

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



October 2021 - Issue #297

Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.

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Objectives

To facilitate and promote the knowledge of natural history, and to encourage the preservation and protection of the Australian natural environment, especially that of the Murrumbidgee River Valley

Bird of the Year
Superb Fairywren
Phil Tenison



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For the November issue by
Wednesday 3 November

To Rowena Whiting

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Yesterday is history.
Tomorrow is a mystery.
And today? Today is a gift.
That's why we call it the present.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

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MEETINGS are held on the second Thursday each month, except January, at the 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.

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

Welcome to October

As you know it didn't take long for our first field trip to be organised, thanks to Nella, and you can read all about it on page 3. Whilst we have been unlucky this year having to miss out on a few weeks of the best flowering time, it is also good that the weather has remain fairly cool with some rain so the flowers haven't withered in a hot spell as so often happens.

There is plenty going on this month as you will see from the coming events, a joint trip to Oolambeyan National Park with the Narrandera Camera Club, the Aussie Backyard Bird Count is on, along with the Twitchathon, also we are having a Moth Night in conjunction with Narrandera Landcare to make a contribution to the Great Southern Bioblitz. Make sure you don't miss out.

From time to time, unfortunately, errors can sneak in and are not picked up by me or the reviewers. This happened last month with the scientific name of the Pink Fingers, it should of course be *Caladenia fuscata* not *Academia*, also *Diuris orientis* should be *Diuris pardina* Leopard Orchid. Virginia did say she wasn't sure and hadn't looked it up but that got cut off due to lack of space. Also with David's *Hymenochilus nutans*, should have been labelled *Hymenochilus muticus* resulting from the photos not lining up with the names in his email.

On this issue I would like to ask that photos are NOT inserted into emails but attached as separate files with the appropriate name. It means I can just move them to my folder and not have to go through the save as process. It is also means the image is a better quality.

'Til next time - enjoy this month's activities, there's plenty on offer.

Rowena.

Please note the date:

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Of the **Murrumbidgee Field Naturists Club Inc** will be held on 11 November 2021 in the Presbyterian Church, 29 Sycamore St, Leeton at 7.00pm. The will be followed by the usual monthly meeting.

Note: the location may change to the Leeton Library if COVID number restrictions allow (currently 10).

Impromptu Visit to Stackpoole

25 September 2021

Our Field Nats group had to curtail their Spring outings due to Covid restrictions. When they were eased for our region Nella seized the opportunity and quickly organised a trip to Stackpoole Nature Reserve, 25km NE of Goolgowi for the last Saturday in September.

MFN have visited this reserve many times over the years, the last time in August 2018. That was a very dry year and the trip report in our [#263](#) issue noted the absence of flowering plants. A lot of time was spent observing Mistletoe which may have prompted Eric to produce the key to local Mistletoes that is in that issue.

This year was quite different. There was so much in flower! We were joined by many new faces on this Field Trip and floristically they were very well rewarded. Birds were scarce on the day probably due to the windy conditions and our mid-morning arrival (although we did find some rarer species like Black Honeyeater and Black Falcon) but the biodiversity of plant life gave us a focus.

Nella asked Eric to lead the group on a walk as he was most familiar with the reserve, and he graciously did.

I wanted to take Eric's key to the local Mistletoes along as I thought it would be useful but couldn't find my copy of it. Instead, I found a plant list for Stackpoole that Eric once provided me, so took that along - it was a great resource to have. For example, rather than ponder which of the 1000+ Australian Acacias we were seeing, we could presume it was likely to be one of the eight on Eric's list and start from there.

Some of the more eye-catching and prevalent plants observed on the day included Common Emubush *Eremophila glabra*, Creamy Candles *Stackhousia monogyna*, various *Caladenia sp.* Orchids, Spur-wing Wattle *Acacia triptera*, Small Mintbush *Prostanthera*



serpyllifolia, Mallee Blue-flower *Halygania cyanea* and Primrose Goodenia *Goodenia willisii*.

Jess Murphy, the Ranger for Stackpoole, joined us for the day and explored the Reserve with us. She

has a particular interest in butterflies and snails and introduced us to micro-snails. They are something most of the group wouldn't be aware of, but Jess knew where to look and found some in the leaf litter under some Wilga. They are incredibly hard to i.d. so she will send the shells she collected away to be identified, but are probably in the families Pupillid and Punctid.



Flowers clockwise from above
Spur-wing Wattle (above)
Small Mintbush
Mallee Blue-flower
Primrose Goodenia



As rewarding as Stackpoole was this year in late September, Eric and Nella both suggested these Mallee areas are even better 3-4 weeks earlier so we'll endeavour to visit them in August next year.

Many thanks to Nella and Eric for the day and hopefully the new faces will join us on some of our future outings.

Glenn Currie photos Rowena Whiting, micro-snails Nella Smith, the bug Eric Whiting

Bird List - compiled by Nella Smith

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Rufous Whistler | Black Falcon |
| Wedgetailed Eagle | Black Honeyeater |
| Western Gerygone | Red capped Robin |
| Singing Honeyeater | Striped Honeyeater |
| Spiny cheeked Honeyeater | Australian Raven |
| Little Raven | Grey Shrike Thrush |
| Chestnut rumped Thornbill | Willy Wagtail |
| Grey Fantail | Apostlebird |
| White winged Chough | Galah |

Butterflies

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Spotted Jezebel | Painted Lady |
| Meadow Argus | Grass Yellow |



Wildflower Walks at Scenic Hill

I was asked to conduct a wildflower walk on Scenic Hill, Griffith first for the general community, promoted by David Kellett, second for the Science Teachers at Marian College. As the Spring conditions this year have been spectacular the community was well rewarded by some wonderful Spring flowers.

The welcoming committee was a great stand of *Indigofera australis*. After that it was Goodenia, Hibbertia, Rock Sida. Further along were found Leopard Orchids *Diuris pardina* (image below left), Midget Greenhoods which amused some children with their insect trapping trapdoor and the carnivorous Pale



Sundew were found with an insect trapped. Many Spider Orchids (two species *Caladenia atrovessa* and *Caladenia tentaculata* (image bottom left) fascinated them because they deceive male insects into visiting them by pretending to be a female insect!



The edge of Scenic Hill is the backyard of some of the local residents and some garden prunings are deposited there. Consequently we have invasive Freesias and Gazanias. However appearing in the rubbish was a spectacular Sturt's Desert Pea (below right). This was a treat to finish our day.

A fortnight later the landscape had dried somewhat and there were not so many herbs, forbs and orchids, but still enough to amuse the Science Teachers from Marian College. However rain came to wet the landscape and us as well. The teachers donned their raincoats and umbrellas and proceeded.Impressive naturalists!! It was worth producing the handouts with various species of flowers with QR codes for reference. The Science teachers will be able to walk the students from the



college to Scenic Hill to do their Ecology units.

Nella Smith

Changes at Fivebough in September 2021

It has been interesting to see the gradual changes that have been happening at Fivebough in September. Apart from the devastation caused by the loss of so many newly hatched **Black Swans** and **Magpie Geese** to various predator species like foxes, feral cats, ravens and birds of prey, this year has seen a mere handful of cygnets survive (possibly 11 only) and no goslings at all. The **Pied Stilts** started to nest out in the open in the wetland and they too have suffered massive egg loss and, to date, there are no birds now on nests – **Little Ravens** being the main egg predators it seems.



Marsh Sandpiper

appeared for a day on 25th and stayed around for 5 days but hasn't been seen since.

Also noticeable is the departure of most of the swans and, as well, **Magpie Geese** numbers have also declined. In their place, the number of **Australian Shelduck** have steadily increased to over 50 birds – a build up from 1 bird at the start of the month – on 5th October there were over 82 present!

The migratory waders too are slowly returning with **Wood Sandpiper** being the first to arrive. A small number of **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** started arriving mid-month but only stayed one of two days before heading south, I presume. On 23rd I saw a flock of well over 100 birds in the far northern section of the wetlands. It will be interesting to see if they remain as the area is perfect for waders at the moment. A lone **Marsh Sandpiper**

Anne Lepper has been a daily visitor like myself and several others interested in the changing birdscape over the weeks since lockdown was imposed on us. After the restrictions were lifted, we have continued to frequent the wetlands on a daily basis to see what new birds have come in. Often it is disappointing that nothing new appeared overnight but that makes it more interesting to see what might turn up the next time we go – there's always something interesting to see whenever you visit.

Accompanying this article are a series of photos that Anne has taken since August and includes some very rare sightings for Fivebough. They include **Latham's Snipe**, **Banded Lapwing**, **Marsh Sandpiper**, **Wood Sandpipers** and a recent photo of **Plumed Whistling-duck** and **Australian Shelduck** that was taken on 28th September.



**Banded Lapwing (left),
Latham's Snipe (right)**

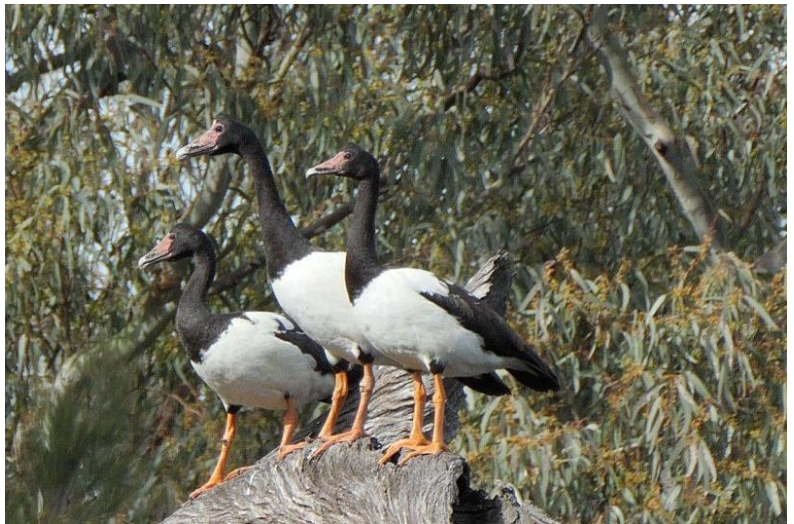
The best time for visiting the wetlands is in the morning around 9am to check if any birds have turned up overnight, like migratory waders or in the late afternoon after 5pm (now that we have daylight saving) when birds accumulate in the eastern open area beyond the Brolga sculptures before flying off for the night to feed in adjacent farmlands.

A note of caution, both **Red-bellied Black** and **Brown Snakes** are now seen almost daily as the days warm up so it is necessary to be aware of their presence when walking the tracks from now on and into the summer.

Max O'Sullivan Photos by Anne Lepper



Plumed Whistling and Australian Shelduck (above) / Wood sandpipers (below) both taken at Fivebough



Australian Shelducks (left) taken at the Murrumbidya Wetlands / Magpie Geese at a swamp on Springdale Drive, Wagga Wagga, they have been seen moving between Lake Albert and this swamp. Photos by Janet Hume

Good News for Nericon Wetlands
 Water is going in to the wetlands this week (11 October). It's the first time it's had water in it for several years. Good timing for Australasian Bitterns which are returning to the area for the rice season.
 A must for this month's birding.

AUSSIE BIRD COUNT 2021



Royal Spoonbill
Kathy Tenison

In the September/October edition of *Australian Geographic*, Peter Rowland reports that he currently has a bird count at his property (sounds like an urban site, with Spotted Turtle Doves, Bulbuls and Starlings) of 55 birds. At our house in Narrandera, we have a total of 57. I wonder if this mid-50s number is a kind of mean for domestic sitings in much of Australia?

My list contains flyovers, both heard and seen from afar, as well as birds actually on the property. This accounts for such unlikely members on my list as White-bellied Sea-eagle, Royal Spoonbill, White-necked Heron and Southern Boobook. Peter had a Wedge-tailed Eagle, so he probably has the same rather liberal criteria as me! On his list, and the most

reported bird in Australia for some years, is the kaleidoscopic Rainbow Lorikeet. It is also one of the first birds to make their raucous presence felt every morning at our place.

As Birdlife Australia's annual Aussie Backyard Bird Count (aussiebirdcount.org.au) is coming up from 18 to 24 October I thought members might be interested, as a kind of time capsule, in an article I penned in 1993 on my efforts to add to the all-important citizen scientist data bank on our continent's wonderful birds. In the 2020 bird count there was a whopping 610 species recorded around the country!

WHO'S WATCHING WHOM?

I was pretty excited on that first day of the year in 1993; this was my most important assignment as an amateur ornithologist. I was to do a one-hour bird survey on my one acre property in Mullumbimby, NSW. My observation hour was 7.30 to 8.30am. The rules weren't quite clear, so I took a flexible approach to my bird identification; including even those that I could identify even if I heard them from a outside the fence line: like a pair of Grey Butcherbirds who caroled my appearance from a dead Camphor Laurel tree. I know they meant well, but by the deafening silence that followed their clarion calls, it was clear that every small bird in the area had gone for cover! But patience triumphed as I added a Crested Pigeon to my still small list.

I was safe with my next sighting; our resident family of Superb Fairy-wrens. Those littlies can't keep quiet for long, no matter the ominous presence of Butcherbirds. But where were our pair of Eastern Whipbirds? They usually crack us into wakefulness every morning as they inspect the pot plants on the verandah? Ah, there they are - and there they stayed, seeming to follow me round the creek, no doubt warning off many foliage twitterers and tweeters which I haven't a hope of identifying without seeing them.

I did hear at least four Swamp Pheasants, arranged on the cardinal points of the compass, but all some distance away. And of course a couple of token Black-backed Magpies, who also failed to make an appearance but who warbled in the sunny new year anyway.

A pair of Scaly-breasted Lorikeets whizzed by like emerald arrows, and a small group of Silvereyes searched the foliage for whatever they thought was hidden there.



Rainbow Lorikeet
Jason Richardson



Yellow-rumped Thornbills
Janet Hume



“Hey, what about us!” cackled a pair of Spangled Drongos as they showed off their two fledglings from a tall Cudgerie tree.

“And us!” peeped a twitter of Yellow-rumped Thornbills. A Lewin Honeyeater came down to make sure she was included on the list, while a pair of Kookaburras watched *me* from a more respectable distance.

Ah, one of the most beautiful sounds in the bird world. The whistling wings of a pair of Pacific Black Ducks struck a counter-song to the chirrups

of some Noisy Miners sipping on Passion fruit flowers. And there’s the ‘whoop-a-whoop’ of a Brown Pigeon. Beatific sounds, beatific colours all: none more so that a pair of Eastern Rosellas feeding on tall weeds on the cow paddock next door.

Then another black-and-white songster, a pair of Pied Mudlarks (the onomatopoeic ‘pee-wee’ being often preferred). And who’s that with the large berry in his mouth? An Olive-backed Oriole, that’s who!

The hour’s nearly up; gosh, usually the sky around here is like an avian freeway, with a constant coming and going on that corridor of power, the north-west line from Cape Byron to Mount Warning. But this morning ... nothing. Wait - are those a pair of Welcome Swallows? But just as I raise my glasses to check, the clock struck 8.30 (metaphorically at least), so I’ll never know.

Now for a cup of coffee on the verandah. Just as I thought; the place is now like an aviary, with birds frolicking in every tree, shrub and garden bed. Maybe I’ll just slip a couple more on my list of 18 species; who’s to know?

Ahhh ... I can’t do it; this is, after all, an accurate record, not a competition; even on any other day this magical acre could be one of the most bird-frequented in the country.

Maybe next time I’ll go in camouflage to make sure those Butcherbirds don’t see me. At least they’re not as threatening to my feathered friends as the two Crested Hawks which routinely nest at the back of the property. If they turned up I’d probably see no other birds at all.

Alan Whitehead Mullumbimby 1-1-1993

Book Donations to our library.

Prior to moving into aged-care Col and June Sell kindly gave some of their books to the Club. It was agreed at our August meeting that they would be available for members to borrow. Please email the club if there is something you would like to borrow and arrangements can be made.

We are very grateful and thank the Sells for this kind gesture. Sadly, as acknowledged in our September newsletter Col is no longer with us.

1. Native Vegetation Guide for the Riverina.
2. Listening to the Lachlan.
3. The Banks is Book by Alex S George.
4. Wildflowers of the Snowy Country a field guide to the Australian Alps.
5. Seed collection of Australian Native Plants.
6. Growing Australian Native Plants from Seed by Murry Ralph.
7. Native Grasses for Australian Gardens by Nola Parry & Jocelyn Jones.
8. Grassland Plants of South-eastern Australia by Neil & Jane Marriott.
9. Australian Trees by Ivan Holliday.
10. Colour Guide to the Wildflowers of Central & Western Australia by Denise Greig.
11. Wildflowers & Plants of Inland Australia by Anne Urban.
12. Australian Fungi. A field Companion by Bruce Fuhrer.
13. Native Orchards of Southern Australia. By David & Barbara Jones.
14. Field Guide. Orchids of NSW & VIC. By Tony Bishop.
15. A Guide to the SPIDERS of Australia. By Volker W Framenau, Barbara C Baehr & Paul Zborowski.

Orchid names

Over the past decade or so there has been a plethora of new names for orchids (and for other plant groups as well). Many new names have arisen as orchid aficionados claim new species from a slight difference in flower structure or latterly differing pollinators. Not all botanists agree with this level of speciation and arguments will probably carry on for years.

So what name should you give to any particular specimen? The name given by the 'splitters' or the more traditional one. It does not matter – old names are still correct. However to make it clear one should quote the reference used for identification e.g. Jones and Backhaus (2020) or Bishop(1996). Alternatively each name can be appended by the authority who described the species (or taxon for other levels) e.g. *Caledonia fuscata* (Rchb.f) M.A. Clem. & D.C. Jones. The Rchb.f in brackets is the standardised abbreviation for Heinrich Gustav Reichenbach (1824-1889) who originally described the plant. His father was also a botanist – Heinrich Gottlieb Ludwig Reicheubach (1793-1879), and to distinguish between them the father's abbreviation is Rchb. Clem. Is the abbreviation of Clements.

Eric Whiting

Aussie Backyard Bird Count

Want to make every bird count? You can join thousands of other Australians by joining the 2021 Aussie Backyard Bird Count from 18th to the 24th of October. Just grab your phone, download the free app from your app store, head outdoors and follow the instructions.



All you need to do is count the birds you see for 20 minutes at your favourite outdoor space. It can be in your backyard, a park or in a bush area that you love. It's best to count the birds from one spot in an area with a radius of 80 m or 200m by 100m. You can do it at any time and as many times and in as many places as you like.

Birds are everywhere. Look in the trees, on the ground, in the water and up in the sky. You might see a Superb Fairywren or Starling visiting your vegie garden, a threatened Superb Parrot at Gosling Creek or a Wedge-tailed Eagle soaring over Mt Canobolas.

Don't just look but listen for the bird song. You might hear a Magpie warbling or a group of House Sparrows arguing. At this time of year birds are nesting so look at hollows in old eucalypt trees for Galahs or parrots or you may see some ducklings of Wood Ducks.

It doesn't matter if you're a novice. You can look up those birds you can't identify on the Bird Count app or website <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au/>. On the app you'll also be able to see live statistics on how many people are taking part near you and the number of birds and species counted in your neighbourhood and the whole of Australia! Last year over 4.6 million birds were counted in this BirdLife Australia project. In NSW, the top birds were the Rainbow Lorikeet and Noisy Miner.

It doesn't matter if the birds are common or rare ... every bird counts. It's like the census of people we all did in August. The aim is to get a snapshot of the birds everywhere across Australia all in the same week. This picture of birds in every community is important as birds are a good indicator of what's happening in the environment.

It's also a good thing to do as watching birds can be relaxing and can help us take our mind off our worries. Do it with friends and your children but make sure you abide by the COVID 19 rules. Who knows what you will see and what you will learn about birds?

Nella Smith



Know your daisies, Part 8 daisies with opposite or basal leaves or whitish daisies

This part covers three small groups of daisies each with a distinguishing feature.

Yellow flowered daisies with only basal leaves

***Cymbonotus preissianus*, Austral Bear's-ear**

Perennial herb to 25cm diam. Leaves ovate, elliptic to lanceolate with petiole-like bases, 40-150mm long, margins toothed to pinnatisect. Upper surface green and pubescent, lower surface white and woolly. Achenes obovoid, 3-3.5mm long \pm straight, wrinkled and glabrous, with the floret slightly off-centre. Recorded from sclerophyll woodlands often amongst leaf litter.



***Cymbonotus lawsonianus*, Bear's-ear**

Perennial herb similar to *C. preissianus* except the achenes are smaller c2.5mm long and curved, the convex face slightly hairy and minutely tuberculate. Likewise recorded from sclerophyll woodlands though generally more in wetter eastern areas than *C. preissianus*. There is a strong possibility of mis-identifications between the two.

***Arctotheca calendula**, Capeweed**

The blackish disc florets are distinctive of this prevalent species. Leaves are oblanceolate and lyrate-pinnatisect. Flowerheads are solitary and the achenes are enveloped in brown wool at maturity.

Daisies with opposite leaves

***Eclipta platyglossa*, Tellow Twin-heads**

Prostrate or ascending slender annual or biennial herb to 25cm high, rooting at nodes. Leaves are narrow lanceolate 15-50mm long. Flowerheads are axillary on stalks 5-30mm long, the involucre bracts about as long as the rays (c1mm long). Recorded in damp areas mostly along the rivers and creeks.

***Sigesbeckia australiensis*, Pale Indian Weed**

Erect herb to 80cm high. Leaves are in remote pairs, lanceolate to elliptic, 35-90mm long. The veins are prominent. Flowerheads are in terminal cymes, the c8 rays 1-2mm long. The outer involucre bracts are 4-7mm long, linear to oblanceolate, pubescent with non-glandular hairs. Local records are from around Lake Cowal and near Yathong. Usually found on shallow stony soils of hillsides.

***Sigesbeckia orientalis*, Indian Weed**

Very similar to *S. australiensis*, differing by having leaves and bracts glandular-haired and the bracts being narrow-spathulate, 7-11mm long and spreading. Locally recorded from the southern Cocoparra Ranges and at Yathong on shallow stony to grey soils of river banks.



***Flaveria australasica*, Yellow Twin-stem, Speedy Weed**

Annual herb to 5-50cm high, erect with dichotomous branching in upper parts. Leaves are lanceolate to narrow-elliptic 10-50mm long with entire to shallowly lobed margins. Flowerheads are terminal or axillary in small clusters. Ray are solitary and short (to 1mm long) or absent. Generally a plant of more northerly climes with only one record near Whitton.

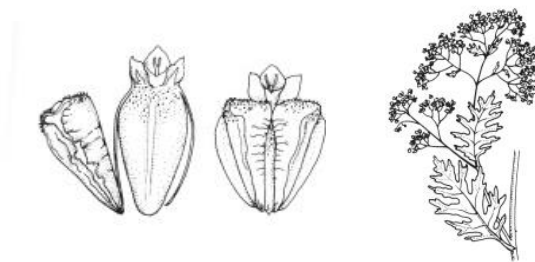
Daisies with white to mauve flowers (other than the previously treated *Brachyscome* or *Calotis* species)

***Aster subulatus**, Wild Aster**

Annual, biennial or short-lived perennial herb up to 1.8m high, with reddish stems. Leaves are linear-lanceolate to narrowly-lanceolate, stem-clasping. Flowerheads are numerous in a loose leafy panicle. Ray florets are in a single row, white, pink or blue. Pappus is of a single row of whitish bristles. A common weed of seasonally wet or poorly drained land.

***Parthenium hysterophorus**, Parthenium Weed**

A very noxious weed up to 2m high. Leaves are bipinnate, the lower 50-200mm long, the upper less divided and smaller. Flowerheads are in leafy panicles, each flowerhead with a single row of white resin-dotted rays. The pappus is 2 broad membranous white scales. Frequent in Queensland and occasionally brought down on farm machinery. Causes contact dermatitis and respiratory problems in humans and stock. If found report immediately.



Eric Whiting

NSW & ACT 2021 Twitchathon Saturday 30 October and Sunday 31 October

As last year, BIGnet, A loose affiliation of NSW & ACT Birdwatching Clubs and Organisations will be running this the event.

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. This year the money raised will be allocated to supporting the Gould's Petrel **the aim is to look at the status of breeding on Montague in 2022/23**

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.
- **Champagne** is an 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. Twitchathon funding from efforts in October 2021 is aimed to look at the status of breeding on Montague Island in 2022/23

One of the other things that we do not have time to organise is the sponsorship and prizes that have been on offer ever since the inception of the Twitchathon. Apologies for this. We hope you will still want to be involved for fun and conservation regardless. There's always the kudos of raising the most funds, recording the most species, finding the rarest bird, getting the biggest bang for your buck from the fewest kilometres travelled and sadly the biggest dip. We'll still publicise your sterling performance.

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.

Great Southern Bioblitz 22 – 25 October

The 'Great Southern BioBlitz', or 'GSB' for short, is an international period of intense biological surveying in an attempt to record all the living species across the Southern Hemisphere in Spring.



The purpose of this event is to highlight both the immense biodiversity spread across the Southern Hemisphere in the flourishing springtime, as well as to engage the greater public in science and nature learning. It is a unique opportunity for you to get out and about and capture (on film) as many animals and plants and fungi and birds and worms and snails and anything else living, that you find.

If you're an iNaturalist user all your observations during this period will contribute to this umbrella project so we encourage you to record and upload all the bugs, flowers, birds you see on that weekend.

To find out more information about this event, check out our website at

<https://greatsouthernbioblitz.wixsite.com/website>

MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

Plumed Whistling-duck [100+]	Beelbangera area	Aug/Sept	Meredith Billington
Meredith and Pete have discovered these ducks in a dam beside the main Channel just out of Beelbangera near where they photographed the Swans with 8 cygnets included in the August newsletter.			
Fan-tailed Cuckoo [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	05/09/21	Kath&Phil Tenison
Fan-tailed Cuckoo [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	06/09/21	Keith Hutton
Sacred Kingfisher [1]	Fivebough Wetlands – season return	06/09/21	Keith Hutton
Pied Currawong [20+]	Fivebough Wetlands – high number	06/09/21	Keith Hutton
Whiskered Tern [37]	Fivebough Wetlands	06/09/21	Keith Hutton
Pallid Cuckoo [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	07/09/21	Keith Hutton
Wood Sandpiper [2]	Fivebough Wetlands – season arrival	07/09/21	Max O'Sullivan
Wedge-tailed Eagle [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/09/21	Max O'Sullivan
Black-tailed Native-hen [11]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/09/21	Keith Hutton
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [10]	'Mountain Dam', Colinroobie Rd	09/09/21	Dione Russell
White-breasted Woodswallow	Freedom Foods, Murrumbidgee	09/09/21	Graham Russell
Sacred Kingfisher [1]	Fivebough – near the settling ponds	10/09/21	Anne Lepper
Eastern Brown Snake	Fivebough Wetlands – season first	11/09/21	Keith Hutton
Baillon's Crake [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	11/09/21	Keith Hutton
Red-kneed Dotterel [10]	Fivebough Wetlands	11/09/21	Keith Hutton
Grey Shrike-Thrush	McDonald Rd Bilbul	13/09/21	Meredith Billington
White-winged Triller [3m2f]	McCann Rd Reserve Lake Wyangan	13/09/21	Max O'Sullivan
Mistletoebird [male]	McCann Rd Reserve Lake Wyangan	13/09/21	Max O'Sullivan
Plumed Whistling-duck [12]	Fivebough back settling ponds	14/09/21	Max O'Sullivan
Brown Songlark [male]	Fivebough Wetlands	16/09/21	Max O'Sullivan
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [5]	Fivebough Wetlands	16/09/21	Anne Lepper&Max O'S
Caspian Tern [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	16/09/21	Anne Lepper&Max O'S
Black-fronted Dotterel [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/09/21	Keith Hutton
Eastern Bearded Dragon	Fivebough Wetlands	18/09/21	Keith Hutton
Brolga [2]	Tabain Dam, McCracken Rd, Leeton	18/09/21	Max O'Sullivan
Barn Owl [12+]	Oolambeyan National Park	18/09/21	Nella Smith
Australian Pipit [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/09/21	Keith Hutton
Whiskered Tern [103]	Fivebough- numbers increasing	19/09/21	Keith Hutton
Glossy Ibis [5]	Fivebough – numbers still low	19/09/21	Keith Hutton
White-bellied Sea-eagle [pr]	Fivebough – mature adult birds	19/09/21	Keith Hutton
Brolga [2]	Fivebough – same pair as yesterday's	19/09/21	Anne Lepper&Max O'S
Australasian Bittern [1]	Fivebough - 1 st for the Spring	19/09/21	Anne Lepper&Max O'S
White-necked Heron [20]	Fivebough – an unusual large number	19/09/21	Keith Hutton
Barn Owl [pr]	Bella Vista Dr Leeton – calling	22/09/21	Kath&Phil Tenison
Rose-ringed Parakeet	Brobenah Rd – escapee!	22/09/21	Max O'Sullivan
Red-capped Plover [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/09/21	Anne L & Keith H
Blue-winged Parrot [1]	Fivebough Wetlands – very rare	22/09/21	Keith Hutton
Gang Gang [pr]	Livingstone NP – possibly nesting	22/09/21	Wagga Group
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [100+]	Fivebough Wetlands	23/09/21	Max O'Sullivan
Australian Shelduck [45]	Fivebough – numbers increasing	24/09/21	Keith Hutton
Rakali [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	24/09/21	Keith Hutton
Black Falcon [2]	Stackpoole Reserve, Goolgowi	25/09/21	MFN Group
Black Honeyeater	Stackpoole Reserve, Goolgowi	25/09/21	MFN Group
Crested Shrike-tit	Narrandera	25/09/21	Warwick Smith
Wombat	Narrandera	25/09/21	Warwick Smith
Marsh Sandpiper [1]	Fivebough Wetlands – season return	25/09/21	Keith Hutton
Wood Sandpiper [4]	Fivebough – since departed	25/09/21	Keith Hutton
Brown Goshawk [Imm]	Fivebough Wetlands	25/09/21	Keith Hutton

Spotted Harrier [Imm]	Fivebough Wetlands	25/09/21	Keith Hutton
Zebra Finch [6+]	Fivebough – 1 st for some time	25/09/21	Anne Lepper
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	Lake Wyangan Picnic Area	25/09/21	Melva Robb
Collared Sparrowhawk [dead]	McDonald Rd Bilbul – in the garden	26/09/21	Meredith Billington
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [35]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/21	Keith Hutton
Black Rat [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/09/21	Keith Hutton
Spotless Crane [1]	Fivebough – heard often, rarely seen	26/09/21	Keith Hutton
Plumed Whistling-duck [7]	Fivebough – in the main open area	28/09/21	Anne Lepper
Nankeen Night Heron [1]	Fivebough carpark	29/09/21	Eva, Allan and Max
Magpie Goose [11]	Fivebough – numbers vary daily	30/09/21	Keith Hutton
Sacred Kingfisher [2]	Whitton – season return	30/09/21	Margaret Strong
Noisy Friarbird	Whitton – season return	30/09/21	Margaret Strong
Nankeen Night Heron [8 + 1 juv]	McCaughey Park, Yanco	Sept	Alan Whitehead
Crested Shrike-tit, Tawny Frogmouth, Square-tailed Kite	Murrumbidgee River Narrandera Alan Whitehead		
<i>Diuris tricolor</i>	Narrandera area – various locations	01/10/21	Nella Smith
<i>Zieria aspalathoides</i>	Cocoparra National Park	01/10/21	Nella Smith
Hooded Robin [m]	Evans Smyles Rd, via Leeton	02/10/21	Max O'Sullivan
White-winged Triller [5m 1f]	Evans Smyles Rd, via Leeton	02/10/21	Max O'Sullivan
Burton's Snake Lizard	Mallee scrub	04/10/21	Nella Smith
Red-necked Stint [4]	Fivebough Wetlands – season return	05/10/21	Max O'Sullivan
Australian Shelduck [82+]	Fivebough – ever increasing numbers	05//10/21	Max O'Sullivan
Painted Honeyeater [2]	McCann RD Reserve Lake Wyangan	08/10/21	Max O'Sullivan

The Painted Honeyeaters have arrived much later than usual this Spring – normally mid to late Sept.

Other events

16-17 October Mallee Fowl Monitoring

contact Ellene on 0488080866 or schnell.letaba@gmail.com.

16-17 October Cowra Woodland Bird Survey

If you are interested contact Malcolm Fyfe on (02)4471-8757, malcolmfyfe85@gmail.com

18-22 October - Bird Atlassers Spring Camp will be held at Nyngan.

For details see in their newsletter in email sent by Secretary

19 October 12pm and 7pm Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO) Webinar

A conversation with the CEWH – a plab for where and when water for the environment may be used across the Murray-Darling Basin. How CEWO works with communities. How water for the environment is making a difference in river communities across the basin. To register go to <https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo>

22 October Lake Cowal, West Wyalong.

A great birding day can be had at It's full of water and the birdlife is supposed to be spectacular this year. More details can be found here [Lake Cowal Birds and Bino's](#)

[4 Seasons of seed: Site management workshop](#) (Hay Plains Landcare Group) – **29 October, 10.00 am**, Conargo. Come and observe the germination results from the winter workshop, and learn the different methods of site management and weed control at 'Oakville'. We will then travel to 'Waterloo' where we will identify native plants and observe the benefits of retaining native vegetation on your property. The day will be led by Martin Driver, Ecologist and Project Manager with the Australian Network for Plant Conservation.

[Australasian Bittern Conservation Summit](#) (Riverina Local Land Services) – **1 to 4 February 2022**, Leeton. This is the first time such a conference has been held, and is a unique opportunity to connect with scientists, conservationists, wetland managers, birdwatchers and farmers who share a passion about the iconic Australasian Bittern. The program will include expert speakers and tours. You can sign up to receive updates as the event approaches.

**** 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.

- 14 October Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** will be held in the Presbyterian Church, 29 Sycamore St, Leeton at 7.00pm.
Masks and social distancing apply and you must be double vaccinated
Topic:
Contact: Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536 290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham) **Email:** murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 16 October Saturday** **Oolambeyan National Park - joint excursion with Narrandera Camera Club.**
What will you see? Homestead and other built environment, fauna and flora of the plains country, including Barn Owls. May be a sunset to photograph.
Meet at Waddi service station at 12:45 pm for 1 pm departure.
Bring food for BBQ - meat, salad to share and something sweet (if you wish).
Water, Thermos, Tea and Coffee and chair. Your own plates and cutlery etc.
Contact: Nella Smith to register nellasmith0@gmail.com Phone **0428 890 537**
- 18-24 October** **Backyard Bird Count this is National Bird Week**
'Tis the season for birds and birdwatching, so Australia's favourite citizen science event, the [Aussie Backyard Bird Count](#), will return between 18–24 October. You don't have to be an expert birder to take part — all you need is a little enthusiasm! [Register](#) today to join in the fun.
See page 9 or go to the BirdLife web site
- 23 October Saturday** **Moth Night at Narrandera Food Garden** (located at Narrandera Showgrounds)
Meet at 7pm. Bring supper
Contact to Register Glenn Currie glenncurrie100@hotmail.com
This event is in recognition of the Great Southern Bioblitz (22-25 October this <https://greatsouthernbiobl.wixsite.com/website>)
- 30-31 October Sat-Sun** **Twitchathon 2021 Page 11 has more information.**
If you are interested in forming a team to participate (minimum of 2 people per team) and haven't got the Rules, Bird List and Entry Form please contact Max via email - maxosul@hotmail.com - and he will send it to you.
- 3 November Wednesday** **Copy for the November newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 7 November Sunday** **'Breakfast with Platypus' at Flowerdale Lagoon**
Meet at 7am at corner Sturt Highway and Edward Street West, Wagga Wagga.
Leader will be Joanne Connolly. Senior Lecturer CSU Veterinary Microbiology.
RSVP to Joanne 0405649525 Email: jconnolly@csu.edu.au
- 11 November Thursday** **Annual General Meeting and Monthly Meeting** will be held in the Presbyterian Church, 29 Sycamore St, Leeton at 7.00pm.
Topic:
Contact: Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536 290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham) **Email:** murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 13 November Saturday** **Outing to Cocoparras National Park – details next month.**