

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



September 2023 - Issue #318

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



A selection of wildflowers - Rowena Whiting

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CONTRIBUTIONS

For the October 2023 issue by
Wednesday 4 October

To Rowena Whiting

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September is
Biodiversity month

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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Welcome to the September issue

August has been quite a busy month with tree planting events, wildflower walks along with our usual outings. First I would like to mention our guest speaker, David Parker who gave us a excellent presentation about his work over many years studying the Plains-wanderer, including many hours monitoring at night. He explained the bird's behaviour and showed examples of its very specific habitat along with his work with landholders who are committed to providing this to help preserve the species along with the breeding program and release of birds at Oolambeyan National Park. It currently holds the top spot on Australia's most threatened species of bird. Our grateful thanks to David and we look forward to hearing how the newcomers fare.

This month we are heading to Taleeban Mining Reserve for our regular observations of this mallee area, it is often a feast of flowering plants together with plenty of bird life. We hope it is faring well this season.

For those who remember **Roy Wade** will be sad to hear that he passed away last month. He was an early member of MFN and active in the 1990s and 2000s making a number of contributions to the newsletter. See page 11 for one. He was active in the Narrandera community where he and Mary retired to in 1974 from their Euroley farm. He pursued his love of nature, photography and history taking on a number of office bearing roles, along with the Show Society and Koala Regeneration Committee. In 2003 Roy was named Citizen of the Year and in 2012 Loyal Citizen of the Shire. May our memories of him live on. Our sincere condolences to Mary and family. Below is printed a short piece he wrote in 2002. Photo was taken in 2013, their 60th wedding anniversary.



Once again this is a 14 pager and it has been tight on space with some items having to be compressed and others expanded to fit. Still it is a good spread of topics; thank you to all who have contributed.

Enjoy your month, **Rowena**.

Outing to Ingalba

6 August 2023

For their first Sunday excursion in August Paul Walker organised a trip to Ingalba Nature Reserve. Being about the same distance from Leeton as Wagga, this was an opportunity also for western members.

Meeting place was Kellows Lane towards the south-western part of the Reserve. The walk was planned to be a 5 to 6 km circuit along Grey Box Track to Mt Warran with an option to scale it for the view, and back via Mt Warran Track and the Western Boundary Trail.

Ingalba is mostly an Ironbark Forest (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) and these trees were in flower, to the delight of the bird watchers. To relieve the strained necks the numerous wattles in flower kept the eyes towards ground level for just as much of the time. Of particular note was to see the Cootamundra Wattle *Acacia baileyana* growing in its home territory and not as an invasive weed.

Although it was still mid-winter there was plenty to see and it took us a couple of hours to get to Mt Warran our half way point. Those that had carried their lunch had it there whilst the rest had a very late morning tea, managing to last out to eat their lunch back at the cars.

Ingalba has so much to offer and we should have it regularly on our program, Thank you Paul, for organising this one.

Eric Whiting

Photos by Rowena Whiting from top: Area of the reserve with Cootamundra Wattles
Small-flowered grevillea, ploughshare wattle, erect guinea-flower, at the top of Mt Warran



Bird List compiled by Janet Hume

Apostlebird, Australian Raven, Australian Ringneck, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Common Bronzewing, Eastern Rosella, Eastern Yellow Robin, Galah, Golden Whistler, Grey Butcherbird, Grey Fantail, Grey Shrike-thrush, Inland Thornbill, Jacky Winter, Laughing Kookaburra, Noisy Friarbird, Olive-backed Oriole, Pied Currawong, Red Wattlebird, Restless Flycatcher, Silvereye, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Superb Fairy-wren, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Weebill, White-plumed Honeyeater, White-throated Treecreeper, White-winged Chough, Willie Wagtail, Yellow Thornbill, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Yellow-rumped Thornbill.

Tree Planting at Bromley Road, Griffith

This event was organised by Ema Munro in conjunction with the Griffith City Council who had prepared the ground. The area is adjacent to the recently opened bypass by Walla Road. Several MFN members went along on the 12th August to help together with some of the Griffith community. Some of the species planted were Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora*, Black Box *Eucalyptus largiflorens*, *Acacia pendula*, *Acacia salicina*, *Callitris glaucophylla* White Cypress Pine as well as some smaller shrubs. Well done Ema for your enthusiasm and efforts in bringing people together to make this happen.



Wildflower Walk on Scenic Hill

Around 60 people gathered at the bottom of Scenic Hill (Koonoa St) on Saturday afternoon 26 August when MFN members guided groups around the hill identifying the various wildflowers. There was a blaze of yellow and purples as we climbed the first section; these being the Currawang Wattle and Austral Indigofera. Many other plants were seen along the track: Twining Glycine, Sticky Everlasting, Rock Sida, Mulga Ferns to name a few. Higher up we found Leak Lilies, a number of Leopard Orchids scattered amongst the grasses.

It was a great response and an opportunity for the club to inform locals about our activities. Our thanks to Ema Munro for organising this event.



Rowena Whiting

Margrit Martin, Margaret Strong with Ema Munro.
Flowers from left: Currawang Wattle, Austral Indigofera, Twining Glycine.



Outing to Kindra

27 August 2023

The southern section of Kindra State Forest has been fenced off to eliminate grazing for the conservation of the Box forest. Being right on the edge of Coolamon township it is a well-used recreation area. The network of tracks are maintained for easy walking and a separate system of more challenging tracks kept for mountain bike riders. This separation of tracks should be copied in other areas of community use.

Coolamon is within easy travelling distance from both Wagga and Narrandera so this trip organised by Sarah Danckert was another ideal opportunity for east and west members to meet together at a place new to many of us. The plan was to do a circuit walk around the reserve with a diversion out to the bird hide overlooking the Travelling Stock Route Dam. Originally this dam was a water supply for the township and for the steam engines on the railway.



The forest has patches of three types of Box trees giving the canopy contrasts of the pale grey broader leaved White Box *Eucalyptus albens*, the narrow yellow-green leaved Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora* and the dull grey-green leaved Grey Box *Eucalyptus microcarpa*. The White Box was in full bloom and attracting many birds to the joy of the bird watchers. Lower down it was the various wattles that stood out, with just a few other plants in flower due to being still early on the season.

It took us something like 3 hours to walk the circuit, including some time at the bird hide. A party of joggers we frequently met along the tracks did 5 laps in that time!

After lunch a few of us travelled up the Aria Park Road to the northern end of Kindra State Forest where it is crossed by Redbank Creek. The attraction here was the change of vegetation to more wetland species where the creek overflows, the creek is also lined with River Red Gums *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, giving us a fourth eucalypt for the day.

Eric Whiting

Along the track the group and wattles – Rowena Whiting
Dusky Fingers, Midget Greenhoods - Sarah Danckert

Bird List compiled by Sarah Danckert

Willie Wagtail, White-plumed Honeyeater, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Grey Shrike-thrush, Laughing Kookaburra, Australian Raven, Grey Fantail, Rufous Whistler, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Olive-backed Oriole, Striated Pardalote, Spotted Pardalote, Western Gerygone, Weebill, Red Wattlebird, Red-capped Robin, Eastern Yellow Robin, White-throated Treecreeper, Golden Whistler, Noisy Miner, Noisy Friarbird, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Little Friarbird, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Crested Pigeon, Masked



Lapwing, White-faced Heron, Plumed Whistling-Duck, Pink-eared Duck, Little Pied Cormorant, Magpie-lark, Superb Fairy-wren, Australasian Shoveler, Red-rumped Parrot, Welcome Swallow, Black-fronted Dotterel, Grey Teal, White-winged Chough, Common Starling, Common Blackbird, Galah, Eurasian Coot, Straw-necked Ibis, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, White-browed Babbler.

Special Points of Interest at Kindra State Forest

There were many interesting encounters with nature on our walk around the Coolamon forest. The first was *Solanum cinereum* Narrawa Burr with its large leaves and obvious spikes. Its potential size was a part of the curiosity, as this was only a young plant.



As we walked past numerous *Callitris glaucophylla* (White Cypress Pine) our companion, Margrit, pointed out pink blobs at the ends of the branchlets (as pictured). After much discussion, we agreed that the consistency of their location meant that they would probably be flowers or newly formed fruit. We checked the location of cones on the branchlets and, to our surprise, we saw that they were also consistently at the ends (as pictured). I write 'surprise' because cones on pine trees aren't unusual, but none of us present had ever noticed their exact location.



Further on our leader, Sarah, pointed to an unusual track from the ground going up the trunk of a *Eucalyptus albens* (White Box), as pictured. On closer inspection she saw that ants were busily walking up and down the trunk and that the track had been created by hundreds or thousands of their feet wearing the bark away. We couldn't determine the reason for this busy two-way traffic, but we could see higher ant tracks going from the top of the trunk to the canopy. Whatever the ants were collecting was at the top of the tree.

Throughout the whole of the forest walk, we were serenaded by the 'airs' of Olive-backed Orioles to our great delight. A range of other birds, including Babblers, were seen and heard on our visit. The White Box trees are main attractions to that site with their impressive height, large grey-green leaves and massive, scented flower clusters. The wetland at

the far end of the forest area attracted an interesting number of bird species as well as frogs.

Margaret Strong

A view of part of the wetland at the southern end of the forest and to the east of the Golf Course. The other side of the bird hide (on left in picture) looks out over a larger area of water where we were able to watch a number of waders, ducks and other birds. Rowena



Visits to Pulletop Nature Reserve

Three visits to Pulletop NR* in a month showed the quick emergence and development of plants to flowering and fruit. Seasonal changes in birds sighted over this period were also observed.

24/7/23. On the track into the reserve, most of the shrubs were loaded with buds with the expectation of flowers on the next visit. Three prominent plants in flower were *Dodonaea viscosa* (Broad-leaf Hopbush) with tiny red fleshy flowers, *Eucalyptus gracilis* (White Mallee/Yorrell) and *Acacia hakeoides* (Hakea Wattle) which line both sides of the track. Mixed winter flocks of small birds included **Red-capped Robin**, **Chestnut-rumped Thornbills** and **Silver-eyes**. **Splendid Wrens**, the dominate male with non-breeding colours on this visit, and **Bronze-wing pigeons** (5) were also seen.

From the reserve entrance, *Olearia pimeleoides* (Showy Daisy Bush) dominated the understorey and were in bud as with all the smaller shrubs and groundcovers. **Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters** were numerous and very vocal.

19/8/23. Exploring the Pulletop track is an event in itself and was a blaze of bright yellow and white from *Acacia rigens* (Needle Wattle) and *O.*

pimeleoides in flower. *Cassytha melantha* (Mallee Strangle Vine) had tiny cream dots all over it, being the meagre but abundant flowers encased on dark stems. *Amyema quandang* (Grey Mistletoe) were also in flower and *Santalum acuminatum* (Quandong) had green fruit. *D. viscosa* had developed fruit since my last visit. Spaces between the acacias and hopbushes were filled with *Beyeria leshenaultii* (Felted Wallaby Bush) in bud.

Inside the unique atmosphere of the reserve, a beautiful sea of white was the understorey of the low Mallee canopy, with the shrubs in flower as we followed a westerly course along the northern fence line. An enormous *Callitris verrucosa* (Mallee Cypress Pine) grew there amongst smaller ones and alongside *Melaleuca uncinata* (Broombush). *B. leshenaultii* male plants drew our attention with some yellow flowers among the glossy leaves. The females were a mystery, as buds didn't appear open, yet some carried fruit.

From left: Spotted Jezebel, *Beyeria leshenaultii* male flower and buds, *Dodonaea viscosa*

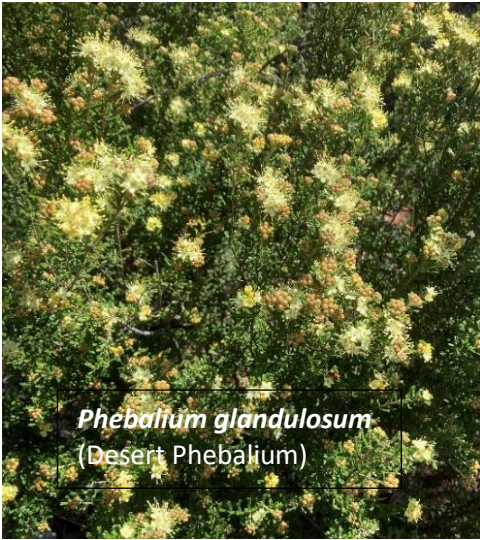


Eucalyptus socialis (Pointed Mallee) were in bud all the way to the north-western corner of the reserve where we saw the very impressive *Davesia ulicifolia* (Gorse bitter Pea) and several *Pimelea microcephala* (Shrubby Rice Flower), both in flower. As we headed back, a **Spotted Jezebel** butterfly landed and sat long enough for us to see the marks of a female. Hopefully she was heading for the Mistletoe and Quandongs to lay eggs. The most prominent bird had been a **Striated Pardalote** which sat out of the foliage for several minutes to watch us. We heard the **Splendid Wrens** over in a neighbouring Lupin field, and also heard several **Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters** close up.

24/8/23. The avenue of shrubs along the track showed different intensities of dazzling yellow and green after only a few days and a shower of rain. *Acacia lineata* (Streaked Wattle) were in flower and what a marvellous sight they were, with the softer yellow of *Acacia brachybotrya* (Grey Mulga) filling the spaces between them.



Daviesia ulicifolia Gorse Bitter-pea



Virginia Tarr, my MFN companion, quickly solved the mystery of the *B. leshenaultii* inside the reserve by spotting female shrubs in flower amongst the males, which by then had flowers covered in pollen in massive numbers. As we headed for the north western corner, shrubs newly in flower including *Philothea difformis* (Small-leaf Waxflower) and *Phebalium glandulosum* (Desert Phebalium) were breathtaking in their beauty. *Pterostylus nana* (Dwarf Greenhood) and *Pterostylus mutica* (Midget Greenhood) were seen in 100s during this visit along with numerous *Caladenia fuscata* (Dusky Fingers). *Eremophila glabra* (Fuschia Bush) had a few flowers open, which solved the mysterious identity of numerous olive-green shrubs on previous visits. *Halgania cyanea* (Mallee Blue-flower) showed some rich blue colour, sharing the understorey scene. Numerous **Weebills** were eating psyllids (lerps) from Mallee leaves.

Two newly emerged annuals were recognizable, being *Goodenia pinnatifida* (Cut-leaf Goodenia) in flower and *Stackhousia monogyna* (Creamy Candles) in bud near our destination at the end of the reserve. Another obvious development from previous visits were the numbers of **mosses** in flower and new **lichens** more frequently seen. **Rufous Whistlers** and a **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**, both recently returned seasonal migrants, were also indications of Spring compared to late winter. In contrast, *E. socialis* were still in bud with no obvious development. While exiting this Mallee wonderland, we spotted the **Splendid Wrens** with breeding colours obvious on the dominant male.



Moss parasols (sporophytes)

The speed of change in the details noted since my first visit is normal for plants and animals in our region and was fascinating to observe at Pulletop NR. Successfully timing my visits to experience these delights was due to the enthusiasm of my companions and luck with the weather.

Margaret Strong

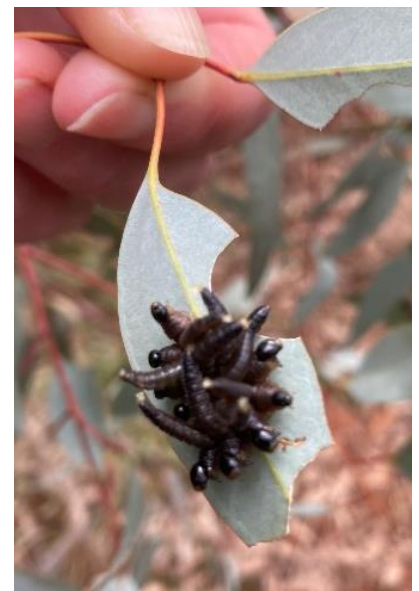
*Note that permission from National Parks Rangers is needed to visit Nature Reserves in NSW.

'points of special interest'/ focus piece - Sawfly Larvae

These Sawfly larvae, seen on 19th August in Pulletop NR, are past the first instar stage of development but are still quite young. Eucalyptus species are the food plant for the larvae of most species and Perga is the main genus.

They reared their heads on being disturbed but we didn't notice any strong eucalyptus spittle, which they are well known for expelling at larger sizes. Known as 'Spitfires' when they behave in that way, many predators know to leave them alone. However, Gang Gang Cockatoos (within their range) have learned to remove the Eucalyptus gland near the head first, before eating the body and are known to devour large quantities at a time. The larvae exude liquids along their body that are also distasteful to most predators, but obviously not to Gang Gangs. It's uncertain as to which birds may eat them in our region.

The larvae continue to be gregarious when they are fully fed and



descend the tree canopy to make pupation cells from silk, mud and regurgitated eucalyptus oil. Adult Sawflies resemble a medium sized wasp, but lack the division or 'waist' between the abdomen and thorax. The females have a 'saw' on their ovipositor to make small grooves on the leaf surface for their eggs.

Margaret Strong

References: "Australian Insects: a Natural History" Bert Brunet, 2000, Reed New Holland and "Insects of South-eastern Australia: an ecological and behavioural guide" Roger Farrow, 2016, CSIRO.

Birds recorded at Pulletop Nature Reserve on 24 August by Virginia Tarr & Margaret Strong
Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters, many. **Eastern Rosellas**, small flock. **Red-rumped Parrots**, small flock. **Australian Kookaburra** [2], **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** [3], **Galaha**s, flock, **Willie Wagtail** [3], **Common Bronzewing**, several. **Inland Thornbill**, many, **Western Gerygone** [2] heard, **Rufous Whistler** [1] & [2] heard, **Weebill**, numerous, **Australian Magpie**, **Splendid Wrens**, several, **Blue-faced Honeyeater** [2]

Narrandera Landcare's Propagating Workshop

[Hay Plains Landcare](#) are setting up their own native seedling nursery to help with re-vegetating their local area. They have built the infrastructure required and approached our [Narrandera Landcare](#) group to get pointers on the next steps they need to take to start propagating. I've met a lot of their members before at their "[Four Seasons of Seed](#)" workshops and was quite happy to help.

Narrandera Landcare has been fortunate in twice obtaining funding from Landcare Australia to help with our propagating and planting days. This funding is provided by Michael King who donates to Landcare Australia with the aim of assisting small native nurseries. Michael's big goal is to get more trees in the ground and by helping Hay Landcare I'm sure more trees will get planted in the coming years.

Our Landcare group have been propagating our own seedlings for 4 years with quite a bit of success. There's been trials and tribulations where we have learnt a lot and we were happy to share our experiences.

So we had a propagation workshop on 6 September at the Narrandera Food Garden. Nine members of Hay Landcare made the journey across the plains to our Food Garden, and were joined by eleven locals, a lot of who are members of NLG or MFN (or both).

After greeting and showing everyone around the Food Garden, I spoke to the group about what has worked for us, the different containers we've used, the potting media available, the boiling water treatment we use for hard coated seed such as acacias, techniques for filling the trays and sowing the different seed, the watering and fertilising needed as the seedlings grow etc.



Then everyone got hands-on experience by filling trays, tamping the tubes, and sowing seeds. It was a busy hour and a lot of work got done! One of the things I spoke about was making sure everything was labelled correctly and I had my work cut out keeping up with writing the labels required. I hoped to demonstrate on the day how much can be achieved in just an hour or two and NLG ended up with 21 trays (900 tubes) prepped and sown (and hopefully properly labelled!) which is a great start to our season's propagating. There were 10 different species sown – 2 Eucalypts, 6 Acacias, Indigofera and Narrow-leaf Hopbush.

After we lunched the folk from Hay left with a ute load of potting media, trays and forestry tubes, seed courtesy of MFN, a container of slow-release fertiliser and some horticultural labels. And I remembered to include a 2B pencil which works a lot better than so called permanent markers. Basically, everything I could think of to get them started propagating their own seedlings. I look forward to comparing notes with

them over the next few months regarding how our respective seedlings are faring.

I'd like to thank MFN members, Nella, Margrit, Margaret and Sally for their help on the day. And of course Landcare Australia and Michael King. We all wish Hay Landcare the very best in their project.

Glenn Currie

Koalas of Narrandera and Beyond

Koala Survey



Charles Sturt University in partnership with the Narrandera Koala Regeneration Advisory Committee, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Murrumbidgee Landcare, and Local Land Services are gathering information on koalas in the Riverina located in or dispersing from the Koala Reserve in Narrandera to find out how healthy and abundant koalas are and what habitats they prefer.

Koalas were introduced to Narrandera Nature Reserve in 1972-1974 from north-eastern NSW, French Island in VIC, and south-eastern QLD. The introduced koalas appeared to thrive on the River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) diet. Their numbers increased from 19 to an estimated 200 and are considered to be a sustainable population. Koalas have now spread into the Narrandera Commons and beyond. The local koala habitat in the Riverina includes River Red Gum, Black Box, Grey Box, Yellow Box, and Poplar Box. Ancillary koala habitat trees include white box and white cypress pine.

Before you decide to participate, please read the **Participant Information Sheet**

using the QR code below. Your privacy is of utmost importance to us. All respondent identities will be kept strictly confidential. While we understand if you prefer not to provide your name and address, we kindly request that you still fill in the other details on the survey form and maps or provide GPS coordinates.

The inaugural research of the Narrandera koala population led by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service began in June 2022 assessing the health and genetics of the population. This koala survey has been generously supported by the NSW Koala Strategy, Department of Planning and Environmental.

The aim is to continue the long-term monitoring of koala populations in Narrandera and adjacent koala habitat in the Riverina.

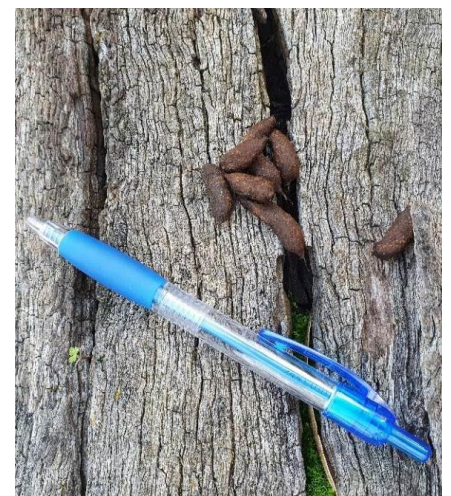
Joanne Connolly



Images: Above: Koala in a Narrandera resident's garden. (Photo: Joanne Connolly)

Above left: Joanne releasing a koala into its original tree. Note the blue ear tag in the left ear indicating a male. (Photo: Tim Scanlon)

Right: Droppings or scats from a healthy koala. (Photo: Tim Johnson)



Participant Information Sheet & Link to the Online Koala Survey



- Scan the QR code,
- read the sheet,
- follow the link

<https://arcg.is/1DueTq0>

In the survey you can record:

- The location of a koala you have seen directly or on an online map or by GPS coordinates.
- The koala status (alive, injured or dead).
- Circumstances of koala sighting (day & time, breeding activity, ear tag etc.)

The information will assist to:

- Identify where koalas are present or absent
- Detect changes in koala populations overtime. e.g. declines, overabundance
- Identify threats to our local koala populations
- Help wildlife authorities make conservation plans

For more information regarding the koala survey contact:

Dr Joanne Connolly School of Agricultural, Environmental & Veterinary Sciences, Charles Sturt University

Email: jconnolly@csu.edu.au

Web: <https://science-health.csu.edu.au/schools/ag-environmental-vet/staff/profiles/vet-science/jconnolly> & click on Research tab

ANNUAL NARRANDERA KOALA COUNT & FESTIVAL

The Narrandera Annual Koala Count is a great chance for people to see koalas in the wild. Held in spring at the Narrandera Flora and Fauna Reserve, the Koala Count is a fun way for the community to check on the koala colony which was reintroduced into the reserve in 1972.

The Narrandera Koala Festival will include the Narrandera Koala Count on the Saturday 7th October, and a full program of events including kayaking tours, bush tucker workshops, koala-spotting tours, craft workshops, live entertainment, market stalls and much more.

<https://www.visitnsw.com/destinations/country-nsw/riverina/narrandera/events/narrandera-annual-koala-count>

More information is also available on the Narrandera Shire Council website



Animals Aplenty Re-printed in memory of Roy Wade, from the March 2010 issue.

As a young boy, growing up on the land, I was privileged to have numerous enjoyable and interesting pets over the years. This was the catalyst which started a lifelong love of nature in general.

While quite young I was given two baby possums which became very tame. Although given their freedom they chose to stay, spending time in fruit trees and grape trellis.

A neighbour brought a young "joey" which he found in its mother's pouch after her demise. We hung up a wheat bag with a vertical slit in one side and I still remember the joy of watching "Chut" opening the slit with his paws, then somersaulting into his new pouch. He too, stayed around for a long time, and together with a poddy lamb followed me every where as I rode by bicycle. One day a neighbour called in as I was being followed. When I asked him what he thought of my "sheep dogs" he gave a rather wry smile for some reason. A gentle, quiet pony gave me the opportunity to learn to ride at a young age.

There was usually a tortoise or two in the garden as well as a ferret hutch for a time, and the odd gecko or lizard, but definitely no pet mice or snakes.

Various birds such as magpies, a galah and parrots were kept at times, but I feel the most novel was a pair of tawny frogmouths. These had fallen from their nest in a storm, becoming quite tame in a short time, probably realizing where their food was coming from.

Searching under loose bark revealed small frogs and a variety of crawlies. Observing tadpoles losing their tails as they matured was another pleasant diversion.

There was a spot on the Yanko Creek where I often saw platypus swimming, and at Molly's Lagoon, a still water creek, water rats were frequently observed.

A lake on the property was a haven for a huge variety of aquatic birds. The lagoon and lake filled practically every year, but unfortunately with the prolonged drought no flood water as reached this area since 2000.

There is much to be thankful for as I recall so many pleasant memories of a wonderful childhood 70 plus years ago, guided by loving parents.

Roy Wade

Members' Observations / Show and Tell

Two Owl Encounters on 24 August

I went to Anderson's Lane to see how the flooding was drying up ... it is but there is still a lot of water. Birdlife is drying up too, only a tenth of what was there previously.

On Anderson's Lane East I stopped at random to take a look at what might be flowering in the mallee. I noticed a flapping of brown wings in the grass by the fence. Oh, no! I'm guessing maybe a falcon and it's caught in the wire. Approached slowly and a **Boobook** took off and landed a few metres further away in more grass. Sick? Injured? But then it flew into a mallee, then over to another mallee, so I guess it was fine after all.

So was it hunting in the grass by the fence? Trying to extract an animal? But in mid-morning daylight? I have seen no mention of them hunting by day.

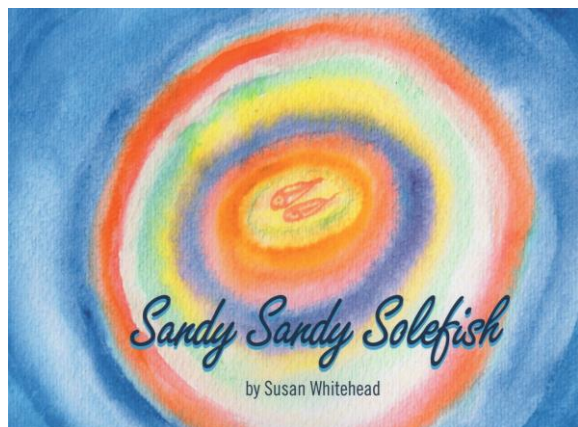
Back in town behind Banna Ave I spotted a **Barn Owl** pinned down on bare open ground by several birds including ravens. Surrounded, it had no chance of take-off and appeared doomed. I approached, the other birds flew off, and the owl flew straight to the nearest building and clung on upside down by one leg from a window. Once it got its wits back it headed for the nearest trees, birds in chase. It should have more luck there.

Neil Palframan

Neil also reports **Three Seasonal Firsts in one Day** : 25th August

1. Rufous Songlark calling
2. Magpie swoop
3. Blue tongue lizard flat on the road (not the best place to sunbake)

Susan Whitehead showed us a beautiful children's book she has published of her paintings and songs. It is called **Sandy Sandy Solefish**, a story inspired by the sea life she observed around beaches and coves of Sydney as a child. Well done, Susan.



She has kindly donated a copy to the Club library; please contact our librarian Margrit Martin tigram.nitram@gmail.com if you would like to borrow it.

Margrit has also received a copies of and Tony Juniper's *Spix's Macaw* via Neil Palframan which belonged to Max O'Sullivan.

When space permits, I will include a list of books that are available.

The Gift

My father has been dead for almost a decade
His body interred with others who share my genes,
On a hillside in Harcourt, under the granite boulder strewn
hillside
He roamed as a youth. My youth

Was troubled. I aged at a time where there were
Not the words to describe what was going on in my skull.
Even now my mental health is an undefined thing that lives

In forests, rivers, deserts, the places I love.
There were many things my father gave me
And I will not trouble you with the details, but

The greatest gift was green, was wild, could not be wrapped
In a box, could only be inhaled, with deep breaths of cold air.
Could be earned by sweat and through tired legs and arms.
Was the moment when you see a lyrebird dancing

Amongst gums. I recently paddled twelve kilometres up to a
gorge
In a lake that wasn't there In my father's time, but that he
helped build.

40 years ago we walked into the gorge from above
And it was camped on the small creek above that I received
This green gift.

The water in the lake is deep and clear
And close to the shore, you can see into the depths where
ghostly green branches reach up for the surface,
as if to evoke the memories of my father.

Greg Pritchard

MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

Spotless Crane [5-6]	Fivebough Wetlands	07/08/23	Keith Hutton
Australian Spotted Crane [5/6]	Fivebough Wetlands	07/08/23	Keith Hutton
Buff-banded Rail [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	07/08/23	Keith Hutton
Brolga [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	07/08/23	Keith Hutton
Fairy Martin [17] Arrival	Fivebough Wetlands	13/08/23	Keith Hutton
Australian Shelduck [5]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/08/23	Keith Hutton
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [25] Arrival	Fivebough Wetlands	19/08/23	Keith Hutton
Magpie Goose [300+]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/08/23	Keith Hutton
Avocet [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/08/23	Keith Hutton
Wood Sandpiper [2] Arrival	Fivebough Wetlands	20/08/23	Keith Hutton
Baillon's Crane [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/08/23	Keith Hutton
Black-fronted Dotterel [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/08/23	Keith Hutton
Wedge-tailed Eagle [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	26/08/23	Keith Hutton
Pied Stilt [50+]	Fivebough Wetlands	27/08/23	Keith Hutton
Buff-banded Rail [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	27/08/23	Keith Hutton
Great Cormorant [35]	Fivebough Wetlands	27/08/23	Keith Hutton
Australia Pelican [184]	Fivebough Wetlands	27/08/23	Keith Hutton
Red-kneed Dotterel [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	31/08/23	Keith Hutton

In addition to above sightings at Fivebough Wetlands in August: Brown Honeyeaters were established and singing vigorously in at least 3 sites in Leeton, and Superb Parrots in flocks of 18 to 50 were seen flying over Leeton town centre, Golden Apple, Fivebough Wetlands, Middle Rd and Brobenah Hall Rd early in the month. There were also 17 Bronzewings hanging around sheep feed troughs with 5 Blue Bonnets, 14 Red-rumped Parrots, 2 Eastern Rosellas, 14 Galahs, 7 Crested Pigeons and 3 Peaceful Doves in a paddock along Evans Smyles Road on August 8th. Keith Hutton

Little Corella [20]	Narrandera Wetlands	01/08/23	Alan Whitehead
Eastern Rosella [9]	Narrandera Wetlands	08/08/23	Susan Whitehead
White-winged Fairywren	Nericon Swamp	09/08/23	Neil Palframan
Superb Fairywren	Campbells Swamp	21/08/23	Neil Palframan
(the Superb is not common in this area, most common is the Purple-backed)			
Painted Buttonquail [5]	Carathool Reserve, Quarry Rd	24/08/23	Neil Palframan
Red-kneed Dotterel [2]	Nericon Swamp	01/09/23	Neil Palframan
Australian Crane [16]	Nericon Swamp	01/09/23	Neil Palframan
Spotless Crane [1]	Nericon Swamp	01/09/23	Neil Palframan
Baillon's Crane [1]	Nericon Swamp	01/09/23	Neil Palframan
Flame Robin [7]	"Hildasid" Lake Albert	03/08/23	J Hume, S Danckert
European Goldfinch [25]	"Hildasid" Lake Albert	03/08/23	J Hume, S Danckert
Black Honeyeater	Stackpoole Nature Reserve, nth Goolgowi	03/09/23	Margaret Strong
Pallid Cuckoo (seasonal migrant)	Stackpoole NR, nth Goolgowi	03/09/23	Margaret Strong
Rufous Songlark (seasonal migrant)	Watson Rd, Tabbita	07/09/23	Margaret Strong
Seasonal migrant butterflies			
Spotted Jezabel <i>Delias aganippe</i> [2]	Pulletop Nature Reserve, nth of Griffith	14,19/08/23	Margaret Strong
Aust. Painted Lady <i>Vanessa kershawi</i>	Stackpoole NR, nth Goolgowi	03/09/23	Margaret Strong
Spotted Jezabel Butterfly	Stackpoole NR, nth Goolgowi	03/09/23	Margaret Strong
White-necked Heron [1]	Lake Albert wetland	23/08/23	S Danckert, J Hume
First time seen at this location. Immature-has markings on front of neck. Unusual for this bird as they are easily disturbed. Seen 3 metres from a very busy walking, cycling track.			
White-necked Heron [1]	Lake Albert wetland	28/08/23	Penny King
Cattle Egret [80]	Lake Albert wetland	23/08/23	S Danckert, J Hume
Nankeen Night-heron [5 – 2A 3J]	Lake Albert wetland	23/08/23	S Danckert, J Hume
Magpie Goose [2]Roosting	Lake Albert wetland	23/08/23	S Danckert, J Hume

**** COMING EVENTS ****

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions.

Please register with the nominated person.

- 14 September 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
- 16 September Saturday** **Outing to Taleeban Mining Reserve**
This is mallee country, an opportunity to see this country in Spring.
Meet at the corner of Burley Griffin Way and Erigolia Road @ 8.30am
Bring: morning tea and lunch.
Register with Dione Russell murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com, phone 0428 536 290.
- 4 October Wednesday** **Copy for the October newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
For significant sightings email janethume@icloud.com
- 6/7 October** **Leeton Show**
- 7 October Saturday** **Annual Koala Count and Festival in Narrandera**
Participation is open to all ages, simply follow the signs from the Lake Talbot Canal Bridge (Lake Drive and Oakbank Street) to the meeting point within the reserve. At the conclusion of the event, a sausage sizzle lunch and drinks will be provided for a small donation, or bring your own picnic lunch to enjoy in beautiful bush surrounds. See page 11 for more information.
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 12 October 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

- 20-23 October** **Yarram, South Gippsland, Victoria** South East Australian Naturalists’ Association Camp (SEANA) Camp, to be hosted jointly by the Field Naturalist clubs of Sale & District and Latrobe Valley.
An opportunity to meet fellow field naturalists and explore the area with locals. A variety of excursions are planned including the Wilsons Prom National Park.

Bird Surveys

2023 Cowra Woodland Bird Surveys,

Dates for 2023/24 are October 14/15, and February 17/18 2024.

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

Australia’s favourite citizen science event, [The Aussie Bird Count](#), will return between 16–22 October. You don’t need to be an expert birder to take part — all you need is a little enthusiasm!