

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



August 2026 - Issue #349

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



From our field trip to the Milbrulong area

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CONTRIBUTIONS

**For the September issue by
Wednesday 2 September**

To Rowena Whiting

Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com.

Phone: 6953 2612

***"In the end, we will conserve only what
we love, we will love only what we
understand, and we will understand only
what we are taught."***

***Baba Dioum, Senegalese ecologist and
forestry engineer (IUCN 1968)***

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

Welcome to August

Once again we have a full issue with a variety of contributions. We have Margaret Strong and Jeff Hoffman to thank for their reports of our field trip to Milbrulong. Both give an in-depth description of what we saw at the 3 locations. Jeff's depiction of the geology is particularly welcome as we don't often look at geology. Margaret has also achieved a very informative report of James Klarevis-Irby's presentation about his research project on the large-scale seasonal movements of Honeyeaters from Canberra region which we were all able to link into via Zoom. His monitoring is ongoing and is relevant to our local areas. There is so much to learn about bird behaviour.

We have an update on the signage at Campbell's Wetlands and a number of observations from members including flowering plants on Scenic Hill. My grateful thanks to all who have contributed. This month's quote comes courtesy of Sarah Danckert.

Coming up this month our presentation topic is about the implications of dust storms; don't forget to join in or better still come to the meeting at the Leeton library. There are outings to a couple of reserves at Henty and an afternoon bird walk. At Fivebough Wetlands we are holding a community shrub planting day to rehabilitate the area. The dates and details are on the coming events pages 13/14, put them in your diary.

Enjoy reading this issue and your month, **Rowena**.

Cover photos from our field trip to Milbrulong:

(clockwise from top left) Jeff Hoffman describing the rock formations at the cutting on Healy Lane; Superb Parrot twittering; Early Nancy; Amulla; Sundew; Puffball. By Rowena Whiting except the parrot by Janet Hume.

Please note: I got confused with my left and right with the captions for the liverworts in last month's issue (page 6) they should read: **Left: *Riccia lamellosa*, has white side scales which go above the top surface; Right: *Riccia nigrella*, with black margins** though from the colour of the margins it was obvious. I have created a corrected version of the pdf. Let me know if you'd like a copy. Rowena.

Seasonal Honeyeater Migrations – presentation report

Large Honeyeater Seasonal Migrations / Movements from the Southern Tablelands: preliminary findings of a three-year project, presented by James Klarevis-Irby (ANU) Yellow Room 9 July 2026

Long distant seasonal migrations of honeyeaters are not well understood in Australia in both the scale and extremities meaning numbers of birds, where they fly from and where they fly to.

Generally, birds move location to find the range of food they need or to escape from predators. **Most migrating species here move within our continent**, which is moderate in total distance but difficult to monitor in Australia's vast areas with low human population density to do monitoring. In the northern hemisphere, in contrast, there are geographical bottlenecks where thousands of birds pass through which can be monitored by comparatively few people.



Above: Immature Red Wattlebird

Right: Noisy Friarbird

Other monitoring problems include migratory connectivity where species become mixed due to geographical factors or the food needs of different species being satisfied in shared habitats.

James's project team, based at ANU Research School of Biology, aims to understand more detail about bird migrations and other movements in south eastern Australia. They have chosen large honeyeaters, eg **Red Wattlebirds** and **Noisy Friarbirds**, because these birds are strong enough to carry the tracking devices that can be used over long distances. Both these species are 'non-Threatened', therefore their research results will give real population numbers in common

patterns of migrating birds and not depleted numbers.

The Southern Tablelands, including Canberra city, was chosen as the study site because large numbers of honeyeaters migrate from and to there, which has been observed for many years.

Tracking devices chosen for the project use Bluetooth low energy which are accurate within 150m. They transmit only and don't store data. Recently, before July 2026, 88 birds were tagged with 210 detections recorded. From then, tagged Noisy Friarbirds were detected moving within 100km of ACT and Wattlebirds between 1-10km from the ACT.

What has been learned so far?

- Both species fly at between 5km to 10km per hour. Red wattlebirds move suburb to suburb, whereas Noisy Friarbirds fly further away.
- Exploratory movements have been detected, meaning flying in varying directions and returning.
- Both species make lots of stops for foraging in any migratory movements and different individuals of the same species often use the same foraging stops at different time intervals. For bird observers, this means that during Autumn and Spring the birds seen daily in gardens and parks may not always be the same individuals.
- Non-conventional movements from both species, eg flying south before north in April, have shown more flexible migratory behaviour than traditionally thought.



Murrumbidgee River Observations near Yanco, NSW, December 2025

- Early Noisy Friarbird breeding evidence seen at McCaughey's Lagoon, following location information from MFNs. A small flock was seen feeding on *Exocarpos* sp. fruit a little further west.

Future Directions and Collaborations

- This project team is collaborating with the Farine Evolutionary Ecology Group, also at ANU Research School of Biology. Whether storm / pressure fronts and sporadic flowering of *Eucalyptus* species influence flexible bird movements is under investigation.
- Greening Australia and Regent Honeyeater research groups are also collaborating with James's team to help them understand how birds are migrating between revegetated landscapes, with implications for movement of pollen between remnant vegetation communities as an ecologically crucial task performed by migrating / moving birds.
- Examples of philopatry, being consistent returns to the same breeding site for individuals, for example at McCaughey's Lagoon, will be of great interest to the project team.

We thank James for his very informative presentation and look forward to knowing more about future findings of this important research project.

Written by **Margaret Strong**, in collaboration with **Sarah Danckert**. Photos by **Janet Hume**

Milbrulong Field Trip

25 July 2026

Milbrulong district was named after Eastern Rosellas, '**Mulbirrang**' in Wiradjuri language, and is true to that label with many of the name-sake species plus Red-rump Parrots and Apostlebirds sighted by members on the approach and departure routes. As there aren't many wheat grains on the roads at this time of the year, it's hard to understand why such high numbers of birds were on the sealed surfaces other than to socialise among their own and other species.



Dunlevy's Lane, Eastern Rosella in canola – Janet Hume

On the western side of the village, **Dunlevy's Lane** was our first of three sites to visit. The day was overcast, but pleasant and conducive to walking up the hill in a relaxed and social manner, while keeping an eye out for birds. The lane has been closed to traffic for some years and is revegetating naturally with *Senna artemisioides*, Hop-bush *Dodonaea viscosa* and **Hakea Wattle** gradually regenerating an understorey with **Desert Goosefoot**, *Chenopodium desertorum*, leading in numbers of shrubs. **White Cypress**, *Callitris glaucophylla*, are the majority of the tree species along the lane with a few big, old **Grey Box**, *Eucalyptus microcarpa*. Also along the roadside near the lane entrance are **Boree**, *Acacia pendula*, and many young **Senna** shrubs which will add to the lane habitat for small birds.

After morning tea we drove to our second site, Healy Lane, to explore the geology of a rock cutting. A description of that geology follows this article.

After lunch with very cool air to cheer us along, a small group, of those who hadn't left for home, walked the track around **Quandong Park**, being a Biodiversity Conservation Trust reserve between Dunlevy's Lane and the village. We were keen to see the regeneration of the ground-cover plants since our last visit in 2024.

Amulla, *Eremophila debilis*, is now in abundance at several locations and, although it's a shrub that is unable to stand up off the ground, it is one of the most attractive plants in the region. It's not rare but seems elusive, as it's not often seen.

Mat-rushes, *Lomandra* sp, were the most widespread native ground-cover in the reserve, with three species noticed. **Many-flowered Mat-rush**, *Lomandra multiflora*, were the most distinctive with their notches of large flowers dotted among the stems. Spring flowering will determine whether **Small Mat-rush**,

Lomandra bracteata, and **Wattle Mat-rush**, *L. foliosa* var *coriaceae*, are the other two species we saw wherever we walked. It was great to see them spreading so much.

Many other ground layer plants were seen as we walked around and many more would be noticeable when in flower in the next month or so. A cheerful sight on such a cold day was a

Buttercup, *Ranunculus laplaceus*, in flower.

Liverworts and **mosses** were numerous in several places with *Asterella drummondii* easily identified from photos after the event. Common English names of 'Warty Liverwort' and 'Licorice Strap' describe some of their features but miss the beauty implied by 'Little star' in their genus name.



Left: Amulla; Right: Many-flowered Mat-rush

Near the bryophytes were **Sundew** sp, either Scarlet Sundew *Drosera glanduligera* or Pale Sundew, *Drosera peltata*. Our hesitancy in identifying was because the plants were showing only their basal leaves at this early stage, which is typical of both species. In a few weeks Scarlet Sundew would grow a simple, leafless flower stem with bright orange/red flowers, whereas Pale Sundew would grow a longer stem with multiple leaves and flowers. The first named species has fibrous roots and grows from seeds annually, not from a tuber perennially as the second named species do.



Left: Buttercup *Ranunculus laplaceus*
Right: (Sundews) *Drosera glanduligera*, *D. peltata* with *Asterella drummondii* + archegonium, sporophyte emerging

The leaves of Sundews are their most interesting feature. **Rapid snap-tentacles** fringe the margins of the leaves that are like hairy cups. When a small insect touches a tentacle, it moves like a catapult and flings the insect into the bowl of the leaf which is filled with sticky liquid. The insect cannot escape and is digested by the leaf. As humans aren't prey for Sundews, they appear to us as glossy, beautiful plants rather than predatory insect traps.

Trees are a prominent feature of Quandong Park. **White Cypress**, *Callitris glaucophylla*, dominate in both mature and sapling stages of growth. **Grey Box**, *Eucalyptus microcarpa*, are the next most numerous and many of them are large and old. A giant **Apple Box**, *Eucalyptus bridgesiana*, was admired at length by us all as we don't usually see such a robust trunk in the central part of a tree. **Kurrajongs**, *Brachychiton*

populneus, are fewer in number but saplings are evident. Bird calls were very few, unlike on other visits, and no species were noted by our plant-focused group.



Quandong Park – pine and box woodland -
Rowena Whiting



Margaret, Jeff and Eric in discussion
under the Apple Box- Rowena Whiting

It was a pleasure to revisit Quandong Park. Thanks to our hosts and owners of the reserve, MFN members Jeff and Lorraine Hoffman, for their welcoming and thoughtful considerations throughout the day that added to our comfort and our enjoyment of the natural features of their district. A warming fire at lunchtime was unexpected and greatly appreciated.

Written by **Margaret Strong**.

“A New Wiradjuri Dictionary” compiled by Stan Grant (Snr) and Dr John Rudder (available in Riverina Public Libraries) lists “Mulbirrang’ for Eastern Rosella, *Platycercus excimius*.”

A Little Geology - Milbrulong Field Trip

25 July 2026

There is a very large area of **sedimentary rock** in southern NSW, laid down in sea sediments some 450-550 million years ago. That dates it as Ordovician, Cambrian or, because it is devoid of fossils, perhaps pre-Cambrian. Either way these sediments are ancient in our way of thinking. However, about 90% of the current age of the earth had passed when these sediments were laid down.

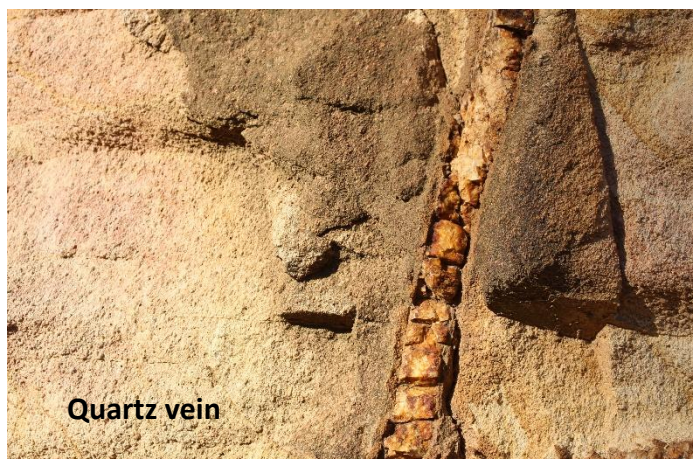


At an old quarry near Milbrulong, a little of this sedimentary rock is exposed and was part of our outing in July. The main body of rock is a soft **talc**, almost white in color. The strata are vertical but would have been laid down horizontally.

We were able to observe **quartz veins** that formed as **silica** moved out of the talc into cracks, where it concentrated in superheated, supersaturated solution. These later cooled and the silica crystalized into **quartz rock**. High temperatures and pressures could not occur near the surface. How deep, how hot, none of us would know. How long for the silica to migrate into solution, again how

could we even guess?

The same process happened with **iron**. Adjacent to the quartz veins, iron accumulated in the talc.



Quartz vein

That accumulation is thin at this site but on the surface in the surrounding area are **hard, heavy, iron rich stones, flat with a quartz rib**. The iron rich talc and the quartz are very hard and therefore resistant to erosion. That these stones are found loose on the surface is an indication of erosion of the softer talc.

Overlaying the talc bedrock is a blanket of windblown material classified as **parna**. Wind deposited material is known as **aeolian**. Worldwide most aeolian deposits are **loess**, that is, silt particles deposited by wind. The red soil that is deposited in the Milbrulong area and extensively in southern NSW is unusual. It is clay particles aggregated to silt size particles, that are small enough to be carried on the wind but large enough to fall out of the airstream.

Parna was recognized by CSIRO pedologist Bruce Butler in the 1950's and is peculiar to the Murrumbidgee and Murray areas in southern NSW. It came in on the wind from the west around 26-19 million years ago, during the Last Glacial Maximum when the climate was very arid and cold. That blanket of fertile soil supports vegetation communities and agriculture that would not be supported by the talc.

Jeff Hoffmann



Healy Lane rock cutting - Rowena Whiting



Healy Lane Golden Wattle - Rowena Whiting

Small flocks of **Brown-headed Honeyeaters** have been seen foraging in the canopy on each of our MFN outings over the last few weeks where White Box are in flower. At Silvalite Reserve and Rawlings Park, Wagga Wagga and near the township of the Rock. **Janet Hume**



H5N1 Bird flu

The most commonly affected birds include waterfowl, shorebirds, seabirds and predators & scavengers. Commonly affected mammals are predators and scavengers.

Wild animals infected with can display a range of clinical signs H5 bird flu, including:

- **gastrointestinal:** diarrhoea, vomiting, reduced intake of food or water
- **respiratory:** panting, coughing or sneezing, nasal discharge, conjunctivitis, cloudy eyes or changes in iris colour
- **neurological:** incoordination, including inability to stand, walk, fly or swim; unresponsiveness; tremors or seizures.

H5 bird flu can result in rapid and sudden death, and in some instances multiple animals may die within a short period.

In our area, priority sites include: Lake Brewster, Fivebough & Tuckerbil Wetlands, Lower Lachlan Floodplain Wetlands and the Lowbidgee Floodplain Murrumbidgee River Wetlands. This means, at other wetlands you visit, **you** may be the person to identify affected birds or wildlife.

What to do:

Maintain good hygiene at your birdbath - replace water daily, clean the bird bath regularly - scrub and rise with clean water. If your bath is particularly dirty you can use a very dilute (20:1) water to bleach ratio - be sure to rinse very well after this.

https://birdlife.org.au/providing-water-for-birds/?srsId=AfmBOopac5Yx7-NQvcN4xq_7ocTfK2uyF4Rr8YBUkzZtKZU5hHgfQkTK

If you find a sick or dead bird that you suspect could have Avian Influenza (H5N1), remember these three steps:

- **AVOID** contact with sick or dead wildlife and their environment. Do not touch, move or approach the bird, and do not allow pets to touch or eat sick or dead wildlife.
- **RECORD** what you see, the location the bird was found, and take photos or video (if possible) without approaching the bird.
- **REPORT** any unusual illness or death in wild birds and other wildlife immediately via the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on **1800 675 888**.

For information in NSW refer: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/dpi/biosecurity/animal-biosecurity/avian-influenza>

https://birdlife.org.au/providing-water-for-birds/?srsId=AfmBOopac5Yx7-NQvcN4xq_7ocTfK2uyF4Rr8YBUkzZtKZU5hHgfQkTK

Field Trip to Doodle Comer and Government Dam, Henty – 29 August see coming events for meeting place, time etc.

Itinerary and information about the Reserves:

Morning Tea on arrival (can be purchased locally at Henty Bakery). Then a walk through the **Government Dam Nature Reserve**. The Reserve is a delight for bird lovers, where up to 140 different bird species either make their home or migrate for the season. Lunch will be had at this Reserve before moving onto **Doodle Comer Swamp Nature Reserve**. This Reserve protects 1099ha. It is an ephemeral wetland, representing the largest of many swamps and depressions scattered across Billabong Creek Valley. It is a declared Aboriginal Place of Significance. The reserve contains several threatened ecological communities such as Inland Grey Box Woodland and Sandhill Pine Woodland. A population of the endangered semi-aquatic fern, austral pillwort, was recently discovered in the reserve. When flooded Doodle Comer, provides breeding and foraging habitat for waterbirds, amphibians, reptiles, fish and invertebrates. Waterbirds such as ducks, ibis, cormorants, spoonbills and terns have been observed in their thousands. A total of 37 species of native animals have been formally recorded in the reserve. When dry, the lakebed provides habitat for the bush stone-curlew. There is a bird hide at Doodle Comer.

Catherine Conroy

Campbell's Wetland

An updated report from Virginia Tarr

I visited the Wetlands on the 16 July after the signage had been erected and cabinets installed; the Lignum sign needs repositioning and there is a blank signpost further down the track. Both will be addressed in the near future. The cabinets have been turned so we are able to open the Perspex doors sideways. I've since put 2 posters in the cabinets for a start. Lisa Parker is writing the history with an interesting watermarking backdrop photo that will be displayed.

After Sally Bamblett, Neil Palframan and I cleaned the hide of cobwebs, bird droppings, stray weeds and years of dirt, it looks quite respectable, though the bird poop stains and the one and only occupying mud nest still remains.

Neil Palframan has done a great job painting the wooden boards surrounding the cabinets same colour as the bird droppings. 😊 He has also painted the ledges. I've since added two foot stools.

Griffith City Council, Parks & Gardens, have provided the names of the seedlings they planted along the walking tracks recently (there were some photos in the June newsletter):

Eucalyptus camaldulensis (River Red Gum)

Eucalyptus melliodora (Yellow Box)

Eucalyptus polybractea (Blue Mallee)

Casuarina cunninghamiana (River She-oak)

Melaleuca stypheliodes (Prickly-leaved Paperbark)



Photos: Clockwise from top: Campbell's Native Grasslands sign; interior of the hide; Wattle and Grey Mistletoe in flower; display cabinet.

Neil Palframan adds the swamp is very quiet of birds at present, I presume they have all gone further out to the real flood water, or north to whatever is flowering. In fact I have been struggling to find birds anywhere.

Narrandera Landcare's 2026 National Tree Day Plantings

Propagating our seedlings for this year's National Tree Day (NTD) started last September. Our volunteers grew approximately 2200 seedlings, mostly from seed but some by division and cuttings. There were trees, shrubs and ground layer plants.

We were able to provide 7 schools this year from Lake Cargelligo to Whitton-Murrumbidgee with seedlings to plant themselves for their NTD. Like always, our volunteers love being able to provide this resource for them.

We were also able to give several local landholders plants native to their area. We were assisted in this by being awarded funding from Landcare Australia through their Michael King Nursery Grant program. This grant allowed us to purchase sturdy corflute tree guards and hardwood stakes to giveaway with the seedlings.

There were still lots of seedlings for our group to plant ourselves, so we planned another National Tree Day community planting for the 26th July at Narrandera Wetlands. Usually, 3 or 4 school groups will come down in the week leading up to NTD with 70-80 kids. This year, 5 school groups were enthusiastic to help out. They come down in separate groups but we had to plan for around 150 students in total. They were all welcome of course, but the logistics took a bit of figuring.



We had enough seedlings and dug up our old stock of milk carton tree guards and thankfully had enough bamboo stakes (900) for three plants per student. They will plant a lot more than this if you let them, but the name of the game was to slow them down to stretch our resources and the site prep work needed. This involved scalping the soil to remove as much Lippia as we could, then turning the various areas over. We did strips 1m

wide by 15-30m long till we thought we had enough.

The kids worked in pairs and were asked to plant things densely. I parked the water cart and dumped the mulch a bit further away than necessary 😊 (they got quite a bit of exercise, going back and forth!). It all went pretty good and around 470 ground layer seedlings were planted and each group learnt about the importance of biodiversity and was kept busy for a productive hour or so.

The weather was dreary on the Sunday but we still had 14 adults come along with 4 kids. That day we planted about 280 trees and shrubs with a further 75 ground layer species.

Our plantings from last year didn't get any follow up watering and survived remarkably well over the dry summer. Hopefully this year's will fare well too.

Narrandera Landcare was supported on the day by Peter and Josie Cirillo (Narrandera Pizzeria) who donated pizzas for our volunteers, and Leeton Toyota who sponsored the day. Both businesses have been assisting our National Tree Day plantings for seven years now, and as always, their help is greatly appreciated!

Glenn Currie



Member Observations

Sally Bamblett

Flowering on Scenic Hill, Griffith at the moment.

Photos from left:

Iron Grass *Lomandra patens*, stands of Creamy Candles, Drifts of Hairy Pod-cress and Common Everlasting.



David Dunn

Purple Burr Daisy (*Calotis cuneifolia*)
seen on Lake Albert bird walk
Sunday 12th July.



Sarah Danckert

Photographed this lichen at Murraguldrrie Flora Reserve. The lichen with the red top (the fruiting body) is a fruticose, probably *Cladonia macillenta*. However chemical tests are required to confirm. (Eric Whiting)



Paul Maytom

Image of the resident Brolgas mating at
Fivebough Wetlands on 16 July



M E M B E R S ' S I G H T I N G S

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

Significant sightings

Flame Robin [2]	"Mundarlo", Mundarlo	02/07/16	BOF survey*
White-browed Babbler [4]	"Mundarlo", Mundarlo	02/07/16	BOF survey*
Brown-headed Honeyeater [8]	Rawlings Park, Wagga Wagga	12/07/26	MFN Birdwalk
Restless Flycatcher [1]	"Yaven", Mt Adrah	16/07/26	BOF survey*
White-browed Babbler [6]	"Yaven", Mt Adrah	16/07/26	BOF survey*
Fuscous Honeyeater [6]	"Yaven", Mt Adrah	16/07/26	BOF survey*
Flame Robin [2]	Ellerslie NP, Mt Adrah	16/07/26	S Danckert, J Hume
Diamond Firetail [1]	Ellerslie NP, Mt Adrah	16/07/26	S Danckert, J Hume
Fuscous Honeyeater [7]	Ellerslie NP, Mt Adrah	16/07/26	S Danckert, J Hume
Brown Treecreeper [1]	Ellerslie NP, Mt Adrah	16/07/26	S Danckert, J Hume
Speckled Warbler [3]	"Highfield", Mt Adrah	16/07/26	BOF survey*
Yellow-Tufted Honeyeater [4]	"Highfield", Mt Adrah	16/07/26	BOF survey*
Flame Robin [14]	"Highfield", Mt Adrah	16/07/26	BOF survey*
Scarlet Robin [2]	"Highfield", Mt Adrah	16/07/26	BOF survey*
Jacky Winter [3]	"Highfield", Mt Adrah	16/07/26	BOF survey*
Fuscous Honeyeater [10]	"Highfield", Mt Adrah	16/07/26	BOF survey*
Brolga [1M 1F]	Fivebough Wetlands	16/07/26	Paul Maytom

These 2 resident birds were seen mating

Superb Parrot [12]	Lynches Lane cutting, Milbrulong	25/07/26	MFN outing
Grey-crowned Babbler [8]	Cape St, Milbrulong	25/07/26	MFN outing
Brown-headed Honeyeater [15]	Silvalite Reserve, Wagga Wagga	26/07/26	MFN Birdwalk
Red-capped Robin [2]	Silvalite Reserve, Wagga Wagga	26/07/26	MFN Birdwalk
Brown Treecreeper [1]	Mates Gully TSR, Tarcutta	31/07/26	S Danckert, P Walker
Fuscous Honeyeater [7]	Mates Gully TSR, Tarcutta	31/07/26	S Danckert, P Walker
Brown-headed Honeyeater [8]	"rocomingla", The Rock	26/07/26	MFN outing /BOF

Sightings of interest

White-faced Heron [13]	"Gundillawah", Mundarlo	02/07/26	BOF survey*
White-bellied Cuckooshrike [1]	"Mundarlo", Mundarlo	02/07/26	BOF survey*
Spotted Bowerbird [2]	Hillston, NSW	14/07/26	Lisa Parker

*BOF-Birdlife Birds on Farms

Compiled by Janet Hume

Lisa Parker

While Spotted Bowerbirds are often associated with bowers constructed within lignum and other dense native vegetation, this individual appeared quite at home in the shelter of the hedge. The bower itself was distinctive, with the display court containing a collection of green objects, including numerous olives, while the approaches were decorated with an assortment of white materials ranging from bleached bone fragments to plastic tabs and pebbles. Two birds were later observed feeding together on the adjacent lawn, suggesting the bower may have succeeded in attracting a mate.



**** 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.

13 August Thursday **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore Street Leeton
Time: 6:45pm for 7:00pm.

Topic/guest speaker: Dust Storms: implications for Australian landscapes, agriculture, mining and cities.

Presented by Dr. Richard Greene ANU, who has been researching and lecturing in this aspect of soil and land management for several years.

Questions from the audience will follow Richard's talk on this locally popular topic.

Join us at 6.45pm for 7.00pm by clicking the Zoom link in the Newsletter email.

Do attend in person, if possible, to enjoy Show and Tell, a light supper and chat following the Zoom session.

Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com if you have any queries

23 August Sunday **Wagga Sunday afternoon Birdwalks**

Rocky Hill - meet at the path between 73 - 75 Simkin Cres, Koorinal.

Time 2:30pm for 1-2hrs depending on your time, the weather and the birds.

Contact: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

Phone: Sarah 0427 276 306 or Janet 0408 238 890

29 August Saturday **Field Trip to Doodle Comer and Government Dam, Henty**

Morning - a walk through the Government Dam Nature Reserve.

Afternoon - Doodle Comer Swamp Nature Reserve, an ephemeral wetland.

For more information and itinerary see page 8.

Meet: 10:00am at Henty Government Dam Nature Reserve, Pleasant Hills Road, Henty

Morning Tea on arrival (can be purchased locally at Henty Bakery).

Wear warm clothing, long pants or gaiters, sun hat, sun screen and insect repellent.

Bring your own morning tea and lunch. Picnic area available at Government Dam.

Both locations are close to Henty township, where toilets are available.

Contact person: Catherine Conroy Mob: 0437 663 815 Please register with her.

30 August Sunday **Fivebough Wetlands – Community Planting of native shrubs** in cooperation with Murrumbidgee Landcare. There are 400 saltbushes to plant opposite the Information Centre to rehabilitate the area and suppress the weeds.

Time: 9am to 12noon

Bring: trowels, gloves etc if you can (some will be supplied).

Afterwards enjoy a sausage sandwich from Leeton Rotary (gold coin donation)

MFN will have an information table – help here if planting is not your thing.

Contact: Eric Whiting 02 6953 2612 or Rowena 0429 726 120

2 September **Copy for the September newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**

Wednesday **Email:** ericwhiting4@bigpond.com Phone: 0429 726 120.

3 September **Committee Meeting held at 7pm by Zoom**

Thursday All members are welcome to attend and submit agenda items

Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

6 September **Silvalite Reserve** - meet at the truck stop on Olympic Way, 300m from the Sturt Hwy.

Sunday **Time 2:30pm** for 1-2hrs depending on your time, the weather and the birds.

Contact: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

Phone: Sarah 0427 276 306 or Janet 0408 238 890

**** COMING EVENTS continued ****

10 September Thursday **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore Street Leeton. **Topic/guest speaker: Peacock Spiders (Maratus genus), presented by Stuart Harris, ACT citizen scientist, via Zoom.** Stuart will focus on two local species, being *Maratus vespertilio* (Whitton district) and *M. pavonis* (Wagga district). These Jumping Spiders are well-known for the complex courtship displays and iridescent colours of males. Questions from the audience will follow Stuart's talk.
Accessible to all members via Zoom. Do attend in person, if possible, to enjoy Show and Tell, a light supper and chat following the Zoom session.

13 September Sunday **Whitton Common**
Meet: 9.00am Binya St - southern end at the cattle grid entrance.
Whitton Common is a known hotspot for Peacock Spiders *Maratus vespertilio*. We will search for them as well as see sedentary birds and those migrating back to or through the area that use the Black Box woodland there.
Bring: snacks, lunch and magnifying glass to help see the tiny creatures. Wear boots, trousers, hat, etc. Toilet block in Benerembah St, village park.
Register by text to Margaret Strong 0434 060 973.

10 October Saturday **Field trip - Alfredtown TSR - The Quarry**
Meet members of Wagga 4WD Club and add to the biodiversity list. See what's in flower, what's nesting and discuss the club's options for replanting at the site, refer July Newsletter for details about the site.
Time: 9am
Location: River Rd, Alfredtown, meet at the gate, 600m from the Sturt Hwy.
Bring: morning tea & lunch. There is a toilet on site.

31 October / 1 November Saturday / Sunday **NSW and ACT Twitchathon**
This is a unique blend of friendly competition and community fundraising where teams race against the clock to spot as many bird species as possible. Whether you're a backyard birdwatcher, a first-time birder, or a seasoned twitcher, there's a race for you: choose from **30-hour, 8-hour, or 3-hour challenges**.
Over the 30 years it has been running it has funded dozens of critical bird conservation projects across NSW and the ACT. Be part of this proud tradition – form a team, join the fun, and make a real difference for our birds.
For information about this event see <https://www.twitchathon.com.au/>

Other events / items

Malleefowl Documentary Friday September 4th at 6:30pm

 **Tickets:** <https://civictheatre.com.au/whats-on/events/mallee-fowl-the-most-unlikely-of-birds>

A Birdwalk will be hosted by Janet Hume and Sarah Danckert beforehand at 2:30pm for 1-2hrs

Register by email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

Narrandera Koala Festival & Koala Count

Saturday 19 September at Brewery Flat

The program includes koala habitat tours, guided bushwalks, kayak adventures, nature and art workshops, reptile encounters, live music and dance performances. On the Lions Train Koala Tour you are guaranteed to see Koalas and learn all about the Narrandera Koala population successes.

Sunday 20 September 9:30am to be confirmed at the Narrandera Flora and Fauna Reserve

Please support this essential koala population by attending the annual Koala Count - one of Australia's longest-running citizen science events. It's an opportunity to meet local National Parks Rangers, Landcare and LLS staff in the field within the River Redgum Flora and Fauna reserve. It's a great day out.

<https://www.narrandera.com.au/whats-on/koala-festival-2026>