

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



July 2018 - Issue #261

Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.

PO Box 541, LEETON 2705 ISSN-1327-1172

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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



**A large avian community at
Tuckerbil Wetlands,
by Rowena Whiting**

**Royal Spoonbill
by Kathy Tenision**

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CONTRIBUTIONS

**For the August issue by
Wednesday 4 August**

To Rowena Whiting

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***Join us at Livingstone
National Park for this
month's outing***

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 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.

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

Bank details for direct deposit: 062 564 account no. 10039396, a/c name: Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Include your own name and description of payment in the reference box.

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

Welcome to the July issue

Once again lots of informative articles which I'm sure you will find of interest and our appreciation and thanks goes to contributors; without whom there would be no newsletter.

Show and Tell – at the June Meeting

Joy Young drew our attention to a booklet of **Weeds of the Riverina**, an identification and control guide. It has quite a detailed description and images. It is available at the Leeton Library. Joy also showed a weed found by her garden fence in the centre of Leeton. It was an **African Boxthorn** *Lycium ferocissimum*, a noxious weed. It was presumed to have grown from a seed in a bird dropping.

Eric Whiting showed a map of part of the Mirrool Creek showing the extent of the floodways from the 1973 (or was it 1956?) big flood. The area from near Barellan to Apostles Yard Regulator and south to near Murrumbidgee was largely under water. The main floodways showed an intricate network pattern. It was said that most of the floodwater flowed past Murrumbidgee. The map was originally traced onto a topographic map from an air photo from Murrumbidgee Irrigation and recently digitised.

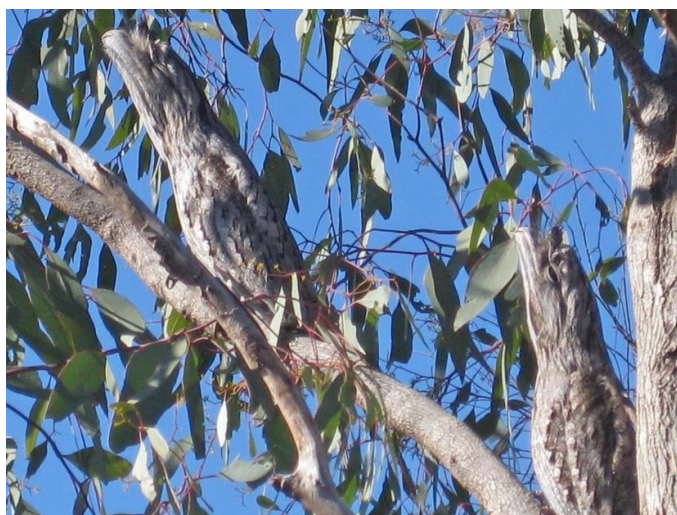
Enjoy your month, Rowena.

I always thought we visited Fivebough Wetlands for waterbirds.

On a gloriously sunny and still winters day this week when we searched in the woodland section of the precinct there were a surprising number of woodland birds. The two big surprises for me was the Yellow-plumed Honeyeater which I have also recently seen at The Rock. I expect to see these little honeyeaters in the mallee and a pair of Tawny Frogmouth seen napping on the edges of the woodland. The twenty year old planting of locally native species is providing some habitat for woodland birds. Other birds seen were:

White-plumed Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Spiny cheeked Honeyeater, Yellow Thornbill, Weebill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Silvereye, Variegated Fairy-wren, Superb Fairy-wren, Striated Pardalote, Grey Fantail, Peregrine Falcon, Red capped Robin and Zebra Finch.

Nella Smith



Pair of Tawny Frogmouth Glenn Currie

Duncans Creek Excursion

Saturday 16 June 2018

The 11 of us who braved the cold damp day that was forecast, when we met at Yenda PO with full wet weather gear to take on what was to come!

We drove to the base of the Mt Bingar road (before the road climb) and parked, organised our backpacks for the long walk along Duncans Creek. The walk was quiet and easy going on the low gradient flat ground with no undergrowth to hinder us. Only an occasional bird could be heard for the first part of the walk, until we reached the gorge-like valley with acacia trees more abundant; although there are patches that looked if they will not survive the dry conditions that has prevailed. We came across a wombat hole that had been abandoned recently and a partly eaten skeleton of a young wombat about 10ft from the hole.

We reached the ridge of large boulders and decided that it was too wet to go further or higher as the occasional showers of rain didn't help in giving us a good view of the distant hills surrounding us.

We about turned and headed back through the surviving trees, along the dry creek-bed, and observed the rock formations, scats of kangaroo, wallaby, wombat, goats and rabbits. There was much digging up of dried grasses for root fodder.

Our meagre Bird list included: White-browed Babblers x 5, Yellow Thornbills, Eastern Yellow Robins, Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters, Weebills, Black Kite, Red-rumped & Ring-necked parrots.

As it was still showering occasionally back at the parked cars, we decided that Woolshed Flats Picnic/camp shelter would be the place to have lunch. Arriving there, we found that all the tables were taken by the West Wyalong Scouts who were camping there that weekend. They obliged by moving their

gear from one of the tables for us. After a good hearty lunch and great conversation, we decided to take the risk and walk the Store Creek track to show a few newbies, as the sun had started to appear through the banks of clouds. All went well crossing dry streams and reminiscing of the wet times. There are mosses and lichens to see, one small pool of water under rock cover and those who ventured to the falls found only a slight runoff from the showers that happened earlier that day. The rocks of the gorge were spectacular as usual and colours more dominate than usual due to wetness. We could hear thunder in the distance on the walk back and cloud building up, so we didn't waste time getting back to the cars and heading

off. Then we drove through the bank of rain to a sun-shiny wet road. Home in Griffith, they were all excited due to the hail storm they had covering the ground like snow!!

Glad we missed that!

Virginia Tarr



Walking back down Duncans Creek (top)

Green Carpet of Moss (below)

Group looking here and there, Store Creek (left)



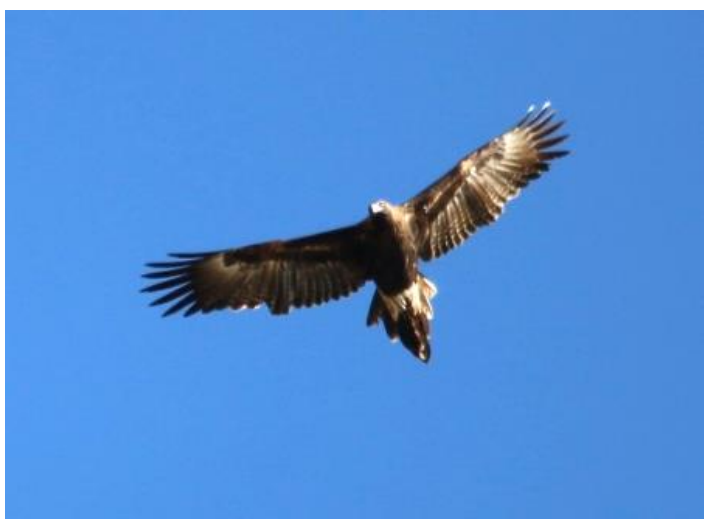
Ducks in a Row at Tuckerbil

For the trip by the Field Naturalists to Tuckerbil Wetlands on the first day of July. All our ducks were in a row – with binos and scopes at the ready.

The warm, sunny air was windless and a large avian community was in attendance. Wetlands outings seem always well attended by the Field Nats., and this day was no exception. After all, at wetlands there are almost always birds on the water, most with relatively generous body mass, lazy movement, and with fewer places of concealment. Good spotting conditions, all.

Although we were some distance from the water, with the aid of several scopes large sweeps of sun-spangled swamp surface and reed beds could be observed. In this vein the highlight for me was watching a small flock of Brolgas leisurely feeding on the far water's edge. The scopes also helped us easily see many other species, like the pick-pick-pick of Red Necked Avocets closer in – and closer still, the ever-elusive Pink-eared Ducks, and even a Chestnut Teal.

And Tuckerbil is certainly duck central in the region. For some mysterious reason a cloud of many hundreds of these birds, mainly of the Grey Teal and Pacific Black varieties would rise into the air and wheel around in all kinds of aerial formations, before skating back to the surface. A most exciting sight.



Perhaps it was the ominous presence of a Wedge-tailed Eagle as it soared watchfully above that caused the commotion. Kathy Tenison captured some marvellous images of this magisterial raptor with its feather-fingered wingtips seeking out those warm-air updrafts. Below, as if to attract attention to itself away from the splendour above and beyond, a Grey Fantail performed its aerial aerobics the whole time we were there.



As an unexpected bonus, we were provided with a mini-lecture by the oh-so-knowledgeable Peter Draper. He explained that the regularly occurring large sandhills on the eastern shore of most of the wetlands in the area were caused by, over countless millennia, westerly sand-borne winds being compelled to slow down as they crossed the natural swamp

depressions. The result being that, by the time they were rising again at the eastern rim they began to lose their silica load, gradually building up the sandhills. An extraordinary topological insight!

But back to birds. For most of the time we were there, we could see four Spoonbills; three Yellow-billed and one Royal. These remained in their dead-branch roosts for ages, being either asleep or idly preening. Highlight two for me was seeing, before flying off, the black-billed Royal lift his head into the light southerly, allowing his beautiful breeding nape plumes to flutter in the breeze, like a mini Medieval Knight. Exquisite.



Photos by Kathy Tenison: Wedge-tailed Eagle, Grey Fantail, the Spoonbills – only 2 Yellow-billed in this image.

I walked down through the trees to obtain a closer view of the reed beds, and was voyeur to a half dozen Australasian Grebes, with their powder puff posteriors, motoring along like wind-up toys in formation – Look this way! Look that way! Look this way! Look ...

All this sensory overload made me weary, so when I returned I led the movement to set up the chairs in the deliciously warm sun for afternoon tea,



**The group listening to Peter Draper
Rowena Whiting**

So delicious indeed that it was only the lengthening shadows and rising chilly breeze that drove us to pack up and depart.

Yet another wonderful excursion by the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists – a day when all their ducks were in a row, for sure.

Alan Whitehead

Bird list compiled by Max O'Sullivan

Australasian Grebe	Little Pied Cormorant	Little Black Cormorant
Australasian Darter	Pelican	Brolga
Royal Spoonbill	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Straw-necked Ibis
Australian White Ibis	Black Swan	Freckled Duck
Wood Duck	Hardhead	Black Duck
Australasian Shoveler	Grey Teal	Chestnut Teal
Pink-eared Duck	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Purple Swamphen
Black-winged Stilt	Red-necked Avocet	Crested Pigeon
Red-rumped Parrot	Welcome Swallow	Red-capped Robin
Willie Wagtail	Grey Fantail	Yellow-throated Miner
White-plumed Honeyeater	Striated Pardalote (H)	Pee Wee
Pied Butcherbird	Little Raven	



Kathy Tenison

Basin Plan 101

Our guest speaker last month was Elizabeth Stott, Regional Engagement Officer with Murray Darling Basin Authority. Her aim was to explain the background of water reform in the region, to give an overview of the basin and the Basin Plan and to talk about recent and upcoming Basin Plan work.

The Basin plan aims to have in place rules and regulations to ensure equitable sharing use of water for all. It includes a limit on extraction for both surface and ground water (Sustainable Diversion Limits). It has targets for water quality, rules for water trading, water resource planning, an environmental watering plan and monitoring and evaluation of these. Sustainable Diversion Limits and Water Resource Plans are to be implemented by 2019. Sustainable Diversion Limits regulate the amount of water that can be used for consumptive purposes in the basin.

There are many agencies responsible for various things:

Agency	Responsibility
Murray Darling Basin Authority	Writes, implements and reports on Basin Plan
Department Agriculture and Water Resources	Recovers water entitlements to meet the target set by Basin Plan
Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder	Holds and manages the Australian Governments water entitlements and allocations
NSW Office of Environment and Heritage	Holds and manages NSW Government's water entitlements and allocations
NSW Department of Industry – Water	Responsible for sharing water between consumptive users and the environment in line with Water Sharing Plans
Water NSW	Manages Burrinjuck and Blowering storages and delivers water to the region via Murrumbidgee River
Murrumbidgee Irrigation Limited & Coleambally Irrigation Cooperative Limited	Manages water delivery from the Murrumbidgee River to customers via the irrigation schemes

Compliance

Recent adjustments have been recommended by the minister to the Sustainable Diversion Limits for it to be increased by 605 GL. This means a reduction in the water recovery targets for the environment. There will need to be 62GL of efficiency measures in place by 30 June 2019.

Another recent decision by the government is to improve compliance with a basin-wide compliance compact to be negotiated. An Independent Assurance Committee has been established to provide expert advice on design, implementation and adequacy of MDBA compliance program. Legislative changes will be sought to enhance compliance powers.

A register of state progress on water resource plan development will be established. Guidelines will be published for a hydrometric network and hydrological modelling.

Environmental Outcomes: change takes time but where there is available information, early signs indicate the Basin Plan is on track to deliver long-term environmental outcomes. **Native fish** have responded positively to environmental water. It has been used to support endangered Murray Hardyhead population, ensure Golden Perch can move to suitable habitats, and has supported an increase in Murray Cod breeding.

Waterbird Numbers-Five years into implementation of the Basin Plan the **rate of decline has reduced**. There are **early signs** of positive responses of native vegetation to water delivered under the basin plan, such as growth of seedlings and saplings, and improvement in the condition of **some** river red-gum forests.

Members appreciated the very informative presentation giving us many facts and figures to digest and served to enhance our understanding of the complexities of the plan. Our thanks go to Elizabeth for coming to our meeting.

Three Questions Overheard at Tuckerbil

1. What are so many ducks doing on the one piece of water?
2. Why are Flame Robins only seen at Tuckerbil in Winter?
3. Why are Brolgas seen in one particular spot each year?

All three questions are of animal behaviour. As we cannot ask the birds directly the answers are always our interpretations based on our observations or the writings of others. Unfortunately there is always an anthropocentric view – we could always be entirely wrong!

The first question is really two – why so many together? And why on that particular body of water (the Basin part of Tuckerbil in this case)? Taking the first part, ducks have adapted to feeding in deeper water (I am generalising of course), but in so doing have selected a very exposed situation. A single bird out away from its cover is easy prey to a raptor. There are no confusing distractions, just one target. Nature soon learnt that there is safety in numbers. A predator has to choose one target and keep that in focus right through to the kill. By massing



Flame Robin
Phil Tenison



together and in particular taking off and flying en masse makes it harder for the predator to single out a victim. Try focussing and tracking one individual during a disturbance!

Could you pick a duck and follow it Tuckerbil Wetland ?- Rowena Whiting

As to why a particular place the answer is rather subjective, but probably has to do with the availability of food. It must be in sufficient quantity to satisfy the numbers required for safety. We know so little about food chains to even guess why one body of water is preferred over another at any particular time. What a particular species of duck – or any other animal – generally feeds on may be known in a broad sense but none of the preferences or nutritional requirements arising from seasonal changes or breeding cycles. Our knowledge of the life cycles and nutrition content of invertebrates and smaller plants is so poor we can only guess at that part of the food cycle.

Question 2 has a simple answer – they spend the summer months in the mountains but have to come down as their food disappears during the colder months.

How or why Flame Robins have adopted this life style is anybody's guess. As is also how they know how and when to take the journey. It is one of the biggest questions in biology – the riddle of migration. Humans do not credit other animals with much memory or intelligence of navigation yet these faculties seem to be built in to migratory animals. Some say it is in their genes but how does a set of chemicals dictate such complicated behaviour?

It always goes to show – ask one question of nature and the answer is several more questions.

And why do Brolgas come back to the same place year after year? Do they have a memory of a reliable feeding place? {I thought it was so we knew where to find them!! Ed}

Eric Whiting

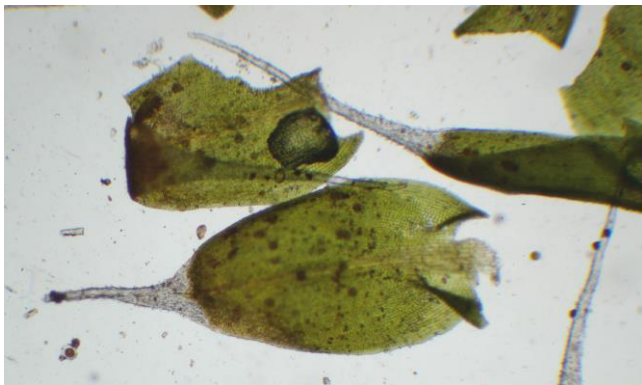


Brolga
Phillip Williams

A Green Carpet at Duncans Creek, Cocoparra National Park

A feature of the Duncans Creek walk was the bright green on the forest floor as the multitude of mosses responded to the return of rain.

Putting names onto the various types is difficult given the number of species involved and their small size. I have seen 23 species of mosses in the Cocoparras (National Park, Nature Reserve and the adjacent Whitton Stock Route), and have seen reports for a further 28. For the related liverworts which also contribute to the green carpet, I have seen 13 species and have reports for a further 13. So forgive me for not being able to put a name on more than a few. In any case the name would be a scientific one – very few mosses have common names.



Notwithstanding the above there are a few that do stand out. One in particular grows over rocks rather than on soil. This is *Grimmia laevigata*. Its leaves have hyaline terminal hair points which when the leaves are dry and pressed against the stem give the moss a dull grey colour. On wetting the leaves spread outwards in seconds displaying the rich green colour. Just trickle a little water over a colony and see the change.



Another one that was brought to my attention during the walk was *Polytrichum juniperinum*. This one looks like miniature pine seedlings or seeing the specific name – juniper seedlings. Most mosses have leaf cells in only one layer thick, sometimes in two layers, unlike higher plants which have a much more complicated structure.

Polytrichum along with other members of its family have longitudinal walls usually six cells high running up each leaf to increase the surface area and probably aid in water retention. The walls, or lamellae as they are called, must be beneficial as one member of the family *Dawsonia superba*

can grow to have stems to 20cm in height. This one can be found in wet areas of our mountain forests and alpine areas.

Most of our liverworts are thallose types, that is they do not have leaves but exist as fleshy green tongues often growing either individually or as rosettes. Liverworts also differ from mosses as the spore capsules are simple spherical structures or in ornate umbrella-like structures. Mosses have capsules that are like stalked pepper pots with intricate teeth or hairs regulating the release of the spores.

(top) *Grimmia* on a rock and *Grimmia laevigata* leaves
(middle) *Polytrichum* and *Grimmia* dry and wet
(bottom) Moss capsule & liverwort sporophyte.



Eric Whiting

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist

Darwin-Kakadu-Pine Creek-Darwin June 2018

To complete my long holiday in the north, I went on a 5 day birding trip in the Northern Territory. Whilst there was little likelihood of any new birds, I wanted to revisit old haunts from years ago.

I had booked on a tour Experience the Wild with Mike Jarvis and involved comfortable accommodation not camping this time as I felt it more convenient when doing such a short trip.



The first day after a 6am pick-up in Darwin was spent in the Mary and Adelaide River areas. We had our breakfast stop at a spot in savannah woodland habitat and the first birds heard and then sighted were a pair of **Black-tailed Treecreepers** who conveniently landed in the trees above where we were eating.

Next to appear were a couple of **Varied Lorikeets** feeding in the orange blossoms of the flowering Darwin Woollybutt. These trees were in flower all over the area and were good for attracting birds, especially honeyeaters. Whilst the others were still eating, I saw a female **Gouldian Finch** (black faced form) but before the others could scramble up to see it, it flew off never to be seen again. Other birds seen at the

breakfast spot were **Little Woodswallow**, **Masked Finch** and **Red-backed Kingfisher**.

The next spot was along the Adelaide River where we had good views of **Green-backed Gerygone**, **Arafura Fantail** (now a separate species split from the Rufous Fantail of the east coast) and several others including **Shining**, **Broad-billed** and **Paperbark Flycatchers**.

Day 2 we set out for Kakadu itself and had breakfast at Mamukala Wetlands before doing the 4km loop walk around the wetlands where there were many bush birds as well as waterbirds. From there we headed for Ubirr Rock in search of the elusive **Chestnut-quilled Rock-pigeon** which lived up to its name and did elude us! Ubirr Rock is famous for its aboriginal rock paintings and we spent the afternoon going by the various galleries with a climb, in the heat, up the rock itself where views of the surrounding wetlands and monsoon forests was spectacular. The rock is a favourite spot to view the sunset but we had to leave for Jabiru and our accommodation before then. Birds seen that day that were good for my year list were **Long-tailed** and **Crimson Finch**, **Bar-breasted** and **Rufous-banded Honeyeaters**, **Partridge Pigeon** (beside the road) and **Rose-crowned Fruit-dove** (in the fig tree above our lunch table!).

Day 3 we headed along the Kakadu Highway heading south to Nourlangie Rock another famous open air gallery of aboriginal rock art. It is a spectacular spot and we arrived very early before the hordes of tourists that visit the site daily so had a very private tour courtesy of our guide, Mike, who had an amazing knowledge of the history of the place and its art work. Whilst admiring the art in the main gallery Mike spotted a pigeon in a fig tree leaning against the overhanging rock that shelters the rock paintings. The bird was a **Banded Fruit-Dove** which is a very rare and beautiful bird endemic to Kakadu and Arnhem Land. In all we saw 8 of these elegant pigeons feeding on the figs. I also had good close views of the **Red-collared Lorikeet** which is everywhere in the north and in Darwin but I hadn't had a good look at one until that day. It is also now a separate species from the east coast **Rainbow Lorikeet** and just as numerous. After a few hours looking through the Warradjan Cultural Centre, we then booked into the Cooinda Lodge where we had also booked on the sunset Yellow Waters boat cruise. The cruise was, as always, very good although the water level was so high that there were not such a congregation of water birds that you see later in the dry season. However, we did see lots of birds and plenty of crocodiles and oo-ed and aah-ed at the beautiful sunset.

Day 4 was another early start and we were headed for Pine Creek and environs in search of Gouldian Finches and Hooded Parrots. After breakfast on the bank of the South Alligator River we drove further south and Mike, our guide, stopped beside the road where a **Red Goshawk** had nested the previous year but hadn't been seen there since. Our luck was in as whilst looking at the nest the female flew in and sat for no more than 5 minutes in the nest before



Red Goshawk

flying off. Mike was really pleased that the bird is back and possibly about to nest again this year. We left that spot and headed to a comfy stop where I found a couple of **Silver-backed Butcherbirds**. This is another separation in recent years from the Grey Butcherbird of southern Australia.

Once out of Kakadu and onto the Stuart Highway we headed just past the Pine Creek turnoff to the Pine



Rajah Shelducks

Creek Water Treatment plant where we came across a small flock of **Red-tailed Black Cockatoos** sitting in a dead tree at the gate. On the ponds there were **Plumed Whistling Ducks** and **Rajah Shelduck** – one pair escorting a brood of 17 ducklings! A search of the Fergusson River further south

failed to produce any finches so we headed to Edith River on the way to Edith Falls – another reliable spot for the Gouldian Finch. Again birds were scarce as it was mid-afternoon and quite hot but I, and I alone, saw another female **Black-faced Gouldian** along with a **Masked Finch**. Unfortunately none of the others saw any of the target finch.

Back to Pine Creek to book into our accommodation we were greeted with a huge biker club gathering who were also to spend the night there. We needn't have worried as they were very well behaved and kept in the bar area away from our cabins. Whilst the others rested in the heat, I went for a walk and came across some of the biker crowd who I stopped to talk to. We were standing beside a raised sprayer used to water



Hooded Parrots

the grass. Tied to it was a small stick with a horizontal perch and a beautiful pair of **Hooded Parrots** landed on it not one metre from where we were standing! They were so quiet and the people I was with were astounded at the colours in the male bird. By this time the others had emerged and we were treated to a display of over 30 of the parrots above us on the power lines and feeding on the grass nearby – an absolute delight to see so many.

Day 5 morning was spent in another vain search for the elusive gouldians at the same spots as the previous afternoon, although Mike did see one female very briefly. After giving up on the finches, we decided after lunch to head back to Darwin. We were planning to call into Litchfield National Park on the way but because it was Sunday and would be crowded, Mike decided to head straight back into Darwin. Our first stop was at the Botanic Gardens in search of the **Rufous Owl** which had been reported there. Needless to say we dipped as the area had been so devastated by the cyclone that passed through last wet season and so Mike decided to go to East Point to check out the mangrove board walk and nearby pockets of monsoon rainforest. The tide was very low so all we managed to see was a **Torresian (Collared) Kingfisher** and **Black-necked Stork**.

After a farewell bird call and dinner at an Indian Restaurant, we said our farewells and Mike delivered us back to our various accommodations.

I had a free day before flying back to Sydney so took myself back to East Point only to find a very high tide had covered the board walk so to fill in time, I went to the monsoon forest walk and was extremely fortunate to find a very obliging **Rainbow Pitta** that stayed around for about 10 minutes for me to admire.

Back at the board walk, the tide had receded sufficiently for me to walk into the mangroves where I saw **Red-headed Myzomela (Honeyeater)** and **Mangrove Golden Whistler** along with some other mangrove species I had already seen in Cairns and elsewhere on the trip – **Large-billed** and **Mangrove Gerygone**, **Broad-billed** and **Shining Flycatcher** and **Lemon-bellied Flyrobin**.

I called into the Botanic Gardens in the afternoon in the hope of finding the owls but dipped again on the Rufous but was directed to a tree where a pair of **Barking Owls** were roosting – they were a good substitute for not seeing the other one.

All up I saw 130 species on the trip and added 32 new birds to my year list. Thanks to Experience the Wild and Mike Jarvis for making the whole trip such a success. Images have been taken from a video by Mike.

Max O'Sullivan

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

Australian Water Rat	Narrandera Wetlands	22/05/18	Alan Whitehead
Blue-faced Honeyeater [6]	Narrandera Wetlands	01/06/18	Susan Whitehead
Yellow-throated Miner [7]	Palla St, Griffith	01/06/18	Virginia Tarr
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike [3]	Palla St, Griffith	01/06/18	Virginia Tarr
Great Cormorant [16]	Lake Talbot, Narrandera	03/06/18	Alan Whitehead
Blue-faced Honeyeater [7]	Narrandera Wetlands	13/06/18	Susan Whitehead
Variegated Wren [3]	Gallipoli St, Griffith	21/06/18	Virginia Tarr
White-plumed Honeyeater [2]	Gallipoli St, Griffith	21/06/18	Virginia Tarr
Black Kite [2]	Jubilee Park, Griffith	21/06/18	Virginia Tarr
Red Wattlebird [2]	Jubilee Park, Griffith	21/06/18	Virginia Tarr
Yellow-throated Miner [5]	Jubilee Park, Griffith	21/06/18	Virginia Tarr
White Cockatoo [3]	Jubilee Park, Griffith	21/06/18	Virginia Tarr
Little Eagle	Koonadan Reserve	24/06/18	Max O'Sullivan
Buff-banded Rail	Fivebough Wetlands	24/06/18	Max O'Sullivan
Brolga [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	24/06/18	Canberra birders
Pied Currawong	Leeton town area	24/06/18	Phil Tenison
Olive-backed Oriole [2]	'The Winery' site, Binya	30/06/18	Max O'Sullivan
Cockatiel [6]	'The Winery' site, Binya	30/06/18	Max O'Sullivan
Darter [20+]	Lake Wyangan – south lake	30/06/18	Max O'Sullivan
Silvereye [8]	Pendula St, Leeton – Tasmanian form	30/06/18	Max O'Sullivan
Brolga [16]	Tuckerbil from Koonadan Reserve	01/07/18	MFN outing
Freckled Duck [1]	The Basin Dam, Koonadan	01/07/18	MFN outing
Wedge-tailed Eagle [1]	Koonadan – circling overhead	01/07/18	MFN outing
Flame Robin [fem]	Koonadan Reserve	01/07/18	MFN outing
Black Falcon	MacArthur St, Griffith	02/07/18	Sue Chittick-Dalton

Sue said this is the first time she has seen this falcon in the area and also reports her usual collection of garden birds as listed in the June Newsletter.

Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	Koonadan Reserve	03/07/18	Max O'Sullivan
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For the record, I visited Fivebough on 02/07/18 and saw the following – see list elsewhere for Tuckerbil.

Australasian Little Grebe [20+]	Pelican [10+]	White-necked Heron
Australian White Ibis	Australian Shelduck [10+]	Black Swan [30+]
Freckled Duck [8+]	Hardhead	Black Duck
Grey Teal [100s]	Australasian Shoveler [40+]	Pink-eared Duck [80+]
Blue-billed Duck [male]	Brown Goshawk [fem]	Swamp Harrier
Whistling Kite	Little Eagle [3]	Black-shouldered Kite
Kestrel	Coot	Purple Swamphen [120+]
Masked Lapwing	Black-fronted Dotterel [20+]	Red-kneed Dotterel [50+]
Red-necked Avocet	White-headed Stilt*	Silver Gull [80+]
Crested Pigeon	Galah	Red-rumped Parrot
Welcome Swallow	Tree Martin	Grey Fantail
Willie Wagtail	Golden-headed Cisticola	Superb Wren
Variegated Wren	Yellow Thornbill	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Singing Honeyeater	White-fronted Chat [10+]
Starling	Pied Currawong	Pee-wee
Magpie	Australian Raven	Little Raven [20+]

Note: * Name change – the **Black-winged Stilt** is now officially called the **White-headed Stilt**.

Max O'Sullivan

**** COMING EVENTS ****

Membership subscriptions are due on the 30th June

Please send your money to the Treasurer, Ellené Schnell , promptly to PO Box 541, Leeton, NSW 2705 or make a bank transfer to the MFN's bank account. Any queries, Ellené can be contacted on 6959 8435 Annual subscription rates and bank details are on Page 2.

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

- 12 July Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.
Topic: **Insect Orders Overview by Nicolas May**
Bring along any 'Show and Tell'
Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 14 July Saturday** **Livingstone National Park, 30kms south of Wagga Wagga.**
Open woodland of Cypress Pines and Scribbly Gums.
Walk is approximately 4.3km loop, easy on a graded track.
Bring morning tea and lunch.
Meet at Uranquinty Bakery at 9:00am.
Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210 if you are interested in going.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 21 July Saturday** **Grong Grong – Festival of Tiny Towns - The Road to Unbusy**
A day of gathering knowledge, sharing stories, learning new skills with talks and demonstrations. Local produce, crafts, gardening, permaculture et al.
The Club will be having a display stand at this event.
9am – 5 pm. Please let Nella know if you are able to help man our display.
Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 1 August Wednesday** **Copy for the August newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 9 August Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.
Topic: To be decided – please bring ideas to the meeting or email Nella.
Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210.
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 17-19 August Weekend** **Spring Camp**
This will be held at Oolambeyan National Park
Accommodation is available in the homestead.
Cost is \$15 per night for food. Money is required to be paid by 12 July.
Please let Dione Russell (0428 536 290) know if you are interested in coming or
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 25 August** **Stackpoole National Park for Spring Flowers**
Bring morning tea and lunch.
Contact: Eric Whiting 6953 2612
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- Other events**
6 July – 20 July **Griffith City Library - travelling display - 'Australian Inspiration'**
explores how the koala and the waratah were first depicted over 200 years ago and how they evolved over time to become national icons.