

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



March 2014 - Issue #213

Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.

PO Box 541, LEETON 2705 ISSN-1327-1172

Website: www.mfn.org.au

Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

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



February Outings

Left: Evening view at Rocky Waterholes,
Narrandera - Rowena Whiting

Above: Awaiting the birds to drink at
Wattle Dam - Penny Williams

IN THIS ISSUE

Office Bearers and Subscriptions.....	2
Looking Backward, Looking Forward.....	2
Glossy Black Cockatoo Count.....	2
Club Outing to Rocky Waterholes.....	3
The Main Canal Berembled to Narrandera	3
Competition #2	4
Club Outing to Wattle Dam	5
Roos in the Lakesview Branch Canal	6
Bittern Chicks, a drone 7 Grass Owls	7
Basalt and Granite – the Differences.....	8
Fauna Observations in Tasmania	9
Bird of the Month – Peregrine Falcon	10
Members’ Sightings	11
Coming Events Calendar	12

CONTRIBUTIONS

For the next issue by
Wednesday 2 April

To Rowena Whiting

Email ericwhiting4@bigpond.com

Phone 6953 2612

This month -

Meeting is being held in Griffith
Glossy Black Cockatoo Count

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

President:	Max O'Sullivan	6953 4726	Editor:	Rowena Whiting	6953 2612
Vice President:	Nella Smith	6959 1210	Committee:	Johanna Botman	6963 4855
Vice President:	Eric Whiting	6953 2612		Phillip Williams	6953 3524
Vice President:	Neil Palframan	6963 4855		Betty Bradney	6959 2901
Secretary:	Penny Williams	6953 3524	Web Co-ordinator:	Johanna Botman	6963 4855
Treasurer:	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:

Leeton	Eric Whiting	6953 2612	Griffith	Johanna Botman	6963 4855
Narrandera	Nella Smith	6959 1210	Coleambally	John Wilkinson	6954 4129

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

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

Looking Backward - Looking Forward

A new year is time for looking back and for looking forward. This year the club will celebrate its 20th anniversary – another excuse for reflection and contemplation.

Looking back, the group can be proud of its achievements over the past twenty years. One only has to name Fivebough Tuckerbil Ramsar site, Campbells and Nericon Swamp, the Hills Project. Almost forgotten now are the Bird Conferences the group ran and were the forerunners of the Bird Fairs. In all we quickly became the voice of conservation in the Riverina and even today have positions on various committees.

Over the years we have gathered a considerable volume of data on our flora and fauna (admittedly mostly bird records). In 1994 you could get flora and fauna lists for the Cocoparras from National Parks. Anything else was a struggle or just non-existent. Cunninghamii (the official publication of Sydney Botanic Gardens) could list only two flora maps covering the Riverina – one much dated and covering the whole of western New South Wales, and the other detailing more of the South West slopes and just spilling over into the Riverina. The Riverina was considered an ecological desert, totally destroyed by agriculture.

Looking forward, we have much that we can do. Campbells and Nericon Swamps need work to be done to revitalise them, we are still involved in monitoring the Glossy Black Cockatoos and there are a couple of flora species requiring surveying. We also have a healthy Environment Fund to administer. And what of that volume of flora and fauna data we have gathered? We have a fantastic environment and should be letting everyone know.

Of course any project needs volunteers to run them and quite a few of us are feeling a bit burnt-out. New recruits are definitely required but we won't get them if we cannot be shown to be doing anything. A twentieth anniversary is a good time to be showing our wares.

Eric Whiting

Glossy Black Cockatoo Count 16 March 2014

We will be holding a Glossy Black Cockatoo Count on 16th March. The birds must drink daily and will sometimes come to farm dams or dams in reserves for this purpose in the evening. The dams are usually found close to the Cocoparra Ranges or the Narrandera Hills or the Brobenah Hills.

We have identified dams in Griffith, Leeton and Narrandera where there is a possibility these birds may come to drink. We want to cover as many dams as we can.

To this end we require dam sitters from all of these towns to assemble quietly at the allocated dam from about 6pm until dark. You must sit quietly a little distance away from the water so as not to frighten the birds. It would be good if you could also record birds or mammals that may appear around the dam. If you are able to spare a few hours can you please call Max O'Sullivan and let him know. Please email results to Nella Smith nella.smith@gmail.com or phone 69591210

Club Outing to Rocky Waterholes, Narrandera - 16 February

The late afternoon walk along the channel bank from Rocky Waterholes to the regulator at Five Mile was a very pleasant experience. Nella had arranged for access through private property so the group of 8 members were able to walk all the way to Five Mile – about 6.3km.



Virginia O'Brien captured one of the koalas on her phone.

Not a lot a birds were spotted on the way despite it being a cooler afternoon than had been experienced in the weeks before. However, highlights were the spotting of 2 **Koalas** in the trees overhanging the pathway, a **Nankeen Night Heron** and numbers of **Dollarbirds** perched high in the dead branches of red gums beside the channel. Some other birds seen on the walk were **Yellow Rosella**, **White Cockatoo**, **Galah**, **Little Corella** and **Great Cormorant**.

We had left my car earlier at the regulator at Five Mile and Terry was organised to come down at 6.30 to ferry people back to the other cars at Rocky Waterholes. We made a quick drive to where the White-bellied Sea-Eagle had its nest in the swamp but, unfortunately, no birds were present.

Back at the new bridge, we set up for nibbles and Terry gave us a talk on the building of the bridge and how they managed to get it on site and ,more remarkably, across the channel. So thanks Terry for your information session.

Max O'Sullivan

View from our 'nibbles' picnic spot – reflections along the channel.



Box Mistletoe
Amyema miquelii
A stem parasite attached to its host by a single swollen base. It has long drooping branches. There are some flowers on this one.
Photo: Eric Whiting



The Main Canal Berembled to Narrandera – a Little History

A Description of the Main Canal from Berembled Weir taken from an article written by H Mallaby-Manager MIA about 60 years ago. (abridged)

Berembled Weir- The weir is built across the Murrumbidgee River at a point about 32 river miles above Narrandera. The actual construction was commenced in 1908 and was completed in 1910.

Having passed under the gates of this regulator the water enters into the first section of the man-made canal. To some extent the natural creek bed has been used in this section. At first the country through which the canal passes is more in the nature of sand hills, but later becomes typical creek frontage clayey flats. In the sand hill section the cut to form the canal is deep, and some erosion of the banks takes place, necessitating the use of stone revetments to stabilise the sides of the canal. At about five miles below the weir the water passes into Bundidgerry Creek. This creek section is very important as it permits greater flexibility in the canal system. The back waters and deep holes are used as storage points from which water can be drawn to meet peak demands during the heat of summer, without having to wait for the water to flow down from Berembled. These holes and backwaters also serve a very necessary purpose in times of heavy storms on the country in the direction of and beyond Grong Grong. The run-off water from hundreds

of square miles of country flows into Bundidgerry Creek and inflow from summer storms has reached as high as 4000 cusecs.

At a point 26 ½ miles downstream of Berembed is located the Bundidjerry Bridge and regulator.

Narrandera Regulator

Having passed Bundidgerry the water flows on to Narrandera through a section of improved natural water-way and man-made canal. In parts such as immediately above Narrandera only the left bank of the canal has been made in the form of a long levee bank. The right bank of the water-way being the natural bank of the creek skirting the foot of the Bundidgerry Hills. Water is partially pooled in the Narrandera lake and provides for the satisfying short notice increase in water demands during heat wave periods. On the left bank and just upstream of the regulator is a spillway through which water can be diverted to the river. This structure with that at Bundidjerry is vital when it is realised that it would take twelve days for a variation in the uncontrolled flow of water adjustment at Burrinjuck to take effect at Mirrool. There is an historic feature which has not been recorded in passing; it is the remains of the main diversion weir erected by the late Sir Samuel McCaughy in his early irrigation development. It is located about ¾ of a mile downstream of the Bundidjerry regulator.

(A few bits of interest)

We believe that the original Broken Bridge at Rocky Waterholes may have been built by the local community to walk stock from the Narrandera Common to higher ground at Rocky Waterholes and along the Old Wagga Road in times of high river and flooding.

During the May 1925 floods two small boys drilled a tiny hole into the main canal bank, to see what sort of flow they could get. By next day a large section of the bank had disappeared, and Bundidjerry flat was flooded. In June Bill Talbot, the town clerk of Narrandera took the opportunity to suggest to the council that the flooded area be developed as baths and recreation area. (From Narrandera Shire by Bill Gammage)

Contributed by Nella Smith

Competition #2 February 2014

This month's competition involves giving the correct name to the following birds:

Murray Smoker	Soldierbird
Canvasback	Bush Canary
Shepherd's Companion	Happy Families
Willie-Willock	Whistling Dick
Break-o'-day- boy	Green Leek

Send your answers to Max at 69534726 or maxosul@hotmail.com

Last month's competition was a combined win by Penny and Phillip Williams and were each awarded a Mars Bar because they pointed out my glaring errors about the number of flightless birds in Australia. I had forgotten the Little Penguin (Penny) and the Lord Howe Island Woodhen (Phillip)!!

So the correct answers were 3 endemics – the **Tasmanian Native-hen**, the **Emu** and **LHI Woodhen**, native to Australia but occurring elsewhere are the **Southern Cassowary** (also in New Guinea), and the **Little Penguin** (called the Blue Penguin in New Zealand) and the introduced one is the **Ostrich**.

Golden-headed Cisticolas garnish almost every Australian rice field

Posted on: February 20th, 2014 by Matthew Herring - www.murraywildlife.com.au .

There must be tens of thousands of Golden-headed Cisticolas (*Cisticola exilis*) breeding in rice crops this season. I record these beautiful birds at almost every site I survey. I've seen nests and lots of unfledged young. They're a tiny bird and make a range of distinctive, insect-like buzzing calls. If you're not familiar with them, it's worth taking the time to get a good look and to watch their antics.

I wonder where they all come from and where they all go after the rice season. They're certainly good at quickly taking advantage of new habitats as they emerge. One of their close relatives in Japan holds the record for the youngest breeding bird: less than two months old. Now that's not wasting any time.



Club Outing to Wattle Dam, Binya State Forest - 2 March



Turquoise Parrot
Photo: Phillip Williams

Another 4pm outing was well attended with 10 members meeting at the rail crossing on the Whitton Stock Route Rd. At the dam things were very quiet so the group went for a walk in search for birds. Enid was left to sit under a tree to keep a watch on the dam whilst the rest of us walked. Again, there were not a lot of birds to be seen on the walk – the usual wrens, thornbills and choughs were seen but little else. A **Mallee Ringneck** was very obliging for Phillip Williams to get a reasonable photo.

On return to the dam, tables, nibbles and drinks were set up in

view of the dam and a few birds braved the crowd to come down to drink. Of course, the hope was for some **Turquoise Parrots** to come in and just before we

decided to pack-up for the evening just after 7pm, a group of 4 flew into a dead tree and perched long enough to be seen by most of the group before flying off to maybe look for a drink elsewhere. The presence of a **Collared Sparrowhawk** might have been responsible for the small number of birds coming in to the dam at the time.

Below is the list of birds seen or heard:

Common Bronzewing
Crested Pigeon
Mallee Ringneck
Splendid Fairy-wren
Weebill
Striped Honeyeater (H)
White-browed Babbler

Bar-shouldered Dove
Apostlebird
Turquoise Parrot
Red-capped Robin
Inland Thornbill
Grey Shrike-thrush (H)
Collared Sparrowhawk

Peaceful Dove
White-winged Chough
Galah
Yellow Thornbill
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill
Grey Butcherbird (H)

Max O’Sullivan

A couple of finds on our walk



Gargaloo

Parsonia eucalyptophylla

The stragglers spotted this tree which was a blaze of flowers. It turned out to be Gargaloo, a vine which climbs on living or dead trees; it attaches itself by pads at points of contact. In this case a Cypress Pine. The flowers emit a rich honey odour.

Gargaloo is not a parasite, it only uses the host for support, it will grow on dead trees or even on fence posts, and may scramble over the ground.

Rowena Whiting



A Tiger or Tussock Moth
Eric Whiting

Roos in the Lakesview Branch Canal

Nobody really thought about the Eastern Greys beforehand, but once the Lakesview Branch Canal had been given a makeover in the winter of 2013, suddenly there was the disaster of roos drowning where they had never drowned before – but why? The local paper mentioned a number of 25 having to be dragged out.

The canal is around 100 years old and sections had deteriorated to the point of being more holes than concrete, this in a soil that is sandier than most in the area, so the leakage was unacceptable and should have been fixed years ago, but the current water cut backs have made it a priority. Two crews working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, got more than half the work done last winter, with the balance to be done this winter, 2014.

The base was left in place and concreted over, and the sides were cleaned out, widened, reformed and concreted. The new canal is wider, can carry more water, and the issue at hand, it has more head space than the old canal (see photos). So now the roos need to reach further for their drink, and fall in (?) or maybe slide in (?) to get closer to the water. Either way they can't get out again.

The solution, be it temporary or permanent, is quite simple and seems effective – timber pallets have been tied to star pegs and hang into the water, providing a ladder for the roos to climb out (or in(?), who knows exactly what they get up to).

Neil Palframan



Photos clockwise from top:
Digging out the old canal, but leaving the base.
Canal fully reconditioned,
The old canal with water constantly threatening to overflow.
The new canal with extra headspace.
The kangaroo ladder.

Bittern chicks going strong, more nests, a drone and Grass Owls

Bitterns in Rice Project Update by Matt Herring Posted on: February 12th, 2014 by matthew

It's hard to know where to begin. We're learning so much about endangered Australasian Bitterns and their secret lives. Valuable insights and exciting finds have come as thick and fast as the rice has been growing.

Just yesterday, two gorgeous chicks, dubbed Bazza and Beatrice, now about 18 days old, were found hiding under 4-5 feet tall Barnyard Grass on the side of a bank between rice bays. They were about 50 metres from the nest where they hatched into this world. The truth is I was about to see a man about a dog and saw movement in the grass. I thought it was a cat. I couldn't believe my eyes when I parted the grass. Total fluke, but as they say, 'you've got to be in it to win it'. Anyway, it really demonstrates the value of thick cover on banks and makes for another bittern-friendly rice farming tip. Controlling foxes and cats, which often walk along the banks, is likely to improve the chances of chicks fledging too.



We now have four nests including one that's active with five eggs. If they hatch soon, they'll have a reasonable chance of fledging from this late breeding attempt before harvest. Mark Robb has 'been in it to win it' again this season and almost stumbled on the nest. The other two nests have presumably already been used because the original nest found now looks much like they do, with little or no evidence of prior breeding but lots of trampled rice immediately surrounding it.

These nests are all very different from the various roosting and feeding platforms that the bitterns build. While it is thought the chicks take 7-8 weeks to fledge, they leave the nest after about two weeks and clamber about in the surrounding vegetation, making any measures of breeding success very tricky. Having said that, all indications are positive for successful breeding in rice crops.

In recent days, we've had Andrew Silcocks and Chris Purnell traipsing around the rice as well, trialing Birdlife Australia's new drone. It showed good potential to complement other methods to find and monitor future nests. It certainly helped us find one of the new 'old' nests.

Back to the Australia Day public holiday. I flushed an owl out of a rice crop. Strange. I had a quick look as it flew off and thought that's an odd place for a Barn Owl to roost. Moments later, I remembered that the similar but very rare Eastern Grass Owl is a ground dweller that only nests on the ground. I spoke to a few people and thought it worthwhile to get a better look to work out if it was them or not. On a neighbouring property just a couple of days ago, together with Andrew, Chris and Mark, we saw two more, then went back to the original site and found that one again. We had great views and were able to confirm a total of at least three, possibly

four or five. Grass Owls: another threatened species using rice crops as surrogate wetlands and another secret revealed. Remarkable. There's a great deal of goodwill and enthusiasm for

bittern conservation among rice growers. Almost every day I'm struck by it. The support for the Bitterns in Rice Project has been wonderful and the potential seems endless.



Eastern Grass Owl
Photos by Andrew Silcocks, Birdlife Australia.
These owls we recorded on private property during authorised bittern monitoring



Basalt and Granite – the Differences

Geologists recognise three main types of rock. **Igneous rocks** are formed from molten magma coming from deep below the Earth's surface. Sedimentary rocks arise from the deposition of the erosion products of other rocks or as in the case of limestone, from the accumulation of organic matter. The third type, metamorphic rocks, are the result of heating and/or pressure on sedimentary rocks usually with much hardening and/or distortion.

Basalt and granite are both igneous rocks, but have a very different origin and properties. Basalt comes from the upper mantle usually along the divergent margins of tectonic plates. The classic example is the mid- Atlantic ridge with Iceland being the most visible part. Molten magma can also rise at hot spots, breaking through the crust at weak areas, as they drift over the hot spot such as Hawaii or closer to home the broken line from Queensland down to South Australia creating volcanic areas such as Mt Warning, Mt Kaputar, the Warrumbungles, and the whole volcanic province in south-west Victoria.



Above: The rich farming lands on soil derived from basalt – SW Victoria



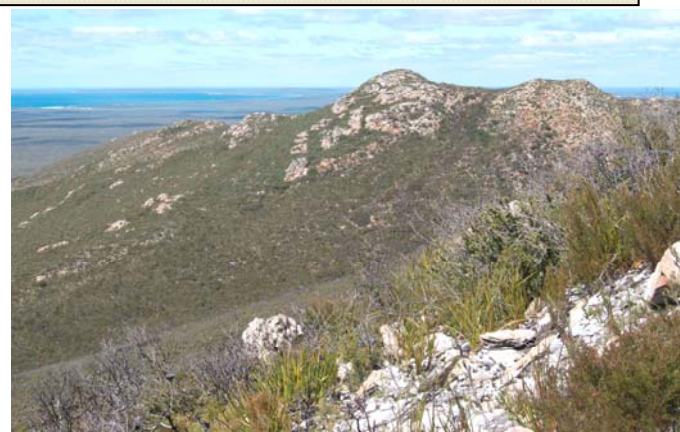
Right: Lava Flow, Rangatangi Island, Auckland

When molten, basalt is relatively fluid and tends to flow out of vents and fissures creating wide broad shield volcanoes or long lava flows extending for several kilometres. As volcanic activity can be periodic, one flow can solidify and even the surface begin to erode into soil only to be covered by another flow, as we saw at Paddy's River Falls.

Basalt has a density of 3.0 to 3.1 tonnes per cubic metre and is rich in the heavier minerals including iron and similar metals making it basic (pH greater than 7.0). On the surface it is relatively easily oxidised by weathering and breaks down to a rich soil. The result is good vegetation cover (and good farming country).

The origin of granite on the other hand is from re-worked continental crust. At converging plate boundaries where one plate has a continent floating on it at the subduction point, then at least parts of the continent is carried down into the depths and melts. Now continents are made of lighter silicon rich material (density 2.0 to 2.8 t/m³, that's why continents 'float' on tectonic plates). Lighter material will always try to float up to the top. If the silicon rich material does push its way through to the surface, the result is an explosive volcano as the material is much

Left: The Remarkables Kangaroo Island
Below: Western Australia's wonderful flora has adapted to the poor soils derived from granite.



more viscous and also contains gases and water carried down with it at the subduction zones.

Quite often though the magma does not break through to the surface and cools far below in massive bodies. The solidified mass is then a granite (or granitic – composition can vary) batholith. They can be five kilometres or more below the surface but such is the changing Earth, the overlying rocks can be eroded away. As erosion takes place the pressure of the over burden decreases and the granite responds by expanding. But silicon rich rocks are brittle and so cracks appear. Erosion is easier along the cracks eventually separating blocks of the once homogenous rock. The results eventually leads to piles of boulder – tors.

Granite erodes down to principally sand, and as people in Narrandera know, sandy soils are poor and drain very quickly. Hence any vegetation growing on these soils has to be very hardy. To add to their troubles granite is mineral poor and what there is soon erodes away.

Narrandera's sand is totally sedimentary having been sorted out from the massive amounts of alluvium that has filled the Riverina basin. Residents of Grong Grong however have to contend with locally produced sand as they live on a now exposed batholith, one of the series that stretch northward from there.

Eric Whiting

Bird of the Month

PEREGRINE FALCON

Falco peregrinus

There is a great similarity between bird characteristics and humans. To me, the Peregrine Falcon is an ideal type - strong, forceful, determined, handsome, an excellent 'hunter and gatherer' and loyal.

Considered the strongest and swiftest hawk in Australia and is found both inland and coastal, hence the Latin name *peregrinus* which means wandering. They prey on other birds which are targeted in flight by a swift dive and a blow by a hind claw. They also eat small mammals, reptiles and insects.

They usually nest on a rocky ledge where possible, otherwise a high tree hollow or another raptor's or raven's nest. We are fortunate to have at least two ledge nests in our area, one at Falcon Falls and the other at Lady Smith Glen, both in the Cocoparras. There are 2-3 buff eggs with reddish/brown markings.

Other names: Black-cheeked Hawk, Pigeon Hawk, Duck Hawk.



Identification: Head and cheek black, upperparts blue/grey,

Underparts: cream with dark streaking on abdomen.

Sexes similar but female at 480cm is larger than male 380cm.

Juvenile has upperparts tinged with brown and underparts buff with heavy dark streaks.

Voice is a loud shrill hek ek ek.

Sue Chittick-Dalton

Photos by Penny Williams
"The Peregrine was taken as it was soaring above Fivebough Wetlands on the morning of the 4th January."

Observations of Fauna in Tasmania

When Max and I were in Tasmania recently the mammals were much more visible than on the mainland. We saw at least 2 Eastern Quoll (road kill). That tells me that there must be lots of these. We saw Tasmanian Devils (road kill) as well as many Red-necked Wallabies and Common Brush-tailed Possum. Sharp-eyed Max also saw a Swamp or Dusky Antechinus at Cradle Mountain and if you see them in the daytime there must be a lot around. He also saw what was probably a Long-nosed Potoroo at Strahan. As well as upturned Common Wombats we saw Echidna and Platypus. One Eastern-barred Bandicoot had recently been killed at Tinderbox. I was thinking that the decline of medium and small mammals in Australia is as a result of human overpopulation and clearing of habitat and/or inappropriate fire regimes. But it could be the feral animals that come with humans like cats and foxes.

Increased evidence of the presence of foxes in Tasmania has been growing since the late 1990s. It is unproven how foxes may have arrived in the State, whether deliberately introduced or accidental introduction via cargo ship or other – or a combination of both.

The Potential Threat to Tasmania's Wildlife:

The fox represents the single most devastating threat to Tasmania's native mammals and birds. This island State is recognised as a national and international fauna haven due to the lack of foxes, but should the species become established here all of Tasmania's native land animals would be at risk.

Threatened and high conservation significance species at risk would include:

- Eastern Barred Bandicoot
- Tasmanian Bettong
- Long-nosed Potoroo
- Eastern Quoll
- Southern Brown Bandicoot
- Long-tailed Mouse
- Velvet-furred Rat
- New Holland Mouse
- Hooded Plover
- Little Tern
- Fairy Tern
- Ground Parrot
- Ground Thrush
- Painted Button-quail
- Great Crested Grebe
- Green and Gold Bell Frog
- Tussock Skink
- Glossy Grass Skink.



The Tasmanian Pademelon and Tasmanian Bettong, both of which thrive in Tasmania, are now extinct on the mainland because of the fox. The mainland Eastern Barred Bandicoot has been reduced to a mere 200 surviving individuals because of the fox. The young of unique species such as the Tasmanian Devil, Spotted-tailed Quoll that are left unattended in dens are highly vulnerable to fox predation.

More widespread species like ducks, shorebirds, ground nesting birds, blue tongue lizards, mountain dragons, skinks and frogs are all highly at risk. Even animals such as the Little Penguin and platypus are at risk.

Additionally, foxes are carriers of disease and spread environmental weeds. I hope that Tasmania is fox-free but I have my strong doubts unlike the ranger at Melaleuca who thought the release of foxes in Tasmania in the last years was a hoax.

Nella Smith

MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS

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

Collared Sparrowhawk	Karri St, Leeton	08/02/14	Barry Allen
Wood Sandpiper [3]	Fivebough Wetlands	09/02/14	Max O'Sullivan
Baillon's Crake [3]	Walla Ave, Griffith in rice crop	09/02/14	Neil Palframan
Little Friarbird	Almond Rd, Leeton	10/02/14	P and P Williams
Brown Quail	Stony Point Rd, Leeton	11/02/14	Max O'Sullivan
Sacred Kingfisher	Cypress St, Leeton	12/02/14	Eric Whiting

Bird was caught in behind a fly screen and had to be released by Eric.

Superb Parrot [4]	Boorga and West Rds, Nericon	12/02/14	Johanna Botman
Eastern Yellow Robin	Pine Hill Rd, Narrandera	13/02/14	Nella Smith

First sighting in Nella's garden.

Glossy Black Cockatoo [1]	Brobenah Hall Rd, Leeton	14/02/14	Bill Draper
Koala [2]	Rocky Waterholes, Narrandera	16/02/14	MFN Group
Glossy Ibis [40]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/02/14	Max O'Sullivan
Masked Lapwing [45]	Fivebough Wetlands	19/02/14	Max O'Sullivan

The above ibis and lapwings were together just off the T-intersection in the open area.

Red-capped Plover [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/02/14	Keith Hutton
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/02/14	Keith Hutton
Wood Sandpiper [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/02/14	Keith Hutton
Black-winged Stilt [5]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/02/14	Keith Hutton
Latham's Snipe [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/02/14	Keith Hutton
Masked Lapwing [50+]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/02/14	Keith Hutton
Glossy Ibis [60]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/02/14	Keith Hutton
Brown Quail [2]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/02/14	Keith Hutton
Australian Shelduck [15]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/02/14	Keith Hutton
Swamp Harrier [juv]	Fivebough Wetlands	22/02/14	Keith Hutton
Glossy Black Cockatoo [7]	Barry Heihr's property via Leeton	23/02/14	Nella Smith
Diamond Firetail [4]	Barry Heihr's property	23/02/14	Max O'Sullivan
Spotted Pardalote [1]	Barry Heihr's property	23/02/14	Nella Smith
Eastern Yellow Robin [5]	Barry Hehir's property	23/02/14	Nella Smith
Brown-headed Honeyeater [20+]	Barry Hehir's property	23/02/14	Max O'Sullivan
Grey-crowned Babbler [5]	Barry Hehir's property	23/02/14	Nella Smith

Nella and I did a check at Barry's place to see which dams the cockies were coming to. Last year they were counted at the lower dam but this time Nella got 7 at the top dam near the shelter. I got none lower down.

Sacred Kingfisher [1]	Gordon Ave, Griffith	23/02/14	June Sell
Leaden Flycatcher [female]	Koonadan Historic Site, Leeton	26/02/14	Max O'Sullivan

This was quite a surprise find and Keith says they have been very rarely recorded here although he has an early record of a pair nesting near Euroly bridge.

White-breasted Woodswallow	Park beside the PO in Banna Ave, Griffith	26/02/14	June Sell
-----------------------------------	---	----------	-----------

June said she had never seen them before in the main street. There were at least 7 birds.

Little Eagle [1]	Above Campbell's Swamp, Griffith	27/02/14	Max O'Sullivan
Marsh Sandpiper [12]	Campbell's Swamp	27/02/14	Max O'Sullivan
Diamond Dove [10+]	Wattle Dam Binya State Forest	27/02/14	Max O'Sullivan

These doves haven't been seen for a while at Binya and were in a larger group of Peaceful Doves.

Mulga Parrot [12]	Wattle Dam	27/02/14	Max O'Sullivan
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo	McNabb Cres, Griffith	daily	Sue Chittick-Dalton
Little Corella [2]	McNabb Cres, Griffith	28/02/14	Sue Chittick-Dalton
Turquoise Parrot [4]	Wattle Dam Binya State Forest	02/03/14	MFN Group
Plumed-whistling Duck [flock]	Whistling over Nericon in the dark	14/02/14	Neil Palframan

**** COMING EVENTS ****

13 March Thursday

Meeting is
in Griffith

Monthly Meeting at 7:30pm at the National Parks Office,
100 Yambil St. Griffith
Guest Speaker: David Parker Topic: Plains Wanderer –
Contact: Penny Williams 6953 3524
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

16 March Sunday

Glossy Black Cockatoo 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) - say by 7.30pm.
Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210

30 March Sunday

Barren Box: Meet at the Griffith Tourist Info. car park at 8.30am.
Bring morning tea and lunch.
Contact: Max O'Sullivan 6953 4726

2 April Wednesday

Copy for the April newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena –
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.

10 April Thursday

Monthly Meeting the Yellow Room at **Leeton Library**,
Sycamore St., Leeton, commencing at 7:30pm
Topic: TBA
Contact: Penny Williams 6953 3524
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

18-21 April Easter weekend

Friday to Monday

Campout at Round Hill.
Other accommodation is available at Lake Cargelligo for those who don't
want to camp. Come for all or part of the time.
The plan is to search for threatened Holly Grevillea, as well as our usual
activities.
Contact: Max O'Sullivan 6953 4726

Other events:

25 March Tuesday

Why Wetlands? One Tree Field Day
Explore the best wetlands on the Hay Plain
with Wildlife Ecologist, Matt Herring.
Contact Wendy Minato on 0487 953 777
wminato@murrumbidgeelandcare.asn.au
Numbers are required for catering.

2-5 May

SEANA (South East Australian Naturalists Association Inc.)
Marysville, Victoria Campout - hosted by Upper Goulburn Field Naturalists
A full weekend of talks and field outings on geology, fauna, flora of the area
including the various fire recovery projects.
Contact Eric or Rowena Whiting 6953 2612 for further details

17-24 October

Australian Naturalists Network 2014 Get-together in Tasmania
A chance to meet like-minded naturalists from around Australia, along with local
knowledge and double up with a holiday in Tasmania.
More Information: <http://tasfieldnats.weebly.com/australian-naturalists-network.html>