

# The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



November 2021 - Issue #298

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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

**Eastern  
Barn Owl**  
taken at  
Oolambeyan  
National  
Park  
by  
Kathy  
Tenison



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For the December 2021 issue by  
Wednesday 1 December

To Rowena Whiting

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Please note that the date of the  
AGM and General Meeting has  
been postponed a week and will  
now be held on the 18 November

## Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

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**MEETINGS** are held on the second Thursday each month, except January, at the Henry Lawson Room, Leeton Library, Sycamore Street, Leeton at 7pm.

**FIELD TRIPS** NORMALLY TAKE PLACE ON THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND.

INTENDING NEW MEMBERS, GUESTS AND VISITORS WELCOME.

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

## Welcome to November

This month's issue is a whopper, 16 pages, I'm sure that would have to be a record.

As always in Spring lots of things have been happening with the our visit to Oolambeyan, a Mothing night and the Twitchathon in which we had 3 teams competing. Don't forget to make a donation to one or each team to support their money raising efforts. Details are on Page 10. Members have also participated in Malleefowl monitoring and the Backyard Bird Count. So if you haven't been able to participate I hope you will enjoy reading about them.

This month in addition to our regular outings there are the annual events of the Pollinator Count and FrogId; further information about these are on page 15 with links to how to participate.

Regrettably our Annual & General Meetings have needed to be postponed until the following week, Graham and Dione will be away with their family following the recent loss of Graham's father in Tamworth. We do convey our sincere sympathy to them at this sad time.

Rowena.

## News Items from the Inbox

**Plains Wanderers habitat** of more than 13,000 hectares in south-west New South Wales has been conserved with the help of rural landholders. This link includes footage of a couple of birds foraging and an interview with David Parker (Saving our Species). [Read the full story - from ABC Riverina](#)

### From BirdLife

#### Fairy-wrens and other small birds

Data from citizen scientists' surveys in previous Aussie Backyard Bird Counts have confirmed a disturbing trend — [small birds are declining in urban gardens across the country](#).

#### Masked Lapwings

Although Magpies tend to hog the limelight, there are other Australian birds which are also springtime swoopers — it's something the [Masked Lapwing](#) excels at.

#### Baby birds

They may look cute and helpless, but chicks out of the nest don't always need your help. [Step back and assess](#) the situation before 'rescuing' one.

## Letter to the Editor

It's easy to despair at the lack of attention given to the natural environment, but there's an opportunity at present to make it a priority in local government.

Across the region councils are in the process of preparing their Community Strategic Plans (CSP). These documents have a lifespan of at least 10 years and shape all activities undertaken by our local government authorities.

If you look inside a business paper prepared by council for their councillors, you will see that every proposal links back to their CSP. Each term of council has a delivery program that articulates actions for their four-year term, which in turn is referenced by annual plans and both documents refer to CSP. Consultation processes vary between councils but each of them will present a draft document for written comments in the new year. Some councils are currently still consulting, such as Narrandera Shire Council have a survey that will be distributed to ratepayers in the next month.

One way to ensure that native flora and fauna are recognised as part of your local government area is to write for these terms to be included alongside the more general term of environment. Other suggestions would be to promote the merits of remnant bushland, living rivers, clean air and biodiversity. It would be beneficial to use specific phrases rather than terms like environment to reduce the possibility for misinterpretation. For example, during one discussion recently it was overheard that some residents thought the term culture applied only to First Nations.

Have a look at what your council is doing to consult on the development of their CSP and engage with the strategies to promote the wildlife that you enjoy and ensure they recognise the value of natural assets.

**Jason Richardson** (Disclosure: Jason Richardson is currently employed by Narrandera Shire Council.)

## West Wyalong Malleefowl Monitoring – 29-31 October



On the first day 3 teams met at Mt Mulga Pastoral Company between Tallimba and West Wyalong. The next day monitoring was carried out at Alleena. The third day was at Yalgogorin with 4 teams participating. At least 8 active mounds were seen.

Also observed were Budgerigars nesting everywhere and a Spotted Nightjar was accidentally disturbed from its nest (photo of egg). The weather was perfect, a week later the Burr daisy would have given grief. Courtesy Rodney Guest



## Aussie Backyard Bird Counts



Phil Tenison has sent a couple of photos he took whilst doing a count.

Reflections of a Fairy Martin (left)  
Immature White-Faced Heron (right)

Data from citizen scientists' surveys in previous Aussie Backyard Bird Counts have confirmed a disturbing trend — [small birds are declining in urban gardens across the country](#).



Oolambeyan National Park (22,000 ha) provided a great location for a lovely day out for MFN and the Narrandera Camera club. The property was originally a merino stud and cropping property. The NSW and Federal Governments purchased it to become a National Park in October 2002. It has been purchased for the conservation of Native Grasslands and the endangered Plains-Wanderer. There are grasslands that are

very suitable for this beautiful little bird shown in an artwork on the wall of the homestead (image on left). Photos of the stud Merinos are testimony to the quality of the stud and their success at both Sydney and Melbourne shows in days gone by.



What a treat it was to look through the old homestead (Built around 1926) and the surrounding buildings. There are many buildings around the property. The ones we concentrated on were the Homestead itself, the shearing shed and the three Ram sheds that were built at varying times over the lifetime of the property.

Bill Draper was a wealth of information on the shearing shed and its function showing us the tool room where the blades were sharpened and the sweat yards where the sheep were held prior to being shorn. He still holds his wool classing licence at the age of 97 and could pull it from his wallet to show us.



Bill (image left) never ceases to amaze us.

As we headed to the ram sheds we were entertained by the Eastern Barn Owls that flew about the Pine Trees trying to keep out of our sight. There were at least 12. They are in large numbers presumably because of the number of mice that are currently around. Their huge white heart-shaped dish-like faces and beautiful speckled bodies were a treat to behold. Having never seen them so active during the day and in such large numbers was a real privilege.

The contrast between the ram sheds was amazing showing the different building skills and development over time, all for the comfort of the animals and to present the rams in their best condition before sale. Although the buildings are showing their age, it is part of a bigger plan to restore some of them for visitors to view and appreciate the original workings of the property.

In its capacity as a National Park, Oolambeyan did not disappoint in providing us with a great fauna list of birds, reptiles and mammals that now

call this place home due to the maintenance of habitats that suit them.

On a drive around Oolambeyan we travelled in convoy firstly to some tin that has been placed on the ground to provide additional habitat for reptiles where Michael found a skink. Further on we came to a fenced area where the Macropods were excluded. Michael explained how these sites are visible from satellite photos. Over time this vegetation has been analysed by visiting scientists.

Just near this enclosure we had a sighting of a Black-faced Woodswallow which was a first for most of us. Not to be confused with the Masked Woodswallow who has a larger black area on its face.

In the lower areas perched up on some Lignum we came across some White-fronted Chats. Not long after that we saw about twelve Banded Lapwings (image to right) which appeared to be playing (or being chased by some kangaroos). We were not sure which. The wild flowers were out in force and we could see in many areas why the Plains-wanders liked to call Oolambeyan home.



On our track there were large hollows in trees and fallen timber where the Lace Monitors (photo below left) are happy to live and we were lucky enough to see one rush across the road and up a tree where he posed patiently. The Draper children and their friends were very excited about seeing and photographing this beautiful creature. How lovely to see the kids getting excited about nature.



On our way back to the homestead for a BBQ dinner we came across a Rainbow Bee-eater and a Cockatiel.

We saw firsthand that Oolambeyan National Park has a number of vegetation communities including Pine Woodlands, Boree Woodlands, Black Box Woodlands and Riverine Grasslands. These areas contain habitat for a range of fauna and threatened species. Boree Woodlands and Sandhill Pine Woodlands have been listed as endangered ecological communities.

After the BBQ we had a celebratory cake made by Nella for Rowena's Birthday. Thanks Nella for organising such a lovely day and to Glenn Currie (Senior Field Officer) and Michael Murphy (Ranger) for the tour of this wonderful piece of Wiradjuri Country. We all thoroughly enjoyed our visit and appreciate the effort that goes into the pest animal management and weed control to maintain healthy vegetation communities.

Can't forget the sunset at the end of the day. You have to be very quick it's surprising how quickly they go down.

**Kathy Tenison**

**Oolambeyan Fauna List 16-10-21 Compiled by Nella Smith**

Emu	Crested Pigeon	Peaceful Dove	Whistling Kite
Black Kite	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Little Eagle	Nankeen Kestrel
Brown Falcon	Banded Lapwing	Galah	Cockatiel
Blue Bonnet	Red-rumped Parrot 2 x 15	Eastern Barn Owl 8	Rainbow Bee-eater
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Southern Whiteface	Singing Honeyeater	Yellow-throated Miner
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	White-fronted Chat	Striped Honeyeater	Grey-crowned Babbler
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Masked Woodswallow	Willy Wagtail	White-winged Chough
Black-faced Woodswallow	Jacky Winter	Brown Songlark	Welcome Swallow
Lace Monitor <i>Varanus varius</i>		Sand Goanna <i>Varanus gouldii</i>	
Eastern Blue-tongue <i>Tiliqua scincoides</i>		Morethia boulengeri (a skink)	
Brush-tailed Possum			

**Phil  
Tenison's  
sunset**



# Great Southern Bioblitz Mothing Night

23 October 2021

The [Great Southern Bioblitz](#) was held over 22-25th October 2021. It was an intense biological survey in which Citizen Scientists throughout the Southern Hemisphere attempted to record as many living species as they could. Observations were recorded on the iNaturalist platform which can also be used to help identify what people see.

One of the Bioblitz organiser's suggestions to add data to the project was to hold a mothing night. I had discussed with Eric a few times about having a Mothing Night and timing one with the GSB seemed like a good idea.



The concept is simple – hang up a white sheet, shine a light on it and see what it attracts. A bit of research suggested a UV light might be the best light source. Also putting any trapped insects into an esky with ice might make them easier to photograph.

We gathered at the Community Food Garden in Narrandera around 7pm, rigged up some sheets with a couple different lights and had a bite to eat as we waited for sundown. We switched on the lights just on dusk and insects quickly starting to arrive – and they kept coming! Along with the moths were caddisflies, beetles and a butterfly.

We observed maybe a dozen different species of moths and tried to sort them into families with the resources we had. Then I put eight of the more distinctive moths onto iNaturalist which fed them into the GSB umbrella project. Other users on iNaturalists have helped to determine the probable species name of three moths, whilst we have the probable family of three other moths.

Many thanks to Sandra McDougal for her help and for sharing some methodology and resources.

**Glenn Currie**

**Photos by Phil Tenison & Eric Whiting clockwise from top right**  
(Phil's naming is in brackets!)

Spider may be an Orb Weaver type (ew); likely *Olbonoma triptycha* (Black and White jobbie) (pt); Caddisfly (Long Skinny Bug)(ew); *Culladia cuneiferellus* (ew); *Diarsia intermixta* (Tan Colour bug)(ew), Tree Lucerne Moth *Uresiphita ornithopteralis* (Jet Fighter shape)(pt)



## Silly Galahs Twitchathon Report 2021

Kathy and Phil Tenison and myself elected to do the annual Twitchathon on Sunday 31 October. Our plan was to commence at McCann Rd, Lake Wyangan and finish up at Fivebough Wetlands in the late afternoon.

Australian Hobby –  
Kathy Tenison



We were hoping for the Painted Honeyeater there but, alas, there was none calling so we settled for the few honeyeaters – **Spiny-cheeked** and **Singing** plus parrots – **Mallee Ringnecks** and **Red-rumps** as well as a couple of thornbills and several **Mistletoebirds**.

After a quick look at the water front at the Lake Wyangan Picnic area and a comfy stop we headed for the causeway where we got a good collection of birds, including **Pied Cormorant**, **Darter**, **Chestnut Teal** and a perched **Sea-eagle**.

Next was Campbell's Wetlands where we added quite a few duck species as well as **Zebra Finch**. We decided then to go via the airport in the desperate hope of seeing **Pink Cockatoos** but, alas, there were none to be seen. We did get a couple of new additions to the list including, **Blue-faced Honeyeater** and **Bluebonnet**.

We then made a bee-line for Cocoparra National Park, Store Creek and Jack's Creek in particular. At Store Creek we just stayed at the entrance road and got **Bee-eaters**, **Budgerigars**, **Rufous Songlark**, **Grey-crowned Babblers** to name a few. At Jacks Creek, we did the walk up to the main rock face and collected a few more good birds like **White-browed Babbler** and **Eastern Yellow Robin** with, the bird of the day, making a fluttering noise over our shoulder which Kathy quickly alerted us to, a **Painted Button-quail**.

We then had the compulsory 1 hour lunch break before intending to head back towards Leeton via Murrami and Evans Smyles Road.

At the intersection coming from Yenda onto Whitton Stock Route Road, I saw a raptor so we turned left to check it out and just down the road we espied two **Dollarbirds** on the powerlines – so how lucky can you be! We also got a large flock of **Little Corellas** roosting in the gum trees beside the channel. So despite missing the raptor, a **Black Kite**, we picked-up two new additions to the list for our trouble.

Just beyond the rail crossing on Irrigation Way, there is a paddock where emus are often seen. We drove into the grain storage facility there and

didn't see a single bird but on the way out, luckily Phil saw a blob in the distance and, sure enough, it was a lone **Emu**!

Not much joy was had on Round Hill/Evans Smyles Roads save for **Eastern Rosella**, **Brown Songlark** and **White-browed Woodswallows**, no Masked birds were seen in the bunch flying low overhead.

We made Fivebough earlier than planned and had a brisk walk from the car park to the ponds where we managed the usual birds save for the **Avocets** which were present on Saturday but gone by Sunday – typical!

With another hour up our sleeve before we needed to finish, we did a mad dash to Euroly Bridge to get **Superb Parrot** and, of all things, a **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** which we hadn't seen all day.

With just 20 minutes left we called in to the Yanco TSR and picked up both friarbirds, **Noisy** and **Little** along the track. No time left to check the Night Heron at McCaughey Park in Yanco so we headed home to do the tallying and check lists.

We ended up with 113 species for our trouble and felt pretty chuffed with that number. On texting Nella, we found that they too had exactly the same number 113! How coincidental is that!

I want to thank Kathy for all the catering – lunch and dinner once back home and to Phil for all the driving. It was a fun day but exhausting nonetheless so we all slept well that night and the next and the next!!

Elsewhere in the newsletter I have done a breakdown of birds seen by Nella's team but not by us and vice versa. Glenn's team went to Oolambeyan NP so he will no doubt submit his list of 75 birds as well.

**Max O'Sullivan**

*The Murrumbidgee Naturalist*

## Bidgee Boobooks' Twitchathon 2021

Our count began in Oolambeyan district and ended at Leeton, via Narrandera. We identified many species we expected to see and some that we hoped to see, but there were others which were simply not present on the day at some sites.

Numerous White-necked Herons flushed from roadside water as we headed south past the Carrathool Grain Complex. We sighted Black Kites frequently along this road, clearly identifying the forked or square-tipped tail depending on the extent of the spread.

A delight was the number of Pipits sited within the park, which were the most numerous species along with Crested Pigeons. Brown Falcons had us concentrating on their colour variations, but were easily identified. Other raptors in that district were Wedge-tailed Eagles, Black-shouldered Kites, Nankeen Kestrels, a Whistling Kite, a juvenile Brown Goshawk and numerous Barn Owls near the Homestead.

White-winged Fairy-wrens were sited on a bare fence line, rather than amongst saltbush, as were White-fronted Chats. Other notable sightings within the park were Banded Plovers, Black-faced Woodswallows, Emus, Little Corellas, Bluebonnets, Red-rumped Parrots, Eastern Rosellas, Superb Blue Fairy-wrens, Grey Shrike Thrush, Singing Honeyeater, Rainbow Bee-eater, Peaceful Dove, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, Welcome Swallows, White-winged Choughs, Apostlebirds and a Yellow-throated Miner.

The Narrandera Wetland circuit was quieter than usual. Dusky Moorhen, Grey Teal and Yellow Spoonbill were the only water/wader birds present, in company with Masked Plovers on the rocks. Alan's place nearby was alive with bird calls from Little Friarbirds, Noisy Friarbirds, Red Wattlebirds, Blue-faced Honeyeaters, Grey Fantail, Peewees and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos.

The MIA 1 Sandhill Revegetation Site towards Leeton was also very quiet, with only Yellow-rumped Thornbills sighted. We suspected Purple-backed Wrens, but they refused to show themselves.

Fivebough Wetland was also quieter than usual, adding only 15 species to our total. There was some intense scrutiny in identifying some of these. While their heads were down feeding, Glossy Ibis appeared as brown/red splashes of colour until they revealed themselves and took to the air. Sharp-tailed Sandpipers needed close observation as did a non-breeding Common Greenshank. Red-necked Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Australian White Ibis, Little Black Cormorant, Royal Spoonbill, Black Swan, Chestnut Teal, Australian Pelican, Eurasian Coot and Australasian (Purple) Swamphen were clearly visible. Little Grassbirds' soft and distinctive calls were heard, but the birds not seen, as usual.

Our time was up just as we noticed a Spotless Crake, which we couldn't count. We had a total of 74 species with White-winged Fairy-wren our Best Bird and White-faced Heron our Biggest Dip, not having seen one all day. We identified all the birds we'd seen or heard throughout the day, except Purple-backed Fairy-wren which we had also suspected at Fivebough. It was our most elusive species, refusing to show itself twice and not possible to identify clearly while only whispering.

Bidgee Boobooks in 2021 are Glenn Currie, Alan Whitehead and Margaret Strong (author of this report). We hope more people will donate money to our MFN teams by the end of December to support this worthy cause. We thoroughly enjoyed our day out identifying birds, but the aim of the Twitchathon is to financially support projects that will conserve vulnerable / threatened bird species in NSW.

**Margaret Strong**



**Black Winged Stilt Phil Tenison**

## Upupa Eops 2021 Twitchathon report

Michael Murphy-the eyes of an eagle, Jess Murphy-the ears of an owl, Nella Smith – might know where they are, Meredith Billington-Plumed Whistling Scribe

We agreed to begin early at the Cocoparras, well not that early. However the twitching started when we saw the emus. The woodland birds were out in force. Lots of Yellow Robins and Jacky Winter but no red or black ones. Lots of parrots including Budgies, Mulga Parrots, Mallee Ringnecks, Major Mitchell's, Blue Bonnets and Red Rumps as well as the Superb Parrot later on. The Rufous Songlarks wouldn't stop calling and distracting us from hearing the others. Although the Dwyers Mallee Gum were flowering honeyeaters were scarce except large ones, Spiny Cheeked and Blue-faced. Thornbills were scarce, we only saw Yellow and Weebill. Both miners were seen and both Babblers. Black and white Mudlark and Magpies were also present. The fly catchers were very busy, Willy, Grey Fantail and Restless Flycatcher. We braved a lot of burrs in our socks for a Brown Treecreeper.

White-winged Trillers confused the Rufous Songlarks, Five finches were heard but not much seen, Double-barred, Zebra, Goldfinch, Sparrow and Diamond Finch. The latter gave up his hiding place by flying with a long straw to woo his girl. On the way to the swamp we stopped at a huge crowd of Plumed Whistling Ducks overseen by a Spotted Harrier.

At Campbell's Wetlands the ducks were present, not in large numbers but one was enough except for the beautiful Blue Billeds of which there were many. Where were the Grebes? Just as well we stopped to tick the Cattle Egret doing the cows a service as otherwise we would have missed the Shelducks.(there were 100 last week)

At Fivebough the Long-legged Swamp species were largely present. Even the shorebirds were easy to see. Marsh and Wood Sandpipers, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and a Red-kneed Dotterels. (Must check out their knees one day). A Spotted Crake appeared as well. The Avocets and Stilts were hanging around as usual.

I bet the Grey Teal, the Wood Ducks, the Freckled Ducks and the Grebe were at the Sewage Treatment Works. We chose to go to the river instead for better or for worse.

Michael pointed out that the first birds we recorded were the emus and the last were the weebills. It was a lovely cool day and these days are always great fun. By the way, we found 113 different species.

**Nella Smith**



White-breasted Woodswallow - Kathy Tenison  
(below) Grey Teal & Blue-billed Duck – Phil Tenison  
Freckled Duck – Phil Tenison



## 2021 Twitchathon Hits and Misses summary:

This is the breakdown of birds seen by one team but not by others. Some doubling-up occurs because I basically compared Nella's results with ours, seeing we got exactly the same number of 113 in total. Glenn's team went to Oolambeyan and got a great selection of birds in their 75 total list.

### Nella's Team: *Upupa epops*

Plumed Whistling Duck  
Crimson (Yellow) Rosella  
Mulga Parrot  
Red-necked Avocet  
Royal Spoonbill  
Silver Gull  
Bar-shouldered Dove  
Speckled Warbler  
Pallid Cuckoo  
Weebill  
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo  
Spotted Harrier  
Masked Woodswallow  
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo  
Brown Goshawk  
Olive-backed Oriole  
Grey Fantail  
Restless Flycatcher  
Double-barred Finch  
Diamond Firetail  
Goldfinch  
Brown Treecreeper

### Max's Team: Silly Galahs

Pied Cormorant  
Little Egret  
Intermediate Egret  
White-necked Heron  
Grey Teal  
Pink-eared Duck  
White-bellied Sea-eagle  
Hobby  
Painted Button-quail  
Black-tailed Native-hen  
Eastern Rosella  
Dollarbird  
Fairy Martin  
Australian Pipit  
Brown Songlark  
Wood Duck  
Inland Thornbill  
Yellow-rumped Thornbill  
Singing Honeyeater  
Striped Honeyeater  
Little Friarbird  
Common Blackbird

### Glenn's Team: Bidgee Boobooks

Black-shouldered Kite  
Square-tailed Kite  
Wedge-tailed Eagle  
Banded Lapwing  
Common Greenshank  
Eastern Barn Owl  
White-fronted Chat  
White-winged Fairy Wren  
Red Wattlebird  
Black-faced Woodswallow

### Max O'Sullivan

The most important part of the annual Twitchathon is raising money for a conservation or research project. This year money is being raised to support further monitoring and tracking of Gould's Petrels on Montague Island near Narooma. This research is being run by Nicholas Carlile and Yuna Kim with many volunteers. You can watch a recording of a presentation made by Dr Yuna Kim at the World Seabird Conference on her work with Gould's Petrels on Montague Island at [http://www.twitch24nsw.org/?page\\_id=155](http://www.twitch24nsw.org/?page_id=155).

Donations can be made to your team via credit card at <https://nsw-twitchathon-2021.raisely.com/donate>.

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## Know your daisies, Part 9 Dandelions

Dandelion flowers are typical of ligulate flowerheads. That is all florets have one corolla lobe extended as a ray. Ligulate members of the Asteraceae can be conveniently divided into three groups the 'Dandelions' with yellow florets, stems that exude a milky sap on breaking, leaves are all basal, and the achenes have a beak; 'Sow Thistles with yellow florets, stems exuding a milky sap, but the achenes are without a beak; and 'Lettuces and Chicory group with yellow or blue (*Chicorium*) or purple (*Tragopogon*) florets, leaves basal and cauline, and the achenes have a long beak. The beak on achenes is a prolongation of the apex raising the pappus to form 'parachutes'.

### *Leontodon taraxacoides\**, Lesser Hawkbit

Widespread perennial weed common in lawns and waste places 15-40cm high. Leaves are narrow-lanceolate, the apex obtuse and the margins are toothed or pinnatisect. Flowerheads are solitary or several together, on a long stalk, nodding until maturity. Achenes are of two kinds. The outer smooth or finely muricate, not beaked and a pappus of small scales. Inner achenes muricate and with short beaks bearing 2 rows of fine hairs.

### ***Taraxacum officinale\**, Dandelion**

Perennial widespread weed of lawns, roadsides, waste places and in cultivated and pasture areas. Leaves oblanceolate with acute apices and toothed to runcinate-pinnatifid lobed margins: Flowerheads on hollow stalks 5-40cm high. Achenes compressed, +/-fusiform, ribbed with the apex tapering to a long beak. Pappus of several rows of barbellate hairs.

### ***Hypochaeris radicata\**, Cat's-ear, Flatweed**

Perennial herb 15-80cm high, commonly in lawns, gardens, roadsides, pastures and disturbed habitats. Leaves obovate, rough-hispid, the margins toothed, sinuate to pinnatifid. Flowerheads solitary on branched stems. Achenes cylindrical, ribbed, the beak long. Pappus of 2 rows of hairs the inner plumose and the outer scabrous.

### ***Hypochaeris glabra\**, Smooth Cat's-ear**

Annual herb, 10-40cm high, commonly in lawns, pastures and woodland and disturbed habitats. Leaves obovate, glabrous, the margins toothed, sinuate or pinnatifid. Flowerheads solitary on branched stems: Achene cylindrical and ribbed, the inner achenes with a long beak and the outer truncate and beakless.

### ***Microseris lanceolata*, Yam-daisy**

Perennial herb, to 40cm high, with fleshy tuberous roots that were a frequent source of food for Aborigines. Leaves are linear-lanceolate or oblanceolate glabrous and with runcinate-toothed margins. The mid-vein is prominent. Flowerheads solitary, nodding until mature. The rays are 5-toothed apically. Achenes are terete and ribbed. Pappus is of 10-12 straw-coloured scales



Flatweed plant and seeds



The following two species differ from those above by having both basal and cauline leaves.

### ***Leontodon rhagadioloides\**, Cretan Weed (syn Hedypnois)**

Annual weed of pastures, roadsides and disturbed areas, 3-50cm high. Stems subglabrous to hispid. Basal leaves oblanceolate to oblong, 20-160 x 8-40mm, with obtuse apex and toothed or entire margins. Cauline leaves elliptic to lanceolate, smaller, scabrous and +/-stem-clasping. Flowerheads solitary or few on hollow stalks swollen below the heads. Achenes terete and incurved. Pappus a crown of scariosus scales, the inner with 5-6 non-pungent awns

### ***Urospermum picroides\**, False Hawksbit**

Annual herb recorded in disturbed places in the Hay district., stems erect, bristly, 10-50cm high, with a few branches, Basal leaves oblanceolate or sometimes lyrate, the margins toothed to pinnatisect and the surfaces bristly. Cauline leaves elliptic to lanceolate, entire or pinnatisect and the mid-veins bristly. Flowerheads solitary or few in a loose cluster. Achenes flattened, curved, tuberculate towards the base and finely pubescent

**Eric Whiting**

# Go the Green and Gold! 3 years of revegetation for the Superb Parrot in the Riverina

2021 marks a significant milestone for the Saving Our Superb Parrot project. Over the past three years Greening Australia, its partners and private landholders have enhanced or restored 1040 hectares of land to bolster Superb Parrot habitat by direct seeding over 100 kilos of native seed and planting 40,000 new trees and shrubs. For landowners, the revegetation has established windbreaks, shade and shelter for livestock and will attract more bird life to the farm.



**Direct seeding shrubs to enhance remnant white cypress pine and Yellowbox sandhill woodland (photo credit: Graham Fifield)**



**Male Superb Parrot feeding on seeds of hop bush (*Dodonaea*) – photo credit: Sandra Henderson**

## Where was the work done?

In the Riverina, the largest population of Superb Parrots breed along the Murrumbidgee River from Wagga Wagga, west to Carrathool with the majority of known nest sites located in the river red gums of the Murrumbidgee Valley National Park. Breeding birds forage in woodlands up to 10km from the nesting sites, and after breeding, the parents and fledglings move further afield (up to 30kms or more). This post-fledging period is thought to be a critical time for the survival of newly independent young birds who

disperse over a wide area but lack experience in finding and making use of foraging locations. Native shrubs such as wattles, hop bush and senna produce abundant seed which Superb Parrots feed on during late spring and summer. Re-establishing these plants at scale was one of the key goals of the project.

## Monitoring

Monitoring of the tubestock and direct seeding shows an average of 73% survival for hand planted trees and shrubs, and roughly 41 seedlings per 100 metres of direct seeding, which over 580kms of seeding is a lot of new shrubs across the parrots' range!

In 2019 and 2020 the Superb Day Out annual census was held in Murrumbidgee Valley National Park and surrounds. The

annual bird count helps to understand the size and composition of the population and activity around nesting sites.

Each November, approximately 20 volunteers (a diverse mix of locals, researchers, members of field naturalist and bird groups) met in Darlington Point, before setting out to predetermined locations along the river. The surveys consisted of sitting in a fixed location for 1-2 hours, recording all the superb parrots present in the

**Direct seeding monitoring, blue markers are placed where seedlings have germinated (photo credit: Lucy Wenger, Greening Australia)**

area. Parrot numbers were similar between the two years, with an average of 9.4 birds/hour across all sites in 2019, and 11.6 birds/hour in 2020. Surveys of all our revegetation sites in 2020 yielded similar results, with an average of 10.5 birds/hour. Hopefully the future for this charismatic little green and gold bird is looking brighter thanks to the collective hard work of many individuals.

## Funding and partners

This project was funded by the NSW Government's Saving Our Species Program, Officeworks and the NSW Environmental Trust. We are indebted to the support from our partners at NSW DPIE, Coleambally Irrigation, Murrumbidgee Landcare, Crown Lands, Riverina Local



Land Services, private landowners and countless volunteers who contributed their time.

### More information and get involved

If you would like to get involved and have areas on your farm you would like to revegetate for livestock or wildlife, please register your interest with Greening Australia at <https://www.gerx.org.au/>. More information on the project is available at <https://bit.ly/3Ev9o6s>. Written by Graham Fifield and Lucy Wenger, Greening Australia Contact details: [lwenger@greeningaustralia.org.au](mailto:lwenger@greeningaustralia.org.au) 0439 030 059

## Better Bidgee Program

The NSW Government is investigating a range of initiatives for the Murrumbidgee River system as part of re-scoping the Yanco Offtake project. These measures are part of a new Better Bidgee program.

Following the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council meeting in April this year, Water Infrastructure NSW has re-scoped the Yanco Offtake Sustainable Diversion Limits Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) project and investigated options that could be supported by the community.

### Yanco Offtake- Improved Environmental Outcomes

- A substantially revised Yanco Creek Offtake Sustainable Diversion Limits Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) project, moving away from the original plan to construct a 2.5m regulator to considering a much lower regulator, at 1.2m, at a new location.

### Reconnecting the Murrumbidgee – Fish Passage

- Constructing fish passage infrastructure at the five main weirs in the Murrumbidgee system, including:
  - Berembed Weir
  - Gogeldrie Weir
  - Hay Weir
  - Maude Weir
  - Redbank Weir

### Addressing Cold Water Pollution

- Installing infrastructure, which could include compressors, pipelines and diffusers, to reduce cold water pollution for more than 510 km downstream of Burrinjuck and Blowering dams to help the recovery of native fish populations and improve water quality.

### Fish Friendly Water Extraction

- Installing fish screens at irrigation offtakes and pumps along the Murrumbidgee River, to reduce fish losses and reduce cleaning costs to farmers while increasing on-farm efficiency.

### Gooragool and Mantangary Lagoons

- Potentially purchasing 1,200 hectares of land, including the Mantangary Lagoon, to improve native fish passage, secure vital refuge and breeding habitat for native animals and enable First Nations communities to manage land and water.

### Balranald Weir/Yanga Lake

- Modifying the existing Balranald Weir to facilitate targeted filling of Yanga Lake and refurbishing, upgrading or decommissioning structures within Yanga National Park to direct water to Yanga Lake.

This is a brief summary taken from the Dpie website. Please read more detail and go to website:

[better.bidgee@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:better.bidgee@dpie.nsw.gov.au)

To me this is a no brainer. We know that populations of native fish have collapsed and something needed to be done. More wetlands would also help as many native fish rely on slow moving warm waters for spawning. These would also improve waterbird habitat as populations of these have crashed as well. Pers comm Nella Smith



Tuckerbil Wetlands / Australasian Grebe



# MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

<b>Red-necked Avocet</b> [58]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Pied Stilt</b> [200+]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Magpie Goose</b> [36]	Fivebough Wetlands	4/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Whiskered Tern</b> [200+]	Fivebough Wetlands	04/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Caspian Tern</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	04/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Red-necked Stint</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	05/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>White-winged Triller</b> [1]	Lonnie Rd, Leeton	05/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Australasian Bittern</b>	Fivebough Wetlands	08/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Australasian Bittern</b>	Campbell's Wetlands	08/10/21	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Painted Honeyeater</b>	Kairi Rd, Leeton – Keith's place	09/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Cockatiel</b>	'Mountain Dam', Colinroobie Rd	09/10/21	Graham Russell
<b>Rufous Songlark</b>	'Mountain Dam', Colinroobie Rd	09/10/21	Graham Russell
<b>Australian Shelduck</b> [86]	Fivebough Wetlands	10/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Brown Songlark</b> [male]	Fivebough Wetlands	10/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Cattle Egret</b> [12]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Sacred Kingfisher</b> [3]	Catalpa St, Leeton	13/10/21	Anne Lepper
<b>Sacred Kingfisher</b> [1]	Karri Rd, Leeton	13/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Glossy Ibis</b> [27]	Fivebough Wetlands	14/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Wood Sandpiper</b> [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>White-winged Triller</b> [male]	Fivebough – near the settling ponds	14/10/21	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Sharp-tailed Sandpiper</b> [70+]	Fivebough – 5-7 juvenile birds	14/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Little Friarbird</b> [6+]	Naradhun St, Whitton – nesting	mid-Oct	Margaret Strong
<b>Sacred Kingfisher</b>	Naradhun St, Whitton -calling	October	Margaret Strong
Margaret also reports <b>Welcome Swallows</b> nesting at her house and she recorded <b>Brown Songlark</b> .			
<b>European Goldfinch</b> [2]	Karri Rd, Leeton	15/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Rainbow Bee-eater</b> [8+]	McKenzie Rd, Leeton – season return	16/10/21	Max O'Sullivan
<b>White-winged Triller</b>	McDonald Rd, Bilbul – at Meredith's	17/10/21	Meredith Billington
Meredith reports the 200+ Plumed Whistling-ducks are still being seen near Beelbangera.			
<b>White-winged Black Tern</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Nankeen Night Heron</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Latham's Snipe</b> [1]	Fivebough – near the Brolga Platform	19/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Yellow Rosella</b> [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Red-bellied Black Snake</b> [5]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Eastern Brown Snake</b> [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Masked Lapwing</b> [61]	Fivebough Wetlands	20/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo</b> [3]	Fivebough – settling pond's fence	20/10/21	Kathy, Phil & Max
<b>Cockatiel</b> [pr]	Koonadan Rd, Leeton	20/10/21	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Budgerigar</b> [50+]	Copoparra Nation Park	21/10/21	Max O'Sullivan
Birds were mostly at the Store Creek entrance in dead trees looking at hollows and squabbling over them.			
Others at Jacks Creek and on the way in to Woolshed Flat.			
<b>White-browed Woodswallow</b> [20+]	Jacks Creek and Woolshed Flat	21/10/21	Max O'Sullivan
<b>White-backed Swallow</b> [3]	Store Creek entrance	21/10/21	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Brolga</b> [2]	Fivebough – dancing	22/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Whiskered Tern</b> [2 only]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Black-tailed Native-hen</b> [9]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Budgerigar</b> [10]	Evans Smyles Rd, Leeton	22/10/21	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Crimson Chat</b> [pr]	Round Hill Rd via Leeton	22/10/21	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Rainbow Bee-eater</b> [6]	Narrandera Wetlands	23/10/21	Alan Whitehead
<b>Dollarbird</b> [1]	Narrandera Wetlands – season arrival	23/10/21	Alan Whitehead
<b>Darter</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	24/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Spotted Harrier</b> [2]	Brobenah Hall Rd via Leeton	24/10/21	Keith Hutton

<b>Budgerigar</b> [6]	Koonadan Rd, Leeton	24/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Cockatiel</b> [2]	Lobby's Rd via Leeton	24/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>White-faced Heron</b> [12]	Fivebough Wetlands	24/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Little Egret</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	24/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>White-breasted Woodswallow</b> [4]	Palla St, Griffith	Oct '21	Virginia Tarr
<b>Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike</b> [2]	Palla St, Griffith	Oct '21	Virginia Tarr
<b>Australian Shelduck</b> [140+]	Fivebough Wetlands	27/10/21	Keith Hutton
<b>Blue-billed Duck</b> [5]	Campbell's Wetlands	30/10/21	Virginia Tarr
<b>Australian Shelduck</b> [2]	Campbell's Wetlands	30/10/21	Virginia Tarr
<b>Painted Button-quail</b>	Jack's Creek, Cocoparra Nat Park	31/10/21	Silly Galahs' Team
<b>Dollarbird</b> [2]	Whitton Stock Route Rd, Yenda	31/10/21	Silly Galahs' Team
<b>Sacred Kingfisher</b>	Beelbangera - along channel	01/11/21	Meredith Billington

**Compiled by Max O'Sullivan**

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## Details of 'other events'

### 6-14 November - Wild Pollinator Count

You're invited to watch a flowering plant for 10 minutes during the week of November and submit your observations of insect visitors via the website: <http://wildpollinatorcount.com>.

- You don't need to be an insect expert.
- You don't need fancy gear.
- You may be surprised by what you see!

Find out [how to count pollinators](#), identify [the insects](#) you see and [submit your observations](#) on our website. You can also download and print a [tally sheet](#) to complete as you go. Taking and [submitting photos](#) of what you see is optional.

Find out [how to count pollinators](#), identify [the insects](#) you see and [submit your observations](#) through the links at the top of the page. You can also download our [Run Your Own Count kit](#) and organise to count with a group.

You can do one ten-minute count, or do a few during the week (on the same or different plants), it's up to you. You don't have to attend a public event to get involved - but you can if there's one nearby!

The Wild Pollinator Count is a national citizen science project. Our count periods occur each year in autumn (April) and spring (November) - spring 2021 is our 13th count! The project aims to raise awareness of the many species of pollinator insects, as well as build a data set of which insects are seen where and on which plants.

For more information or to get in touch please visit [wildpollinatorcount.com](http://wildpollinatorcount.com).

### 12 – 21 November - Take part in FrogID Week - Australia's biggest frog count

The Australian Museum's FrogID Week is on again! This 12-21 November, citizen scientists are encouraged to help inform frog conservation by recording frog calls with the free FrogID app. Whether from urban backyards, farms, or remote national parks, every submission helps understand how frog populations are responding to disturbances such as fire, drought, habitat modification and disease. Download the FrogID app, listen for frogs, and record their calls for science.



More information: [www.frogid.net.au/frog-id-week](http://www.frogid.net.au/frog-id-week) and to download the app.

### 25 November - "Local Leeton Bushland – how to recognise our important bushland places"

Learn where some bush places are in Leeton and do some plant identification, collect a few seeds and learn about the importance of biodiversity in our region.

For more info and registration details please click [here](#) - it will take you to Murrumbidgee Landcare's website for workshop details and how to register. Organiser is Kathy Tenison.

## \*\*\*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\*\*\*

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions.

Covid-19 restrictions need to be adhered to, for outings you must register with the nominated person by email (preferred) or phone to participate, bring proof of double vaccination and do not come if unwell. By registering you declare that 'I am symptom free and have not been in contact with a confirmed case of Covid 19, or directed to isolate'. Masks and social distancing are required as per current Covid rules.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>11 November Thursday</b>  | <b>Annual General Meeting and Monthly Meeting postponed a week</b>   |
| <b>13 November Saturday</b>  | <b>Outing to Cocoparras National Park</b><br>Meet at the junction of Whitton Stock Route and Mt Bingar turn off.<br>Time: 9.00am. Bring morning tea and lunch<br>Contact/Register with: Eric Whiting <a href="mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com">ericwhiting4@bigpond.com</a> , ph 6953 2612.  |
| <b>18 November Thursday</b><br><br><b>Please note<br/>Changed date</b> | <b>Annual General Meeting and Monthly Meeting will be held in the Presbyterian Church, 29 Sycamore St, Leeton at 7.00pm.</b><br><b>Topic:</b> Video of a presentation of Bryophytes (mosses & liverworts)<br><b>Contact:</b> Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536 290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham) Email: <a href="mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com">murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com</a> . |
| <b>27 November Saturday</b>  | <b>Roadsides as habitat, Mejum State Forest area.</b><br>Meet at the corner of Barellan and Kamarah Roads at 9am<br>Bring morning tea and lunch.<br>Contact/Register with Nella by text 0428890537   |
| <b>1 December Wednesday</b>  | <b>Copy for the December newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.</b><br>Email: <a href="mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com">ericwhiting4@bigpond.com</a> . Phone: 6953 2612.  |
| <b>9 December Thursday</b>   | <b>Monthly Meeting will be held in the Presbyterian Church, 29 Sycamore St, Leeton at 7.00pm.</b><br><b>Topic:</b> To be decided<br><b>Contact:</b> Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536 290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham) Email: <a href="mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com">murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com</a> .  |
| <b>11 December Saturday</b>  | <b>End of Year gathering at Middle Beach, Euroley.</b><br><b>Meet at 5.30pm Spotlight walk after dinner.</b><br>This will be a BYO everything to be COVID safe. Please register with Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham) Email: <a href="mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com">murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com</a>  |

### Other events.

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>6 - 14 November</b>      | <b>Frog ID Week</b> - see page 15 for details and how to participate.  |
| <b>6 - 11 November</b>      | <b>Wild Pollinator Count</b> - see page 15 for details and how to participate.   |
| <b>15 – 19 November</b>     | <b>Mallee Fowl Monitoring Mt Hope area</b> - details will be issued soon.  |
| <b>25 November Thursday</b> | <b>"Local Leeton Bushland – How to recognise our important bushland places"</b><br>see page 15 for details and how to participate. |

**[Australasian Bittern Conservation Summit 2022](#)** (Riverina Local Land Services) – **1 to 4 February 2022**, Leeton. This is the first time such a conference has been held, and is a unique opportunity to connect with scientists, conservationists, wetland managers, birdwatchers and farmers who share a passion about the iconic Australasian Bittern. The program will include expert speakers and tours. You can sign up to receive updates as the event approaches. Registration is open.