

# The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



**September 2026 - Issue #350**

**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



**SPRING  
IS  
HERE**



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## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

**For the October issue by  
Wednesday 1 October**

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***"Spring is nature's way of  
saying, 'Let's party! "  
-Robin Williams***

## 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.

### Membership enquiries:

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

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## Welcome to September

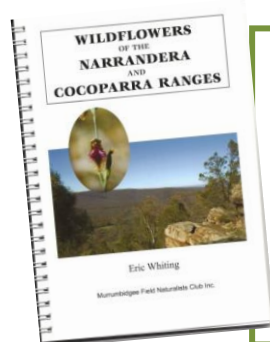
Spring has been with us for a while and what a great wildflower season we are having. This month's images portray this well and has been the main feature for many of us over the last few weeks.

Again we have a full issue featuring our outing to Henty Nature Reserve and cemetery, a few members visited the Pulletop Nature Reserve. Our restoration planting at Fivebough Wetlands was well attended by members and the community. The presentation on Dust Storms gave us a constructive insight into how the particles can affect the soils and the flavours of crops. Margaret has sourced some information about mosses and to continue the part lichens play Eric has written about the ecological history of lichens. Not to mention 2 pages of member observations.

Coming up there is plenty on the calendar for you to participate in - our outing is to Whitton Common, a Black Box woodland area which is known for Peacock Spiders. Then there is the Koala festival and count, Malleefowl monitoring; all a good reason to get out in nature before the hot weather sets in. Do come along (or tune in) to our monthly presentation on Thursday to learn about these fascinating jumping spiders. You can find the details of all these events on pages 13/14.

I'm sure you'll find plenty of interest. My thanks go to everyone who has contributed. We wouldn't have such an informative newsletter without them.

With Enjoy the read and your month. **Rowena.**



**MFN's Flora Guide** by Eric Whiting covers most of the native wildflowers commonly seen in the Narrandera and Cocoparra Ranges, and which also occur in the other ranges and hills from Narrandera to the Lachlan River. 225 species are described with 136 colour photographs. A simplified key aids the identification of the plants. Price is \$25 (inc. GST) or \$20 to MFN members. Copies available at club meetings or Eric Whiting phone (02) 6953 2612 or Email: [ericwhiting4@bigpond.com](mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com). Also available from Virginia Tarr in Griffith and Sarah Danckert in Wagga and at the Leeton Visitor Information Centre. have copies.

## Dust Storms: implications for Australian landscapes, agriculture, mining and cities.

In general conversations, dust storms only arise when a major event occurs such as the storms that blanketed Melbourne in 1983, or Canberra in 2002. Richard Greene, Associate Professor, Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University, opened his talk with dramatic images of these storms, then pointed out that such events occur elsewhere in the world (referencing Wyoming, USA) and even on Mars. He quoted that the Sydney 2009 storm had transported an estimated 2.5 million tonnes of dust, cost \$300 million in direct costs and was a serious health issue. The origin of this dust was principally the arid regions of South Australia and western New South Wales with the vast Lake Eyre Basin being a major source.

Dust transport is not just by freak dust storms. Australia has numerous terminal lake beds scattered across the inland of all States that are usually dry and prone to wind erosion. Larger and heavier sand particles are transported across the surface and pile up on the lee side as the characteristic lunettes. Finer clay particles however are lifted by thermal convection into the atmosphere and carried for vast distances. The haze of warm days and the rosy tints of dawn and dusk on cloudless days is all due to this dust. Dust that settles on hillier areas is washed down by subsequent rainfall into the rivers west of the Divide and mostly returned to the inland terminal lakes, thus completing a cycle.

During the last Ice Age and at several other periods of geologic history, Australia suffered extreme drought conditions. Thick layers of dust built up on western facing slopes, eventually forming distinctive sub-soils. Wind blown deposits are generally called loess. Bruce Butler on studying Riverina soils discovered that much of his soils were composed of finer particles with a mean size of 20 microns (a micron is 1 thousandth of a millimetre) than much of the northern hemisphere loess and termed it parna.

The existence of parna in the sub-soil has consequences for agriculture. The finer particles create smaller pores in the soil which make it harder for plant roots to extract moisture from the soil. This creates a stress on the plant which then reacts by producing more tannins and other substances we detect as flavours. In the wine industry flavour is all important. Richard's studies at two wineries in the Yass valley has shown that there is a difference – one is on parna soil and the other is not. The vintner with parna soil claims that this is why his wine is superior. Of course the other vintner denies this, it is the blending that is the reason for his superiority. More research is required.

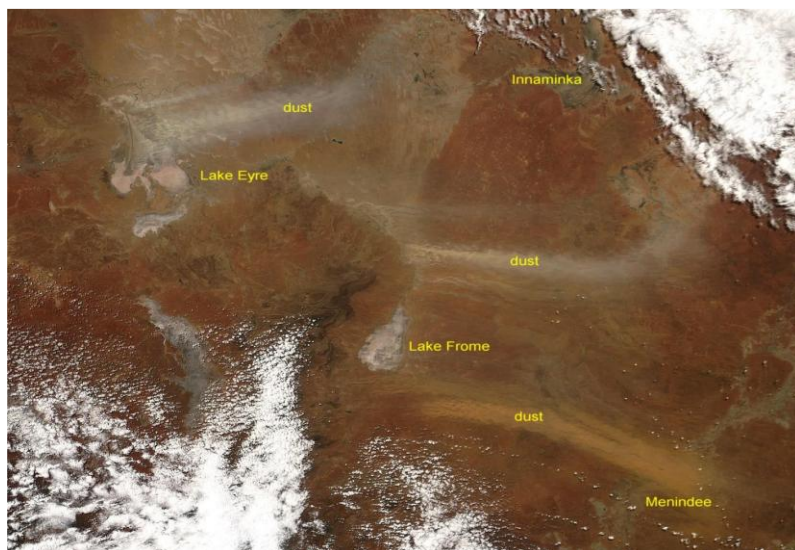
Richard's studies on dust also takes in the consequences of mining where large tailings dams are employed. As these dry out dust can be swept out into the neighbouring area. This dust is likely to contain heavy metals and other unwanted contaminants. So methods of constraint are required. Covering beds with hay, rocks or seeding with grasses are all under examination.

Richard's talk showed that dust storms are more than an occasional phenomenon. He left us much to ponder on – perhaps the wine studies may be appealing!

### Eric Whiting

Images have been taken from Richard Greene's presentation

Above: Dust generation from Lake Eyre  
Right: Dust storm Canberra 2002



## Field Trip to Henty on Saturday 29 August 2026

Henty put on a glorious early spring day for a group of 15 people to explore three sites in and around the outskirts of Henty township. Each site had its own nature highlight, Old Government Dam provided us with the woodland and wetland birds, Henty Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) (next to Henty Cemetery) was for the flora gems and Doodle Comer Swamp gave us a chorus of frogs.

The day got off to a great start when we were greeted at **Old Government Dam** with a pair of Superb Parrots flying overhead. The Old Government Dam is right next to the main Southern Railway Line which gives you a clue as to its past legacy being established as a watering point for the steam train era. Unfortunately, the Reserve is a bit neglected being overtaken by a carpet of oxalis, so much so that it is difficult to find the walking tracks. It is a great spot to sit by the dam and observe the birds. A total of 26 bird species were observed at this site, of note Grey-crowned Babbler [5], Superb Parrot [2], Brown-headed Honeyeater, both the Western Gerygone and the White-throated Gerygone. There were several nests, the Magpie Lark seen on its mud cup. There were also a lot of very fine spider webs so don't know if that is the *Maratus pavonis* spider, the topic of our September guest speaker.



<https://birddata.birdlife.org.au/survey?id=10572855&h=d360f7f5>



The group then moved onto the **Henty Cemetery TSR**, a good example of the critically endangered Box Gum Grassy Woodland. This woodland appears to have not been grazed for some time and had a relatively intact understory with low exotic weed cover. The cemetery itself provided some interest to



Above: Some of the group conferring 'what is it?

Right: Bulbine Lily

Below left: *Templetonia stenophylla*, Leafy Templetonia

Below right: a Pultenaea



Margaret with some interesting lichen and moss to be found near the headstones. The group walked through the northern edge of the cemetery and then into the TSR itself, there were many interesting flora species in flower ranging from Bulbine Lillies, native daisies – all colours, pea species and a multitude of lilies still to flower. Paul identified a total of 25 native flora species, 13 bird species (including a White-winged Chough on the nest), as well as a large mob of grey kangaroos. We then had lunch including some farm fresh oranges provided by Jeff and Henty Bakery Florentines provided by Sarah.

<https://birddata.birdlife.org.au/survey?id=10572856&h=0f4c5682>

**3 colours of *Calotis* at the Henty Cemetery: Purple *Calotis cuneifolia*, Yellow *C. lappulacea*, and White *C. scapigeria* – Sarah Danckert**



**Doodle Comer Swamp** was the last stop with us entering from the Listers Lane entrance. On the edge of this side of the swamp, there are some interesting rock formations that Jeff stated are a connected ridgeline from The Rock through to Tabletop, as opposed to a rocky outcrop. The frogs greeted us, the swamp had shallow water and will dry out over summer. This swamp covers 2023 hectares in total comprising the nature reserve (1099ha) and private land. Jeff personally knows the old owner who sold the land to National Parks around 2011 to create the nature reserve and was able to tell us some of the history including that it is believed the name 'Doodle Comer' was derived from the Scottish word for the spittle receptacle for the bagpipes.

A total of 21 species were recorded at this location, with the highlights being: several small flocks of Superb Parrot [20]

<https://birddata.birdlife.org.au/survey?id=10572857&h=dfabb878>

If you are heading over to the Henty Field Days later this month, may I suggest that if you need a dose of nature to recharge after the crowds, it is well worth paying these nature spaces a visit.

**Catherine Conroy**

## The rocks at Doodle Comer

1. & 2. Rock - red indicating iron with multiple quartz seams (as seen previously at Lynch's Lane, Milbrulong) found as an outcrop at the southern edge of the lake

We had a discussion about geology with Jeff Hoffman. He gave us some interesting insights from the previous landholder. On occasions of short duration, substantial rain events, he said the swamp would be covered in water



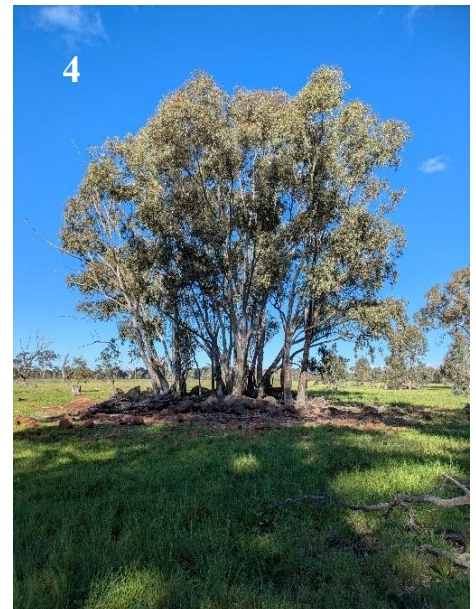
and it would be bubbling intermittently for several days before the bubbling would stop.

3. Rock - volcanic

4. Location within the basin of the swamp where the volcanic rock was found

We found volcanic rock within the basin of the swamp. Morgan's Lookout at Culcairn, located 25km south west, is the cone of an extinct volcano.

**Sarah Danckert**



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## Wolf Spiders

Wolf spiders (Lycosidae) are ground dwelling spiders mainly brown, grey, or sandy-coloured, often with darker stripes or mottled patterns that help them blend into leaf litter and soil.



They are fast runners that hunt on the ground rather than using webs.

They are active at night but often seen during the day when disturbed under pots, mulch, or stones.

They're harmless to garden ecosystems and help control insects.

Female wolf spiders carry their egg sac attached to their spinnerets, so you often see them walking around with it.

The egg sac is typically pale grey, light brown, whitish-grey or slightly bluish-grey depending on species and soil stainings.

When the spiderlings hatch, the female tears open the sac and the babies climb onto her back, forming a dense cluster of tiny pale dots. They stay there until they disperse after their second moult, about two weeks after hatching.

**Margrit Martin**

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## Live Parrot Imports

**Australia is the land of parrots.** Of the 56 species found here, 51 live nowhere else on Earth — from flashing pink galahs to the critically endangered orange-bellied parrot, one of the rarest birds in the world.

But these irreplaceable birds are now under threat from a single government decision.

After 30 years of protection, the Australian Government is considering lifting the restriction on live parrot imports from countries other than New Zealand, opening the door to imported birds for aviaries and the pet trade.

Environment Minister Murray Watt can stop this by removing all 33 parrot species currently on the live import list. Together, we can show him that the risk to our native wildlife is simply too great, and that protecting Australia's parrots must come first.

Send a message to Minister Watt today and tell him to keep Australia's parrots safe from imported diseases.

<https://invasives.org.au/how-to-help/take-action/land-of-parrots/>

## Community Planting Day at Fivebough Wetlands

The morning of Sunday, 30 August dawned with a thick fog over Fivebough, but soon cleared to a fine Spring day before the session was to begin. Despite being in the finals season for so many sports, Leeton folk turned out in force. We were also pleased to welcome a few keen volunteers from as far away as Wagga and Albury. About 55 people had signed in by the time we gathered together for the introduction by Jessie McPherson, Murrumbidgee Landcare and welcome to country by Elijah Ingram – I hope attendees can remember the Wiradjuri word for ‘welcome’!

After a quick demonstration of the planting of the tube stock we separated into 4 teams and started planting the 400 or so saltbush, rush and sedge seedlings into their designated areas. More volunteers arrived as the morning progressed – it was estimated that the total number on site was around 70. Ages ranged from young children to retirees, a truly community day.

Although the day was billed as from 9am to 12, planting had been completed by around 11 and most had been watered in. Then it was reward time with sausage sandwiches kindly cooked by Leeton Rotary. Some enjoyed a stroll around the Wiradjuri walk before leaving

Certainly the day can be called a success, from the funding of the project by our Environmental Fund, the nurturing of the tube stock by Hay and Narrandera Landcare groups, the loan of equipment from Narrandera Landcare, the slashing of the area and supply of the water tanker by Leeton Shire Council, the sausage sizzle by Leeton Rotary and Jessie McPherson for the promotion and running the day. My thanks to all of the above and to all those that gave their morning to help rehabilitate a portion of Fivebough Wetlands.

**Eric Whiting**



## Pulletop Nature Reserve visit 18 August 2026

Three MFN members went to Pulletop Nature Reserve expecting to see a spectacular display of *Acacia* shrubs along the track leading into it, as was usual at that time of year. Pulletop Rd was almost unrecognizable, having been graded to remove the shrubs just mentioned and more. The huge, healthy male *Dodonaea viscosa*, that was like a sentinel at the start of the narrow lane heading west, was gone along with the older females and younger of that species.

What appeared to be a disaster scene at first, was revealed to be one of recovery. Hairy-pod Cress, *Harmsiodoxa blennodioides*, grew all along the southern side of the track and shared the northern side with happy and enthusiastic looking mosses, liverworts and lichens. With shade from the afternoon sun, they've grown there prolifically.

Along the middle of the road between the tyre tracks grew Flannel Cudweed, *Actinobole uliginosum*, a tiny blue-green branched plant seen only at this time of the year after rain. The Mallee trees and Quandongs along the outer edge looked more or less as usual except for an absence of buds and new fruit.

Inside the Reserve, the scene was similar with very few buds on *Acacia lineata* to the extent that I barely recognized the species. A few centimetres of new growth from rain a few months ago had tiny flower buds, but none were seen along the branches as expected. We recalled the very dry conditions in this region during 2025 and thought that would be why the plants appeared to be in survival mode without much extra energy to reproduce.

*Eremophila glabra* appeared to be missing, but were mostly without buds and even Mallee Blue-flowers were in a very scraggy state. Felted Wallaby Bush, *Beyeria leschenaultii* had a few male flowers out, but there was no covering of tiny bright yellow dots as in previous years.

We spotted a Small-leaf Clematis, *Clematis microphylla*, being a young male with few beards. Punty Bushes were numerous, as usual, but buds were few. The only shrub we saw that was in full flower was Heath Spyridium, *Spyridium eriocephalum*, which was a happy sight as it's a plant not often seen anywhere else.

Despite the scene being different to what we had hoped for, there were still floral delights to be seen. A Leopard Orchid, *Diuris pardina*, spotted at the eastern end of Pulletop Rd on our way out was a lovely surprise, as were Ground Heads, *Chthonocephalus pseudevax*, growing among more Flannel Cudweeds and masses of Licorice Straps, *Asterella drummondii*, Liverworts.

Admiration of small plants was our main activity on this outing, which we really enjoyed on a beautiful spring day as there's always something interesting to see in our local bushland.

Written by **Margaret Strong**, on behalf of Margrit Martin and Judy Betts.



Above: Leopard Orchid, *Diuris pardine*;  
Below from left:  
Ground Heads, *Chthonocephalus pseudevax*;  
Flannel Cudweed *Actinobole uliginosum*;  
Heath Spyridium *Spyridium eriocephalum*



## Lichens Ecological History

It is generally accepted that tree seedlings planted as a restoration woodland will take at least 60 years before any useable wildlife hollow develops. To become prime real estate probably takes twice that time. Even then it is still a recognisably plantation woodland composed of a fairly uniform aged trees and most likely retaining the evenly spacing often in their straight lines we generally plant in.

So how long will it be before a plantation woodland becomes more like an old-growth one and what are the differences? Old-growth woodlands are complex communities rich in biodiversity comprising shrubs to the smallest of ground or epiphytic flora. An important part of this flora are the bark inhabiting lichens some of which are so adapted that they are considered as bark specialists. A plantation has to recruit this flora often from a distance and this takes time.

A lichen study in Wales and reported in a British Lichen newsletter, compared two oak woodlands that are close to each other. At a first glance they looked the same, both dominated by large mature oaks with tall straight trunks with high crowns that has been associated with 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century estate forestry. However their histories are quite different. A 1773 estate map, the earliest known for the area, showed one woodland as an already established woodland. Whereas the other woodland was then an open rabbit warren with only a tree-lined avenue crossing it.

By the time of the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888, part of the rabbit warren had become a woodland. The tree-lined avenue had gone, although some trees may have been incorporated in the new woodland.

The difference in lichen flora was clear. The well established woodland had abundant growth of an old-oak bark specialist species in contrast to the reclaimed rabbit-warren woodland in which this species was absent. Apart from being up to 100 years older, the established woodland had been planted to supplement an existing woodland. (It is known that Queen Elizabeth I ordered the wholesale plantation of oaks to replenish those cut down to build ships to defend England from the Spanish that culminated in the defeat of the Armada in 1588). Hence the specialist lichen had a continuity of existence to build on, and the rabbit-warren woodland lacked that continuity. Despite being over a century old the latter plantation was still far from being truly naturalised.

### Eric Whiting

Ref: Hudson, J. 'From Warren to Woodland: Woodland History Ecological Continuity and the Evidence of Lichens', British Lichen Society Bulletin No. 138.

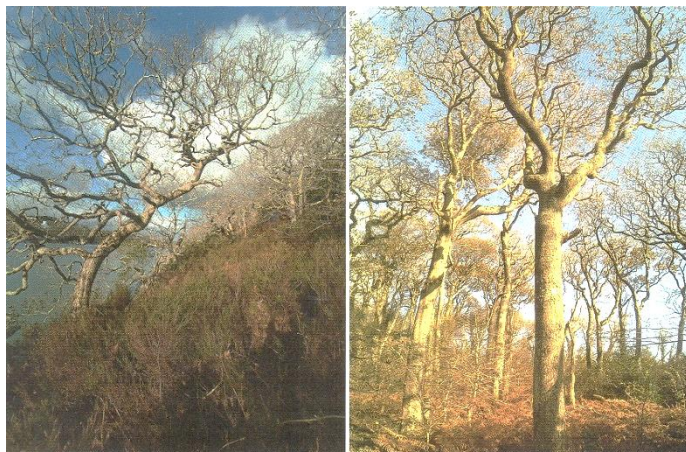


Figure 1. (Left) Typical "wild" oaks of the Cleddau Estuary woodlands & (right) estate "plantation oaks"

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## Mosses are vital for the health of our soil and Earth. A report of a global research project by David Eldridge (Australia) and others.

This article summarises the importance of mosses:

- They retain moisture allowing native and other vascular plants to thrive thereby setting up conditions for other plants to grow.
- They absorb water from the atmosphere.
- They capture vast amounts of carbon.
- They stabilise the soil and this reduces or prevents soil erosion.
- They provide habitat for microbes and Invertebrates.

In this article Lachlan Gilbert introduces research from the UNSW where Dr David Eldridge's team's findings are below via the link.

[Why mosses are vital for the health of our soil and Earth](#)

Copied from FNAC Newsletter September 2026 by Rosemary Blemings

Margaret Strong

## Member Observations

### Sally Bamblett

Lots of lovely flowers on Scenic Hill, Griffith at the end of August



From left: Wedge-leaf Hopbush, *Dodonea viscosa* var *cuneata*; *Caladenia caerulea* Blue Fingers; Dampiera; Bulbine lily

### Lisa Parker

August-September 2026 has been spectacular for wildflowers in Griffith and surrounds. Scenic Hill and Cocoparra National Park have benefited from a consistent goat control program which has allowed many of the more delicate plants to flourish. Scenic Hill has been particularly abundant with Greenhoods (Genus *Pterotylis*), Creamy Candles (*Stackhousia monogyna*), Pink Lady Fingers (*Caladenia carnea*), Double Tails or Donkey Orchids, Spider Orchids Australian Indigo, Sundews, Goodenias, Cloak fern and Common Everlasting. Cocoparra is also putting on a great display of all of the above, as well as blue orchids and teatrees. Also pleasing to see *Pomaderris cocoparra* making a healthy comeback.



Images: right: Australian Indigo *Indigofera australis*

Below from left: Pink Lady Fingers *Caladenia carnea*; Spider Orchid; Donkey Orchid *Diuris*



## Eric Whiting

### Has written a little story about a Fledgling Wattlebird.

In the past week or so I have been regaled in my garden by the insistent 'cheep cheep' of a fledgling Wattlebird. Although almost as big as its parent it still has that fluffy look and is definitely ungainly in flight.



Image of an immature Red Wattlebird was taken by Janet Hume

Moreover it is quite acceptable to my presence. Apart from the resident cheeky Magpie it allows me closer to it by far when perched on the fence than any other bird. In contrast the parent(s) zoom in and out with the next morsel for their insistent offspring, always ensuring I was in another part of the garden. The question is 'when and how does a parent bird get the message across that it is time their offspring finds its own food? So far I have never seen that fledgling make any attempt to find its food or even protect itself.

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## Jason Richardson

This Yellow Admiral butterfly *Vanessa itea* followed me home. Willimbong, Leeton.



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## Linda Burgess

These are from Fivebough Wetlands



The Superb parrot I have seen 3 times on the last 3 visits in the same couple of trees at the car park entrance. He/she has a friend but it doesn't hang around long. The one that is always there is very chatty.

From left: Superb Parrot; Female Superb Fairy-wren; Pied Stilts



# 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

|                                                                             |                               |          |                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| <b>Yellow-faced Honeyeater</b> [8]                                          | South Gundagai Cemetery       | 01/08/26 | H Germantse, S Danckert |
| <b>Flame Robin</b> [4]                                                      | Mundarlo Rd cutting, Mundarlo | 01/08/26 | H Germantse, S Danckert |
| <b>Fuscous Honeyeater</b> [20]                                              | Mundarlo Rd cutting, Mundarlo | 01/08/26 | H Germantse, S Danckert |
| <b>Brown Treecreeper</b> [2]                                                | Mundarlo Rd cutting, Mundarlo | 01/08/26 | H Germantse, S Danckert |
| <b>Western Gerygone</b> [1]                                                 | Government Dam, Henty         | 13/08/26 | C Conroy, S Danckert    |
| <b>Grey-crowned Babbler</b> [6]                                             | Government Dam, Henty         | 13/08/26 | C Conroy, S Danckert    |
| <b>Brown-headed Honeyeater</b> [5]                                          | Government Dam, Henty         | 13/08/26 | MFN Field Trip          |
| <b>Western Gerygone</b> [2]                                                 | Government Dam, Henty         | 13/08/26 | MFN Field Trip          |
| <b>Superb Parrot</b> [2]                                                    | Government Dam, Henty         | 13/08/26 | MFN Field Trip          |
| <b>Grey-crowned Babbler</b> [5]                                             | Government Dam, Henty         | 13/08/26 | MFN Field Trip          |
| <b>Superb Parrot</b> [12]                                                   | Doodle Comer, Henty           | 13/08/26 | MFN Field Trip          |
| <b>Yellow-faced Honeyeater</b> [20]                                         | South Gundagai Cemetery       | 14/08/26 | Sarah Danckert          |
| <b>Chequered Swallowtail Butterfly</b>                                      | Whitton Railway Reserve       | 25/08/26 | Margaret Strong         |
| <i>Papilio demoleus</i> (m) Seasonal migrant in low numbers, first sighting |                               |          |                         |
| <b>Rakali</b> [2]                                                           | Fivebough Wetlands            | 27/08/26 | Eric Whiting            |

## Sightings of interest

|                                                                                            |                                     |          |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|--------------------|
| <b>Spotted Jezabel Butterfly</b>                                                           | Murrumbidgee Valley NP, Coleambally | 07/08/26 | M Martin, M Strong |
| <i>Delia aganippe</i> . Annual seasonal migrant -Larval food plant is Grey Mistletoe       |                                     |          |                    |
| <b>Meadow Argus Butterfly</b>                                                              | Ugobitt Forest, Coleambally         | 07/08/26 | M Strong           |
| <i>Junonia villida</i> (f)                                                                 |                                     |          |                    |
| <b>Australian Painted Lady Butterfly</b>                                                   | Murrumbidgee Valley NP, Coleambally | 07/08/26 | M Martin, M Strong |
| <i>Vanessa kershawi</i> (m)                                                                |                                     |          |                    |
| <b>Small Grass-yellow Butterfly</b>                                                        | Pulletop Rd, nth of Griffith        | 18/08/26 | M Strong           |
| <i>Eurema smilax</i> . Annual seasonal migrant -Larval food plant is Senna sp./ Punty Bush |                                     |          |                    |
| <b>Superb Parrot</b> [6]                                                                   | Gilmore Cres, Garran, ACT           | 29/08/26 | Janet Hume         |
| <b>Superb Parrot</b> [2]                                                                   | Mulligans Flat Woodland, Forde. ACT | 30/08/26 | Janet Hume         |
| <b>Superb Parrot</b> [2]                                                                   | Lake Tuggeranong, Oxley, ACT        | 31/08/26 | Janet Hume         |

Compiled by Janet Hume

Janet Hume  
Female Superb Parrot at Garran, ACT

Margaret Strong  
Liverwort - *Riccia crystallina*, Blue  
Crystalwort seen at Whitton village



# \*\*\*\* 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.

- 10 September Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore Street Leeton, Time: 6.45pm for 7.00pm.  
**Topic: 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 at the cattle grid entrance to the Common.**  
 Follow Binyha St, going south through the village, past the Kooba St intersection and into the Common. Keep to the tracks while inside there.  
 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 the area in the Black Box woodland. There are large areas to walk among the trees and grasslands to search for wildflowers.  
**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.
- 21 September Monday** **Due date for photos for the Photographic Exhibition of Ramsar sites Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands**  
 This exhibition will be held during November at the Leeton Art Gallery in November  
 Contact is [michele.groat@dcceew.gov.au](mailto:michele.groat@dcceew.gov.au) mob 0427 682307 should you wish to submit any photos or need any further information.
- 1 October Wednesday** **Copy for the October newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**  
 Email: [ericwhiting4@bigpond.com](mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com) Phone: 0429 726 120.
- 2 October Thursday** **Committee Meeting held at 7pm by Zoom**  
 All members are welcome to attend and submit agenda items  
 Email: [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com)
- 8 October Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore Street Leeton, Time: 6.45pm for 7.00pm.  
**Topic 1 – 7.00pm “Not just Green Wallpaper”** The significance of plants and Australia's enormous diversity, by Australian Citizen Science Association NSW (Recording. View in situ or via Zoom)  
**Topic 2 – 8.00pm “Koalas in our district – History and updated locations.”**  
 Presented by **Meg Rowlands, WIRES** (Wildlife Information, Resue and Education Services).  
**Attend in person with Meg in Leeton or via Zoom.** Meg will report on recent research from the Koala Sentinel Project and inform us about emergency preparedness procedures for koalas and other wildlife during heat waves. Questions to Meg will follow her 30min 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.

**10 October      Field trip - Alfredtown TSR - The Quarry**

**Saturday** 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 /      MFN Malleefowl mound monitoring at Alleena**

**1 November** The MFN survey location is Alleena (between Mirrool and West Wyalong)  
**Saturday /** If you would like to participate, members are required to be members of NSWMRG for  
**Sunday** insurance purposes. Attending the West Wyalong training sessions (see below for details) is strongly encouraged. Members who haven't attended the training can still participate but will have to partner with one who has attended. Camping nearby or on location Saturday night.

**Contact:** Sarah Danckert [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com) phone 0427 276 306

**31 October /      NSW and ACT Twitchathon**

**1 November** This is a unique blend of friendly competition and community fundraising where  
**Saturday /** teams race against the clock to spot as many bird species as possible. Whether you're a  
**Sunday** 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.

This year's fundraising project is to help researchers get a clearer picture of NSW's declining Little Penguin Nest Attendance at Snapper Island.

For information about this event see <https://www.twitchathon.com.au/>

## **Other events / items**

### **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>

### **NSW Malleefowl Recovery Group Training Weekend and Annual General Meeting**

**Saturday/Sunday 26/27 September**

The weekend will include:

Practical Malleefowl mound monitoring and survey training for both new and existing members.

Opportunities to share knowledge and experiences from across the state.

A social dinner on Saturday evening to reconnect and strengthen their volunteer network.

A presentation on National Malleefowl Genetics research.

The NSW Malleefowl Recovery Group Annual General Meeting on Sunday.