

# *The Murrumbidgee Naturalist*



**March 2017 - Issue #246**

**Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.**

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## **Objects of the Club**

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



**Fivebough Wetlands - enjoying the birds and brekky event to celebrate World Wetlands Day.**

**Image by Penny Williams**

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**For the February issue by  
Wednesday 5 April**

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***Be part of the Glossy  
Black Cockatoo Count on  
Saturday 25 March***

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

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<b>Secretary:</b>	Penny Williams	6953 3524			
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Phil Tenison	6953 4869	<b>Website Co-ordinator:</b>	Phillip Williams	6953 3524

**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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## Birds and Brekky at Fivebough Wetlands on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Kerri Keely of Murrumbidgee Landcare organised the successful Event at Fivebough Wetlands, which is designated a Ramsar listed wetland, to mark World Wetlands Day (held on February 2nd each year). A lot of people turned up, perhaps lured by the smell of a BBQ breakfast in the carpark at Fivebough.

After breakfast the group headed to Budyaan Baamirra Centre to hear from 3 speakers. **Keith Hutton** spoke about the birds of Fivebough. Keith has been undertaking surveys there since 1981. He spoke about the range and number of birds observed at Fivebough and the migratory species that visit Fivebough Wetlands.



**Kerri Keely at the Murrumbidgee Landcare stand  
Geoff Sainty speaking to the group –Penny Williams  
Looking at birds through a scope – Rowena Whiting**



**Geoff Sainty**, a wetland plant specialist, is from Griffith. Geoff gave a historical view of

Fivebough. He said that originally the area was

covered in Black Box trees. These were cleared in the early days of Leeton's settlement for use as firewood. He

spoke of his concerns that all the drugs and other chemicals people use end up in the sewage which is then pumped through the sewage treatment works and eventually into Fivebough. Geoff spoke of his interest in algae and cyanobacteria and other organisms that live in the water. Geoff had several copies of two books which he gave away to people who were at the Event. They are "Waterplants in Australia which he co-authored, and another, "Freshwater Algae in Australia which his organisation published.





The third speaker, David Hunter is a frog specialist and comes from Office of Environment and Heritage in Albury. David spoke about the importance of wetlands for frogs and the role they play in the food chain; from the tadpoles eating algae to the frogs transferring the nutrients back onto the land. Here they provide food for birds, mammals and reptiles. He highlighted the importance of having good quality wetlands right across the landscape to ensure the biodiversity will be able to persist in a healthy way. **Penny Williams**



Walking along the path alongside Cumbungi – Dieuwer Reyner David Hunter. addressing the group (top)– Penny Williams Group listening to Keith Hutton – Penny Williams



### Bird of the Month - Blue-billed Duck *Oxyura australis*

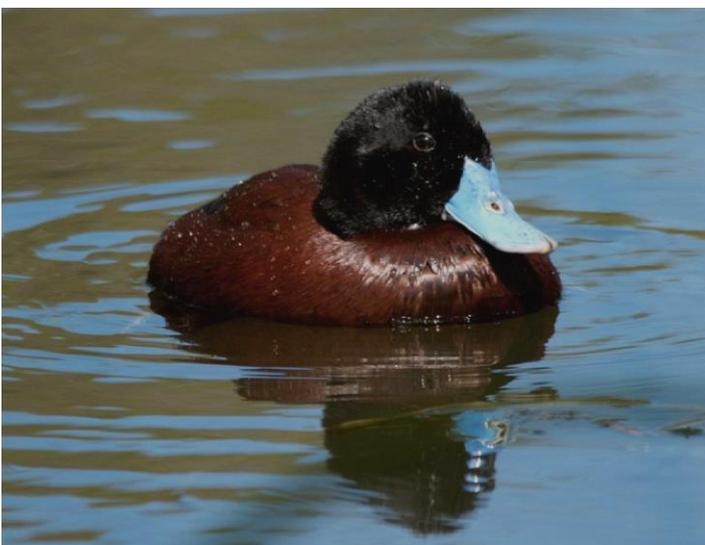
The Blue-billed duck is a striking looking bird with his jet black head and bright blue bill. The species varies from most other ducks for they spend very little time on shore, but are excellent divers and do much of their feeding on the floor of lakes and swamps. They are classed as 'stiff-tail' as their tail feathers are stiff, as is the Musk duck.

Their mating is quite spectacular according to The Readers Digest, "The male splashes water backwards with both feet; springs erect to stand on his tail; dives and rocks his body back and forth with his stiff tail feathers held erect as a fan." Its blue bill lightens in colour when the mating season is over. They build a deep and domed nest on a raft of rushes and produce 3-6 eggs.

Other names are Stiff-tail, Spinetail, Diver, Diving duck.

Sue Chittick-Dalton

Blue-billed Duck photos by Phillip Williams – male is on the left, female the right



## Bush Banter with Knowledgeable Ninety Year Olds.

Excerpts of recordings with Betty Bradney and Bill Draper compiled by Kathy Tenison as part of the 21st Birthday Celebration of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists.

For our first meeting of the year Kathy Tenison gave us a wonderful talk with audio and images of the interviews she had done with two of our nonagenarian members – Betty Bradney and Bill Draper.

She began by outlining the project aims of preserving natural history knowledge of the local area and encouraging new members to the club. Her main reason for being involved was her interest in hearing peoples' stories. The project was funded by the Leeton Soldiers Club, Wade Sports Club Foundation and Select Harvests.

Whilst it was interesting to hear them tell of incidents in their lives from childhood and more recently, it was their love and respect for nature that came through. As Bill said from a farmer's perspective "I think we should respect the environment. You have always got to work with nature, it is very hard to bend it".

For Betty it was her love of plants both in gardens and the bush with her emphasising how "important roadside verges are in providing food and shelter for birds and how they act as corridors that link patches of bushland". She always ensured plantings were watered and makes sure she always has bottles of water in her car.

Kathy pointed out how changes in language and word use has occurred over time and did her own research on the meaning of some of the words they used like rain barrel, bull roarer, jump the rattler, a rough block; this was enlightening. We learnt of life

during the depression, mice plagues and the effects of bushfires. Their concluding comments are well worth mentioning: for Betty it was to be persistent, choose to be happy, live from day to day and make sure you find something that is worthwhile to do; Bill's take was to work hard, play hard, think of your fellow men and work with nature. All things that we can take away with us.

It really was a most enjoyable evening, inspiring and quite different from our usual talks. We were all very appreciative of what Kathy has achieved and thanked her, Betty and Bill for sharing the stories with us in such a novel way. We then all enjoyed the mud cake which Kathy had decorated with a bird's nest with chocolate eggs, fallen timber flakes and the strawberries representing the fruits of the bush.

**Rowena Whiting**



Bill & Betty after cutting the cake -  
Rowena Whiting  
Kathy's cake – Virginia Tarr



# Glossy Black Cockatoo Count 2017

17, 18 February 2017

with the Lachlan Fold Wildlife Action Group around the Rankin Springs area ...

Rankins Springs is surrounded by various National Parks as well as private landholdings which have suitable habitat for Glossy Black Cockatoos. To the North we have Jimberoo National Park. To the south we have Cocoparra National Park and Nature Reserve. The habitat is hardly able to be grazed or cultivated as it tends to be poor gravelly or rocky and steep. The *Allocasuarina stricta* on which the species relies for food grows on stony ridges, rocky outcrops and mountain slopes. As Glossy Black Cockatoos are entirely seed eaters they must drink every day. They usually do this at dams at dusk near where they are feeding. This year it was between 7pm and 8 pm. We also know that they usually drink just once in a day

However they also rely on large old growth Grey Box *Eucalyptus microcarpa*, Red Gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* or Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora* for nesting sites. They need large trunks which are often vertical and can be in dead trees. These large trees grow mostly lower down the ridges where the soil is deeper and more suitable for cultivation. Consequently many of these trees have been cleared.

The census is conducted annually to determine growth or decline of the population and may notify future management of this highly threatened species.

We gathered in the Rankins Springs Hall and were allocated a dam. Some people don't mind sitting at a dam alone as it gives a good opportunity for reflection and meditation and a bit of uninterrupted birdwatching; also it allows for more dams to be covered.

For most of us we drove off in convoy and were shown the dam allocated to us. No chance of getting lost this way.

I was happy be allocated a dam to the south on private land. 2 Glossy Black Cockatoos appeared at 7.30pm and 2 more nearly at dark at 8pm. In between time though all the pigeons normally found around here came to drink, Crested Pigeon, Common Bronzewing, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove and Diamond Dove. A goanna, a Black Wallaby and an Eastern Grey Kangaroo also sneaked down to drink.

We then adjourned back to the hall for a barbecue dinner and a collation and mapping of results.

This year Matt Cameron, Threatened Species Officer for National Parks and Wildlife Service



Photos by Graham Russell  
Blue-faced Honeyeater at a dam (above)  
Mulga Parrot (below)  
Kangaroos came in to drink (bottom)  
Black Honeyeater (left)



gave a talk about this isolated population. He suggested that different dams be monitored the following night which would usually count different individuals as the birds are mostly faithful to the dam for a least a while.

The following night the process was repeated. The end result was more than a hundred individual birds spread across the landscape.

The designated field trip for MFN on the following Sunday morning was at Eight Mile Tank Road. Here we have a square mile of mallee which has been fenced and reserved for conservation by an adjoining landholder.



The *Eucalyptus socialis* was flowering as was the Mistletoe. The little Black Honeyeaters could not resist the nectar. I have never before seen an area dominated by Black Honeyeaters. There were many juveniles so the breeding season had been good. Last September it was so wet that many parts were inaccessible, some vegetation was still using some of the subsoil moisture to remain green.



Some of the group in the mallee watching for the Splendid Fairywren (above) - Rowena Whiting  
 Grey Mistletoe *Amyema quandang* (left)  
 Sand-plain Fanflower *Scaevola humilis* (below) - Rowena Whiting

The Woodswallows (White browed, Masked and Black faced) were chattering high in the sky and the Splendid Fairywren made my heart leap for its vibrant beauty. [alas it eluded the photographers – Ed]

The drive home via Pleasant Valley and Canards roads was a road I had not travelled before and I enjoyed it thoroughly.

Thanks to Lachlan Fold for wonderful hospitality and I am impressed how they have been able to engage many landholders in environmental works despite a very small population and a huge work load that is farming.

**Nella Smith**

**BIRD LIST for Eight Mile Tank Road**

- |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Black Honeyeater         | White-browed Woodswallow | Eastern Yellow Robin     |
| Grey Butcherbird         | Little Friarbird         | Little Raven             |
| Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater | Striped Honeyeater       | Striated Pardalote       |
| Rainbow Beeeater         | Western Gerygone         | Weebill                  |
| Singing Honeyeater       | Grey Shrike Thrush       | Variiegated Fairy wren   |
| Splendid Fairy-wren      | White plumed Honeyeater  | Yellow plumed Honeyeater |
| Peaceful Dove            | Willy Wagtail            | Mallee Ringneck          |
| Pied Butcherbird         | Black-faced Woodswallow  | Masked Woodswallow       |



**Update on the Bitterns in Rice Project:**  
 Last month, there was Bidgee and Cumberland and now they have another two: MILO and Demo. MILO comes courtesy of Murray Irrigation Limited and is the first tracked bittern from the Murray Valley. He was caught near Mayrung thanks to the help of rice grower, Shelley Scoullar, keeping tabs on her bitterns. Back up in Coleambally, Demo was added, another adult male lured into a cage with the help of a mirror and call-playback. Demo was being monitored by rice growers, Chris and Tracey Mannes, and comes courtesy of the Murrumbidgee Shire Community Demonstration Farm.

**A visit to the Cocoparra Nature Reserve and nearby wetland. 26<sup>th</sup> Feb 2017**



MFN members met with Michelle Ballestrin who is a Ranger from the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service at Beelbanger Store at 4.00pm. Michelle took us first to a wetland on **Anderson's Lane** near the intersection with the Rankin Springs road. The road was made impassable at that section by water over the road which continued into the nearby

**Group at Anderson's Lane – Penny Williams  
Welcome Swallow – Phillip Williams**

paddocks creating a wetland that attracted a large number of water birds. Most of the birds were some distance away so members needed the scope and binoculars to see them. We spent time gathering a bird list before heading off to the other destination of the day. On the way we passed a Brown Snake sunning itself on Burchers Road. It was a warmish day and its presence reminded us that there were likely to be snakes about.



<b>Bird List 1<sup>st</sup> stop wetlands – flooded road</b>			
Pink-eared duck	Straw-necked Ibis	Willie Wagtail	Plumed Whistling Duck
Pacific Black Duck	Australasian Grebe	Masked Lapwing	Australian Wood Duck
Grey Teal	Hoary-headed Grebe	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Musk Duck
Australian White Ibis	Tree Martin	Eurasian Coot	Grey-crowned Babbler
Black-winged Stilt	Yellow-throated Miner	Whistling Kite	Magpie-lark
Welcome Swallow	Australasian Shoveler	Black-fronted Dotterel	Australian Pipit

**Cocoparra Nature Reserve** was created in December 1963 with the primary management objective of maintaining the biodiversity and scenic assets of the area. This was an opportunity for the MFN members to visit the Reserve and learn more about it.



Michelle Ballestrin, a ranger with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service led the group into the Reserve through the Mailman's Gap Fire Trail Entrance. We walked along the edge of a dry creek through an area dominated by Cypress Pine near the Mailman's Gap Dam. The birds were quiet but we found plenty of evidence that wombats were

**(left) Eastern Cotton Bush - Rowena Whiting  
(below) A wombat hole or an erosion hole?  
prompted discussion. Photo by Penny Williams**

about. There were droppings and

wombat holes. After the walk we sat at the Dam and had tea watching as birds for example a Yellow-billed Spoonbill and some Nankeen Night-Heron and a Swamp Wallaby came in. We had hoped to see a Glossy Black-Cockatoo or Shy Heathwrens. These two bird species were elusive. Sitting around the dam as night came in, was a peaceful way to end our day.



**Penny Williams**

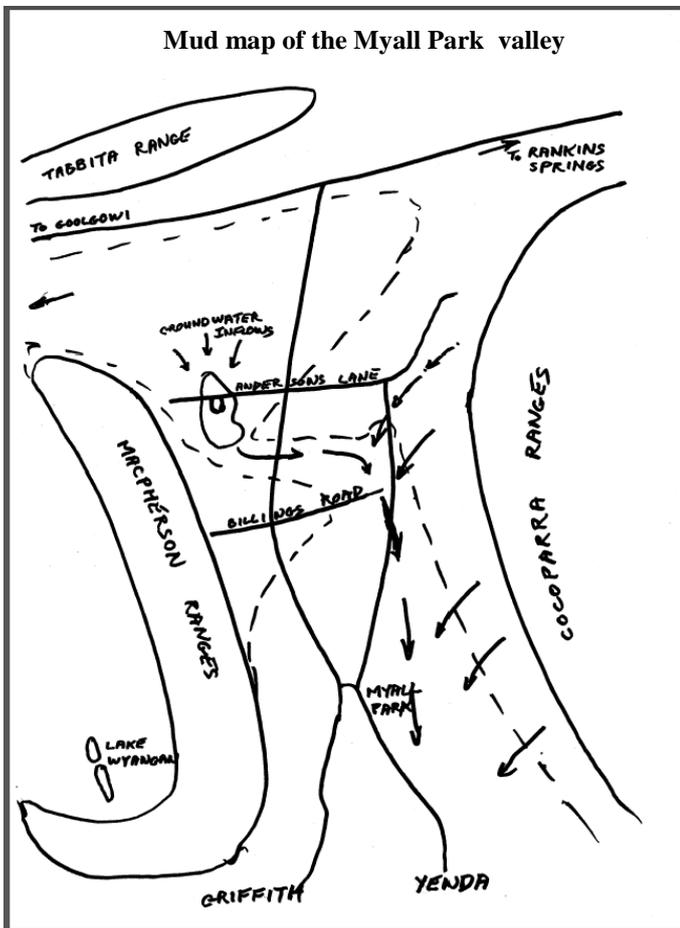
**Bird list Mailman's Gap Dam Cocoparra Nature Reserve.**

Dollar Bird	Striated Pardalote	Brown Honeyeater	Common Bronzewing
Mallee Ringneck Parrot	Red-rumped Parrot	Nankeen Night Heron	Pigeon
Restless Fly Catcher	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Striped Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin
Peaceful Dove	Dollar Bird	Galah	Yellow Thornbill
Mulga Parrot	White-eared	Australasian Grebe	Chestnut-rumped
Australian Owlet-nightjar	Honeyeater	Grey Fantail	Thornbill
	Willie Wagtail		

**Why all the water at Andersons Lane?**

When Michelle took us on a diversion turning left into Andersons Lane, the objective was a small swamp marked on the topographical map. Usually this swamp is observable as a patch of Black Box trees some 600m in diameter with a few River Red Gums in the centre. The surrounds are extensive crop paddocks.

To our surprise the swamp was now an enormous lake some 3Km in extent and completely flooding the lane. We all know it has been wet this past year, but why had the water collected here? Why had it not all drained down the broad Myall Park valley into the irrigation country around Yenda?



The explanation of course lies in the geology of the area, in particular the subsurface geology.

About a kilometre north of Andersons Lane the land surface is a level plain reaching up to the Tabbita Ranges in the northwest and the line of low hills that link these ranges to the Cocoparra Ranges (roughly the line of the Mid-Western Highway). This plain also extends westward round the top of the MacPhersons Range and slowly dips towards Goolgowi. The whole of the plain is the result of the accumulation of wind-blown sand in the drier periods of the past, mostly during the various Ice Ages but probably before them as well.

Rain on the ranges drains into these sands and travels underground down the old river valleys. West of the MacPhersons Ranges this drainage is uninterrupted as the steep scarp slope of the sandstone ridge is on this side. Uninterrupted that is until the Ranges curve sharply westwards to Tharbogang. The result is Lake Wyangan and the other lakes around there.

East of the MacPhersons Ranges the gentler dip slope is not so well defined with a tongue of higher ground extending eastwards roughly along the line of Billings Road (notice the rise at the crossroads). This

higher ground has forced ground water flows on the north-east side of the Ranges to sharply turn eastwards to roughly the line of Black Gate Road. The rise also acts as a partial barrier limiting the ease of flow. Whenever rainfall and resulting groundwater recharge exceeds that amount that is capable of flowing round the sharp bend, the water table rises upstream. If the water table reaches the surface a lake will form, just as we witnessed.

In drier times lake beds, having lost vegetation cover, are subjected to wind erosion causing deflation of the surface further enhancing the formation of a basin. The swamp on Andersons Lane is the start of this process, however as we are not in one of those extreme dry periods, the swamp retains enough subsurface water to allow the growth of Black Box and even the few River Red Gums.

**Eric Whiting**



Views of Anderson's Lane – Phillip Williams and flooded paddocks - Rowena Whiting

## Lake Cargelligo trip - 26 December 2016

Johanna, Neil and I did a Boxing Day trip to Lake Cargelligo to see what water birds we could find. On the way, just before the Yelkin State Forest there had been water over the road and still on either side there was quite an expanse of it left. Last trip I saw a **Plumed Whistling-duck** with a clutch of 12 or more young ducklings and, this trip, they were still there and now half grown showing their plumed feathers. There were other ducks with young as well as a pair of **Black-fronted Dotterels** with 2 chicks.

After my trip to the Mt Hope Rd a few weeks before, it was quite a surprise to find the water on either side had totally disappeared so there were very few water birds to be seen. Numbers of **White-faced** and **White-necked Herons** and 8 **Glossy Ibis**. The **Banded Lapwing** were still present but we only counted about 25 birds. We also sighted a lone **Wandering Whistling-duck** in a small pond remaining.

Around the corner in Chat Alley itself we found at least a pair of **Orange Chats** and numbers of **White-fronted Chats** and a couple of families of **White-winged Wrens**. We then drove to Euabalong with lots more water in the billabong there and plenty of water birds – mostly **Wood Ducks**,



There were a number of **Whiskered Terns** flying around and Neil spotted one on a floating nest with at least one chick. So they too have had a successful breeding year.



After lunch, we drove along a back road to Lake Cargelligo to the weir connecting the Lachlan to The Sheet of Water. Again there were plenty of ponds full of ducks, egrets, herons, ibis and spoonbills and again another lone **Wandering Whistling-duck**. Maybe its mate was

in a nest nearby.

Back on the Condobolin-Lake Cargelligo Road we again came across more expanses of water and again full of waterbirds – more **Wood Ducks** than I have even seen together in the one place. At one of these overflows, there were some migratory waders – 2 **Marsh**, 8 **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** along with 3 **Caspian Terns** and a **Buff-banded Rail** ran across the road as we drove away.

On the way home, we drove down Anderson Rd just north of Beelbangera which was closed and still had plenty of water over it about a kilometre down from the intersection. Again, the number of water birds, especially ducks, was amazing. A **Spotted Harrier** was also there to add to the tally for the day.

For me, the day was made complete when Neil arranged for me to visit the garden of a friend of his who had 4 **Southern Boobook Owls** in her backyard. Such a delight to see the adult birds with their two juveniles sitting in the tree.

### Max O'Sullivan

A postscript to the above trip is that Phil Tenison and I did another trip to the same area out of Lake Cargelligo on 7 January and dipped on both the Orange Chats and Banded Lapwings so birds certainly move when the habitat starts to dry out. [This was held over from last month due to lack of space – Ed.]

## Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Programme

The **Orange-bellied Parrot (OBP)** is in grave danger of becoming extinct in the wild in the next few years because of the low numbers of wild individuals remaining. This season only 3 wild female and 11 male birds have arrived back at their breeding grounds at Melaleuca in south-west Tasmania so efforts to save this bird are critical if they are to survive.

This little parrot, a relative of the **Turquoise Parrot**, is a migratory parrot. Like the **Swift Parrot**, also a threatened species, the OBP migrates to Tasmania in Spring to breed. It overwinters on the south coast of Victoria and South Australia.

A great deal of research has been done in recent years to try to supplement the wild population with captive bred birds. The birds breed freely in captivity but the methods used with the release of captive bred birds so far have not been successful in building up the wild population.

There had been great expectations in previous years when captive bred birds at Melaleuca joined the wild birds there and migrated to their winter feeding grounds on the mainland. Even birds bred on the mainland at Healesville Sanctuary east of Melbourne released on the mainland in the bird's major feeding areas along the Victorian coast migrated in spring to Tasmania. What they did and where they went when they got there is not known. Needless to say, these birds haven't contributed to the wild population so a new technique is being trialled this 2016/17 season to try to build up the wild population.

The 3 nesting females will be monitored constantly to see if their eggs are viable and, if not, will be substituted with eggs from the captive birds at Melaleuca. Also if clutch numbers are low, more eggs will be added to ensure the maximum number of young will fledge. The wild birds are provided with feeding stations so there will be plenty of food available to supplement the additional young in the nest.

If wild chicks in the nest die they will be replaced with chicks from the captive birds.

It is hoped that this massive manipulation of the remaining wild population will ensure the maximum number of next generation wild birds so that in the next season more birds will return to nest.

Whilst Federal and State funding has been forthcoming over the years, it is insufficient for the scientists at ANU to trial this new recovery procedure so they launched a crowdfunding appeal similar to what Matt Herring did for the Australasian Bittern a few years ago. They wanted \$60,000 by 28 November and that figure has more than doubled to \$141,000 by the close of the campaign on 28th – such is the power of the crowdfunding campaign and concern by the community to save this very special bird from extinction.

No further information is available on-line as to how this program has worked so far this past breeding season.

**A personal comment/opinion:** Breeding threatened species in captivity and releasing them into the wild is not the answer to successfully build-up a wild population. Evidence of this has been demonstrated by so many botched attempts over the years. You can't just breed an animal/bird in captivity and then release it expecting it to survive – a few might but so many don't. There has been plenty of evidence of this in the massive numbers of “lost” birds in the captive release programs with the **Regent Honeyeater** and to a lesser extent with the **Bush Stone Curlew** and certainly with the **Gouldian Finch** program at the Mareeba Wetlands in Far North Queensland. These are but three examples of far from satisfactory captive breeding programs undertaken in recent years and it is hoped that the scientists behind the proposed **Plains Wanderer** captive breeding program will have thought out how to successfully release these birds back into the wild.

**Max O'Sullivan**



# MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

<b>Major Mitchell's Cockatoo</b>	Mountain Dam, Colinroobie Road	Daily	Graham Russell
<b>Gull-billed Tern</b>	Fivebough Wetlands	07/02/17	Keith Hutton
Keith reported 3 downy young and 5 flying juvenile/immature birds along with adult birds.			
<b>Brown Honeyeater</b> [3]	Petersham Road, Leeton	09/02/17	Penny Williams
<b>Pelican</b> [37]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Freckled Duck</b> [8]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Magpie Goose</b> [100+]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Sharp-tailed Sandpiper</b> [10]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Latham's Snipe</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Spotless Crake</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Little Pied Cormorant</b> [100+]	Fivebough Wetlands	12/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Black Kite</b> [25]	Fivebough feeding on dead carp	12/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Glossy Black Cockatoo</b> [4]	Yarrabimbi via Leeton	14/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Brown Honeyeater</b> [1]	Pendula St Leeton	14/02/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Little Bittern</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/02/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Nankeen Night Heron</b> [40+]	Fivebough Wetlands – many juveniles	15/02/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Great Crested Grebe</b> [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/02/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Magpie Goose</b> [30+]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/02/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Black Falcon</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	15/02/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Black-tailed Native-hen</b> [2]	The Basin Dam Koonadan	17/02/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Pallid Cuckoo</b> [1]	Koonadan Rd via Leeton	17/02/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Rainbow Bee-eater</b> [8+]	Cruikshank Dam Rankins Springs	17/02/17	Virginia Tarr
<b>Turquoise Parrot</b> [1]	Cruikshank Dam Rankins Springs	17/02/17	Virginia Tarr
<b>Diamond Dove</b>	Dam at Cocky Count Rankins Springs	17/02/17	Nella Smith
<b>Glossy Ibis</b> [100]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Magpie Goose</b> [77]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Wood Duck</b> [30]	Fivebough – large number for Fivebough	18/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Plumed Whistling-duck</b> [30]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Red-capped Plover</b> [13]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Red-necked Avocet</b> [7]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/02/17	Keith Hutton
<b>Yellow-plumed Honeyeater</b>	Whiltshire Road, Rankins Springs	18/02/17	Virginia Tarr
<b>Restless Flycatcher</b> [2]	Whiltshire Road, Rankins Springs	18/02/17	Virginia Tarr
<b>Turquoise Parrot</b> [11]	Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest	18/02/17	Virginia Tarr
<b>Sacred Kingfisher</b> [2]	Bilbul via Griffith	20/02/17	Meredith Billington
<b>Major Mitchell's Cockatoo</b> [20]	Bilbul via Griffith	21/02/17	Meredith Billington
<b>Dollarbird</b>	Mailman's Gap Cocoparra National Park	26/02/17	MFN Outing
<b>Owlet Nightjar</b> [2]	Burchers Rd via Griffith	26/02/17	Neil Palframan
<b>Black Honeyeater</b> [many]	Eight Mile Tank Rd, Rankins Springs	26/02/17	Nella Smith
<b>Major Mitchell's Cockatoo</b> [8+]	McNab Cres, Griffith	Regular	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Hobby</b> [overhead]	McNab Cres, Griffith	27/02/17	Sue Chittick-Dalton
<b>Latham's Snipe</b>	Five Mile, Narrandera	Feb. '17	Nella Smith
<b>Great Cormorant</b> [120+]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/03/17	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Brolga</b> [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	02/03/17	Allan Richards
<b>White-winged Wren</b> [2 males]	Lake Coolah (Narrandera)	03/03/17	Allan Richards

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

- 9 March Thursday**      **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.  
**Topic: Visiting Myanmar (Burma) with Allan Richards**  
**Contact:** Penny Williams 6953 3524.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 12 March Sunday**      **Outing to Fivebough Wetlands** See the changes with the water receding  
**Meet at Petersham Road car park at 5pm.**  
Bring: nibbles/tea, drinks, chairs.  
**Contact:** Penny Williams 6953 3524.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 25 March Saturday**      **Glossy Black Cockatoo bird count**  
Participants will be allotted a dam to go to at various properties in the Brobenah and Narrandera hills and Binya Forest. Timing will be from 6pm until the birds come in (or not) – probably need to stay until 8pm. Please record anything else you may see, there are forms for this and they should be sent to Nella so she can collate the results.  
Please contact Nella Smith 6959 1210 (Narrandera), Graham Russell 0419350673 (Leeton area) or Virginia Tarr 6962 5614 (Griffith) so you can be allocated a dam.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).  
Remember the more dams we can cover the more accurate the count will be.
- 5 April Wednesday**      **Copy for the April newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**  
**Email:** [ericwhiting4@bigpond.com](mailto:ericwhiting4@bigpond.com). Phone: 6953 2612.
- 13 April Thursday**      **Monthly Meeting** in the Yellow Room at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St., Leeton commencing at 7.30pm.  
**Topic:**  
**Contact:** Penny Williams 6953 3524.  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 14-16 April**      **Mid-Murray Field Naturalist Club 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary** - Dinner, campout and  
**Easter**      excursions  
Bush camp at Wandown Flora and Fauna Reserve (Swan Hill area). Basic facilities only. Excursions to nearby reserves including the Boundary Bend area. For more information contact Eric or Rowena 6953 2612, they are requesting numbers and payment for the spit roast (\$10) on the Saturday night.
- 29 April Saturday**      **Murrumbidgee Valley National Park**  
Meet at the Rotary Park, Darlington Point at 8:30am.  
Bring morning tea and lunch.  
**Contact Eric or Rowena Whiting 6953 2612**  
**Email:** [murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com).
- 5-7 May weekend**      **Camp at Whroo, near Rushworth, Victoria – Ironbark Forest**  
Details later. Make a note of the date.
- Other events**  
**27, 28 May w/e**      A vegetation survey is being planned for **Ingleba Nature Reserve** (near Temora).  
Date is still to be confirmed. Expressions of interest to Nella Smith 6959 1210.