

# *The Murrumbidgee Naturalist*



**October 2018 - Issue #264**

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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

## **Spendid Fairy-wren**



Image was taken by Kathy Tenison whilst on the birding tour, organised by the Lachlan Fold Action Group, Rankins Springs

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For the November issue by  
Wednesday 30 October

To Rowena Whiting

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***Be part of the Twitchathon  
this year on the weekend of  
26-27 October***

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

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<b>Treasurer:</b>	Ellené Schnell	6959 8435	<b>Assistant Treasurer:</b>	Phil 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:

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

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## Birdlife Australia National Twitchathon 2018

For over 30 years, hundreds of passionate birdwatchers have been racing around the countryside competing in this unique sporting event. The aim to see or hear as many bird species as possible and help protect our birdlife for years to come.

The Twitchathon is a race in which teams aim to tick off as many species as they can in the allotted time. There are three categories so anyone no matter how experienced or time-restricted, can compete!

This year there are three different events, all you have to do is, choose an event which suits you, form a team, and start planning a route and fundraising strategy!

**The Big Weekend** is a 30 hour marathon bird-race where teams try to collect as many a species as possible with maximum habitat coverage - winning teams regularly record over a quarter of all Australia's birds.

For those with less time, **The Big Day** race is over 12 hours and gives teams half a day to spot as many birds as they can. This more relaxed event avoids the need for teams to camp overnight, and even includes an optional lunch break.

**The Birdathon** is suitable for everyone, young and old, experienced and novice. Each team has three 1-hour blocks to birdwatch over the course of the day, which they can choose to use at any time, and in any place. So one hour (or more) could be spent at your local park or wetland, or it could be that patch of mallee or rainforest that's a few hours' drive away.

### SPONSOR A TEAM

Each year, the Twitchathon raises funds that go towards a different bird conservation initiative in each state. This year in NSW we're raising money for critical recovery actions for Regent Honeyeaters at their breeding locations.

You will find the **Registration Forms** and **Rules** for each race category available for download at the website: <https://www.birdlifetwitchathon.org.au> which includes rules for the different race categories, fundraising targets and information, details on how to donate, the official species list, and a digital copy of the flyer!

**Get involved by joining or forming a team. See coming events for MFN contact.**

## Birding in Far North Queensland

Penny and Phillip Williams and Kathy and Phil Tenison gave a presentation to the club's September meeting about their recent trip to Far North Queensland – Cairns/Musgrave/Iron Range/Cairns.

The four did the same trip as I did in 2017 and had many excellent photos to show the group – photos of birds mainly with emphasis on the endemic species of FNQ. Kathy and Phil did a trip to Cape Tribulation prior to the Iron Range trip and had photos of the Daintree River cruise they did – Great-billed Heron, Shining Flycatcher and Papuan Frogmouth being particular birds of interest along with a 'smiling' crocodile – jaws agape!

Both couples had also spent some time on the Atherton Tablelands as well and had some good records of birds seen there – Sarus Crane and Brolga, Wompoo and Topknot Pigeons, Victoria's Riflebird and a juvenile Cassowary.

The two nights at Musgrave Roadhouse on the way to Iron Range was spent in search of the threatened Golden-shouldered Parrot where



they saw good numbers at Artemis Station – the well known spot to see these lovely birds. Also seen there were Black-backed Butcherbird, plus an assortment of finches – Black-throated and Star being the ones to see in the nearby Lakefield National Park. A search at the Red Goshawk nesting tree failed to find the birds – there had been a report before they left for the trip that the male goshawk had been found dead at the base of the tree and that the body had been sent to Brisbane for a post mortem. No further information has been published so it is uncertain why the bird died.

Iron Range proved very good for the photographers and their guide Ben Bluett was most obliging and patient in finding some of the endemic birds for them. Birds such as Eclectus Parrot – the pair being seen perched and the female emerging from the nest hollow a little later. The real gems of the lowland rain forest there are Frilled-necked Monarch and White-faced Robin and Phillip W and Kathy had a couple of photos to show them in all their glory.

I had directed the Tenisons to a hollow at the Cathedral Fig Tree near Yungaburra where I had seen a Lesser Sooty Owl emerge just before I returned home in late June. Fortunately the bird was still there and Kathy managed a very early morning photo of the bird sitting at the

hollow entrance – an excellent bird to get, especially in the daytime.

Thanks to the Williams and

Tenisons for the talk and photos – both couples would love to go back and spend more time in the Iron Range area and nearby coastal settlements of Lockhart River and Portland Roads – likewise for me!

**Max O'Sullivan**

**Sarus Cranes by Kathy Tenison  
Eclectus Parrots, Palm Cockatoo and  
Red-winged Parrot by Phillip Williams**



## A Walk in the Brobenah Hills

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 9 adults and 2 trainee field naturalists (my grandchildren) met on Colinroobie Rd and were led through private land by a local landholder to the boundary between his place and the Crown land from here we jumped the fence and walked up the hill for an hour and then stopped for morning tea. From here we headed over the ridge to the valley of the next gully and there we stopped for lunch before we walked back out to the cars.

The day was quite windy and cold until we got into the protection of the trees. There were a few birds to be seen once we entered the trees but it was interesting to walk through bush that hadn't been farmed. It wasn't as pristine as we had hoped as while we were stopped for morning tea five to eight goats walked past, they were the only ones that we saw for the day but there was evidence as we walked of them browsing in the understory. They seemed to particularly like the native mint bush flowers as the only flowers that we saw were above the height that they could reach.

As expected in the current conditions there was little green to be seen other than the trees. But it was interesting to see that since the pre walk that Dionee and I had done three weeks earlier that there had been some growth in response to the 13 mm that we had received two weeks before our outing. Not being a plant person I have relied on the plant list that was supplied by Virginia.

The other thing to note was that there were lots of Hill She-oaks and that even though we were looking we saw no evidence that any cones had been eaten by the Glossy Black Cockatoos, does this mean that food isn't the limiting factor to the number in our region?

Overall it was an interesting day and it goes to prove that it isn't only in the good times that the Australian bush is enjoyable to be in. Finally I would like to give a personal thank you to all who attended firstly for their company and finally for being patient with the kids and helping to teach them the joy of being in the Australian bush.

**Graham Russell**

### Flora and other vegetation list compiled by Virginia Tarr

Orchids: Pink Fingers (*Caladenia fuscata*), Midget Greenhood (*Pterostylis mutica*), Leopard Orchid (*Diuris pardina*)

Other: Slender Violet (*Hybanthus monopetalus*), Nodding Blue-Lily (*Stypandra glauca*), Oval-leaf Mint-Bush (*Prostanthera ovalifolia*), Twining Fringe-lily (*Thysanotus patersonii*), Mulga fern (*Cheilanthes sieberi*), Mosses and lichens, Austral carrot (*Daucus glochidiatus*), Purple Burr-daisy (*Calotis cuneifolia*), Hard-head daisies in the more open eucalyptus areas.

Trees: Hill She-oaks and males in flower, abundantly, Bimble Box, Mallee trees and other Eucalyptus trees, White Cypress Pines, Western Golden Wattle, and many more

### Birdlist – 15/09/18 compiled by Max O'Sullivan

White-winged Chough, Crested Pigeon, Pied Butcherbird, Magpie, Peewee, Striated Pardalote (H), Inland Thornbill, Weebill, Grey Shrike-Thrush, Rufous Whistler, Red-capped Robin, Australian Raven, Galah, Red-rumped Parrot, Yellow-throated Miner, Common Bronzewing, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

**Golden Whistler – female – Kathy Tenison**

**Group enjoying a break - Dionee Russell**



## Rankin Springs Annual Bird Tours

On the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of September a few of us attended the Annual Bird Tours at Rankin Springs hosted by the Lachlan Fold Wildlife Action Group.

It was an early start on the Saturday with a 6:00 am loading onto the bus. In the morning we visited three different sites and used one of these stops as a morning tea stop. Lunch was at the park next to the Hall in Rankin Springs. The food for morning tea and for lunch was excellent. Lunch was interrupted by birding and in particular some disappeared across the road chasing the elusive Spotted Bowerbird that on this occasion wasn't that elusive.

After lunch some of the group headed out to the mallee at Eight Mile Tank Road the highlight for me was once again the Splendid Fairy Wrens that gave us a very good show.

From here we headed back to Rankin Springs picked up the remainder of the group and headed out to try and find Glossy Black Cockatoos but to no avail. The food for afternoon tea was again excellent, when dark descended we headed back to the hall for pre-dinner drinks, nibble and lots of discussion about the day's activities. This was followed by more excellent food then early to bed as those that were doing the second days tour had to again meet the bus at 6:00am.



**Masked Woodswallow (above)  
White-eared Honeyeater (left)  
Eastern Robin (below)  
– Graham Russell**



The birding for the day that Dionee and I attended was good and we got to see many of the species that are present. It was great to meet and spend the day with like-minded people building contacts.

I will be going again next year and

would recommend the day to all, it was good value with all meals provided except breakfast, the use of the local knowledge that get you to places that you couldn't get to otherwise.

**Graham Russell**



**At dams on the tour - Dionee Russell**



## Wildflower Walk at Galore Hill

Wagga Wagga Urban Landcare held a well attended Spring Wildflower Walk at **Galore Hill Scenic Reserve** which is one of the most impressive landmarks in the region, rising over 200 metres above the surrounding plains. I can see it from the hill near my place even on a hazy day (picture).



Tracy Geppert Environmental Officer from Lockhart Shire Council and I led the Nature Walk and we talked about the history and current management practices being implemented at the Reserve. Management includes managing the rabbit problem, removing invasive non-endemic species eg Flinders Range Wattle *Acacia iteaphylla*

and Queensland Silver Wattle aka Mt Morgan Wattle *Acacia podalyriifolia*. Invasive local species have also proven to be a problem. Where the *Acacia doratoxlyn* has died White Cypress Pine has invaded the area. *Acacia doratoxlyn* is an important food source for many granivorous and pollen reliant fauna and this will need to be managed appropriately. Some funding has also been spent on a Biodiversity Survey to inform land managers about the flora and fauna that persists at Galore Hill

Covering over 500 hectares of remnant bushland, Galore Hill provides a natural habitat for a wide variety of native flora and fauna including Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Echidna, various reptiles including the 2 goannas *Varanus varius* that we saw and 140 different species of birds.

A lookout tower on the Summit affords 360 degree, panoramic views of the surrounding countryside.

Folklore has it that Galore Hill is indebted to early settler Henry Osborne for its unusual name. It is said that, after climbing to the top, Osborne shouted to the world: There's land enough and galore for me.

Signed walking tracks take in the caves of infamous bushranger, Daniel 'Mad Dog' Morgan. These caves were used by the bushranger as a refuge from the authorities. These days the caves are occupied by Microbats.

Birds benefit from the arboretum which includes plants from other areas of Australia of genus Eucalypts, Eremophila, Hakea, Melaleuca, Grevillea and Acacia. Many of these are doing remarkably well considering that they are not locally native. These plantings were made possible by funding provided by the Lockhart Shire Council and have been cared for by the Lockhart Rotary Club. However it has been decided by Council and Rotary that the arboretum will not be maintained but will be retained for as long as it survives.

It is surprising what can be found on the ground even after extended drought. Creamy Candles *Stackhousia monogyna*, the native grasses *Poa sieberi* and Burr Daisy *Calotis cuneata* could still be found.

*Acacia brachybotrya*, *A. lineata*, *A. hakeoides* and *A. pendula* were all flowering profusely on the road into the reserve, a successful direct drilling from the past.

Normally September would be a great time for a very floristic nature walk. Various terrestrial orchids are found including *Glossodia major*, *Caladenia carnea*, *C. rileyii*, *Cyanicula careula*, *Diuris goonooensis*, *Pterostylis nana*, *P. mutica*, *P. robusta*, *P. striata*, *P. rubescens*, *Calochilus robertsonii*, *Eriochilus cucullatus*, *Microtis mutica*, *Pheladenia difformis*, *Cyrtostylis reniformis* and various *Prasophyllum* spp. **But not this year.**

The last time we saw Glossy Black Cockatoos at Galore was in the middle of the millennium drought. Tracey reported one last week.

The conclusion I reach is that Galore Hill is a very important refuge for threatened species in a largely cleared, cropped and grazed landscape. Many thanks to WWUL for organizing this event.

Nella Smith

From left: Twining Finge Lily, *Pterostylis striata* and *Eriochilus cucullatus*, taken in past years



## Revegetation Project in Victoria – making a contribution

The Bush Heritage Australia (BHA) reserves in central Victoria have areas of eucalypts that are stressed or have died through the influence of intense drought and/or heat stress linked to climate change. This decline is occurring over several hundred hectares of the reserves. At the Nardoo Hills Reserve, near Wedderburn, Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) and to some extent Yellow Box (*E. melliodora*) are affected. The dieback is affecting older and younger trees; some have died outright whilst on other trees coppiced shoots or epicormic regrowth are all that remain.

BHA has the opportunity to build climate adaptation options for its reserves. Traditional revegetation efforts using locally sourced seed are now considered high risk. To address this, the project aims to develop climate-ready (Eucalypt) revegetation options for these affected reserves and undertake trial plantings. A climate change projections tool has been used to identify regional 'climate analogues' from which climatically robust provenances of the same species can be sought. We used the methods recommended in the guide 'Climate-ready revegetation – a guide for natural resource managers' (Hancock *et al.*, 2016).

We used the 'Climate Change in Australia' Climate Analogues tool to identify potential sources of climate-ready Eucalypt provenances for the reserves. Climate analogues are areas in Australia where the current climate is similar to the projected future climate of a place of interest, ie. Wedderburn. Based on this analysis, there are good prospects for genetically diverse provenances of grey and yellow box from areas currently experiencing the climate projected for Nardoo Hills in 2090 under the most likely climate scenarios. The provenances we are collecting from occur in western NSW (eg. near Griffith) and one site in SA (near Quorn).

The areas will be planted with tubestock raised from the seeds collected from 5 different provenances (including the local provenance). They will be planted in ripped lines (40-50 cm deep but possibly more shallow where it is rockier). The tine used to rip the soil is only meant to create a crack to help water infiltrate deeper into the soil profile. The tine is not designed to turn the soil over (like a plough), though some large rocks may be pushed to the surface if they don't crack.

The trees will be planted under an experimental design so that we can monitor the outcomes over the coming decades. This information will help us to determine the relative performance of the local provenance versus the non-local provenances at Nardoo Hills. Crosses between the local and non-local provenances will hopefully produce offspring that are even better suited to the local environment and the drying, hotter climate at Nardoo Hills.

**Matt Appleby**, Senior Ecologist (S.-E. Australia), Bush Heritage Australia

### What has this got to do with us you may ask.

Bush Heritage need around 40 grams of seed for Grey box and/or 50 grams of seed for Yellow Box from our area. Importantly, the seeds need to be collected, georeferenced (GPS) and bagged separately from about 10 individual trees for each species. This will allow them to trace the seedlings they plant back to the locations within the site from which the seeds were collected.

A few of our members have been collecting seed for this project. Surprisingly for me Grey Box is a lot scarcer than I expected and Yellow Box is much more common as roadside trees around Narrandera. Nevertheless I have managed to find enough seed nearby to fill the orders but most coming from Binya and the Cocoparras.

**Nella Smith**

**Grey Box tree**  
**Yellow box – leaves, flowers,**  
**nuts (& a bee)**  
**photos by Nella Smith**



## Turquoise Parrot field day in Rankins Springs

Turquoise Parrots are a really spectacular little birds that can be found in the Rankins Springs area and the Cocoparra National Park. Although we were not fortunate enough to see the birds on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September we were privileged to attend the 'Protecting the Parrot Field Day' put on by Local Land Services where we learnt all about this vulnerable little bird and what is being done to protect it.

Chris Tzaros from Birds, Bush and Beyond gave us a rundown on the history of the birds, why they have reduced in numbers, management of their habitat and the type of nesting boxes they prefer.

Turquoise Parrots used to be in large numbers in the early to mid-nineteenth century in many parts of NSW, Victoria and Queensland. They have however declined in numbers faster than many other woodland birds. Some of the reasons for this decline has been, drought, loss of food source, loss of breeding habitat and apparently hungry people which is a bit hard to believe. They are only small.

During the great Federation drought rabbits increased in plaque proportions which meant food was not as available for these small birds as they feed almost entirely on the ground by eating seeds from native grasses, herbs and small shrubs. Add to this the problem of feral foxes and cats and life becomes difficult for them. It was mentioned at the meeting that 45 cats had been trapped in the Rankins Springs area of late.

Put on top of this the grazing of cattle and sheep and the clearing of land leading to their home and environment being disturbed. The removal of trees through ring-barking meant that the hollows they would normally breed in were not available.

The Turquoise Parrot has become a flagship species for the woodland area of NSW and Victoria and with help from farmers in the Rankins Springs area it is hope that numbers will increase and recover for this vulnerable little bird. Some of the practices that are being used to increase the numbers are:

- 1) Reducing the numbers of feral cats and foxes
- 2) Protection of lightly timbered forest edges where the birds are likely to forage. Leave debris on the ground and avoid disturbing areas of native grasses, herbs and low shrubs. Privately owned landscapes adjoining State Forests and National Parks are vital in the Cocoparra Range project.
- 3) Providing suitable nesting boxes – They can be dead hollowed out stumps mounted to existing or broken off trees as well as artificial nesting boxes built to specification. The most popular nesting sites are one to five metres off the ground with the average being 1.5 metres. The birds prefer vertical or near vertical hollows rather than ones with side openings. Over fifty nest boxes have been placed with GPS identification in the Binya, Cocoparra and Griffith area near watering points to encourage nesting.
- 4) Placement of nesting boxes – They need to be within 100-650m from a watering hole/dam (average 287m).



**Adult male Turquoise Parrot at nest-box, Turquoise Parrot Chicks in the nest-box – photos by Chris Tzaros:**



Alone adult males check out plenty of sites for a nest and then take the female for further inspections. She will inspect the nest-sites and choose the best one before egg-laying. There is often a lot of competition with many other woodland species to find the right site. All the more reason to ensure there are plenty of nest boxes of a suitable type for the Turquoise Parrot.

The male bird is responsible for feeding the chicks. He eats seeds, flies to a dam or other water source to make a porridge in his crop, he calls as he heads towards the nest and the chicks once close to fledging crawl up the grooves on the inside of the nest box to be fed at the entrance hole.

It takes a community of people to save the Turquoise Parrots. They are best identified by a bright flash of yellow as the birds spread their golden outer tail feathers as well as green and blue in the wings. So, keep an eye out for them.

For further information on Turquoise Parrots contact – [chris@birdsbushandbeyond.com.au](mailto:chris@birdsbushandbeyond.com.au)

Chris's booklet is called Turquoise Country – Communities caring for the threatened Turquoise Parrot.

**Kathy Tenison**

**A trailer load of nesting boxes and salvaged hollow logs ready for positioning in suitable sites near watering holes.**

**A nesting box with grooves 40mm apart on the backboard and both sides for birds to climb up.**

**Kathy Tenison**



### **Top Twitch Tips**

Cover as many diverse habitats as possible to maximise the suite of possible species

Put a large distance between your start and end points to increase your range of targets

Find species as quickly as possible, and don't forget that hearing a bird counts too

Don't waste time looking for one bird that is eluding you – focus on the next one

Make sure to actually go birding, not just drive hundreds of kilometres between sites

Have backups for even the most guaranteed birds – they tend to disappear on race day

Top teams often spend weeks 'oiling' their route to pin down nests and flowering trees

Prepare – don't waste time buying food during the race, and make brief petrol stops

Remember the common species – a House Sparrow at the local shopping centre is worth just as much on Twitchathon as a Grey Falcon hundreds of kilometres away!

# MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

Compiled by Max O'Sullivan

<b>Echnida</b>	Narrandera Common	30/08/18	Warrick Bradney
<b>Chestnut-rumped Thornbill</b> [4]	Lake Talbot, Narrandera	01/09/18	Alan Whitehead
<b>Australian Shelduck</b> [>95]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Marsh Sandpiper</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands – season return	02/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Gull-billed Tern</b> [2]	Fivebough Wetlands – season return	07/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Little Corella</b> [>1500]	Petersham Rd near Fivebough car park	07/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Sharp-tailed Sandpiper</b> [77]	Fivebough Wetlands	07/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands – season return	07/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Wedge-tailed Eagle</b> [Imm]	Fivebough Wetlands	07/09/18	Keith Hutton
The wedgie was carrying a half-eaten carcass of a young kangaroo.			
<b>White-breasted Woodswallow</b>	The Basin Dam Koonadan – season return	08/09/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Baillon's Crake</b> [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/09/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>White-fronted Honeyeater</b>	Nericon – Neil's place	10/09/18	Neil Palframan
<b>Brown Honeyeater</b>	Nericon – first record at Neil's place	10/09/18	Neil Palframan
<b>Yellow-plumed Honeyeater</b>	Nericon – first record at Neil's place	11/09/18	Neil Palframan
<b>Grey Fantail</b>	Belah St, Leeton	11/09/18	Joy E Young
<b>Zebra Finch</b> [2]	Scalabrini Garden, Griffith	11/09/18	Virginia Tarr
<b>Silvereye</b> [many]	Scalabrini Garden, Griffith	11/09/18	Virginia Tarr
<b>Whiskered Tern</b> [28]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Black-tailed Native-hen</b> [30]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Silvereye</b> [6]	Narrandera Wetlands	12/09/18	Susan Whitehead
<b>Grey Fantail</b>	Narrandera	12/09/18	Warrick Bradney
<b>Red-capped Robin</b>	Scenic Hill Griffith	12/09/18	Vilma Pellizza
<b>Brolga</b> [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	13/09/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Yellow Rosella</b>	Belah St, Leeton	13/09/18	Joy E Young
<b>Rufous Whistler</b> [2]	Lake Talbot Narrandera	13/09/18	Alan Whitehead
<b>White-plumed Honeyeater</b> [4]	Railway Ave, Leeton	13/09/18	J Parow
<b>Red Wattlebird</b> [3]	Railway Ave, Leeton	13/09/18	J Parow
<b>Grey Shrike-Thrush</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	13/09/18	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Variiegated Wren</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	13/09/18	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Grey-crowned Babbler</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	13/09/18	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Red Wattlebird</b>	McNabb Cres, Griffith	13/09/18	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Major Mitchell's Cockatoo</b> [13]	'Mountain Dam' Colinroobie Rd Leeton	14/09/18	Graham Russell
<b>Freckled Duck</b> [6]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Australasian Shoveler</b> [>50]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Barn Owl</b>	Fivebough Wetlands	16/09/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Brown Quail</b> [7]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Glossy Ibis</b> [39]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Western Gerygone</b> [6]	Buckingbong Forest via Narrandera	22/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Glossy Black Cockatoo</b>	Galore Hill	~22/09/18	Tracey Geppert
<b>Nankeen Night Heron</b> [2]	Kamarah Rd north of Narrandera	22/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Red-capped Robin</b> [male]	Kamarah Rd north of Narrandera	22/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Black Kite</b> [25]	Lake Coolah north of Narrandera	22/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Whistling Kite</b> [4]	Lake Coolah	22/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Little Eagle</b> [1]	Lake Coolah	22/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Chestnut-rumped Thornbill</b>	Mejum State Forest Kamarah Rd	22/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Red-kneed Dotterel</b> [15]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/09/18	Keith Hutton

## Sightings continued

<b>Sacred Kingfisher</b> [1]	Yanco Silo Reserve – season return	23/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Noisy Friarbird</b> [2]	Yanco Silo Reserve - season return	23/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Little Friarbird</b> [2]	Yanco Silo Reserve	23/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Superb Parrot</b> [25]	Whitton Post Office	27/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Yellow Rosella</b> [2]	Whitton Museum	27/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Blue-faced Honeyeater</b> [2]	Whitton Museum	27/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater</b> [3]	Whitton Museum	27/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Striated Pardalote</b> [2]	Whitton Museum	27/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Sacred Kingfisher</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>White-winged Triller</b> [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Baillon's Crake</b> [4]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Buff-banded Rail</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Latham's (Japanese) Snipe</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands – season return	28/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Marsh Sandpiper</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Pallid Cuckoo</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Pacific Golden Plover</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands – rare sighting	28/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>White-bellied Sea-Eagle</b> [Imm]	The Basin Dam Koonadan	28/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Painted Honeyeater</b> [H]	Apostle Yard Rd, Leeton – season return	28/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo</b> [5]	Evans Smyles Rd via Leeton	28/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Major Mitchell's Cockatoo</b> [4]	Evans Smyles Rd via Leeton	28/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>White-browed Woodswallow</b>	Evans Smyles Rd via Leeton	28/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Masked Woodswallow</b>	Evans Smyles Rd via Leeton	28/09/18	Sydney bird group

All the birds at Evans Smyles Road above were on the ground in the sheep paddock just near the corner of Brobenah Hall Road. The woodswallows were in a mixed flock of about 60 birds.

<b>Painted Honeyeater</b> [3]	McCann Rd, Lake Wyangan	29/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Blue-billed Duck</b> [40+]	Sewerage Ponds, Griffith	29/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Musk Duck</b> [20+]	Sewerage Ponds, Griffith	29/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Brolga</b> [8]	Fivebough Wetlands – flew in at 6.40pm	29/09/18	Sydney bird group
<b>Grey Shrike-Thrush</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	30/09/18	Keith Hutton
<b>Painted Honeyeater</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	30/09/18	Keith Hutton

**Brown Honeyeater** appear to be established now in both Leeton and Griffith after colonising Binya State Forest 20 years ago. They are now being seen (and heard) regularly around Leeton and Neil reported one at Nericon.

<b>Brown-headed Honeyeater</b> [7]	Whitton Stock Route Rd – Binya SF south	30/09/18	Margaret Strong
<b>Rainbow Bee-eater</b>	Narrandera area – season return	03/10/18	Nella Smith
<b>Indian Myna</b> [1]	Corbie Hill Rd, Leeton	04/10/18	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Ring-tailed Possum</b>	Rocky Waterholes, Narrandera	05/10/18	Narrandera Landcare

**Variegated Fairy Wren split:** There has been a species split between the Variegated Wren east of the divide (*Malarus lamberti*) and that of the western parts of Australia (*Malarus assimilis*). The east coastal wren will remain as **Variegated Fairy Wren** whilst that to the west of the Great Divide is now called the **Purple-backed Fairy Wren**. This includes all of the rest of Australia including the Kimberley form and the Lavender-flanked form of north-west Western Australia. Not sure if the name change will be generally accepted for some time.

### Mass killing of 420 Wedge-tailed Eagles in Victoria:

A forensic examination by Victoria's Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) into the illegal poisoning of hundreds of Wedge-tailed Eagles at Tubbutt in Victoria's East Gippsland region has resulted in a New Zealand man being sentenced to 14 days imprisonment and fined \$2500 after he pleaded guilty to killing up to 420 of the protected native birds.

The birds were all killed in 2017 and 2018 by injecting poison into lamb carcasses that were then left out for the carrion feeding eagles to scavenge. The birds are said to have died within half an hour of eating the poisoned baits. The DELWP investigation is continuing as several other people have been implicated in the killings. Taken from Birdlife news and the ABC report on the 7pm news.

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

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

- 11 October Thursday**      **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.  
**Topic:**  
**Bring along any 'Show and Tell'**  
**Contact:** Nella Smith 6959 1210.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 13 October Saturday**      **Field survey of Griffith Aborigine Land Council block –**  
**Meet: at 8:30am** at corner of Lakes and Mallinson roads .  
**Bring:** morning tea and lunch.  
This **Spring survey** is a follow up to the survey we did in April (report is in the May issue). As before we will be walking through the block, noting the birds, plants, reptiles, insects etc.  
**Contact Eric Whiting 6953 2612**  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 27-28 October Sat - Sun**      **Birdlife Australia National Twitchathon 2018**  
**Take part in the race or sponsor a team.**  
The idea is to see how many species of birds you can find in the 30, 12 or just 3 hours. For more details see page 2. There is a minimum of 3 hours but they can be done in separate hours but must be on the same day.  
If you have a team or would like to be part of another team and/or for further details contact Nella Smith 6959 1210.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com)
- 31 October Wednesday**      **Copy for the Novemberr newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**  
**Email:** [ericwhiting4@bigpond.com](mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com). Phone: 6953 2612.
- 8 November Thursday**      **Annual General Meeting and Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.  
**Topic:** To be decided – Bring along ideas for topics or possible guest speakers.  
**Contact:** Nella Smith 6959 1210.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 11-18 November**      **Wild Pollinator Count**  
**Week**  
A national citizen science project that encourages people to record local pollinators by watching a flower for 10 minutes during the count week and recording what insects land on the flower during that time. Find out how to go about it at <https://wildpollinatorcount.com/>
- Other Events**
- 20 October Saturday**      **Talking about Stones - preserving history in Narrandera**  
An information session with archaeologists, geologists and Indigenous knowledge holders who will be on hand to help you learn more about these objects. Contact is Robyn McKenzie, ANU, phone: 0261259878, email: [robyn.mckenzie@anu.edu.au](mailto:robyn.mckenzie@anu.edu.au)  
Time 11:00am to 3pm, at the Narrandera Arts and Community Centre