hutton        |
| <b>Australasian Shoveler</b> [17]     | Fivebough Wetlands                       | 16/02/20 | Keith Hutton        |
| <b>Straw-necked Ibis</b> [67]         | Fivebough Wetlands                       | 16/02/20 | Keith Hutton        |
| <b>Glossy Ibis</b> [2 only]           | Fivebough Wetlands                       | 16/02/20 | Keith Hutton        |
| <b>Black Kite</b> [5]                 | Fivebough Wetlands                       | 16/02/20 | Keith Hutton        |
| <b>Rainbow Bee-eater</b> [12+]        | Middle Rd, Leeton – birds on the road    | 17/02/20 | Max O'Sullivan      |
| <b>Diamond Firetail</b> [1]           | Middle Rd, Leeton                        | 17/02/20 | Max O'Sullivan      |
| <b>Crested Shrike-tit</b> [2]         | The Rock                                 | 22/02/20 | Meredith Billington |
| <b>White-throated Treecreeper</b> [2] | The Rock                                 | 22/02/20 | Meredith Billington |

**Bird List from Alan and Susan Whitehead's Superb Parrot count on 17/11/19 at Darlington Point and Cuba Forest NP: They saw 32 species in total and following are the best sightings.**

|   |                             |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Superb Parrot [3 Heard]                                   | Brown Treecreeper [nesting] | Sacred Kingfisher [nesting] |
| Superb Wren [nesting]                                     | Chestnut Teal [male]        | Cockatiel                   |
| White-faced Heron   | Intermediate Egret          | Nankeen Night Heron         |
| Kestrel   | Yellow-billed Spoonbill     | Whistling Kite              |
| Long-billed Corella – seen at Lions Park Darlington Point |                             |                             |

**Bird list from Sue Chittick-Dalton in her garden In Griffith regularly:**

|                       |                           |                  |              |                |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Mallee Ringneck       | '28' Parrot               | Yellow Thornbill | Silvereye    | Red Wattlebird |
| Blue-faced Honeyeater | Major Mitchell's Cockatoo | Peewee           | Blackbird    |                |
| Yellow-throated Miner | Rainbow Lorikeet          | Little Corella   | Little Raven |                |
| Hobby                 | Apostlebird               | Magpie           |              |                |

Compiled by Max O'Sullivan

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

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

- 12 March Thursday**      **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7pm.  
**Topic: Travelling Stock Routes**  
**Guest Speaker: Peter Beal** Peter is team leader for TSRs at Local Land Services  
**Contact:** Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham)  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 14 March Saturday**      **A walk in the Cocoparra National Park**  
**Meet** at Yenda Post Office at 8:30 am.  
**Bring** morning tea and lunch.  
**Contact:** Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham)  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 21 March Saturday**      **International Day of Forest**
- 28 March Saturday**      **Explore some local Travelling Stock Routes**  
Locations and meeting place still to be determined  
**Bring** morning tea and lunch.  
**Contact:** Eric Whiting on 6953 2612  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 1 April Wednesday**      **Copy for the April newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**  
**Email:** [ericwhiting4@bigpond.com](mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com). Phone: 6953 2612.
- 9 April Thursday**      **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7pm.  
**Topic: Darwin in our world.** His work and the relevance to us.  
**Speaker:** Eric Whiting  
**Contact:** Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham)  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- Other events**
- 17-20 April**  
**Friday to Monday**      **South East Australian Naturalists' Association Inc (SEANA)**  
**Autumn Camp 2020 in South West Victoria**  
Hosted by Hamilton Field Naturalists Club Inc  
Autumn is a good time to visit for birds, fungi and geological interests.  
Further details available from Rowena Whiting 02 6953 2612
- 11-20 September**  
**Friday to Sunday**      **Australian Naturalist Network Annual Get-together**  
is being hosted by Stanthorpe Field Naturalists Club  
**Explore Queensland's Granite Belt with local field naturalists**  
Further details available from Rowena Whiting 02 6953 2612

**Remember to bring along some Show 'n Tell to the meetings.**

Alan Whitehead was the only contributor at the last meeting with a couple of beautiful books: Willandra Three Rivers which documents a series of artists at Willandra Homestead, to which MFN member contributed and Bees of Australia which has magnificent close up images.