

# The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



June 2018 - Issue #260

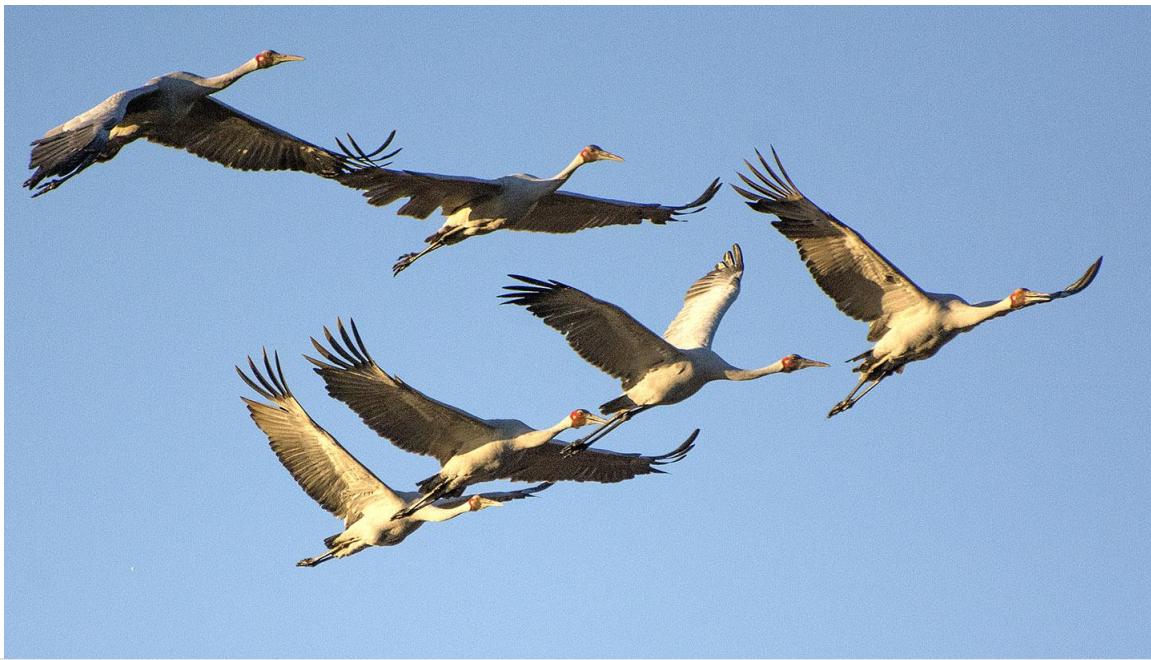
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## Objectives

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



**Brolgas at Tuckerbil Swamp in the late afternoon of 4 June**  
**Captured by Phillip Williams**

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

For the July issue by  
Wednesday 4 July

To Rowena Whiting

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Phone: 6953 2612

**Duncans Creek in the  
Cocoparra National Park  
is the location 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.

### Membership enquiries:

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

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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.

### NIMMIE CAIRA

It has been announced in this last week (29 May) that a consortium led by The Nature Conservancy Australia (TNC) has been selected to manage the Nimmie-Caira water saving project. This property adjoining Yanga National Park located to the west of Hay. (Not far from us) We have been waiting a long time for this news. Congratulations to Mark Rowe for pulling this off.

Once a stark illustration of wetland destruction, a giant floodplain in the Riverina district of New South Wales, Nimmie Caira will be managed by the global environmental charity The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with Aboriginal and scientific groups.

When the European explorer Charles Sturt arrived in Nimmie-Caira about 150 years ago, they thought they had found the inland sea. They had found the Murrumbidgee in flood.



In 2013, the Federal Government spent \$180 million buying 11 farms along the Murrumbidgee River, along with their 137 gigalitres of water rights — enough to fill a quarter of Sydney Harbour. The purchase amounted to the largest water buyback under the \$13 billion Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Those 11 farms were in the middle of a massive wetland area which, despite its ecological importance, had seen broadscale destruction through the 1990s.

Dams, levee banks and water channels had been cut through the landscape, leaving more than three-quarters of the wetlands destroyed or degraded.

In 2004, scientists estimated a fifth of the plant and animal species that lived in the wetlands had disappeared, while waterbird numbers had collapsed, reduced by more than 90 per cent.

Although about half the property was previously used for cropping and grazing, more than half of it has significant native vegetation that is recovering.

Large parts of the property will have their wetlands restored and researchers will monitor how the environment responds.

Two other partners in the winning consortium were the Murray-Darling Wetlands Working Group and the Centre for Ecosystem Science at the University of NSW.

Contributed by Nella Smith, photo from ABC website.

## Altina Wildlife Park, Darlington Point

On the 10 May at our Monthly meeting we were given a talk by Stacey, one of the keepers from Altina Wildlife Park and Gloria, one of the directors. This was an interesting talk on their successful breeding programs and some of the behind the scenes things that happen that the general public don't get to see, including the saga that was involved to bring one of the Rhinos from Germany including five different flights and quarantine both in Germany and Australia. The main thing that came through was the passion from both Stacy and Gloria for what they do and the health and well-being of the animals that are in their care.

As a follow up on the Saturday following, a number of us went for a standard tour of the park to see some of the things that we had heard about on the Thursday night. When we met it was a cold and blustery morning. Altina isn't like a normal zoo where you pay your money at the gate and then wander around and look at the animals with the only input being from whatever signs there are. At Altina there are two guided tours a day, the first part of the tour is on foot looking at the animals that are in smaller enclosures these include the Meerkats, Tasmanian devils, wombats, the two different Australian crocodiles, monkeys, and others. This first part of the tour was led by Rebecca.

Included in this first part of the tour was one of their newest additions a Serval, the smallest of the African big cats. The interesting thing for the Serval is that because he is a lone male waiting for a mate to arrive, to keep him calm and so that he didn't get lonely they have built a hole in the enclosure next to his that has a domestic cat in it. The other interesting thing is that even though he walked over the fence to get his treat in-between times he is growling all the time so he may look like a big spotty cat he is still very much not a domestic cat.

When we had finished our walk through the smaller animals it was time to board the horse drawn cart pulled by Lucky and controlled by Rachel. This part of the tour was around the larger enclosures that contained the herbivorous and the carnivorous that require more space. The big name animals in this group are the Southern White Rhino and the Lions. Outside of these there are a number of animals that are listed as either Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered or Endangered

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) Maned Wolf                            | neared threatened  |
| 2) African Wild Dog                      | Endangered   |
| 3) Scimitar Horned Oryx                  | 'Extinct in the Wild' and "Critically Endangered" in captivity |
| 4) Addax Antelope                        | Critically Endangered  |
| 5) Przewalski Horse/Mongolian Wild Horse | Endangered   |
| 6) Hog Deer                              | Endangered   |

Altina has had breeding success with all of these species and is contributing to the continuation of these species. In addition to the breeding of these species the tours are used to highlight the plight of these and other animals in the wild.

It is believed that the unique way that the tours are run at Altina is

Serval, Red Panda and White Rhino,  
Photos by Dione & Graham Russell



one of the contributing factors to the breeding success that has been achieved by Altina, this means that the animals aren't continually disturbed by visitors but only see visitors twice a day.

This was my fourth visit to Altina and there are two things that are always the same, the passion of the people that work there, and the information and education that they give on the tours but the thing that is always changing is what there is to see, every time that I go there is something new to see. I would recommend a visit.



More information is available at <http://www.altinawildlife.com/>

Graham Russell

Meerkat, Some of the group with  
Lucky, our Guide Horse –Photos by  
Dione Russell



## Sandhills Artefacts at Narrandera and a revegetation site in the Murrumbidgee Valley National Park

Thanks to Michael Lyons from Sandhills Artefacts and Glenn Currie for a great time on Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

Michael is a very lucky bloke, he has two sheds which he very kindly guided us through, showing us in the first shed how he takes raw wood and turns them into magnificent didgeridoos (Boomerangs and Coolamons) by soaking the branches in water, debarking, hollowing it out on his lathe where required, sanding, polishing and painting.

Michael treated us to some tunes on didgeridoo's he had made, including Waltzing Matilda as well as bird calls such as the Boobook Owl, a Rooster (white man alarm clock) and Kookaburra.

Behind the first shed on the river flats Michael showed us some plants including "Old Man Weed" (Common name: Sneeze weed : *Centipeda cunninghamii*) this is a medicine plant for a wide range of health problems including eczema and arthritis.

There was a tree carving of the goanna which is the Wiradjuri totem as well as a scar tree where a Coolamon had been made from the bark of the tree.



On the way to Michael's second shed we saw winter and summer humpies, the second shed was a treasure trove of old and new artefacts including grinding stones, fire starting stones, hunting boomerangs, fighting shields, payback (law enforcement) shields, message sticks, soap stone, emu eggs, possum skins, kangaroo skins made into a rug which would be good for the footy, which Virginia tried on. Michael made a phone call on his Bull Roarer, we assumed he rang Betty Bradney, as she knows how to make these out of school rulers.

Michael told us great stories about the items he showed us and the way of life of his relatives and ancestors, including taking us down to the river to nature's supermarket, retrieving a witchetty grub from a red gum sapling, showing us where river mussels were located and checking into the Hilton, a huge 500-year-old tree used for shelter. We learnt that useful tools would be left in the shelter for all to use rather than carrying them about and markings on trees or rocks were often left advising what food sources were available in the area. These systems made it easier to

transfer information to visitors.

Michael was very generous with his time and vast knowledge, it was fascinating to learn so much about his culture and the history of the Wiradjuri people, we were very grateful and thank him so much.

We moved down river to Graham's Grave and had lunch at Island Bend. Glenn then took us to the Forestry revegetation site in MIA 1 where we saw the magnificent results of plantings on the sandhills 17 years ago. With some planted from tube stock and some direct seeded. With some seeds remaining dormant for a number of years, till the conditions were right to germinate. Some of the vegetation we saw were: *Acacia oswaldii*, *Acacia pendula*, Boree, Grey Mulga, Deanes Wattle, Hakea Wattle, Yellow Box, Grey Box, White Cypress pine, Saltbush.



Thanks very much to Glenn for showing us this very important revegetation site.

Some birds we saw on the day were: Yellow Rosella, Eastern Rosella, Blue Faced Honey Eater, Yellow Thornbill, Grey Fantail, Red Capped Robin (Female), Black Kites (12), Noisy Miners.

#### Phil & Kathy Tenison

**Virginia wrapped in a kangaroo skin**  
**Michael extracts a witchetty grub from a Red Gum sapling**  
**Yellow Rosella and the group with Michael at the 'shelter' tree.**  
**Photos by Kathy Tenison**



## Sandhill Pine Woodlands – Revegetation Site

After the 26<sup>th</sup> May visit to Sandhill Artefacts our group of Field Nats proceeded to MIA I in the Murrumbidgee Valley National Park with the aim of visiting a Sandhill Rehabilitation Site that State Forests established before control of these forests passed to National Parks.

Sandhill Pine Woodlands are an endangered ecological community (EEC) in NSW and are found in the south west portion of the state. There has been funding available recently for landholders to protect and enhance these important EEC's and some sandhill rehabilitation work that has been undertaken at Oolambeyan National Park was written about in our September 2017 #252 newsletter.

We knew of this MIA I site that was approximately 17 years old and were interested in seeing how it was progressing. It's a fenced off area on the track to Island Beach. The vegetation on top of the hill was planted as tubestock and what have survived are doing very well. *Acacia brachybotrys* Grey Mulga, *A. deanei* Deane's Wattle, *A. hakeoides*, Hakea Wattle, *A. pendula* Boree, *A. oswaldii* Miljee, *Senna* sp., *Atriplex nummularia* Old Man Saltbush are all prevalent and have grown into quite large shrubs. The only shrub that seems to be regenerating by itself are the Miljee which are suckering prolifically.

The sandhill is surrounded by a virtual monoculture of River Redgum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* so it's essentially an island of different, diverse vegetation. Fairy Wrens, Yellow and Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Red-capped and Eastern Yellow Robins were all observed inhabiting the revegetation, perhaps illustrating the benefits of biodiversity.

Apart from the shrubs that were planted on top, the sandhills are fairly barren. Rabbit warrens are very evident. Caltrop *Tribulus terrestris* was everywhere. We could see where some direct seeding was tried. This was done in June 2015. The plants are patchy along some of the direct seeding lines and non-existent along others. The *Acacia* and *Senna* that are evident did very well to survive this last terribly dry summer on a bare sandhill. The extremely wet winter of 2016 must have helped their establishment immensely.

NPWS have plans to do more direct seeding on these sandhills if funding becomes available.

**Glenn Currie**



Photos of the rehabilitation site were taken by Glenn Currie (top two) and Kathy Tenison (lower two)

## Work for the Dole wraps up at Fivebough Wetlands

Fivebough Wetlands at Leeton has received a much needed make over, thanks to the Work for the Dole crew who has been on site since the project was first established in May 2017. After almost a year the program has wrapped up and the wetlands are looking all the better for the time and efforts invested in the site by Joe Mimmo, Frank Valenzisi and the crew.

The projects, funded by the Federal Government's Work for the Dole program, has delivered significant recreational benefit to the Leeton community and ecologically to the wetlands reserve as well. The initiative provided a fantastic opportunity for local job seekers to gain real work skills whilst actively engaged in a valuable project, the outcomes of which can now be enjoyed by all visitors to the site.

The project has revitalised the Budyaan Baamira Picnic Area through revegetation, landscaping, fencing, painting, construction of new infrastructure and weed control. The Wiradjuri Walk has a new entrance and welcome sign. The Wetlands Walk now boasts welded 'Windows to the Wetlands' as well as sheltered seating to provide shaded rest stops for visitors, both created and installed by the crew. Weed control has been undertaken throughout the reserve, especially on the walking tracks to keep the burrs at bay.

Petersham Road carpark has been resurfaced and there are new nesting boxes throughout the



**Photos: Budyaan Baamira Picnic Area,  
'Windows to the Wetlands'  
by Rowena Whiting**

woodland areas to encourage native bird and wildlife species.

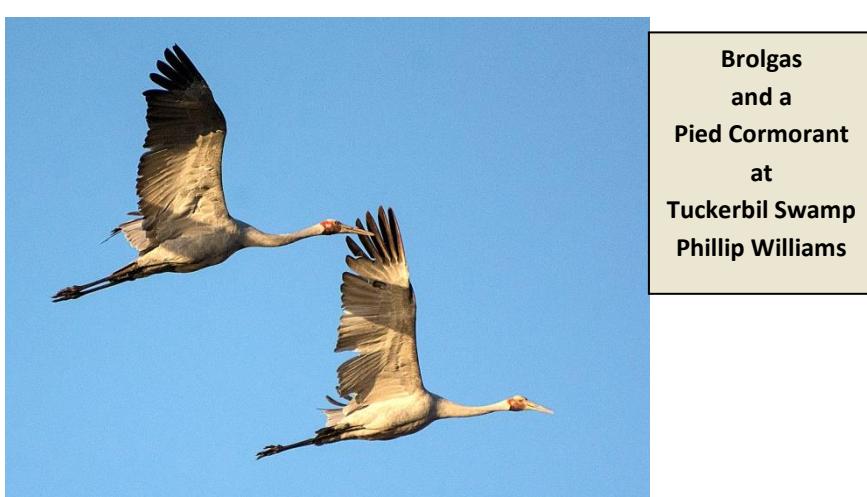
Thanks go to the agencies which collaborated to make it happen including Mission Providence, Sureway Employment and Training, Get Set Leeton, TAFE NSW Riverina Institute and LifeSource Church.

"Joe and the crew deserve considerable acknowledgement and credit for their ongoing hard work and commitment to the project, often going above and beyond with their time and resources to finish works to a high standard and ensure the improvements they've made will continue to benefit the site in the long term. Readers are encouraged to make a visit to the reserve to enjoy the new enhancements."

**Bec Byrne**

NSW Department of Industry – Lands & Water

{This written for the Leeton paper *The Irrigator* - Ed}



**Brolgas  
and a  
Pied Cormorant  
at  
Tuckerbil Swamp  
Phillip Williams**



## The Value of Biodiversity Surveys

What is a biodiversity survey? Basically it is the formal or semi-formal recording of the living things in a particular area. Ideally all flora and fauna species are recorded, but that never happens. Usually what is included depends on the availability of leaders with sufficient knowledge in identification. Most surveys are restricted to covering flowering plants and ferns, birds, mammals and reptiles. Insects and some other macro-invertebrates are sometimes collected but with so many species not named and the woeful lack of identification keys recording is often poor.



Vegetation group assessing the tree cover - Karen McCann



Deploying Elliots Trap, McPherson Range location- Karen McCann

Biodiversity surveys are usually one-off affairs with no follow up surveys after a year or so (three years seems to be the accepted interval). There are projects that check specific populations at regular intervals and these come under the umbrella of monitoring. The scope of these are usually very narrow and may even involve one species.

How biodiversity surveys are carried out has become fairly standardised. National Parks Association have produced a manual of methods. Using set methodologies means survey results can be compared across all the sites surveyed and even across separate surveys. This is particularly so when data is assessed quantitatively. Most surveys use a quadrat approach, typically 20 x 20 metres plots for flora or 20 x 50 or 100 metres for fauna. For highly mobile groups like

birds, records are taken over a set time period or during a transect of defined length. Pit fall, Elliot trap lines can be standardised in terms of numbers and spacing of the traps and also the times of opening.

It is common for lots of information on species and habitats to be collected in just a few days of survey. It is usually months before this information is analysed and a report written. But what then? Too many reports are filed away just to collect dust. However increasingly results are being uploaded to State (sometimes National) databases such as Bionet or Plantnet. Unfortunately some of this data is either restricted in access (to prevent misuse especially with threatened species) or not so easy to download for individual use.

Combined with other information results of biodiversity surveys are extremely useful for land management, conservation and other planning processes. Government agencies, local councils, land developers utilise the information in their decision processes and academics use it in their ecology research. But what about the the individual citizen? What benefits do they obtain from biodiversity surveys?

The greatest benefit for any of us, is to take part in a survey. I mentioned earlier the requirement of leaders in surveys. I say 'leaders' instead of 'experts' intentionally. A team of people can do a better job, quicker and more efficiently than a single worker. The participants do not have to have much knowledge or identification skills, just enthusiasm to search in a logical manner. By just participating one's knowledge is increased enormously. Just by having things in context makes learning and remembering so much easier. It sounds like work – and surveys can be pretty intense – but they are great social events as well, much more rewarding than just walking through the bush. Why not give one a go?

**Eric Whiting**



## Identifying a Spider

In late May Margrit and myself were on a walk along the Bundidgerry Walking Loop around Lake Talbot in Narrandera trying to learn the local flora when a very distinctive spider crossed our path. I automatically wondered what it was then remembered the new "Spideidentify" app I had recently put on my phone.

Whilst Margrit corralled the spider I opened the app and selected the following choices – "NSW", "bushland", "outdoors", "on the ground" and for abdomen shape we nominated "oval". Not knowing better we went for "average" on posture, leg shape and thickness, while the two colours of "black and red" were obvious. We ventured a few more answers as the app asked them based on what we were observing then were presented with a list of possible spiders.

Scrolling through the pictures we quickly arrived at the fourth spider "Red-headed Mouse Spider *Missulena occatoria*" - a dead ringer for what we were looking at. For less than \$5 this seems a terrific app for any interested Field Naturalist.



### Glenn Currie

Here is a link to the web site [Spideidentify – https://identify-spiders.com/](https://identify-spiders.com/)

Eric recalls Bill Moller reporting a sighting of the Red-headed Mouse Spider some time ago and also Richard Faulder adding comments on this quite rare species. Searching through back issues we found it was 2003:

**Red-headed Mouse Spider *Missulena occatoria*** (common name applies to male only, the female is entirely black with a brownish abdomen)

Red-headed Mouse Spiders are long lived, ground dwelling and have book lungs, which requires them to inhabit areas of high humidity eg. burrows, and generally only venture onto the surface in Winter or after rain periods.

They get the name "Mouse Spider" not because they kill mice but because the female builds a large burrow, which can be up to a metre deep, in a Y shape, each arm of the Y usually has a trapdoor or hinged lid, which can be sealed during predator attack (wasps and hornets) or during flooding.

The male grows to about 15 mm and matures at about 4 years and after shedding his last moult, leaves his shallow burrow in search of a female. The male has black thorax and legs and is distinguished by his red head and gun metal blue abdomen. The male is the only sex of this spider usually seen as the female spends the majority of her life in her burrow. The female grows to about 20 mm, is timid and sluggish, rarely showing aggression.

These spiders are not known to cause death but are venomous, and a bite may result in a severe temporary illness, so take care.

**Richard Faulder has made a few comments on the Red-headed Mouse Spider article which appeared in the last issue**

The reason Mouse spiders and other trapdoors open up their burrows at the annual rain break, and other times, is that this is when most insects are scurrying past their door.

The generally held reason for the name is that the first person to see one saw that it had wandered into an old mouse burrow, and assumed that it lived there. The female indeed builds a burrow, but it is a single vertical burrow with a short side chamber about half way down, used for hibernating and hatching the eggs. The Wishbone spiders make a Y-shaped burrow.

There used to be a female of the Red-headed mouse spider in her burrow in the wooded area just down the hill from the Research Labs here at the Yanco Agricultural Institute. It was discovered for me in May 1991 by a male I was following when he started prodding at a depression in the ground. After I recaptured him I discovered the top of a silken cylinder, with a detached silken flap lying nearby. About a month later, after heavy rain, heaps of soil were found around the burrow site and there was a sheet of soil-impregnated silk over the top of the old burrow. By 6th November 1991 surface doors had been renewed, apparently by cutting between the upper sheet and the top edge of the burrow lining. Just below the doors a large dark spider could be seen.

## Bird Notes from Far North Queensland – May 2018

The weather for most of May has not been good for birding – lots of overcast days with scudding rain and wind. Typical for the tablelands at this time of year I'm assured. Normally my visits are a little later when the weather is beautiful. Nights here where I am house-sitting get down to 5 degrees so it is very good sleeping weather.

**Bush Stone Curlews:** This part of Far North Queensland is curlew heaven as they are everywhere. On a recent visit to the Cairns Pioneer Cemetery I counted 64 amongst the gravestones. Then on a trip to Mareeba there were 20 together on the golf course and, this morning 5th June, I counted 16 in the grounds of Atherton High School right beside the main road!

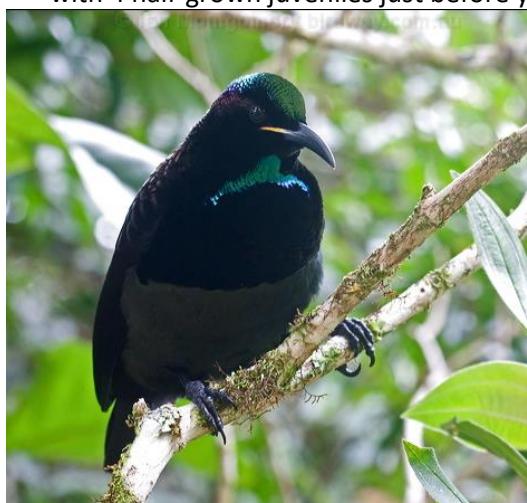
Here where I am staying, there have been 3 in the garden – the parents and last season's young. However, in the last few days there are now just a pair so I would surmise the young bird has been kicked out!

**Sarus Cranes:** I have been hearing these birds calling and seeing them flying over but hadn't been able to track them down to convince myself they were actually the cranes not Brolgas. On Sunday 3 June, I heard them calling just across the Barron River from here so went to check and located 8 feeding in a paddock that had been recently harvested of its corn crop. I went back the next day and counted 20 and this morning (5<sup>th</sup>) I counted 63 feeding. Apparently they come back to the Atherton Tablelands at the time when the corn is being harvested and, as there are loads of corn crops still around to be harvested, the crane numbers will increase to the hundreds if not thousands within the next month or so.

Note in the photo that the red on the head of the Sarus Crane goes down the neck whereas on the Brolga it is only on the top of the head.



**Cassowary:** Visitors and I went to the most reliable spot reasonably close by to look for this bird. It is at Etty Bay just south of Innisfail and a single bird was wandering along the beach harassing a bus load of school kids trying to get some food from them. Neil and I visited there last year and we saw a male bird with 4 half-grown juveniles just before you get to the



beach and another on the beach itself.

### Victoria's

**Riflebird:** Every time I have been into the rainforests about here, I have heard the harsh call of the male bird but never managed to see one until I went to Milla Milla Falls. I was with my sister and her partner and just where we parked the car, there was a male at eye height who ignored us and allowed Mick to get a photo.

**Saltwater Crocodiles:** Two enormous (greater than 3m) crocs at Eubanengee Swamp south of Cairns. Both were on the edge of the swamp sunning themselves.



Lots of birds are still eluding me and search as I might, I haven't been able to track them down. Birds like **Mangrove Robin, Shining Flycatcher, Collared Kingfisher** and so on. I need a few more trips to Cairns in order to try for them.

**Max O'Sullivan**

# MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

<b>Tawny Frogmouth [1]</b>	Nericon near Neil's house	02/05/18	Neil Palframan
<b>Golden-headed Cisticola [20]</b>	Dry Campbells Swamp	01/02/18	Neil Palframan
<b>Eastern Rosella [4]</b>	Narrandera Wetlands	09/05/18	Susan Whitehead
<b>Eurasian Coot [120]</b>	Lake Talbot, Narrandera	09/05/18	Alan Whitehead
<b>Australasian Grebe [30]</b>	Lake Talbot	09/05/18	Alan Whitehead
<b>Double-barred Finch [6]</b>	East Narrandera	09/05/18	Alan Whitehead
<b>Eastern Rosella [12+]</b>	North Wagga together in a tree	03/05/18	Phil Tenison
<b>Superb Fairy Wren</b>	North Wagga	03/05/18	Kathy Tenison
<b>Red-capped Robin</b>	North Wagga	03/05/18	Kathy Tenison
<b>Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [20]</b>	McNabb Cres. Griffith – flyover	Daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	Daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Blue-faced Honeyeater</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	Daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Red Wattlebird</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	Daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Yellow-throated Miner</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	Daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Silvereye</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	Daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Singing Honeyeater</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	Twice	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Apostlebird</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	Daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Rainbow Lorikeet</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith – flyover	Daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Mallee Ringneck</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	Daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>"28" Parrot</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	Daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Little Raven</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith - flyover	Daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Grey Butcherbird</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	Daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Grey-crowned Babbler [6]</b>	McNabb Cres – still attacking Sue's car		Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Straw-necked Ibis [10]</b>	Jubilee park, Griffith	07/05/18	Virginia Tarr
<b>Sulphur-crested Cockatoo [10+]</b>	Jubilee Park, Griffith	07/05/18	Virginia Tarr
<b>Yellow Thornbill [group]</b>	Cutler Ave, Griffith	07/05/18	Virginia Tarr
<b>Red Wattlebird [3]</b>	Cutler Ave, Griffith	07/05/18	Virginia Tarr
<b>Double-barred Finch [10]</b>	Cutler/Ortella corner, Griffith	28/05/18	Virginia Tarr
<b>White-plumed Honeyeater [5]</b>	MIA Radio corner, Griffith	28/05/18	Virginia Tarr
<b>Blue-faced Honeyeater [2]</b>	Palla St, Griffith	28/05/18	Virginia Tarr
Virginia's cat is constantly being harassed by these honeyeaters in her yard – up to 5 of them.			
<b>Variegated Fairy Wren [3]</b>	Cutler Ave, Griffith	31/05/18	Virginia Tarr
<b>Red Wattlebird [2]</b>	Cutler Ave, Griffith	31/05/18	Virginia Tarr
<b>Apostlebird [7]</b>	Cutler Ave, Griffith	Daily	Virginia Tarr
<b>Water Rat</b>	Fivebough Wetlands	10/06/18	Eric Whiting

## Duncans Creek, Cocoparra National Park

Each of the creeks on the western side of the Cocoparra Ranges have a character of their own. Although very easy to access Duncans Creek has been explored by the group on only a few occasions. It is so easy to continue up the road to the summit of Mt. Bingar.

The lower end is admittedly not very imposing, being flat country largely cleared for agriculture – there are still remnants of fences marking out a paddock. This flat area is still very weedy. However along the creek where it approaches the Stock Route there is a stand of Cooba *Acacia salicina*. There is only one other location in the National Park where this wattle occurs and that is similarly positioned on Woolshed Creek.

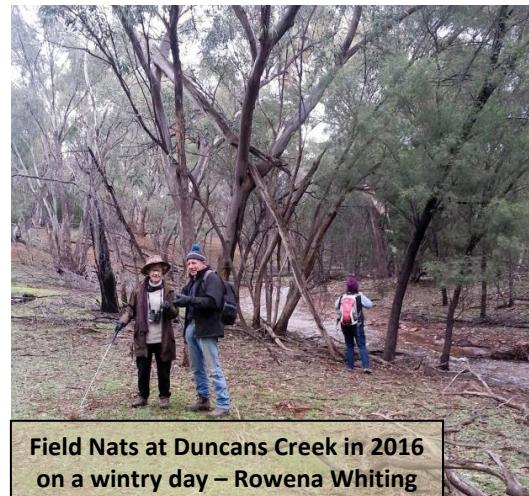
It is usual to bypass this flat portion and start heading up the creek from where the road begins to climb up the ridge. The valley soon becomes narrower and in a short while becomes gorge-like with some spectacular rock formations. Signs of wombats are regularly seen along this stretch including several burrows. Confusingly some drainage lines travel below the surface to emerge at the creek as burrow-like hollows.

After about 700 metres of the narrow valley a branch creek joins the main creek from the north and the valley opens out into a broad bowl with Mt Bingar at the far end. By crossing the side creek and climbing a low ridge the view can be seen in all its glory.

As an added attraction over the years the group has seen the giant fungus *Phlebopus marginatus* conveniently growing across the road from where we park the cars.

There may not be a formed track as at Jack's or Store Creeks but the going is fairly easy, even going up the low ridge. With luck we may even see a wombat this time.

**Eric Whiting**



**Field Nats at Duncans Creek in 2016  
on a wintry day – Rowena Whiting**

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

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

- 14 June Thursday**      **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.  
**Guest Speaker:** **Elizabeth Stott on the Basin Plan 101**  
**Contact:** Nella Smith 6959 1210.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 16 June Saturday**      **A walk in the Cocoparra National Park – Duncans Creek**  
Bring morning tea (to carry) and lunch.  
**Contact:** Rowena or Eric Whiting 6953 2612  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 1 July Sunday**      **Tuckerbil Swamp – waterbirds**  
Meet at Leeton Post Office at 1pm. Bring afternoon tea.  
**Contact:** Nella Smith 6959 1210.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 4 July Wednesday**      **Copy for the July newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**  
**Email:** [ericwhiting4@bigpond.com](mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com). Phone: 6953 2612.
- 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**  
**Contact:** Nella Smith 6959 1210.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 14 July Saturday**      **Livingstone National Park**  
A walk is proposed.  
**Contact:** Nella Smith 6959 1210 if you are interested in going.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 17-19 August Weekend**      **Spring Camp**  
**This will be held at Oolambeyan National Park**  
Accommodation is available in the homestead.  
Please let Dione Russell (0428 536 290) know if you are interested in coming or  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).