

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



April 2023 - Issue #313

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

Birds aplenty
at
Fivebough
Wetlands,
Spotted Crake
alongside the
track
Rowena Whiting



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CONTRIBUTIONS

For the May 2023 issue by
Wednesday 3 May

To Rowena Whiting

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Adopt the pace of nature:

her secret is patience.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

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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.

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Welcome to the April issue

This last month has certainly seen a bonanza of waterbirds. This would have to be the longest sightings list ever!! Fivebough has been a delight in the calmness of the early mornings, the track past the Glossy Ibis shelter is now open. However the birds have been choosy about where they go; our choice for the March outing wasn't favourable, that is what can happen when the location needs to be determined in advance. Still we did have protection from the wind in the forest.

March's meeting was a great success when Bronwyn enlightened us with her research into the ways bees and birds pollinate plants with varying success rates. A wealth of information. Kathy's report on her presentation has a link to further information. Our grateful thanks and for travelling to Leeton, Bronwyn.

Looking forward to more activities this month and hopefully a return to Autumn weather.

Rowena.

April is Citizen Scientist month.

Citizen scientists make such an important contribution to many projects, just by recording what you see can be of value. Saving our Species (SoS) projects across NSW rely heavily on many different kinds of partners, like citizen scientists, who bring their own expertise to the table and help achieve amazing conservation outcomes! Here is a link to their website to see how you could become involved:

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/news/saving-our-species-partnerships-for-wildlife-conservation>

The Murrumbidgee Landcare web site has a few interesting items, here are couple:

The Community Champions of the Murrumbidgee Region Students from Darlington Point, Coleambally and Jerilderie connected with community members over the past year to learn more about their local area and build their appreciation for the place in which they live. Their work led to the creation of the case studies in this book. [Community Champions of the Murrumbidgee region](#) (Kathy Tenison showed us this book at the meeting.) This program was funded by the New South Wales Government and managed by Petaurus Education Group in collaboration with Murrumbidgee Landcare and a range of community groups.



Whilst on their website I found a link to a YouTube video of **Yanco Biodiversity Field Day** at McCaughey Park, again Kathy was involved <https://mli.org.au/yanco-biodiversity-field-day/>

Pollination birds and bees Research

What a pleasure to listen to Bronwyn Ayre speak about the research she carried out in Western Australia at our Thursday Night MFN meeting in Leeton. We heard all about the pollination of Orchids, Banksia and Kangaroo Paw.

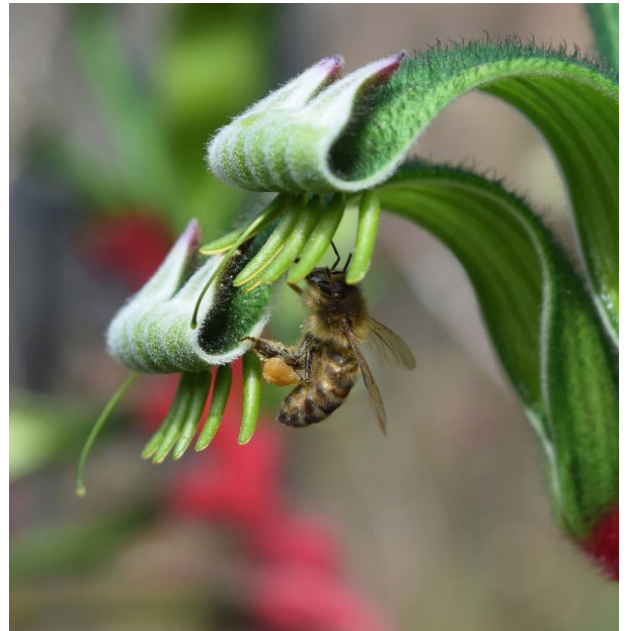
When you come across these beautiful plants in WA you're sometimes so focused on their beauty that you forget about how they are pollinated. Bronwyn sat in the bush for many hours watching the habits of the pollinators doing their work on plants as part of her PhD.



Hand pollination of leek orchids by T Hayashi

deeper, she found that bird pollination is critical for higher fruit set, seed set and greater genetic diversity in kangaroo paws than European Honeybees. The Honeybees are much less effective. 67% less fruit, 81% less seed and they could be acting as pollen thieves in Kangaroo Paws.

She found they could also be lowering genetic diversity and seed production. These results came about after many hours of monitoring and genetic testing.



Honeybee on Kangaroo Paw by Bronwyn Ayres

It is only through detailed studies such as this that we can possibly understand the complexity of the natural world.

We all know about birds and bees being pollinators, but which one is doing a better job. When Bronwyn looked

deeper, she found that bird pollination is critical for higher fruit set, seed set and greater genetic diversity in kangaroo paws than European Honeybees. The Honeybees are much less effective. 67% less fruit, 81% less seed and they could be acting as pollen thieves in Kangaroo Paws.

She found they could also be lowering genetic diversity and seed production. These results came about after many hours of monitoring and genetic testing.



**Honeybee on Paper Daisy, Kings Park
by Bronwyn Ayre**



**Spinebill pollinating a Cats Paw by Bronwyn Ayre
Note the pollen on top of its head.**

Honeybees were introduced into Australia in 1822 and formal records show the Honeybees visit 130 Native plants so there is still plenty of research on other species to be carried out. In 1882 Charles Darwin said that Honeybees in Australia were 'rapidly exterminating the small, stingless

native bee'. It seems many believe the introduced Honeybees are not helping our natural environment.

The direct impact of Honeybees has only been researched on a small number of species. In looking at a variety of plants 48% have a negative impact and a 40% incidence of a positive impact. Bronwyn believes that flower size might be a predictor of a positive or negative impact.

Bronwyn believes we still have a long way to go with research on this topic.

Congratulations Bronwyn on this very important research. We were thrilled you could come over to Leeton and those of us online were very grateful of the opportunity to listen in.

For further information visit <https://www.wanaturalists.org.au/the-birds-the-bees-the-kangaroo-paws/>

Kathy Tenison

McCaughey's Lagoon

A March outing is always a hard one to program. Daytime temperatures are usually too hot for fauna, including ourselves to be active. An early morning or evening water-side site is the normal choice. Except that by March most of our wetlands have dried out in most years, [Have often dried out] leaving a river forest walk as the usual option. The recent floods still restricted guaranteed access to much of the River Red Gum forests this year, leaving only a few candidate sites. Turkey Flat became plan A but a reconnoitre the previous weekend revealed the water there had dropped to be barely visible behind the flourishing Cumbungi.

Plan B was McCaughey's Lagoon – a safe bet because of its easy access just off a sealed road. So a Sunday evening meet was the go – what could upset that. You guessed it – a forecast of a wet southerly change!

Nevertheless six of us met at the picnic site, including Virginia coming from Griffith bringing Sue Chittick-Dalton. We opted to take the walking track into the forest though not aiming to go as far as the river to complete the loop.

It was sad to see the amount of Noogoora Burr *Xanthium occidentale* taking over the edges of the lagoon. Being intermixed with the native Pale Knotweed *Persicaria lapathifolium*, it will be hard to control. With the wind becoming gusty, bird life was subdued, and the years of grazing has left the forest floristically poor. So the walk though pleasant was rather uneventful. Just a few bird calls intermittently and the occasional sighting.

Back at the picnic area, after a brief look at the Herons on the water nearby, nibbles and chatter became interrupted by the first drops of rain. Only some of us took the short walk to see the Fruit Bats still roosting in the trees behind the NPWS works area, then it was off home before the rain set in.

Eric Whiting

Bird List

White-faced Heron	White-necked Heron	Australian White Ibis
Noisy Friarbird	Australian Raven	Galah
Teal Duck	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Dusky Moorhen (Juvenile)
Yellow Rosella	Kookaburra	Little Pied Cormorant
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	White-winged Chough	Australian Ringneck

Tracking Endangered Australian Painted Snipe

From Matt Herring. Do you remember Robbie, Vin, MILo, ColyLion, Bidgee (MFN's sponsorship) and the rest of the gang? It was wonderful watching their journeys and we learnt so much. Well, late last year a new project was launched to track the Endangered Australian Painted Snipe with a team of researchers.

They're Australia's rarest breeding waterbird. They're listed as nationally and globally Endangered. They skulk in shallow wetlands among waterplants and mud. Sadly, the strikingly beautiful Australian Painted Snipe is continuously relegated to the too hard basket for in-depth research.

With your help, for the first time ever, we will track the movements of these cryptic, near-mythical ghost birds, revealing their well-guarded secrets using the latest satellite and mobile phone tower technology.

Here is a link to the web site for more of the story - <https://chuffed.org/project/paintedsnipe>

The Lake Wyangan Wetlands Saga

The Lake

2012 was interesting at Lake Wyangan with a week of wet weather raising the water over the Causeway. Much of the inflow came off Scenic Hill spilling the south lake into the north lake. Photos show wading in ankle deep water. The local creeks and springs ran for months.



Come late October 2022 the new multi-million dollar raised Causeway was complete and finally opened, and then it bucketed again. This time the bulk of the water came off the farms to the north, spilling the north lake into the south lake ... but it rose and rose, reaching a metre above road level by November, and the road has remained closed since. Serious concrete bollards stop even the silliest 4WD'ers. The relatively new pump and pipe along Jones Rd to the Lakesview Canal remained silent.



The loser of the fox fight on the Causeway

There is not a huge number of birds here but on a recent visit highlights were the White-bellied Sea-Eagle, almost 100 Whiskered Tern and 7 Great Crested Grebes (one with 3 chicks). Also I witnessed a fight between two foxes, one of which decided it had lost and passed by not two metres away without noticing me ... I was standing in the middle of the road! It just shows, you see what you expect to see.



Great Crested Grebes on Lake Wyangan

Tharbogang Swamp

In mid-November Murrumbidgee Irrigation / Griffith City Council* hastily installed a pump from the south lake across Lakes Rd to the west, and then open channel into Tharbogang Swamp, in an effort to lower the Lake. In a few days Tharbogang Swamp was full up to the fence line, the pump was switched off, and the level had dropped about 200mm (from memory).

Despite the water, there was almost no birdlife due to an excessive range of choices elsewhere. Currently access to Tharbogang Swamp is denied due to an eight foot high fence and locked gate, whether this is permanent or temporary I do not know.

MI/GCC is also in the process of installing a new pipeline along Lakes Rd to Tharbogang, to send water along the drains toward Barren Box Swamp. Old hands may recall that this was the case until about 20 years ago when the old pump and much smaller pipe went into disuse. This new pipe, apart from its current worth in

dropping the high lake level, may be very important in the future management of the Wyangan Lakes. It will make possible a throughput of water. Most of Lake Wyangan's problems stem from it being a "closed system" where the water enters from rainfall or farms or topping up from the channel, but has no natural exit, and mostly evaporates leaving behind salts, chemicals, algae, whatever.

* I'm not exactly sure which entity has done each work, and if they are solo or shared efforts

Campbells Swamp

Campbells has been full for many years. This is great in dry years when it becomes a magnet and we have had some nice birding there. However, in a flood year it is a shame that there was very little head room to input the excess water. Nevertheless, a small pump has been installed on Jones Rd and sends water from the end of Southlake Drive to Campbells whenever there is a scrap of space. The result is an almost permanently flooded boardwalk, to add to its deteriorating structure, and as well it is seriously overgrown ... in other words, forget the boardwalk for now. The foot track along the eastern edge is still dry (just). The Ibis colony is still in operation, with White to Straw-necked at about 2 to 1. Otherwise a sprinkling of the usual suspects adding to 40 species.

Nericon Swamp

Nericon was given a water allocation in 2022 after many dry years. This is slowly drying and it is not getting pumped water from the flooded Lake Wyangan as the logistics are difficult and the amount it could take is quite small anyway.

Despite being close to Campbells it is shallower and wider and differed in having more Black Swans (20), Grey Teal (150), Pink-eared Ducks (20), Pied Stilts (50), and Masked Lapwing (20). The Saltbush which we can thank Col Sell for, is supporting a suite of smaller bush birds ... wrens, honeyeaters, whistlers ...

Andersons Lane (not part of Lake Wyangan Wetlands)



This relatively unknown spot 25km north of Beelbangera on the Rankins Springs Rd fills from local dry farming runoff, only in extremely wet years. Normally it is wheat paddocks split by a Black Box lined road. It filled in 2012 and again in 2022 flooding both the road and the farm. The Lane is closed to through traffic but you can drive right up to the edge. Slowly receding but still a mass of water there and copious birdlife.

I visited on March 21 with an approaching thunderstorm crackling and I think the birds were buzzing as I was. An old, gnarled Whistling Kite circled for a minute barely 10 metres above me. I can say gnarled as it was so close, I could see the individual broken tail feathers, looking like a big mouth had chomped the tail. A pair of Black Falcons flew through, disappeared, then returned later to roost in a dead tree almost directly above me, demanding I photograph him at close quarters.

Black Falcon posing



Two (possibly four) Wedge-tailed Eagles, Black Kites, Black-shouldered Kite and a Sparrowhawk / Goshawk made it six raptors for the session.

I counted 11 Plumed Whistling Ducks for eBird but later a flock of around 40 wheeled and squealed in the air. They have bred here ... I saw 8 chicks in December. Also of note were around 200 Aust/Hoary-headed Grebes, and ducks including Shovelers, Pink-eared, and Hardhead. Altogether a list of 36 species.

Neil Palframan

A little more from Neil

Further to my mention of Tharbogang Swamp in my report, I contacted Council and the previously locked gate is unlocked and open. The access to the swamp is public road reserve, it even has a name, Alexander Lane. There was a signpost but it came down during the installation of the pump and pipe and hasn't been reinstalled. Tharbogang Swamp is public crown reserve.

I dropped in there today. Didn't stay long as the sun was in the wrong direction, morning would be ideal, but there were a very good variety and number of waterbirds. It is possible to walk all around the swamp but the veg growth would make it slow. Need more roos to eat it down.

I returned to Tharbogang the next morning April 3rd for an eBird survey. That was difficult because there were so many birds getting smaller and smaller into the distance. It is a big area, you can't see the far end. 25 species and apart from the "usual suspects", of note were a lot of Pink-eared Ducks, Blue-billed Duck, Musk Duck, Great Crested Grebe, and mixed rafts of 1500 Grebe, approximately 50-50 Hoary-headed and Australasian. The previous day there were Plumed Whistling Ducks but unseen when I did the survey.

The gate remains open. It is likely it was the farmer who locked it off and Council has told him to desist.

In comparison, at Andersons Lane I got a list of 35 species which included six raptor species.

Rotifers

For the Show and Tell at the February meeting, I played a short video of Rotifers from my bird bath. What are they you may well ask?

Rotifers are small aquatic animalcules less than a millimetre long distinguished by having two lobes at the front that are fringed with cilia. The constant beating of the cilia create a vortex which sweeps even smaller life like single-celled algae and protozoa or even bacteria into the mouth.

Being absolutely colourless you can see (when magnified at least 100x) the inner structure of these multicellular organisms. Particular noticeable are the jaw plates of the stomach grinding together to disintegrate the food. The constant motion looks like a heart beating but being so small there is no need for a circulating system.



Rotifers are just one of the many branches of the animal kingdom, to be found when looking at just one drop of water under a microscope.

Eric Whiting

Call for Applications for MFN Environment Fund Grants

The Fund was set up to provide financial assistance for projects delivering the enhancement of biodiversity, conservation or enhanced understanding of the natural environment within the region covered by the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Club (MFN).

Applications are now open to interested individuals or groups to apply for funding and forms can be obtained by contacting the club secretary via our email address:

murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

Applications close on 1st May and the Environmental Grants Committee of the club will consider all applications and notify people of the result of their respective application after the closing date.

Know your daisies Part 21 - Cudweeds

Like Billy Buttons, the Cudweed group have all tubular florets in a globose head (except for two that have a dense spike. Instead of attractive yellow florets, cudweeds have dull cream or brownish florets and therefore are generally overlooked or taken as weeds. All of the group used to be in the genus *Gnaphalium* except for the earlier segregate *Pseudognaphalium*.

***Euchiton involucreatum*, Star Cudweed (syn *Gnaphalium*)**

Woolly herb 12-50cm high, recorded in forest and woodland on moist ground. Basal leaves linear 10-200mm long, soon withering. Cauline leaves linear to narrow elliptic, 30-200mm long, 2.5-10mm wide, apex acute, stem-clasping at base, margins entire often recurved, midvein distinct, upper surface green and glabrous, lower surface silvery-tomentose. Flowerheads in dense terminal clusters subtended by 3-5 lanceolate leafy bracts far exceeding the flowerheads.

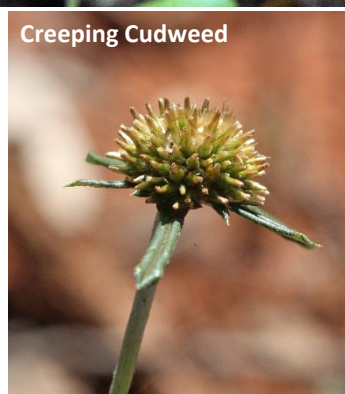
***Euchiton sphaericum*, Common Cudweed (syn *Gnaphalium*)**

Erect herb recorded in various habitats. Basal leaves obovate with narrowed bases and obtuse apices, soon withering. Cauline leaves oblanceolate to spatulate or narrow-elliptic, 10-70mm long, 3-14mm wide, apex obtuse to acute and mucronate, bases narrowed, margins recurved and often undulate, midvein distinct, upper surface green, glabrous to slightly cobwebby, lower surface white- or green-tomentose. Flowerheads in dense terminal clusters subtended by 5-8 leafy bracts far exceeding the flowerheads.



***Euchiton japonicum*, Creeping Cudweed (syn *Gnaphalium gymnocephalum*)**

Herb 10-35cm high recorded in dry sclerophyll forest and scrub, often in moist sites. Basal leaves in a persistent rosette, elliptic to oblanceolate, 40-180mm long, apex acute, margins entire, midvein and 2 lateral veins distinct, upper surface green, ±glabrous, lower surface silvery-tomentose. Cauline leaves few, elliptic, stem-clasping. Flowerheads in dense terminal clusters subtended by 1-3 small lanceolate, leafy bracts.



***Gamochoeta coarctatum*, (syn *Gnaphalium*)**

Weed of disturbed ground, 7-40cm high. Basal leaves in a persistent rosette, oblanceolate to spatulate, 25-70mm long, 8-16mm wide, apex obtuse, base slightly stem-clasping, margins sometimes undulate, upper surface green, ±glabrous, mid-vein furrowed, lower surface white-tomentose. Cauline leaves similar, sparse, 10-60mm long, margins undulate. Flowerheads in axillary clusters forming a dense spike-like panicle.

***Gamochoeta purpurea**, Purple Cudweed (syn *Gnaphalium americanum*)**

Slender weed of disturbed ground, 10-35cm high, Basal leaves in a persistent rosette, spatulate to obovate, 50-120mm long, 8-20mm wide, upper surface green, glabrescent, lower surface white-tomentose. Cauline leaves similar, smaller and narrower. Flowerheads in axillary clusters forming dense spikes subtended by several leafy white-tomentose bracts.

***Gamochoeta calviceps**, (syn *Gnaphalium*)**

Erect or ± prostrate weed of disturbed ground, 10-20cm high. Leaves cauline, narrow-lanceolate to narrow-obovate to spatulate, 15-30mm long, 3-8mm wide, apex obtuse to acute and mucronate, bases slightly stem-clasping, both surfaces white-tomentose. Flowerheads in axillary clusters forming a leafy panicle subtended by several ovate to obovate hyaline bracts.

***Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum*, Jersey Cudweed**

Erect white-woolly herb to 45cm high, branched from base, recorded in most plant communities. Basal leaves withering early. Cauline leaves oblanceolate to linear, to 50mm long, to 5mm wide, becoming progressively smaller and lanceolate to linear up stem, bases slightly stem-clasping, margins often undulate. Flowerheads numerous, creamy, ovoid, to 4mm long. Outer involucral bracts yellow, ±equalling florets, inner fewer.



Eric Whiting

Dragonfly or Damselfly?

Eric showed this photo of a damselfly for show and tell at the February meeting taken in the garden. This prompted the question of how do you tell whether it is a damsel or a dragon, the latter seems to be generally used.

How do you tell the difference? As Eric commented Damselflies fold wings back when resting while Dragonflies have outstretched wings.

Back in 2010 after being told a newsletter picture was incorrectly named I set about finding the difference and came up with the following.

They seem to have more similarities than differences!

The similarities first; they have tiny pointed antennae, they are often found near streams, lakes or dams where they chase and catch other insects in acrobatic displays. They are frequently seen in pairs as they mate in flight and often rest on nearby twigs or branches. Their legs are arranged so they can seize prey when in mid-flight. Both are agile flyers, have a tight turning circle and amazing acceleration.

They are in the order Odonata with suborders of Anisoptera (dragonfly) and Zygoptera (damselfly). There are a number of families in each; their classification is based on differences in wing venation. Unlike those of most other insects they cannot be folded back over the main part of the body when they rest. The main difference is that most damselflies hold their wings vertically above their bodies whereas dragonflies hold theirs horizontally as if they were flying. Blue is a more common colour in damselflies.

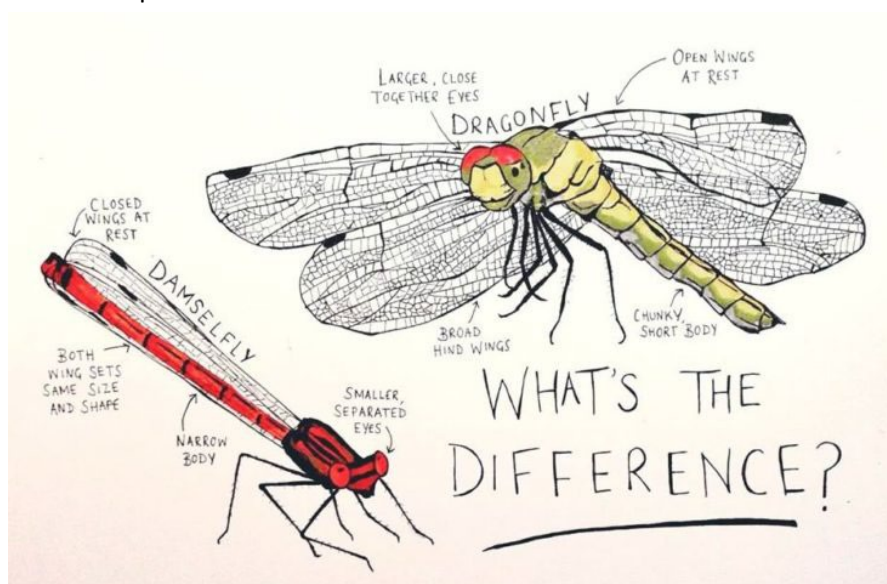
Dragonflies are usually larger than damselflies and may be found quite a distance from water. Damselflies are often referred to as delicate with dragonflies being termed stout. The larvae are aquatic. Another difference is in the gills on the tips of their abdomens with damselflies having three feathery gills while in dragonflies they are concealed.

It appears the first flying insects of prehistoric times are believed to have had similar wings and dragonflies and damselflies are living representatives of the primitive form.

There have certainly been lots of damselflies and dragonflies around this year; our clothes hoist has been a hotspot. As we all know they are fascinating insects to watch and hopefully settle somewhere so they can be more closely observed and possibly take a photo.

Rowena Whiting

Sources: *Backyard Insects* Paul Horne and Denis Crawford
A Field Guide to Insects in Australia Paul Zborowski and Ross Storey



MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

Yellow Rosella	Narrandera Wetlands	08/03/23	Susan Whitehead
Yellow-billed Spoonbill [3]	Narrandera Wetlands	08/03/23	Alan Whitehead
White-necked Heron	Narrandera Wetlands	08/03/23	Alan Whitehead
Southern Boobook	Narrandera Wetlands	08/03/23	Alan Whitehead
Glossy Black Cockatoo	"Mountain Dam", Colinroobie Rd, Leeton	03/03/23	D&G Russell
Black Falcon [2]	Andersons Lane	21/03/23	Neil Palframan
Plumed Whistling Duck [40]	Andersons Lane	21/03/23	Neil Palframan
On 7 January Neil saw eight chicks there			
Australasian/Hoary-headed Grebe [150 mixed]	Andersons Lane	21/03/23	Neil Palframan
White-bellied Sea Eagle [1]	Lake Wyangan	20/03/23	Neil Palframan
Great Crested Grebe [7 including 7 chicks]	Lake Wyangan	20/03/23	Neil Palframan
Whiskered Tern [75]	Lake Wyangan	20/03/23	Neil Palframan
Pied Stilt [50]	Nericon Swamp	28/02/23	Neil Palframan
White-necked Heron [60]	Carrathool Rd at Mirrool Ck crossing	09/02/23	Neil Palframan
Glossy Black Cockatoo	"Yarrabimbi", Colinroobie Road, Leeton	27/03/23	Andrew Thompson
White-necked Heron [100+]	Green Swamp, Narrandera	23/03/23	Nella Smith
Great Egret [100+]	Green Swamp, Narrandera	23/03/23	Nella Smith
Yellow Spoonbill [50+]	Green Swamp, Narrandera	23/03/23	Nella Smith
Royal Spoonbill [50+]	Green Swamp, Narrandera	23/03/23	Nella Smith
White Ibis [50+]	Green Swamp, Narrandera	23/03/23	Nella Smith
Straw-necked Ibis [50+]	Green Swamp, Narrandera	23/03/23	Nella Smith
White-faced Heron [50+]	Green Swamp, Narrandera	23/03/23	Nella Smith
Mountain Duck [200]	Green Swamp, Narrandera	23/03/23	Nella Smith
Grey Teal [500+]	Green Swamp, Narrandera	23/03/23	Nella Smith
Black-winged Stilt [300+]	Green Swamp, Narrandera	23/03/23	Nella Smith
Wood Duck [100+]	Green Swamp, Narrandera	23/03/23	Nella Smith
Sharp tailed Sandpiper [100+]	Green Swamp, Narrandera	23/03/23	Nella Smith
Gull-billed Tern [25]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	30/03/23	Nella Smith
Magpie Goose [200+]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	30/03/23	Nella Smith
Gull-billed Tern [7]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	09/03/23	Keith Hutton
Whiskered Tern [>70]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	09/03/23	Keith Hutton
Baillon's Crake [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	12/03/23	Keith Hutton
Australian Spotted Crake [6]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	12/03/23	Keith Hutton
Spotless Crake [6]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	12/03/23	Keith Hutton
Buff Banded Rail [1]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	12/03/23	Keith Hutton
Swamp Harrier [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	12/03/23	Keith Hutton
Australasian Grebe [>40]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	12/03/23	Keith Hutton
White-bellied Sea-eagle [1 imm]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	13/03/23	Keith Hutton
Common (Indian) Myna [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	14/03/23	Keith Hutton
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [21]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	16/03/23	Keith Hutton
Wood Sandpiper [1]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	16/03/23	Keith Hutton
Black-winged Stilt [35]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	16/03/23	Keith Hutton
Black Kite [1]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	16/03/23	Keith Hutton
Black-shouldered Kite [1]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	16/03/23	Keith Hutton
Little Pied Cormorant [42]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	16/03/23	Keith Hutton
Black fronted Dotterel [1]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Australian Spotted Crake [17]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton

Sightings continued

Spotless Crake [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Eurasian Coot [>90]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Red-kneed Dotterel [3]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 150-200]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Wood Sandpiper [3]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
White-necked Heron [7]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Black-winged Stilt [85]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Red-necked Avocet [12]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Nankeen Night Heron [>30]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Gull-billed Tern [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Whiskered Tern [>10]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Swamp Harrier [1]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Peregrine Falcon [1F]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
White-breasted Woodswallow [10]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/03/23	Keith Hutton
Magpie Geese 152]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	22/03/23	Keith Hutton
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [15]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	22/03/23	Keith Hutton
Gull-billed Tern [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	22/03/23	Keith Hutton
Whiskered Tern [>35]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	22/03/23	Keith Hutton
White-necked Heron [15]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	22/03/23	Keith Hutton
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [128]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	23/03/23	Keith Hutton
Wood Sandpiper [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	23/03/23	Keith Hutton
Red-kneed Dotterel [3]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	23/03/23	Keith Hutton
Greenshank [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	23/03/23	Keith Hutton
Red-kneed Dotterel [4]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	26/03/23	Keith Hutton
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [42]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	26/03/23	Keith Hutton
Australian Spotted Crake [9]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	26/03/23	Keith Hutton
Australian Shelduck [12]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	26/03/23	Keith Hutton
Spotless Crake [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	26/03/23	Keith Hutton
Black-tailed Native Hen [3]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	26/03/23	Keith Hutton
Gull-billed Tern [3]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	26/03/23	Keith Hutton
Whiskered Tern [30]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	26/03/23	Keith Hutton
Wood Sandpiper [1]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	26/03/23	Keith Hutton
Magpie Geese [200-300]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton (south	26/03/23	Keith Hutton

Hooley Road Lookout)

White-breasted Woodswallow [10]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	28/03/23	Keith Hutton
White-bellied Sea-eagle [2, imm pair]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	28/03/23	Keith Hutton
Red-necked Avocet [3]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	29/03/23	Keith Hutton
Plumed Whistling Duck [62]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	29/03/23	Keith Hutton
Magpie Geese [>200]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	29/03/23	Keith Hutton

Additional Comments from Keith: significant movements of crakes and rails, moorhens, native hens, swamphens, and migrant waders as wetlands dried up throughout the month. Also a record number of Magpie Geese I think (at Fivebough).

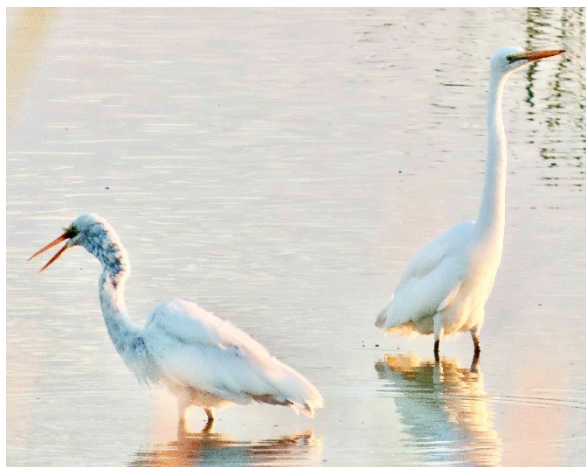
There were bigger numbers than usual of spoonbills, herons, egrets throughout the month too, but I neglected to count many of these.

Collared Sparrowhawk	Rocky Hill, Koorringal	05/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Australian Hobby	Rocky Hill, Koorringal	05/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Crested Shrike-tit	Rocky Hill, Koorringal	05/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Dusky Woodswallow	Rocky Hill, Koorringal	05/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Brown Quail	Rocky Hill, Koorringal	05/03/23	Sarah Danckert

Sightings continued

Hoary Headed Grebe	Doodle Corner Swamp, Henty	11/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Restless Flycatcher	Doodle Corner Swamp, Henty	11/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Fuscous Honeyeater	Tarcutta Hills Reserve	18/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Brown Treecreeper	Tarcutta Hills Reserve	18/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Olive Backed Oriole	Tarcutta Hills Reserve	18/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Rainbow Bee Eater	Tarcutta Hills Reserve	18/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Australasian Pippit	Tarcutta Hills Reserve	18/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Australia Shelduck	Marrambidya Wetlands, Wagga Wagga	20/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Crested Shrike-tit	Marrambidya Wetlands, Wagga Wagga	20/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Eastern Yellow Robin	The Rock	26/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Double Barred Finch	The Rock	26/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Red Capped Robin	The Rock	26/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Restless Flycatcher	Flowerdale Lagoon, Wagga Wagga	27/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Australian Hobby	Flowerdale Lagoon, Wagga Wagga	27/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Royal Spoonbill	Flowerdale Lagoon, Wagga Wagga	27/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Flowerdale Lagoon, Wagga Wagga	27/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Sacred Kingfisher	Flowerdale Lagoon, Wagga Wagga	27/03/23	Sarah Danckert
White-breasted Woodswallow	Flowerdale Lagoon, Wagga Wagga	31/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Peaceful Dove [10]	Flowerdale Lagoon, Wagga Wagga	31/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Little Friarbird [30]	Pomigalarna, Wagga Wagga	28/03/23	Sarah Danckert
Pink-eared Duck	Marrambidya Wetlands, Wagga Wagga	30/03/23	Sarah Danckert

Show and Tell



A Great Egret with unusual markings (and a great catch!) At Fivebough Wetlands by Paul Maytom

The Life of a Glossy Black Cockatoo is not Easy (Bullying in the Bird world)

This week I was sitting at a dam waiting for GBC to come a drink (to see if there were any at all coming in).

One young male came in and drank quickly and left. (It was a bit early, not dusk as I would expect.)

Directly two more birds, one male, one female perched on the bare branches of the tree nearby, it was still early. As they flew across the dam, a flock of Noisy Miners mobbed and harassed them until they again perched in the bare branches of the tree nearby. A long time passed; the birds tried again. This time a Wedge-tailed Eagle appeared to pursue and harass them as they attempted to drink. A small raptor also put in an appearance to add to the fray. At dark the GBC still had not had their daily drink. I noted that the Wedgie was perched in a tree nearby.

Between human clearing and burning and daily hazards, life is not so easy for A Glossy Black Cockatoo.

Nella Smith

Tumut trip: Saturday the 6th of May - Sunday the 7th of May 2023

Please see below a few details of a draft itinerary for the trip to Tumut. Organisation to be confirmed. Start time is flexible to ensure those travelling greater distances have options. Some of us are staying the Friday night and the Saturday night.

All catering and accommodation is to be organised by attendees. Most are staying at the Tumut Riverglade Caravan Park which have cabins and campsites available. Phone: 69472528. Cabins are quite large so some might like to share.

As you will see below, we will have a BBQ on the Saturday Night. BYO meat and salad to share if you would like to. As we will be out in the bush for lunch bring along something that needs little preparation. No cafes around on Sunday.

If you're interested in coming along, please text Phil Tenison on Mb: 0448493426. We can discuss the Trip at the April MFN meeting.

	Saturday the 6th of May 2023	Sunday the 7th of May 2023
Morning	8.00am - 10am Early morning Tumut Wetland walk (1-2hrs) possibly Platypus.	9.00am Goobarragandra (30 min from Caravan Park) Swimming Hole/Good birdwatching Spot. Eastern Yellow Robins and more.
Morning tea	10.00am – 10.30am Caravan Park	10.30am - 11.00am Flat Rock Drop
	10.30 -12.00 noon Riverwalk to the racecourse	11.00am – 1.00pm Thomas Boyd Track head walk. Swinging Bridge. Wombats
Lunch	12-1pm Riverside café for lunch if you would like or back at the caravan park.	1-2pm - BYO Lunch
	1-1.30pm Information centre to see a Corroboree Frog. Maps Books and hiking information for the district available.	2-3pm -TSR Tumut Grevillea on the way home
	1.30-4pm Tumut State Forest – Could possibly see Gang Gangs, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos.	
Afternoon Tea	4.00-4.30pm	Head home
Afternoon	4.30pm - Farm visit – Talk on impact of fires and platypus TBC. White Gate – Gliders and nest boxes Pilot Hill Arboretum - Laurel Hill (Possibly see - Lyrebird) Day bed – Forest Bathing Birdwatching pod Weemala Lookout.	Could drive home on the West Blowering Road for a better view of the water and possibly platypus.
Dinner	7.00pm BYO BBQ Caravan Park Tumut	

Other Events continued from page 14

7 May, Birdwatcher Training Workshop (BirdLife Australia) at Burrumbuttock (Landcare)

This onsite birding skills development workshop is for birdwatchers who would like support to build your skills and local bird knowledge in a friendly relaxed environment. The workshop will help you learn more about our local bird species, and how to assist landholders with quarterly bird surveys. RSVP to Darcy Creece - [0400 949 063](tel:0400949063) or darcy.creece@birdlife.org.au.

**** COMING EVENTS ****

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions.

Please register with the nominated person.

- 13 April Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7pm.
Topic – ‘show & tell’.
Please bring along a story, images, specimens to share.
Contact: Dione Russell 0428 536 290
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com
- 15 April Saturday** **Yenda Flora and Fauna Reserve & Anderson Lane**
This reserve is just north of the township and adjacent to the Golf Course. It is unique as it seems to be a soak for groundwater seeping out from the sandy country between the McPhersons and Cocoparras. Hence a unique set of floral communities. We will also visit Andersons Lane, north of Griffith, where flood waters have attracted many birds - see Neil’s article on page 6.
Meet at Yenda Post Office 9am
Bring morning tea and lunch.
Register with Eric Whiting ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 3 May Wednesday** **Copy for the May newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 6-7 May** **Weekend trip to Tumut**
Saturday – Sunday **Kathy and Phil Tension are organising a varied program.**
Organise your own catering and accommodation.
See page 13 for more information. This will be discussed at the April meeting.
If you’re interested in coming, please text Phil Tension on Mb: 0448493426.
- 11 May Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7pm.
Topic –
Bring along your ‘show & tell’
Contact: Dione Russell 0428 536 290
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

Other Events

2023 Cowra Woodland Bird Surveys,

Dates for 2023 are April 15/16, July 15/16, October 14/15, and February 17/18 2024.

Contact Julian Reid on 0405 922 505 or at julianr@home.com

Southeast Australian Naturalists Association (SEANA) conferences

Autumn camp Date April 28 - 30

Host club Timboon FNC, Location Port Campbell, Victoria

For more information email or phone Rowena; ericwhiting4@bigpond.com 6953 2612.

Swift Parrot/Regent Honeyeater surveys

Mainland biannual Swift Parrot/Regent Honeyeater surveys are almost upon us, beginning on Saturday 22 April and running till Sunday 4 June. Click [here](#) for more info.

15 May, Hay [Seed Collection workshop](#)

Learn how to identify, collect and store native seed. This workshop will target Butterbush, Moonah, White Cypress Pine and Hopbush. You may then join us at our future propagation workshop, so you will have the skills to become independent at revegetating your land!