

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



August 2020 - Issue #284

Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.

PO Box 541, LEETON 2705 ISSN-1327-1172

Website: www.mfn.org.au

Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

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



Silver Gull - the birds were having a bath in the mud puddle

Taken at the Leeton Tip Phil Tenison

IN THIS ISSUE

Office Bearers and Subscriptions.....	2
Welcome to August	2
Narrandera Wetlands Outing	3
Binya Hills Outing.....	5
Casuarina Anomaly 'cones' on a male!.....	7
National Tree Day, Promoting the Value of Trees	8
Fivebough on display at the Leeton Op Shop.....	9
Science behind Environmental Flows – web site.....	10
Member Profiles	10
Members' Sightings	11
Coming Events	12

CONTRIBUTIONS

**For the September 2020 issue by
Wednesday 2 September**

To Rowena Whiting

Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com.

Phone: 6953 2612

Quote:

**Don't be afraid to take a big
step if one is indicated.**

**You cannot cross a chasm in two
small jumps.**

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

President:	Alan Whitehead 6959 3779	Editor:	Rowena Whiting 6953 2612
Vice President:	Warrick Bradney	Committee:	Phil Tenison 6953 4869
Vice President:	Max O'Sullivan 0434 923 766		Glenn Currie 0488 563 321
Vice President:	Virginia Tarr 6962 5614		
Secretary:	Graham and Dionea Russell 0419 350 673 (Graham) 0428 536290 (Dionea)		
Treasurer:	Ellené Schnell 0488 080 866	Website Co-ordinator:	Kathy Tenison 6953 4869

MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE SECOND THURSDAY EACH MONTH, EXCEPT JANUARY, AT THE Yellow Room, Leeton Library, Sycamore Street at 7 PM

FIELD TRIPS NORMALLY TAKE PLACE ON THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND.

INTENDING NEW MEMBERS, GUESTS AND VISITORS WELCOME.

Membership enquiries:

Leeton	Eric Whiting 6953 2612	Griffith	Virginia Tarr 6962 5614
Narrandera	Nella Smith 6959 1210	Coleambally	John Wilkinson 6954 4129
Wagga Wagga	Melanie Baulch 0428914702	melaniebaulch@bigpond.com	

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

Bank details for direct deposit: 062 564 account no. 10039396, 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 August

Outings have continued last month with numbers not causing any issue with COVID-19 restrictions. Another 2 are planned for this month, one to Bunganbil and the other to Narrandera when the club has been invited to join the Landcare group on their Spring Wattle walk. Details are on the last page.

We also have the Biodiversity Survey planned for a few days - an excellent opportunity to get away and be involved in learning survey methods and names of species.

Kathy Tenison has written an article about trees, reflecting on their importance in our lives. It made think that it would nice if people could tell us about their favourite tree; a story and/or photo maybe?

Our **anniversary exhibition photos** are on display at the Leeton Museum and Art Gallery in the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission Building in Chelmsford Place until the end of August. Opening hours are 10am to 3pm Monday - Saturday.

And Spring is just around the corner though you wouldn't think so this last week, though the rain is good. The wattles are already in flower, along with others seen on our Binya trek with plenty in bud and orchid leaves appearing. Should be a great Spring.

Enjoy this issue, Rowena.



Meredith Billington has sent a link to 'a heart-warming story' at

<https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/wildlife/2020/07/the-challenges-of-caring-for-wildlife-amid-a-pandemic/>

Do send in any interesting web sites, videos etc you find in your surfing travels to share with other members.

Narrandera Wetlands outing 18 July 2020

After the previous Saturday's outing was cancelled because of the wet weather, nine members met at the **Narrandera Wetlands** for a second try! The weather, unlike the fogs of the previous two days was fine and sunny – at least for most of the morning. There was a chilly breeze blowing so the walk around the wetlands was slow but cold with Margrit Martin and Sue Allen sprinting ahead to get back into the sunshine.

Apart from the swamphens on the edge of the water, the first birds seen were a pair of **Rainbow Lorikeets** perched atop a dead tree at the end of the swamp. Alan said he sees them there almost daily on his walks and usually more than just the pair. A couple of very vocal **Striated Pardalotes** were noisily calling high up in the trees and eventually were spotted along with a lovely



coloured male **Purple-backed Wren**. Near the first hide Alan pointed out the nest in a clump of mistletoe of **Yellow Thornbills** and several were still flying about in the eucalypt close by.

At the western end there were **Eastern** and **Yellow Rosellas** along with a serenading **Grey Shrike-thrush**. In the water were a few **Black** and **Wood Ducks** and the ever-present **Grey Teal**. As we were about to move, Susan spied a **Koala** feeding in a eucalypt



which proved difficult for some to get onto. However, everyone saw it in the end picked-up by the movement in the leaves.

We then took the side track to look at Glenn's plantings, Black Box mainly, that some school kids had put in last year. All seem to have survived well with some watering by the students and later the intermittent rain over the past 6 months. Here there was another Koala sitting right out in the open on a low branch for all to see. It was very docile unlike the first one we saw.



Morning tea was had at the main carpark area near Terry's 'Pelican' stump before we headed off to Rocky Waterholes with a comfort stop at the free overnight caravan site near the old brewery.

Hakea Wattle - Rowena Whiting
Koala – Barry Allen
Group in the 'plantings' area– Rowena Whiting

Bird List for Narrandera Wetlands:

Darter (H)	Pelican	Yellow-billed Spoonbill (flyover)
Wood Duck	Black Duck	Grey Teal
Moorhen	Swamphen	Crested Pigeon
White Cockatoo	Galah	Rainbow Lorikeet
Eastern Rosella	Yellow Rosella	Kookaburra
Grey Fantail	Purple-backed Wren	Yellow Thornbill
Red Wattlebird	Noisy Friarbird	White-plumed Honeyeater
Grey Shrike-thrush	Striated Pardalote	Magpie-lark (Pee-wee)
White-winged Chough	Pied Butcherbird	Pied Currawong (Heard but seen later)
Magpie	Australian Raven	Koala x2

Rocky Waterholes:



The walk along the channel bank at Rocky Waterholes was fairly quiet apart from Margrit spotting a Koala. There were few bush birds but the expected waterbirds. The water level in the channel was very low and Glenn told us that MI and Council are in the process of doing works both along the channel bank (MI) and at Lake Talbot (Council). The council is planning to clear the ribbon weed in Lake Talbot for the safety of water skiers for the coming summer but the stabilising of the banks by MI is a bit of a mystery.

After lunch at Terry's Bridge picnic area Alan took us along the bank between the two channels. The area is marked out by red flags indicating a possible pathway for heavy machinery to gain access – a little frightening as most of that area is heavily timbered so there may be a number of very large and old River Red Gums to possible go – not good as it might affect the Little Bittern site. An unexpected sighting along this track was of an **Eastern Yellow Robin** which Alan had not seen there before.

Social distancing sign at the bridge and Little Pied Cormorant – Rowena Whiting

Bird list:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Little Pied Cormorant | Little Black Cormorant | Darter (female) |
| Pelican | White-faced Heron | White Ibis |
| Wood Duck | Black Duck | Grey Teal |
| Whistling Kite | Moorhen | Coot |
| Swamphen | White Cockatoo | Galah |
| Eastern Rosella | Yellow Rosella | Kookaburra |
| Welcome Swallow | Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike | Eastern Yellow Robin |
| Willie Wagtail | Grey Fantail | Grey Shrike-thrush |
| Purple-backed Wren | White-plumed Honeyeater | Brown Treecreeper |
| Striped Honeyeater | Striated Pardalote | Magpie-lark |
| White-winged Chough | Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater | Magpie |
| Koala x1 | | |

Max O'Sullivan



Images taken by Phil Tenison on 19 July out at the Leeton Tip on Corbie Hill Road

Silver Gull



Black Kite



Mt Binya Lookout Outing

A somewhat freezing Sunday (26 July) saw a small band of 9 intrepid field nats and 2 visitors from Leeton (Mark and Fiona) head for the hills – Binya Hills, in Binya State Forest on the southern edge of Cocoparra National Park. According to the NPWS plan of management for Cocoparra National Park and Cocoparra Nature Reserve, *binya* is an Aboriginal word meaning mountain, and *cocupara* describes the kookaburra (presumably from a Wiradjuri language).

Our refusal to be thwarted by brass monkey weather¹ brought the inevitable rewards of being out in the bush and we had a most enjoyable outing.

Our walking route took us from the Binya Forest picnic area via a disused quarry and to the Trolley Track. This track was formed to convey quarried rock about 1.5 kilometres through the forest to construct the bed of the Temora – Roto railway line which runs parallel to Burley Griffin Way and opened in 1916. Passenger services discontinued in 1983 but the line continues to carry wheat and Casella's wine for export.



After admiring the straightness of the Trolley Track we headed upwards via a moderately steep rocky track to Binya Lookout for a look-see and a well-earned rest.

Along the track we found a small mouse-like mammal dead on the road. We knew that it had to be native as it had a pointy snout with sharp teeth and large eyes. The little mammal was a carnivorous marsupial which is mouse-grey above and mostly whitish-grey below. She had large rounded ears and a thin tail.

Nella worked out that she was a Common Dunnart rather than a Fat-tailed Dunnart because of the length of her body (850mm), the length of the slender tail (750mm), her weight which was only 20 grams!! (that's 4 teaspoons of sugar) and because the undersides of her feet were hairless. Common Dunnarts tend to be found in woodland and open forest. They feed on a wide range of insects, including beetles, roaches, cricket larvae and spiders.

It is believed that population numbers have dropped significantly in the last 20-30 years most likely due to clearing, reduction in habitat and predation by foxes and cats. We concluded that this little dunnart may have been dropped by an owl or another raptor overnight.

Clockwise from above: Disused quarry Rowena Whiting
Indigofera – Eric Whiting, teatree – Rowena Whiting, Common
Dunnart – Rowena Whiting



¹ Wikipedia has some interesting information about this term: During the 19th and 20th centuries, small [monkeys](#) cast from the [alloy](#) brass were very common tourist [souvenirs](#) from [China](#) and [Japan](#). They usually, but not always, came in a set of three representing the [Three Wise Monkeys](#) carved in wood above the [Shrine of Tōshō-gū](#) in [Nikkō](#), [Tochigi](#), Japan. These monkeys were often cast with all three in a single piece. In other sets they were made singly. Old brass monkeys of this type are collectors' items. [Michael Quinion](#), advisor to [The Oxford English Dictionary](#) and author of the website [World Wide Words](#), writes, "it's more than likely the term came from them". The earliest reference cited by Wikipedia was in 1845. Early references to "brass monkeys" in the 19th century have no references to balls at all, but instead variously say that it is cold enough to freeze the tail, nose, ears, and whiskers off a brass monkey; or hot enough to "scald the throat" or "singe the hair" of a brass monkey.



Another highlight of our walk was finding a very old Rosewood (*Alectryon oleifolius*), and Miljee (*Acacia oswaldii*) near the intersection of the Trolley Track and the Binya Lookout last mentioned by Enid Atkinson in the MFN newsletter about 10 or so years ago! Western Silver Wattles (*Acacia decora*) were in various stages of early flowering, as well as Silver Needlewood (*Hakea*



leucoptera) and hopbush (*Dodonaea viscosa* subsp. *mucronata*). Nella noticed a few rosettes of orchids but it was still too early for flowers. As on other recent walks Purple Burr-daisy (*Calotis cunefolia*) was rife in response to recent rains.

Birdwise we had all the usual suspects associated with our inland local mixed woodlands of Black

Clockwise from above: Rosewood tree - Meredith Billington, Binya track - Meredith Billington, Acacia decora Eric Whiting, Silver Needlewood - Meredith Billington, Grevillea floribunda – Nella Smith

Cypress (*Callitris endlicheri*), Bimble Box (*Eucalyptus populnea*) and Wilga (*Geijera parviflora*). Despite the cold drizzly day, we managed what Nella described as a respectable list (see below). For me the bird highlight was repeated calling by two or three fantail cuckoos which gave me a chance to consolidate in my mind what they really sound like. Experienced birdos tell me that cuckoos are likely to become more noticeable from now on as they move back southwards, ready for stealing other species' nests and breeding.



After many visits to Galah Dam, Wattle Dam, Mt Brogden and various parts of Cocoparra National Park, it was interesting to finally visit the Binya Hills and observe the structurally diverse bush on the steeper slopes avoided by logging and in good condition. What was disappointing on our walk though, was the state of the walking track down from the lookout, chewed up and furrowed by recent trailbike activity which made human walking quite difficult. As in national parks, the rules in state forests require trailbikes to keep to formed roads and trails and they must be registered.



Meredith Billington and Nella Smith

Bird list compiled by Nella:

- Major Mitchell's Cockatoo
- Striped Honeyeater
- Grey Shrike Thrush
- Grey Fantail
- Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo

- Mulga Parrot
- Fantail Cuckoo
- Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
- Striated Pardalote
- Galah

- Rufous Whistler
- Eastern Yellow Robin
- Diamond Firetail (heard)
- White-browed Babbler
- Little Raven

Casuarina anomaly – ‘cones’ on a male!

Whilst at the Binya Lookout last month we saw a Hill She-oak *Allocasuarina verticillata* which looked like one branch also bore female cones. Now Hill She-oaks are supposed to have separate male and female trees like all the other casuarinas around here. The ‘cones’ were barely 1cm long, not the 4-5cm usually seen. They were not immature cones either as they were spikey like mature cones after releasing seeds’

To seek further information I emailed Sydney Herbarium and here is their reply – they could be galls, with a reference to the Angair Inc. web site.

BOTANICAL ODD BALLS Gail Slykhuis



Female cones, *Allocasuarina verticillata*

On a recent ANGAIR nature ramble where the subject of plant identification was Drooping Sheoak, *Allocasuarina verticillata*, I recounted my early confusion associated with the fruiting cones of this species. As a dioecious plant, Drooping Sheoak has separate male and female plants, which should be easily identifiable when flowering, particularly where the female cones are present. The male plants have catkins, the female plants have flowers which develop into woody cones. However, what I discovered were woody cones on male plants. The cause of my confusion was the presence of woody galls, deceptively formed to blend in, masquerading as female cones and housing a solitary insect. Apparently, I am not the only one to be deceived, ‘Various species of insects, especially coccoids, Hemiptera, (Gullan 1984), form distinctive galls on *Casuarinaceae*; some of these may be mistaken for fruiting cones but they are actually modified vegetative branchlets,’ Vol. 3 *Flora of Australia*.

This article investigates several galls commonly observed on our local vegetation.

Allocasuarina Galls - *Cylindrococcus* spp.



Young *Allocasuarina* gall

Coccid insects, closely related to scale and mealy bugs are responsible for the galls found on *Allocasuarina* species. Galls are growth malformations and in this situation are caused through the feeding action of the insect. The sap sucking feeding of Coccid insects ensures their saliva comes into close contact with the plant cells. Such contact can stimulate the plant to form galls which will resemble the fruit of *Allocasuarina* species. These galls will be home to either a male or a female insect and by opening a gall you may be lucky enough to locate a cavity containing a pink,



Mature *Allocasuarina* gall

fleshy, legless, creature approx. 0.4cm in length. This is the female coccid, its cavity within the gall providing both food and a home for life. The mature males are winged and therefore able to experience freedom when they leave their galls for reproductive purposes.

Golden Wattle Bud Galls - *Trichilogaster signiventris*

These commonly observed galls are caused by the action of a very small wasp (2.3–3.2mm long). The female wasp lays multiple eggs into the flower or growth buds of the Golden Wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*. On hatching, the wasp larvae secrete chemicals which stimulate the plant cells to form galls. The larvae undergo metamorphosis within the gall, the winged adult wasps emerge through small holes before flying off to find a mate.

The development of galls within a flower bud reduces the flowering and subsequent seed formation of a plant, it is also thought that the growth of galls reduces the overall resilience of the host plant. These factors would explain why *Trichilogaster signiventris* has been introduced into both the Eastern and Western Cape Provinces of South Africa as a biological control agent against Golden Wattle, where it has become an invasive weed.



Golden Wattle bud gall

References : *Pests Diseases & Ailments of Australian Plants* (1986) David Jones, Rodger Elliot
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trichilogaster_signiventris

So we apparently saw galls. Isn't nature wonderful in the tricks it plays? Eric Whiting

Fivebough At The Heart Of Leeton

A project that aims to connect Leeton Shire residents with their landscape has been developed with auspicing from the Leeton Community Op Shop and features photography from members of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists.

It often surprises me that locals haven't visited or understand the significance of Fivebough. As the project co-ordinator, when I began discussing ideas with the Op Shop I realised the Wetland was a metaphor for their role, as both locations provide a resource for diverse populations."

When Covid-19 threatened plans for the display, the project adapted and developed to meet new opportunities.

Originally we planned to create a large temporary street art installation for the audience attending the Easter street parade. When that was cancelled I went back to various stakeholders and canvassed options.

Kathy Tenison, who is a member of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists and the local Landcare Coordinator, suggested I consider a display that could be used at Fivebough after being exhibited in Leeton.



The project changed medium and will now have an extended exhibition in both the Community Op Shop's main street windows and the Wetland's under-utilised display cabinet.

Another adjustment to meet the requirements of social-distancing involved changing the scope of workshops from being public events at the Op Shop to becoming information sessions for their volunteers.

We had a morning tea at full capacity with presentations from Max O'Sullivan of the Field Naturalists, Kathy from Landcare and myself, which introduced the geological, ecological and cultural significance of Fivebough Wetlands.

These discussions have informed the volunteers and will give them material for conversations with customers at the Shop.

Fivebough At The Heart Of Leeton was displayed at the Leeton Community Op Shop through July and is supported by Create NSW's Country Arts Support Program, a devolved funding program administered by Regional Arts NSW and Western Riverina Arts on behalf of the NSW Government.

Jason Richardson



Window at the Community Op Shop, Jason's design of a sign for Fivebough, Kathy Tenison speaking at the morning tea. Magpie Geese at Fivebough

National Tree Day – promoting the need for trees

When I looked through all the photos I have collected over the last few years I came across so many photos of beautiful trees that had so many different purposes in our local landscape.

There were Canoe trees, trees with Mistletoe that provide food for Honeyeaters (e.g. Painted Honeyeaters) and many other birds, rough bark trees that provide great habitat for lizards, trees that provide wonderful nesting sites, trees with unusual pods that provide food for the Glossy Black Cockatoos, dead trees that provide hollows as nesting sites for Superb and Turquoise parrots, bee trees for native bees that help in the pollination of agricultural and native plants, trees planted to honour our Veterans and trees we played in as kids.

Sadly I found photos of beautiful trees that have been removed along roadsides and in the middle of paddocks. Given it takes 15-20 years to grow a substantial shelterbelt it seems unreasonable that trees should be removed with little thought as to who might be using them as: a home, food source, nesting site, shade, windbreaks or as protection to cool farms dams.

Given it takes 100 years to produce a hollow in a tree, to see some of these old growth trees removed from our landscape is heart breaking. Some community members and landholders spend months growing seedlings to plant in wetlands and on farms while other members of the community spend time removing old trees for seemingly little or no reason.

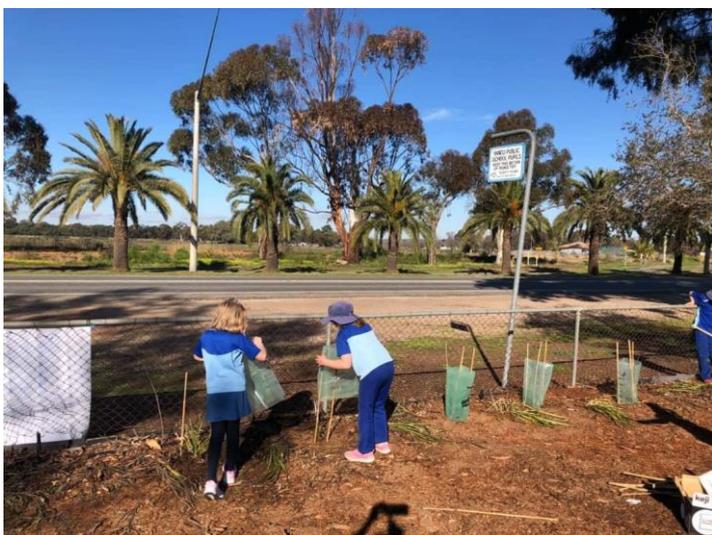
How we can rectify this situation? Promoting National Tree Day is a good start. Thank you to Narrandera Landcare for the huge effort they put in to support, promote and get trees in the ground in this year of such uncertainty.

Over the last week speaking with members of the community it is with great pride they share stories about their favourite tree. Whether it is a tree on a floodplain they see on their way to work, a tree they played in as a child or a species that survives and earns their respect by surviving so well in the drought. We all have a favourite tree. What's yours?

I found a saying in a book this week 'A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit under'.

Hopefully the children of Yanco Public School and their teachers who put trees in the ground on National Tree Day will get to sit under the shade of a tree they planted and know they are making society great. The younger the children who plant trees the more likely they will be to sit in its shade. As the climate changes this shade will become increasingly important. There is also a lot of uncertainty at the moment. We need nature more than ever, making National Tree Day even more important on the calendar.

Kathy Tenison



Students from Yanco Public School Plant Trees on National Tree Day



Roadside vegetation removed near Leeton

New Website Reveals Science Behind Environmental Flows

Murray-Darling Basin communities can now access the science behind environmental water with the launch of the new Flow-MER website. The website brings together the work of independent scientists from some of Australia's leading regional universities and research institutions on how Commonwealth environmental water is making a difference to the Basin's rivers, wetlands and floodplains. Monitoring, evaluation and research are central to how Commonwealth water is managed to improve the health of our rivers.

"The Flow-MER website is a great step towards improving transparency of our decision making. It offers people a way to engage with the scientists and see for themselves the thinking behind when and where we deliver water for the environment," said Jody Swirepik, Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder.

"Flow-MER builds on ten years of robust scientific monitoring and research that underpins our understanding of how plants and animals respond to water for the environment. By keeping decision makers abreast of the latest scientific findings, we can ensure that water for the environment is used in the best way possible to support fish, waterbirds, and wetlands," said Dr Carmel Pollino, Principal Research Scientist at CSIRO.

Numerous scientists work out in the field at locations across the Murray-Darling Basin, often with the involvement of Traditional Owners, local water managers and landholders. "No matter where you live in the Basin, you can look at the Flow-MER website to find out where scientists are monitoring environmental flows near you. There are plenty of great photos and some terrific stories about the frogs and turtles that we meet when we are out in the field," said Skye Wassens, Principal Scientist, Charles Sturt University.

Selections can be made for the various 'themes' hydrology, biodiversity, ecosystem diversity, fish, vegetation and food webs and water quality. Or selected areas can be accessed all with drill downs to activities and findings.

The Flow-MER website is now online at flow-mer.com.au

Member Profiles

Eric Whiting

The way to learn is to listen to and follow ones that knew. For the natural world Field Naturalist Clubs are the place for this. I have been a member of a Field Naturalist Club ever since I arrived in Australia

When moving to Leeton I could not find anyone with an interest in plants in town. Moreover I found there was nothing written on the local flora. It seemed to me the Riverina was believed to be all farmland and practically no native bush left. It did not take many trips searching State Forests and particularly roadsides before realising there was a great deal here. But it is a lonely business finding out by one self.

So I put an ad in The Irrigator inviting like-minded people to a meeting. It was the birth of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists.

A pleasure shared is a pleasure enjoyed many times over.



Rowena Whiting



In a way I didn't specifically join the club as I automatically became a member through Eric's family membership. However that didn't mean I wasn't interested in nature; bushwalking was always on my agenda. At the time (1994) with children still at school and working full time it was a case of participating in outings when I could. Being amongst other people with a variety of interests and perspectives of the natural world has allowed me to be more aware of what is around, along with enjoying everyone's company.

Becoming editor of the newsletter in 2000 was a way I could contribute to the club and enhance my knowledge of natural history across many areas along the way.

PS. 20 years coming up later this year!!

MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

Brown Honeyeater [4+]	Campbell's and Boorga Rd Griffith	06/07/20	Neil Palframan
Diamond Firetail [1]	Yarrabimbi Colinroobie Rd Leeton	06/07/20	Andrew Thompson
Nankeen Night Heron [6]	McCaughey Park Yanco	08/07/20	Max O'Sullivan
Freckled Duck [2]	Campbell's Swamp	09/07/20	Max O'Sullivan
Brown Honeyeater [1]	Campbell's Swamp – very vocal	09/07/20	Max O'Sullivan
Spotted Crake [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/07/20	Keith Hutton
Spotless Crake [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/07/20	Keith Hutton
Magpie Goose [6]	Fivebough Wetlands – settling ponds	10/07/20	Jason Richardson
Magpie Goose [5]	Lake Coolah area on the Barellan Rd	10/07/20	Keith Hutton
Grey-crowned Babbler [10+]	Groups at various spots along Barellan Rd	10/07/20	Keith Hutton
Blue-billed Duck [male]	Fivebough Wetlands – settling ponds	10/07/20	Max O'Sullivan
Red-necked Avocet [5]	Fivebough Wetlands	10/07/20	Max O'Sullivan
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo	Rankins Springs Rd via Griffith	12/07/20	Neil Palframan
Fantail Cuckoo	Rankins Springs Rd via Griffith	12/07/20	Neil Palframan
Pallid Cuckoo	Rankins Springs Rd via Griffith	12/07/20	Neil Palframan
White-fronted Chat	Rankins Springs Rd via Griffith	12/07/20	Neil Palframan
Collared Sparrowhawk [male]	Pendula St, Leeton – a close encounter	15/07/20	Max O'Sullivan

I was taking a basket of washing to my clothesline and just before I got there I saw the sparrowhawk just sitting on the line. I would have been less than 2m from it so I put the basket down and started talking to it and it just stayed there on the crossbar without moving. I decided not to frighten it off so came back into the kitchen and watched it sit there for a while longer before flying off – I then went out and hung the washing but couldn't see it about anywhere.

Glossy Black Cockatoo [5]	Whitton – flyover towards the river	15/07/20	Margaret Strong
Noisy Friarbird [12+]	Naradhun St, Whitton	15/07/20	Margaret Strong
Banded Lapwing [5]	Evans Smyles Rd – still present	15/07/20	Max O'Sullivan
Spotted Crake [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/07/20	Max O'Sullivan
White-bellied Sea-Eagle [Imm]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/07/20	Keith Hutton
White-necked Heron [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/07/20	Keith Hutton
Australasian Grebe [6]	Fivebough Wetlands – settling ponds	15/07/20	Keith Hutton
Koala [2]	Narrandera Wetlands	18/07/20	MFN outing
Koala [1]	Rocky Waterholes, Narrandera	18/07/20	MFN outing
Eastern Yellow Robin [1]	Rocky Waterholes, Narrandera	18/07/20	MFN outing
White-bellied Sea-Eagle [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/07/20	Keith Hutton

There were 2 Immature males and one sub-adult female perched on the old fence posts in the swamp.

Banded Lapwing [11]	Evans Smyles Rd via Leeton	19/07/20	Keith Hutton
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------	--------------

Birds are still being seen in a cereal crop over the hill along Evans Smyles Road.

Cockatiel	Whitton Stock Route Rd, Binya	19/07/20	Neil Palframan
Golden Whistler [male]	Fivebough Wetlands near toilet block	23/07/20	Max O'Sullivan
Pallid Cuckoo [4+]	McCann Rd Lake, Wyangan	24/07/20	Neil Palframan

Neil reported hearing the cuckoos calling both at Jack Carson Reserve on Lakes Rd and also in the reserve along McCann Rd. I went to check on 25/07 and found at least 4 birds but possibly 6 in the McCann Rd Reserve. They were calling constantly so easy to locate. I also saw a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** there as well.

Glossy Black Cockatoo [20+]	Middle Rd via Leeton	25/07/20	Paul Rook
------------------------------------	----------------------	----------	-----------

Paul also reported 5 or 6 cockatoos feeding in casuarinas at the Yanco Agricultural Institute.

Koala [1]	Buckingbong Station via Narrandera	26/07/20	Peter Draper
Major Mitchell Cockatoo	Binya State Forest	26/07/20	MFN outing
Mulga Parrot	Binya State Forest	26/07/20	MFN outing
White-winged Triller [2 males]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/07/20	Max O'Sullivan

Red-necked Avocet [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	30/07/20	Keith Hutton
Swamp Harrier [male]	Fivebough Wetlands	30/07/20	Keith Hutton
Spotted and Spotless Crakes are now being seen regularly from the 'Window on the Wetlands' closest to the first viewing platform at Fivebough.			
Fairy Martin	Fivebough Wetlands – season return	31/07/20	Max O'Sullivan
Brolga [2]	Fivebough Wetlands – still present	31/07/20	Max O'Sullivan
There are numbers of eucalypts in blossom at Fivebough which is attracting many of the large honeyeaters – Red Wattlebird, Noisy and Little Friarbirds and Blue-faced Honeyeaters all bickering over who has the right to each tree.			
Striated Pardalote [10]	Lake Talbot, Narrandera	04/08/20	Alan Whitehead

****** COMING EVENTS ******

16 August Sunday Outing at Bunganbil

We will be meeting mid morning inside the entrance of the State Forest for a walk up the hill, followed by lunch and a wander around the dam area.

To comply with COVID-19 restrictions you must register to participate.

Contact: Nella Smith 0248 890 537

21 August Friday onwards Biodiversity Survey at the Weddin Mountains National Park

We propose to conduct a biodiversity survey in the **Weddin Mountains** on the week starting 21st August. This is a baseline survey to ascertain presence/absence of flora and fauna.

You are invited to come along and assist. We will be mammal trapping using Elliott traps for 4 nights and conducting vegetation surveys. We will also be doing opportunistic listings.

You may camp in the Ben Hall campground and must be totally self-sufficient. The campground has picnic tables and a toilet. In order to camp there you need to book your site and pay \$6 per person per night. (This is new since Coronavirus) You need to book online or call the National Parks contact centre 1300 072757.

Please contact Nella Smith Phone 0248 890 537, email nella.smith0@gmail.com if you are interesting in participating.

30 August Sunday Wattle Day Wildflower Walk at Narrandera

Join Narrandera Landcare on their Wattle Day Wildflower Walk on Bundidgerry Hill. Time and meeting place still to be determined.

To comply with COVID-19 restrictions you must register to participate.

Contact: Glenn Currie 0488 563 321

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

Maybe a piece on your favourite tree.

Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.

Spring trip to Gluepot Reserve in South Australia ?

This is planned for the end of September however with the latest COVID-19 restrictions it seems likely that this will not be able to go ahead. If you are interested please contact Meredith Billington (0498711165) or Meredith.billington@environment.nsw.gov.au

More information about the reserve can be found at <https://birdlife.org.au/visit-us/reserves/gluepot>