

# *The Murrumbidgee Naturalist*



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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



**Falls Creek vista - Warwick and Terry - Photo: Bill Moller**

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## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

**For the next issue by  
Wednesday, 5 March 2008**

**To Rowena Whiting**

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**Fax or collection can be arranged.**

**Welcome to 2008**

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

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<b>Secretary:</b>	Jan Cameron	6953 2202	<b>Web Co-ordinator:</b>	Johanna Botman	6963 4855
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**MEETINGS** ARE HELD EACH MONTH, EXCEPT JANUARY

**FIELD TRIPS** NORMALLY TAKE PLACE ON THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND.

**LEETON** MEETINGS SECOND THURSDAY - Seminar Room 1, Murrumbidgee Agricultural Institute at 7.30 PM

**GRIFFITH** MEETINGS FOURTH THURSDAY - Conference Room, Dept. of Agriculture AT 7.30 PM

INTENDING NEW MEMBERS, GUESTS AND VISITORS WELCOME.

### Membership:

<b>Leeton</b>	Jan Cameron	6953 2202	<b>Griffith</b>	Bill Moller	6960 1341	
<b>Narrandera</b>	Neville James	6959 2963	<b>Coleambally</b>	John Wilkinson	6954 4129	
<b>Annual Subscriptions:</b>	Family	\$40.00	Adult/Single	\$30.00	Journal only/Concession	\$20.00

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

### Code of Birding Ethics

At the December meeting the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists formally adopted the BOCA Code of Birding ethics as their Code of Ethics.

This is set out below.

Bird Observation & Conservation Australia (BOCA) states one of its objectives as being: **“To foster ethical bird observing as a social and individual activity directed to benefit Australian birds.”**

To help achieve this objective, BOCA has adopted the following code:

#### Birds

- ◆ **The welfare of the birds must always have the highest priority**  
Do not cause stress to birds or expose them to danger during observation, photography or recording. Do not approach too closely or interfere with their natural behaviour. Try not to put resting birds to flight.
- ◆ **Adjust your behaviour to the location.**  
Walk slowly, speak quietly, drive cautiously.
- ◆ **Approach nests carefully and do not stay nearby for long periods.**  
Your visit may assist predators to find eggs or young and your continued presence may drive the parents away.
- ◆ **Do not harass birds by repeated disturbance**  
Accept good distant views of a bird rather than risk causing stress through approaching too closely or putting them to flight. Excessive spotlighting, or repeated playback or imitation of calls can cause stress. Shining spotlights or laser lights directly into bird's eyes is unacceptable. Beating bushes or dragging ropes to flush birds is inappropriate.

**Remember that all bird observers will be judged by your action**

#### Habitat

- ◆ **Keep habitat disturbance to a minimum**  
Where possible, walk or drive on formed roads, tracks and paths to minimise disturbance to bird habitat and to the birds. Avoid disturbance around nests, display areas and roost sites.
- ◆ **Consider the consequences of attracting birds**  
Providing food, water or artificial nest hollows can be beneficial, but may, in some situations, expose birds to predation.

#### People

- ◆ **Respect the rights of landholders**  
Always obtain permission to enter their land. Always leave gates as you found them and do not damage property.
- ◆ **Follow all rules, laws & regulations governing public areas**
- ◆ **In groups, respect the rights of others**
  - Raising your voice or pointing excitedly may cause the bird to fly away or spoil the sighting for others.
  - Consider whether you are blocking other observers and if so, when you have seen the bird, move away to make room for them.
  - Be helpful to beginners and always try to encourage others to appreciate birds.
  - On group outings, the group leader must accept responsibility for enforcing the BOCA Code of Birding Ethics.
  - The leader must take into account the cumulative effect of a number of people approaching a bird

A pair of barking owls had been seen perching in some Red Gums at 5 mile Travelling Stock Reserve near Narrandera for some time. We knew of other threatened species to be present as well. So we went to have a look. As luck would have it we all had good views of a lone Latham's Snipe zig-zaging across the swamp, Black-tailed Native Hens and a White-bellied Sea Eagle perching below his nest.

But alas no Barking Owls were to be seen. These birds are known to inhabit the red-gum river country and nest in some of the large hollows found in the gums. They are heard barking "woof-woof" or the strangled woman screech which can be distressing at 2 am. They are a more robust looking owl than the Boobook. These ones "barked" when you came too close to their roost but not today.

Around from the water skiing area were Little Pied Cormorant and Darters nesting in multi storey accommodation: a leafy bough overhanging the water. 6 or 7 nests were in the same tree. Later in the month we were able to see the white fluffy snake like necks of the dartlets waving around for the attention of their mother (or father I suppose).

We moved on to look at the Lake Talbot willow removal program managed by Narrandera Shire Council, with input from Murrumbidgee Irrigation.

Two bunds have been installed to stop water flow into Rocky Waterholes and Lake Talbot to enable access by large excavators. Mind you, there were still difficulties with bogging. I imagine it wouldn't be easy to pull one of these monsters out of a bog.

The willows are being removed to reduce silting and increase the flow of water in the channel, to reduce bank degradation when the willows fall over and to enable native vegetation to recolonise. A large 2 metre square hole had been excavated as a test and all of it was accumulation of silt over the last 90 years or more. I have a photo of the Lake taken in 1924 with no willows. The dead willows have been stacked in huge mounds for burning next year. And any shoots will be managed by Narrandera Shire staff.

The drying cracks of the mud were big enough to house a herd of phascogales. A crested shrike-tit was observed cracking at the bark for grubs.

Never again will we be able to walk that area of Rocky Waterholes as it has now been refilled with water, much to the happiness of the gas guzzling ski boats.

**Nella Smith**

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### Bird Fair Report – 15-18 November 2007

The Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists again participated in this event in 2007. National Parks and Wildlife through Michelle Ballestrin organized for us to share the National Park's tent – a much larger area for us than we had in 2006.

The display screens were provided by Roy Wade and we had a very good selection of photos on display – thanks to Bill's organizing of photocopying and laminating. Photos by David Kleinert and David Webb dominated but there were some excellent photos from Bills (Moller and Draper) as well as some good ones from Warwick Smith from our Plains Wanderer trip to Oolambeyan last year and I think there was also a photo or two from Johanna Botman – perhaps a Plains Wanderer or two!

Difficulties were experienced with attaching the photos to the screens in order to keep them *in situ* for the three days of the Fair as the wind played havoc at some times and photos went everywhere.

Thanks to Terry (Smith), Roy (Wade) and Bill (Draper) for helping with the set-up on the Friday and particularly to Johanna for producing the excellent brochure of the Bird Routes of Griffith in time for the Fair. A number of members assisted throughout the three days and Betty (Bradney) and Nella brought along a collection of seed capsules and a variety of bird feathers for display.

The nature of the Fair and the weather made for an interesting situation in that there were so many excellent talks going on all the time that most of the visitors spent their time attending these and only a few people each day wandered about in the heat to look at the various displays. Having air coolers in the three lecture tents was a great plus this year and this added to the comfort of everyone – especially those visitors not so accustomed to the heat.

As well as activities at the Fair itself there were a number of excursions organized to Fivebough, Tuckerbill, the Whitton Common and Oolambeyan where the 12 or so visitors had a successful Plains Wanderer search on the Sunday evening – much to the relief of Michelle!

Nella's sister, Lorna, added to the confusion of locals by being constantly mistaken for Nella! However, she was able to attend most of the talks and was most impressed by the quality of speakers.

Congratulations to Mike Schultz and his dedicated team who organized the whole event.

**Max O'Sullivan**

## Christmas at “Old Coree” 25<sup>th</sup> November 2007

Christmas parties in Australia are invariably hot affairs and shady spots near a creek or river have an irresistible allure as a venue for such. So when Max was strutting about waxing lyrical about what a wonderful place “Old Coree” was, well the choice was made, what more could you want, perched as it was on the banks of Billabong Creek, great birding spot, a variety of habitat with extensive areas of relatively lightly grazed woodland, plenty of places to walk and drive. (But he forgot to tell us about the flies, more about that later)



A magnificent Spread

And a great venue it turned out to be, a beautiful setting, we had the run of a four bedroom cottage AND it was air conditioned, what luxury!!!

“Old Coree” is a property about 20km west of Jerilderie, that is owned by Ricegrowers Limited,

and used for rice research. It has some great old buildings, the homestead is magnificent and it is perched on the banks of the Billabong Creek. The area afforded some great walks with some good variation of vegetation and fair birding in some of the paddocks, with an interesting Pine planting.



Cook at work



Santa at work

The birding was a little slow but we ended up with a good list as you can see below, but goodness dear reader, the FLIES. They must have thought all their Christmases had come at once, they pounced on us in great marauding hordes, They were having a wonderful time, inspecting

the corners of our eyes, the inside of our ears and nose and the odd throat, (they tended to find, that wasn't their best strategy). Nothing we could do, would convince them that we weren't too keen on their enthusiastic attention. You know dear reader you really have to wonder what they do for entertainment when we aren't around.

But the flies and possibly a bit of heat aside, it was a great weekend and the Christmas party was a great success, thanks to Patty, Phoebe with admirable help from Nella and Jan and all the rest that contributed to the party, in fact all played their part to ensure it was a great day/weekend.

### Old Coree Birdlist 24<sup>th</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> November 2007

Australian Wood Duck	Eastern Rosella	Southern Whiteface	Dusky Woodswallow	Common Blackbird
Pacific Black Duck	Blue-bonnet	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird	Common Starling
Grey Teal	Red-rumped Parrot	Noisy Miner	Pied Butcherbird	Tree Martin
White-faced Heron	Horsefield's Bronze	White-plumed	Australian Magpie	Straw-necked Ibis
White-necked Heron	Cuckoo	Honeyeater	Australian Raven	Sacred Ibis
Nankeen Night Heron	Sacred Kingfisher	Brown-headed Honeyeater	White-winged Chough	Intermediate Egret
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Laughing Kookaburra	Singing Honeyeater	House Sparrow	Brown Falcon
Black Falcon	Rainbow Bee-eater	Red-capped Robin	Tree Sparrow	Australian Hobby
Nankeen Kestrel	Brown Treecreeper	Grey-crowned Babbler	Zebra Finch	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Whistling Kite	Superb Fairy-wren	White-browed Babbler	Welcome Swallow	Little Friar Bird
Purple Swamp Hen	White-winged Fairy Wren	Crested Bellbird	Clamorous Reed-Warbler	Superb Parrot
Common Bronzewing	Striated Pardalote	Rufous Whistler	Little Grassbird	
Crested Pigeon	Western Gerygone	Grey Shrike-Thrush		
Peaceful Dove	Inland Thornbill	Magpie-lark		
Galah	Chestnut-rumped Thornbill	Satin Flycatcher		
Cockatiel	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Willie-Wagtail		
Yellow Rosella	Weebill	Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike		



They needed Bibs

Bill Moller – Photos by Dennis Moretto

## A Walk in the Red Gums

27<sup>th</sup> January 2008

There was a last minute decision at the Thursday meeting to have a walk in the River Red Gum over the Australia Day weekend, but someone who will remain nameless had forgotten to send the email to the proletariat so not



Garland or Wilcannia Lily

many were adequately informed. Some apologies are due from the offending individual.

Coincidentally a group of hard cases had decided to camp on the river for the weekend, so the outing was arranged to join the group for a walk along the river through the forest.



Refreshed

There has been some considerable improvement in the appearance of the forest with the recent rains. The River Red Gums are certainly looking a bit brighter with some magnificent specimens the rivers edge was also dotted with some grand River Sheoaks, the understorey was showing signs of green, unfortunately most of it was weeds (non native) but there were a few natives having a go. The Garland or Wilcannia Lily was widespread through the forest and was mostly in flower, showing both the yellow and mauve forms, very attractive and certainly a delight

to see after such a prolonged dry spell. A few other natives included Common Verbena, Blue Bell, Goodenia and Poison Pratia,



Forest People

There was a good smattering of birds to see, no real standouts but a good list, the list below was the list of sightings for the whole weekend but there were quite a few seen on the walk. A bit of a treat for the campers was the nightly appearance and calling of a Owlet Nightjar, that turned up just on dusk and for those up early enough occasionally in the morning as well, its nest or roosting spot must have been nearby.

It was a fairly hot weekend but comfortable at the outset after the usual cuppa, the

walk along the river track was very pleasant with lovely views of the river from different angles. It warmed up quickly particularly as we got further away from the river so we didn't press it too much but had a look at an area that was a little more woodland than forest to check for birds of more open areas. We returned back to the camp site for lunch and a paddle (some paddled some fully immersed) but it was a pleasant walk and the river seemed to cool the day so we sat in the shade for some social discourse.



Murrumbidgee River

The day trippers left in the early afternoon and the campers alternated between a dip in the river and a sit in the shade to read or to discuss a point or two, until it had cooled sufficiently for another walk.

The campers apart from the eating, sleeping, swimming and sitting around also managed a little fishing and spotlighting and managed a few other sightings which are listed below.

### Willbriggie State Forest Bird List 27<sup>th</sup> January 2008

Australian Wood Duck  
Grey Teal  
Pacific Black Duck  
Little Pied Cormorant  
White-faced Heron  
Straw-necked Ibis  
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo  
Little Corella  
Yellow Rosella

Eastern Rosella  
Red-rumped Parrot  
Galah  
Blue-faced Honeyeater  
White-plumed Honeyeater  
Noisy Miner  
Little Friarbird  
Grey Shrike Thrush  
Collared Sparrowhawk

Black Kite  
Whistling Kite  
Southern Boobook  
Owlet Nightjar  
Willie Wagtail  
Grey Fantail  
Sacred Kingfisher  
Laughing Kookaburra  
Peaceful Dove

Yellow Thornbill  
Weebill  
Western Gerygone  
Striated Pardalote  
Variegated Fairy-wren  
Superb Fairy-wren  
Brown Treecreeper  
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike  
Australian Raven

White-winged Chough  
Australian Magpie  
Magpie-lark  
Pied Butcherbird  
Grey Butcherbird  
Dollarbird  
White-browed Woodswallow  
Black-faced Woodswallow

### Other Sightings

Ringtail Possum  
Brushtail Possum  
Eastern Grey Kangaroo?  
Swamp Wallaby

European Carp  
Murray Cod

Yabbie *Cherax destructor*  
Large Freshwater Shrimp  
*Macrobrachium australiense*  
Small Fresh Water Shrimp (Glass Shrimp) *Paratya australiensis*

Broad shelled Turtle *Chelodona expansa*  
Murray Turtle *Emydura macquari*

Bill Moller

## The Story of the Falls Creek - 11-14<sup>th</sup> January 2008

This account includes some comments made by members and special companions who took the opportunity to go to our ANNUAL trip to Falls Creek.



Great Butterfly

From Mt Beauty the road snaked around the hills as we climbed the Bogong High Plains to the Ski Resort of Falls Creek, no snow in January though.

Dead grey sentinels of giant Mountain Ash reached to the sky, not at all regenerating because Mountain Ash do not, they need to regrow from the seed dropped as a result of the wildfires.

Arriving mid-afternoon meant we had time to settle and attempt a short walk. This walk was not like the walks of the rest of the weekend. Some brave soles thought they could brave it without raincoats although the sky was shades of grey: we'd forgotten that grey skies meant rain, we got wet.



First Days March

Our mountain walks revealed a magical world, ghostly shiny, silvery limbs of dead snow gums with carpets of brilliant white snow daisies, deep bluebells, iridescently bright orange and yellow clumps of everlasting daisies, this was a kaleidoscope of colour.



Variable Groundsel



Ancient Snow Gum

From the windows of the lodge we regarded ridges and spurs covered in silvery cobwebs of dead snow gums. One morning heaven's mist floated through the valley and covered the Rocky Valley dam and soon the creaking door 30 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos flapped languidly above the valleys.

Our first early morning bird walk took us around the village with the cool mountain air breathing gently on our faces, some of us had cold weather gear on (eat your heart out, you who stayed in the Riverina for 40C weekend).



Storm Brewing

The spongy moss bogs on the valleys were like a lover's mattress, soft and sumptuous, but damp enough for veined sun orchids to flourish in their thousands. Usually a stream could be heard trickling out of the hillsides or gurgling down valleys. Our walks mostly ended with inspections of cattlemen's huts still remaining and maintained and restored by National Parks and Wildlife Service for bushwalkers to shelter or dry out from extended pack walks.



**Veined Sun-orchid**

The highlight of the weekend was the 10 kilometre walk up the high plains, this was an exhilarating climb for flatlanders legs, they having had a day or two of conditioning with an assortment of shorter sorties, managed the task admirably.

We were privileged to be given the opportunity to experience the wildflowers at their best. The layer of snowgums had burnt 2 or 3 years ago and this allowed the flowers and herbs to flourish.



**Just a Magic View**

Already some snow gums have sprouted from epicormic shoots but where the fire was too hot, they have not recovered.



**Fitzgerald's Hut**

The accommodation at the ski lodge is excellent, the catering as usual was beyond the call of duty engineered by our usual passionate chefs, with fresh food brought in and a well stocked pantry and very well equipped kitchen at the lodge.

With bellies comfortably satisfied with food and booze some of us shared evenings of music (You had to be quick to beat Warwick before he put on his country music drone)

and card playing. One member forgot what a club looks like much to Jane's



**Waxy Bluebell**

disgust. Bill, you must play every card in your hand in future and no tutoring of your partner across the table. . Jane, you'll have to come back for another game and to reclaim your hat.

Max found the Gang Gangs at last on the way home.

Eric found the whole experience:

Phytocogniscenially challenging  
 Ecolocalitorially challenged and

Altoaccesionary challenging  
 Gastosuperfluctuositally challenged What does this mean?



**Orange Everlasting**

**Falls Creek Bird List - 11-14<sup>th</sup> January 2008**

- |                     |                         |                        |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| White-backed Magpie | Gang-gang               | Black Duck             |
| Grey Currawong      | Yellow-faced Honeyeater | Olive Whistler         |
| Australian Raven    | Crimson Rosella         | Common Starling        |
| Pied Currawong      | King Parrot             | Singing Bush-lark      |
| Flame Robin         | Red-wattlebird          | White-browed Scrub     |
| Richard's Pipit     | Kookaburra              | Wren                   |
| Jacky Winter        | Little Wattlebird       | Striated Pardalote     |
| Brown Thornbill     | Skylark                 | Australian Kestrel     |
| Yellow-tailed Black | Silvereye               | Great Cormorant        |
| Cockatoo            | Grey Fantail            | Little Black Cormorant |

**Nella Smith – Photos by Bill Moller**

## Plants of the Month - Box Woodlands

Box woodlands comprise a whole suite of plant communities. First of all is the species of Box involved as the major dominant. Bimble, Grey, Yellow, White and Black Box all form the basis of communities within easy travel distance from here.

Most familiar to us is Bimble Box *Eucalyptus populnea*, covering as it does much of the lower slopes of our sandstone ranges and extending downwards until the soils get too heavy for it. It is usually a co-dominant with White Cypress Pine *Callitris glaucophylla* though in the Cocoparra Ranges this rapidly changes to association with Black Cypress Pine *Callitris endlicheri* with rising elevation. At one time around the 1950's State Forests attempted to eliminate the Box in their domains by ring-barking the Box trees, believing that would increase the yield of the Cypress Pine. Unfortunately for them nature does not work that way, however we now have a legacy of Box woodlands with very sparse mature Box trees.

There is commonly a well defined shrub layer in woodlands around the ranges. Anecdotal evidence suggests that mature woodlands on more level ground were more open and grassy. Extensive clearing or grazing of the latter areas have somewhat obscured the natural picture.

The shrub species found in Box woodlands can be quite mixed but with an apparent north-south variation. Western Golden and Hedge Wattles (*Acacia decora* and *Acacia paradoxa*) are common in the southern parts around Narrandera (Bimble Box all but stops at the Murrumbidgee River), whereas Hill Tea-tree *Leptospermum divaricatum* is frequently the main shrub in the Cocoparra Ranges. There are other changes as you go north – Bimble Box occurs northwards well into Queensland. Those of you that attended the Cumby State Forest Biodiversity Survey near Nymagee would have noted the presence of Budda *Eremophila mitchellii*.

Of the other Box species, White Box *Eucalyptus albens* has featured in a lot of studies under the Grassy-Box Woodlands project. It is classed as a threatened community with very few intact stands surviving across its range that in rough terms broadly follows the Olympic Highway. One of the areas that is in a reserve and that members are probably familiar with is at The Rock.

To my mind Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora* is in even a more precarious condition as a community. Preferring deeper soils much has been cleared for cropping.

Trees can be commonly found along roadsides between Narrandera and Wagga, and there are areas within the State Forests with reasonable stands of trees, but I would not claim to have seen anything like a natural shrub or groundcover anywhere in my travels.

Grey Box woodlands are also threatened communities as a result of clearing for agriculture. Grey Box *Eucalyptus microcarpa* is frequently seen in other Box woodlands and has a wide range of occurrence, but as a community in the Riverina occurs in scattered areas of usually only a few hectares or less. In fact on a vegetation map the area in the south-east of the Riverina (heading down to Albury) looks as if it is depicted as a light stipple except that the background is cleared ground.

Black Box *Eucalyptus largiflorens* has a preference for heavy clay soils often subject to inundation. As such it substantially differs from the other Boxes and warrants an article to itself.

### Eric Whiting

A paper in the journal *Cunninghamia*, 'Plant composition of three woodland communities in the western Riverina' is of local interest. Louise Harrison is a co-author and co-ordinated the surveys during her time with Murrumbidgee Irrigation.

Eric Whiting has a copy if anyone is interested in reading it.



Date for the **2008 MFN Short Film Festival and Soup Night** will be **Saturday June 21**.

**Johanna Botman** will run workshops again to remind contenders how to do it. Dates for these will be decided later. Her phone number is 6963 4855 should you want to contact her.

## Our birding duo June and Sue, tell another story

Wednesday 23 January held all the elements for a perfect birding jaunt. Recent rain, cool breeze and a good mate, June Sell. We drove firstly to Wattle Dam then Moss Dam with both rewarding us with a reasonable bird list, but another dam on Binya Forest Drive Track was brilliant!

Firstly, we were greeted by three young emus and overhead a pair of Magpie Larks were trying to attack a Little Eagle whose graceful tactics unhurriedly avoided any contact though the parents were frantic. We soon realised why. The wonderful old Box tree above us was like a cosmopolitan boarding house! On the top story was a large and scraggy nest of sticks and twigs, maybe the Eagles? The floor below had a perfectly sculptured mud nest and a little fluffy fledgling Magpie Lark sitting beside it listening to it's parent's protestations overhead. On the upper ground floor a female White-winged Triller was flying back and forth to a fork in the tree, which, on closer inspection revealed three balls of fluff with mouths. One little ball stepped out of the nest for a short spell then returned to the safety of its siblings. More exclusive accommodation was found in an adjoining tree where a salmon pink structure hung suspended from two fragile twigs. Where the Striped Honeyeater found the material is a mystery but despite our presence, she proudly took possession and nestled in. Who would have thought that a bird would have a colour preference!

All of the dams were full, the trees had new shoots and ferns and foliage growing underfoot. It was so wonderful to see life come back to the bush.

### BIRD LIST

Emu	Little Eagle	Peaceful Dove
Bar-shouldered Dove	Common Bronzwing	Crested Pigeon
Galah	Mallee Ringneck	Red-rump Parrot
Mulga Parrot	Black-eared Cuckoo	Rainbow Bee-eater
Tree Martin	White-winged Triller	Red-capped Robin
Eastern Yellow Robin	Rufous Whistler	Grey Shrike-thrush
Restless Flycatcher	Grey Fantail	Willy Wagtail
White-browed Babbler	Splendid Fairy-wren	Speckled Warbler
Weebill	Western Gerygone	Inland Thornbill
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Yellow Thornbill
Southern Whiteface	Brown Treecreeper	Spiney-cheeked Honeyeater
Striped Honeyeater	Yellow-throated Miner	Yellow-plumed Honeyeater
Brown-headed Honeyeater	Silvereye	Dusky Woodswallow
Magpie Lark	White-eared Honeyeater	

### Sue Chittick-Dalton

## Reflections on the Falls Creek Weekend

Each January Rowena and I like to spend at least a few days up in the High Country. It is not surprising therefore that we were at Fall Creek this year.

These regular visits are not just more of the same, or even just to have a break from the summer heat. We start out each time with the questions of what will it be like this time, as each year it is different. The main difference is in how the season has progressed – are the flower shows as good as last time, are they flowering earlier or later this year?

In 2001 we were on Mt. Hotham when the horrendous bushfires marched across the mountains. The following year we year we observed the first steps of recovery at Perisher. 2003 we were looking at the same at Falls Creek and were amazed at the patchiness of the fire damage.

With yet another fire at Falls Creek in 2007 we started out this year with great intrepidation on what we would see. On arriving at Mount Beauty at the foot of the mountains it was clear. Mountainsides all stark and devoid of colour, just like a monochrome drawing with the mountainsides hatched in a pale grey.

However that was all below Falls Creek – the alpine areas were ablaze in yellow and white. Memories of past displays readily came back, yet not the same. It never us. That's why we keep going back. See you there next year?



Approach to Ropers Lookout – Rowena Whiting

### Eric Whiting



## Griffith Meeting Minutes 24<sup>th</sup> January 2008

**Present** : Patty & Bill Moller, June & Col Sell, Johanna Botman, Joanne Tarbit, Elio Minato, Enid Atkinson,

**Apologies** : Dennis Moretto Jan Condon,

**General Business.**

**Report on the Christmas Party - at Old Coree, 24<sup>th</sup> November**, Excellent event except for the flies, great venue, need to go again when cooler.

**Report on Falls Creek – 12-13 January 2008** – Wildflowers were spectacular, weather magnificent, serves you right for not coming, don't miss it next year.

**Seed Collection** - a good quantity collected, needs some cleaning yet, sieves purchased.

**Constitution** – proposed changes to the constitution discussed.

**BOCA Affiliation and Code of Conduct discussed**

**The Short Film / Soup Night** – to be held on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June – Johanna to advise re training

**Next Meeting** – The next meeting in Griffith will be 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008

**February Guest speaker** – TBA

### Notice of Special resolution to alter the Constitution

The operation of the club (The Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc.) has developed some inconsistencies with the constitution and these inconsistencies have been accepted as normal operation for some time.

The purpose of this special resolution is to altering the constitution so that it is consistent with the current operation of the club.

Proposed amendments have been tabled and discussed at length at the Leeton meeting in December and also at the Griffith meeting held in January.

The proposed alterations will be distributed to all financial members by email, or post prior to the next general meeting to be held at Leeton on 14<sup>th</sup> February, at which the Special Resolution will be put for determination.

**Bill Moller, President**



Bill Draper has been observing a juvenile Wedge-tailed Eagle at Peter's property – "Willow Park", Koonadan. He also captured this Bearded Dragon.



# S I G H T I N G S

<b>White-winged Triller</b>	Binya State Forest	12/01/08	June & Sue
<b>Superb Parrot</b> [20]	Arcadia, Narrandera	02/01/08	Jan Strong
<b>White-backed Swallow</b>	Rocky Waterholes	04/02/08	Neville James
<b>White-backed Swallow</b>	Tuckerbil Swamp	Dec. /07	Max O'Sullivan
<b>Superb Parrot s</b> (feeding young)	Narrandera Common	08/12/07	Neville James
<b>Tawny Frogmouth</b>	Narrandera Common	12/12/07	Neville James
Nesting in old White-winged Chough's nest			
<b>Little Friarbird</b> (nesting)	Narrandera Wetlands	12/12/07	Neville James
<b>Noisy Friarbird</b> (nesting)	Narrandera Wetlands	12/12/07	Neville James
<b>Tawny Frogmouth</b>	Narrandera Wetlands	12/12/07	Neville James
<b>Superb Parrots</b> (on wing)	Karri Road, Leeton	12/12/07	Barry Allen
<b>Glossy Black Cockatoo</b>	"Yarrabimbi"	13/12/07	Nella Smith
<b>Banded Plover</b> [34]	"Yarrabimbi"	13/12/07	Nella Smith
<b>Masked Lapwing</b> [6]	Pinehill Road, Narrandera	05/12/07	Betty Bradney
<b>Royal Spoonbills</b> [12]	Narrandera Wetlands	05/12/07	Betty Bradney
In breeding plumage			

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## *COMING EVENTS CALENDAR*

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- 14 February Thursday**    **Leeton Meeting at 7:30pm in the Seminar Room 1, Block 34 at Yanco Agricultural Institute. Enquiries Jan Cameron on 6955 2202**  
**Walk around the grounds – bring binoculars**  
**Guest Speaker – Kathy Mahy**  
**Topic: Travelling the Len Beadell tracks**
- 16 February Saturday**    **Outing to Tuckerbil Swamp**  
**Meet at Leeton Post Office at 8am.**  
 Bring morning tea.    Enquiries: Max O'Sullivan 6953 7376
- 24 February Sunday**    **Bush Walk – A brisk walk up Square Nob with Nella and Terry**  
**Meet on the Barelle Road at the Square Nob property turn off.**  
**For transport or directions phone Eric or Rowena 6953 2612 (Leeton) or Nella Smith 6959 1210 Narrandera**
- 28 February Thursday**    **Griffth Meeting at 7.30pm at Conference Room, Dept. of Primary Industries**  
**Guest Speaker: TBA**  
 Enquiries: **Bill Moller 6960 1341**
- 2 March Sunday**    **Outing to be decided**  
 Enquiries: **Bill Moller 6960 1341**
- 5 March Wednesday**    **Copy for March newsletter is due**
- 13 March Thursday**    **Leeton Meeting at 7:30pm in the Seminar Room 1, Block 34 at Yanco Agricultural Institute. Enquiries Jan Cameron on 6955 2202**  
**Guest Speaker: TBA.**
- 15 March Saturday**    **iiiiiiiiiiiiii – want more ?**  
**We do! We want as many eyes as we can get for the Glossy Black Cockatoo count in the Narrandera Hills.**  
 The Smiths are co-ordinating this evening so please ring them on 6959 1210 so you can be allocated a dam. We want to cover as many dams as we can.  
**Place: at your allocated dam. Time: At location prior to dusk (~7ish).**  
 We will gather at Yarrabimbi (Andrew Thompson's property) for a BBQ afterwards
- OTHER DATES**
- 5-6 April weekend**    **BIGnet meeting in Canberra – focus to be conservation - Nella has details.**
- 21 June Saturday**    **Short Film Festival and Soup Night – contact Johanna.**
- 18-19 May**    **National Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot Survey.**