

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



October 2020 - Issue #286

Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.

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Website: www.mfn.org.au

Email: 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



Tawny Frogmouth
by Kathy Tenison

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CONTRIBUTIONS

For the November 2020 issue by
Wednesday 4 November

To Rowena Whiting

Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com.

Phone: 6953 2612

When one tugs at a single thing
in nature, he finds it attached
to the rest of the world.

John Muir.

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 Presbyterian Church, 23 Sycamore Street at 7 PM

FIELD TRIPS NORMALLY TAKE PLACE ON THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND.

INTENDING NEW MEMBERS, GUESTS AND VISITORS WELCOME.

Membership enquiries:

Leeton Eric Whiting 6953 2612 **Griffith** Virginia Tarr 6962 5614
Narrandera Nella Smith 0428 890 537 **Coleambally** John Wilkinson 6954 4129
Wagga Wagga Melanie Baulch 0428914702 melaniebaulch@bigpond.com

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Welcome to October

Another full issue with reports of our Spring outings, and there are more to come this month. Max has written about the parrots in the Riverina including some changes to where they are travelling, Glenn has researched a 'favourite' tree and Nella continues her contributions about the monitoring of wetland areas.

The October meeting was well attended with our guest speakers presenting via Zoom. This also enabled a few out of town members to link in including the Williams from the Northern Territory. We all found the presentation by CSU researchers on arboreal reptiles of great interest and it is hoped to organise a field trip with them.

For photographers there is an opportunity to submit a few of your special nature photos for a club calendar. Sandra McDougall is organising this. The details are below.

Enjoy your reading, Rowena.

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalist's Calendar

Jan 2021-Dec 2021

As was discussed at the September meeting I am happy to put together a MFN calendar of some of your best photos of the last year or so. As a first run I can do a 20 x 28cm calendar in Snapfish which will cost between \$7.50 (price I paid with discount December last year) and \$24 (full cost). There is no volume discount. If successful we could look at other volume printers to do next year which should be cheaper.

I suggest that each member can submit up to 10 photos broadly relating to MFN –

Nominate the month each is most suitable for and a caption.

We will also put in dates for MFN activities for 2021 and other related dates. Kath Tenison has provided me with a listing of national or international dates i.e. World Wetland day.

Please email the images to be considered to me by the 30 October at sjmcdougs@gmail.com or load into my google drive folder

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CCNkil-b3HLUHPTawmsFHZDz2zZZMTCM?usp=sharing>

Sandra McDougall

Around the Traps

A trip to the Mallee is essential in Spring as it offers so much biodiversity especially plants and especially this year because we've had rain.

The fragile nature of this ecosystem that can be so easily destroyed by wind and water erosion when disturbed, results from the unreliability and distribution of the rainfall in this arid environment, and the soil they grow in, being thin on top of sand that was spread by the strong winds of the earlier glacial phases.

The remarkable thing is that the plants have adapted to a very tough environment with scorching hot summers, freezing winters and rainfall no more than 250mm pa. The multi-stemmed mallee gums have lignotubers which retain some life even when the going is tough. The wattles have modified leaves that transpire little and the little plants wait for a shower and quickly grow and flower and seed when it comes. The early settlers found out that when they cleared the trees the soil simply blew away. They may have grown one or two good crops and then drought beat them back and they often walked off their farms.

Fortunately there are a few parcels of land and road easements that were not cleared and roadside vegetation had to be retained to a width that a cricket pitch is long.

So we have a few wonderful refuges remaining.

Pulletop Nature Reserve managed by National Parks and Wildlife Service is one such reserve found north of Griffith. Local landholders have also retained some parcels of land over 3 or 4 generations. Normally special permission is required to visit NPWS nature reserves and these have no visitor facilities unlike National Parks. The endangered Malleefowl and other mallee birds like the Shy Heathwren were found here until about 1960.



**The mallee landscape, group amongst the Spinifex–
Rowena Whiting**



Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists were privileged to be invited to visit the reserve recently. We also visited an enclosure on private land which excludes macropods and feral animals like foxes and cats. The enclosure protects small native mammals like dunnarts and antechinus and ground dwelling birds from being gobbled up and reduces pressure on scarce food resources for the fauna.

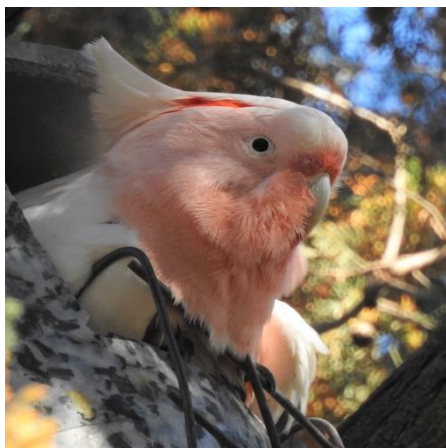
Two species of grevillea were seen, the fiery red Rankins Springs Grevillea and the creamy coloured Spiny cream Spider Flower. Three species of pea, Mallee Bush Pea, Broom Bitter Pea and Sandhill Bitter Pea. You can tell they are bitter when you bite into them.

**Above: Rankins Springs Grevillea
Right: Small Mintbush
Far right: Scarlet Mintbush
Nella Smith**

There are two mint bushes specific to good mallee patches: Scarlet Mintbush and a Small Mintbush. To arouse your senses even further there was Scented Mat-rush which you can smell across the landscape.



At least six species of wattle are found there making it a good patch: *Acacia decora*, *A. doratoxlyn*, *A. hakeoides*, *A. lineata*, *A. brachybotrya* and *A. deanii*.



On the ground, particularly in the enclosure was a myriad of small white, yellow and purple daisies. A smattering of the Mallee Blue-flower, the yellow of Goodenias and Hibbertias gave the ground some colourful cover. Spinifex occurs in this landscape and although we find it prickly the small mammals



**Major Mitchell's Cockatoo nest box in Cypress Pine – Kathy Tenison
Splendid Fairy-wren – Nella Smith**



and reptiles that live there

love it for food and shelter.

The toughness of the environment makes it diverse but fragile. We all enjoy our visits to these special woodlands.

And I forgot to mention the Major Mitchells Cockatoo which was nesting in an artificial nest near the house. This is one of the few species I know of that are using man made boxes. Last reports indicate that the eggs have hatched!! Thanks to David Heath for showing us around the place. Your input is valued greatly.

I have just found out about another mallee site that we could visit. Coming??

Nella Smith

Pulletpop and "Acres" Malleefowl enclosure 12/09/20 Max O'Sullivan

Birdlist:

Spotted Harrier	Brown Falcon	Crested Pigeon	Peaceful Dove
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo	Galah	Cockatiel	Mallee Ringneck
Red-rumped Parrot	Rufous Songlark	Crested Bellbird (H)	Willie Wagtail
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	Splendid Fairy-wren	Striated Pardalote (H)	Apostlebird
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Yellow-throated Miner	White-winged Chough	Weebill
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Pied Butcherbird	Magpie	Little Raven

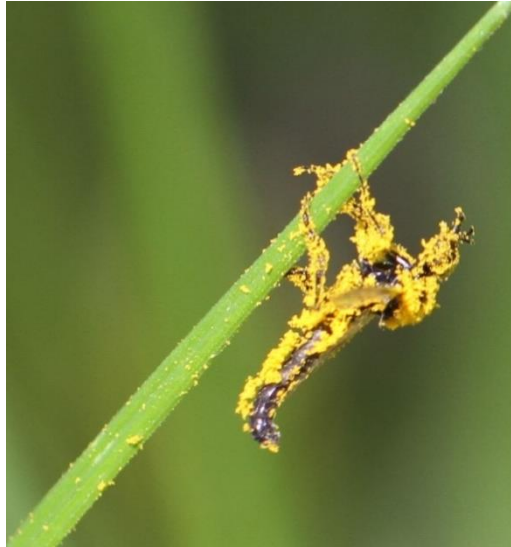
Biodiversity Surveying in the Weddin Mountains

My first MFN outing was to the Weddin Mountains for the biodiversity survey. I arrived on Sunday afternoon and with team out setting traps I went for a walk up Bertha's Gully to move into 'mountain time' and start looking. The initial walk was through Ben Hall's campground and an assortment of introduced grasses and healthy weeds with some native forbs. As I climbed the proportion of natives increased. I saw one swamp wallaby and was surprised not to see any reptiles amongst the rocks. The creek and waterfall was running well and again was surprised at how few small bushland birds were in the gully. I met up with the small survey team after returning through Seaton's farm.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday were a delight in checking Elliot traps – all empty- trying to identify un or vaguely familiar birds from their calls, walking slowly on and off tracks trying to name plant species and for

me also looking at what insects were about. My background is in Entomology although for 30 years I have essentially been working in production agriculture which hosts a small proportion of invertebrate species.

Again I was surprised at how few species were around and that a single fly species seems to dominate as pollinator on most flowering species. I have yet to identify it and will do so when I can retrieve my diptera keys from my office in DPI. The photo attached shows our pollinating fly so covered in pollen from Cape weed flowers that it can't fly. The second fly is a Tipulid or Crane fly which I haven't seen for years but did see a dozen and at each site we surveyed.



I am very grateful to Nella for her knowledge of plants especially the range of orchids and allied species that we saw. A highlight was finding bearded and spider orchids; seeing a midget greenhood and donkey orchids. There were so many sun orchids and pink fingers they seemed common, and virtually all the species covered in the MFN July and August magazines were to be seen!



Sun Orchid



Spider Orchid



Beard Orchid

It was a great trip. Bill fulfilled his reputation for fine camp fire dining. Around the fire conversations were refreshing to have. I still have many of my photos to be named – this one is a bit of a mystery – I am guessing a stalked egg – possibly a lepidoptera but perhaps not – I only found one per Callitris tree – usually at shoulder height and only found on dead trees – once my eye was in I saw probably 20 or so on every 3rd tree. What do you think?

I am looking forward to more outings!

Sandra McDougall



Grassland Encounters with Friends of Grasslands (FOG)



We met at Narrandera on Sunday morning the 27 September and after a brief chat headed to Gillenbah Travelling Stock Reserve on the Back Morundah Road. The thing that is most evident as you drive up to the reserve is the lack of trees, probably why it is called a grassland community and why this group visits this location as they are Friends of Grasslands.

These grasslands are very unique in the Riverina and often overlooked as a natural vegetation community. We are familiar with other communities in the region such as the River Red Gum, White Cypress Pine, Black box, Boree and Saltbush but don't often think about the grassland communities.

On arrival at the Gillenbah TSR it wasn't long before people scattered about in a hectare or so and were on their hands and knees finding the most amazing array of grasses, herbs and forbs. The chatter and excitement of everyone was infectious.

The most important aspect for me and a lot of the other newbies was the patience with which Margaret and Rainer approached the day. They would often call people over to view a species you may never have seen before and of course there were plenty of those.

There were a few we had seen and we were very excited to see them. Often when you drive down a roadside in this area you see masses of Wild Oats and Ryegrass. Take a walk in a TSR (particularly this one) and the variety of plants is astounding. The exotics seemed to be in the minority which is so refreshing and makes me realise how valuable these places are as a vegetation community. So little is known about them by the general public. Even those who dabble in the environmental issues of the area.

We stopped along the road verge a few kilometres down the road and found a spot we could walk around. There was an abundance of White Paper Daisies (*Rodanthe floribunda*) in amongst the Ryegrass. Apparently it has been such a good season the White Paper Daisies are competing quite well with the Ryegrass. In drier years this would not be the case. It's a battleground out there as to who can survive given the low rainfall over the last couple of years and the soil type.



We were blessed with a very special sighting of a Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*). We have all seen these lovely birds in their camouflaged state, inconspicuously blending in well with their surrounds. I have never seen them prostrate on a branch looking like a lizard. Also new for me is the fact we could see the nesting material under its belly as it protected its home by laying spread flat out over the branch.

Back Morundah road TSR - Rowena Whiting
White Paper Daisies – Eric Whiting
Tawny Frogmouth – Kathy Tension

After a bite to eat from our picnic baskets with some of us managing a tiramisu pie from the Morundah Pub (highly recommended) and some good chatter we then headed back down the road we had just come to get a photo of some Drum Sticks (*Pycnosorus globosus*). What a beautiful healthy specimen taking advantage of the water in the table drain.

Then off to Buckingbong State Forest. This season is something really special, orchids, Orange Sunray (*Hyalosperma semisterile*) and Grass Cushion (*Isoetopsis graminifolia*) to name a few.

People everywhere lying on their tummies to take photos of these beautiful specimens. A

Rufous Whistler (*Pachycephala rufiventris*) and his family were keeping us entertained and making sure we didn't forget the birds on this trip. Trying to keep people together in the excitement was difficult. You can tell we have just come out of a drought and been locked up with covid. No problems with social distance, people were spread out everywhere.

When we stop and think about caring for the land we often think about planting trees, bee hotels, birds, frogs and lizard. We're even hearing more about pollinators, rocky outcrops and dams lately. It is time we added the grasslands.

Kathy Tenison



Drum Sticks – plant- Rowena Whiting
Single flower – Kathy Tension

Parrots of the Riverina

I have written before about the number of parrot species in our local area. Few places, if any, in other parts of the country can boast of so many without travelling a long distance to see more. What is of concern though is the difficulty these past few years in tracking down what once was easy-to-see species like **Turquoise** and **Mulga Parrots**.

The Mulgas are still about but not in the numbers they were a few years ago prior to the last drought. With Wattle Dam dry for the latter part of 2019 and the early part of 2020, these once common species seem to have moved elsewhere. Even with the local dams now full, the birds are still not being seen in the numbers they once were.



There is one exception and that is the **Superb Parrot** which has been around the Leeton

area all year albeit in much reduced numbers compared with the present Spring and Summer. Once it was almost impossible to find any even along the river in late Autumn and Winter but now a small number can be seen regularly in the Leeton Golf Course all year. When I first came to live in Leeton and took part in the annual Twitchathon, Superb Parrots were always a bogey bird as by the time of the competition in late October, it was still difficult to locate any. Now, they can be seen flying over town in small flocks of up to 10 birds at most times of day since early September.

Over the years, I have associated our local area by the common species peculiar to each town – Narrandera for **Yellow Rosellas**, Leeton for **Superb Parrots** and Griffith for **Mallee Ringnecks**.



Although these days Griffith is becoming more famous for **Rainbow Lorikeets** which seem to be ever increasing in numbers and are extending their range and are now regularly seen in Narrandera with even a few pairs here in Leeton.

Another species that seems to have 'settled' in the Leeton area is the **Major Mitchell's Cockatoo**. Thanks to the Walnut Orchard on Colinroobie Road just out of Leeton these beautiful birds are reasonably easy to see in the early morning and late afternoon. There is, as I write, a pair nesting along Colinroobie Road and can be seen when driving past its nest tree.

Other parrots that are not always seen in town but can be seen along the river are the two **Corella** species – the **Little** and the **Long-billed Corellas**. Species that are seasonal and turn up in



the Spring are **Cockatiels** and **Budgerigars** – both of which have been seen in small numbers in recent weeks.

In all, there are 17 regularly seen species of parrots in the Riverina with the odd sighting of others like **Musk Lorikeets** and **Swift Parrots** which visit briefly when the food source elsewhere is not adequate.



Another rare visitor is the **Blue-winged Parrot** which used to visit Tuckerbil in years past but has not been seen for some years now. Maybe because Tuckerbil has been dry for several years is a possible reason for their non-appearance.

Paul Johnstone, who the Sri Lankan trip people know, has just done a trip out this way visiting Round Hill and Nombinnie and has sent the included photos he took on the trip. One photo is of the very common but often overlooked **Galah** watching a **White-breasted Woodswallow** inspecting a hollow is a worthwhile addition to this article as the poor Galah doesn't often make any list!

Max O'Sullivan

Photos by Paul Johnstone.

Photos (from top) are: Mallee Ringneck, Budgies in a tree, Budgies, Cockatiel (on left), Galah / White-breasted Woodswallow.

Superb Parrot (female) by Phillip Williams

My Favourite Tree

I really enjoyed Kathy Tension's article on trees in the last issue and following Rowena's prompt thought about what could be my favourite tree. As per what Kathy wrote we had two big ones in our front yard whilst growing up and we climbed them incessantly as kids do. One must have been a Silky Oak, the other, easier to climb one, maybe a Grey Box? They're a fuzzy, good memory. Both are gone now.

I wouldn't have a favourite tree but am definitely partial to River Red Gums. Another impression I'm left with from childhood was driving through the river country on family outings - the forest seemed so vast! The sheer number of trees was amazing – virtually all River Red Gums.

Eucalyptus camaldulensis are the most widespread of the Eucalyptus, found along watercourses throughout the country, and I've read they are the most photographed tree in Australia. That doesn't surprise me as the older ones have all manner of intriguing shapes - drooping, twisted, gnarled and so very photogenic.



Measuring the River Red Gum
Photo: Nella Smith

So I'm fond of River Red Gums and while exploring around Narrandera a couple of years ago I came across an amazing example in the Narrandera North precinct of the Murrumbidgee Valley National Park. It was huge! I assumed every local must know of this tree but Nella couldn't recall it, so I took her out to see it and she agreed it was pretty darn big! Her enthusiasm prompted me to do a bit of research.

On the internet I found <https://nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au/>. This very interesting website aims to record all the biggest trees, by species, in Australia. They use a points system where measurements for the girth, height and spread are added up to give a total. The register doesn't purport to be a scientific project, it just wants "big trees" happily registered by amateur enthusiasts.

I was curious how our local Red Gum stacked up against the other Red Gum monsters on the register, so my next visit was with a tape measure and some helpers to fill in the form to submit this tree's attributes.

Height and spread had to be estimated but girth was easy with the tape measure. The photo of three people wielding the tape measure really does give some idea of this tree's majesty.

On the form I had to enter the age of the tree. After some very rudimentary research on growth rates of these Red Gums, the best I could do was guesstimate 800+ years.

Then there was a section on "tree condition". After a bit more research "In senescence" was appropriate – that means it's dying. A lot of limbs have dropped off over the years. Its spread and height isn't anything like it used to be.

So it's dying and maybe has been for 50-100 years. It really made me stop and think when filling in that section. It might be "in senescence" for another 100+ years? We can only guess.

I started thinking about when it eventually dies sometime in the next century. Something that big should remain standing there dead for a long time. We can only wonder how long this single specimen of a *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* will have some sort of presence on this planet. On the register it stacked up very well. It rated 498 points with a circumference of 10.34m (dia. 3.29m), height 22m and crown 24m. There are a lot of other bigger Red Gums out there but our local Redgum is up there amongst the top 15 in Australia.

Glenn Currie

*to view it on the website you need to access the "Tree Data" tab then click on "Archive"

Murrumbidgee Monitoring Program

The Bidgee Bulletin June 2020 is a quarterly newsletter of the Murrumbidgee Monitoring Program to provide quarterly progress updates on the project and ecological outcomes of Commonwealth water for the environment. It is available online.

This part of the bulletin outlined two research projects developed by researchers from Charles Sturt University and partner organisations that explore the relationships between environmental watering actions and biodiversity responses in the Murrumbidgee region. The projects are a baseline vegetation assessment (benchmarking) project, and a study of the importance of artificial wetlands (such as farm dams) for frogs.

VEGETATION BENCHMARKING

Regular flooding is vital to maintain healthy river red gum forests and black box woodlands. Flood regimes determine the types of vegetation communities that grow in different wetlands. Permanent wetlands and those which regularly receive water are often characterised by large expanses of open water fringed by river red gum trees. Shallow wetlands that are seasonally inundated are often dominated by spike rush and the common reed. Wetlands that rarely become inundated, except during natural flood events, may experience dense river red gum regeneration that results in saplings encroaching on the wetland.



Some wetlands in the mid-Murrumbidgee region such as McKenna's Lagoon have experienced high densities of river red gum recruitment, with trees growing throughout the wetland and resulting in a reduction in wetland health and function. CSU researchers are systematically benchmarking wetland vegetation diversity and structure to assess the health of wetland vegetation communities and the extent of red gum encroachment across the mid Murrumbidgee and Lowbidgee regions. This information will help guide targeted delivery of environmental water which has been shown to maintain areas of open water and improve vegetation diversity

FROGS IN FARM DAMS

The majority of frog species found along the Murrumbidgee River require slow-moving or still water to breed.

As many natural wetlands no longer receive regular water, many frog species have declined and populations of the threatened southern bell frog are now dependent on environmental water or artificial wetlands such as irrigation channels and farm dams.

During the spring and summer drought of 2019-2020, CSU researchers in partnership with YACTAC (Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council) surveyed frogs in 42 sites along Yanco Creek.



Surveyed sites included both farm infrastructure (farm dams and irrigation channels) and natural wetlands such as billabongs and creeks.

Many species were recorded from farm dams highlighting the value of this type of habitat as a refuge for frogs during times of drought.

I have added these comments. Some of you may be thinking...why are we using water to support frogs and birds at the expense of production. The answer is that Frogs and birds do a lot of quiet pest control on our properties that is relatively free and without any chemical residues. Of course birds and frogs aren't the only ones that use environmental water, they wouldn't exist without the reeds, rushes, grasses and trees that give them places to live.

Nella Smith

Photos: McCaughy (top) and Yarrada Lagoons

Members' Meanderings

A Note from Sue Chittick-Dalton who is on the move

I know all of us have to face a big decision....The heart or the head.....but as I worked, surrounded by half-empty boxes and diminishing cupboard contents, I am called to the back deck by the sound of hungry fledglings and the frantic attempts by their parents to feed them....The trees on my block have been regular nesting sites for Blue-faced Honeyeaters, Red Wattlebirds, Crested Pigeons and Blackbirds...so far no Fairy-wrens, Silvereyes or Yellow Thornbills.

I am moving into Hyandra Village early next month (age has caught up) but I guess common sense must prevail. I have planted a Grevillea and will take a birdbath with the hope I will have a few feathered visitors. 20.9.2020

[I am sure they will find you, Sue. Rowena]

An observation from Jason Richardson

Thought I'd share this **awesome cockroach** I saw in Matong State Forest yesterday.

Jo and I went to the Burning Seed site to record another video for Red Earth Ecology.

As I was driving I kept seeing these black shiny things moving across Deepwater Road.

Then when we got to the Forest, we were able to photograph this one as it scurried across the ground.

It's a soil burrowing cockroach (*Geoscapheus dilatatus*) and about 5cm long. They live underground in sandy soils, constructing burrows to a depth of around one metre. Apparently they are only seen on the ground surface following rain.

There had been 15-20mm on the weekend, so there were many puddles on the road.

Also there were many flowers in bloom, as well as a couple of blue heron by the dam in the Forest.



NSW & ACT 2020 Twitchathon Saturday 31st October and Sunday 1st November

BIGnet, A loose affiliation of NSW & ACT Birdwatching Clubs and Organisations has recently taken on the running of the event this year as BirdLife decided they were unable to due to the lockdown in Victoria.

The Twitchathon is a race in which teams aim to tick off as many species as they can in the allotted time. There are three categories so anyone no matter how experienced or time-restricted, can compete! For over 30 years, hundreds of passionate birdwatchers have been racing around the countryside competing in this unique sporting event. The aim is to see or hear as many bird species as possible and help protect our birdlife for years to come. This is a fund raising event.

There are 3 formats:

- The **Big Weekend** will be a 30 hour mega twitch for the crazy and dedicated with a target well above 200 species being their goal.
- We have reverted to the name **Champaigne** for a more sedate and now 8 hour event for those who want something more relaxing and sedate.
- Finally the 3 hour **Birdathon** is also retained. This offers something for a whole range of participants, from experienced bird watchers who don't have the time or inclination for the Big Weekend to the novices looking for a chance to cut their teeth.

Information can be found at www.twitch24nsw.org. These include the rules for the three Twitchathon formats, the registration form, the official checklist of birds and a flyer outlining more about the project that is being sponsored. This is "**The Origma Enigma**" Project which is focused on the Rockwarbler (Origma), Rufous Scrub-bird, Eastern Bristlebird and Ground Parrot in sites ranging from Jervis Bay to the Scenic Rim. These cryptic species have been seriously affected by the bushfires.

Get involved by joining or forming a team or by giving a donation to one of our teams or directly. See coming events for MFN contact.

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.

Glossy Black Cockatoo [8]	Hanwood via Griffith	Aug/Sept/20	Meredith Billington
Red-necked Avocet [40]	Fivebough Wetlands – 4 on nests	02/09/20	Keith Hutton
Black-winged Stilt [>100]	Fivebough Wetlands – at least 6 on nests	02/09/20	Keith Hutton
Square-tailed Kite [2]	Lake Talbot, Narrandera	05/09/20	Alan Whitehead
Little Friarbird	Narrandera Wetlands	05/09/20	Susan Whitehead
Red-kneed Dotterel [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	06/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Spotless Crane [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	06/09/20	Keith Hutton
Australian (Spotted) Crane [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	06/09/20	Keith Hutton
Buff-banded Rail [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	06/09/20	Keith Hutton
Black Falcon [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	06/09/20	Keith Hutton
Little Corella [28]	Fivebough Wetlands - flyover	06/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Sacred Kingfisher [1]	Evans Smyles Rd Leeton – season return	06/09/20	Keith Hutton
Rufous Songlark [5+]	Evans Smyles Rd Leeton – season return	06/09/20	Keith Hutton
White-winged Triller [male]	Evans Smyles Rd Leeton	06/09/20	Keith Hutton
Blue-faced Honeyeater [2]	Narrandera Wetlands	07/09/20	Susan Whitehead
White-breasted Woodswallow	Murrumbidgee Rd, Leeton	07/09/20	Graham Russell
Black-fronted Dotterel [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Blue-billed Duck [2 males]	Fivebough Wetlands – settling ponds	09/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Plumed Whistling-duck [50+]	Fivebough Wetlands -back settling pond	09/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Pink-eared Duck [14+]	Fivebough Wetlands -back settling pond	09/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Sacred Kingfisher [1]	Fivebough Wetlands - near picnic shelter	09/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Budgerigar [10]	Evans Smyles Rd, Leeton	09/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Cockatiel [4]	Evans Smyles Rd, Leeton	09/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Whiskered Tern [20+]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/09/20	Keith Hutton
Glossy Ibis [17]	Fivebough Wetlands	10/09/20	Keith Hutton
Intermediate Egret [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	10/09/20	Keith Hutton
Black-shouldered Kite [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	10/09/20	Keith Hutton
Microbat [injured]	Gidgee St, Leeton – on footpath	10/09/20	Joy Ellen Young
Shingleback [2]	Barry Scenic Dr Binya State Forest	10/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [1]	Narrandera area	10/09/20	Nella Smith
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo	'Acres' property of David Heath Pulletop	12/09/20	MFN Group
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	'Acres' Malleefowl enclosure	12/09/20	MFN Group
Spotted Harrier	'Acres' Pulletop – over lupin crop	12/09/20	MFN Group
Latham's Snipe	'Gum Creek', Sandigo – in watered barley	12/09/20	Peter Draper
This is the first time Peter has seen the snipe at this site.			
Brown Quail [calling]	Fivebough Wetlands	13/09/20	Keith Hutton
Yellow Rosella [1]	Fivebough Wetlands – not often seen	13/09/20	Keith Hutton
White-winged Triller [male]	Fivebough Wetlands	13/09/20	Keith Hutton
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	13/09/20	Keith Hutton
Pallid Cuckoo [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	13/09/20	Keith Hutton
Brown Goshawk [Imm fem]	Fivebough Wetlands	13/09/20	Keith Hutton
Swamp Harrier [2 prs]	Campbell's Swamp – courtship display	14/09/20	Neil Palframan
Curlew Sandpiper [1]	Fivebough Wetlands – season return	15/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Brolga [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Australasian Bittern [4]	Campbell's Swamp	16/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Musk Duck [6]	Campbell's Swamp	16/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
There was one male performing – whistling and splashing – and 2 females with one half grown duckling each.			
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [4]	Fivebough Wetlands – season return	17/09/20	Keith Hutton
Royal Spoonbill [5]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/09/20	Keith Hutton
Yellow-billed Spoonbill [6]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/09/20	Keith Hutton

White-necked Heron [15]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/09/20	Keith Hutton
Superb Parrot [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/09/20	Keith Hutton
Wood Sandpiper [1]	Fivebough Wetlands – season return	17/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Buff-banded Rail [3]	Fivebough Wetlands – adult birds	17/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Crimson Chat [7]	Fivebough Wetlands - unexpected	18/09/20	Keith Hutton
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/09/20	Keith Hutton
Spotted Harrier [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/09/20	Central Coast Group
Swamp Harrier [juv]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/09/20	Central Coast Group
Hooded Robin [male]	Jack's Creek Cocoparra NP	18/09/20	Central Coast Group
Crested Bellbird [H]	Whitton Stock Route Rd Cocoparra NP	18/09/20	Central Coast Group
Budgerigar [20+]	Nericon Village – flyover Neil's place	19/09/20	Neil Palframan
Glossy Ibis [22]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/09/20	Keith Hutton
Black Falcon [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/09/20	Keith Hutton
Wood Sandpiper [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	21/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Pied Currawong [H]	Scenic Hill, Griffith	21/09/20	Neil Palframan
Red Wattlebird	Nericon Village – unusual for this site	21/09/20	Neil Palframan
Australian Shelduck [14]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/09/20	Keith Hutton
Sacred Kingfisher [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/09/20	Keith Hutton
Red-necked Stint [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/09/20	Keith Hutton
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [13]	Fivebough Wetlands – flyover	22/09/20	Keith Hutton
Magpie Goose [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/09/20	Keith Hutton
Budgerigar [5+]	Jack's Creek Cocoparra NP	23/09/20	Glenn Currie
Glenn reported a pair of the birds were looking into nest hollows in a blossoming eucalypt tree in the car park.			
Baillon's Crake	Campbell's Swamp	24/09/20	Sydney birders
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [20]	Fivebough Wetlands	25/09/20	Sydney Birders
Sacred Kingfisher [2]	Naradhun St, Whitton	25/09/20	Margaret Strong
White-bellied Sea-Eagle [1]	Whitton Rd, Gogeldrie	26/09/20	Margaret Strong
Caspian Tern [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Little Egret [1]	Campbell's Swamp	26/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Little Eagle [1]	Campbell's Swamp	26/09/20	Max O'Sullivan
Red-browed Finch [14]	Narrandera Wetlands	26/09/20	Glenn Currie
Glossy Black Cockatoo [2]	Galore Hill	26/09/20	Eric & Rowena Whiting
Red-necked Stint [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	27/09/20	Elisabeth Karplus
Magpie Goose [8+]	Campbell's Swamp	28/09/20	Elisabeth Karplus
There was a family of 4 adult birds escorting 12 goslings that looked just a few days old.			
Australasian Bittern [3]	Campbell's Swamp – northern end	28/09/20	Elisabeth Karplus
Brown Honeyeater [1]	Campbell's Swamp	29/09/20	Neil Palframan
Shy Heathwren	Taleeban Mining Reserve Erigolia	29/09/20	E & T Karplus
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill [6]	Lake Talbot Narrandera	30/09/20	Alan Whitehead
Whiskered Tern [22]	Fivebough Wetlands	30/09/20	Keith Hutton
Australian Shelduck [50]	Fivebough Wetlands	30/09/20	Keith Hutton
Brown Honeyeater [1]	Leeton Tourist Centre – singing	30/09/20	Keith Hutton

Seen with Friends of Grasslands on weekend of 26th September 2020 - Nella Smith

<i>Caladenia rileyii</i>	<i>Caladenia concinna</i>	<i>Caladenia arenaria</i>
<i>Caladenia Greencombe Spider (Inland Form)</i>		<i>Caladenia fuscata</i>
<i>Caladenia carnea</i>	<i>Cyanicula careula</i>	<i>Glossodia major</i>
<i>Diuris behrii</i>	<i>Diuris tricolor</i>	<i>Prasophyllum campestre</i>
<i>Prasophyllum beatrix</i>	<i>Prasophyllum patens</i>	<i>Calochilus robersonii</i>
<i>Pterostylis mutica</i>	<i>Pterostylis cynocephala</i>	<i>Microtis unifolia</i>
<i>Thelymitra sp</i>		

Compiled by Max O'Sullivan

**** COMING EVENTS ****

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions.

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, outings are currently limited to 20 people, you must register with the nominated person by email (preferred) or phone to participate.

- 8 October Thursday** **Monthly Meeting will be held in the Presbyterian Church, 29 Sycamore St, Leeton commencing at 7pm.**
Speaker: Jo Roberts and Jason Richardson
Topic: Red Earth Ecology, a regenerating plant project with the Matong community in the state forest. .
Please bring your own coffee mug if you would like to have a cuppa and remember to social distance.
Contact: Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham) **Email:** murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 10 October Saturday** **Outing to Taleeban Mining Reserve**
This is mallee country so another opportunity to see some of the wildflowers featured in this newsletter. A glimpse of the Shy Heath-wren is a possibility.
Bring: morning tea and lunch.
To comply with COVID-19 restrictions you must register to participate.
Register with Dione Russell murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com, phone 0428 536290, she will give you details for day.
- 16, 17, and 18 October** **Malleefowl Monitoring**
Friday / Sunday
Everybody is welcome whether you had training or not and you can come on one or multiple days. All to meet at Lion Park (airplane) in West Wyalong each day
Please call Ellené Schnell on 0427 559 435 for more information and to register.
- 19 – 25 October** **Aussie Backyard Bird Count (BirdLife Australia)**
Connect with the birds in your backyard - no matter where you happen to be! You can complete as many 20-minute bird counts as you like over the week, the results will help to build understanding about the birds that live where people live. For information on how to participate <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au/>
- 30 October Friday** **MFN Calendar for 2021**
Last day for submitting photos to Sandra – see page 2 for details
- 31 October Saturday** **Birdlife Australia National Twitchathon 2020**
and 1 November Sunday **Registration is now available.** Take part in the race or sponsor a team.
The idea is to see how many species of birds you can find in either the 30, 8 or just 3 hours. See page 11 for the more information.
If you would like to join a team or require further details contact Max O’Sullivan on 0434923766 or Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com
- 4 November Wednesday** **Copy for the November newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 8 – 15 November week** **Spring Wild Pollinator Count**
This gives you an opportunity to contribute to wild pollinator insect conservation in Australia. <https://wildpollinatorcount.com/>
- 12 November Thursday** **Annual General Meeting and Monthly Meeting will be held in the Presbyterian Church Hall, 29 Sycamore St, Leeton commencing at 7pm.**
Topic: to be decided
Contact: Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham) **Email:** murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.