

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



November 2022 - Issue #309

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

**Ants in a
flood zone,
Gum swamp**

Janet Hume



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CONTRIBUTIONS

For the December 2022 issue by
Wednesday 30 November

To Rowena Whiting

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**Observing something means
more than just looking at it.**

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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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Welcome to the November issue

It was lovely to have a break; my thanks to Dionee and Graham Russell for stepping in and also to Penny Williams for proof reading.

This last month has seen us gather for a memorial walk and afternoon tea at Fivebough Wetlands for Max together with some of his buddies amongst the Leeton local visitors. Many spoke of their gratitude to him for his enthusiasm and encouragement in their bird watching endeavours; making the experience more enjoyable. Susan Whitehead read a lovely poem she had written entitled 'Birdman'. You can find it on page 11. Our thanks go to Penny for co-ordinating and leading the proceedings.

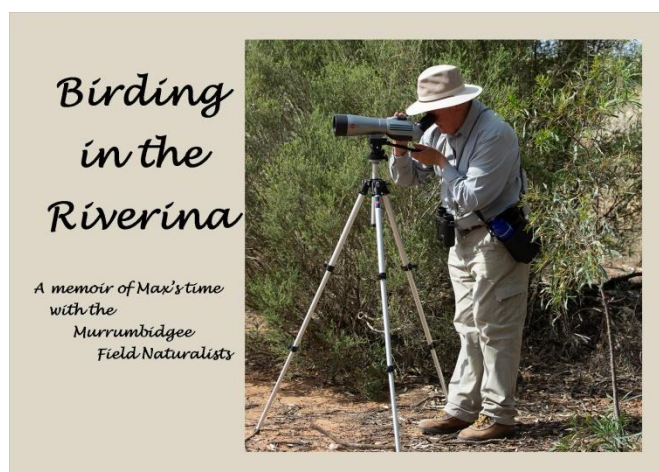
A photobook of Max's time in the Riverina with the MFN has been compiled and sent to his family. It initiated as a leaving present for him when we knew he was going to spend his last few weeks with his sister on the Gold Coast. Sadly this was not to be so we decided to continue with it, add photos of him and some messages for his family. I will show it on the screen at the meeting. A few people have indicated they would like a copy, let me know if you are interested.

Another item of sad news to convey is that Dionee Russell's father, Jim Dare, died last week; our sincere condolences to her and her family at this sad time.

Don't forget the AGM is this coming Thursday, 10 November, do consider how you can play a part in the running of the club, new ideas are always welcome.

Enjoy the read.

Rowena.





Field Naturalists and Leeton locals at Max's memorial at Fivebough Wetlands
Photo Paul Maytom

Encounters with the Peregrine Falcon

A Dedication to Rachel Carson



Peregrine Falcon juvenile – Phillip Williams

As a young man working in the centre of Sydney in 1965, I happened upon a small paperback in a local bookstore. The title was *Silent Spring*, the author, American natural scientist, Rachel Carson. I still believe this book to be a perennial bible for the Conservation Movement.

It described the ravages that commercial agricultural poisons, especially DDT, were having on the natural world. The poster bird for her research was the Peregrine Falcon. The sublime raptors were fast heading towards extinction due to the increasing fragility of their eggshells.

Saint Rachel determined that this was caused by concentrations of DDT in their diet. They are of course one of the top predators in the food chain, right up from the insect pests to which the poisons were directed. As the toxins move up the food chain, from insects to reptiles to small birds to raptors, they become increasingly concentrated. Big Ag mounted a massive and malicious campaign against the diminutive scientist, perhaps even leading to her early death a few short years later.

However, the message stuck, and in time DDT was largely banned, resulting, over time, to the return of the Peregrine; and legion other embattled avians.

As well as attaining world celebrity in its role in saving so much feathered diversity, the Peregrine Falcon has two other claims to global fame. One; it is the fastest vertebrate on earth. Two; it is the most widely distributed bird on the planet (if not the most prolific).

The first is related to not just its flight speed, which is phenomenal, but its dive, which can reach a jet-fast 300-plus kilometres an hour. This fine feathered aviator has even evolved special flight “goggles” to withstand the extreme air pressure at these high speeds. As well, the optical acuity required to home in on prey at such speeds, in a dive especially, is among the highest of any animal.

The second, distribution, is related to its prey animals, largely birds; which of course can be found all over the globe (frigid areas excepted). Not surprisingly its name, “peregrine”, means wanderer.

My personal journey, my first “Encounter”, began just a short distance from where I purchased Silent Spring; though some years later. I was sitting on a bench in Martin Place watching the busy lunchtime crowds scurrying by, when I looked up – as bird watchers are prone to do, wherever they may be – and saw a Peregrine chasing a Rock Pigeon between the tall buildings. Of all the hundreds of people in the area, it was only I who seemed to have observed this high drama (sorry!).

So, not only is the Peregrine the most widely distributed bird in terms of geography, but one that flourishes in the most varied habitats; even city CBDs. Of course the feral pigeons would be the main menu attraction here, as in cities all over the world. The two speedsters are said by evolutionists to be engaged in a never-ending “arms race” of pursuit and escape.

An aside: There is a real-time 24-hour online video of nesting Peregrines at 367 Collins Street Melbourne. This site has been continually occupied on the cliff-like balustrade since 1991!

Encounter Two. I was sitting on the verandah of my Mullumbimby home enjoying a morning coffee when I heard a loud gunshot, quite close. This was followed by a Cattle Egret falling from the sky.

“Bastards!” I fumed; until the hapless bird was closely followed down by a Peregrine Falcon. The “gunshot” was the high-decibel report of a bird-on-bird impact – feet first – at very high speed. The prey is literally knocked unconscious.



Peregrine Falcon
Penny Williams

The peregrinary predator then saw me, which gave it pause in its intention to feed on the ground. The egret seemed dead, but after a few minutes, it stirred, struggled to its wobbly legs, and crept off into the shrubbery. The Peregrine appeared most displeased!

Encounter Three. One morning while walking along a bush track at Blackheath, I was startled by a loud firecracker exploding just above my head.

“Who? What!” I exclaimed. And I did confirm that it was indeed a firecracker, because of the very fine, grey ash that floated down around me. And “down” was the operative word. The “ash” was a flurry of tiny down feathers from a bird, like a Grey Shrike-thrush. Even though I didn't see it, the attacker had to be a

Peregrine, as almost no other birds hunt this way – or certainly sound this way!

As a life-long birdwatcher, I may not have experienced some of the truly great ornithological spectacles one sees on nature documentaries, but I have been a witness to one of the most magisterial events in the bird world; the exact time and place, quite close, of the impact of a Peregrine Falcon on its prey – not once, but twice! Few, even experienced bird aficionados, can lay claim to this. Privileged indeed!

Encounter Four. Again in the early morning, this time at my home in Narrandera, I was startled by a cacophony created by a small flock of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos above my head. On looking up I saw the flock, quite uncharacteristically, in total disarray. Then I observed why. A Peregrine Falcon was scything hither and thither in its attempt to home in on a single bird – to no avail.

Actually this flock behaviour is a distracting mechanism to avoid being the falcon's breakfast. And it worked, as the canny cockies disappeared on their raucous way unscathed. Alas, no “gunshot-fireworks” this fine morn.

Due to this sighting, it was reassuring to surmise that the presence of this noble assassin (and other bird hunters, like the Hobby and Sparrowhawk) might be responsible for the small scattering of mid-sized feathers found around my property every month or so. Then again, it might be just cats!

In any case, it seems, six decades later, that Peregrine Falcons lay very fine eggs indeed - thanks to Rachel Carson.

Alan Whitehead



The Gum Swamp at Walla Walla is a Grassy Woodland and River Red Gum & Grey Box Forest. It doesn't often fill, but on Sunday 9 October it was overflowing, sunny and the birds were all about us. We saw a mixture of water birds and woodland birds, Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Swamp Wallabies, deer & flourishing mixed vegetation. The ants were clamouring over one another above their inundated nests. There were several old trees of significance, including one with a scar that may have been from a canoe. We could have brought ours!

Birdlist: Australian Magpie, Australian Raven, Willie Wagtail, Stubble Quail, Little Friarbird, Superb Fairy-wren, White-faced Heron, Sacred Kingfisher, Grey Shrike-thrush, White-winged Chough, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Crested Pigeon, Little Corella, Weebill, Hardhead, Grey Teal, Australian Wood Duck, Striated Pardalote, White-plumed Honeyeater, Pacific Black Duck, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike – 1 immature, Australasian Grebe, Australian White Ibis, Common Bronzewing, Yellow Rosella, Grey Fantail, Laughing Kookaburra, Magpie-lark, Noisy Miner, Purple Swampphen, Restless Flycatcher, Rufous Whistler, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Western Gerygone, Dusky Moorhen, Eastern Rosella, Yellow Thornbill, White-necked Heron, Galah.

Sarah Danckert



Photos by Janet Hume: Penny, Margrit Glenn & Sarah; ants in a flood zone (see cover for close up); White-faced Heron.



Twitchathon Donations

The Twitchathon is a fundraiser for birds BIGnet, a loose affiliation of bird watching clubs and organisations in NSW & ACT. This year's bird is the **Gang Gang Cockatoo** because of the effects of the bushfires of 2019/2020.

Donations for our Twitchathon teams can be made by direct transfer into the BIGnet account rather than by Raisely because the Twitchathon loses significant amounts of the donations in credit card fees if Raisely is used. Otherwise contact our treasurer, Glenn Currie glenncurrie100@hotmail.com

This is the link to the BIGnet twitch web site: http://www.twitch24nsw.org/?page_id=2

Pigeon Pair Twitchathon 2022

Janet Hume & I participated in the Twitchathon on Sunday 30 October. Our team was called Pigeon Pair. We had a lot of fun and finished the day completely exhausted, satisfied & encouraged to keep building our nature field skills and knowledge. We chose the 3 hour Birdathon and selected 3 locations for each hour spread over the day.



Photos by Janet Hume:
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, above
Rufous Fantail, below
Reed Warbler below right

We started at the southern end of Lake Albert. Wagga Wagga City Council is to be congratulated on the accessibility of this space for people. We regularly see 35+ birds at this location and Sunday did not disappoint with 34 birds. Many of the birds are breeding, and because the birds have adapted with confidence that we humans consistently walk, cycle or run past them, they are so close! Favourite birds spotted were Darters, Pardalotes, Woodswallows and my most recent discovery, several pairs of White-browed Scrubwrens. Next favoured spot to provide diversity was the western boundary of Pomingalarna Reserve where we saw 29 birds. At the moment there are Rainbow Bee-eaters - such a delight, the travelled Dollarbird and we added both the Grey and Pied Butcherbirds. After lunch we set off for Livingston National Park and we saw 30 birds, so glad we have this on our doorstep. We supported the insect eating birds as fodder for the mosquitoes, oh my!!

We finished off our count with a drive through the park to Burrandana. In choosing the 3 hour event we were able to "turn on" and "off" our energies and relax & take in the spaces we visit and see some more birds!! Like the Superb Parrot, and the Diamond Firetail - I hadn't seen this one at Livingston NP for over a year.

We tallied 61 different birds out of a total of 93 sightings for the day. We can see ourselves fronting up again next year.

Birdlist: Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, White Necked Heron, Australasian Darter, Little Black Cormorant, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen, Masked Lapwing, Spotted Turtle Dove, Common Bronzewing, Crested pigeon, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill, White-breasted Woodswallow, Dusky Woodswallow, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, Rufus

Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Willie Wagtail, Grey Fantail, Magpie Lark, Australian Raven, White winged Chough, Jacky Winter, Welcome Swallow, Australian Reed Warbler, Little Grass Bird, Silvereye, Common Starling, Common Blackbird, Red-browed Finch, European Goldfinch, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater, Oriental Dollarbird, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Crimson Rosella(yellow), Eastern Rosella, Red-rumped Parrot, White-throated Treecreeper, Brown Treecreeper, Superb Fairywren, Red Wattlebird, Noisy Friarbird, Little Friarbird, Noisy Minor, Yellow-faced honeyeater, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, White-browed Scrubwren, Striated Pardalote, Speckled Warbler, Western Gerygone,

Sarah Danckert and Janet Hume



Twitchathon with the Silly Galahs

What a treat for us to be back in Leeton as part of the Silly Galahs Twitchathon team with Phil and Penny Williams. We started at Andrew and Anna's at Yarrambimbi firstly around the dam picking up the Australian Wood Duck, Australasian Grebe, and a Golden-headed Cisticola singing away in the reeds.

Then up on the hill to find the Brown Treecreeper and White-browed Babblers. Some of the common birds were there as well including the Willie Wagtail and Little Raven. Didn't take long for us to find the gorgeous Double-barred Finch and the Diamond Firetail.

Such a thrill to see these little birds happy living on Yarrambimbi. This is testimony to the way the block is managed and what a wonderful natural asset it is. A Sacred Kingfisher appeared to be counted along with the Spotted Pardalote. Just down the road we digressed to see a patch of Spider Orchids. Up on the hill we also saw some Beard Orchids still in bud.

Beautiful almond biscuits are always a hit. Morning tea doesn't get much better. Thanks Anna. The Murrumbidgee Boobooks (another MFN team) arrived to this treasured bush to carry out their second hour of the competition having started in Narrandera. So, we headed off to Fivebough for our second hour.

We all decided to do the three-hour Birdathon this year which can be done at 3 separate locations (each of one hour duration).

At Fivebough the Black Swans, Chestnut Teal, Hardheads, Egrets, Royal Spoonbills and Magpie Geese helped our list.

Lunch at the Soldiers Club revitalised us and we headed to Yanco's Euroley Road TSR to find Mistletoebird, Noisy Friarbirds, Yellow Thornbills and a Kookaburra.

Other than the enormous number of mosquitoes, we had a lovely day out finding 65 species in 3 hours. There were quite a few birds we missed out on seeing probably because there is water everywhere. The birds were spoilt for choice. Our biggest dip was a Little Pied Cormorant and our best bird the Diamond Firetail.

Kathy and Phil Tenison

Silly Galah's list Bird List for the Twitchathon on the 29 th October 2022		
Magpie Goose	Rock Dove	White-browed Babbler
Black Swan	Crested Pigeon	Australian Magpie
Australian Wood Duck	Peaceful Dove	Black-faced Cuckooshrike
Pacific Black Duck	Laughing Kookaburra	Willie Wagtail
Grey Teal	Sacred Kingfisher	Magpie-Lark
Chestnut Teal	Rainbow Bee-eater	Australian Raven
Hardhead	Galah	Little Raven
Australasian Grebe	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	White-winged Chough
Australian White Ibis	Crimson Rosella	Apostlebird
Royal Spoonbill	Red-rumped Parrot	Jacky Winter



Phil Tenison, Kathy Tenison, Phil Williams and Penny Williams Photo Andrew Thompson



Anna, Andrew and Porkie at Yarrambimbi – Wonderful hosts for the Twitchathon. Photo Kathy Tenison.

White-faced Heron	Brown Treecreeper	Welcome Swallow
Little Egret	Superb Fairywren	Fairy Martin
Intermediate Egret	Purple-backed Fairywren	Australian Reed-warbler
Little Black Cormorant	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Little Grassbird
Great Cormorant	Noisy Friarbird	Golden-headed Cisticola
Australian Pelican	Little Friarbird	Common Starling
Nankeen Kestrel	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Common Blackbird
Purple Swamphen	Singing Honeyeater	Mistletoebird
Dusky Moorehen	White-plumed Honeyeater	House Sparrow
Eurasian Coot	Spotted Pardalote	Double-barred Finch
Masked Lapwing	Chestnut-rumped Thornbill	Diamond Firetail
Silver Gull	Yellow Thornbill	

Bidgee Boobooks' Twitchathon 2022

Team: Glenn Currie, Alan Whitehead, Nella Smith, Margrit Martin and Margaret Strong.

We entered the 3 x 1hr Birdathon and with 5 members at least 3 needed to clearly identify each bird, being quite a challenge at times.



Rainbow Bee-eater – Phillip Williams

1st hour. Narrandera – Alan's garden and Rocky Waterholes.

We quickly identified **20 species** at Alan's, being mostly **parrots** and **honeyeaters**. Seasonal migrants returned for nesting included **Noisy Friarbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, Striated Pardalote, Sacred Kingfisher, Grey Fantail, Little Friarbird, Rufous Whistler and Silvereye**.

Rocky Waterholes attracts birds that like **tall Eucalypts** and also **waterbirds**. Of the **19 species** we identified here, those we didn't find in the other woodland included **Weebill, Dollarbird, Laughing Kookaburra, Restless Flycatcher and Brown Treecreeper**.

2nd hour. Brobenah Hills – Andrew Thompson's property.

The habitats visited here include **Eucalyptus woodland** and **Callitris** (White Pine), where we added **13 species**. **Little Eagle** and **Diamond Firetail** were the rarest sightings. Seasonal migrants included **Rainbow Bee-eater, Dusky**

Woodswallow and **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**. The most numerous species calling was **Peaceful Dove**, in chorus with **Striped Honeyeaters**.

3rd hour. Fivebough Wetlands

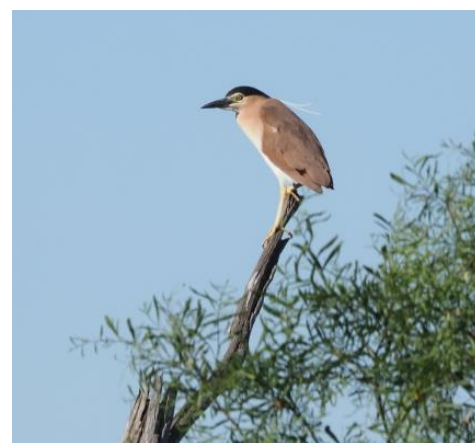
At this huge site we recorded **Great Egret, Yellow Spoonbill, Nankeen Night Heron** and **Dusky Moorhen**, being the **few waderbirds** we saw.

High water levels there are not suitable for birds that stand in the water and need to reach the bottom with their bills.

Of the **21 species** recorded, 8 were waterbirds. Highlights amongst them include **Blue-billed Duck, Chestnut Teal, Hardhead, Great Cormorant** and **Magpie Goose**.

We had a **total of 73 Species** on the day. A pair of **Dollarbirds** got our vote for **Best Bird**. They were perched just above us, in the sun, showing their stunning colours at Rocky Waterholes. Our **Biggest Dip** was White-faced Heron. Oddly, we didn't see one all day.

Margaret Strong



Nankeen Night Heron – Nella Smith

Know your daisies Part 18 Beauty Buttons

The general form of the Beauty Buttons group is yellow tubular florets spreading from a hemispherical cup of involucre bracts. The structure and position of the bracts are the prime features for identifying the species within this otherwise similar looking group.

***Leiocarpa tomentosa*, Woolly Ixiolaena (syn Ixiolana)**

Bushy perennial woody herb, 30-70cm high, stems glandular-hairy, woolly to cobwebby, becoming glabrescent. Recorded in various situations from arid woodland to mallee. Leaves linear, 10-30mm long x 2-4mm, woolly-cobwebby, sessile. Flowerheads 12-18mm diam on peduncles 40-100mm long. Involucre bracts broad-linear, outer shortest, woolly-cobwebby, brown to pale brown, lacinate. Pappus of 18-24 barbellate hairs.

***Leiocarpa leptolepis*, Stalked Plover Daisy**

Bushy perennial herb, 10-40cm high, woody towards base, stems and leaves glandular-scabrous. Recorded in arid woodland or shrubland, usually on open plains, usually after rains. Leaves oblanceolate to linear, 15-25mm long x 2-5mm. Flowerheads 15-20mm diam on peduncles 50-100mm long. Involucre bracts broad linear, outer shortest, densely glandular-pubescent, brown or purple-brown, lacinate. Pappus of 10-24 hairs plain at base, barbellate centrally and plumose at apex.

***Leptorhynchos elongatus*, Lanky Buttons**

Perennial bushy herb, to 40cm high. Recorded in woodland and grassland. Leaves in a basal rosette and cauline, oblong to narrow-oblanceolate, 20-40mm long x 3-7mm, margins recurved, lamina pubescent with coarse multiseptate hairs and short glandular hairs. Flower heads 20-35mm diam on peduncles 20-50mm long. Involucre bracts extending down peduncle and grading into upper leaves, outer mostly membranous, colourless, innermost herbaceous, reddish and with narrow membranous margins and tip. Pappus of many hairs evenly barbellate.



***Leiocarpa websteri*, (syn Ixiolana)**

Bushy perennial herb, 10-40cm high, young stems usually glandular-scabrous, often cobwebby. Recorded in woodland and grassy woodland on a variety of soils, often in disturbed areas such as roadsides. Leaves linear to oblanceolate or spatulate, 15-40mm long x 2-5mm, both surfaces glandular-scabrous, often cobwebby. Flowerheads 10-20mm diam. Involucre bracts \pm linear, to 6mm long, densely glandular-hairy, outer bracts with subulate, lacinate-ciliate scarious apices. Pappus of 10-24 barbellate hairs.

Leptorhynchos orientalis

Annual herb, to 30cm high, stems single or much branched, erect, minutely pubescent. Recorded in open grassland in Urana NR and near Hillston. Leaves linear, 10-20mm long x 2-9mm, margins recurved. Flowerheads 20-35mm diam on peduncles 20-50mm long. Involucre bracts scarious, extending down peduncle, outer very narrow triangular, acute, transparent with reddish brown bases, margins entire; inner lanceolate with green cartilaginous glandular bases and narrow hyaline margins. Pappus of many white, evenly barbellate hairs.

***Leptorhynchos squamatus*, Scaly Buttons**

Herb 10-40cm high, recorded usually at higher altitudes, in open areas or in low-growing grassland. Stems leafy, usually single, woolly to glabrescent and shiny red-brown with age. Leaves oblong or narrow oblanceolate, 15-35mm long x 2-4mm, upper surface green, glabrescent or \pm hirsute with long glistening hairs; lower glabrescent or pubescent with appressed woolly hairs. Flowerheads 8-15mm diam on

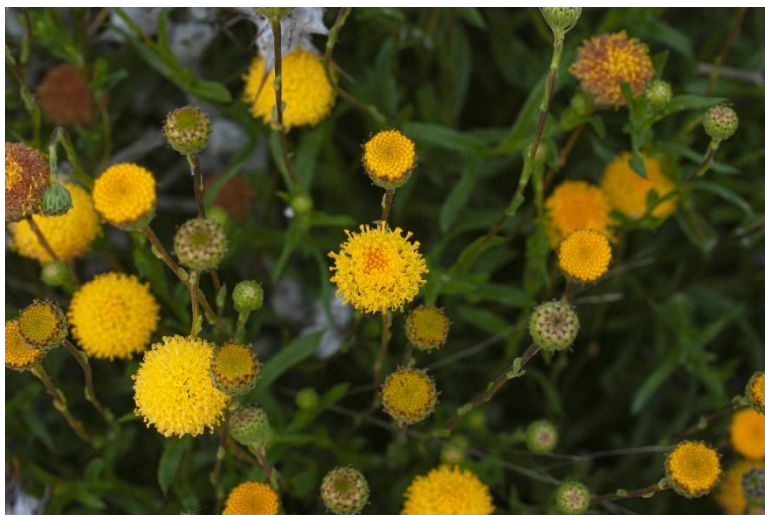
peduncles 50-150mm long. Involucral bracts mostly scarious, extending down peduncle, colourless or brown-; innermost strongly reflexed at maturity. Pappus of many barbellate hairs.

***Leiocarpa panaetioides*, Woolly Buttons (syn *Leptorhynchos*)**

Erect semi-shrub, to 60cm high, much branched, silvery-grey, densely covered of fine tangled hairs. Recorded in woodland, shrubland, and grassland, usually on grey heavy soils of major floodplains. Leaves linear to oblong, 10-15mm long x 1-1.5mm, surfaces densely hairy with tangled hairs, more densely so on lower surface. Flowerheads 8-10mm diam on peduncles 20-50mm long. Involucral bracts glabrescent, outer shortest, all ±herbaceous and with paler opaque margins and a linear golden membranous acute tips, margins tangled-ciliate. Pappus of many barbellate bristles.

***Leptorhynchos tetrachaetus*, Beauty Buttons**

Slender annual herb, to 15cm high, branches wiry, reddish, glabrescent or sparsely hirsute at nodes. Recorded in woodland on gravelly well-drained sites in moister areas. Leaves linear to oblong, 8-20mm long x 1-2.5mm, upper surface and midvein below with short coarse multiseptate hairs; lower surface woolly. Flowerheads 7-10mm diam on peduncles 15-50mm long, Involucral bracts scarcely extending down peduncle, mostly hyaline, the outer brown, inner a pale yellow, margins comb-like with long cilia. Pappus on outer florets with 2-3 hairs and on inner florets 4 hairs, all entire at base then barbellate



Leptorhynchos baileyi

Annual herb, to 25cm high, sparsely woolly, often much branched. Recorded in Acacia scrubland, on sandy loam soils, often in wetter areas, drainage lines and depressions. Leaves linear, 10-20mm long x 1-2.5mm, slightly decurrent, upper surface glabrescent or sparsely hairy, lower pubescent with tangled hairs. Flowerheads 7-10mm diam on peduncles 20-50mm long. Involucral bracts extending down peduncle, cobwebby especially towards base, mostly hyaline, margins long ciliate. Pappus of inner florets with 1-3 hairs, barbellate at base, plumose at tip, pappus absent on outer florets.

Eric Whiting

Members' images

Platypus in the Lachlan River at Wyangala by Jason Richardson



Eastern Brown Snake taken Doodle Comer Swamp Nature Reserve, Henty by Phil Tenison



BIRDMAN

He was a kind and gentle man
Teaching, his domain
He was an amazing bird lover
His binoculars in train.
He was fast to track a bird
A Peregrine on the wing
Pelicans, Whistling ducks,
Grebes and water – birds
Wrens, thornbills and Silvereyes
Such tiny little things.

He loved to visit Fivebough Wetlands,
Dancing Brolgas there and Cairns as well
Magpie Geese about their nests,
Bitterns where they dwell
Azure Kingfishers nesting
Near the billabong
Koels calling in the spring
With their sneaking song
Seas, mountains, rivers, lakes
And more,
To see his feathered friends
Loving to explore,
Cockatoos of many kinds,

Susan Whitehead ©2022
For Max, Family and Friends.

Glossy Blacks and Barking Owls.
Pink Cockatoos and water- fowls

A purple coloured waterhen
Walks from its reedy hide
Musk Ducks rising from the lake
Black swan's graceful glide.
He loved all of nature
Koalas too, pointing out
A mob of kangaroos.

He was a contemplative man
Helping where he could
Writing many expose'
On birdlife understood.

So when we see parrots O! Superb
And an eagle
Rising in the sky
Or we quickly catch the light
On a bird that passes by
We'll always think of Max
And his wisdom watching eye.

From the inbox

Bitterns in Rice Project

There has been a bunch of key updates on the bittern in rice website recently.

New Paper: From boutique to mainstream: upscaling wildlife-friendly farming through consumer premiums

New Booklet: Saving The Endangered Australasian Bittern

New Paper: Producing rice while conserving the habitat of an endangered waterbird: incentives for farmers to integrate water management

New Bittern Summit Dates: Jan 31 - Feb 3, 2023

Incentive Program: 3000 hectares and counting

New Children's Book: Bernie and the Bunyip Bird ([this is available at the Leeton Visitor Centre](#))

Here is the link to the web site. Unfortunately from the email I received the individual links didn't function
<http://www.bitternsinrice.com.au/>

[Rare native plant discovered on Hay TSR](#) - A population of rare native yam daisies has been discovered on a travelling stock reserve (TSR) near Hay, with work underway from Riverina Local Land Services to protect the native plant. These yam daisies, known as *Micoseris walteri*, produce edible tuberous roots and yellow flower heads, which look similar to dandelion. The discovery was made on a TSR north of Hay by Booligal Primary School Principal, Lindy Stewart who is an avid naturalist and photographer.

[The Plains-wanderer: A feature film](#) (Remember The Wild) - This stunning documentary explores the incredible life of this globally significant and threatened species, one of the world's most unique birds. Also featured are the efforts of those trying to understand and protect it.

MFN Booklist (November 2022)

Here is a list of the books in our library, Margrit Martin is the custodian so if you would like to any just contact her tirgram.nitram@gmail.com .

No	Title	Author
1	Native Vegetation Guide for the Riverina	CSU
2	Listening to the Lachlan.	Jane Roberts and Geoff Sainty
3	The Banksia Book	Alex S George
4	Wildflowers of the Snow Country a field guide to the Australian Alps.	Ian Fraser and Margaret McJannett
5	Seed collection of Australian Native Plants	
6	Growing Australian Native Plants from Seed	Murray Ralph
7	Native Grasses for Australian Gardens by Nola Parry & Jocelyn Jones.	Nola Parry & Jocelyn Jones.
8	Grassland Plants of South-eastern Australia	Neil & Jane Marriott
9	Australian Trees	Ivan Holliday
10	Colour Guide to the Wildflowers of Central & Western Australia	Denise Greig
11	Wildflowers & Plants of Inland Australia	Anne Urban
12	Australian Fungi. A field Companion	Bruce Fuhrer
13	Native Orchids of Southern Australia	David & Barbara Jones
14	Field Guide. Orchids of NSW & VIC	Tony Bishop
15	A Guide to the SPIDERS of Australia	"Volker W Framenau, Barbara C Baehr & Paul Zborowski"
16	The New Atlas of Australian Birds	Geoff Barrett et al
17	Plants of Western NSW	"Cunningham, Mulham, Milthorpe and Leigh"
18	Arachnids	Jan Beccaloni
19	Spiders	Lynne Kelly
20	Field Guide Birds of Australia	Simpson & Day
21	Spineless (Pests and Pals)	Bronwen Scott
22	A Field Guide to Insects in Australia	Paul Zborowski & Ross Storey
23	Annual Bird report 2004 Vol 34 No 1	NSW Field Orn. Club
24	SW Victoria Bird Observers Guide	Bird Observers Club
25	The Waterbug Book	John Gooderham & Edward Tsyrlin
26	Invertebrates of Austr. Inland Waters	John Hawking & Felicity J. Smith
27	South-Western Cypress State Forests	Assessment report 2010
28	Nericon and Campbell's Swamps	Johnstone Centre CSU 2000
29	Fivebough and Tuckerbil Swamps	Johnstone Centre CSU 1998
30	Murrumbidgee Catchment Action Plan	Gov 2008
31	Plants of the NSW Rangelands (Glove Box Guide)	Greg Brooke and Lori McWhirter
32	Wiradjuri Plant Use in Murrumbidgee Catchment	Gov 2008
33	Frogs (Glove Box Guide with CD)	Gov
34	DVD: More Than A River	Murray Darling Basin Commission
35	DVD: Wildlife Friendly & Productive Farms	Natural Heritage Trust
36	Bird Trails of the Riverina and SW slopes of NSW	Promotion
37	Ute Guide to Common Shrubs of the Hay Plain	Local Land Services
38	Priority Weeds of the Murray and Riverina Regions	Local Land Services
39	South-eastern Glossy Black-Cockatoo	birdlife Australia

Fivebough wetlands

As a result of the recent rain and localised flooding within the Riverina, the Fivebough Wetland walking tracks are currently inundated.

They are closed for public access.

Photo of the Wiradjuri trail was taken by Paul Maytom taken on Monday (7 November).



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.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Narrandera Wetlands	01/10/22	Alan Whitehead
Kangaroos [7]	Narrandera	01/10/22	Susan Whitehead
	Hopping down the road towards the wetland		
Turquoise Parrot	Cocoparra National Park	02/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Brown Quail	Cocoparra National Park	02/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Striped Honeyeater	Cocoparra National Park	02/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Australian Shelduck	Gum Swamp, Walla Walla	03/10/22	MFN outing
Restless Flycatcher	Gum Swamp, Walla Walla	03/10/22	MFN outing
Grey Crowned Babbler	Gum Swamp, Walla Walla	03/10/22	MFN outing
Whiskered Tern	Lake Albert, Wagga Wagga	07/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Common Bronzewing	Lake Albert, Wagga Wagga	07/10/22	Sarah Danckert
White Breasted Woodswallow	Lake Albert, Wagga Wagga	07/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Spotted Pardolote	Rowan TSR, Wagga Wagga	08/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Magpie Goose [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/10/22	Keith Hutton
	3 adults with 6 downy young < a week old		
Whiskered Tern [30+]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/10/22	Keith Hutton
Sea Eagle [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	08/10/22	Keith Hutton
Gull-billed Tern [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/10/22	Keith Hutton
Whiskered Tern [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/10/22	Keith Hutton
Great Crested Grebe [6]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/10/22	Keith Hutton
	6 adults in full breeding plumage. These were also reported by Penny & Phillip Williams		
Silver Gull [70+]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/10/22	Keith Hutton
Red-kneed Dotterel [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/10/22	Keith Hutton
Fan Tailed Cuckoo	Morgan's Lookout	09/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Black-shouldered Kite	Morgan's Lookout	09/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Varied Sitella	Morgan's Lookout	09/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Welcome Swallow	Whitton	10/10/22	Margaret Strong
	3 chicks, fledged		
Masked Lapwing [2]	Narrandera	11/10/22	Susan Whitehead
Sacred Kingfisher	Narrandera Wetlands, first for season	11/10/22	Alan Whitehead
Koel	Narrandera, first for season	11/10/22	Alan Whitehead
Apostlebird	San Isidore Reserve, Wagga Wagga	11/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	San Isidore Reserve, Wagga Wagga	11/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Sacred Kingfisher	Whitton, migrating south	13-15/10/22	Margaret Strong
Pied Stilt [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/10/22	Keith Hutton
	2 adults with first downy young of the season (3). At least half of the stilt nests are flooded out.		
Magpie Goose [50+]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/10/22	Keith Hutton
	flew in close to sunset		
Nankeen Night Heron [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/10/22	Keith Hutton
Magpie Goose [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/10/22	Keith Hutton
	3 adults with 4 downy young		
Eastern Koel	Lake Albert, Wagga Wagga	26/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Dusky Woodswallow	Lake Albert, Wagga Wagga	26/10/22	Sarah Danckert
Little Friarbird	Whitton, seasonal return for nesting	30/10/22	Margaret Strong

**** COMING EVENTS ****

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions.

Please register with the nominated person.

- 10 November Thursday** **Annual General Meeting and Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7pm.
Topic:
Contact: Dione Russell 0428 536 290
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com
- 13 November Sunday** **Discover Australian Pollinator Insects in Wirraminna Native Gardens & Woodland with Karen Retra**
(Invitation from the Albury Wodonga Field Naturalists Club)
Time: 10am – 12.30pm
Location: Wirraminna Environmental Centre Burrumbuttock
BYO fold up chair, hat, water, lunch, magnifying glass
An opportunity to locate and identify Australian pollinator insects with Karen Retra, Co-founder of the Australian National Wild Pollinator Count and to meet other Field Naturalists.
If you are interested in going contact Rowena Whiting 0429 726 120
- 19 November Saturday** **Tarcutta Hills Reserve**
Time: 10 - 4pm
4WD access, request attendees carpool
Bring all food & water
Contact: Sarah Danckert spdanckert@gmail.com
- 30 November Wednesday** **Copy for the December newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 8 December Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7pm.
Bring along your 'show & tell'
Contact: Dione Russell 0428 536 290
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com
- 10 December Saturday** **Christmas/end of year get together**
Where / what / time – to be discussed at the November meeting

OTHER EVENTS

Frog ID Week is coming up on 11-20th November and is one of the best Citizen Science projects to be involved with. With the amount of water around there's no shortage of frogs calling and the Australian Museum would love your input! It's an easy to use app, very educational and contributes tremendous scientific data.

Bringing back the Bunyip Bird: Australasian Bittern Summit 2023

31 January to 3 February 2023, Leeton.

This summit will present a unique opportunity to connect with scientists, conservationists, wetlands managers, birdwatchers and farmers who share a passion about working to protect the iconic Australasian Bittern. *Tickets cost \$110 for the Summit, and \$55 for field trips.*

Here is a link to the summit's registration pack with further information.

[Bringing Back the Bunyip Bird: Australasian Bittern Summit 2023 - Local Land Services \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.local.land.nsw.gov.au/bringing-back-the-bunyip-bird-australasian-bittern-summit-2023)