

The Murrumbidgee Naturalist



May 2021 - Issue #292
Journal of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.
PO Box 541, LEETON 2705 ISSN-1327-1172
Website: www.mfn.org.au
Email: murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com

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



Along the track
in Livingstone
National Park -
Wagga Wagga
members
Parsons Bands
Orchid (insert)



IN THIS ISSUE

Office Bearers and Subscriptions	2
Welcome to May	2
From the Inbox	2
Flowerdale Lagoon Walk	3
Campbell's Wetlands Outing	4
BirdLife Photography Awards	5
Ironbark Picnic Ground Excursion	6
Livingstone National Park	7
Hay Plains Workshop / Narrandera Landcare	8
Orchids flowering in April and May in local areas	9
Know your Daisies – Part4, Fuzzweeds	10
Birds in my backyard over 2 weeks in April	12
Members' Sightings	13
Coming Events	14

CONTRIBUTIONS

For the June issue by
Wednesday 2 June
To Rowena Whiting
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com
Phone: 6953 2612

"The most important thing, as I am constantly saying, is to think about small ways in which we can make a difference – every day."

Jane Goodall

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Office Bearers and Annual Subscriptions

President:	Alan Whitehead	6959 3779	Editor:	Rowena Whiting	6953 2612
Vice President:	Nella Smith	0428 809 537	Committee:	Phil Tenison	6953 4869
Vice President:	Max O'Sullivan	0434 923 766		Glenn Currie	0488 563 321
Vice President:	Meredith Billington	0498 711 165		Virginia Tarr	6962 5614
Secretary:	Graham and Dione Russell 0419 350 673 (Graham) 0428 536290 (Dione)				
Treasurer:	Ellené Schnell	0488 080 866	Website Co-ordinator:	Kathy Tenison	6953 4869

MEETINGS are held on the second Thursday each month, except January, at the Henry Lawson Room, Leeton Library, Sycamore Street, Leeton at 7pm.

FIELD TRIPS NORMALLY TAKE PLACE ON THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND.

INTENDING NEW MEMBERS, GUESTS AND VISITORS WELCOME.

Membership enquiries:

Leeton	Eric Whiting	6953 2612	Griffith	Virginia Tarr	6962 5614
Narrandera	Nella Smith	0428 890 537	Coleambally	John Wilkinson	6954 4129
Wagga Wagga	Melanie Baulch	0428914702	melaniebaulch@bigpond.com		

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

Bank details for direct deposit: 082 672 account no. 772043387, a/c name: Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Include your own name and description of payment in the reference box.

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

Welcome to May

Once again we have come up with a 14 pager hope you find it an informative read. Thanks to everyone who has contributed. Remember feedback is welcome.

Our April meeting was a 'Show & Tell' evening with many members bringing along items of interest. Nella had a large map showing where environmental water is going in 2021, of special interest is the Yanco Creek System, she also showed a poster of Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism Modernisation Project from Water New South Wales. ; Joy had a stunning Emperor Gum Moth; Kathy had a mysterious seed pod, a Doubah or Bush Banana, the seeds have a fan to assist 'blowing it away' (see photos); Eric showed some maps showing the data he has gathered of the distributions of daisies; Allan had seen Parson Band orchids which were white.

Enjoy this month's activities.

Rowena.



From the mailbox

From Jason Richardson:

Thought I'd share this video of a carpet python seen on visit to Valla Beach during the Easter holidays:
<https://youtu.be/Y7QGkJsW3PQ>

It might be the same snake that my son found under the house on our last visit:
<http://shotwildlife.blogspot.com/2018/04/carpet-python.html>

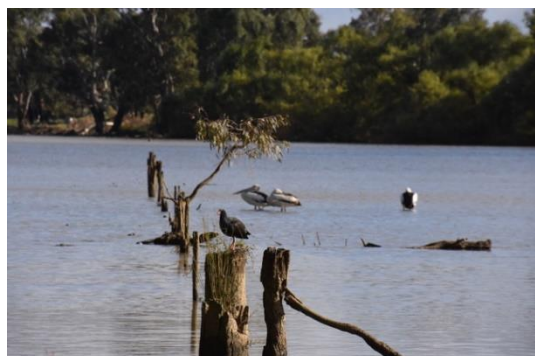
That was particularly memorable for him as he thought it was a toy and touched it! During our recent visit it would emerge each morning to sunbathe on the balcony for about an hour.

From Nella:

Nella & I came across this article about how Bendigo is helping their bats with the summer heat. It relates to the talk given by Andrew Peters [Bendigo's bats stay cool with a tree canopy sprinkler system - National Tree Day Blog \(planetark.org\)](#)

Flowerdale Lagoon Walk

On the coolest morning of the month with a fresh breeze 11 members coursed the shore of Flowerdale Lagoon. First up at the car park we saw 2 Striated Pardalotes in the upper reaches of the tree where 6 months earlier we had seen many breeding in hollows. On our way to the water we passed Red-browed Finches swaying on long grass stalks, a late breeding Grey Teal family (a pair with 5 chicks), a watchful Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and flocks of Galahs, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Corellas - Little and Long-billed, White ibis, White-faced herons, while the Kookaburras laughed on.



At the water, highlights were a pair of Whistling Kites, 3 Black-fronted Dotterels, a lone Silver gull and 2 Yellow-billed Spoonbills. But the Dusky and White-breasted Woodswallows stole the day with their aerial displays catching insects on the wing and later clustering together to roost; we did the same at a nearby cafe.

Full survey details can be found at:

<https://birdata.birdlife.org.au/survey?id=5311923&h=7c96499f>

Bird list:

Striated Pardalote	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Galah	Common Starling
Crested Pigeon	Laughing Kookaburra	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Superb Fairy-wren
Red-browed Finch	Australian Magpie	Pacific Black Duck	Grey Teal –family
Magpie-lark	Masked Lapwing	Australian Pelican	Willie Wagtail
Little Corella	Australian White Ibis	White-faced Heron	Long-billed Corella
Red-rumped Parrot	Australian Raven	Eurasian Coot	Australasian Grebe
Whistling Kite	Purple Swamphen	Australian Wood Duck	Dusky Moorhen
Dusky Woodswallow	White-breasted Woodswallow	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Black-fronted Dotterel
Silver Gull	Crimson Rosella (Yellow)	Grey Shrike-thrush	Blue-faced Honeyeater
Welcome Swallow	White-plumed Honeyeater	Little Pied Cormorant	

Sarah Danckert

The Murrumbidgee Landcare website have numerous items which you may like to check out.

Here is a taste:

[Guide: What platypus need to survive](#) (Rivers of Carbon) – Platypus need a healthy, well vegetated riparian zone, with pools, riffles and banks within which they can burrow. When riparian zones are in good condition, they provide platypus with good food, protection from predators, and refuge in times of drought. This guide will help you to understand all about these amazing animals and how you can help promote their conservation.

[Propagating from fruit and vegetable scraps](#) (Landcare Australia) – The Junior Landcare website has lots of activities to get kids involved in environmental sustainability activities at school or at home. The latest activity shows kids how to use fruit and vegetable scraps to propagate or grow new plants.

[Reading the landscape: Signs of impact in conservation areas](#) - Reading the landscape is about looking for signs or clues that help to piece together what is happening in the landscape. This guide focuses on signs of both positive and negative impacts within conservation areas. Restoring native vegetation and habitat features can be a slow process and it is often hard to tell if management efforts are having the desired effect. This guide outlines some of the key indicators that you should look for to determine if the health of your conservation area is improving or declining.

Campbell's Wetlands outing

10 April 2021

14 people made up the group for the outing. We met in the car park at Campbell's at 9am and David Kellett gave a brief talk to the group about some recent funding he had applied for and got for improvements to the track leading from the car park to the board walk and beyond along the northern section of the wetlands.

The group set off and at the start of the boardwalk, we split into two groups so as not to put too much pressure on the fragile boardwalk with so many of us going on it at once. So Nella took about half the group to the northern end whilst I took the remainder to the hide. Despite there being few ducks in the main open area as seen from the hide, with time and patience we ended up with a good selection of duck species as they eventually emerged from the cumbungi clumps and out into the open water. Blue-billed Ducks were definitely the highlight for us as up to 4 males were seen along with a couple of females. Musk Ducks were also great to see and there were 2 juvenile birds seen along with a resplendent male close to the hide showing his leathery lobe (dewlap!) quite clearly for all to see.



Blue-billed Duck Family – Phil Tenison



Pink-eared Duck - Kathy Tenison

The purpose of this lobe is used in the mating season when the male inflates the lobe allowing him to produce a long whistle and this accompanied by him splashing the water to attract a female. It is quite a ritual and is easy to observe in the spring mating season.

After an hour or so, the two groups swapped positions and my group headed for the northern end of the wetlands. Unfortunately, the edge of the swamp was obscured by very tall weed growth so it was quite difficult to get a good view of any birds close in to the shore. In the open water we could see swans, ibis, spoonbill and pelicans.

Back at the car park, Nella's group had already settled into morning tea so my group joined them. Alan saw a Wedge-tailed Eagle in the distance whilst we were sitting enjoying the break.

From Campbell's, some of the group left for home whilst the rest went to Nericon Wetlands for a look. There was very little birdlife to be seen save for the wooded area along the roadside with some honeyeaters and babblers.

Nella, had suggested we then go to Beelbangera to meet up with Michelle Groat who was going to meet us and show us the wetlands on the rice farm at Myall Park. Unfortunately, I and a couple of others sped off leaving Alan and Susan behind and when I realised this and turned back Alan had already gone towards Griffith instead of going off to the left towards Beelbangera. My deepest apologies to them both for this oversight on my part.

At Beelbangera the remaining group had a coffee and cake before Michelle came to guide us to the rice farm. It was an amazing sight with birds everywhere. That's where they all were gathered not at Campbell's but at the water storage dams that had recently been formed by draining the rice fields on the property – quite a sight to see such a large gathering of ducks, egrets, spoonbills, pelicans and grebes all in the one expanse of water. It wasn't that the birds were unusual, it's just there were so many.

Nella, in her car saw a Great Crested Grebe but we, in Michelle's vehicle missed it. We were more intent on checking out the birds of prey flying around – mostly Swamp Harriers it turned out. After circumnavigating

the various storage dams, we headed back to Beelbangera to our cars and headed for home. The bird list for Campbells is below.



**Birds at rice fields - Great Crested Grebe
Rosemary Stapleton**

Bird list:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Australasian Grebe | Little Pied Cormorant | Great Cormorant |
| Pelican | White-faced Heron | Yellow-billed Spoonbill |
| Straw-necked Ibis | Australian White Ibis | Black Swan |
| Hardhead | Black Duck | Australian Shoveler |
| Grey Teal | Chestnut Teal | Pink-eared Duck |
| Blue-billed Duck | Musk Duck | Swamp Harrier |
| Whistling Kite | Wedge-tailed Eagle | Kestrel |
| Hobby | Spotted Crake (H) | Eurasian Coot |
| Purple Swamphen | Crested Pigeon | Red-rumped Parrot |
| Welcome Swallow | Tree Martin | Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike |
| Grey Fantail | Willie Wagtail | Australian Reed Warbler |
| Purple-backed Wren | Yellow-rumped Thornbill | Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater |
| Singing Honeyeater | White-plumed Honeyeater | Striped Honeyeater |
| House Sparrow | Starling | Pee Wee |
| White-breasted Woodswallow | Pied Butcherbird | Magpie |
| Australian Raven | Feral Pigeon | |

Max O'Sullivan

BirdLife Photography Awards

This year, we're back with the same categories as 2020 but with a new special theme!

- * Backyard Birds
- * Birds in Flight
- * Bird Portrait
- * Bird Behaviour
- * Landscapes and Habitat
- * Human Impact
- * Special Theme: Plovers, Dotterels & Lapwings
- * Youth

We are proud to announce that Nikon Australia, Lake Cowal Foundation and RSPCA Victoria are sponsoring the 2021 awards, each category winner will receive a \$1,000 cash prize, with a whopping \$5,000 cash going to the portfolio winner courtesy of principal sponsor, Nikon Australia. There is also a special Black and White photography prize which you can opt into during entry - up for grabs is a Peter Slater original illustration.

Entries open on May 28th and run through until August 2nd. For updates and more information, check out the awards website here

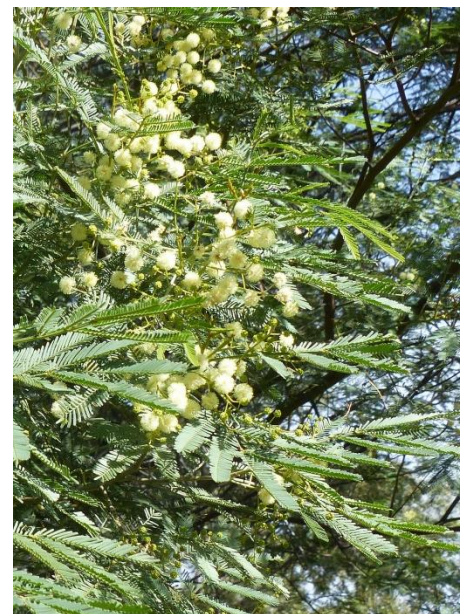
<https://support.birdlife.org.au/page.redir?target=https%3a%2f%2fwww.birdlifephotoaward.org.au%2f&srclid=198763&srctid=1&erid=26748476&trid=dbba847e-fac4-475e-a892-cfe0bbc2f115>.

My original intention for this walk was basically follow the route that Bill Moller used to lead the group but in reverse with the proviso of back-tracking from a lookout point instead of having a steep descent down to the creek above the picnic ground. A quick reconnoitre with Rowena to check the best point to start the climb up the ridge found the lower slopes thickly covered in Purple Burr-daisy – no purple, all burr. Two hours of pulling spiky bits out of trousers, socks, shoes, laces and at time fingers, said that plan B was required.



Clockwise from top: View across the flats to the ridge with the Goodia bushes; Deanes Wattle; Pomaderris; Cranberry Heath; a Tiger Moth

So the six of us that turned up (this most welcomingly included the Ranger, Jess Murphy who wanted to learn from us more about her park) had a more leisurely stroll around part of the Flats. The first part of our walk followed the foot of the cliffs to the end of the spur. Jess soon revealed her interest in butterflies when a couple fluttered by, only Common Browns and they scarcely settled on anything much to the chagrin of the photographers. They did however spark a discussion on insects and other smaller things in life. Why don't we pay more attention to these?



Near the toe of the spur we took a small diversion back to an elevated open rock to get a view across the Flats to the Bluff. Not as good as from higher up but still worth the deviation, though a few more bird sightings helped. From the toe, it was a bee line across the valley, crossing two creek lines that at this point are scarcely entrenched and so easy to negotiate.

Woolshed Flats prior to becoming a National Park in 1969 were open farmland that had presumably been cleared. In the area we passed through Deanes Wattle *Acacia deanei* had regenerated to a fairly complete coverage but the millennium drought decimated them. The result is a very open landscape that introduced weeds have taken advantage of, but not completely. We were delighted to find a few bushes of Western Golden-tip *Goodia medicaginea*, a yellow flowered pea-bush that is a true ephemeral pioneer plant and rarely recorded.



Not all of the trees on the flat were cleared. A few grand smooth-barked giants suggested River Red Gums or possibly Blakely's Gum. If there were any buds or fruit to confirm ID they



were way above us until later one branch with buds was accessible. The trees were Yellow Box that had outgrown their tell-tale skirts of rough box-bark. A short distance up the entrance track took us to the Pines Picnic Ground nominally for a comfort break, though all opted to walk up to the Falls. There was no water flowing, it takes recent heavy rain to get a flow. Nevertheless they are always worth the short walk up to them.

Then it was a matter of principally following the track back round to Ironbark Picnic Ground for lunch. As a finale we drove up Mt Bingar to check out the Pomaderris there. They are coming back fairly well thanks to regular culls of the goats. And with that pleasing note we departed for home.

Eric Whiting

Photos: Rowena Whiting

Ironbark Creek Bird List 24/4/21 compiled by Nella Smith

The positive part about the birds found here was the numbers of species and the numbers of individuals of small woodland birds. The area was fairly open with woodland, a creek and a rocky rise nearby. But where were the wrens?

Southern Whiteface	White browed Babbler	Mallee Ringneck	Striped Honeyeater
Pied Butcherbird	Rufous Whistler (performing)	Grey Fantail	Willy Wagtail
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Grey Shrike Thrush	Jacky Winter	Red-capped Robin
Eastern yellow Robin	Yellow Thornbill (8)	Western Gerygone	Kookaburra
White-winged Chough	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Magpie	Peaceful Dove
Silvereye	Restless Flycatcher	Apostlebird	Noisy Miner



Nella, Eric Jess and Margrit discussing the identification of the Western Golden-tip

Wagga Wagga Chapter- Livingstone National Park-

2nd May 2021

A distinct male Hooded Robin with his female counterpart welcomed the 12 of us in the carpark on a perfect still Autumn afternoon. An instant sense of belonging binds likeminded folk armed with binoculars and birdie books and a common curiosity of the natural world. White-throated Treecreepers beckoned us to explore the woodlands further.

Expansive webs decorated our path shimmering with gold in the afternoon sunshine. Home of the Golden Orb Weavers. Dick also showed us the

difference between Black & White Cypress. Whilst tapping on a Scribbly Gum, a startled Owlet Nightjar



made a quick dash overhead to seek refuge in a neighbouring tree hollow.

At times we did not know whether to look up or down. Looking down revealed a praying mantis egg case and the discretely camouflaged Autumn Greenhood orchid.



**Praying mantis egg case – photo taken by Sarah Danckert
Autumn Greenhood
Melanie Baulch**

Two hours into the walk and a kerfuffle of Red Wattlebirds was heard. Their sound once described by John Gould (English Ornithologist in 1800s) as “like a person vomiting”.

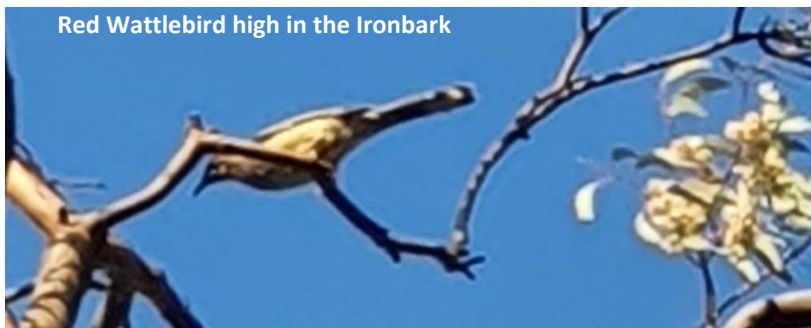
On inspection with craned necks & upward binoculars we watched them in the sunlight seeking nectar from the eucalypt blossoms. Then the keen eyes of Sarah and Mel spotted the Regent Honeyeater hanging amongst the flock. How amazing!

We all spent time to enjoy such a sight.

As we left the carpark in a convoy on our return to Wagga the day closed with the most magnificent sunset. I feel it appropriate to close with a quote from Laura Ingalls Wilder

“If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere.”

Bird Sightings- Galah, Brown-Treecreeper, White-throated Treecreeper, Hooded Robin, White-browed Babbler, Grey Fantail, Willy Wagtail, Superb Fairy-wren, Yellow Thornbill, Owllet Nightjar, Grey Shrike-thrush, Rufous Whistler, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Regent Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, Red Wattlebird, Currawong, Kookaburra.



Susan Campbell

HAY PLAINS LANDCARE PROPAGATING WORKSHOP

On April 30th Kath Tenison and myself attended a native seed propagating workshop organised by the [Hay Plains Landcare group](#). This was the second session in their “4 Seasons of Seed” program. Nella Smith wrote about the first seed collecting workshop in our March newsletter.

This excellent second workshop was again presented by Martin Driver. It was held at the Hay Golf Club and had attendees from north of Hillston all the way down to Wodonga. It was great to see how widespread the interest is in this type of Landcare thing.

Among the participants were a farmer who has removed a lot of trees over the decades and was now looking to put some back, small nurseries trying to propagate for a growing native seedling market and volunteers from community native seedling nurseries.

My specific interest was to pick up ideas on how Narrandera Landcare can improve our propagating endeavours. We’ve been growing our own seedlings for 3 years now to plant out at National Tree Day community events and I found the procedures we’ve adopted through trial, error and research were pretty well reinforced by what Martin said – just one example is to direct sow multiple seeds into a tube then thin them out, rather than “pricking out” and transplanting emerging seedlings.



It was also heartening to learn some species are just plain difficult! I don’t feel too bad from our lack of success propagating Sweet Bursaria and Kangaroo Grass now.

Nevertheless, with the help of a lot of volunteers, seed provided by MFN and also a grant through their Environmental Grants Program, our Landcare group have propagated around 4000 seedlings this year. Some of these are destined for a Griffith City Council project at Lake Wyangan. A couple of hundred are Hill She-oak *Allocasuarina verticillata* which Kath will help us distribute to landowners willing to plant a small grove of this vital food stock of the Glossy Black Cockatoo. Other seedlings will be going to some of our smaller local schools for them to plant out, and the balance is destined for Narrandera Wetlands.

MFN’s second field trip in May is to participate in Narrandera Landcare’s community planting for their [National Tree Day](#) event at Narrandera Wetlands. With the grant MFN awarded us and support from Leeton Toyota and Narrandera Pizzeria, we’ll be planting to add to the biodiversity of the Wetlands and enjoying pizza afterwards.

Glenn Currie

Orchids flowering in April and May in the local area.



Diplodium laxa synonym *Pterostylis laxa* common name Antelope Greenhood

Has slender, semi nodding dark green and white flowers with darker green or brown markings. Grows among grasses and rocks on slopes. Found at Bogolong, Mt Bingar and The Rock.



Corunastylis rufum synonym *Genoplesium rufum* Rufous Midge Orchid

Variable midge orchid with crowded red to green and chocolate flowers. Flowers may be numerous and crowded or few and well- spaced.



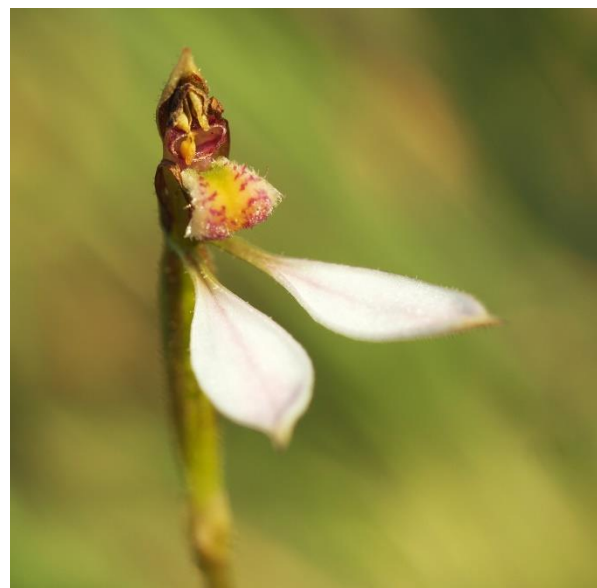
Speculantha rubescens synonym *Pterostylis rubescens* Blushing Tiny Greenhood

Flowering plants have up to 10 tiny flowers, green and white striped with reddish brown about the apex. The orchid is on a wiry stem 15-30cm tall.



Diplodium ampliata synonym *Pterostylis revoluta*. Autumn Greenhood

Has large richly coloured white and green flowers with brownish tones. A long, narrow pointed labellum extends beyond the sinus between the lateral sepals. Flowering stem is up to 25 cm tall.



Eriochilus cucllatus Parsons bands

Has one to three bright pink flowers which have long pale hanging sepals, like a clerical neck piece. The stem can be 5-25cm high. Stem clasping rounded leaf persists after flowering.

Nella Smith

[Ed. The synonyms are the former name]

Know your Daisies – Part 4, Fuzzweeds

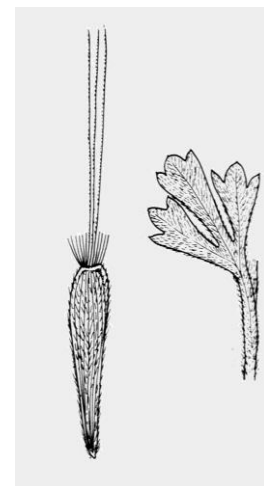
Vittadinia differs from Brachyscome in having rays in two or more rows and having a pappus of hairs. In Vittadinia the achenes and pappus greatly enlarge at maturity giving rise to the 'fuzzy' balls. Vittadinia species usually have several flowerheads each terminating a branch and have lilac or paler rays

Vittadinia

Annual or perennial herbs or small shrubs bristly to cottony; leaves flat or conduplicate; involucre bracts herbaceous in several series; florets tubular plus 2 or more series of rays; ray florets white, lilac or purple, ray 3-4.5mm long; achenes obovate to oblanceolate, flattened with opposing faces separated by marginal ridges, facial ribbing present or absent, variously hairy but always with a basal tuft; pappus of numerous free hairs usually barbellate exceeding involucre at maturity.

Vittadinia dissecta

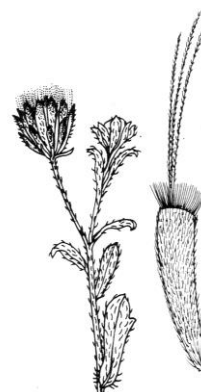
Annual or short-lived perennial herbs, 10-35cm high, leaves spatulate, deeply 3-lobed, the lobes sometimes further divided, 10-40mm x 7-20mm, apex obtuse; florets white to lilac; achenes with ribs all extending to summit, pubescent; marginal ridges narrow, pubescent; recorded in woodland, mallee and cleared land.



Vittadinia pterochata, Rough Fuzzweed

Annual herb or small shrub,; stem erect hirsute to scabrous; leaves narrow oblanceolate, margins entire or with 1-3 small teeth near apex; ray florets lilac to mauve; achenes terete, marginal ridges absent, faces without ribs, smooth or +/- striate,

pubescent; recorded in open plains and woodlands and chenopod shrubland on low-lying heavy soils.



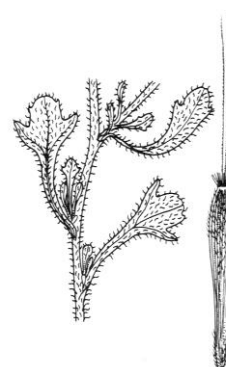
Vittadinia cervicalis

Mostly annual herbs, scabrous to hirsute with +/- glandular hairs; leaves variable usually obovate apex recurved, margins entire or lobed near the middle; ray florets white to purple; achenes oblanceolate, narrowed into a neck 0.5-3mm long at summit, ridges and ribs +/-glandular pubescent; recorded in dry sclerophyll or Callitris woodland, mallee, grassland and cleared land, on sandy and loamy soils.



Vittadinia sulcata

Annual herb, 10-30cm high; hirsute, glandular hairs present; leaves flat, obovate, margins entire or with 2-3 small teeth near apex; ray florets purple; achenes oblanceolate, marginal ridges prominent, pubescent above, faces with ribs converging, pubescent only in upper half with simple hairs; recorded on sandy and red loam soils, in clay pans or beside rivers.



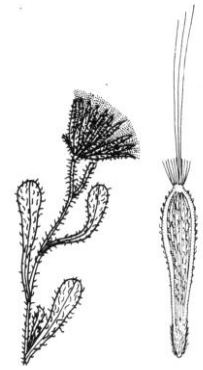
Vittadinia muelleri

Perennial herb with woody rootstock and tufted stems; stems with minute glandular and scattered longer hairs; leaves sometimes conduplicate, linear or elliptic to oblanceolate, margins entire or lobed in upper half, hairs restricted to midrib and margins; ray florets bluish-purple; achenes narrow oblanceolate, ribs all extending to summit, hairs short, spreading; marginal ridges narrow, pubescent; recorded from grasslands and woodlands.



Vittadinia condyloides

Perennial herbs, 12-30cm high, hirsute with +/- glandular hairs; leaves sub-conduplicate, narrow oblanceolate, apex apiculate, recurved, margins entire or with 2 small lateral lobes; ray florets violet to pink; achenes oblanceolate, ribs all extending to summit, marginal ridges and faces with bifid hairs and a few glandular hairs pubescent; recorded in woodland, mallee, and on cleared land.



Vittadinia gracilis

Perennial small shrub with woody base, 10-40cm high; stem with dense fine, white hairs; leaves flat to conduplicate, linear to obovate, apex obtuse; ray florets purple; achenes linear to oblanceolate, ribs all extending to summit, densely pubescent with fine +/-glandular hairs; recorded in roadsides, pastures and sclerophyll forest.



***Vittadinia cuneata*, Woolly New Holland Daisy**

Woody annual or perennial herbs, 10-40cm high, rigidly erect, hirsute with +/- glandular hairs; leaves sub-conduplicate, cuneate or oblanceolate, apex apiculate, recurved, margins entire or with 2 small lateral lobes, hairs stiff and appressed (var *cuneata*) or loose and spreading (var *hirsuta*); ray florets pale blue to mauve; achenes linear to oblanceolate, ribs all extending to summit, marginal ridges thin, pubescent; recorded in a variety of habitats.



var *cuneata*



var *hirsuta*

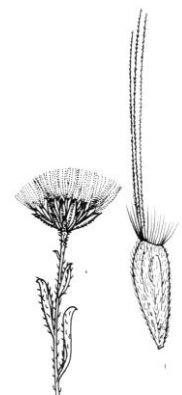


Vittadinia pustulata

Annual herb or small shrub, 10-30cm high, hirsute, glandular hairs present; leaves sub-conduplicate, oblanceolate, margins entire or with 1-3 small teeth near apex, obtuse; achenes 4-angled with the centre line raised, often asymmetric with 1 or more prominent pustules near the base, with appressed simple hairs; recorded on sandy red loam soils in grassland and disturbed areas.

Prior to 1982 most of the species were only collectively referred to as *Vittadinia* 'tri-loba complex' as in the Plants of Western New South Wales book.

Eric Whiting



A correction to the previous issue (#291), although an amended version was sent out. The name 'Velvet Gecko' was somewhat off track and it is most likely a Nobbi Dragon *Diporiphora nobbi*. A distinguishing characteristic is its pink tongue and mouth. This shows you often need a particular feature(s) for an accurate identification and an image isn't always sufficient. Rowena

Birds in my backyard over a 2 week period in April 2021.

I have my desk and meal table facing the backyard and bird bath which keeps me highly entertained when working on my laptop or having a meal.

I have been amazed at the variety of birds that have turned up in recent weeks. Apart from the ever-present House Sparrows and Common Blackbirds, I have had a good array of native species that have visited my water troughs, not just once, but daily in most cases. I have a pair of Brown Honeyeaters visiting daily to have a bath and they have to compete in the pecking order with the more dominant species – mostly the resident Blackbirds.



Above: Purple-backed – Bill Draper
Left: Singing Honeyeater – Kathy Tenison

Next door has a large Lillypilly hanging over our fence and this year it has produced

masses of fruit – more than I have ever noticed in past years. So they have attracted rosellas and ringnecks into my yard and they hang around the water but I haven't as yet seen them actually drinking – they are very wary. I have worked out by the behaviour of a pair of Eastern Rosellas that they can see their reflection in my window and spend most of the time trying to work out what their reflection is. The female has often fluttered at the window trying to ward off her reflection – or, at least, that's what it seems to me.

I have had many visits by female wrens and couldn't work out if they were Purple-backed or Superbs – I have had both here over the years. Anyway a male Purple-backed bird turned up with the females recently so that solved that problem!

Following is the list I've made over the past few weeks:

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Singing Honeyeater	White-plumed Honeyeater
Brown Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail	Crested Pigeon
Silvereye (Tasmanian form)	Pee Wee	Purple-backed Wren
Little Friarbird	Rufous Whistler (female)	Yellow-throated Miner
Yellow Rosella	Eastern Rosella	Mallee Ringneck
Magpie	Blue-faced Honeyeater	
House Sparrow	Common Blackbird	European Starling

Max O'Sullivan

The Australian Plants Society (Vic) have an interesting video which they've produced:

In March 2020, APS Victoria organised an Exhibition called "Australian Plants Revealed: 65,000 years of traditional plant use and 250 years of science". CoVid19 caused the exhibition to be closed early and lectures planned for the end of March 2020 to be cancelled.

During lockdown Alex Smart and Michael Cook produced a video of the presentations, which has now been uploaded to YouTube.

The video can be accessed by clicking this link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_zAlnLEhw

M E M B E R S ' S I G H T I N G S

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

Nankeen Night Heron	Bilbul – Meredith's place	28/03/21	Meredith Billington
Brolga [16]	Fivebough Wetlands	01/04/21	Keith Hutton
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [43]	Nericon – Neil's place	03/04/21	Neil Palframan
Magpie Goose [6]	Fivebough Wetlands	03/04/21	Keith Hutton
Black Swan [350+]	Fivebough Wetlands	03/04/21	Keith Hutton
Wood Sandpiper [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	03/04/21	Keith Hutton
Australian Shelduck [18]	Fivebough Wetlands	03/04/21	Keith Hutton
Yellow-faced Whipsnake [dead]	Fivebough Common – photo taken	04/04/21	Keith Hutton
Striped Honeyeater	Narrandera Wetlands	04/04/21	Alan Whitehead
Superb Parrot [2]	Narrandera Wetlands	04/04/21	Alan Whitehead
Red Wattlebird [5]	Cutler Ave, Griffith	05/04/21	Virginia Tarr
Glossy Black Cockatoo [pr]	Spring Hill, Cocoparra Nat Park	07/04/21	Max O'Sullivan
Peregrine Falcon [2]	Falcon Falls, Cocoparra Nat Park	07/04/21	Nella Smith
Silvereye [6]	Narrandera Wetlands	08/04/21	Susan Whitehead
Pied Currawong [6+]	Narrandera – season arrival	09/04/21	Alan Whitehead
Currawongs were seen at the Yanco Reserve on 26/04/21 - Max			
Great Crested Grebe	Myall Park via Beelbangara	10/04/21	Nella Smith
Red-capped Robin [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	10/04/21	Keith Hutton
Grey Fantail	Whitton	Daily	Margaret Strong
Brolga [12]	Tuckerbil Wetlands	17/04/21	Max O'Sullivan
I met Peter Draper on Vance Road and he told me there were Brolgas in his rice stubble on his farm that morning and they flew towards Tuckerbil. I went there in the afternoon and saw 12 brolgas there.			
Brolga [22]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/04/21	Keith Hutton
We are not sure if the Tuckerbil birds were part or separate from Keith's group at Fivebough.			
White-necked Heron [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	17/04/21	Keith Hutton
Keith also reported Swamp Harrier 2, Collared Sapsrowhawk, Hobby, Black Kite and Kestrel at Fivebough.			
White-fronted Chat [43]	Fivebough Wetlands	18/04/21	Keith Hutton
Little Friarbird [3]	Karri Road, Leeton	20/04/21	Keith Hutton
Ground Cuckoo-Shrike [1]	Cnr Almond and Quodling Rds	20/04/21	Keith Hutton
Pied Currawong [15+]	Leeton Golf Course	26/04/21	Keith Hutton
Blue-faced Honeyeater [11]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/04/21	Keith Hutton
Australasian Bittern [1]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/04/21	Keith Hutton
Black-fronted Dotterel [8]	Fivebough Wetlands	28/04/21	Keith Hutton
<i>Pterostylis laxa</i>	Narrandera	04/21	Nella Smith
<i>Diplodium ampliata</i>	Bogalong, Mt Bingar, The Rock	04/21	Nella Smith
<i>Speculantha rubescens</i>	Bogalong, Mt Bingar	04/21	Nella Smith
<i>Corunastylis rufum</i>	Bogalong, Mt Bingar	04/21	Nella Smith
Common (Indian) Myna [1]	Corobimilla	01/05/21	Nella Smith

I had a call from Sarah who is a member of the Wagga Group and she reported seeing 3 **Regent Honeyeaters** at **Livingstone National Park** on an outing there on 2 May 2021. Such an unexpected and rare find so I have included it on our bird list. We are planning an outing there with the Wagga Group in the coming months which Nella is organising.

Max O'Sullivan

**** COMING EVENTS ****

Please note all outings are subject to weather conditions.

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, outings are currently limited, you must register with the nominated person by email (preferred) or phone to participate.

- 13 May Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** will be held in the **Henry Lawson Room** at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St, Leeton commencing at **7pm**.
Topic: Wires activities in the local area **Guest speaker: Ellené Schnell**
Contact: Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536 290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham) **Email:** murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 14 and 15 May** **Riverina Field Days in Griffith**
Friday and Saturday **MFN will be joining with Murrumbidgee Landcare to have a stall at this event.**
The site is **Woodside Hall W34**.
If you can man our stall for some time on either day please
Contact Kathy Tenison bidgeeirrigation@mli.org.au Ph 0428396826
- 30 May Sunday** **National Tree Planting Day at Narrandera**
Contact Glenn Currie glenncurrie100@hotmail.com
- 2 June Wednesday** **Copy for the June newsletter is due. Please send to Rowena.**
Email: ericwhiting4@bigpond.com. Phone: 6953 2612.
- 6 June Sunday** **Mates Gully Reserve (TSR) near Tarcutta.**
From 9am – 1 pm includes lunch. Easy walking, total distance 3-4kms.
Leader: Dick Green 0448585844 r.green49@bigpond.com
Co-leader: Mel Baulch 0428914702
Directions: From Wagga Wagga take Sturt Highway east approx. 30kms. Turn right (south) onto Mates Gully Road and travel 7kms towards Tarcutta. Follow signs to Mates Gully TSR. Park on the left side of Mates Gully road.
- 10 June Thursday** **Monthly Meeting** will be held in the **Henry Lawson Room** at the **Leeton Library**, Sycamore St, Leeton commencing at **7pm**.
Topic: The Importance of Fungi
Contact: Graham or Dione Russell 0428 536 290 (Dione) or 0419 350 673 (Graham) **Email:** murrumbidgeefieldnaturalists@gmail.com.
- 12 June Saturday** **Field trip to Lake Urana**
Meet at the Aquatic Centre, Urana at 10am.
Contact Nella Smith by text 0428890537
- 26 June Saturday** **Field Trip to Livingstone National Park**
Contact Nella Smith by text 0428890537
- 30 June Wednesday** **Tree planting at Lake Wyangan contact David Kellett, Griffith City Council**
David.Kellett@griffith.nsw.gov.au mob. 0437 948 826

Other Events

Swift Parrot Surveys contact **birdlife website** for methodology and sites.

Round 1 - Saturday 24 April to Sunday 6 June 2021 (a 6-week period approximately centred around the traditional 3rd weekend in May)

Round 2 - Saturday 17 July to Sunday 29 August 2021 (a 6-week period approximately centred around the traditional 1st weekend in August)