

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



July 2024 - Issue #327

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



"Good Evening, Pelicans"

4000 have been enjoying Lake Cowal by Nella Smith

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CONTRIBUTIONS

For the August issue by

Wednesday 31 July

To Rowena Whiting

Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com.

Phone: 0429 726 120

"Nothing in life is to be feared.

It is only to be understood."

— Marie Curie

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; (Leeton, Griffith, Narrandera areas) AND ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH (Wagga Wagga area)

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 July issue

The weather has been considerate for our outings this month although there are those who would like to see more rain; Leeton only received 6mm in this last event, maybe a bit more by the time you receive this. Outings have been enjoyed and members have been out and about, however fungi have been sparse. Keep sharing your observations.

At the monthly meeting we were pleased to welcome Guy Retallick and Jessica Puntoriero from Leeton Shire and hear about recycling and our new **Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO)** bin and the ensuing reduction to landfill. These have now been introduced. The green waste is taken to the Wormtech facility at Carathool (where the Black Kites are enjoying our waste - see Nella's sighting). Our grateful thanks to Guy and Jessica Puntoriero.

A big thank you to all the contributors to this newsletter. I hope you understand I have had to condense some copy.

I only received one reply to the question about the pronunciation of scientific names - "I probably don't mind it when used judiciously. I found Aphaenogaster (af-ee-no-gas-ter), quite helpful. Thanks Glenn.

This month has a number of interesting activities - a talk by our new Landcare Co-ordinator, a walk in the Brobenah Hills, tree planting at Narrandera and Griffith, a visit to Quandong Park property and coming up in August is an outing to Barren Box Swamp (registration required). And don't forget to pay your subs. **See coming events on page 13 for full details.**

Enjoy your newsletter and your month, **Rowena.**

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

Bank transfers are preferred and can be made to the MFN's bank account (Please make sure you are using the current account - BSB 082 672 account no. 722043387) or cheques can be posted to the Treasurer, Glenn Currie, PO Box 541, Leeton, NSW 2705. 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.

Just getting to the meeting place at the end of Evan Smyles Road was a challenge. It did not matter from which direction you came; the whole country was covered in a thick grey foggy blanket. Nevertheless those that said they were coming were there on time, and we optimistically moved further along the road towards the base of the hill. This is the usual parking spot for the noted bird watching area. Not that we could do much birding, we could barely see the tops of the roadside trees. Instead we took a casual walk up to the saddle, noting the change from a Bimble Box dominance to a Dwyers Gum one. In 1991 this area suffered a very hot bushfire and can still be considered as recovering. The variety of shrubs that have come back was interesting.



By the time we got back to the cars there were signs the fog was lifting, so we pressed on further along the road. Evan Smyles Road becomes Mirrool Road past the hill and cuts across irrigated land. In times of extreme flood like 1956, 1972,

Mirrool Creek waters spill over this stretch to continue along Little Mirrool Creek. Scattered Boree trees are all that is left of



Above: Rowena photographing bracket fungi on a tree stump (Janet Hume); Evans Smyles Road (Rowena Whiting), Below: (left) junction Mirrool Road and Boundary Road (Rowena) (right) north end Boundary Road looking south (Eric Whiting)



the thick scrub that faced John Oxley making him change direction.

Mirrool Road meets Boundary Road and on turning right this part of the road is nothing more than 2.5 kilometres of unformed track with wide roadside verges. A sign, unfortunately largely hidden by a Needlewood bush declares this stretch as a Roadside Environmental Significance. Vegetation along this stretch is a Bimble Box woodland in a reasonably good condition. Maps show a continuation through private land to a low hill on Merribee Station and forms a vegetation corridor to the Binya hills to the north.

As the fog finally cleared, the birdos got to work – see Janet's list. Being winter there was a scarcity of flowers, however it looked as if a spring visit would be rewarding.

Most of the bird list was compiled near the junction. We did drive northwards to the end of the road making brief spots at interesting shrub patches. One of these patches looked like lignum but was Desert Broombush, *Templetonia egea* – a pea-flowered shrub more likely to be found in mallee. Another interesting find was the climber Native Jasmin, *Jasminum lineare*. It would be nice to see (and smell) this one in flower.

Progressing onwards we made our way down to Naismith Hill just to the north of Murrami. Permission had been sought to enter this private land. MFN had previous visited this spot some twenty years ago. At most

the hill has been lightly grazed – more as a drought refuge and not for a number of years. That is except for the 50 or so kangaroos that Peter Randell, the owner, informed me call the site home.

Once again it was principally a bird watching session, with the tantalising promise of a spring wildflower bounty. What was intended to be a short loop up the north side of the hill, was frequently extended as more birds were followed. It was a late lunch back at the cars parked on Malcolm Road – and the bird list continued to grow as we sat there.



All in all, despite the early morning conditions and the fact it was winter, it was a rewarding day out for us to two areas not on the usual venue list.

Our thanks to Peter for letting us explore this area of his property.

Eric Whiting

Bird Lists compiled by Janet Hume

Boundary Road North end

Crested Pigeon
 Red-rumped Parrot
 Singing Honeyeater
 Rufous Whistler
 Willie Wagtail
 Zebra Finch

Nankeen Night-Heron
 Eastern Rosella
 White-plumed Honeyeater
 Grey Shrike-thrush
 Australian Raven

Little Pied Cormorant
 Australian Ringneck
 Noisy Miner
 Australian Magpie
 Magpie-lark

Australian Hobby
 Superb Fairy-wren
 Striated Pardalote
 Pied Butcherbird
 Jacky Winter

Naismith Hill

Crested Pigeon
 Red-rumped Parrot
 Noisy Miner
 Rufous Whistler
 White-winged Chough
 Silvereye

White-faced Heron
 Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
 White-plumed Honeyeater
 Chestnut-rumped Thornbill
 Red-capped Robin

Australian White Ibis
 Willie Wagtail
 Weebill
 Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
 Double-barred Finch

Galah
 Australian Raven
 Yellow Thornbill
 Australian Magpie
 Jacky Winter

Above right: Naismith Hill (Rowena Whiting)
 Left: Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (Janet Hume)
 Below left: Double-barred Finch (Janet Hume)
 (right): Jacky Winter (Janet Hume)



Rocky Hill – Installing Habitech Nest Boxes

Rocky Hill is located within the City of Wagga Wagga in the northern section of Koorinal, main access is via Simkin Cres. It is a 50 hectare remnant White Box grassy woodland. There are approximately 160 plant species, more than half of which are introduced. In 2020 the local community started to preserve and enhance the environment of their neighbourhood nature space. South Wagga Rotary Rocky Hill Regeneration was formed and supported by NSW Community Building Partnership, Federal Government Volunteer Funding, Wagga Wagga City Council, Riverina Water, Transgrid, Charles Sturt University, Wollundry Rotary Club, Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc., and a core of 10 committed and a total of over 70 volunteers from the Wagga community, particularly those residents living close by.

A Transgrid funded website and information cards showcase Rocky Hill's Biodiversity. See <https://rockyhill.com.au/> for flora and fauna images and a complete Plant List by botanist, Geoff Burrows at <https://rockyhill.com.au/flora/>

Only two of the local tree species are hollow bearing, *Eucalyptus albens* White Box, *Eucalyptus blakelyi* Blakely's Red Gum. Other local trees include *Allocasuarina verticillata* Drooping She-oak, *Callitris glaucophylla* White Cypress Pine, *Brachychiton populneus* Kurrajong, and tree sized *Acacia deanei* subsp. *paucijuga* Deane's Wattle, *Acacia implexa* Hickory Wattle and *Acacia pycnantha* Golden Wattle.

Introduced trees include *Corymbia citriodora* Lemon-scented Gum and *Acacia baileyana* Cootamundra Wattle (whose dominance WWCC staff are monitoring), and trees that are being removed over time include *Melia azedarach* White Cedar, *Ailanthus altissima* Tree-of-heaven, *Olea europaea* Common Olive, *Fraxinus spp.* ash, *Ligustrum sp.* Privet, Cotoneaster and historic almond, date and *Schinus areira* Pepper Tree.

To provide habitat for hollow nesting species, Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. were invited to and were successful in applying for a Transgrid Community Partnership's Program grant.

On Thursday 27 June 2024, five Habitech nest boxes were installed on Koorinal's Rocky Hill, Wagga Wagga.

2 Laughing Kookaburra configuration and 3 medium parrot configuration e.g. Rosella or Red-rumped Parrot. Milena Dunn and I took several photos and videos which you may be interested to see. They show the step by step installation by ecologist, Mikayla Green, supported by Deborah Wakeling. These links are shown below.

I'm so keen to see what the local birds think of their new real estate. A Brown Falcon flew in and perched in a nearby tree after the first box was installed! Unfortunately I did not have a suitable camera to capture its visit. No doubt, Geoff Burrows of Rocky Hill Regeneration Volunteers will be able to capture some images of the local birds investigating the boxes.

I'm grateful to Transgrid for funding this project. Given the few hollow bearing trees on Rocky Hill, it will be decades before these trees the South Wagga Rotary initiated Rocky Hill Regeneration group are protecting, and those they are planting, will have hollows. This has been a valuable way that Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. can support Rocky Hill Regeneration volunteers in the amazing work they have been doing restoring healthy habitat for our nature space right in town in Wagga Wagga.

Sarah Danckert



Here's the full procedure of the installation of 5 Nesting boxes on Rocky Hill. The short videos by Sarah range in length from 11 seconds to 80 seconds.

1. Select tree with vertical section of trunk

2. Select nest box - this one's for a Laughing Kookaburra”

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T0GxjWE9Xcks7XWDN_XbOc7rsFmKTBzo/view?usp=drivesdk

3. Deb explains the importance of the bracket in keeping the nesting box attached

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T3mqV-0gFvBooLyACqNH8A31AjPQJ8wX/view?usp=drivesdk>

4. Secure ladder on level ground, climb up, attach self to tree, attach ladder to tree, attach self a second time.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T04C188J2JaY0hbXLCeC93b1wWAYfi1s/view?usp=drivesdk>

5. Cut a rectangle of cambium bark for the bracket to sit in.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SpXb1CKcmNJ61sYTWy4Zc4J5ApzFlAW/view?usp=drivesdk>

6. Secure the bracket

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ShAyXVbPZioJqPt3D5TKkkZPMFtYghc8/view?usp=drivesdk>

7. Install the nest box

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Sg8HeLGatq0cbu_q0WY3iOMIntogIBMw/view?usp=drivesdk

8. Coil the rope & pack up

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ScOEh6sQgiaBkk2m5y8aPbgmVYhBvSrt/view?usp=drivesdk>

Great Australian Wildlife Search using Environmental DNA

Results 2023

Sampling survey Researchers at La Trobe University designed a biodiversity survey powered by eDNA technology to determine the distribution of aquatic wildlife and threatened species across the basin. eDNA is innovative monitoring technology that enables biodiversity data to be collected efficiently across tremendous spatial scales. Citizen scientists and project partners signed up to participate in the survey, undertaking a simple water sampling technique. Volunteers collected two water samples at each site. Samples were sent back to EnviroDNA for analysis and data processing to deliver biodiversity detection data. This data combined with other knowledge will help inform future conservation efforts.

Environmental DNA, or eDNA, refers to the DNA that all creatures shed into their surrounding environment via skin cells, hair, scales, mucus and more. Analysing eDNA from environmental samples such as water, provides exceptional insights into the species, biodiversity and ecosystems that are present in the sampling region.

If you are interested in looking at the results of this exciting research or are interested in being involved in the project in the future look at this website. There is an interesting interactive map. Great Australian Wildlife Search www.wildlifesearch.org.au/ Open the tab “results” to view the 2023 results.

Nella Smith Information taken from the website.

[You may remember Nella writing about her and Glenn’s experience of collecting data at a site on the Bullenbung Creek in the December 2023 issue. Registrations are open to participate in the 2024 season – Ed.]



Koala Research in Narrandera

Narrandera's koala population began with the introduction of 19 koalas in the 1970's.

As in Narrandera, a statewide monitoring programme is being conducted with the view of improving the status of koalas across the state.

NPWS is working with the Murrumbidgee Landcare Network and Riverina Local Land Services to fill in knowledge gaps about the size of the population and just how far along the river the koalas have spread.

Drones with thermal cameras have been used to count koalas and sound recorders were installed in national parks, and on Crown land and farms along a 100-kilometre stretch of the Murrumbidgee River. 290 koalas were counted in a 1600 hectare area that is the Narrandera Flora and Fauna Refuge. From the thermal cameras we know that the population is increasing and still is increasing because all the females that were surveyed and counted had pouch young and many others had back young.



New DNA testing also revealed the Narrandera koalas are the most genetically diverse in southern NSW with genetic links to populations in Victoria, northern NSW, and southern Queensland.

Chlamydia is a highly infectious bacterial disease that can make koalas more vulnerable to death from other causes. Narrandera's koalas appear to be free of this disease.

Songmeters were deployed aiming to detect the call of male koalas during breeding season along the Murrumbidgee corridor in both east and west directions from Narrandera. These were put out over a 2 to 3 week period.

To analyse the data a recogniser tool on a computer is used to detect a certain tone and frequency of a male koala call. It does have to be checked by humans as well, because sometimes you have things like deer that can sound very similar to koalas, or sometimes even different levels of thunderstorms will be heard.

Of the 71 song meters that were put out, 23 of them detected male koala calls.

Now that it is known generally how far the population extends along the Murrumbidgee corridor, survey methods can be improved and other survey methods can be used.

Local partners who helped on this project include Murrumbidgee Landcare, Local Land Services and Narrandera Shire Council and all are very keen to see where habitat can be improved and linked.

Compiled by **Nella Smith** using an interview by Emily Doak and a website.

An Awesome Sighting

Approximately 2000 (that's two thousand) Black Kites gathered at the corner of the Sturt Highway and the Conargo Road near the Carathool turnoff. There were many perched on the biggest compost heap you have ever seen at the Wormtech facility. It is believed that they were taking advantage of the warmth from the compost heap. Wormtech collects the green waste from nearby towns. **Nella Smith**



BOOK REVIEW:

***The Birdman's Wife* by Melissa Ashley.** Affirm Press, Melbourne, 2019.

The 'Birdman', being John Gould, has been more well known in Australia for the past 185 years than his wife, Elizabeth, who painted images of many of our birds that the famous ornithologist described and named. Melissa Ashley researched Elizabeth Gould's story from historical sources, including Eliza's letters home to England from Australia and her personal diary, to write the novel which features Eliza and her art.

Eliza's delight in seeing Australian birds such as Superb Fairywrens and Grey Fantails are described by Ashley with the excitement and detail of a skilled birdwatcher. Eliza recorded her experiences of seeing birds in their natural habitats in her diary as well as her art. Prior to their trip to Australia in 1839 and 1840, Eliza's paintings of Australian birds had been from skins collected by her brother, John Gilbert, who sent them to John Gould's taxidermist business then onto Eliza's studio in England.

Melissa Ashley's personal interest in Australian birds prompted her to write the novel and I highly recommend it to anyone interested in ornithology and also the history of Australia as a British colony. Little mention is made of John and Eliza's knowledge of or contact with Aboriginal people during their visit, which is reflected in the absence of Aboriginal language names in their common names and notes.

Although a work of fiction, the social history of the era of scientific discovery that the Gould family lived in is realistically recreated in the novel to leave a lasting memory of the historical record. This story of Eliza Gould includes her personal family life and professional life in her husband's business, as well as their association with other natural science artists, such as Edward Lear, and the renowned biologist Charles Darwin.

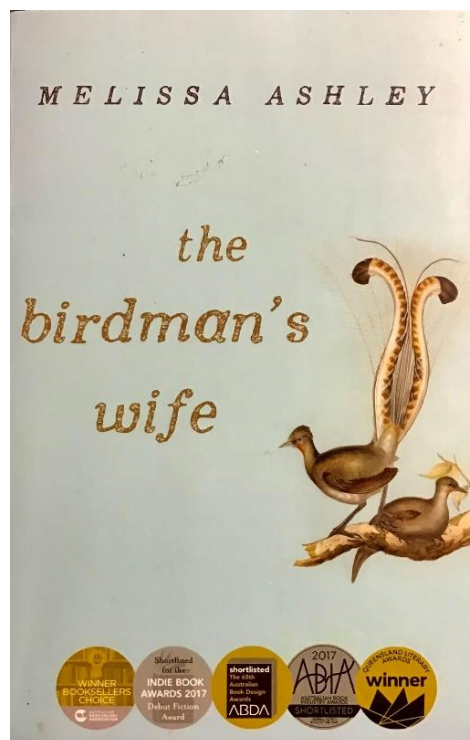
During their visit to Australia Eliza and John stayed on Ash Island in the Hunter River with Alexander Scott, a renowned entomologist, artist and father of Helena and Harriet Scott who were children at this time and not yet living on Ash Island. The description of the island with its original species, as documented by Eliza and John, enriches what we've recently learnt from the regional tour of the Scott Sister's Collection at the Australian Museum.

The process of naming species involved 'collecting' specimens, which usually meant killing the bird. The meat was usually eaten by the Gould family and their employees. Where subspecies existed, eg the Crimson Rosella group, many mature and immature birds were killed to carefully check feathers as evidence for classifying them. Birds with distinctive sexual dimorphism for the breeding season, eg Lyrebirds, also required multiple specimens as evidence of this trait. Ashley includes Eliza's distress of this necessity, in the name of science, giving a realistic appraisal of the complexities of her work with her husband.

I'm looking forward to reading another novel by Melissa Ashley, though it will need to be magnificent to rival this, her first one. It highlights the historic importance of Australian biology to international records and the excitement that accompanied the global awareness of our species. The social history of the era will be of great interest to many readers and is easily absorbed and remembered as a novel, rather than as a list of facts.

I recommend that you request the novel at your Public Library or order your own copy, while this treasure is still in print.

Margaret Strong



More images from

"Birds of the World: the art of Elizabeth Gould", reviewed June 2024,



Clockwise from top left:

Grey Fantail's hunting acrobatics depicted in Tasmanian Blanket Bush

Superb Fairywrens with a Cuckoo chick. Note the frantic male wren..

Freckled Duck female, painting from a specimen skin before 1839.

Pink Cocky lithograph by Eliza before 1839, showing array of crest colours.

Cockateels lithograph by Eliza after an Edward Lear painting before 1839.

Mulga Parrots in a Kurrajong. A watercolour by Eliza.

Splendid Wrens dimorphism of male breeding colours noted by John



Research Project on Bogong Moth Winter Breeding Grounds

MFN received a request from Dr Emily McColl-Gausden (University of Melbourne) who is researching the winter breeding grounds of the Bogong Moth. She is after potential places to test environmental DNA sampling. The hope is this technique will allow the detection of the species from different environmental samples like water and soil.

Specifically, she's looking for sites that currently have Bogong moth larvae (common cutworm). It's thought they are more likely to be in, or at least more likely to be detectable in agricultural areas, specifically broad lead pasture and crops. Because their aim is to test this environmental DNA sampling, they need a positive site first.

They seem to breed from southern Queensland to South Australia, including western NSW. If you have had experience with cutworms or confirmed Bogong moth sightings on your property or in your area, Emily would love to hear from you.

A pdf about the project can be accessed on Tamworth Regional Landcare's website

<https://www.trla.org.au>. There's a lot of interesting information about the moth, their cutworm larvae and the project on it.

Glenn Currie



A Kurrajong growing inside the base of a Bimble Box, along the Mad Mile TSR – Glenn Currie

Janet Hume and Glenn Currie with MFN's new banner. Look out for it on Field Trips meeting locations.



From Glenn Currie

I found this weird looking thing in my backyard. I prodded it and determined it was some sort of fungi. I put it on iNaturalist and it's a **Smooth Cage Fungus** *Ileodictyon gracile*. I vaguely remembered Eric showing something like this for Show 'n Tell at a meeting a couple of years ago. At the time I thought "I'd love to see something neat like that in my backyard", and now I have.



Reduce Plastic Pollution in NSW (Sarah Danckert)

Lachlan Mitchell is 15 years old and has asked MFN members for support of his e-petition advocating for the banning of plastics:

single-use coffee cups and lids, heavy-weight plastic check out bags, plastic produce bags, plastic takeaway containers, plastic bread bag clips. These are all litter items I frequently pick up in National Parks, Nature Reserves, TSR's, Crown Land Reserves, not just in my urban street. These are the items MFN is working in conjunction with several schools in Wagga Wagga to educate the community regarding how they negatively impact the habitat at Flowerdale Lagoon, as well as flowing downstream along the Murrumbidgee River. Please show your support for nature, you me and future generations through Lachlan's initiative. Go to the link below or find it on the Parliament of NSW website, under e-petitions.

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/Pages/ePetition-details.aspx?q=aH-ghevxFyxSvDS7RzpBA>

From Virginia Tarr

I made the most of the fine cool days to explore McCann Rd Reserve and Sth Lake Wyangan. I was disappointed with not seeing a Mistletoe Bird amongst all the flowering Harlequin Mistletoe, though many Honeyeaters were found there. The acacias are also in flower.

My bird list from McCann Rd Reserve on 24 June 2024

White-winged Choughs [12], Mallee Ringneck Parrots [10+], Yellow-throated Miners [80+] (too many), Welcome Swallows [4], Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters [20+], Crested Pigeons [5], White-plumed Honeyeaters [6], Singing Honeyeaters [2], Brown Quails [5], Red-capped Robin [1f + 1juv], Purple-backed Fairywrens [2], Grey Fantail [1], Willy-wagtails [2], Whistling Kite [1]

One of the ground cover plants on sandy soil at Sth Lake Wyangan. Very pretty!

It is of the Chenopodiaceae family, Sea-blite, *Suaeda baccitera*, found in saline areas of the Riverina – Eric Whiting.



Janet Hume



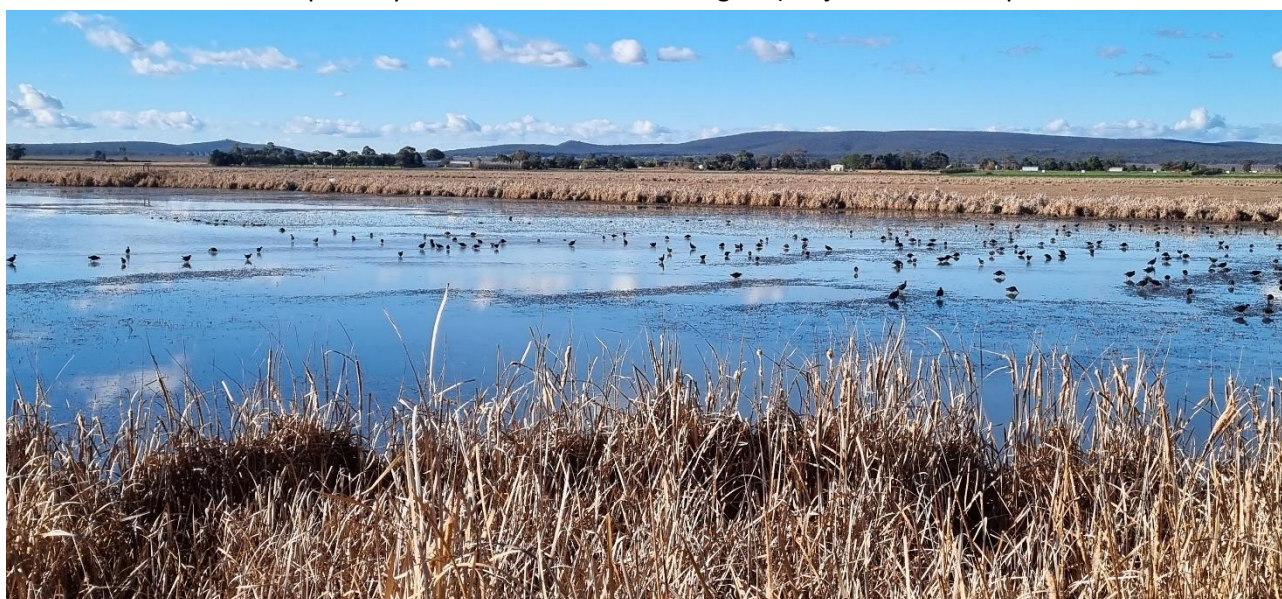
I had an exciting find at Pomingalarna Reserve, Wagga Wagga of **Striped Honeyeaters**. Wagga is at the edge of their range.

The Striped Honeyeater is found in forests and woodlands, often along rivers, as well as mangroves and in urban gardens.

It feeds mainly on insects and spiders, but will also eat nectar and other plant sugars, along with seeds, berries and fruit. It is mainly arboreal, feeding in pairs or small flocks in dense foliage, at the lower levels of the canopy. (from Birdlife)

Fivebough Wetlands now has water and Nella reported 300 Purple Swamp Hens there recently.

The wetland will remain partially closed until the end of August (subject to the completion of the



maintenance work). The Picnic area, Wiradjuri Walk and track to the first viewing platform are accessible. Rowena.

MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

Significant sightings

Australasian Darter [30]	Murramdidya, Wagga Wagga	16/06/24	Sarah Danckert
Zebra Finch [6]	Boundary Rd Nth, Murrami	16/06/24	MFN outing
Jacky Winter [2]	Naismith Hill, Murrami	16/06/24	MFN outing
Red-capped Robin [1]	Naismith Hill, Murrami	16/06/24	MFN outing
Scarlet Robin [4]	Tarcutta Hills Reserve	21/06/24	Sarah Danckert
Flame Robin [6]	Tarcutta Hills Reserve	21/06/24	Sarah Danckert
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater [2]	Tarcutta Hills Reserve	21/06/24	Sarah Danckert
Brown Treecreeper [1]	Tarcutta Hills Reserve	21/06/24	Sarah Danckert
Red-necked Wallaby [12]	Tarcutta Hills Reserve	21/06/24	Sarah Danckert
Yellow-footed Antechinus [1]	Tarcutta Hills Reserve	21/06/24	Sarah Danckert
Brown Falcon [1]	Weisner's Swamp, Walbundrie	23/06/23	Sarah Danckert
Red-capped Robin [2]	McCann Rd Reserve, Griffith	24/06/24	Virginia Tarr
Flame Robin [8]	Redbank Rd, Wagga Wagga	28/06/24	Janet Hume
Grey-crowned Babblers [6]	Sth Lake Wyangan, Griffith	29/06/24	Virginia Tarr
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike [1]	San Isadore Crown Reserve	30/06/24	Sarah Danckert
White-winged Fairy Wren [8]	Dickie Rd, Lake Wyangan	06/24	Neil Palframan
Brown Quail [3]	Neil's place, Nericon nr Griffith	06/24	Neil Palframan
Pelican [~4000]	Lake Cowal	20/06/24	Nella Smith
Inland Thornbill [4]	Livingstone National Park	29/06/24	Sarah Danckert
Yellow-throated Miner [20]	Sth Lake Wyangan, Griffith	29/06/24	Virginia Tarr
Pink Cockatoo	"Yarambimbi", Colinroobie Rd via Leeton	29/06/24	Andrew Thompson
Glossy Black Cockatoo [heard]	"Yarambimbi", Colinroobie Rd via Leeton	29/06/24	Andrew Thompson
Purple Swamp Hen [300]	Fivebough Wetlands	01/07/24	Nella Smith
Black Kite [~2000]	Wormtech facility, Carathool	01/07/24	Nella Smith
Magpie Goose [~150]	Fivebough Wetlands	04/07/24	M Martin, R Whiting
Musk Lorriquet [20]	Morundah	05/07/24	Nella Smith/Bridget

Other sightings of note These do not meet the criteria of significant sightings that the Committee are discussing – see Meeting minutes for details.

Striped Honeyeater [2]	Pomingalarna Reserve, Wagga Wagga	08/06/24	Janet Hume
Straited Pardalote [30]	Weisner's Swamp, Walbundrie	23/06/23	Sarah Danckert
Brown Quail [5]	McCann Rd Reserve, Griffith	24/06/24	Virginia Tarr
Red-capped Robin [2]	Redbank Rd, Wagga Wagga	28/06/24	Janet Hume
White-bellied Sea-eagle [1]	Sth Lake Wyangan, Griffith	29/06/24	Virginia Tarr

Compiled by Janet Hume, reviewed by Nella Smith.

The sounds of echidnas flirting?

Echidnas are not known for their vocalisation, but it has long been known that they do make sounds during breeding time. In what is believed to be a scientific first, researchers from Curtin University have obtained recordings of short-beaked echidnas producing a range of sounds including cooing, grunting, and wheezing. The short video plays some of these recorded sounds, and they are very intriguing.

See here:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-02/echidnasounds-recorded-for-first-time-by-curtinuniversity/102917730>

**** COMING EVENTS ****

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions.

Please register with the nominated person so they can be contacted if there is a change in arrangements.

Registering also means that the leader is better able to plan activities.

- 11 July Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7pm.
Guest Speaker: Jessie McPherson
Topic: Jessie will be talking about her role as the (new) Murrumbidgee Landcare Co-ordinator. Come along and meet her.
Join in person if you can. Zoom will be available.
Bring along your 'show & tell'
Contact: Dione Russell 0428 536 290
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 14 July Sunday** **Field trip – a walk in the Brobenah hills**
"Yarrabimbi" Collinroobie Road (18km from Leeton on right side of road).
Meet: at 9am
Place: at the gate – marked with the new MFN banner
Bring: binoculars, morning tea and lunch
To register or for more details: Eric Whiting 02 6953 2612 or ericwhiting4@bigpond.com
- 28 July Sunday** **National Tree Day**
Tree plantings will take place at Narrandera Wetlands and Lake Wyangan foreshore, Griffith
- Narrandera** <https://treeday.planetark.org/site/10030028> - Narrandera
Contact: Glenn Currie 0488 563 321
- Griffith** **Lake Wyangan Recreational/Picnic Area, Lakes Road, Griffith. 9am to 1pm,**
We will be planting the area around the Lake and on the adjacent grassy slope. Please bring a hat, trowel, your water bottle, and bucket or watering can, and gloves. Owen Toyota will be cooking us a BBQ as a reward for our hard work.
Organiser is Ema Munro 0425335146
<https://treeday.planetark.org/site/10029890> - Griffith
- 31 July Wednesday** **Copy for the August newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com Phone: 0429 726 120.
- 1 August Thursday** **Committee Meeting @ 7pm via Zoom**
All members are welcome to participate.
Contact: Dione Russell 0428 536 290 or the Club email.
- 4 August Sunday** **Quandong Park: 10ha Pine and Box Woodland**
We will visit 2-3 sites, starting at Jeff Hoffmann's Quandong Park
Map reference for Quandong Park -35.249072,146.836662
Meeting: 9:30am, 1km on the Lockhart – The Rock road west side of Milbrulong, park inside Pine Park for this event
Bring: Morning tea, lunch, chair, field guides, binos, wet weather gear
Contact: Sarah Danckert 0427 276 306 spdanckert@gmail.com

****** COMING EVENTS continued ******

8 August Thursday Field Trip to Barren Box Storage and Wetlands

Expressions of Interest are needed

We are proposing a field trip to Barren Box in August. It has to be held during the week because we have to be escorted by Murrumbidgee Irrigation Staff and the reason for that is that there is a highly invasive plant found at Barren Box and we don't want to spread it.

If you intend on coming let me know and I will send you a "Barren Box Storage Access Permit Application". When you have sent that you will be sent an online induction. We will have to pool cars and all people driving will have to submit their registration plate number.

We would meet at the Murrumbidgee Irrigation office in Research Road Hanwood at 10 am.

Nella Smith 0428 890 537 nella.smith0@gmail.com

8 August Thursday Monthly Meeting in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7pm.

Guest Speaker: Jessica Todd, Research Officer at DPI, Yanco. (to be confirmed)

Topic: Monitoring of Feral Animals

Join in person if you can. Zoom will be available.

Bring along your 'show & tell'

Contact: Dione Russell 0428 536 290

Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.

September is biodiversity month -

Is there something you'd like to see the club doing to participate in during this month? A way to promote ourselves? A community event? A display at library. Please bring along any ideas to the monthly meeting or discuss with a committee member.

Time to celebrate our 30th Anniversary

The club's first meeting and outing were held in mid-October 1994.

The committee is looking for ideas - how would you like to celebrate this occasion?

Other events

Sophie Chauncy: Trails

An exhibition at the Griffith Art Gallery – on now and goes until 4th August, really worth a look, I popped in there today, it's free, and I signed up for her workshop this Saturday. Beautiful naturescapes and birds. Check it out! Ema Munro

https://www.griffith.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/gallery/page.asp?p=DOC-DKT-30-24-05

8 August, Thursday 6-8pm – 'Deep Listening to Nature'

Andrew Skeoch will be in Wagga Wagga at The Curious Rabbit, 44 Johnston St, Wagga Wagga

Tickets: <https://events.humanitix.com/deep-listening-to-nature-by-andrew-skeoch>

Western Riverina Seed Workshop Series near Tabbita on 25 September and 13 November

to explore the enchanting world of native species seed and regeneration.

For more information please email bidgeewest@mli.org.au or call 0408 629 553.