

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



July 2021 - Issue #294

Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.

PO Box 541, LEETON 2705 ISSN-1327-1172

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



Flora & Fauna Livingstone National Park 2020

Melanie Baulch

IN THIS ISSUE

Office Bearers and Subscriptions	2
Welcome to July	2
Lake Urana Outing.....	3
Mates Gully Crown Reserve Outing	5
Livingstone National Park Outing.....	6
Platypus Priorities in Creek Systems	8
Unusual Sightings in Leeton	9
Members' Observations.....	10
Know your Daisies Part 6 – Daisy-bushes	11
Members' Sightings.....	13
Coming Events.....	14

CONTRIBUTIONS

For the August 2021 issue by
Wednesday 4 August

To Rowena Whiting

Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com.

Phone: 6953 2612

Everything is interesting
if you study it
in enough detail.

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

President:	Alan Whitehead	6959 3779	Editor:	Rowena Whiting	6953 2612
Vice President:	Nella Smith	0428 890 537	Committee:	Phil Tenison	6953 4869
Vice President:	Max O'Sullivan	0434 923 766		Glenn Currie	0488 563 321
Vice President:	Meredith Billington	0498 711 165		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 Henry Lawson Room, Leeton Library, Sycamore Street, Leeton at 7pm.

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		

Annual Subscriptions: Family \$45.00 Adult/Single \$35.00 Journal only/Concession \$25.00

Bank details for direct deposit: 082 672 account no. 722043387, 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 July

Winter is well and truly with us, as is Covid; just hope our month's activities aren't affected too much. Please note this month's meeting will be held at the Presbyterian Church when we will have a guest speaker talking about recycling. See page 14 for details.

Thanks to all the contributors particularly to the Wagga members, I'm afraid I wasn't able to use them all. The Livingstone outing saw almost equal members from the east and west of our area. Our thanks must go to Nella for her organising of the trip to Lake Urana, I think all the participants would say it was a fantastic effort and enjoyed by all. Read all about it starting on the next page. As Nella says "one of the best trips we've had in a while".

At the last meeting we enjoyed watching some Discovery Fungi videos: They explore the Forgotten Kingdom, explaining their role in the ecosystem. They are presented by Alison Pouliot, an ecologist and photographer whose special interest is fungi.

They can be found on this website [Fungi guide - Website - Local Land Services \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/fungi-guide) so you can watch if you were unable to come to the meeting, or have a second look if you were.

I am pleased to feature one of Melanie's artworks (photo) on the cover this month.

She has supplied some details of her work 'Flora & Fauna Livingstone National Park 2020'.

"Dimensions 58cm H x 87cm L, Year 2020, Media Ink, Watercolour, on Plant-dyed Ink Wash on Watercolour Paper 300gsm.

I am studying for a Diploma of Visual Art at TAFE Wagga Wagga and for my final body of work last year I presented 12 drawings and 8 paintings based on sightings and experiences at Livingstone National Park during 2020. This piece showcases some of the flora and fauna sighted on my weekly visits."

The fungi images below were all taken on this month's outings.

Rowena.



Lake Urana Field Trip

12 June 2021

From Pleistocene Human Occupation Site at Lake Urana (Ken Page, etal 1994)

Lake Urana is located at the eastern margin of the Riverine Plain. It is oval to kidney shape, large, shallow and intermittent. With its topography, northwest to southeast orientation and shoreline geomorphology, Lake Urana closely resembles other lakes of the Murray basin including, Mungo, Tyrell and Kow Swamp.

The lake is at the end of the drainage basin of Billabong, Coonong and Urangeline Creeks. It fills every 10-20 years and retains water for several years. The outer edges however are only flooded for short periods. The catchment can be 2000 km². It was also the original home of Samuel McCaughey who dammed the Coonong creek which forever stopped it from flowing into Lake Urana.



The field trip began with a day of raptors. We sighted Brown Falcon, Kestrel, Black Kite and Spotted Harrier on the road out to Lake Urana. Our first port of call was the Aquatic Centre at Urana where we met Pat Bourke the Mayor of Federation Council and a passionate local boy whose playground was Lake Urana when growing up. Our first stop was the South -West Woodland Nature Reserve on the eastern side of the lake. Here we passed a great clump of Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora* which is one of only two relatively large areas remaining in the Riverina. We stopped on the sandy lunette covered with Murray Pine where a great view of the lake could be had and a good spot for woodland birds including a small flock of

Flame Robins, Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Singing Honeyeaters. There were no cut off stumps so we assumed that there had been little logging. Here was good ground storey of Thorny and Ruby Saltbush and *Ajuga australis* as well as grasses and relatively weed free.

Our next stop was the site of a huge Murray Pine with a girth of 5 metres circumference. This nature reserve has some of the biggest Murray Pine in the Southern Hemisphere, (Pers comm Pat Bourke). This was in the vicinity of the southern lunette where remains of an aboriginal skeleton were found after sand quarrying. This has been dated to between 30 000 and 25 000 years before the present.



Walking up the sandhill – Nella Smith
The huge Murray Pine - Rowena Whiting



We moved to the west of the lake and arrived at a Post and Rail Hut from past pastoral occupation. This was in fairly good condition considering its age. As we arrived a Barn Owl flew out in alarm. Outside a brave Willy Wagtail all but lost its life to a Whistling Kite (it lost a few feathers). Further around we stopped at some limestone cliffs which were interesting with the wind and water erosion. Some Fairy Martins had built their bottle shaped mud nests in one of the hollows.



On the western side of the lake we drove past the site where the CSIRO had a double fenced site where they conducted the first research into the effects of rabbit myxomatosis. The reserve was an early release site of the virus that resulted in spectacular rabbit mortality rates which then allowed for the regeneration of Cypress Pine and other vegetation on the sandhills. This was an area of beautiful regenerating Buloke and Hakea

Further around an enclosure built to protect the threatened Winged Peppercross *Lepidium monoplocoides* is located. As we made our way around Pat was able to point out some historic Shell Middens on private land which we would never have recognised as rabbits have been happily undermining these with their burrowing. These were a good kilometre from what seemed to be the edge of the lake perhaps indicating the extent of water in the lake 25 000 years ago.



Post and Rail Hut – Nella Smith
Lake shore line and dune limestone cliff, cliff face and mud nests on rock face Photos: Rowena Whiting

A Wedge-tailed Eagle was hanging around. The other eagle which can be seen around here is the White-bellied Sea-eagle and the Little Eagle; but not today.

This was a whirlwind tour of Lake Urana and we promise to return for a closer look one spring.

We can applaud and thank Pat Bourke for making this one of the best field trips we have had for a long time.

Nella Smith

Bird List for Lake Urana Field Trip

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Noisy Miner | Little Corella | Brown Falcon | Singing Honeyeater |
| Inland Thornbill | Yellow-rumped Thornbill | Flame Robin | Rufous Whistler |
| Superb Fairy-wren | Spotted Harrier | Black Kite | Wedge-tailed Eagle |
| Barn Owl | Willy Wagtail | Crested Pigeon | Little Pied Cormorant |
| Striated Pardalote | Dusky Moorhen | Whistling Kite | Black-faced Cuckoo shrike |
| Magpie | | | |

Mates Gully Crown Reserve, Tarcutta

The Back Story and MFN field trip, 6th June 2021.

As part of Wiradjuri Ngurambang (Wiradjuri Country), Mates Gully or Creek is a short, 10km ephemeral creek with a catchment of approximately 5,000 ha running north into Tarcutta Creek and thence into the Murrumbidgee River.

It is named after Thomas Mate who squatted on the surrounding land in 1835/36 and established an inn and store on the newly formed Port Phillip Rd which followed the 1824 route of explorers Hume and Hovel. This was the beginnings of the town of Tarcutta - a Wiradjuri word meaning either "grass seed" or "damper made from grass seed".

The surrounding areas were originally covered by open forest to grassy/shrubby box woodlands.

Extensive clearing, pastoral and cropping use and associated land degradation since then has left only 900 ha of the original native vegetation in the 40,000 ha section of Tarcutta Creek Catchment west of the Hume Highway.

Mates Gully Crown Reserve (MGCR), of approximately 110 ha, running alongside the upper section of Mates Gully, was gazetted in 1893 as a Traveling Stock Reserve. Although affected by years of grazing by traveling stock and timber removal, it contains one of the last vestiges of this box woodland / iron bark forest vegetation in the area.

Assessments of the conservation status in recent years confirms the High Conservation Value and importance of this Reserve. That is: NSW Environment & Conservation -Threatened Species of Wagga Wagga LGA (2005); Wagga Wagga Rural Lands Protection Board (RLPB) /Greening Australia -TSR Conservation Assessment (1999) and WWCC / Greening Australia - Roadside Vegetation Assessment (1999).

Threatened species recorded at MGCR in recent years include: Swift Parrot, Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail, Brown Treecreeper and Squirrel Glider. Research on the squirrel glider continues to be conducted.

In recognition of the conservation values of MGCR the former Wagga Wagga RLPB and now the Riverina Local Land Service, Tarcutta Landcare and the local community have co-operated in undertaking protective management and community education actions. This has included: renewing boundary and internal fencing with an Aboriginal students works team; exclusion of grazing stock since 2014 and cessation of fire wood gathering.

This is having the desired effect of protecting the native vegetation and encouraging regeneration which is occurring especially in the western section.

During the MFN morning walk (6/6/21) some 20 bird species were recorded, a reasonable number given the cold, wet and overcast conditions prevailing. (See bird list included in this Newsletter)

Many woodland native plants were observed. Those in flower or of interest included:

Scribbly gum, Woolly and Early wattles, Mugga Iron bark, Parrot peas, Drooping Cassinia., Urn Heath, Yellow Buttons and Goodenia.

Also of interest was the array of Cryptogams, (plant like species of algae, mosses and lichens).

Dick Green



Chlorocoboria sp. Grows on dead wood lying on moist ground – Melanie Baulch



Bird List

Red Wattlebird	Australian Magpie	Willie Wagtail	Grey Shrike-thrush
Magpie-lark	Galah	Laughing Kookaburra	Eastern Rosella
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	White-plumed Honeyeater	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	White-winged Chough
Noisy Friarbird	Golden Whistler	Pied Butcherbird	Fuscous Honeyeater
Brown Goshawk	White-naped Honeyeater	Striated Pardalote	

White-throated Honeyeater – Seen by 1 observer, visibility was poor today

Full survey details are at: <https://birddata.birdlife.org.au/survey?id=5326456&h=74dea9fe>

Livingstone National Park Outing

26 June 2021

What a dreadful day we ended up with for this long planned combined outing with the Wagga chapter of the MFN club. Despite this 17 people braved the elements – 6 from Leeton, 3 from Narrandera and 8 from Wagga as we set out on the circuit track hoping for the weather to improve. No such luck as it remained overcast and cold with the odd light shower, however, the thickly forested track sheltered us from the worst of it.

It didn't take long for the group to break up into two separate bunches – the birdos in front and the plantos taking up the rear some distance behind. From a birding perspective, there wasn't much joy to be had. Not only were the birds high up in the trees but the poor light made it very difficult to successfully identify them. There were feeding groups of thornbills and honeyeaters at various spots where some Ironbark trees were still in blossom. Both **Fuscous**, **Scarlet** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were identified along with a beautiful male **Golden Whistler** and a **Speckled Warbler** but little else apart from the ever present **Red Wattlebirds**. No parrot species were seen on the circuit track – we were hoping for a glimpse of a **Gang Gang** but that wasn't to be!



It's up there somewhere – Rowena Whiting

Southern Whiteface – Kathy Tenison



Back at the cars for lunch we managed to eat and chat before the adjacent Rifle Range literally fired up for the rest of the time we were in the park – such an aggressive sound yet one that the birds are obviously used to as they weren't perturbed by the noise. Actually, the best birding, as always with the National Park, was around the carpark and towards the front entrance. There were several trees in blossom there and the honeyeaters were flitting from one to the other. The best of these were **Yellow-tufted**, **White-naped** and **Black-chinned Honeyeaters**. Along the fence line were **Diamond Firetail**, **Jacky Winter** and **Southern Whiteface**.

All up, 27 species were recorded so it wasn't an entirely wasted day for the bird watchers in the group. The bird list follows along with a possible note from the plant people!

Max O'Sullivan

Bird List

Wood Duck	Galah	Red-rumped Parrot	Kookaburra
Jacky Winter	Golden Whistler	Grey Fantail	Eastern Yellow Robin (H)
Willie Wagtail	Superb Wren	Speckled Warbler	Grey Shrike-thrush
Southern Whiteface	Brown Treecreeper	White-throated Treecreeper	Red Wattlebird
White-naped Honeyeater	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Fuscous Honeyeater
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	White-plumed Honeyeater	Scarlet Honeyeater	Diamond Firetail
Pied Currawong	Magpie	Australian Raven	

Livingstone National Park

It was good to have so many turn up to the Livingstone trip on such a miserable morning. It seemed the only non-appearance was the sun! It was a splendid opportunity for east and west members to get to know each other as we mingled in the carpark prior to starting the walk.

After rugging up for the misty conditions and the threat of rain, we immediately split into two groups, mainly birdos to the fore followed by the others a little way back. For such a largish party it was a good thing really. A field naturalist walk is usually best for all to see and communicate findings with 4-10 participants in any one group.



Winter is usually the low point in nature with most life either dormant or absent, so we did not expect to see the abundance that the area offers in say spring. Nevertheless both parties were occupied for the whole walk around the walking track even though the birds were elusive. There were a few flowers to be seen with the Spreading Wattle *Acacia genistifolia* being the only one to put on a good show. Some Thread-leaf Mintbush *Prostanthera howellii* and Rusty Spider-flowers *Grevillea floribunda* had a few flowers worthy of photographing. It was the vivid patches of mosses and lichens that gave the bush an attractive carpet.

For those with eyes on the ground there were fungi dotted around everywhere. Small ones on logs. Large white ones amongst the leaf litter – white underneath, guess not for eating. There was even a slimy yellow slime mould spotted.

We were fortunate that the weather held off though always misty and dull. A brief shower did not send people scurrying when we sat down for lunch at the carpark. What did disturb us was the commencement of firing at the nearby shooting range. The detonations were over-loud for us. Surely ear muffs are not sufficient to prevent hearing damage to the shooters. With such an annoyance most left after lunch leaving the avid birdos to venture down to the entrance for their best rewards for the day. Just to prove how lucky we were, we had several heavy rain storms to go through on the way home.

Eric Whiting

Clockwise from above left: Rusty Spider-flower – David Glastonbury, Thread-leaf Mintbush – Diane Lane, Scribbly Gum bark – David Glastonbury, Birdos by the rifle range – Diane Lane, Slime mould and *Calacera sp.* – Rowena Whiting



Platypus priorities in Creek systems

The Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council Inc (YACTAC) carried out an eDNA survey of the Yanco Creek system which it published in 2021. Many of the landholders in the area were unaware of the number of platypus in the major creeks in the area (Yanco, Colombo and Billabong). So, it was decided to have a public meeting to release the results of the findings to both the landholders and interested public to gauge the interest in this iconic species. Also, to engage with Platypus specialists who understand the best management practices of platypus populations.

YACTAC joined forces with Murrumbidgee Landcare to discuss and organise the meeting at Morundah. The evening began with a Welcome to Country by Wiradjuri Elder Michael Lyons who also played the didgeridoo to a dreamtime story. Three specialists in platypus habitat were engaged to participate. Geoff Williams from the Australian Platypus Conservancy gave an insight on key findings from YACTAC's platypus report. Dr Joanne Connolly, Charles Sturt University, spoke about the platypus locally and what can be done to improve habitat. Kathie Le Busque, ANU Sustainable Farms spoke about enhancing farm dams for best environmental and agricultural outcomes. A field walk was arranged to see firsthand the characteristics of suitable Platypus habitat and to learn useful methods of Platypus spotting.



Forty-three participants enjoyed the workshop allowing for plenty of questions to help understand the local population and habitat requirements of Platypus. The farm we visited for 'Platypus Spotting' practices holistic farming methods which complement the needs of the Platypus. Good quality creek water was found to be present as tested by Kathie using the macroinvertebrate identification chart system. Native grasses and low stocking rates reduce sediment into the creek system maintaining water quality. Trees, shrubs and grasses lined the banks providing messy roots and fallen logs which help protect the Platypus and provide a food source suitable for an animal with no teeth.



A big thank you to all the people and organisations who made the events possible including: Andrea Mitchell YACTAC; Grant funding - Riverina and Murray Local Land Services; Wettenhall Environmental Trust; Anna and Michael Coughlan, 'Tarrabah'; 'Yarrabee' manager Andrew Ritchie, staff and volunteers; guest speakers - Kathie Le Busque, Joanne Connolly, Geoff Williams; Michael Lyons; Dave Fahey, Morundah Pub for catering and tech support; and landholders who took part in the larger platypus monitoring project.

Eager participants, Research, platypus, Didgeridoo, healthy creek beds, community, landholders, Morundah Pub, kids, invertebrates, native grasses, tree planting. What a wonderful couple of days learning about Platypus in Morundah. It's amazing how stormy weather didn't deter anyone.

Kathy Tenison

Some useful links from the events:

- Geoff Williams & Australian Platypus Conservancy <https://platypus.asn.au/>
- Platypus in the Yanco Creek System <https://landcare.nsw.gov.au/groups/yanco-creek-and-tributaries-advisory-council/platypus-in-the-yanco-creek-system/>
- Dr Joanne Connolly & platypus, <https://academic.oup.com/jmammal/article/100/2/308/5477503>
- Platypus in farm dam video: <https://fb.watch/6aBrla9tgV/>
- Farm dams <https://www.sustainablefarms.org.au/article/farm-dam-enhancement>
- Pyramid nets (instead of Opera house) <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/recreational/fishing-rules-and-regs/perm-prohib-freshwater>

Unusual sightings in Leeton June 2021

Red-winged Parrot:

A female Red-winged Parrot was photographed by Anne Lepper in her front garden in Catalpa Road on 15 June. She was quite surprised and submitted the photo to Australian Native Birds site on Facebook. It has been seen in her garden daily ever since, both morning and late afternoon often in the company of 8 or more Superb Parrots feeding in the same trees – Chinese Elms.

There was much discussion on Facebook about the bird and it appears that the bird escaped from an aviary in Wamoon when the cage that it was in blew over and the door came open releasing the bird. It was reported that 2 birds a male and female escaped but only the female has been sighted.



This bird is native to northern NSW and is found further north than here. There have been sightings of this parrot in Merriwa in the Upper Hunter which is unusual to be that far east of its normal range.

When my father was alive and I visited in Tamworth, I would often see them along the road just out of Coolah heading north. This is possibly the southern end of their range and they are very common in western Queensland and the Northern Territory with birds easily seen around Darwin.

A sad post script to the above. I just had a call from Anne (Sunday 27/6/21) that she found the parrot dead in her garden. It showed no sign of being attacked nor was it thin from lack of food so she doesn't know why it died – very sad.



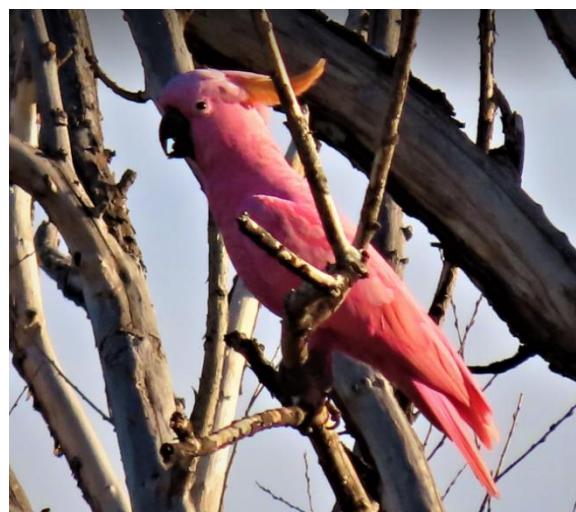
Superb Parrot:

These parrots which are very abundant in our area in the Spring and early Summer tend to disperse after breeding locally. They are generally not easy to find at these times of year but in the past few years, small flocks can be located particularly at the Leeton Golf Course and, this year, in Anne Lepper's garden! Up to a dozen birds have been regular visitors to her Chinese Elm trees feeding on the seed pods. I have also seen them in Acacia Avenue feeding in the same trees along the street.

Anne put the photo of the male bird (see photo) on the Australian Native Bird Facebook website and got over 600 likes! They are really lovely birds and always a pleasure to see. We are fortunate to have them here for all to appreciate. They are known by the locals as Green Leeks and as Barraband Parrot by aviary breeders.

"Pink" Sulphur-crested Cockatoo:

This bird has created another flutter of reports on Facebook as it moved around Leeton in a flock of normal birds. I first came across it when doing some birding in the golf course on 7 May. I thought I'd "discovered" a new species! From a distance it looked like a possible cross between a Galah and a White Cockatoo as the colour from a distance was similar to the Galah pink. However, on close inspection, it was bright pink all over – even its yellow crest was pink! Several golfers told me it was already on Facebook and that the story was that someone actually dyed it bright pink and released it. I'm not sure if it had been a caged bird or a wild one that was caught, but it was certainly striking to see flying with the normally white cockatoos.



Again, the bird appeared in Anne Lepper's garden and she photographed it. The last time I saw it, it had faded noticeably so with the recent rain, the dye might have been washed off and the bird is getting back to normal colour!

Baillon's Crake in Winter:

On 2 June Phil and Kathy Tenison photographed a Baillon's Crake below the first viewing platform at Fivebough Wetlands. This is very unusual to find this bird locally in mid-winter. They are a very migratory species and usually turn up in wetlands in the Riverina around early-spring and depart in late summer. So, it was quite unexpected to see this crake at this time of year. I managed to see it a couple of days later and Keith Hutton also saw it in the same spot. Around this time, I also saw several Spotted Crake and two Spotless Crake. So, despite the higher water level in the usual crake spots at Fivebough, they are still about – just difficult to get onto!



They are a very migratory species and usually turn up in wetlands in the Riverina around early-spring and depart in late summer. So, it was quite unexpected to see this crake at this time of year. I managed to see it a couple of days later and Keith Hutton also saw it in the same spot. Around this time, I also saw several Spotted Crake and two Spotless Crake. So, despite the higher water level in the usual crake spots at Fivebough, they are still about – just difficult to get onto!

Max O'Sullivan

Member Observations



Virginia Tarr

I'm enclosing a few pics of birds that are taken from my phone!

The one and only Mistletoebird sat nicely in the small tree covered in Mistletoe at the back of Griffin Plaza car park singing merrily.

The 2nd picture, taken at Campbell's Wetlands is of a randy male Musk Duck wooing two females with his extraordinary display of flipping water behind him as he moved along beside them, wings fanned vertically each side and displaying his bulbous neck.

I was hoping that they would come closer for a good photo, but instead the female chased the other female off! That was the end of his advances!



Had my two grandchildren with me and they saw the whole show with their binoculars. To begin with, Zaki and I couldn't figure out this black creature coming out of the reeds, flipping water as it went. First we thought it may have been a big black turtle being chased or gone mad. When nearing the 2 ducks, the penny dropped. Quite a show.

Jason Richardson

Attached are pics of a Murrumbidgee Lowry that visited this week.

The birds venture into our yard during winter to eat the berries from this plant.

It's not a native plant but seems to provide a food source at this time in the year,

It's interesting watching the Lowry because they seem to travel in pairs, or sometimes a pair of pairs.

One bird will supervise from a distance, while the other snacks.

And they make their peep-peep call to keep track of each other.

[Note: this species is a Yellow Rosella, Murrumbidgee Lowry is a commonly used local name. Ed]



Know your daisies – Part 6 Daisy-bushes

Olearia

Shrubs or rarely trees, glabrous or hairy; leaves alternate or opposite or crowded, margins entire or toothed, sessile or petiolate; Inflorescences axillary heads, sessile or pedunculate, solitary, corymbose or paniculate; florets tubular disc plus 1 series of ray florets; achenes terete or slightly compressed, striate, glabrous or variously hairy; pappus of numerous usually unequal free hairs.

***Olearia decurrens*, Clammy Daisy-bush**

Shrubs to 1.5m; leaves scattered, oblanceolate, 7-48 x 1-5mm , apex acute, margins entire or toothed apically, viscid, venation indistinct, sessile; heads in panicles, 15-20mm diam, on peduncles to 11mm long; ray florets 3-5, white; disc florets 6-7, yellow; achenes striate, silky; pappus of 40-65 hairs in 2 series; recorded in Mallee scrub.

***Olearia floribunda*, Heath Daisy-bush**

Shrubs to 2m; leaves crowded, elliptic or ovate, 0.5-3 x 0.3-1mm , apex acute or obtuse, margins entire revolute, upper surface glabrous, lower grey-woolly; heads in panicles, 15-20mm diam, on peduncles to 11mm long; ray florets 3-7, white; disc florets 3-9, cream; achenes; striate, silky or sub-glabrous; pappus of 27-37 hairs in 1-2 series with or without an outer row of short hairs; recorded in eucalypt woodland and near swampy areas.



***Olearia lepidophylla*, Club-moss Daisy-bush**

Shrubs to 1m; leaves clustered, ovate, 0.5-1.5 x 0.3-0.8mm , apex acute or rounded, margins entire revolute, upper surface glabrous or subglabrous, lower pale grey-woolly; heads terminal, solitary, sessile 8-15mm diam; ray florets 4-7, white; disc florets 4-6, yellow; achenes striate, silky and glandular; pappus of 29-44 hairs in 1 series; recorded in Mallee of *Eucalyptus dumosa* and *E. socialis*.



Heath Daisy-bush

***Olearia pimeleoides*, Pimelea Daisy-bush**

Shrubs to 2m; leaves scattered, elliptic or linear or obovate, 3-25 x 1-6.5mm , apex acute or obtuse or rounded, margins entire or irregularly toothed, revolute, upper surface subglabrous and green, lower grey-woolly; heads solitary or clustered, 13-37mm diam, on peduncles to 85mm long; ray florets 8-25, white; disc florets 14-49, pale yellow; achenes; striate, silky; pappus of 39-65 hairs in 1-2 series; recorded in open woodland, dry sclerophyll forest or tall shrubland on sandy or clay soils.

***Olearia ramulosa*, Twiggy Daisy-bush**

Shrubs to 1.6m; leaves scattered to crowded, narrow elliptic or linear or narrow obovate, 2-8 x 0.8-2.5mm , apex rounded, margins entire, revolute, upper surface minutely tuberculate, lower grey-woolly; heads axillary or terminal on lateral branches, solitary, pedunculate or sessile, 10-20mm diam, peduncles to 14mm long; ray florets 2-13, pale blue or mauve or white; disc florets 3-13, yellow; achenes; striate, silky or glandular; pappus of 22-41 hairs in 1-2 series with or without an outer row of short hairs; recorded in Sclerophyll forest in hilly terrain.

***Olearia rudis*, Azure Daisy-bush**

Shrubs to 1.3m; leaves crowded, elliptic or obovate or ovate, 15-120 x 6-10mm , apex acute or rounded, margins toothed or entire, revolute, upper surface and, lower hirsute; heads terminal, solitary or in simple or compound corymbs, pedunculate, 20-40mm diam, peduncles to 100mm long; ray florets 39-75, pale blue or mauve or purple; disc florets 86-241, orange; achenes; striate, glabrous; pappus; 31-42 hairs in 2 series; recorded in Mallee and woodland on red, calcareous sand South from Mt. Hope and in Balranald – Pooncarie- Wentworth district.

***Olearia subspicata*, Shrubby Daisy-bush**

Shrubs to 3m; leaves scattered, linear or obovate, 5-20 x 1-3mm , apex acute, margins or entire, revolute, upper surface subglabrous and green, lower grey-woolly; heads in panicles, pedunculate, 17-25mm diam, peduncles to 12mm long; ray florets 2-6, white; disc florets 2-12, yellow; achenes; striate, silky; pappus of 45-59 hairs in 1 series; recorded in shrubland and mallee, west from Condobolin district.

***Olearia tenuifolia*, Shiny Daisy-bush**

Shrubs to 2m; leaves scattered, linear, 5-35 x 1-2.5mm , apex acute, margins entire or regularly toothed, strongly revolute, upper surface and lower glandular; heads terminal, solitary or in loose simple corymbs, pedunculate, 26-41mm diam, peduncles to 30mm long; ray florets 7-15, blue or mauve; disc florets 19-33, yellow; achenes; striate, silky; pappus of 21-28 hairs in 2 series with an outer row of short bristles; recorded in dry sclerophyll forest, mallee and woodland, usually in rocky areas.



Eric Whiting

A few more images from our outings



Clockwise from top: left: Sarah taking a picture of some funky little yellow fungi – Janet Hume. Lake Urana, group on the sandhill/lunette – Rowena Whiting. Livingstone: Ironbark and Grasstree – David Glastonbury, Livingstone, lichens and mosses – Rowena Whiting

MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

Brolga [36]	Fivebough Wetlands	01/06/21	Keith Hutton
Red-necked Avocet [82]	Fivebough Wetlands	01/06/21	Keith Hutton
Buff-banded Rail [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/06/21	Max O'Sullivan
Blue-billed Duck [pr]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/06/21	Max O'Sullivan
Baillon's Crake [1]	Fivebough - See note & photo	02/06/21	Kathy & Phil Tenison
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [8]	Griffith Golf Course	04/06/21	Max O'Sullivan
Ground Cuckooshrike [4]	Nericon village – another first	05/06/21	Neil Palframan
Banded Lapwing [21]	Nericon area – new bird for the area	06/06/21	Neil Palframan
Stubble Quail [1]	Nericon area	06/06/21	Neil Palframan
Brolga [32]	Fivebough Wetlands	06/06/21	Keith Hutton
Mistletoebird [male]	Griffith Plaza Car park	07/06/21	Virginia Tarr
Buff-banded Rail	Griffith Airport – terminal lawn	07/06/21	Meredith Billington
Mistletoebird	NPWS Office, Yambil St ,Griffith	Early June	Meredith Billington
This may be the same bird that Virginia saw at Griffith Plaza. Meredith also reported seeing the bird on 29/06/21.			
Black-shouldered Kite [3 juvs]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/06/21	Max O'Sullivan
Peregrine Falcon [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/06/21	Keith Hutton
Masked Lapwing [38]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/06/21	Keith Hutton
Swamp Harrier [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/06/21	Keith Hutton
Collard Sparrowhawk [1]	Karri Rd, Leeton	12/06/21	Keith Hutton
White-winged Wren [Up to 20]	Koonadan/Tuckerbil area	13/06/21	Keith, Kathy and Phil
Also seen by Keith, Kathy and Phil were 6 Superb Wren , 6 Purple-backed Wren , 1 Collared Sparrowhawk , 1 Brown Falcon and 2 Kestrel .			
White-fronted Chat [80 to 100]	Koonadan/Tuckerbil area	13/06/21	Keith, Kathy & Phil
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [20]	Meredith's place, Bilbul	13/06/21	Meredith Billington
Red-winged Parrot [fem]	Catalpa Rd Leeton – escapee?	14/06/21	Anne Maree Lepper
Noisy Friarbird [3]	Whitton	mid-June	Margaret Strong
Musk Duck [1m 2f]	Campbell's Wetlands – displaying	15/06/21	Virginia Tarr
Virginia also reports the following in Cutler Ave: Red Wattlebird, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Mallee Ringneck, Galah, Red-rumped Parrot and Yellow-throated Miner.			
Superb Parrot [8+]	Catalpa Rd Leeton	16/06/21	Max O'Sullivan
Common Bronzewing [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/06/21	Keith Hutton
Magpie Goose [15]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/06/21	Keith Hutton
Olive-backed Oriole [2]	Yanco TSR	19/06/21	Max O'Sullivan
White-bellied Sea-eagle [Imm]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/06/21	Keith Hutton
Blue-billed Duck [15+]	Campbell's Wetlands	22/06/21	Max O'Sullivan
Most were seen from the side entrance off Jones Rd and the rest from the hide – the majority were males.			
Black-faced Cuckooshrike	Cutler Ave Griffith	26/06/21	Virginia Tarr
Rakali (Water rat) [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	27/06/21	Max O'Sullivan
Black-fronted Dotterel [35+]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/06/21	Allan Richards
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Pendula St Leeton – 1st home record	30/06/21	Max O'Sullivan

Max O'Sullivan

These are the sightings from members at the June meeting:

Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Bird bath, Karri Road, Leeton	02/06/2021	Barry Allen
Superb Parrots	Narrandera & Yanco	05/06/2021	Nella Smith
Possum (on power line)	St Peter's Lane, Leeton	06/06/2021	Joy E Young
Magpie Larks	Belah Street, Leeton	02/06/2021	Joy E Young
Pelican (pair)	Belah Street, Leeton, thermalling	04/06/2021	Joy E Young
Blue Wrens	Visitor Centre, Leeton	07/06/2021	Joy E Young
Red-rumped Parrots	Narrandera Wetlands	10/06/2021	Susan Whitehead

**** COMING EVENTS ****

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions.

Covid-19 restrictions need to be adhered to, for outings you must register with the nominated person by email (preferred) or phone to participate.

- 8 July Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** will be held in the Presbyterian Church Hall, 29 Sycamore St, Leeton at 7.00pm. **Please note masks are required.**
Guest Speaker: Elizabeth Madden
Topic: Recycling at Kurrajong
Contact: Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536 290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham) **Email:** murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 10 July Saturday** **Field trip to Yarrabimbi, Colinroobie Road** (18km from Leeton on right side of road). Gate will be marked.
Meet at the house. Bring morning tea and lunch.
Contact to register: Graham & Dione.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
Leader: Andrew Thompson
- 17 July Saturday** **Christmas in July at Andrew's, Yarrabimbi, Colinroobie Road**
Meet at Andrew's at 10am for a walk
Baked Late Lunch to be served around 2pm.
Must register with Graham & Dione.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 1 August Sunday** **San Isidore Crown Reserve –**
Turn into carpark off Kapooka Road (100-150 m) from Sturt Highway.
Time: 10am – 1pm. Bring lunch.
Leader: Janet Hume, Register: janethume@me.com
- 4 August Wednesday** **Copy for the August newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 12 August Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** will be held in the **Henry Lawson Room** at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St, Leeton commencing at **7pm**.
Guest Speaker: Peter Andrews about Fruit Bats
Contact: Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536 290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham) **Email:** murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.

Other events

- 30 July Wednesday** **Tree planting at Campbell's Wetlands from 9am to 12 noon**
Contact: David Kellett, Griffith City Council
David.Kellett@griffith.nsw.gov.au mob. 0437 948 826

Swift Parrot Surveys - contact birdlife website for methodology and sites.

Round 2- **Saturday 17 July to Sunday 29 August 2021** (a 6-week period approximately centred around the traditional 1st weekend in August)

Membership subscriptions were due on the 30th June

Please send your money to the Treasurer, Ellené Schnell, promptly to PO Box 541, Leeton, NSW 2705 or make a bank transfer to the MFN's bank account (NB this has changed since last year). Any queries, Ellené can be contacted on 0488 080 866.

See page 2 for annual subscription rates and bank details.