

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



December 2018 - Issue #266

Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.

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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



Lake Cowal: mine pit and lake in perspective - Penny Williams

A soaring Wedge-tailed Eagle - Kathy Tenison

The Club recently visited the Lake Cowal Conservation Foundation

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CONTRIBUTIONS

**For the February 2019 issue by
Wednesday 6 February**

to Rowena Whiting

Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com.

Phone: 6953 2612

***Wishing you all
a very happy and
safe time at Christmas***

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

President:	Graham Russell	0419 350 673	Editor:	Rowena Whiting	6953 2612
Vice President:	Alan Whitehead	6959 3779	Committee:	Trevor O'Brien	6962 5614
Vice President:	Eric Whiting	6953 2612		Joy Young	
Vice President:	Virginia Tarr	6962 5614		Glenn Currie	
Secretary:	Nella Smith	6959 1210			
Treasurer:	Ellené Schnell	6959 8435	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 7.30 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	
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 December and the final issue for the year

The topic for Thursday night is a '**members night**' so please bring along something(s) that have been of special interest for you - images, specimens, stories, newsletter article - over the year.

At the AGM last month Graham Russell was re-elected president with Alan Whitehead, Eric Whiting and Virginia Tarr continuing as Vice Presidents. There were a couple of changes to the committee with Trevor O'Brien and Joy Young being elected.

Enjoy your summer break. Rowena.

Looking Back and Looking Forward

As we come to the end of another year it is usual to reflect on what the year brought us – the successes, the failures and the missed opportunities. At the same time we can look forward to the coming year. Do we repeat the successes, perhaps with variations or even extended ideas? The weekend campouts certainly would come into this category.

Despite the drought conditions we can proudly say we did not have any complete failures. Our regular bi-monthly excursions still went ahead, though sometimes with reduced numbers or with last minute alterations of plans. Not once was a trip cancelled because nobody turned up at the meeting place. Perhaps we have learnt that even in the hardest of conditions, nature keeps going and there is always something to see.

Of the missed opportunities the standout is the postponement of the Photographic Exhibition. This great opportunity to tell the population we are here and have much to offer needs people to help organise it if we are to hold it this coming year.

The coming year – what are the prospects? Bi-monthly excursions need to be planned. Please don't leave it to the few stalwarts. Following on from the past couple of years a few ad hoc events such as nest box inspections and vegetation surveys are proposed. Some of them can be mid-week for us retirees to have more involvement. Also as a result of events this year, it is proposed we conduct a survey of the conservation values of roadsides and reserves, firstly in Leeton Shire. The aim is to provide Council(s) with information based on our knowledge base and expertise for them to use in better management of their undertakings.

Finally 2019 will see our 25th anniversary in October. It would be fitting if we could organise a special event to mark this, in the past we have organised conferences, the 10th anniversary was celebrated with a dinner with a special guest speaker. Now is the time to start planning.

Eric Whiting

ROCK OF AGES

Mal Carnegie is a rock: a tall, tough country boy born and bred in this same unforgiving land which hosts the Evolution gold mine, the epicenter of our outing on November 24, 2018. He is also the rock upon which the success of the Lake Cowal Conservation Centre is assured, which has its home adjacent to the gold mine.

It was in their spacious tearoom/conference centre that Mal welcomed us with a mandatory video on mine safety. Apparently, with the stringent obligations of OH&S attached to Australian mines, too much safety is never enough. And this colossal enterprise is, happily, Aussie owned and operated.

Our host then gave us an informative talk on the mine and its history; along with lots of operational facts and figures. This is indeed a major industrial complex just 40 or so kilometres north of sleepy West Wyalong.

Then he escorted us on a tour of the mine; hard hats, hi-vis vests and safety glasses for all. We looked, for all the world, like a party of desperate politicians canvassing for regional votes!

Ah, nature at last. At the lookout above the yawning abyss of the pit we saw not one but three raptors; a Wedge-tailed Eagle, a Whistling Kite and a Kestrel. Each was effortlessly soaring above a landscape unblest by any other living thing. So why were they there?

An open cut mine of this scale completely transforms the topography; from a formally featureless plain there now rises small mountains of rubble and ore, with the pit itself a 1.3 kilometre-wide grand canyon with near vertical sides. So the wind movement in the vicinity is itself transformed, with eddies and updrafts providing a plenitude of opportunities for the aerobatics of these joyful birds. In short, they were not seeking prey, they were just having fun!

The nominal reason for the trip was, however, to visit the small inland sea that is Lake Cowal. When full, as it was in 2016, it is said to be one of the largest bodies of fresh water in NSW, being some 18 kilometres long north to south, and 10km wide.

Alas, as it is a uniformly shallow lake – at best 3 metres deep – Mal predicts that it will be dry by February 2019: unless of course it receives a heavy inflow before then.

From another lookout we could gaze over a large part of the lake, a vista including fringing River Red Gum forests, mud flats for waders, and wide, grassy verges for grazing animals, such as the scattered emus present on that sunny, windy morn.

We also saw patches of lignum, an extraordinary plant that can live equally in and out of water, its long, thick, slender branches storing moisture much like a giant succulent.

Mal then told us a sorry tale of how, where we could now see only bare mud flats, not so long ago these were blanketed in a life-sustaining lignum “forest”. That is until some unconscionably careless campers permitted their fire to escape, totally incinerating around 1800 hectares of this precious floral resource.

“But it will grow back again ... surely?” one of our number asked.

“Maybe in about 200 years.” Mal replied grimly.

Apart from the plant community itself, think what vital habitat was destroyed for so much wildlife, like the Sacred Ibis and White-winged Fairy Wren.



Members geared up for visiting the mine site (Penny Williams)
Overlooking the mine pit with a Wedge-tailed Eagle soaring (Kathy Tenison)

Our sombre mood was lifted as we were bussed back to the LCCC for morning tea (we MFNs love our food stops). Then off again to interface with the lake itself. And what splendour there was, with thousands of water birds along the shore line visible to us. The three scopes were never idle!



“All this in less than a kilometre;” Max mused “imagine how much bird life the entire circumference (my estimate, north of 60 kilometres) of the lake supports.”

I leave it to others to supply the species list; but among my favourite sightings was a family of Pink-eared Ducks foraging at the water’s edge. These were in company with several Red-necked Avocets and Black-winged Stilts. For trivia buffs: as a ratio, the Avocet has the longest legs to body size of any bird on earth!

Above these was the constant presence of Whiskered Terns, their scything dihedral flight

challenged only by the arrow-like speed of a small flock of Spine-tailed Sandpipers. Bird watching at its best!

Then back to the Centre for lunch; and another talk by our tireless host. Here he amused the “class” by producing a cannonball of hardened carbon steel. These are employed in the ore-crushing process. At first this dead weight was handed around person-to-person – until it was agreed that rolling it around randomly on the floor between the 10-pin chair and human legs was the preferred option.

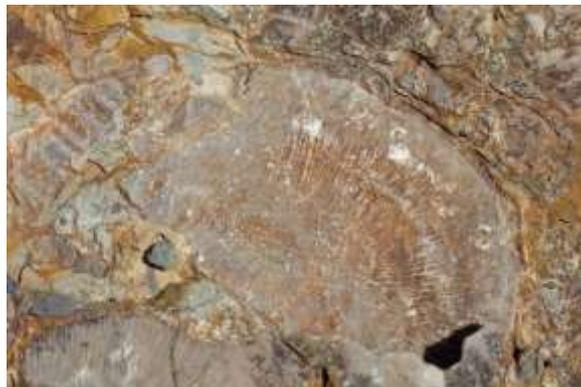
Before entering the bus for our last short excursion, I experienced one of my trip highlights. This was a *rock*. It rested innocuously beside the path to the carpark, having been hauled in from who-knows-where; obviously to reinforce the geologic credentials of the mine.

It was about the size of a flattened Mini Minor, of sedimentary origin and of pale, warm-toned hues. As a chunk of an ancient sea bed, it contained thousands of marine fossils in unknowable laminates. All these ancient animals were seemingly invertebrate – that is, they lived prior to the Devonian (“Age of Fishes”). Among these was a seafood basket of crustaceans, and mollusks, such as chitons, limpets, periwinkles, turban shells, whelks - and small, long-extinct ammonites. There was even a sampling of echinoderms, like crinoids and urchins.



This bounty ranged from tiny to quite large, one beauty, which may have been a coelenterate, like a jellyfish or coral, being about 10 centimetres in diameter.

Not only was there a matchless plethora of long-passed animals, some of the imprints were jewel-like in their perfection, with every pattern and texture of “skin” and exoskeleton being as hi-definition and contoured as if it were laid down yesterday – after hundreds of millions of years!



Flood plain of Lake Cowal with dead trees (Penny Williams)
Group on dune, southern end of Lake Cowal (Penny Williams)
Rock of Ages and close up of an exoskeleton (Rowena Whiting)

After a short drive out to see Mal's old abandoned family homestead, we set off on our return journey; our generous and competent driver Jude at the wheel. At this point there could hardly be anything new.

"Look, Cockatiels." said Nella, *sans* any special emphasis. But to me it was special indeed, as I had never seen these exquisite avians in the wild. And here they were, a small flock of seven or so, a feathered farewell winging along parallel to the bus.

Now, that's the way to conclude yet another wonderful outing with the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists.

Alan Whitehead

Lake Cowal Birdlist 24/11/18 compiled by Max O'Sullivan

Emu	Little Pied Cormorant	Little Black Cormorants
Darter	Pelican	Great Egret
White-faced Heron	Royal Spoonbill	White Ibis
Glossy Ibis	Freckled Duck	Wood Duck
Black Duck	Australasian Shoveller	Grey Teal
Pink-eared Duck	Whistling Kite	Wedge-tailed Eagle
Kestrel	Masked Lapwing	Black-fronted Dotterel
Red-kneed Dotterel	Red-capped Plover	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
Black-winged Stilt	Red-necked Avocet	Silver Gull
Whiskered Tern	Crested Pigeon	Galah
Cockatiel	Eastern Rosella	Red-rumped Parrot
Sacred Kingfisher	Welcome Swallow	Fairy Martin
Australian Pipit	White-fronted Chat	Double-barred Finch
Pee-wee	White-winged Chough	Apostlebird
Pied Butcherbird	Masked Woodswallow	White-browed Woodswallow
Magpie	Australian Raven	Little Raven

+ possible Orange Chat but only a brief glimpse so not a definite sighting

Challenge Bird Count at Xmas Gathering 01/12/18

The Xmas party at Gogelderie Weir Caravan Park included a brief bird count through the park and along the weir near the boat ramp. This was part of the BirdLife Challenge Bird Count and we managed to spot 24 species before returning to the hall for the main Xmas meal.

Within the grounds we had some very obliging **Yellow Rosellas** and **Red-rumped Parrots** feeding on the lawn. On the walk towards the boat ramp, there were quite a few birds to be seen flitting about in the red gums. Possible the best bird seen, albeit by only a couple of members, was a **Crested Shrike-tit** just outside the main gate. Other birds included several **Brown Treecreepers** at close range on the ground and **White-breasted Woodswallows** in the dead trees over the water.



Red-rumped Parrot [5]	Yellow Rosella [10]	Striped Honeyeater [1]
Tree Martin [30]	Noisy Friarbird [3]	Magpie [6]
Crested Shrike-tit [1]	Singing Honeyeater [1]	White-plumed Honeyeater [8]
White Cockatoo [12]	Black Duck [12]	Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike [2]
Kookaburra [4]	Brown Treecreeper [4]	Sacred Kingfisher [1]
Galah [2]	Peewee [2]	Grey Shrike-Thrush [1]
White-winged Chough [3]	Welcome Swallow [4]	White-breasted Woodswallow [5]
Little Pied Cormorant [1]	Little Black Cormorant [2]	Peaceful Dove [2]

Max O'Sullivan

[Our grateful thanks go to Nella Smith for organising this event – the venue and the menu. Ed]

Native Seed Collection Workshop

delivered by Sue Logie

On Wednesday the 7th of November Sue Logie from Local Land Services presented a wonderful workshop on 'native seed collection, identification and storage' to a group of very interested local people who will use the techniques to revegetate the local environment. These people are treasures.

The workshop was organised by the Landcare Coordinator Kathy Tenison in conjunction with Nella Smith from the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists.

Sue began the workshop by saying 'It is amazing when farmers want to buy a property, they like to buy a farm that has established paddock trees and shelter belts, it is often very important to them'.

There was a range of experience in the group attending. Some had 30 years experience in botany, while other were new to the world of native plants, but a sharing of ideas and experiences were the order of the day.

Taking a moment for everyone to introduce themselves was very valuable as it gave us an idea of the perspective people had. Some wanted to return a bush block to its original state. Another farmer with established trees wanted to continue regeneration on her property and introduce such plants as Chocolate lily's. There were Landcare volunteers who would just like to regenerate the bushland.

All were very interested in maintaining and improving the landscape to provide homes and food for our much-loved wildlife and to provide a beautiful space in which to live.

Sue explained that 'When collecting seeds, it has always got to be done in an ethical manner'

Ways of collecting seed ethically are:

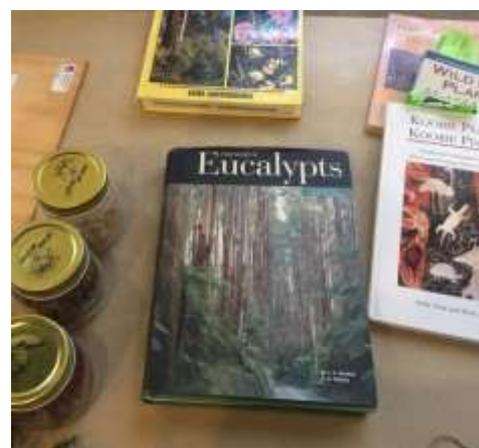
- do not take more than 10% of the seed present from remnant populations, any one plant or from the group of plants.
- do not collect seed from rare or threatened species
- be careful where you walk and avoid standing on native plants
- be careful not to bring collected weed seeds on your shoes or vehicles
- avoid driving into areas of high conservation significance and destroying ground cover
- make sure you get permission from the landholder or relevant government agency to collect seeds.

In terms of weeds, be very careful as some weeds can take up to six years to be removed from an area. Khaki weed is very bad according to Sue. She speaks from personal experience.

Some seeds need to be collected when the pods are closed because if they are open, they are quickly lost to the ground and difficult to collect. One such seed is the Acacia seed.

Sue is involved in the growing of seed production areas. Which in her terms are a bit like a seed orchard which is grown on good productive land to ensure the plants and the seeds are of very high quality. A bit like all species looking to reproduce, it is best if they are healthy as the progeny will benefit. If they are stressed, it is the progeny that suffer, in this case the seeds. These seed production areas are usually at their best for about 15 years and often contain up to 300 plants to encourage genetic diversity.

Sue has a wonderful native garden herself. She describes the Wedged leaf hopbush as a fantastic plant and loves to put grasses like kangaroo grass in her garden to provide another layer of plants. She also has a large number of Quandongs which she harvests and dries the fruit to eat. We all had a taste of the bush apricot as they are often referred to which would have increased our vitamin C intake for the day considerably. It was a little bitter but had a lovely apricot/peachy flavour to freshen us up.





She told us of techniques used to regenerate Buloke, where you can rip away from the canopy and in two or three years there will be a lot of new suckers forming around the original stand. This technique is certainly not suitable for Eucalypts.

She showed us photos of *Acacia salicina* that were two or three hundred years old providing wonderful shade, showing the investment in planting will be around for many years, so it is well worth putting in the effort now for future generations.

A seed collection calendar is hugely important in the tool kit of a seed collector as seeds mature and ripen at varying times and some of the plants shed more quickly than others. Yellow Box and Silver Wattle are plants that shed very quickly.

Knowing if Eucalypts are ready for collection can be tricky. Sue gave us a demonstration by cutting some seed pods with secateurs. If the inside of the seed pod is brown, it is ready to harvest however, if it is yellow it is not ready for harvest. The Eucalypt seed pods are left on a big sheet in her shed to fully open and drop their seed. The chaff then has to be sifted off and removed.

The seed is stored in a cool dark place which is between 10-15 degrees centigrade and with a humidity of 40-50% which means insects cannot reproduce and cause damage to the seed. An old fridge or a dark cool cupboard in a well-sealed container will do the trick for the less professional of us.

Sue has a great interest in educating Councils and Council workers on the benefits of native roadside vegetation as well as the protection of significant endangered endemic vegetation. This education is an important part of her work. The big problem is that people change jobs and new education is required all the time. Strategic plans to protect roadside vegetation is a must.

A couple of websites that are very useful to people looking to improve their knowledge on native plants and seed collection are.

Flora Bank <http://www.florabank.org.au/> and Plant net <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/>

Kathy Tenison

Improved flow management works at the Murrumbidgee River – Yanco Creek offtake

The Yanco Creek system is an anabranch that leaves the Murrumbidgee River at Yanco Weir and enters the Edward River at Moulamein. The system contains many interconnected creeks including Yanco, Colombo, Billabong and Forest Creeks.

This system contains many wetland assets and values that are highly regarded by both landholders, environmentalists and recreational users.

The project is a supply measure under the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM). A supply measure is a project that offsets the amount of water required to be recovered under the Basin Plan by providing equivalent or improved environmental outcomes using less water.

NSW Department of Industry held very well attended community and stakeholder meetings at Conargo and Jerilderie last week. The Jerilderie meeting was attended by at least 350 people from across the region. This is some of the information provided at this meeting with my concerns included in italics.

Ecological outcomes: Efficient delivery of environmental water to Murrumbidgee wetlands downstream of the Yanco Creek offtake. *This will mean that more Mid-Murrumbidgee wetlands will be able to be watered more easily on high flows. When there is a high flow, water flows over the existing regulator that is not accounted for. The MDBA considers these to be losses. The losses actually water wetlands and billabongs on the Yanco and Colombo Creeks.*

New infrastructure: The project proposes new infrastructure (two new regulators with fishways) to deliver environmental water more efficiently to Murrumbidgee River wetlands downstream of Yanco Creek, and provide fish passage across weirs in the Murrumbidgee River and Yanco Creek. *Fishways never ever give the same effect as natural flowing events. Other options are available that do not include regulation to achieve*

the same effect.

River regulation is never good for the environment. Fish fingerlings and fish eggs are smashed as they go over regulators. Of the 18 species of native fish which were once found in the Murray Darling Basin only 8 species remain. The main reason for their demise is regulation. Fishways never ever give the same effect as natural flowing events.

Ecological risks: Reduced connectivity between the Murrumbidgee River and Yanco Creek Status: Connectivity is really important for fish feeding and breeding. Fish move a surprisingly long way around the different waterways as research has shown and different fish species have different requirements. Birds also require connectivity for movement and breeding. The creeks are important bird breeding areas for Night Heron, Brolga, Water Rats and many other native fauna.

This is one of six SDL projects proposed for the Murrumbidgee catchment.

The other projects are: • modernising supply systems for effluent creeks • a computer-aided river management system • Murrumbidgee River constraints measure • Nimmie-Caira infrastructure modifications. You can read this article in full at:

https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/205519/yanco-sdl-fact-sheet.pdf

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/basincatchments/murray-darling/supply-efficiency-measures>

Nella Smith

Reviving Riverina's Malleefowl

It was an absolute pleasure to be able to give you a brief introduction on the Riverina Local Land Services Malleefowl Project at the latest MFN's November meeting and I thought I would give a brief overview for the people who weren't at the meeting.

The Riverina was once home to one of the largest populations of Malleefowl in NSW. In the 1980's and 90's most of the prime habitat was cleared and Malleefowl were forced to take refuge in small isolated pockets of remaining vegetation. Over the past five years, I have been trying to find areas in the Riverina that still have Malleefowl; or where Malleefowl have historically occurred. I have been lucky to now have four project sites that have Malleefowl however, there is currently only six confirmed breeding pairs in total. There are many reasons that Malleefowl numbers are so low and why they have become extinct in many of the smaller reserves that remain and we are currently investigating ways to reintroduce Malleefowl. I have kept this very brief as I hope to give a power point presentation in the coming months.

I am also seeking volunteers for annual Malleefowl mound monitoring and we will be running four training days in January 2019 that will also lead into more activities that will be revealed next meeting. This will also lead into the formation of a NSW Malleefowl Recovery Group, and if anyone is interested in more information about the NSW Malleefowl Recovery Group or would like to become a volunteer, please feel free to contact me anytime. This is a great opportunity to join the largest monitoring group in Australia with all data collected uploaded to the National Malleefowl Database. Not to mention your chance to spot Malleefowl in the wild!!

Monitoring Processing Progress for Season 2018

Season started on 01/09/2018: Week 10

Mounds

State	Mounds	Loaded	Complete	0	100%
NSW	575	0 %	0 %		
SA	1242	29 %	30 %		
VIC	1205	43 %	14 %		
WA	1224	32 %	21 %		

Monitoring not yet commenced in NSW
My favourite monitoring photo
Join the Malleefowl Monitoring Team



MALLEEFOWL MONITORING
"BUSHWALKING WITH A PURPOSE"
LEARN ALL ABOUT MALLEEFOWL, THEIR AMAZING NESTS AND HOW WE MONITOR THEM.
It's a bit like searching out holes to see a threatened species.

Local Land Services Riverina

David Kellett – Riverina Local Land Services & Chairperson for the National Malleefowl Recovery Team david.kellett@lls.nsw.gov.au, ph. 0428 693 990

CITIZEN SCIENCE AND “APPS”

Frogs are an important indicator of the health of our environment and the Australian Museum has developed a tremendous smartphone app to help them survey frogs around Australia. This survey is going to help the Museum learn more about how different frog species are responding to a changing environment.

The app is part of a citizen science project involving everyday people downloading the app onto their smartphone, recording frog calls then submitting the recording to the Museum. The Museum identifies the calls and emails you back with the identification. The process is quite simple.

The app also has useful tools to help you identify the frog you are recording based on location, habitat and sample recordings of what the individual frogs sound like. The verification emailed back to you will let you know if you're correct.



The app was heavily promoted during **Frog ID Week Nov 9 – Nov 18, 2018** which was aimed at collecting frog calls across the nation - at a moment in time - to establish a benchmark from which frog populations can be monitored annually, but the Museum wishes citizen scientists to continually use the app so they can learn more about frog behaviour throughout the year.

If anyone wants to get involved in this project details can be found via this link <https://www.frogid.net.au/>

Narrandera Landcare held a workshop at Narrandera Wetlands to promote the use of the app and to help less tech savvy people get comfortable with it. Numerous surveys have since been submitted from the Narrandera- Leeton area. During Frog ID Week 6 species of frogs were recorded around the Narrandera Wetlands:

Eastern Sign-bearing Froglet *Crinia parinsignifera*,
Peron's Tree Frog *Litoria peronii*,
Barking Frog *Limnodynastes fletcheri*,
Spotted Marsh Frog *Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*,
Eastern Banjo Frog *Limnodynastes dumerii*,
Broad-palmed Rocket Frog *Litoria latopalmata*.



The **Aussie Backyard Birdcount**

<https://aussiebirdcount.org.au/> is another citizen science project involving the use of an app. The count is organised by Birdlife Australia and again engages novices observing their surroundings and submitting the results. The app also helps with the identifying of birds based on location, size, shape and plumage.

Narrandera Landcare also held a workshop on using this app and close to 50 surveys were submitted from the Narrandera-Leeton area during National Birdweek 21-27 October. Surveys such as these help provide the raw data decision makers need to form policies and they are something all Field Naturalists may wish to involve themselves in.

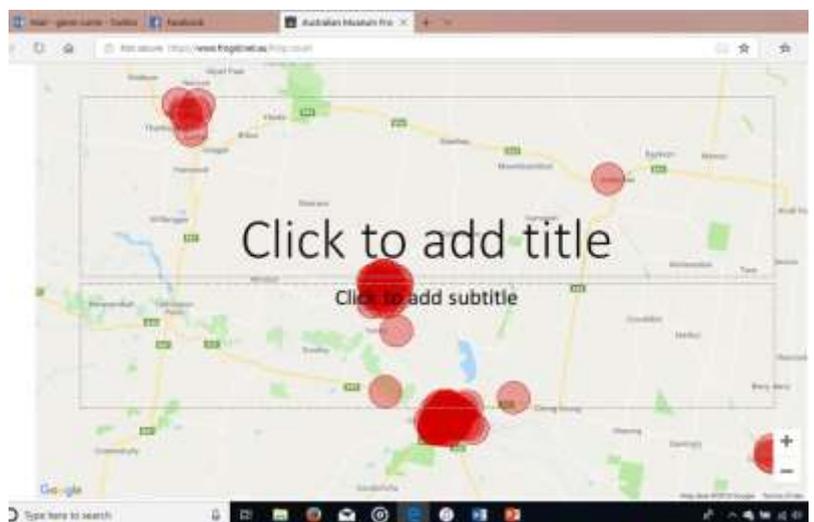
Narrandera Landcare sends out emails detailing workshops like these as well as tree planting and propagating days as they hold them. If you would like to be informed of these days and be on their email list please contact

narranderalandcare@gmail.com

Or look at their facebook page

www.facebook.com/NarranderaLandcare/

Glenn Currie



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

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

Superb Parrot [1]	Leeton Cemetery	19/10/18	Margrit Martin
Silvereye	Melbourne Street, Narrandera	26/10/18	Betty Bradney
Grey Fantail	Melbourne Street, Narrandera	26/10/18	Betty Bradney
White-plumed Honeyeater	Melbourne Street, Narrandera	26/10/18	Betty Bradney
Rufous Whistler	Melbourne Street, Narrandera	26/10/18	Betty Bradney
All under sprinkler in bushes on hot day			
Common Koel	St Joseph's, Narrandera	Nov '18	Betty Bradney
Diamond Firetail	Narrandera Canal	01/11/18	Warrick Bradney
Rainbow Bee-eater [4]	Narrandera	01/11/18	Susan Whitehead
Freckled Duck [2]	Bundidjarie Creek, Narrandera	02/11/18	Nella Smith
Little Bittern [2]	Bundidjarie Creek, Narrandera	02/11/18	Nella Smith
Mistletoebird	Belah Street, Leeton	02/11/18	Joy Young
Superb Parrot [Flock of 40+]	Yanco Common	03/11/18	Max O'Sullivan
Black-tailed Native-hen [65]	Fivebough Wetlands	03/11/18	Keith Hutton
Peregrine Falcon [Imm fem]	Fivebough Wetlands	03/11/18	Keith Hutton
Magpie Goose [35+]	Campbell Swamp, Griffith	05/11/18	Max O'Sullivan
Little Bittern [H]	Campbell Swamp, Griffith	05/11/18	Max O'Sullivan
Diamond Dove [1]	Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest	05/11/18	Max O'Sullivan
Mulga Parrot [pr]	Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest	05/11/18	Max O'Sullivan
Major Mitchell [6]	Colinroobie Road, Leeton	05/11/18	Phil Tenison
Superb Parrot [6]	Sandigo	06/11/18	Ellené Schnell
Wedge-tailed Eagle [2]	Sandigo	06/11/18	Ellené Schnell
Silvereye [2]	Narrandera	08/11/18	Susan Whitehead
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [23+]	Brobenah	06/11/18	Keith Hutton
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Narrandera Wetlands	07/11/18	Alan Whitehead
Yellow Rosella [2]	Narrandera	08/11/18	Susan Whitehead
Silvereye [2]	Narrandera	08/11/18	Susan Whitehead
Painted Honeyeater [12+]	Yanco Common	09/11/18	Vincent Mourik
Australasian Bittern [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/11/18	Vincent Mourik
Black Honeyeater [20+]	Barren Box, western gate	10/11/18	Vincent Mourik
Pied Honeyeater [2 fem]	Barren Box, western gate	10/11/18	Vincent Mourik
Crimson Chat [pr]	Barren Box, western gate	10/11/18	Vincent Mourik
Swamp Harrier [2f 1m displaying]	Fivebough Wetlands	10/11/18	Keith Hutton
Rainbow Bee-eater [27 together]	Brobenah	12/11/18	Keith Hutton
Glossy Black Cockatoo [12]	Brobenah	12/11/18	Keith Hutton
Glossy Black Cockatoo [6]	Middle Rd off Colinroobie Rd, Leeton	13/11/18	Valentin Moser
Little Bittern [3 calling]	Campbell Swamp, Griffith	14/11/18	Valentin Moser
Turquoise Parrot [male]	Woolshed Flat, Cocoparra National Park	14/11/18	Valentin Moser
This is the first sighting in its usual habitat since April 2018.			
Echidna	'The Winery' site Binya	14/11/18	Valentin Moser
Australasian Bittern [booming]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/11/18	Valentin Moser
Brolga [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/11/18	Keith Hutton
Australasian Bittern [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/11/18	Keith Hutton
Black-shouldered Kite [pr]	At nest off Brolga Platform, Fivebough	15/11/18	Keith Hutton
Little Bittern [1 calling]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/11/18	Keith Hutton
Intermediate Egret [14]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/11/18	Keith Hutton
Australasian Bittern [3]	Fivebough Wetlands – not calling	22/11/18	Keith Hutton
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [144]	Corbie Hill Rd, Leeton in flooded paddock	22/11/18	Keith Hutton

Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [2]	Koonadan Rd, Leeton	22/11/18	Phillip Williams
Phillip saw the birds trying to hollow out a nest site in an old palm tree near their house.			
Marsh Sandpiper [30]	Fivebough Wetlands	25/11/18	Max O'Sullivan
Nankeen Night Heron [2]	The Basin Dam, Koonadan	25/11/18	Max O'Sullivan
Red Wattlebird [2]	Palla Ave, Griffith	26/11/18	Virginia Tarr
Blue-faced Honeyeater [3]	Palla Ave, Griffith	26/11/18	Virginia Tarr
Yellow Thornbill [5]	Palla Ave, Griffith	26/11/18	Virginia Tarr
Yellow-rumped Thornbill [3]	Palla Ave, Griffith	26/11/18	Virginia Tarr
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo [3]	Palla Ave, Griffith	26/11/18	Virginia Tarr

Following are the birds that are regular visitors to Sue's garden, McNabb St, Griffith

Red Wattlebird	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Little Friarbird
Mistletoebird	Silvereye	Rainbow Lorikeet
Mallee Ringneck	'28' Parrot	Grey-crowned Babbler
Sacred Kingfisher	Laughing Kookaburra	Grey Shrike-Thrush
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo		26/11/18 Sue Chittick Dalton

Sue also reports that the white mallard and Black Duck are still together at Lake Wyangan.

Crested Shrike-tit [1]	Gogelderie Weir at Xmas bird walk	01/12/18	MFN Group
Yellow Rosella [10+]	Gogelderie Weir – juv. birds on lawn	01/12/18	MFN Group

Margrit Martin has sent an image of her Bush Banana seedlings.



President's Report 2018

Hi as I sit and write this from the wilds of Tasmania on the final night before we head off on the overland trail I look back on the 5 five odd years that I have been involved with the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalist, it is all your fault that I am heading off on this great adventure. From an interest in birds and being in the bush sitting waiting for things to come to me, to walking through the bush just for the Joy of being in it, this has grown to setting off tomorrow.

Looking back at this year as a Field Naturalist and the new members that have joined our merry group of walking, looking and using the brains of those around us that have been doing it for years as walking encyclopaedias, this is the true worth of what we do, encouraging, teaching and edifying each other in our varied pursuits.

This year in our pursuit of learning we have done our usual two camps, twice monthly day outings and annual Glossy Black Cockatoo count.

Our first camp was at Talbingo for three nights venturing up to the higher cooler areas each day, this was again a day of first for some. Our second camp was to Oolambeyan this was in August hoping to find the wild flowers, but the continuing dry conditions thwarted our plans in this regard, but as usual there is always something to look at and learn about and as a birder the count of over 50 birds for the week end was more than enough to keep me happy.

For the day outings we did a lot of the usual places but also added some new ones and found some interesting new places.

The Glossy Black Cockatoo Count yielded one of the highest counts in recent times with a total of 36 for the day. As an aid to our monitoring of the Glossy Black Cockatoo Count the Club purchased a nest box camera so that we will be able to survey the next boxes that have been placed in the past.

This year has been for me personally once again a year of learning and the enjoyment of watching others learn with me

I envisage that next year will be another year of the same and look forward to enjoying it with you all

Regards **Graham Russell**

**** COMING EVENTS ****

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions please email or phone if you intend to come.

- 13 December Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.
Topic: Members evening – highlights of the year.
Come along with a specimen, image or story of something special for you.
Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 15 December Saturday** **Tiddalik Wetlands, Darlington Point and Yarrada**
Tiddalik is a small wetland area off Campbell Street in the township.
Meet: at 5:30pm at Darlington Point, the park by junction of Leeton & Griffith roads. We will have a local guide to show us to the wetland.
This will be followed by a visit to the Yarrada Wetlands (off Sturt Hwy).
Bring: nibbles and drinks or picnic tea.
Contact is Nella Smith 6959 1210 or
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com .
- 2 February Friday** **World Wetlands Day**
This year's theme - Wetlands and climate change
- 6 February Wednesday** **Copy for the February newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 14 February Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.
Topic:
Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 16 February Saturday** **Rocky Waterholes, Narrandera**
A twilight meeting for a walk along the channel bank followed by nibbles at the area by the bridge.
Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com
- 25-28 January** **Summer camp at Laurel Hill near Tumbarumba**
Friday – Monday A tentative booking has been made for 3 nights at \$95 per person night, fully catered. Own bedding (sleeping bag or linen, blanket and pillow) and towel is required.
Own transport but we will car pool where possible.
We will be exploring the mountain forests, sub-alpine grasslands, a secluded dam and waterfalls.
Confirmation is required asap with a deposit of \$50 per person.
A minimum number of 20 people is required for this to go ahead.
Please contact Nella if you intend to go Nella Smith 6959 1210.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.

