

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



June 2023 - Issue #315

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



Kengal (The Rock)
The Towers from the
Yugay track
by Rowena Whiting
Showy Isotome,
Grevillea floribunda
and Zieria
by John Smith

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CONTRIBUTIONS

For the July 2023 issue by
Wednesday 5 July

To Rowena Whiting

Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com.

Phone: 6953 2612

**"Everything has beauty, but not
everyone sees it."**

— Confucius

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

Bank details for direct deposit: BSB 082 672 account no. 722043387, a/c name: Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Include your own name and description of payment in the reference box.

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

Welcome to the June issue

How nice it was that we've had a few lovely warm days to welcome Winter with after a rather cool May. The Club outing to Kengal (The Rock) yesterday was well attended and much enjoyed from all accounts - John and Greg have submitted their experiences for you to share.

Quite a mixture of copy in this issue which is great. A big thank you to those who came to the party after yesterday's day out! Also to Kathy & Phil, Nella, Glenn, Janet and Eric. Please contribute anything you think may be of interest to others, just give me a ring or email if you're not sure.

Kathy Tenison is taking on a new role of Story Capturing for Murrumbidgee Landcare. At the May meeting she thanked the Club for their support in working with her as Local Landcare Coordinator for the Bidgee Irrigation District. We hope a new co-ordinator for the Irrigation area will be appointed soon. We congratulated her on her appointment and wished her well. We look forward to her continuing involvement with MFN.

World Environment Day 2023 will be over by the time you receive this. The theme this year is: It is time to #BeatPlasticPollution. A reminder that people's actions on plastic pollution matters. The steps governments and businesses are taking to tackle plastic pollution are the consequence of this action. It is time to accelerate this action and transition to a circular economy.

Enjoy your read and your month.

Rowena.

Please note: Membership subscriptions are due on the 30th June

Please send your money to the Treasurer, Glenn Currie promptly to PO Box 541, Leeton, NSW 2705 or make a bank transfer (preferred) to the MFN's bank account (Please make sure you are using the current account - BSB 082 672 account no. 722043387). Make sure you include your name and description of payment.

There is no change to our **Annual Subscriptions:**

Family \$45.00, Adult/Single \$35.00, Journal only/Concession \$25.00

Any queries, Glenn can be contacted on 0488 563 321.

A Tumut Weekend Away

Tumut is amazing when you have 10 sets of eyes checking out who lives where and detecting who's singing what songs in which trees. Moving into a new area for the weekend we were privy to what Tumut has to offer with new nature experiences.

Having Bernadette from Murrumbidgee Landcare as our guide was a real bonus. Taking us to all her favourite flora and fauna hot spots. Knowing who lives where is a great skill Landcarer's take great pride in.

Australasian Darter, Tumut Wetland

We started with Pizzas on Friday night (thanks Bernie). On Saturday we visited Tumut wetlands meandering our way through the landscape. A great mix of woodland and wetland birds. Red-browed Finches, Scrub Wrens and Crimson Rosella's kept us thoroughly entertained. As we walked along the river, we kept an eye out for possible sightings of Platypus in the steady water among the logs and debris in the fast-flowing Tumut River. Having Joanne with us to check out possible sites was great. Margaret was lucky to catch a glimpse of one.



We then headed off to the State Forest for a view of Eastern Spinebills, Satin Bowerbirds and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. All the recent rain meant the mosses and lichen kept Eric more than happy. The fungi with all its shapes and sizes were a real thrill. As we left the forest, we saw a bird scooting along the forest floor which was a Spotted Quail Thrush, a beautiful bird.

We then headed to Dave's place in Batlow to learn about the devastating fires of 2020 and check out his dam. The fire seemed to move around the dam and unlike many dams in the area the water in Dave's dam remained clear when many others were blackened by ash run off reducing their quality.

Dave's planting and fencing of the dam was fundamental to improving dam quality and providing a good home for the now resident Platypus. As we stood by the dam on queue up popped the platypus still loving the spring and creek fed dam.

Rakali, on bank of Tumut River



What a treat on Sunday morning to see a Rakali spotted by Geoff on the banks of the Tumut River indulging on a 40cm fish completely unphased by our presence.

Several Ducks were trying to see what was going on at the bank, but the Rakali was oblivious to them. A phone call to the group had us all on the edge of the River watching the Otter-like local devour his breakfast.

After breakfast off to Flat Rock along the Goobagandra Road. As we walked along the edge of the road, we found a White-throated Tree Creeper and an Eastern Yellow Robin. Sadly, rain turned us back to the cars and off to the Thomas Boyd Track Head where we dived for cover from the rain and warmed up with hot beverages.

We found Wombat Dens and plenty of evidence on the bridge that they live in the area and probably compete for territory.

Our last stop was the Tumut nursery where we discovered the wheelhouse of botany in motion, where the seeding of biodiversity begins. Where we can change the way we do business on farm and in our communities. They just need to be purchased, planted and nurtured to maturity where they can provide homes and food for our native animals, be they platypus, birds, bees or any other local. Local plants mean local food and local homes that satisfy local animals. A bit like us really loving local produce.

Thanks again to all those who attended particularly Bernie and Dave for being our guides. Autumn in Tumut was well worth a visit.

Kathy and Phil Tenison. Photos by Kathy.

Janet Hume has also visited this area recently, here is what she saw.

Birding on the Goob

Iain and I recently spent 3 very relaxing days on the Goobarrandra River. We saw 30 species of birds during our stay (many repeated sightings) at Robynes River Retreat.

We saw another 5 species when exploring up the valley as far as Elm Grove Mt Retreat.

The highlights were a flock of 30 plus Gang Gang who flew across the valley at Thomas Boyd Trackhead. A group of King Parrots feeding in and under a deciduous tree along the road at Elm Grove Mountain retreat and a family of double barred finches at Robynes. According to birdlife they are not normally seen in the area, although a neighbour said they were frequent visitors to her garden. We watched them daily feeding in a mixed flock with Red-browed Finches, Superb Fairy-wrens, Yellow-rumped Thornbills and even a Flame Robin on one occasion.

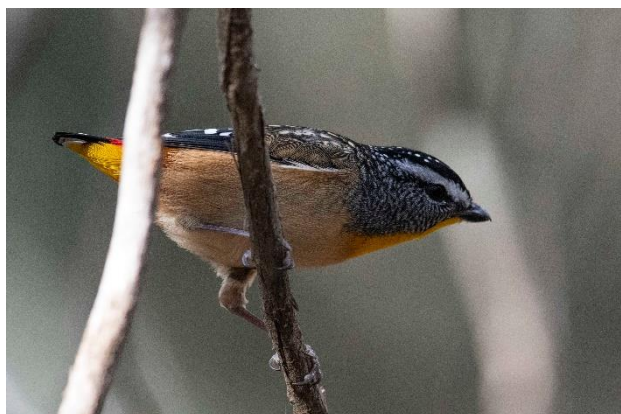
Bird list.

Australasian Grebe, Australian King Parrot, Australia Magpie , Australian Raven, Australian Wood Duck, Common Blackbird, Common Starling, Crimson Rosella, Double-barred Finch, Flame Robin, Galah, Laughing Kookaburra, Little pied Cormorant, Magpie Lark, New Holland Honeyeater, Pacific Black Duck, Pied Currawong, Red-browed Finch, Satin Bowerbird, Silveryeye, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Superb Fairy-wren, Weebill, Welcome Swallow, White-browed Scrubwren, White-plumed Honeyeater, Willie Wagtail, Yellow Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Yellow-tailed Cockatoo, Eastern Yellow Robin, Grey Shrike-thrush, White-throated Treecreeper, Gang Gang, Golden Whistler.

Janet Hume

Search for Large Hollow Bearing Trees in the Brobenah Hills - 20 May 2023

We followed a small creek line for a few hours recording any large trees with likely looking hollows. There weren't many because most of these trees grow lower down the slope where soil is deeper. Unfortunately many of these



have been coppiced and became multi-stemmed. Some large stumps remain and these would have been the present Glossie Black hollows.

Vegetation in general was typical of vegetation found in the Narrandera Hills and the Brobenah Hills, but considering the time of the year much of



Photos by Graham Russell
Spider: *Nephila* Spp,
Spotted Pardalote

the smaller vegetation was not readily seen for a full flora list. There were

large thickets of *Allocasuarina verticillata* (Hill She-oak), some with seed suitable for Glossie Blacks.

Bird List

Striated Pardalote
Grey Fantail
Quail sp
Spotted Pardalote

Australian Grebe
Weebill
Red-capped Robin
Australian Raven

Brown Treecreeper
Grey Shrike Thrush
Silveryeye

Nella Smith

Kengal – The Rock Field Trip

4 June 2023

Leaders: John Smith, Dick Green

23 people from Wagga, Narrandera & Leeton took a very enjoyable walk at Kengal – The Rock, south of Wagga Wagga.

Dick Green started off with a Welcome to Country, explaining that Kengal is a Place of Significance to the Wiradjuri people. He asked that we all treat the area with respect.

He showed what is most probably a scar tree, a Stringybark close to the Reserve entrance.

We then we split into 2 groups to walk. Dick led one group on the Yerong track.

John took the other group up towards the Towers. Some of us were stopped very quickly by some Large Autumn Orchids, many past their best but some fine examples were found. *Wahlenbergias* were next, then a Red-Headed Mouse Spider walked down the path for all to see. Showy *Isotomes* were in prime condition.



Echidna, Mallee Mouse Spider, *Grevillea floribunda*

Beyond a band of close-spaced Drooping Sheoaks was grassy woodland of Dwyer's Red Gum. It was there an Echidna was spotted and posed for photos. *Goodenias* also were in flower.

We were then nearing the Towers – steep cliffs favoured by rock-climbers, some in action at the time. There was no evidence of Peregrine Falcons, known to nest in the area.

Four people continued on the much rougher track along the bottom of the cliff line to the ridgetop. Woolly Ragwort was found (not flowering) just at the cliff base, and some *Grevillea floribunda* samples growing from cracks in the cliff-face. A Wedge-tailed Eagle was seen riding the air currents south of the ridge.

The group returned via a new track that diverted from The Towers Walk, and wound down to join the Yerong track, 200m East of the carpark.



It was quite noticeable that vegetation varied with slope and aspect. There were distinct bands of overstorey and understorey species.

After lunch and chat in the shelter shed, we gathered at a spot in the sun so that the two groups could share their experiences (see right).

John Smith



Combined Field Naturalist Trip to Kengal – 4 June 2023

Today was a beautiful day for a walk. When my friend Jason mentioned the Field Nats were going to The Rock today, where I had planned to go independently, I asked him if he thought the group would mind if I tagged along and he said he didn't think so. So, with coffee purchased and a sandwich for lunch I drove down to The Rock and turned into the Kengal car park.

Right from the outset I was welcomed, by Dick one of the two nominal leaders of this trip. It was a large group of maybe twenty people, so we split into two groups and the other leader John led those who were feeling fitter up the steeper option of two tracks. I opted for the easier option.

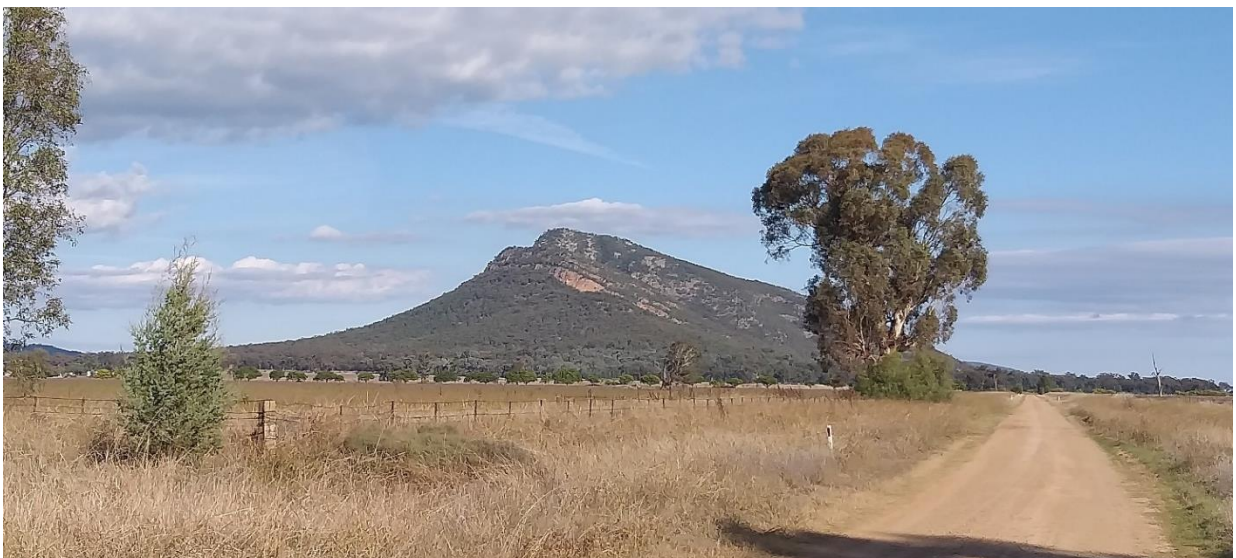
Before we left the carpark, we walked down to the gate and Dick did an acknowledgment at the sign, and talked a bit about knowledge and respect, and about the history of the park. We then looked at a possibly modified Grey Box tree (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) and some sedge. I have to admit that I learned so many things today that I have forgotten some, and the scientific names have come from google though many in the group knew them.

After splitting, the group I was in took the lower angled Yerong Creek walk and pointed out this of interest as we walked. This area was quite lumpy, evidence of extensive quarrying for road and rail base in the past. Sue spotted some Greenhood Orchids (*Pterostylis cobarensis*). We saw some Dianella and then Dick and Jo talked about the difference between male and female Drooping She-Oaks *Allocasuarina verticillata* (syn. *Casuarina stricta*). It was explained that the Allo- means not, and that it is not a casuarina. Dick also pointed to the ridges in the stems and how this roughness made the swishing noise when they were in wind (or waved up and down). Dick also demonstrated the difference between a Black Box and a White Box, by rubbing the white waxy coating.

There was a Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*,) at the edge of a section of bush and we walked off the path to see it. Someone saw a Grey Fantail, (*Rhipidura albiscapa*) which surprisingly was one of the few birds our group saw.

We stopped and had a conversation about whether it was appropriate to climb or not climb Kengal.

Then Sue's keen eye saw some *Grevillea floribunda*, commonly known as seven dwarfs grevillea, and then we could see them everywhere. We passed a plaque for the antechinus, and one about the Settlers History of the area and then the trail started uphill. Dick was keen for us to get up higher to see the endangered Woolly Ragwort (*Senecio garlandii*), but we were walking too slow. The lead walkers saw a wallaby that was not greatly upset by our presence, and we stopped and started talking about echidnas and wallabies as warning. I was looking off into the bush and thought I could see the wallaby again then realized it was an echidna. I walked over but it was nowhere to be seen. I did, however, see two wallabies on the other side of the gully. But we had run out of time and turned for the carpark and lunch. After lunch we gathered for



the two groups to discuss what they had respectively seen. The other group had similar stories but had seen a wedgie that we had not.

I drove back to Wagga content with what I had learned and seen on my first Field Nats meet-up, with a new appreciation for Kengal.

Greg Pritchard

Weebills at Marrambidya Wetland (Wagga Wagga)

Australia's smallest bird.

My daughter and I first spotted weebill on its nest on the evening of the 5th February in a small gum on the edge of a much used path that leads from the carpark to the wetlands. I checked nest every couple of days until the 16th of Feb. I was then away for a few days and on my return 3 chicks were being feed by their parents (from 28th Feb through 'til the 3rd March). I was away again for 3 nights and the nest was empty on my next visit on the 7th March.

The dome-shaped pendant nests of weebills are made from fine, pliable materials, such as grasses and plant fibres suspended from a branch and concealed in dense foliage of the tree canopy. Weebills are known to utilize cobwebs, insect cocoons and animal hair to bind, strengthen, and further conceal the nest.

They most commonly breed from July to May.

The female usually lays two to four brown-speckled cream-coloured eggs. Only the female incubates the eggs, which hatch after 10–12 days, and then both parents care for the chicks.

Weebill eggs in the nest are occasionally vulnerable to the Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo where the female cuckoo removes the Weebill's eggs and lays one or two eggs in the host nest for the Weebill to raise the chicks.

First photo taken in the late afternoon light on the 5 Feb



Adult on nest on 13th Feb



Feeding young on 1st March



Crowded house, 3's company



I was using a zoom lens when observing the nest and at no time did I feel the parents or chicks were distressed by my presence.

Janet Hume

Know your daisies Part 23 - Fleabanes and others

In all larger families there are some species that just do not fit into any convenient group and are usually appended ignominiously as 'other'. Fleabanes and others here are such species.

Conyza bonariensis*, Flaxleaf Fleabane

Robust annual erect weed of cultivation, pasture and wasteland, to 1m high. Stems usually unbranched below inflorescence, grey-hispid, densely hirsute with spreading septate hairs. Basal leaves linear, oblong or narrow-lanceolate, 40-90 x 5-15mm, margins toothed, upper leaves oblong to linear, entire. Flowerheads in a pyramidal or corymbiform panicle, hemispherical, 8-12mm diam. Involucral bracts linear, hirsute, pale when reflexed. Outer florets white to pink, inner yellow. Pappus of free barbellate hairs.



Conyza sumatrensis*, Canadian Fleabane (syn *C. albida*)

Robust erect annual weed of disturbed sites, to 1.5m high. Stems usually unbranched below inflorescence, hispid, sparsely hirsute with long spreading septate hairs. Basal leaves oblong to oblanceolate, 20-100 x 3-8mm, margins toothed, upper leaves elliptic to linear, entire or finely toothed. Flowerheads numerous in a pyramidal panicle extensive pyramidal panicle, campanulate to hemispherical, 3-4mm diam. Involucral bracts linear, glabrous or sparsely hairy, light brown with paler margins, inner surfaces light brown. Outer florets with white ligules c1mm long; inner few yellow. Pappus of free barbellate hairs.

Raponticum repens*, Creeping Knapweed (syn *Acroptilon*)

Annual, erect pubescent weed of irrigated crops and pastures, wasteland and roadsides, to 1m high. Basal and lower leaves oblanceolate, lobed, soon withering. Upper leaves oblong to lanceolate, 10-50mm long, 2-8mm wide, margins entire or toothed, pubescent. Flowerheads solitary, terminal, 5-7mm diam. Involucral bracts in several rows, herbaceous, pale green, pubescent, outer circular to obovate with broad entire to lacerate membranous appendages. Inner bracts lanceolate with acuminate, hirsute white appendages. Florets numerous, outer with ligules c1mm long, inner few, yellow. Pappus of free unequal barbellate hairs.

Eriochlamys behrii, Woolly Mantle

Annual aromatic herb, usually 4-8cm high, recorded in woodland, mallee, sand plains and low turfs especially on saline soils. Stems erect, branching from base, ±woolly. Leaves alternate or opposite in lower parts, linear, 4-7mm long, c1mm wide, acute, margins revolute, ±glabrous. Flowerheads solitary, terminal, ±globose; 4-10mm diam, grey-white to pale yellow-green woolly. Florets woolly at base. Pappus of free unequal barbellate hairs.



Eriochlamys squamata, Woolly Mantle (syn sp. A)

Differs from above in being larger, 8-13cm high, flowerheads 2-3mm diam and leaves obtuse and narrower. Recorded in open woodland, sandy floodways, roadsides and low turfs especially on red loams and sands.

Millotia myosotidifolia, Broad-leaf Millotia

Annual aromatic herb, 4-11cm high, recorded in woodland, mallee, Mulga and shrublands, mainly on sandy soils. Stems erect to spreading, grey-woolly. Leaves narrow-linear to ±spathulate, 2.5-4.5mm long, 2-4mm wide, bases stem-clasping, surfaces ±woolly. Flowerheads solitary, terminal, on peduncles 20-80mm long, c5-7mm diam. Involucral bracts usually 8-13, in 2 rows, lanceolate to oblong, margins straw-coloured or purplish, entire. Florets white to creamy-yellow. Pappus of c18-25 barbellate hairs ± as long as corolla (3-6mm).



Millotia tenuifolia

As above except not aromatic, stems white-woolly, leaves linear, 7-12mm long, c1mm wide, and involucral bracts in 1 row. Recorded in heath or sclerophyll communities, mainly on moister infertile grey or rarely red sands, in Mildura, Albany and Kosciusko areas.

***Gnephosis arachnoidea*, Erect Yellow-heads**

Annual herb, 5-30cm long, recorded in a range of communities in sandy and clay, often semi-saline soils. Stems erect, nearly glabrous to cottony. Leaves lanceolate to linear, 4-34mm x c0.5-4mm, mid-rib ±prominent on lower surface, glabrous to cottony, glabrous to cottony. Flowerheads compound, c8mm diam, ±depressed ovoid, with 50-300 partial heads each with 2 florets. General involucral bracts c1/3rd as long as head, leaf-like, cottony, inconspicuous at maturity. Innermost bracts with yellow hyaline apices. Partial bracts yellow. Pappus cup-like.



Eric Whiting

5 Rakali in a Morning

When I saw my first Rakali at Narrandera Wetlands I needed Nella's help to i.d. it (had no idea what this furry thing in the water may have been), and duly submitted it as a sighting to MFN as she suggested.

I've seen others at the wetlands since and submitted the observations to ALA or the Australian Platypus Conservancy. The Conservancy has a big interest in [Rakali](#) as well as Platypus.

Last Sunday I saw a pair at the northern end of the Wetlands, then whilst walking the loop, saw a pair at the southern side. I had to walk to the northern side again to see if those Rakali were still there, (they were!) so I was pretty confident I verified there was at least two pair of Rakali at the Wetlands at that moment.

Then driving to Leeton 30 minutes later I saw something cross the road just before Cudgel Sandhills. I enjoyed Geoff William's presentation to our Field Nats on the 9th February and remember him talking about the Rakali's white-tipped tail. The critter crossing the road had such an obvious, white-tipped tail I was in no doubt that was my fifth Rakali sighting for the morning.

I submitted the sightings to the Australian Platypus Conservancy who appreciate the reporting of any sightings of Platypus or Rakali. Any sightings can be reported to them by following this link [Australian Platypus Conservancy - Report a Sighting](#)

Glenn Currie



**A Rakali heading for Tumut River
- Rowena Whiting**

Barn Owl – Neil Palframan

“Unfortunately I flushed him and he got mobbed, but he toughed it out, and is still around a month later, screaming every evening and morning”.



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.

Little Egret	Irrigation Way	11/05/23	Susan Whitehead
Red-browed Finch [>1]	Narrandera Wetlands	09/05/23	Alan Whitehead
Double-barred Finch [>1]	Narrandera Wetlands	09/05/23	Alan Whitehead
These finches were feeding together.			
Pied Currawong [14]	Leeton	03/05/23	Keith Hutton
in loose flock flying over - first record for winter.			
Common Myna [3]	Vance Road, Leeton	03/05/23	Keith Hutton
Eastern Barn Owl [1]	Karri Road, Leeton	10/05/23	Keith Hutton
Spotted Harrier [2]	Middle Road, Leeton	04/05/23	Keith Hutton
Spotted Harrier [2]	Middle Road, Leeton	07/05/23	Keith Hutton
Spotted Harrier [5+]	Middle Road, Leeton	10/05/23	Keith Hutton
Spotted Harrier [5]	Middle Road, Leeton	11/05/23	Keith Hutton
Brown Goshawk [1]	Middle Road, Leeton	11/05/23	Keith Hutton
Glossy Black Cockatoo [2]	Middle Road, Leeton	11/05/23	Keith Hutton
Spotted Harrier [5]	Middle Road, Leeton	12/05/23	Keith Hutton
Spotted Harrier [1]	Middle Road, Leeton	14/05/23	Keith Hutton
Black Falcon [2]	Middle Road, Leeton	14/05/23	Keith Hutton
Brown Falcon [2]	Middle Road, Leeton	14/05/23	Keith Hutton
Australian Hobby [1]	Middle Road, Leeton	14/05/23	Keith Hutton
Kestrel [5]	Middle Road, Leeton	14/05/23	Keith Hutton
Black-shouldered Kite [9]	Middle Road, Leeton	14/05/23	Keith Hutton
Wedge-tailed Eagle [1]	Middle Road, Leeton	14/05/23	Keith Hutton
Spotted Harrier [1]	Middle Road, Leeton	21/05/23	Keith Hutton
Brown Goshawk [1]	Middle Road, Leeton	21/05/23	Keith Hutton
Spotted Harrier [3]	Middle Road, Leeton	26/05/23	Keith Hutton
Glossy Black-Cockatoo [7]	Middle Road, Leeton	31/05/23	Keith Hutton
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [2]	Middle Road, Leeton	31/05/23	Keith Hutton
Black-shouldered Kite [10]	Middle Road, Leeton	31/05/23	Keith Hutton
Spotted Harrier [3]	Middle Road, Leeton	31/05/23	Keith Hutton
Australian Hobby [1]	Middle Road, Leeton	31/05/23	Keith Hutton
Magpie Goose [350-400]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	04/05/23	Keith Hutton
loafing on water edge, also 2 adult Magpie Geese with 4 downy young.			
Masked Lapwing [72]	Fivebough Wetlands, from Fivebough Rd	07/05/23	Keith Hutton
Wedge-tailed Eagle [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	07/05/23	Keith Hutton
Circling over			
Brolga [7]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	14/05/23	Keith Hutton
Wedge-tailed Eagle [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	14/05/23	Keith Hutton
Whistling Kite [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	14/05/23	Keith Hutton
Wedge-tailed Eagle [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/05/23	Keith Hutton
Magpie Goose [350-400]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/05/23	Keith Hutton
Australian Spotted Crake [7]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/05/23	Keith Hutton
Spotless Crake [1]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/05/23	Keith Hutton
Swamp Harrier [2]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/05/23	Keith Hutton
Avocet [3]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/05/23	Keith Hutton
Australian Shelduck [37]	Fivebough Wetlands, Leeton	20/05/23	Keith Hutton
Platypus [2]	Yanco Creek	13/05/23	Keith Hutton

Keith reports that the exceptional numbers of Spotted Harriers observed in April continued throughout May and offered magnificent views of males and females, and all plumages except juveniles.

Barn Owl (calling every night)	Nericon village	22/04/23	Neil Palframan
See photo on page 9			
Australasian Bittern [1] (overflying toward Campbells Swamp)	Boorga Rd, Lake Wyangan	10/05/23	Neil Palframan
Olive-backed Oriole	Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest	01/06/23	Neil Palframan
Painted Buttonquail [2]	Kidman Way entrance, Binya Forest	01/06/23	Neil Palframan
Spotted Pardalote [2 nesting]	Kidman Way entrance, Binya Forest	01/06/23	Neil Palframan
Splendid Wrens [4]	Kidman Way entrance, Binya Forest	01/06/23	Neil Palframan
Speckled Warbler [3]	Kidman Way entrance, Binya Forest	01/06/23	Neil Palframan
Neil recently took a two day trip to Cobar with a friend looking for Leopardwoods. Found plenty, but very light birdwise.			
Rakali [4]	Narrandera Wetlands	28/05/23	Glen Currie
Glenn also spotted one on the road to Leeton – see Page 9			

MFN 2023 Environmental Grants Recipients

After not receiving any applications for our Environmental Grants last year, we doubled our publicising efforts this year and were rewarded with 3 applications.

Our grants sub-committee were happy with them all, so awarded them all.

We've funded [Hay Plains Landcare](#) for a **Creative Catchment Kids program**. This project involves Year 6 students from Hay Public School working with stakeholders of selected properties or areas in the community, to learn about the various aspects of the land and the people who have lived on it before. They will go on field trips, conduct interviews, and research further to gather information. The students will learn about First Nations culture, historical information about the properties, wildlife and the environment, as well as sustainable farming practices. At the end of the project the students will publish a book highlighting the issues they think are important from their field trips.

We'll be contributing to [Wagga Wagga Urban Landcare's Restoration of Platypus Habitat at Flowerdale Lagoon](#). This project will improve the environmental quality of Flowerdale Lagoon by reducing litter transported to the lagoon via the urban stormwater system. This will be achieved through a targeted community awareness and education program.

And we'll be helping the [Estella Public School](#) Parents and Citizens Association in establishing an **Edible Garden and Natural Outdoor Learning Area** in their new school. This area will teach vital life skills that can enrich the students' personal, emotional and physical well-being, as well as the well-being of our planet through sustainable living. By establishing this edible garden and natural learning space the P&C Association will be fostering the children's care for the environment and providing an opportunity to observe and learn about the natural world.

I'd like to thank the members of our grant sub-committee for their help in awarding these grants and look forward to reading the reports on the achievements and outcomes of the projects.

Glenn Currie

From the Mailbox

Andrea Mitchell who is the project Officer for YACTAC has sent an article entitled "**Bird life of Yanko Creek**" by **Charles Barrett from the journal Emu in 1916** which she found it very interesting. It has been published online and she sent me the pdf file; let me know if you'd like to see a copy. Rowena.

From this month's Birdlife e-news:

2023 BirdLife Photography Awards

The Annual [BirdLife Australia Photography Awards](#) are now open for entries. There are nine categories for 2023, including this year's special theme, 'wading waterbirds of Australian floodplains'.

Old-age birds

Two birds — a Willie Wagtail and a Wandering Albatross — have recently entered the record books as [Australia's oldest](#)

**** COMING EVENTS ****

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions.

Please register with the nominated person.

- 8 June Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7pm.
Topic – My Rock Collection - Alan Whitehead
Bring along your ‘show & tell’
Contact: Dione Russell 0428 536 290
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com
- 11 June Sunday** **Outing to Mejim State Forest (20km north of Narrandera)**
Meet at 9am at the junction of the Barellan and Kamarah Roads.
Bring morning tea and lunch.
To register or ask questions contact Glenn Currie on 0488 563 321
- 5 July Wednesday** **Copy for the July newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 13 July 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

Bird Surveys

2023 Cowra Woodland Bird Surveys,

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

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

Birds in Backyards Winter surveys

Rug up, it's winter survey time! Grab a cup of something warm, head outside and do a [20-minute Birds in Backyards survey](#).

Birds on Farms surveys

Winter [Birds on Farms](#) surveys begin on 17 June, so it's nearly time to scan the paddocks and search the reveg for rural birds.

Nicola Dickson – *Only a Remnant* May 13, 2023 to Aug 20, 2023 at the Wagga Art Gallery

This exhibition explores biodiversity loss in the Riverina, centering upon the Box Gum Grassy Woodlands that once covered much of south eastern Australia and were the homelands of Indigenous Peoples including Wiradjuri.

<https://waggaartgallery.com.au/whats-on/upcoming-exhibitions/nicola-dickson-only-a-remnant>