

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



February 2023 - Issue #311
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Website: www.mfn.org.au
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

Objectives

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



**An Australasian Bittern in a rice crop
and in flight - Phillip Williams**

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CONTRIBUTIONS

**For the March 2023 issue by
Wednesday 2 March
To Rowena Whiting
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com.
Phone: 6953 2612**

**The problem with experience is
that you rarely have it until
after you need it.**

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

President:	Eric Whiting	6953 2612	Editor:	Rowena Whiting	0429 726 120
Vice President:	Alan Whitehead	6959 3779	Committee:	Margaret Strong	0434 060 973
Vice President:	Virginia Tarr	0434 831 031			
Vice President:	Sarah Danckert	0427 276 306			
Secretary:	Dione Russell	0428 536 290	Website Co-ordinator:		
Treasurer:	Glenn Currie	0488 563 321		Kathy Tenison	0439 596 093

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	0434 831 031
Narrandera	Nella Smith	0428 890 537	Wagga Wagga	Sarah Danckert	0427 276 306

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Welcome to 2023

And a new year of fieldnatting. I hope you have all enjoyed your summer break, have had plenty of nature experiences and are looking forward to participating in club events. The year has started positively with the **Bittern Conference** recently held in Leeton and a number of field nats members participating; Nella, Penny & Kathy have written pieces for the newsletter. Margaret Strong has been delving into history and has ably edited a journalist's article of a journey across the Hay Plains 135 years ago.

Going back to last year, briefly, **Eric Whiting** stepped up into the President's role and **Virginia Tarr** has accepted a Vice President's role. Please be aware that for a healthy club we need everyone to play a part and contribute where you can. A number of us had a most enjoyable time at our Christmas breakup with delicious food and a challenging quiz. Glenn Currie was the overall winner and Aanya Whitehead came out on top with the most amusing answer. Well done.



Now to this month. For our meeting we have a Guest Speaker, **Geoff Williams of Australian Platypus Conservancy**. His talk will outline the biology and key conservation requirements of rakali and include tips on how to go about spotting this fascinating species in local waterways. While this will be delivered via Zoom it is hoped that members will attend personally in the Yellow Room at the Leeton library. Note that it will start promptly at 7pm so arrive a little before. Outdoors we have a couple of evening activities with a visit to Rocky Waterholes (Narrandera) and our annual count of Glossy Black Cockatoos, a very special species that frequent the local hills. Also the group at Rankins

Springs would like members to join them for their count. Details are in the Coming Events.

Following a donation from Max O'Sullivan's niece who has fundraised for MFN; it was decided at the last meeting to match her donation and print further copies of the 'Wild about wetland birds' brochure as a 'Max memorial edition'. These are now available for people who would like a copy.

Our congratulations go to **Nella Smith** for achieving the Environmental Citizen of the Year at the Narrandera Australia Day Awards. Nella is involved with a number of organisations in Narrandera and surrounding area volunteering her time doing bird surveys and of course MFN. Well deserved, Nella.

My thanks to all those who have contributed to this issue.

Enjoy your read, Rowena.

Bringing Back the Bunyip Bird –Australasian Bittern Summit 2023 held in Leeton on 31 January to 3 February was a resounding success.

It was well organised by a team from Local Land Services in collaboration with landholders on the Bittern Friendly rice program and supported by SunRice, Australian and NSW Government and the National Landcare program.

It was well attended by many other organisations including Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group, MDBA, CMA, NPWS, Commonwealth Environmental Water managers as well as environmental water managers from DPE. Environmental consultants and researchers also thought this a worthwhile cause by attending this conference. Birdlife, Landcare groups, Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists and people who monitor wetlands were well represented.

Various rural and environmental consultants and water delivery corporations were also represented. Delegates from as far away as New Zealand, Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland were present. Well, everyone who was anyone was there.

Speakers included Matt Herring (a well-known researcher from Murray Wildlife and Charles Darwin University, Chris Purnell from Birdlife Australia, Damian Cook about conservation actions in North Central Victoria, Bob Green (Birdlife South East South Australia) Emma Williams from the Department of Conservation in New Zealand, Ali Borrell from the Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group and Jen Spencer from DPIE. Sarah Corner from Western Australia Department of Biodiversity and Liz Znidarsic about Bittern acoustic monitoring in Tasmania.

Former Birdlife magazine editor and self-named bird nerd entertained us at the Whitton Malt House with a hilarious bird quiz.

I think congratulations are due to the LLS team for a well balanced, well organized program.

Nella Smith

The Australasian Bittern Summit

The Bittern Summit held in Leeton from the 31st of January to the 3rd of February 2023 attracted delegates that work in the field of wetlands and birds, from community groups such as the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists and Country Women's Association of NSW (CWA) and others who described themselves as bird photographers. The CWA of NSW had chosen to study Australasian Bitterns last year and Matt Herring spoke to CWA members. Australasian Bitterns are found in a number of different locations around Australia such as the southeast of South Australia on the border with Victoria, southwest Western Australia and New Zealand. Presenters and delegates were from all these areas.

Whilst Wednesday of the Summit was dedicated to researchers presenting their research, delegates to the Bittern Summit had opportunities to go out into the wetlands. We were lucky as the weather was cooler and there were few mosquitoes. The wetlands were all full of water and birdlife after the floods and wet seasons. On Tuesday evening the Welcome BBQ was held at Fivebough Wetlands and people took the opportunity to walk around and check out what bird species were there. Then on Thursday buses took people to Nericon and Campbell's Wetland and to a "Bittern Friendly Rice Crop". Australasian Bitterns were seen at the rice crop. Access to some of Fivebough's tracks were limited as some were still under water. Campbell's Wetland's boardwalk was under water. Nericon was full of water and birdlife. Keith Hutton spoke about Fivebough to delegates and Nella and other MFN members talked to delegates about the local wetlands. The MFN's scopes were used.



Pink-eared Duck – Phillip Williams



Grey Teal – Phillip Williams

Murrumbidgee River and Yanga National Park. Here we walked along a track and the wetland on either side was rich with birdlife and very picturesque. I had a long list of bird species I had recorded by the end of the evening. The owners of both these private properties invested in conserving the wetlands. It was very heartening to see such efforts put into preserving such great places for our birdlife to thrive.

The highlight of my visits to the wetlands was seeing the Great Crested Grebe, many of them with their young. They were at all the wetlands we visited, but in greatest numbers at the wetland near Yanga National Park. Some birds carried their young on their backs.

My thanks go to the organisers. The Summit went smoothly, and I found the organisers, presenters and other delegates were friendly and ready to share their knowledge. There is even talk of having another Australasian Bittern Summit in the future.

Penny Williams

On Friday, some of the delegates headed to the Reeds Beds Bird Hide near Mathoura and others headed to Balranald and the Lower Bidgee. I was part of the group that headed to Balranald. Here Matt Herring led us to two wetlands on private property. He had promised that these places would be amazing, and they were! Our first stop was near Paika Lake on private property. The wetlands were divided by the road into two lakes, one of which had been manmade. Large Carp had been prevented from entering the lakes so that the water was cleaner and suitable for native fish. While we were there a fisheries officer was reintroducing Southern Pygmy Perch to the lake.

He was bringing the fish up from Ballarat hatchery. The second wetland was on another private property which backed onto the



Great Crested Grebe – Penny Williams



Wetlands near Yanga National Park

3 February 2023

Smitten on Bittern

What a wonderful Australasian Bittern Summit to Bring back the Bunyip Bird. It definitely had a National and International feel about it with most states of Australia as well as New Zealand speakers and delegates. People from all walks of life seem to have an interest in this cryptic and secretive bird. The bird even has a town named after it. Bittern in Victoria is on the Mornington Peninsular. Who would have thought!

The conference centre at the Hydro was filled with gorgeous huge photos of the Bittern. It felt like this now famous bird filled the building. It would have been in good company with other famous faces who have frequented the Historic Hydro like Agatha Christie, the Harlem Globe Trotters and Princess Alexandra as pointed out by Leeton's Mayor Tony Reneker.

The Bittern has attracted people who are next level passionate about this bird. A hand full of participants at the conference dinner could mimic a great rendition of a Bittern calling with actions to match.

We were all so grateful to hear the cultural significance of the Bittern by William Ingram.

The story of the Bittern does differ around Australia but here in Wiradjuri Country the Bittern is a messenger and when ever you see one you should think about the message it is delivering to you. Many believed they had already had this feeling and felt the honour. William says, we don't often see them but we feel them and can hear them. He believes we all need to listen more and speak less. Great advice.

According to Matt Herring there has never been so much love for this bird. It has been a huge decade. He has certainly had a lot to do with the increase in understanding of its cover dependent behaviour. He believes it is all about partnerships and there are wonderful partners in this program. There has also been a lot of fun with people dressing up as bittern fashioned from an old air conditioner duct. A creative sole lurks beneath.

According to Matt at the end of the day the truth is that the Riverina rice fields support a global stronghold of this bird largely due to the wonderful work of this team and their ability to crack the code of how best to understand Bittern behavior and needs. Knowing how many days are needed for ponding, when the water needs to go on and off, how to safely monitor them and how the banks need to be managed to deter feral

pest such as foxes and cats. There is still a lot of work to go on to continue saving this species.

In many other parts of the world there are products on the market such as Elephant friendly tea and Stork friendly rice just to name a few. It seems there are people who are happy to pay a premium for these products and social research has been done by the group to indicate this is the case. All groundbreaking ideas that will help support the growers and assist in the enormous in-kind work that is being done. Rice fields are crucial for Bittern Conservation and now part of the ethos says Matt. There is a need to incentivise and address sustainable tradeoffs. Bittern

Friendly products are feasible.

Ricegrowers providing habitat for these birds are providing homes and food for many other species of



The Hydro lights up after the Hydro wetland walk with a documentary launch 'Shadow in the Reeds' by Grassland films - Kathy Tenison

waterbirds, frogs and turtles. It was interesting to find that rice does not benefit the Australian Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus dubius*) as they rely more on the natural wetlands of the region.

It was also interesting to find Bittern living in more Urban Wetland areas which they have probably lived in happily many years ago. Places like Port Philip Bay and Geelong. Most of the wetlands now require management of some sort as their hydrology has been changed. There is now a need to be much more aware of their connectivity, nutrient load and water level heights. The height of the water is particularly important for the Bittern as during flooding events the numbers can drop off as high water levels impact nesting. Open areas are also important for them to graze. Slashing and managing Cumbungi and Phragmites are needed to allow for feeding and movement. Tall marshes can choke the wetlands and reduce biodiversity providing a monoculture which is less attractive to the bird. Burning and grooming the wetland are all options that need further investigation.

Managing wetland differs according to the location of the habitat. Some require watering in strategic ways to encourage species like Swamp Wallaby Grass and native sedges and reeds. Direct seeding has also been used in restoration of wetlands. Fishways have been installed in others for fish and eels to return to the wetland. This is why wetlands require a band of learned people to assist in their management. Locally we have the Fivebough, Tuckerbil Wetland Advisory Group. Across Australia there are many other groups that have researchers and universities involved in their restoration and management. Volunteers and Citizen Scientists can play a role in assisting in the restoration of these wetlands.

Some of the most important work in understanding these birds was to tag and track them. This has been very problematic and to this day the females have remained quite elusive. Tracking and tagging the birds allows researcher's to understand their movements as they travel large distances e.g. from the Riverina to the coast.

A big congratulations to all involved in this project. It has been a huge success and to the bystanders we have loved watching the journey.

Please see below some links for other websites of interest.

Kathy Tenison

<https://www.bitternsinrice.com.au/>

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/once-bittern-farmers-not-shy-200003248.html>

Loud and proud Australasian Bittern sculptures created by students at St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Coleambally, to help raise awareness for this local endangered bird. Each of these beautiful Australasian Bitterns are filled with rice as a symbol of their habitat in the Riverina.

These sculptures were proudly funded by the NSW Government Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 3, Murrumbidgee Council Local Champions Project. This was also made possible with support from local artist Kerri Weymouth and her team, students and teachers at St Peter's Catholic Primary School Coleambally, and Samantha Davies and Harry McCrabb from Petaurus Education Group.

Made by children. Kindly, do not touch or remove.



Above: Saint Peters Catholic School Coleambally get involved with Bittern_Kathy Tenison

Below: Conference Table decorations made by Students at St Peters Coleambally_Kathy Tenison



NARRANDERA LANDCARE'S HOLLOW WORKSHOP – 21 FEBRUARY

Riverina Local Land Services (LLS) recently awarded a grant to Narrandera Landcare as their Champion Landcare Group. The application involved submitting a short video about projects our group have completed and a project that we would like to undertake. Our marvellous Local Landcare Co-ordinator, Kathy Tenison, put a video together and submitted it for us.

Our Landcare group is very appreciative of this grant and will be using it to compliment the work we've been doing to increase the awareness of local threatened species. Landcare Australia (LA) awarded us funding in 2020 to propagate 1000 Drooping She-oak seedlings to provide additional food sources for the Glossy Black Cockatoo. Then in 2022, Landcare Australia awarded us another grant to increase habitat for Superb Parrots. These grants are funded by a donation from Michael King to LA with the desire to support small native nurseries.

The propagating and planting we're doing contributes to these bird's diets but another huge requirement in their habitat are hollows for breeding, and with this LLS grant we are holding a workshop on the plastic, modular nest-boxes produced by [Habitat Innovations](#) from Orange.



These Habitech boxes were featured on a [Landline](#) segment last year and give better results than the wooden boxes commonly installed. They have better thermal properties and are more durable. In addition to the workshop, the grant also allows us to have 12 of these modular nest-boxes installed around Narrandera and quite a few of them will be at Narrandera Wetlands where they'll be visible to the public and hopefully any use of them will be reported to us. The nest-boxes are modular and we're installing them in different configurations to benefit a variety of species.

The workshop will be on **Tuesday, 21st February at Narrandera's Ex-servicemen's Club**. An ecologist from Habitat

Innovations will be talking to us about bird ecology, the impact of the loss of tree hollows and the benefits of the modular nestboxes their company produces. Anyone interested in conservation is welcome to attend. It's a free event but registration is required. This can be done on [Eventbrite](#) or please contact Kathy Tenison, Local Landcare Co-ordinator, ktenison@mli.org.au or 0428 396 826.

Glenn Currie Photos: Kathy Tenison

Links from December meeting from Penny

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLgh9h2ePYw>

Noisy Miners when good birds go bad <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rIAJTdvQxw>

Glossy Black information <https://glossyblack.org.au/fact-sheets/>

Fivebough Wetlands Walking Tracks are partially open

Now that the water has partially receded from the Fivebough Wetland walking track, maintenance and patching repairs have been completed on the section of the track between the picnic area, the Bittern bird hide (overlooking the effluent water area) and the Brolga bird hide (first bird hide along the walking trail to the north of the picnic area). The western extent of the track loop had been flagged off and will remain closed until the water subsides and repairs can be undertaken. Members of the public can now safely enjoy the accessible areas until further works track repairs works can be undertaken.

Murrumbidgee Meadows

Below are excerpts from an historic newspaper article, focussing on the descriptions of our native plants by a journalist travelling by coach from Hay to Darlington Point in 1887.

IN RIVERINA, by Telemachus. **THE MURRUMBIDGEE MEADOWS.** Argus (Melbourne), Saturday 24 September 1887, p4

I found them first leaving Hay on the northern bank, near Groongal station, though they lie on either side of the river here for at least 200 miles of its course - **meadows** which, as seen now, seem to fully merit the old English term. Damp and cool, and thickly swarded with soft rich succulent **grass** or **herbage**, that spreads **blossoms** over square miles of surface.

Daisies and buttercups all the flowers seem as we ride eastward from Hay, though a closer examination shows them to merit rather the name of **gold and silver daisies**, for in both colours Nature has repeated her star shaped form - the **yellow blooms** resembling perhaps chrysanthemums more than **daisies** growing from nine to eighteen inches in height and shining like the wattle blooms of the scrub in the sunlight.

Between them the **wild pea** blossoms are beginning to peep in all varieties of colour, from purple to lavender and crimson to pink...The black **river timber** shuts in the view

to the southward, and **pine ridges** seem to hang between breadths or strata of sky to the north. The woolsheds are seen down by the waterside gums, their iron roofs gleaming in the heat and white tents shining amongst the trees at times, owing much enchantment to the distance.

Eli Elliwah and Burrabogie lie down there. Uardry and Carathool are passed, before at noon- day the Groongal platform is reached... Groongal home station is set in the midst of the meadows...We will talk more about the home station, its humanities and recent experiences another time. Our purpose just now is to gallop over the meadows.

Out to the breadth of the meadows we travel in the early afternoon, across the railway line and right northward - grass, flowers and herbage all around and scarcely a familiar name for any blade, leaf or bloom. There is **Crow's Foot** (everybody knows that), a sort of **Geranium** with a tiny bloom of the rich blue so often repeated in Australian wildflowers and the **daisies** and **wild pea** already mentioned and the **soft, short silky grass** that grows on the red ground and the **tall broad-leaved stuff** that flourishes in the swamps, **wild oats** and **barley grass**.

In some places it is tall enough to wave in the breeze: everywhere it is big enough for the fat and lazy bullocks to crop with ease and miles and miles away there it rolls round points of the **pine ridges** and clumps of **myall** and **boree** till, if we choose to make northward for an hour, the edge of the plain will be reached when the sun will set as in mid ocean. But our course is eastward and nearer the river. We will cross a pine ridge, one of those natural plantations which all wise pastoralists prize so highly and will some day learn to conserve with a jealous care....

A few **myalls** or **boree trees** grow on the edge of the ridge and an **acacia** or two....You might easily imagine that the **myalls** would burst into silver as the **wattle** into golden bloom with a few more days



Hay Plains, 2006 by Rowena Whiting



Myall or Boree trees by Rowena Whiting



Myall tassels (from Plants of Western NSW)

of sunshine, so strong seems the olive silvery sheen on their leaves and sprays. But we have not seen the perfect **myall** yet; he grows down by the river in the fatter soil. The **pin**es are the trees of the ridge - the **Australian pin**es - which never attain any gigantic bulk or height. A trunk 2ft. in diameter is exceptionally large. A height of 40ft is very seldom reached. The well-known **clematis** festoons all meaner scrubs and on the earth's surface, covering every inch of space except that recently exposed by the rabbit - the blue-blossomed **crowsfoot**, the delicately tinted **wild thyme**, and the **barley grass**...

Then, away we spin...down to a **meadow** close to the river, whose clothing of **grass** was such as I had never seen before, or could have believed that Nature would, of her own unaided will, provide. It was like an English clover paddock in density; a mass of grass and herbage a foot in height and not yet started to run to seed - all green and soft and juicy. There, a patch of it! No, it was miles in

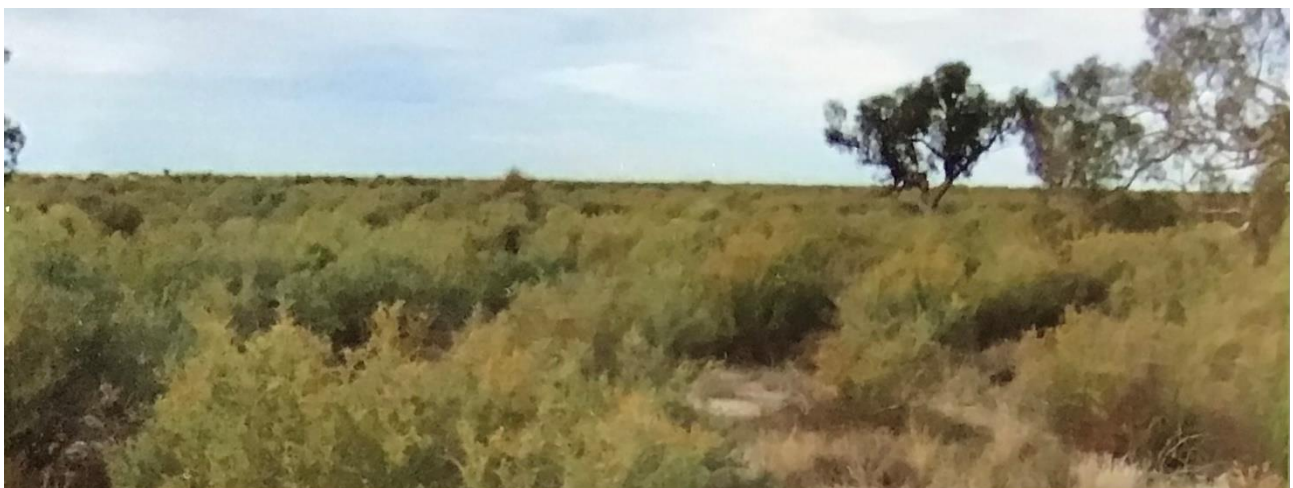
length and breadth. On the open space just approached, four or five hundred acres perhaps. But that was only a beginning; we enter the Bringagee paddock (Bringagee is an out station of Groongal) and come instantly to a scene of utmost beauty! It is a **myall grove** or park.

Had an Australian squire lived here 100 years ago, and fixed a spot for his residence at some future day and set out a park to face it, planting trees, solitary or in clumps, so as to make pleasing light and shade over all the plain, had he been compelled for some reason or other to forego his idea of residence and had the trees grown to perfection, but the house never been built, one could understand the picturesque and orderly arrangement of these trees. But that they should have grown thus by chance seems incredible! There is no such thing as chance. These **myall trees** are specially intended by nature to make the Murrumbidgee meadows beautiful forever.

Does everybody know what a **myall tree** really is? All have heard of the **fragrance of its wood**, and there is no better or more accurate description than to say that passing a heap of freshly chopped **myall** wood is like walking to leeward of a bank of violets! But no scent exudes from the growing wood, and the fragrance is not permanent in the timber. The **beauty** is found in the **grace of the tree** in its **form and colour**, in the **rounded crown** and the **long, drooping boughs**, the **leaves somewhat broader and drooping** in heavier **tassels** than the weeping willows and the **colour**, which is like the **silvery grey** seen at times in high summer clouds. The most silvery olives have only a wash of the **true myall colour**. Never more than 20ft in height, they droop down almost to the grass over areas 30ft in diameter, or form in little clumps some times and completely overshadow broad patches of grass which seem to invite artistic study. I think if a really good and faithful painter would take a month out on the Murrumbidgee meadows, in the flush of such a springtide as this, he would give the whole world a new idea of the beauties of Australian scenery.

Myalls, koobas, boree, acacia, belah and **pin**es - these give the distinctive character to the broad Australian landscape and they are all found in perfection on these broad plains....

<Trove.nla.gov.au> Edited by Margaret Strong.



Know your daisies Part 19 Podolepis and allies

Podolepis species differ from the Beauty Button group in that the outer florets of the flowerheads have very short rays (not long enough to be recognised as 'daisy-type' flowerheads). Flower colouration is also usually glossy golden- to brownish-yellow as opposed to the distinctly yellow of Beauty Buttons. Involucral bracts are opaquely coloured on narrowed cartilaginous bases (claws).

***Podolepis arachnoidea*, Clustered Copper-wire Daisy**

Erect perennial herb, to 80cm high, recorded in mallee and open woodland on sandy soil. Stems below the involucral bracts are naked. The sessile flowerheads 6mm diam and 10mm long in clusters. Involucral bracts with transverse wrinkles.

***Podolepis canescens*, Large Copper-wire Daisy**

Similar to *P. arachnoides* except flowerheads 15-25mm diam, 15mm long and plants are woolly. Recorded in mallee and open woodland on sandy soil.

***Podolepis longipedata*, Tall Copper-wire Daisy**

Flowering stems have scale-like leaves grading into the involucral bracts. Intermediate involucral bracts triangular, not obscuring the claws of adjacent bracts. Recorded usually in mallee and Callitris communities, on deep sandy soils, north from Roto-Euabalong district.

***Podolepis jaceoides*, Showy Copper-wire Daisy**

Similar to *P. longipedata* except intermediate involucral bracts ovate and ±obscuring the claws of adjacent bracts. Recorded in woodland and grassland on heavy clay floodplains or sandhills.

***Podolepis muelleri*, Small Copper-wire Daisy**

Small generally woolly sparsely branched annual to 22cm high (often much less). Recorded in woodland, grassland and saltbush shrubland on heavy soils or stony sites. Basal leaves die early leaving few stem-clasping lanceolate leaves. Flowerheads few in elongated cymes. Involucral bracts straw coloured with the inner bracts fused to form a leathery cup. Pappus is absent on outer florets and of plumose bristles on inner florets.

***Schkuhria pinnata**, Dwarf Marigold**

Much branched annual to 50cm high, recorded in disturbed areas and roadsides. Leaves pinnate with filiform lobes. Flowerheads terminal on filiform peduncles. Involucral bracts with hyaline apices. Ray florets solitary. Pappus of scales with non-pungent awns.

***Tagetes minuta**, Stinking Roger**

Mostly unbranched aromatic, annual, 1-2m high, weed of roadsides and in disturbed areas and woodlands. Leaves mostly opposite, pinnate with 3-9 leaflets. Flowerheads in dense panicles. Involucral bracts herbaceous, fused into a tube. Ray florets 2-4, obovate. Pappus of 5-6 scales unequal, the longest with slender awns.

Eric Whiting



Images from top;
Clustered Copper-wire Daisy
Showy Copper-wire Daisy
Small Copper-wire Daisy

Members' Observations and more

Janet Hume

Sarah and I saw 3 juvenile **Nankeen Night Herons** at **Springvale swamp** on the 16th Jan. We had 31 sightings in total, the highlight being the juvenile herons and the number of Australasian Grebe present (20 plus) and 4 nesting

We saw 3 herons fly into a tree across the water and then a tad later while sheltering under some trees this young fellow dropped in to say hello. Willie Wagtail was not happy that he was in his patch.



Iain and I spent 5 days camped on the river in Tumut early in January. Saw 35 different birds during our stay. The highlight being a family of **Sacred Kingfishers** who spent much of the day in the trees in the middle of the van park and a Yellow-faced Honeyeater who hung out in the claret ash we were camped under. The park was extremely busy and it was fantastic to see so many birds in and around the park and the nearby wetlands.



Ada Stoll

A lovely photo of a Red-winged Parrot she took in Cobar on 21st January; they saw a few flying around.

Paul Walker

Photos from the Tantangara area of Kosciusko National Park taken mid-January.

Leek Orchid, *Paraprasophyllum* sp. hosting an **Assassin bug**, *Gminatius australis* and its prey.

A small number of the horses around the headwater of Tantangara dam amid the degraded landscape.



This shot certainly shows how important it is to control the numbers of brumbies particularly in view of the fact there has been a 30% increase over the past 2 years. [Ed.]



MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

Horse Dung fungi	"Yarrabimbi", Colinroobie Road, Leeton	03/12/22	Andrew Thompson
Australasian Bittern [1 calling]	Fivebough Wetlands	04/12/22	Keith Hutton
Australasian Bittern [1 calling]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/12/22	Keith Hutton
Australasian Grebe [14]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/12/22	Keith Hutton
Great-crested Grebe [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/12/22	Keith Hutton
Magpie Geese [86]	Fivebough Wetlands	11/12/22	Keith Hutton
Spotted Harrier [1]	Middle Road at Looby's Road	19/12/22	Keith Hutton
Plumed Whistling Duck [35]	Hooey Road	21/12/22	Keith Hutton
Australasian Bittern [1 still calling]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/12/22	Keith Hutton
Small parties of 6/7			
White-winged Choughs			
And Grey-crowned Babblers	Fivebough Wetlands	throughout December/22	Keith Hutton
Pink Cockatoo [3]	Colinroobie Road, Leeton	24/12/22	Dionee Russell
Magpie Geese [86]	Boorga Road, Griffith	01/01/23	Johanna Botman
With three very small chicks between Nericon Swamp and Campbell's Wetland			
Baillon's Crake [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	01/01/23	Keith Hutton
Latham's Snipe	Fivebough Wetlands	01/01/23	Keith Hutton
White-necked Heron	Fivebough Wetlands	01/01/23	Keith Hutton
Nankeen Night-Heron [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	01/01/23	Keith Hutton
White-necked Heron [3 adults]	Fivebough Wetlands	01/01/23	Keith Hutton
Nankeen Kestrel [1]	Presbyterian Church, Cypress St, Leeton	05/01/23	Eric Whiting
Chestnut rumped Thornbill	Pomingalana Reserve, Wagga Wagga	14/01/23	Janet Hume
Nankeen Night Heron [3 juv]	Springvale Swamp, Wagga Wagga	16/01/23	Janet Hume
Plumed Whistling Duck	Fivebough Wetlands	19/01/23	Keith Hutton
A family party made up of 2 adults with 5 downy young, first confirmed successful breeding record for Fivebough Wetlands - see photo below			
White-browed Woodswallow [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/01/23	Keith Hutton
Magpie Geese [70]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/01/23	Keith Hutton
Plus an adult trio with 12 downy young			
Bronzewing [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/01/23	Keith Hutton
Swamp Harrier [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/01/23	Keith Hutton
Silver Gulls [>100] roosting	Fivebough Wetlands	20/01/23	Keith Hutton
Whiskered Tern [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/01/23	Keith Hutton
Hoary-headed Grebe [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/01/23	Keith Hutton
Australasian Grebe [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/01/23	Keith Hutton
with 2 downy young			
Royal Spoonbill [9]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/01/23	Keith Hutton
Whiskered Tern [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/01/23	Keith Hutton
Nankeen Night Heron [6]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/01/23	Keith Hutton
6 adults feeding in mid afternoon			
Great-crested Grebe with chicks	Fivebough Wetlands	28/01/23	Nella Smith
Blue-billed Duck	Fivebough Wetlands	28/01/23	Nella Smith
Buff -banded Rail	Fivebough Wetlands	28/01/23	Nella Smith
Australasian Bittern	Fivebough Wetlands	28/01/23	Nella Smith
Nankeen Night Heron [juv]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/01/23	Nella Smith
Little Bittern	Fivebough Wetlands	28/01/23	Nella Smith
White-faced Heron [25]	McCaughy Lagoon	29/01/23	Nella Smith

White-faced Heron [60]

McCaughey Lagoon

31/01/23

Glenn Currie

Brown Honeyeater

Hyandra St, Griffith

31/01/23

Sue Chittick-Dalton

Virginia Tarr Campbell's Wetlands on 23/1/2023 Australian White Ibis 100's, Straw-necked Ibis x 100's. Great Crested Grebe 2, White-faced Herons 2, Great Egret, Black Swans. M, F & 4 Goslings, Pacific Black Duck. Many, Freckled Ducks 4, Chestnut Teal, Blue-billed duck, Swamp Harrier, Purple Swamp Hen, Eurasian Coots, Red-rumped Parrot, Purple-backed Fairywren, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Red -Wattlebird Golden-headed Cisticola.

Please note

Sightings must be significant, unusual and/or threatened and in the Murrumbidgee Footprint.



Plumed Whistling Duck family by Anne Lepper

Event addition and information

Yuluma Plains Wetland Field Day –on Tuesday 7th March at “Lakeside” Boree Creek Rd, Urana, 9.00 am to 1.00 pm. Join Corowa District Landcare and the Webb Family for a unique opportunity to visit a high-conservation on-farm wetland at “Lakeside”, which provides habitat for an abundance of wildlife, including Brolgas and Australasian Bitterns. Wildlife Ecologist, Matt Herring will be presenting on wetland ecology, waterbird conservation and management. Property owner Charlie Webb will be presenting on wetland conservation management practices on farms. This is a free event and lunch will be provided (Please see attached flyer). This event is supported by the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and Landcare NSW partnership.

For catering purposed please RSVP by 28th February to Judy - judykirk@corowalandcare.com.au or phone/text - 0417 858 533

Additional information about the cocky count

24/25 February Fri/Sat Glossy Black Cockatoo Count

All volunteers must register and when you do, Leeton Narrandera or Griffith organisers will assign you to a dam. You should try and get familiar with the sound they make as you will probably hear them first. As there is a lot of water in the landscape this year, the birds may not drink at a dam as they prefer to drink from puddles. If you hear them you should still record them even if they don't drink. If you are able please record sex of glossies.

Please record all species and numbers of fauna that come near the dam or down to drink. . There are forms for this and they should be sent to Nella so she can collate the results. You should position yourself at your allotted dam by 6pm at the latest.

Remember the more dams we can cover the more accurate the count will be.

**** COMING EVENTS ****

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions.

Please register with the nominated person.

- 9 February Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7pm. It will start promptly so arrive a little before.
Guest Speaker: Geoff Williams of Australian Platypus Conservancy
Topic – Rakali (Australia’s Water-Rat) The talk will outline the biology and key conservation requirements of rakali and include tips on how to go about spotting this fascinating species in local waterways.
Note: this will be presented via Zoom.
Bring along your ‘show & tell’
Contact: Dione Russell 0428 536 290
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com or for info about the talk Kathy Tenison at ktenison@mli.org.au
- 12 February Sunday** **Outing to Rocky Waterholes, Narrandera**
A twilight meeting for a walk along the channel bank followed by nibbles at the area by the bridge.
Meet by the bridge (off Old Wagga Road) at 5pm
Bring binoculars, repellent, nibbles and drinks.
Register with murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com
- 17/18 February** **Annual Glossy Black Cockatoo Count Leeton, Narrandera, Griffith**
Friday / Saturday
Participants will be allotted a dam to go to at various locations in the Brobenah and Narrandera hills and Binya Forest. Timing will be from 6pm
If you are interested in participating contacts are
Narrandera - Nella Smith Email: nellasmith0@gmail.com Phone 0428 890 537
Leeton – Graham Russell grahamrussell29@gmail.com Phone 0419 350 673
Griffith - Virginia Tarr vobrien3@hotmail.com Phone 0434 831 031
- 24 or 25 February** **Rankins Springs Glossy Black Cockatoo Count**
Friday or Saturday
MFN members have been invited to join the Lachlan Valley Group for their count. Which day is still to be confirmed. If you would like to participate or for more information contact Dione Russell know
murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com
- 2 March Wednesday** **Copy for the March newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 5 March Sunday** **Outing to Rocky Hill, Wagga Wagga**
Time: 7:30 – 11:00am
RSVP Sarah Danckert spdanckert@gmail.com
We will meet with members of the Rocky Hill Regeneration Group
- 9 March Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7pm.
Guest Speaker: Bronwyn Ayre from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority
Topic – Native Bees
Bring along your ‘show & tell’
Contact: Dione Russell 0428 536 290
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com
- 11 or 12 March** **Outing to Turkey Flat late afternoon/early evening**
Saturday or Sunday This will depend on weather & water levels