

# The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



**July 2023 - Issue #316**

**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



**Wedge-tailed Eagle**  
**Graham Russell**

**Mt Olive from the Mejum State Forest**  
**Eric Whiting**

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**For the August 2023 issue by  
Wednesday 2 August**

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**"In every walk with nature one  
receives far more than he seeks."**

**- John Muir**

## Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

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**MEETINGS** are held on the second Thursday each month, except January, at the Henry Lawson Room, Leeton Library, Sycamore Street, Leeton at 7pm.

**FIELD TRIPS** NORMALLY TAKE PLACE ON THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND.

INTENDING NEW MEMBERS, GUESTS AND VISITORS WELCOME.

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**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 July

We are well and truly in the throes of Winter, one good thing; Spring is coming.

This month we have articles about identifying rocks, eucalypts and the Autumn Greenhood along with our outing to Mejum State Forest. You may notice that most of the photos are mine, I haven't received any this time. Copy is always welcome; so maybe explore your favourite bird, plant, insect, place and share what you find.

Janet Hume has taken on the role of compiling the sightings page so please send any significant sightings to her [janethume@me.com](mailto:janethume@me.com). Nella will continue her role as co-ordinator and veto their validity.

This month we have a guest speaker, Matt Herring, whom many will remember from the Bitterns in Rice project. He has now embarked on a new project - to track the endangered Australia Painted Snipe. Make sure you don't miss this great speaker, and the opportunity of learning how they are aiming to find these birds.

Also on our program are walks in the Cocoparras and Ingalba Nature Reserve, Hope the sun remembers to come along! See Page 12 for details of activities.

**Rowena.**

### From the Mailbox

#### Migratory birds

In case you missed the excellent documentary on the ABC - "Flyways: The Story of Migratory Shorebirds". It follows 3 different migratory birds and how they are having to adapt to changing conditions.

<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/flyways-the-story-of-migratory-shorebirds>

**Please Note:** that the Greenhood orchids *Pterostylis cobarensis* were Autumn Greenhoods *Pterostylis ampliata* in the report on Kengal (The Rock). See page 10 for information about this orchid by David Glastonbury. Apologies for not picking that up.

**Remember: membership subscriptions were due on the 30 June – see above for payment details**

## Planet of Four Rocks

### (Alan Whitehead's Rock Collection)

Alas, the subtitle above, as appeared in the June edition of *The Murrumbidgee Field Naturalist* announcing my coming presentation to the MFN June meeting, was somewhat restricting.

When agreeing to do the talk, I imagined an exploration through the wonderful Aladdin's Cave of world minerals; especially the ever-popular 'sparkly bits'. But being confined to mere 'rocks', my first task had to be to describe the differences between a rock and a mineral.

Rocks are mostly complex combinations of minerals proper; while true minerals usually comprise just one element of the Periodic Table, like gold – Au. As interesting as they are, the study of rocks - Orology (Gr. 'mountain') - is not one of nature's primary crowd pleasers.

World rock, collectively comprising the Lithosphere, is the fourth mantle of our remarkable blue planet. The first – outer – sphere is the Pyrosphere, an intensely hot girdle around the globe protecting it from galactic invaders, like meteorites – and returning space vehicles. In fact one of the most dire dilemmas confronting astronauts is for their flimsy craft to survive this fiery shield.



The second, the Atmosphere, also performs a protective function, but from different stellar assailants, like ultra-violet light.

Third is the Hydrosphere, that which primarily supports life on earth. This is multifarious in its expressions, from rain, oceans, ice, mist and groundwater. No liquid water no life.

Finally, we feel the good earth underfoot, the Lithosphere (Gr. lithos, stone); nominally the realm of rocks and minerals of every kind; some even in liquid form, like oil.

Fortunately for we mere mortals, world rock can be classified into four main types; a simple grouping but one containing infinite variety and complexity. The four are: Plutonic, Igneous, Sedimentary and Metamorphic.

The first, PLUTONIC, are formed in the deepest recesses of the Lithosphere; an example being diamond-bearing Kimberlite, being cast in earth's dark furnace some hundreds of kilometers deep. The main identifying feature of the plutonics is their large crystal size. This is due to their glacially-slow creation over the aeons. Also, due to their forceful upward journey, they tend to be rounded in form, or 'globular-clastic'.

Granite ('granular') is the most familiar of these bedrocks of the Lithosphere; others being diorite, gabbro, pegmatite, et al. They are all formed from the universal amorphous magma, which forces them to the surface. Here they extrude in one of three main colours (or combinations of the three), black, white and pink, as impressive 'heads'. Black crystals cool first, followed by white, and still closer to the surface, pink. The biggest granitic outcrop in Australia is Bald Mountain, near Tenterfield NSW.

As a teacher I created a story of this granitic evolution for my primary pupils - *The Adventures of Gritty Granite!* This science/fantasy fabulation began in the fiery inner earth, where our incredulous but indomitable hero was compelled to leave his Mother Magma for an uncertain future above ground. (Aren't all futures uncertain?)

On reaching the surface all that was visible was Gritty's big, bald head poking out of a grassy sheep paddock. Then he was broken up and carted off to become a stone wall; then a gravestone, then ...

He finished up (or part of him at least) standing on a little corner table in the classroom. Here he was employed to confer with the storyteller on one or other detail that might have been missed in the recounting of his life. Although an odyssey of imagination, the tale remained true to the geologic verities at all times.



The IGNEOUS rocks are more often the shiny ones, created as they were in the potting kilns of volcanoes and the like. There is a vast variety of forms and colours in the igneous, from the dull grey of basalt ('blue metal'), to the reds of ironstone and the yellows of sulphur-infused rocks. Their oft-alluring crystalline nature is determined by the manner in which they meet the air when expelled from their fiery furnace.

Obsidian ('black glass') shoots skyward into the freezing upper air, cooling rapidly. The crystal formation is thus ultra-fine ('cryptocrystals'), taking a high polish. Obsidian's igneous opposite, pale pumice, rather pops out of the volcano, like the balls of a roman candle. Pumice cools slowly, its crystalline matrix porous – and very light in weight. So light indeed that it is one of the only rocks that float. Wollumbin - Mt Warning - is Australia's largest igneous extrusion, its yawning caldera ('cauldron'), said to be the widest on earth.

The SEDIMENTARY, the third of the lithospheric families, is one of special interest (Aren't they all?), as they contain many of the world's fossils. These are found in laminars of

sediments from water flows of various natures over the ages. Fossils of course are not the original plant or animal, rather soluble minerals which gradually fill the original organic cellular cavities – then solidify into at times detailed and impossibly accurate facsimiles.

These can be found in sandstone, shale, coal, diatomaceous earth and the like. Red Uluru is Australia's largest sedimentary monolith, being a form of iron-rich conglomerate, as it is.

Finally, the fourth, the most mysterious of rock types, the METAMORPHIC ('change form'). Through impossibly immense earth pressures, these rocks actually metamorphose their crystal structure, hence form, into something entirely different. "When an irresistible force such as you, meets an old immovable object like me, you can bet as sure as you live, something's gotta give ..."

Such as when the tectonic land masses of India and Asian collide – which they're still doing! This created the metamorphic Himalayas. A similar process gave birth to much of our Great Dividing Range; with Mt Kosciusko being our highest metamorphic (mainly) eminence. Examples of this magical transubstantiation are: sandstone to quartzite – from one of the softest to one of the hardest stones; shale to slate; limestone to marble.

A fun geology excursion can be had right in Sydney's CBD. Here polished columns and clad surfaces of banks, public buildings and so forth abound with all kinds and colours of highly polished marbles; many containing wonderful, clearly discernible marine fossils.



**From top:**  
**Igneous Tigereye Asbestos in Ironstone**  
**Ammonite with Carnelian crystals**  
**Igneous Snowflake Obsidian**  
**Sedimentary Mangrove leaf fossils in Mudstone**

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Now, you've been lucky to have been chosen as a contestant in our highly popular game-show based on natural history. In this section, Name That Rock, you have to identify a particular concealed specimen from seven questions based on The Seven Systems of Rock Recognition. Beginning with \$70,000, for every question incorrect or not answered you lose \$10,000. Are you ready?

QUESTION 1: CLEAVAGE. Meaning, does our test rock flake or exfoliate along structural layers? Our rock is amorphous, with no cleavage.

QUESTION 2: COLOUR. Is the rock red, black, green, mottled ...? In our case it is white - ish.

QUESTION 3: FRACTURE. When a rock breaks is it random, or rather influenced by its crystallography? The test rock crumbles with no fracture. Still no idea?

QUESTION 4: HARDNESS. Where does it sit on the Moh scale, with diamond at ten? In our case it is about 2. Don't know? Hmmm, not doing so well. Only \$30,000 left.

QUESTION 5: LUSTRE. Where does this rock sit, with high gloss at the top? Ours is very low, with a matt lustre.

QUESTION 6: STREAK. Meaning can you mark a surface with it; is there transference? Yes you can. ... Come on; surely this gives it away?!

QUESTION 7: WEIGHT. Or what is the rock's specific gravity? Our rock is very light indeed. Still no idea ...!

So, seven wrong or non-answers. (I'll have to have a talk with our production team about poor quality contestant screening.) So the \$70,000 is returned to our sponsor, the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists. And to conclude; I'll just write the answer up here on the blackboard ...

Alan Whitehead

Photos Rowena Whiting

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## Mejum State Forest Outing

I'll be honest and admit the main reason I chose Mejum State Forest to do a June outing was that it was close to home! When thinking of where I could lead a field trip, I guess I didn't feel like driving too far. We had had an outing to Kamarah Road in November 2021 (written up in the Dec 21 newsletter) which runs along one side of Mejum, doing a Roadside Vegetation Assessment of it, and at the time I thought an exploration through the forest might be a worthwhile outing for the club.

I drove the forest before the outing to scout it and the only birds I noticed were some quail I flushed so I figured it may be a more plant-oriented field trip and asked Eric to bring along a plant list for the forest. I did hope some fungi would appear after the recent rain but I wasn't counting on it.

Mejum is a narrow forest, about 1km wide and 11km long. It has been harvested for White Cypress in the past but is floristically quite diverse. Eric's plant list for it runs to three pages. I thought the group might concentrate on the 4 Eucalyptus and 5 Acacias Eric listed.



Along the track – Rowena Whiting

It was a brilliant winter morning, lots of sunshine and no wind, when we met for the outing. My plan was to walk a 3km loop, starting north through one section of the forest, crossing to a fence line abutting a farmer's field and returning south to our vehicles along the edge of the forest.

The walk north was through a lot of Cypress and Bimble Box and just a few birds were observed. The variations in the Bimble Box led to a discussion about the hybridisation known to occur between the different "box" Eucalyptus. The acacia in that part of the forest was mainly *Acacia decora* and some *A. paradoxa*.





When we crossed to the eastern boundary to commence the southern leg of our walk was when things got exciting! The convergence of the treed forest and grazed farmland resulted in a surprising number of different species being observed, the birds taking advantage of the cover the forest provides and the feeding opportunities of the farmed land.

Robins (Eastern Yellow, Red-capped and Flames), Thornbills (including Yellow, Chestnut-rumped, Brown) were all showing themselves regularly as we walked south. Pipits, Doves and Silvereyes were also seen. The fleabane in the field attracted a lot of attention from the birds.

We were also able to view a section of Mt Olive which burnt last summer. A variety of raptors were soaring above the rocky outcrops, presumably taking advantage of the burnt terrain to spot potential prey.

After lunch we drove north on Kamarah Road and parked close to Wammera Hill. This higher part of Mejum had more Grey Box, Dwyer's Mallee Gum and Bull Oak. There were some different acacias evident – *A. hakeoides*, *doratoxylon* and *deaneii*. Some of the *A. paradoxa* there was already in flower as was some Urn Heath *Melichrus urceolatus*.

My thanks to everyone who came along on this glorious and rewarding day.



Glenn Currie

From top:  
Hedge Wattle *A. paradoxa* – Rowena Whiting  
Red-capped Robin – Kathy Tenison  
oral lichen, Purple Burr Daisy - Rowena Whiting

Bird lists compile by Sarah Danckert

**Mejum State Forest**

- |                         |                     |                           |                            |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Laughing Kookaburra     | Galah               | Grey Shrike-thrush        | Australian Raven           |
| Eastern Yellow Robin    | Australian Ringneck | White-winged Chough       | Striated Pardalote         |
| White-plumed Honeyeater | Black Kite          | Noisy Miner               | Grey Butcherbird           |
| Rufous Whistler         | Red-rumped Parrot   | Willie Wagtail            | Flame Robin                |
| Australasian Pipit      | Pied Butcherbird    | Stubble Quail             | Yellow Thornbill           |
| Magpie-lark             | Apostlebird         | Wedge-tailed Eagle        | Whistling Kite             |
| Little Eagle            | Red-capped Robin    | Yellow-rumped Thornbill   | Weebill                    |
| Buffered Thornbill      | Brown Thornbill     | Silvereye                 | Southern Whiteface Striped |
| Honeyeater              | Peaceful Dove       | Chestnut-rumped Thornbill |                            |

**Mt Wammera (north end Mejum Forest)**

- |                    |                     |                          |                  |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Striped Honeyeater | Laughing Kookaburra | Whistling Kite           | Grey Butcherbird |
| Australian Raven   | Restless Flycatcher | Yellow-tufted Honeyeater | Galah            |
| Red-capped Robi    |                     |                          |                  |

**cnr Kamara & Barellan Rds**

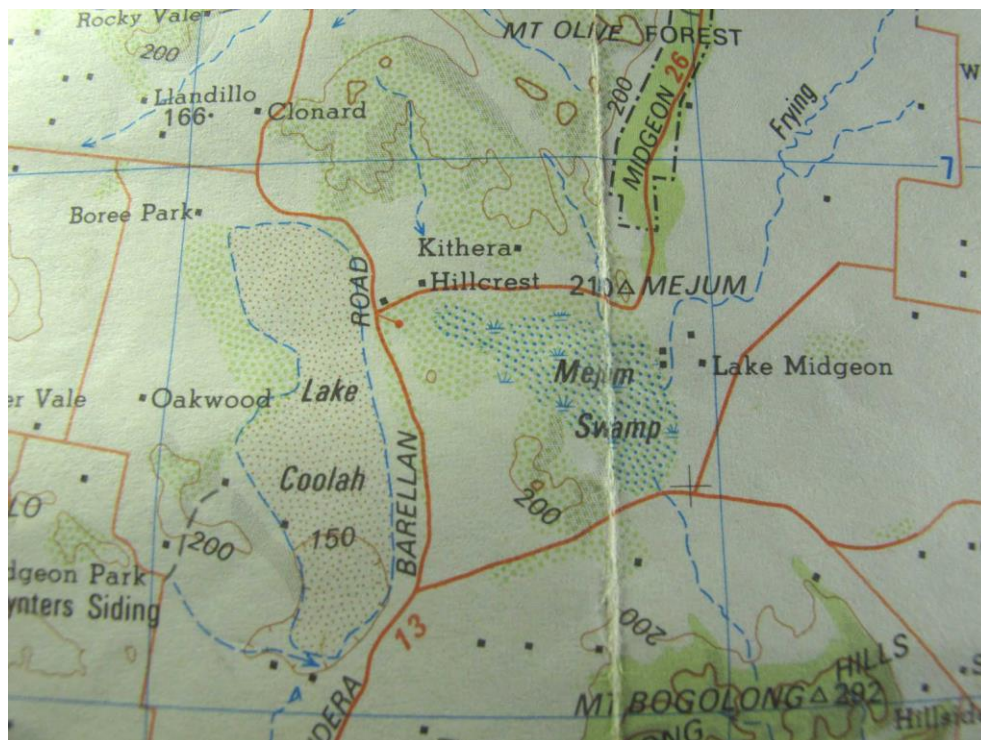
- |                      |                     |                 |                   |
|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| White-faced Heron    | Blue Bonnet         | Eastern Rosella | Pied Butcherbird  |
| Australian Raven     | Galah               | Noisy Miner     | Australian Magpie |
| Australian Wood Duck | Laughing Kookaburra |                 |                   |

## Mejum Swamp - How it came to be

Have you ever looked at a landscape and wondered how it came to be?

When I first started travelling up and down the minor roads for my plant surveys in the early 1990's, I was intrigued by the way Frying Pan Creek – that's the small creek draining the area between the Narrandera Ranges and the granite rise running north from Grong Grong – takes a sudden bend westward into Mejum Swamp thence to Lake Coolah. Why didn't it continue southwards east of the Bogolong Hills to join the Murrumbidgee River?

Recently I have been looking at the topography of the area again. Frying Pan Creek does not have a large catchment. From the map most creek lines come from the Walleroobie Ranges through a shallow gap north of the Grong Grong Granite into a broad almost flat area. All of the creek lines on the map have breaks along their courses and on the ground there is little indication of any creeks at all. Most of the area has scattered Boree that presumably used to be a Boree woodland indicating deep alluvial soils.



In a wetter climate – the Murrumbidgee River is believed to carry four to five times its present flow in parts of the Tertiary Period – the creek could have wound its way through the hills possibly out towards Corbie Hill Road way looking at the contours.

On the eastern side of Mejum Swamp there is a distinct raised crescent partly attached to the slight rise separating Mejum from Thompsons Swamp. (The contours on the map are partly obscured by the words 'Closed Road' and the lines of a track.) Thompsons Swamp is also fed by Frying Pan Creek. The crescent shape is typical of a lunette, the sandhill blown up from terminal lake. Koonadan is a good example. But why a terminal lake? Why didn't Frying Pan maintain a simple flow line?

I believe the reason is that the Narrandera Ranges had a period of rising. They may still be! The Cadell Fault between Deniliquin and Moama caused a ridge some 25,000 years ago and is still active. Like the Great Dividing Range the Cadell Fault's the result of sideways pressure coming from the Pacific Tectonic Plate being subducted under the Australian Plate. During the last Ice Age the climate in Australia was much drier. An early Frying Pan Creek would not have enough flow to cut down through the rising hills. The Murrumbidgee River on the other hand was still big enough to keep a channel open, although the gap at Narrandera must have been a choke causing a sluggish river of very little descent between Wagga and Narrandera as evidenced by the numerous anabranch creeks (Old Man Creek, Poison Water Holes, etc.).

Is there any other evidence of the Ranges rising? At this stage I don't know of any. I have been looking at the three or four terrace levels in Store Creek in the Cocoparras and wondered if they are not the result of the land rising. A terrace is left when a river is rejuvenated by steepening its course.

We may think we live in a very stable geological landscape, but just how stable is it?

**Eric Whiting**

This article is taken from the August 2013 issue. Our walk last month was by Mt Olive – top, right of centre. Ed



## A Rough Guide to Local Eucalypts

Recognising a tree as a eucalypt is second nature to us, but with hundreds of species in Australia putting a specific name to one would seem too daunting. Fortunately the number of those growing naturally in any given area is usually small.

By just taking into account the environment where the tree is growing and then the nature of the bark can be all that is needed. Thus a gum barked tree growing close to a water source and/or liable to be inundated for extended periods is practically certain to be the familiar River Red Gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*.

If the ground is liable to be flooded but only for up to a month or so and the bark is a dark rough and flaky (box-type), think Black Box *E. largiflorens*. This species is common in depressions on the heavy clay flood plains generally west of Narrandera.

East of Narrandera and on the deeper more loamy soils away from the river is the home for the Yellow Box *E. melliodora*. Look for very rough box bark forming a skirt at the base of the otherwise smooth trunk and branches. Confirm with the narrow leaves, and further by the yellow wood beneath the bark.

Climbing up to the rocky tops of the hills where the soils are thin and quickly drained, choices diminish to just one. No other eucalypt in this area has adapted to these harsh conditions as Dwyers Gum or to give it the full common name Dwyers Mallee Red Gum, *E. dwyeri*. Mallee as it develops lignotubers to counteract the frequent water shortages, and Red as its wood is that colour. Believe it or not it is closely related to the River Red Gum.

On the wooded slopes and on the lower hills, two trees with box barks are commonly found, Grey Box *E. microcarpa* and Bimble Box *E. populnea*. The main difference between the two is that the upper branches of the Grey Box are smooth whereas the bark of Bimble Box is box-type up to the smallest branches. Bimble Box also has broader more shinier leaves than Grey Box. Trouble is they hybridise easily! I think they must have had a common ancestor in the not so distant geological past. Both species have much the same general distribution extending northwards into Queensland but Bimble Box does not occur south of the Murrumbidgee (apart from down along the Gillenbah hills). Grey Box occurs well into Victoria.

As a group mallees are easily recognised by their many low growing trunks rising from lignotubers. However identifying species is another matter – I'll leave that to another time.

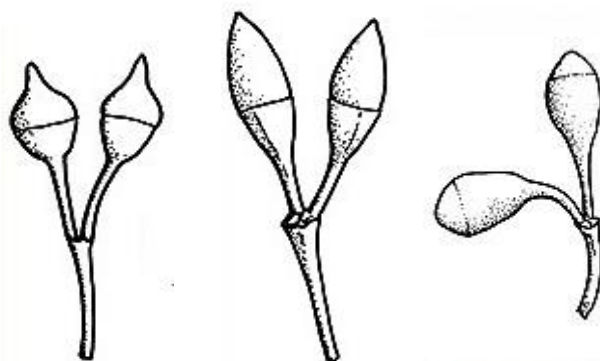
Ironbarks (Mugga Ironbark *E. sideroxylon* here, there are other Ironbarks) and stringybarks are easy to tell because of their distinctive barks. Draw an east-west line through Griffith and Ardlethan and you won't find an Ironbark in the northern Riverina south of it. I don't know why because it does occur to the east and also in Victoria. Stringybarks, Red Stringybark *E. macrorhyncha* to be precise are also at the western edge of their range and are only found in very sheltered locations in deep gorges in the Cocoparra Ranges.

Two other eucalypts, both preferring deep loamy soils, are not common in the northern Riverina. Both have principally smooth gum barks with a rough 'sock' at the base and are tall erect trees. Blakely's Gum *E. blakelyi* is closely related to the River Red Gum and can be confused with it – however it grows in much drier or better drained sites than its cousin. Gum-bark Coolibah *E. intertexta* only just comes into the northern Riverina ie. to the north or north-west of Griffith. The caps of the buds are the best way to distinguish between the three – pixie caps for the River Red, long-conical for Blakely's and rounded-conical for Gum Bark. That is if you can find them or get to them – anyone for a climb?

Eric Whiting



Ironbark by Melanie Baulch



River Red Gum, Blakely's Gum, Gum-bark Coolibah



## Large Autumn Greenhood

This orchid is a member off the genus: *Pterostylis* which includes orchids commonly recognised as “greenhoods”. The genus has over 400 species and it is the largest genus of native orchids in NSW and ACT.

*Pterostylis* orchids have a distinctive floral structure in which the dorsal sepal and the petals are joined to form a floral structure known as the galea. The lateral sepals are also joined at the base and then separate into two moderately long, erect or deflexed free points. The labellum or lateral petal usually protrudes between the fused bases of the lateral sepals. See photograph.

The greenhood orchid which was observed at The Rock is classified as genus/species *Pterostylis ampliata* Large Autumn Greenhood Orchid.

It has a widespread occurrence throughout NSW inland slopes and is locally quite common.

The single flower is of distinctive “greenhood” structure with a long downward curved, white and green striped and often red tipped, galea. The flower also has distinctive, moderately long and erect, sepal free points. The orchid flowers from March-July.

At The Rock Nature Reserve on 4 June, flowering orchids were observed mostly on the lower slopes of the Rock Hill, often in colonies. A lot of these orchids observed were quite mature specimens.

**David Glastonbury**

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## Other Events

### Narrandera Landcare

In the **coming school holidays**, we'll be having a [Frog Hotel](#) making workshop at **The Food Garden**. It's on **Friday, 14th July from 10am**. Please see the **attached flyer** for more info. We'll be supplying the pipes, fittings and gravel (courtesy of [Think Water- Leeton](#)). All you need to bring is an old dish/container as per the flyer, and some enthusiastic kids! Contact is Nioka at [niodup@mli.org.au](mailto:niodup@mli.org.au)

### 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>

### 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@homeemail.com](mailto:julianr@homeemail.com)

#### 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](#).

#### National Science Week 2023 is from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> August

The **Atlas of Living Australia** are holding a series of lunch time webinars 15, 16 & 17 August, 1.00 to 2.00 pm  
This special webinar series will cover the following topics: Beginner's guide to the ALA Galah tool (15 Aug); The importance of open science (16 Aug); and maximising your metadata for citizen science (17 Aug).

## Show and Tell

From the June meeting:

Eric showed this piece of rock with containing graptolites – one of nature’s extinct branches in the evolution of the animal kingdom. They flourished in the Ordovician Oceans 450-500 million years ago. small, aquatic colonial animals...



Joy drew our attention to a couple of items from the Gardening Australia magazine. One of research that is showing polypropylene plastic can be broken down by a fungus. They are using two common strains, *Aspergillus terreus* and *Engyodontium album* which are usually found in plants and soil.

If you want to find out more I found this on the ABC website, sounds as though it has a long way to go. It took about 140 days to completely break it down, after the samples were exposed to ultraviolet rays or heat. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-15/plastic-eating-fungi-discovery-raises-hopes-for-recycling-crisis/102219310>

The other item was of scientists looking at mosses in areas of native vegetation and have found they may be capable of reabsorbing the carbon dioxide in a natural ‘carbon capture’ scheme creating healthier soils.

Both show the importance of the natural world.

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## From the Mailbox

### BirdLife International

[Endangered species migrating along the Mid-continental Americas Flyway](#) are now being protected by new internationally connected conservation projects to maintain the integrity of the whole flyway

Flyways (American) The awe-inspiring phenomenon of migration is not just coastal – in the Mid- continental Americas Flyway, many species fly in their millions between North and South America, encountering numerous challenges along the way. The most endangered species undertaking this journey are beginning to be protected by a new set of internationally connected conservation projects, aiming to maintain the integrity of the whole flyway.

### 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](#).

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### Fivebough Wetland walking track is now partially reopened.

All bird hides are now accessible via sections of the walking track that have been remediated after flooding. A small segment of the walking track loop (shown in red on the map) remains closed from the Freckled Duck bird hide adjoining the Leeton Shire Council Sewerage Ponds to the Walking Track loop T Junction until drier conditions allow further repair works to be completed.





# MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

<b>Superb Parrot</b>	Murrumbidgee Road, Stanbridge	30/05/23	Graham Russell
<b>Superb Parrot</b> [15]	Narrandera Wetlands	01/06/23	Alan Whitehead
<b>Double-barred Finch</b> [5]	Narrandera Wetlands	06/06/23	Susan Whitehead
<b>Superb Parrot</b> [1]	"Colale" Pattersons Rd, Wagga	17/06/23	Janet Hume, Sarah Danckert
<b>Double-barred Finch</b> [5]	Narrandera Wetlands	06/06/23	Susan Whitehead
<b>Double-barred Finch</b> [7]	"Colale" Pattersons Rd, Wagga	17/06/23	Janet Hume, Sarah Danckert
<b>Olive-backed Oriole</b>	"Colale" Pattersons Rd, Wagga	17/06/23	Janet Hume, Sarah Danckert
<b>Olive-backed Oriole</b>	Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest	01/06/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Nankeen Night Heron</b> [2] Adult and juvenile	Flowerdale Lagoon, Wagga Wagga	02/07/23	Janet Hume
<b>Dusky Woodswallow</b> [12]	Marrambidya Wetland, Wagga	05/07/23	Janet Hume
<b>Restless Flycatcher</b>	"Yabtree West", Mundarlo	29/06/23	Janet Hume, Darcy Creece
<b>Jacky Winter</b>	"Yabtree West", Mundarlo	29/06/23	Janet Hume, Darcy Creece
<b>Little Pied Cormorant</b> [200]	Lake Wyangan	05/07/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Little Pied Cormorant</b> [6]	Lake Wyangan	19/06/23	Virginia Tarr
<b>Little Black Cormorant</b> [100]	Lake Wyangan	05/07/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Little Black Cormorant</b> [170]	Campbells Swamp	06/07/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Little Black Cormorant</b> [40]	Flowerdale Lagoon, Wagga Wagga	02/07/23	Janet Hume
<b>Pelican</b> [220]	Lake Wyangan	05/07/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Plumed Whistling Duck</b> [35] (returned after 2 year absence)	Campbells Swamp	06/07/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Freckled Duck</b> [35] (returned after 4 year absence)	Campbells Swamp	06/07/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Great Cormorant</b> [80]	Campbells Swamp	06/07/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Royal Spoonbill</b> [15]	Campbells Swamp	06/07/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Rainbow Lorikeet</b> [2] (maybe a first for Campbells, they have spread quickly, taken over Nericon Village)	Campbells Swamp	06/07/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Rainbow Lorikeet</b> [8]	Scenic Hill, Griffith	30/6/23	Virginia Tarr.
<b>Purple Swamphen</b> [200]	Nericon Swamp	06/07/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Great Cormorant</b> [90]	Nericon Swamp	06/07/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Australasian Bittern</b> [1]	Nericon Swamp	06/07/23	Neil Palframan
<b>Magpie Geese</b> [350-400] are still at the Fivebough Wetlands		end of June	Keith Hutton
<b>Brolga</b> [10] were still at the Fivebough Wetlands		early June/23	Keith Hutton
<b>Spotted Harrier</b> [1-3]	Middle Road, Leeton	all of June/23	Keith Hutton
<b>Black Falcon</b> [1-2]	Middle Road, Leeton	all of June/23	Keith Hutton
<b>Black-shouldered Kite</b> [11-15]	Middle Road, Leeton	all of June/23	Keith Hutton
<b>Nankeen Kestrel</b> [5-9]	Middle Road, Leeton	all of June/23	Keith Hutton
<b>Wedge-tailed Eagle</b> [1]	Middle Road, Leeton	24/06/23	Keith Hutton
Keith notes that mice are only prey seen at this site for Black-shouldered Kites and Kestrels; they may have attracted Spotted Harriers, Black Falcons and Brown Falcons too, going back to at least 09/03/23.			
<b>Black Kite</b> [4]	Lake Wyangan	03/06/23	Virginia Tarr
<b>White-bellied Sea-Eagle</b> [1]	Lake Wyangan	19/06/23	Virginia Tarr
<b>Australasian Darter</b> [2]	Lake Wyangan	19/06/23	Virginia Tarr

# \*\*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\*\*

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions.

Please register with the nominated person.

- 13 July Thursday**      **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7pm.  
**Guest Speaker: Matt Herring**  
**Topic: "Uncovering the secrets of Australia's rarest waterbird: the Australian Painted-snipe"**  
**Bring along your 'show & tell'**  
**Contact:** Dione Russell 0428 536 290  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com)
- 16 July Sunday**      **Outing to Cocoparra National Park – Mt Caley**  
**Meet at 9am at the Spring Hill Picnic Ground**  
**Bring morning tea and lunch.**  
**To register or any questions contact Eric Whiting on 6953 2612 or**  
[ericwhiting4@bigpond.com](mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com).
- 30 July Sunday**      **National Tree Day in Narrandera**  
**This year Landcare will be planting out at Narrandera Fisheries Centre**  
**From 9:00am to 12:00pm**  
Leeton Toyota and Narrandera Pizzeria are again giving lots of support!  
**Contact: Glenn Currie 0488 563 321**
- 2 August Wednesday**      **Copy for the August newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**  
**Email:** [ericwhiting4@bigpond.com](mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com). Phone: 6953 2612.
- 6 August Sunday**      **Ingalba Nature Reserve - Wildflower and bird walk**  
Via Kellows Rd, off Old Wagga South Rd.  
A circuit walk of about 7km, relatively flat, on firetrails is planned. Should access to the NR be degraded a further 1.2km may be necessary.  
Optional 200m scramble to Mt Wharrun trig, with views..  
**Meet:** 8.30am for carpooling at The Playhouse Carpark, leaving by 8:45am  
**Bring:** Morning tea, lunch, water, binoculars, field guides  
**Leaders:** Paul Walker and Janet Hume, contact 0490793340 or  
[paul1931ckf@gmail.com](mailto:paul1931ckf@gmail.com)  
**RSVP:** Thursday 3 August
- 10 August 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](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com)

## Other Events

Please see Page 9.