

# The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



**May 2026 - Issue #346**  
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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



Liverworts  
Eric Whiting

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

For the June issue by  
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**"It seems to me that the natural world is the greatest source of excitement; the greatest source of visual beauty; the greatest source of intellectual interest. It is the greatest source of so much in life that makes life worth living."  
— Sir David Attenborough**

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

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

**FIELD TRIPS** NORMALLY TAKE PLACE ON THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND; (Leeton, Griffith, Narrandera areas) AND ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH (Wagga Wagga area)

INTENDING NEW MEMBERS, GUESTS AND VISITORS WELCOME.

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

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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 May

Autumn is in full swing though we could do with more rain. Fungi are scarce. Here is another impressive newsletter covering an extensive range of interesting and topical subjects. I hope you find plenty of interest. Many thanks to all the contributors.

First I would like to draw your attention to this month's presentation on a lesser-known subject - **cryptogams**. Being small they are often overlooked but form an important part of the ecosystem. Eric has written a brief introduction (next page) to wet the appetite.

Regarding Margaret Strong's article about Mirrool (Merool) Creek in earlier times, I have combined the three parts into a single article (pdf file). Let me know if you'd like a copy.

Our website is now up to date with the latest newsletters and a recent article so do refer any anyone you think may be interested in the club to have look. [www.mfn.org.au](http://www.mfn.org.au)

With no observations this month, I will share one of mine...

'til next month, **Rowena**.

### Lawyer's Wig Fungus *Coprinus comatus*

I found around twenty of these fungi on the centre strip of Chelmsford Place, Leeton.

They were spread out over an area of about 2 x 3 metres and were about 8cm tall. What was interesting was they were at different stages of their cycle.



## Cryptogams – a brief introduction for this month’s presentation

Not wanting to pre-empt Chris Cargill’s presentation as she is a world expert on Bryophytes particularly liverworts, but cryptogam is possibly a term you don’t know and therefore may think this is not for you. To the contrary, I think you will be enthralled to discover this group of plants.

Cryptogams – from crypto = hidden and gams =gametes – are the forgotten members of the plant world where botanists and ecologists only consider vascular plants (ferns, cycads, palms, conifers, and flowering plants). They mistakenly think anything else is not important. Not so. Cryptogam is an over-riding term for mosses, liverworts, hornworts, fungi including lichens and algae i.e. those plants that reproduce by spores and do not have a vascular system.

This loose group keep rainforests alive by controlling waterflow (epiphytes act as sponges), hold soils together against erosion as soil crusts, act as seed beds for ‘higher’ plants, and are the true pioneers of bare ground or other surfaces.

Cryptogams are well worth getting to know more about. I think everyone will get a lot out of Chris’s talk.

**Eric Whiting**

**Left: *Grimmia laevigata* moss growing on a rock**  
**Right: *Polytrichum juniperinum* looks like miniature pine seedlings or seeing the specific name – juniper seedlings.**

**Photos: Rowena Whiting.**



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## MFN 2026 Environmental Fund Grant Recipients

Despite promoting the availability of MFN’s grants widely through our newsletter, social media and Murrumbidgee Landcare, we only received three applications. Our committee deemed they all met the criteria, were worthy and they were happy to award them all.

The successful applicants were –

**Eric Whiting** with a ***Fivebough Biodiversity and Rehabilitation Project***. This will involve planting a degraded part of the wetlands.

**Narrandera Landcare** to continue their ***Woody Weed Control Project***. Our funding will assist the group to purchase more equipment and obtain additional training for their members in the use of herbicides and chainsaws.

**Emily Shannon** with her ***Murrumbidgee Food Web Board Game Development Project***. This project involves the development, trial, and launch of an educational board game centred on the species and ecological relationships of the Murrumbidgee ecosystem. Our committee were very enthusiastic about this novel project and have agreed to auspice Emily’s grant application to Wagga Wagga City Council. If that application is successful, this grant will fund the GST component of it.

MFN wish all the applicants every success with their projects and look forward to hearing about the results.

**Glenn Currie**

## Malleefowl new promotional video

The New South Wales Malleefowl Recovery Group (NSWMRG) new promotional video was presented by their President David Kellett at our April monthly meeting.

Monitoring the Malleefowl is critical to understanding and securing the future of this nationally vulnerable species.

### Why monitoring matters:

**Tracks population trends** – Regular mound surveys show whether numbers are increasing, stable, or declining.

**Measures breeding success** – Active mound monitoring indicates reproductive output and seasonal success.

**Informs management** – Data guides predator control, habitat restoration, and fire management decisions.

**Identifies threats early** – Monitoring detects impacts from foxes, feral cats, grazing pressure, or drought.

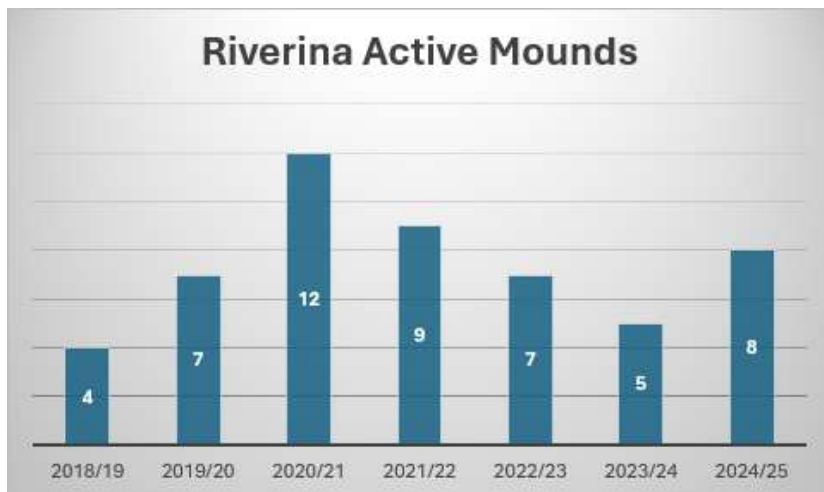
**Supports funding and policy** – Reliable long-term data strengthens grant applications and recovery planning.

**Engages the community** – Volunteer monitoring builds stewardship and local ownership of conservation outcomes.

In short, without consistent monitoring, conservation efforts risk being reactive and unfocused. Good data ensures management actions are targeted, effective, and measurable over time.



MFNs members engaged in Malleefowl monitoring activities:  
Mt Mulga in 2024 during training (top)  
Yalgogrin in 2019-2020



Here in NSW, we have very limited Malleefowl monitoring data, and what we do have has been inconsistent, so the NSWMRG was formed to address this problem. But we need more volunteers and funding to make it happen.

The chart shows the results from the 155 Malleefowl mounds in the Riverina dating back to 2018 and you can see how the numbers of active mounds fluctuate depending on the season.

### David Kellett

Project Manager, NRM | Local Land Services Agency, **Local Land Services**

The video was produced to raise the profile of the NSWMRG, the short film highlights the vital work being undertaken to protect and monitor the remarkable Malleefowl across New South Wales. It aims to inspire community members to get involved - whether by volunteering to monitor mounds, supporting field activities, or through donating. The video was sponsored by MFN in 2025. We appreciated David coming to Leeton and look forward to future visits. Our thanks. Ed.

## Barren Box report 24 April 2026

On 24 April 12 MFN members carpoled and visited Barren Box storage to survey the birds and vegetation and have a closer look at the Wetland cell, the largest by area. We were joined by Brooke and Herman from Murrumbidgee Irrigation and it was lovely to have Judy Betts back in the field.

Meeting at the gate, it was very windy, and with little protection, there were not many birds compared to previous visits. At the bridge and main channel we dispersed seeking those small elusive birds and getting a better look through the scope - thanks to John Hogan for the loan. White-breasted Woodswallows are always a delight, even better up close. We saw 6 Brolgas fly over which we were lucky to see again later in the visit at the intermediate cell. At the interpretation centre and revegetation area, we had some wind protection. The Zebra Finches had the best protection, in the saltbush - I could hear the bushes singing. There's something about their fine black and white stripes, tan with white spots and red-orange beak that keeps drawing me in, such enchanting little birds. The raptors were well represented with 9 Whistling Kites, 2 Wedge-tailed Eagles, 1 Brown Falcon, 1 Black-shouldered Kite.

On our way to the Intermediate cell - the only one with water, we stopped along the causeway, there was a quick flash of 10 Cockatiels in flight, and 9 White-winged Fairy-wrens in the shrubbery.



Left: Black-fronted Dotterel  
Above: Zebra Finch in saltbush  
Below: Cockatiel feeding post-harvest rice

At the intermediate cell, although the bird numbers were not as we have seen previously, it was lovely to watch the Pelicans. The scope was focused on the Brolgas, the Silver Gull on us and the Black-fronted Dotterel gave us the corner of its eye. We decided to not venture into the Wetland cell as it appeared fairly similar vegetation to what we had already seen. Exiting the gate on Shaw Rd we saw four Red-capped Robins, Singing Honeyeaters, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater and a pair of Black-shouldered Kites in trees with big nests. We all enjoyed the flora, Paul Walker in particular who was seen wandering far. He has compiled his report with Margaret Strong.

There were many members who were unable to attend this time, so I'm thinking another date will be coming up in July/August or later in the year.

**Sarah Danckert Photos by Janet Hume**

Links to the bird lists for the 3 locations:

<https://birddata.birdlife.org.au/survey?id=10532450&h=7ee23acf> - Barren Box entry - 1st bridge

<https://birddata.birdlife.org.au/survey?id=10532446&h=67cadb94> - Barren Box active & intermediate cells

<https://birddata.birdlife.org.au/survey?id=10532443&h=bae5b471> - Shaw Road



## Some notes on the flora of Barren Box, Warrawidgee - Tabbita.

On Friday 24 April members of MFN visited Barren Box wetlands. Effort on flora identification admittedly suffered due to the distraction of birdwatching.

A good insight into this saltbush dominated community is found in the NSW Government app, Trees Near Me NSW. This plant community type is described as 'Black Box – Lignum woodland wetland'. Within the Barren Box storage area however extensive flooding and disturbance has resulted in a saltbush (*chenopodiaceae*) dominated community. Doubting my ability to identify many of the saltbush, I quote from the app 'The ground cover includes low shrubs such as *Sclerolaena muricata* var. *muricata*, *Encyalaena tomentosa*, *Einadia nutans* ssp. *nutans* and various .... *Atriplex* spp....'. Roly-Poly (*Sclerolaena* sp.) and Old man Saltbush (*Atriplex nummularia*) being obvious larger shrubs.

In the vicinity of the visitor facilities, dense blocks of planted *Eucalyptus* spp. were maturing and appeared healthy. Density and shading beneath allows little other diversity. At this area, and along the access roads, many exotic weeds were obvious. Noogoora Burr, Bathurst Burr, Fleabane, Solanum (poss. native sp. with pale yellow fruits), Khaki Weed and Bindii.

The remnant Black Box Gum (*Eucalyptus largiflorens*) had the misfortune to have been growing in the ephemeral watercourse which the irrigation scheme adapted for long term storage; thus killing them. The evidence of this previous forest can be seen in the dead trees still standing within the shallow storage. The reference, *Native Trees and Shrubs of South-Eastern Australia* – L. Costermans, describes this plant '... Wood: Reddish, hard, heavy and durable; good for posts...blossoms may be pink as well as cream on the one tree...'. The durability of the wood seems evident here. I have seen this unusual ability to produce different colour flowers elsewhere and recall the charming effect.



From left: Sarah and Judy looking at mistletoe growing on Rosewood; Mistletoe; Billardiera versicolor flowering.

Leaving the enclosure of Barren Box storage, on Shaw Rd we found a sudden transition from the exotic weeds and saltbush to some interesting roadside flora. Black Box (*Eucalyptus largiflorens*), Cooba (*Acacia salicina*), Bootlace Wattle (*Acacia stenophylla*), Wedge-Leaf Hop Bush (*Dodonaea viscosa* ssp. *cuneata*), Tar Bush (*Eremophila glabra*), Weeping Pittosprum (*Pittosporum angustifolia*), fruiting, and the climber Pale Appleberry (*Billardiera versicolor*), in flower, Interestingly, Rosewood (*Alectryon oleifolius*) bearing flowering mistletoe was also seen. The mistletoe initially catching our attention, we luckily found a couple of the distinctive 2-lobed woody capsules on the Rosewood, a plant that many of us rarely see.

Paul Walker

## Images from Barren Box

Brolgas in formation, Pelicans in flight, waterbirds from the bridge – Janet Hume



## Tarcutta Swifts

Lakna Gunawardana from Local Land Services has asked me to survey Swift Parrots and invite fellow birdos along. She has put me in contact with 6 landholders centred around Tarcutta, they have beautiful farming country with some remnant vegetation, or some regenerated, or some revegetated. The Swift Parrots have free access to all these options, but not everyone else, so I'm very excited to be able to visit these locations. And there's always Livingstone & Mates Gully Travelling Stock Route as great locations as well. I haven't seen a Swift Parrot yet, surely this is my year.



Mostly the large and connected groups of trees are in the hilly back bush paddocks, there are also trees along fence lines and some good stands within paddocks. I have asked the landholders to keep an eye out for flowering eucalypts. Surveys are being done of the tree locations as well as the homestead & yard. Several of the landholders have great bird knowledge, some keen to upskill and I'm

working on converting the rest to be bird nerds. I have young 12-year-old Harry in my sights! BirdLife has provided me with more of their Woodland Birds of south-east Australia identification booklets to share and Janet has printed lists from our Birds on Farms program. It's likely these properties will have very similar lists. The plan is to find the Parrots, share with this group and maintain confidentiality of the location and the landholder.



Some information about the birds to help our quest:

- Migratory nectar feeders follow the flowering of Red Stringybark, Mugga Ironbark and the Box group of eucalypts in our region - we're likely to see them feeding, or on their way to the flowers
- Sometimes there's a bumper, one hit flowering of a whole species, this year the flowering is patchy - not all trees of a species, not all trees of that species flowering all at once
- Look for trees in bud and flower and listen for bees and other species of honeyeaters
- Migratory nectar feeders move together - always listen & look for Swift Parrots when there are Noisy Friarbirds, Red Wattlebirds, Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters or Fuscous Honeyeaters about
- Honeyeaters chase other species out of the feasting spot they've found - so listen out for squabbling & look for birds chasing others around
- Birds have long memories of the best feasting locations, always check previous sighting locations for Swift Parrots. There is a property near Temora where the landholder says the Swifties come every year on their return journey south!
- Watch the skies - for honeyeater flocks. Friarbirds have been seen a month ago, more recently small flocks of Brown-headed Honeyeaters have been seen. Swift Parrots will be similar to a Superb Parrot flock flying. Swifties will be noticeably faster, and possibly more roller-coaster like, not so long head to tail, you may see flashes of red - there's a lot of red on the underside of the wing and their in-flight chatter will be different from the Superbs - see a video and audio below
- Watch the skies morning and early evening. A flock sighted feeding at Tarcutta Hills Reserve roosted overnight at a location different to the feeding spot. It was on a nearby farm, they travelled to and from their roost each day to the reserve.
- Have your phone handy and consider video as the go-to option. Mobile phone cameras can provide surprising quality - they will capture the bird sounds, the number of birds in the flock
- Even when the birds are right there in front of you, you may hear them yet they can be very hard to see

There's a really good video of a flock flying overhead on this Facebook post

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1Gr9CCx1X4/>

This is a bunch of short audio recordings to help you get your ear in

<https://xeno-canto.org/species/Lathamus-discolor>

**Sarah Danckert**

## Discovering Sandhills

A 'Discovering Sandhills Tour from Deniliquin to Wanganella' popped up on my radar. I was free to go and I didn't look any further into it, just signed up. I vaguely wondered if MFN members would be interested in it but our newsletter was already out and I didn't know much about it, so simply invited Nella along who I know has an interest in sandhills. In hindsight, I owe an apology to our members for not letting them know of the day. It was excellent!

The meeting point was in Deniliquin and it was a very popular event with many attendees. The organisers had a well-planned and structured day laid out. Carpooling was quickly sorted then we were off to the first site.



**Sandhill near Wanganella.** Its considered one of the best, if not the best, example of a Riverina Sandhill Woodland. It's on private property so visiting isn't usually an option. To give you an idea of the sandhill here's a video of [Hay Plains Landcare visit in 2020](#). I'm used to totally denuded sandhills in the Narrandera area and have wondered what they used to look like. Zara gave me a good indication – thick, very biodiverse vegetation you can't see through. If you ever get a chance to visit you should!

It was fenced off years ago by early owners, possibly as a horse paddock. The wife of an early owner was a keen naturalist and some of her species' collection is at National

Herbarium of NSW. In the 1980's it got some recognition of its values and better fencing and regeneration was initiated. Conservation efforts continued into the 1990's.

Speakers on the day included Philip Maher, Michael Mullins and Nigel Jones. Philip and Michael spoke about how Zara Sandhill has been cleared of African Boxthorn and rabbits two or three times previously in the last few decades. Unfortunately, rabbits are appearing again and Boxthorn is establishing again. Nigel is with the Biodiversity Conservation Trust, and I got the impression further conservation efforts can happen at Zara.



I mentioned it was a very structured event so we couldn't just wander idyllically around Zara all day exploring but ventured onto the next site. This was the **Wanganella Sandhill**.

It's on a Travelling Stock Route (TSR) north of Deni; a 17ha. site which was cleared years ago. Revegetation efforts started in the early 2000's. There was funding for the first few years and after this ran out, volunteers kept working away at the site. The sandhill had pretty much just one living tree on it at the start but continual revegetation efforts have transformed it.

There have been quite a few drought years since 2001 and a lot can be learned from the efforts there. Philip was very open about how 30 000 seedlings were planted and maybe 10 000 survived. What Philip learned was weed control was essential to limit the

competition for moisture. Protection from animals was also vital. Rabbits and kangaroos are a major problem at the site. The biggest issue with kangaroos is they disturb the tree guards which allows rabbits to attack the seedlings. Philip shared a novel tip to help with this. He likes to use the corflute tree guards secured with a sturdy hardwood stake. To help anchor them he puts a bamboo stake diagonally through the tree guard which helps immensely to hold it in place.

Philip also shared that wallabies can be a big problem for revegetation sites. They're browsers unlike kangaroos which are more grazers. Wallabies aren't an issue at the sites we visited but definitely have to be considered for any works around Narrandera.

The last site we visited is called the **Monimail Exchange Site**. This is again on a TSR and had more remnant vegetation than Wanganella Sandhill, including *Acacia victoriae*. Revegetation efforts started shortly after the Wanganella ones and the lessons learned there were applied. This, coupled with its sandy loam soil, resulted in better survival rates than Wanganella.

A lot of hand watering was involved at both sites until seedlings got established. Direct seeding was tried at both sites, largely failing at Wanganella, but with more success at Monimail.



It was an inspiring day showing what can be done with a lot of determination and hard work. An example of the hard work is at Wanganella where we came across a few very large pits in the sandhill. Maybe 2m deep by 3m square? They had a vertical face exposed with many holes in it. The pits were all hand dug by Philip! The holes in the face were made by White-backed Swallows which started using the site within 6 weeks of excavation. I believe Red-backed Kingfishers have also taken advantage of the site.

Philip's bird knowledge and observational abilities are immense. If I install a nest box, I might be able to report seeing a bird near it. He could inform us how

many clutches some species raised out of a particular nestbox in any season. Philip's revegetation efforts extended to collecting various mistletoe seeds and putting them on likely host species. From memory, he did thousands and not a lot survived, but enough have that he's happy to let Mistletoe birds take over and keep spreading them.



I was asked towards the end of the day whether I gained any inspiration and I replied "Just for my dreams 😊". I've looked into Narrandera Landcare planting on sandhills before and it seemed too difficult. But on the way home I came up with a couple of ideas I'll tentatively pursue. If any of them come to fruition, you'll read about it here in The Murrumbidgee Naturalist!

Many thanks to RGA Landcare, Janet Manzin, Andrea Mitchell, Philip, Michael and Nigel for this incredibly educational day.

**Text by Glenn Currie, photos courtesy Ryan Heffer Photography**

This is a link to the booklet [Discovering Sandhills Booklet](#)

## Building Bittern Refuges

Matt Herring, who is well known to MFN, has been successful in receiving funding from the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (Environmental Activities Program). He is the Principal Ecologist at Murray Wildlife Pty Ltd and has been working on and waiting for this opportunity for several years. His aim is to "Build Bittern Refuges" in irrigation areas where there aren't any significant natural wetlands remaining, one dedicated refuge in each of the Murrumbidgee, Coleambally and Murray Irrigation Areas.



*Photo: Phillip Williams*

MFN has worked with Matt in previous projects for bittern tracking, the Bittern Summit and the Bitterns in Rice Project. This project will see a total of about 34 hectares converted to wetland and complement the habitat values of rice fields, like providing habitat after harvest in autumn and throughout winter. He has the support of some enthusiastic local irrigators. The new habitat will target the Australasian Bittern (conservation status is Endangered in NSW and the Commonwealth) and also incorporate the habitat requirements of other threatened species like the Southern Bell Frog and Australian Painted-snipe.

On Tuesday 21 April, I travelled with Matt and several team members to Wirra-lo



*Photo: Matt Herring at the Bittern-specific constructed wetland at Wirra-lo, shallow feeding grounds in the foreground and for nesting, Cumbungi stands are further back*

wetlands near Murrabit. I learnt a lot! Wirra-lo is a 180ha property that has been dedicated to wetland conservation. We met Damian Cook of the Wetlands Revival Trust who provided us with the stories alongside the tour of the property. It has 11 constructed wetlands, two 5ha ones of which were constructed by Matt Herring 7 years ago with the features specifically required for the Australasian Bittern, see the wetland diagram (see below). And it worked! The Australasian and the Little Bitterns came AND nested.

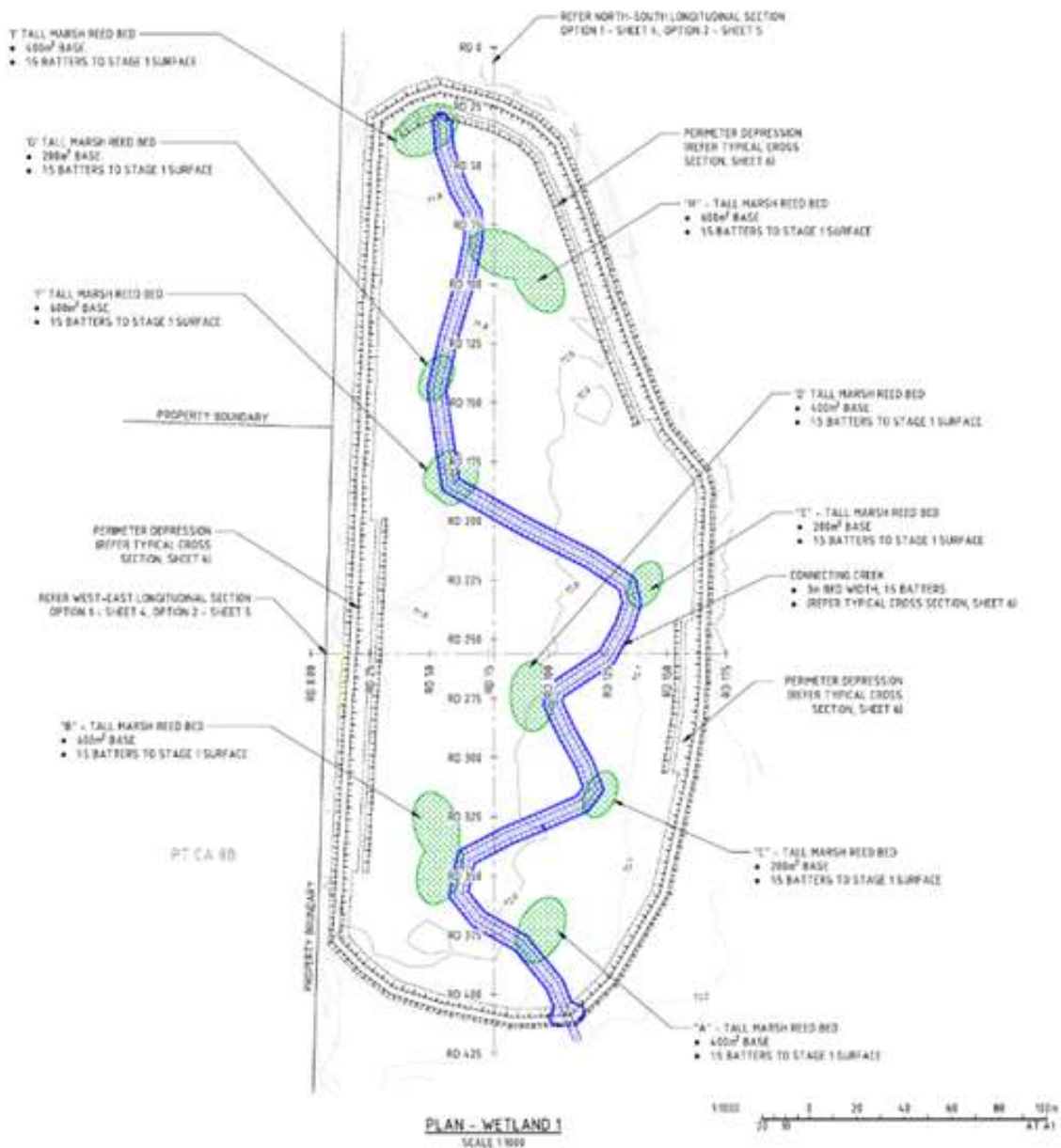
Features of the Bittern-specific design are the creek which provides water to the deep pools where tall reeds grow, the shallow periphery for water plants, water bugs, small fish and frogs to breed. The benefit to bitterns by creating adequate water levels, edges and vegetation structure provides roosting, feeding and breeding opportunities so long as the water is available. Having access to Environmental water ensures there is adequate water for the entire duration of the bittern's breeding cycle, even outside of the rice season and during droughts. It is possible, if the wetland is permanent, the Australasian Bittern may not need to migrate 600km over winter. In rice farming, the rice fields can dry too soon for the female bittern to feed her chicks to maturity. She has to leave the chicks to search further distances for food for herself and her chicks, leaving the nest undefended and vulnerable to predators. She may have a range of up to 90ha. By comparison, the Little Bittern needs just one farm dam.

There is information about growing "Bittern Friendly Rice" below.

The method is proven, now to build. The constructed wetland refuges will complement rice field habitats and provide the additional habitat to ensure breeding success. Each will be over 10ha and located in each of the Irrigation areas. There will be numerous opportunities for school children and indigenous people to participate and the whole communities of places like Coleambally will benefit - see the video below. Matt will produce a booklet about the best practice wetland creation for Riverina wildlife. There will be field days, control of cats and foxes and monitoring of the response of biodiversity to the new wetlands.

MFN is invited to contribute to the on-going monitoring of the bitterns and other biodiversity at the sites by surveying them and participating in field days.

**Diagram of a constructed Bittern specific wetland.** There is a containment wall - black, at the perimeter to create shallow water and mud flats as the water evaporates for feeding grounds, an artificial creek - blue, to fill the deep pools - green, where reeds are planted for nesting habitat e.g. Cumbungi *Typha orientalis* or Giant rush *Juncus ingens*.



For a re-cap on Bitterns in Rice, here's some with fun:

<https://vimeo.com/68458195?fl=pl&fe=cm>

For more information and to follow the project first hand see:

<https://www.bitternsinrice.com.au/new-project-building-bittern-refuges/>

For more information about Wirra-lo see:

<https://wetlandrevaltrust.org/wirra-lo-wetlands/>

For more information about Bittern-friendly rice and Nice Rice see:

<https://www.bitternsinrice.com.au/free-online-course-for-bittern-friendly-rice-growers/>

Sarah Danckert

# MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

## Significant sightings

Jacky Winter [1]	'Trewalla', Book Book	10/04/26	BOF survey*
Grey-crowned Babbler [10]	'Trewalla', Book Book	10/04/26	BOF survey*
Crested Skrike-tit [2]	'Yabtree West' Mundarlo	16/04/26	BOF survey*
Red-capped Robin [1]	Pomingalarna Reserve, Wagga Wagga	19/04/26	Sarah Danckert
Speckled Warbler [2]	Pomingalarna Reserve, Wagga Wagga	19/04/26	Sarah Danckert
White-winged Fairy Wren [15]	Barren Box Storage, Griffith	24/04/26	MFN Outing
Brolga [6]	Barren Box Storage, Griffith	24/04/26	MFN Outing
Double-barred Finch [10]	Robyne's Nest, Goobarragandra Rd	26/04/26	Janet Hume
Brown-headed Honeyeater [4]	Mates Gully TSR, nr Tarcutta	27/04/26	Sarah Danckert
Restless Flycatcher [2]	Mates Gully TSR, nr Tarcutta	27/04/26	Sarah Danckert
Spotted Harrier	Colinroobie Road, via Leeton	02/05/26	Nella Smith
Flame Robin	Barellan Road	09/05/26	Nella Smith

## Sightings of interest

Southern Boobook [1]	Flowerdale Lagoon, Wagga Wagga	12/04/26	S Danckert, H Germantse
Double-barred Finch [5]	Whitton Museum, Whitton	26/04/26	Margaret Strong

Compiled by Janet Hume, reviewed by Nella Smith

\* BOF – Birds on Farms

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## Bogong Watch Update from the Bogong Watch Newsletter April 2026

Further to the information from The Guardian newspaper in our March edition of the Naturalist, the update reports that in February 2026 twenty researchers and volunteers for the Western Sydney University and Invertebrates Australia Citizen Science project tagged 14,700 moths to enable tracking of the moths as they leave the Alps. The aim of the project is to know where the moths go to and therefore where they've come from to the Alps in early Summer.



Two tagging methods were used:

1. **Paper** tags with an individual ID tracking code, glued to the back of moths.
2. Paint marks on the back of moths, which is quicker to apply but vulnerable to the elements.

In total 6,000 paper tags were applied in a week and 8,700 paint marks applied in three days.

**Tracking the moth flight paths from the Alps has begun** as they migrate to their places of origin.

**What can you do?** Photograph any Bogong Moth that you see and upload it to iNaturalist. If it is tagged with an ID code, report it [Bogong.org/tagging](https://www.bogong.org/tagging).

**Margaret Strong**

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## Other Events

Murrumbidgee Landcare are hosting a [series of free biodiversity workshops](#) across the region throughout May. Supported by the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust, these workshops will cover topics ranging from conserving native species and habitats to sustainable land management practices. Each session offers a hands-on opportunity to learn, connect, and contribute to biodiversity conservation across the Murrumbidgee region.

# \*\*\*\* 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.

- 14 May Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore Street Leeton, please join in person or on Zoom at 6.45pm to start at 7.00pm  
**Topic/speaker: Cryptogams**, especially Bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) and how they have adapted to the dry 'Mediterranean' conditions in Australia by **Christine Cargill (ANU)**. Chris will speak for about thirty minutes and welcomes questions from the audience. See page 3 for a short piece about cryptogams by Eric. **This will be 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.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com) if you have any queries
- 17 May Sunday** **Narrandera Nature Reserve (Koala Park) Outing**  
**Organiser: Glenn Currie**  
**Meet at the entrance to the Narrandera Flora & Flora reserve (aka The Common).**  
**Time 9am.** Bring morning tea and lunch.  
**Please register with Glenn 0488 563 321**  
Or **Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com)
- 3 June Wednesday** **Copy for the June newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**  
**Email:** [ericwhiting4@bigpond.com](mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com) Phone: 0429 726 120.
- 4 June 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)
- 11 June Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore Street Leeton, please join in person or on Zoom at 6.45pm to start at 7.00pm  
**Topic/speaker: TBA**  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com)
- 14 June Sunday** **Wagga Sunday afternoon Birdwalks**  
**Rocky Hill - meet at the path between 73 - 75 Simkin Cres, Koorinal.**  
**Time 2:30pm** for 1-2hrs depending on your time, the weather and the birds.  
There are binoculars for those without, and bird ID booklets. Dress for the weather, comfortable shoes.  
**Contact:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com)  
Phone: Sarah 0427 276 306 or Janet 0408238890
- 28 June Sunday** **Wagga Sunday afternoon Birdwalks**  
**San Isidore - meet on Kapooka Rd, just 300m from the intersection of Sturt Hwy, there's a carpark next to the reserve.**  
**Time 2:30pm** for 1-2hrs depending on your time, the weather and the birds.  
**Contact:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com)  
Phone: Sarah 0427 276 306 or Janet 0408 238 890
- 11 July Saturday** **Field trip to The Quarry TSR at Alfredtown**  
to meet the Wagga 4WD Club and assist them with ideas for re-vegetation of the site which has two plant communities:
- ID 276 Yellow Box grassy tall woodland on alluvium or parna loams and clays on flats
  - ID 266 White Box grassy woodland in the upper slopes
- After lunch, we will visit a second location, TBC.