

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



View from above Ironbark Creek - Eric Whiting



Grey Butcherbird
- Rowena Whiting

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**For the next issue by
Wednesday, 30 April 2008**

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Fax or collection can be arranged.

Have you visited the website?

www.mfn.org.au

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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, Block 34 at Dept. Primary Industry at 7.30 PM

GRIFFITH MEETINGS FOURTH THURSDAY - Conference Room, Dept. of Primary Industry AT 7.30 PM

INTENDING NEW MEMBERS, GUESTS AND VISITORS WELCOME.

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Annual Subscriptions:	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.

GLOSSY BLACK COCKATOO

Distribution: Eastern Australia from Central Queensland to Eastern Victoria with isolated populations on Kangaroo Island, in the Narrandera and Brobenah Hills,

Adult Male:- Head, neck, nape and underparts dark sooty-brown, merging into brown-black on under-tail coverts; back and wings black, a faint brownish green sheen on primaries, central tail feathers black, lateral feathers black with a broad subterminal band of bright red; bill grey; iris dark brown; legs grey; weight 422 gms

Adult Female: Tail-band washed with yellow and divided by narrow black stripes; yellow feathers scattered throughout sides of head and neck, in some birds only a few feathers, but in others large patches of yellow; bill grey weight 430 gm

Immatures:- Feathers of lower underparts strongly edged with yellow ; a few yellow spots on upper wing-coverts; no yellow feathers on head; tail band similar to that of adult female; bill grey.

Habitat: In forests, woodlands , timbered watercourses in hilly rocky ridge country. Good supplies of *Allocasuarina verticilla* or other *Allocasuarina* species are required together with Old Growth Eucalypts with large hollows.



New Plans for native and planted forests

From the Bush Telegraph magazine Autumn 2008

Forests NSW has released Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management (ESFM) plans for its native forests in the Western and Riverina regions and for planted forests in the South West slopes, Monaro, Central West and Northern Tablelands regions.

Forests NSW forester, Heath Frewin, said the plans cover the next five years and are intended to provide clear information to the people of NSW on how their forests are being managed.

"The plans demonstrate Forests NSW commitment to sustainability, as both a profitable enterprise and a land management agency, and are integral to maintaining certification under the internationally recognised Australian Forestry Standard," Heath said.

"The plans recognise that native forests provide a wide range of environmental benefits to the community and that their management should be based on sustainable management principles."

Heath said the plans covered management of forest values such as biodiversity, soil and water, recreation, carbon storage and Aboriginal cultural heritage.

"These plans promote nature conservation and forest health, while sustaining timber production and economic and social development," Heath said.

The plans set out the broad strategies, performance indicators and measurable outcomes for planted forest management in each region during the next five years.

Heath said public submissions were incorporated into the final plans. Copies of the plans can be found on the Forests NSW website www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests or in hard copy by contacting Forests NSW regional offices.

Where have all the Glossies gone??

Report of the Glossy Black Cockatoo Count

12 March 2008



The day was hot, one of the hottest this year: on these sorts of days the Glossy Black Cockatoos sometimes drink 2 or 3 times a day.

Members and landholders made their way north, east and west hopeful....

Twenty dams were surveyed in total in both the Narrandera and Brobenah Hills. A good roll up of members allowed that to happen. Many dams had 2 members to keep each other from getting cold or scared!! Some dams were surveyed by landholders themselves.

Some other species benefit from white mans dams. The seed-eaters all need to drink often Crested Pigeons, Common Bronzewing, Peaceful Doves were all sighted at many dams. Parrots: Galahs, Eastern Rosellas, Mulga Parrots and Mallee Ringnecks all appeared at some of the dams. Many mammals came to drink also, 5 Swamp Wallabies and 3 Eastern Grey Kangaroos at Bogolong as well as a goanna at Brobenah. It must have been a hot day because even the magpies and ravens and honeyeaters: Bluefaced, Singing and Noisy Miners drank today.

One year when we were at Yarrongobilly caves my boys killed over 100 marsh flies in about an hour. Are they also called horse flies because children tied a horse hair onto them and watched them fly around tethered, an old Chinese story I think. Well, I have never seen so many around here, and they bite! Neville did a fine dance around the dam avoiding these buzzards.

When we look at the *Allocasuarina verticillata* (that the Glossy Black Cockatoos largely subsist on) we see little available food seed. In some areas we see some re-growth of the plants at different stages of size. The drought has had a terrible toll on the hills. The foraging areas have been reduced due to the fires in 2002 and 2003 and the habitat and the few nesting hollows that remain in the hills and some slopes nearby are fragmented by agriculture.

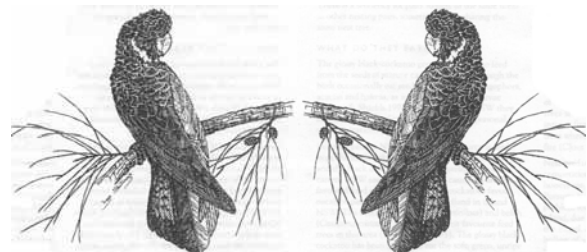
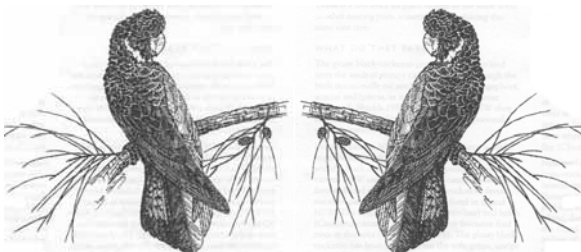
I hope these Glossy Black Cockatoos have found better hunting grounds elsewhere because if they haven't, we no longer have a viable population in the Narrandera and Brobenah Hills.

The four birds sighted on the night at Bents Hill are not enough.

The first count we had in September 2004 yielded 35 birds. The stronghold then was Square Nob. In March 2005 we conducted another count which yielded a similar number.

Many thanks to all members who participated and thanks to Bill and Terry who cooked the barbecue afterwards. And thanks to Terry Smith for contacting landholders and arranging the count.

Nella Smith



Drawing by Melanie Brougham

Masked Finch:

This often overlooked beautiful grassfinch of the tropical northern grasslands of Australia builds its nest in grass clumps and lines the nest, not with feathers, but with pieces of charcoal! It is thought this helps absorb moisture and smells thus making their nest less obvious to marauding goannas and such like creatures – I just hope it prevents predation from the dreaded cane toads as well.

Max O'Sullivan

Ironbark Field Trip

28 March 2008

We had a fabulous little walk at Ironbark Creek last Sunday. By 'we' I mean the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists, of course.

I have to admit that over the years I've not been a fan of Cocoparra National Park. I've always found it to be weed infested, neglected and generally abused by users. But the years of drought, while bad for everyone in the surrounding districts, has been good to 'the hills'. Introduced weeds have struggled to survive, and the local endemic species have been able to regain a foothold. Tenuously, of course, but at least there are the signs of a fightback.

And the National Park seems to have fought back a bit too. Woolshed Flat camping area looked clean and well maintained. There was no sign of vandalism or destruction. A welcome relief for me.

The creek at Ironbark Creek is dry. We've had little rain since January. Any rain we do get would run away quite quickly so you'd have to be lucky to see water in it. The creek bed makes a passable substitute for a walking trail, and the gully narrows in places with some interesting rock formations and colours. A walk all the way up the creek will take you up to the top of the ridge and over, if you wish, into Jack's Creek. We didn't go that far. Some of us were less nimble than we'd like, so we found our way back to the picnic area and informed discussions about the flora of the area.

The area is significant for its huge old Dwyer's Mallee, as well as Stringybark, Bimble Box and, of course, Ironbarks. These magnificent old trees provide protection for the two storeys of vegetation below. There were Mallee Tanglevine, grey Hill Teatree, Black and White Cypress, Urnheath and Geebung. The dragonflies were out in full force as well trying to see what Col had in his hair

If you cross the gully to the west and then climb, there is also a clear trail on the edge of the rock face that will take you to good views of the Woolshed Flat valley and then drop you off close to the road for an easier walk back. Easier, but not quicker, because it is along this road that we saw many of our bird species for the day.

I was pleasantly surprised that I enjoyed the park and the visit as much as I did. I think I'll go back again, soon even. Perhaps sooner if it rains.

Johanna Botman

Bird List:

- Wedge-tailed Eagle
- Crested Pigeon
- Galah
- Red-rumped Parrot
- Specked Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Thornbill
- Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
- Red-capped Robin

- Rufous Whistler
- Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike
- Apostlebirds
- Australian Raven

- Hobby
- Bar-shouldered Dove
- Australian Ringneck
- Blue Bonnet
- Weebill
- Yellow Thornbill
- Striped Honeyeater
- Eastern-yellow Robin

- Grey-shrike Thrush
- Grey-butcherbird
- Pied-butcherbird
- White-eared Honeyeater

- Peaceful Dove
- Common Bronzewing
- Bluebonnet
- Kookaburra
- Inland Thornbill
- Southern Whiteface
- Jacky Winter
- White-browed Babblers
building a nest
- Magpie-lark
- White winged Chough
- Magpie



Grey Butcherbird - Rowena

Cliff face – Rowena



Amongst the Ironbarks - Johanna

Plants of the Month - Stringybark Communities

Stringybark communities are interesting ones for us as Red Stringybark *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* is at its extreme westerly limits for New South Wales in the Cocoparra Ranges. Leon Costerman's distribution map (in his 'Native Trees and Shrubs of South-eastern Australia') depicts the western boundary running through Forbes, Junee, Wagga and Albury. It is described as widespread on drier well-drained hilly sites (foothills and tablelands to 1000 metres) in more open formations with boxes, peppermints, candlebarks and other gums.

In the Cocoparras it is restricted to the sheltered deep gorges. Such confined spaces means that there are no large area stands and in reality Stringybark is never the sole dominant (at least in the Cocoparras and it is unusual to be so elsewhere). Commonly it is associated with Dwyers Gum and/or Black Cypress Pine. At the lower ends of the gorges where pockets of deeper soil can collect, an Ironbark community can merge into the Stringybark.

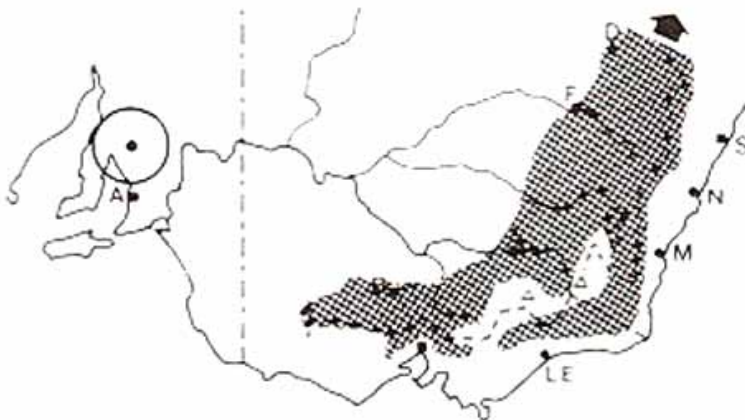
Gorges are high erosion areas, and over half of the ground surface is likely to be bare rock. Nevertheless shrubs can be frequent exploiting all the pockets of skeletal soil. Deane's Wattle *Acacia deanei* is found here though this wattle is more usual on the wide lower slopes of the margins of the Ranges. Of the medium sized shrubs Rusty Spider-flower *Grevillea floribunda*, the Hopbushes *Dodonaea viscosa* subspecies *mucronata* and *spatulata*, and the endemic *Pomaderris coccoparensis* are common. Apart from tussocks of the sedge *Lepidospermum laterale* and patches of Clustered Everlasting *Chrysocephalum semipapposum* and at times Guinea-flower *Hibbertia obtusifolia*, smaller shrubs, semi-shrubs, herbs and grasses are sparse.

The Stringybark community can be considered as a relict population surviving from the times when the climate was cooler and wetter. Any further warming and particularly drying will certainly see the demise of this community. The past years of drought have seen a heavy toll brought on the Stringybarks and the diminished numbers of the *Grevillea* and Deanes Wattle have been particularly noticeable.

How long the community has been in relict status is hard to say. My guess is only 6-10,000 years ago ie. since the last stages of the last Ice Age. I know that there were significant changes in sea level 6,000 years ago and perhaps they have marked a considerable shift in the climate. That dating puts it well within the folk lore history of the Aborigines – if any Wiradjuri happens to read this I would welcome to hear of any of their stories that allude to permanently running streams in the Cocoparras or similar references to a wetter climate.

The only other way we could establish previous climates of the recent (geologically speaking) past is from a study of the residual river terraces that can be discerned in areas such as Woolshed Flats above the camping ground, and at Store Creek.

Eric Whiting



Stringybark Distribution –

Source: Leon Costermans Native trees and shrubs of SE Australia.



Stringybark Bark

Bird of the Month - AUSTRALIAN MAGPIES

(*Gymnorhin tibicen*, *tibicen*, *hypoleuca* and *doralis*)

Have you ever driven south and east of our area mainly, and noticed something different about the magpies but don't stop to take great notice? Well one day I did and became acquainted with a white-backed Magpie foraging with the black-backs, and also noticed that the majority had the pale greyish tinge to the white plumage of the females and juveniles, with a dominant male keeping watch...

The story of Magpies in general is rather interesting for they are all *Gymnorhina tibicin* (add *hypoleuca* for the white back and *doralis* for the Western), and can breed freely between themselves. However, there is one male for several females who have to build their own nests and care for the young and unless they are the favourite and fed by the male, must find their own food. The reason is because the male is too busy keeping away male intruders from his clan. Therefore, there could be as little as one only successful hatching in the group.

The bird is slow to mature and could be as old as 4-5-years before reaching sexual maturity. They are very territorial and depending on habitat and conditions, control between 2 to 18 hectares. The juvenile mortality rate is high from road kill as the birds are mainly terrestrial and roadways supply a variety of foodstuffs

The voice of the magpie is well known and loved with it's variety of melodious notes as well as the in depth conversations it would have with or without company and the fear it would incur during breeding season with it's squawk and swoop.

The bird has a variety of names depending on the locality... some are Flute Bird, Long-billed Magpie, Organ Bird, Piping Shrike, Crow-shrike, black-back, white-back and lesser white-back.

Statistics:

Length: 44cm

Tibicin: black on head, underparts, back and tail tip and primaries, with shoulder, nape, underwing and rump white.

Hypoleuca: similar with white back.

Dorsalis: similar to white-back.

All have orange eyes, legs black and bill blue-grey with black tip.

Females similar to males but white is greyish.

Juveniles: dark parts mottled grey or buff in first year and more like females in the next.

Nesting is usually between August and October in a basket of sticks with wool, hair and grass from 6-16 m. from ground in an outer canopy.

Distribution is throughout Australia except the extreme Northern tips.

Sue Chittick-Dalton



Picture from Readers Digest
Complete Book of Australian Birds

Bush Stone-Curlew in central Sydney – a sad tale:

Allan Richards from Glebe found the said curlew in a nearby harbour reserve in early February this year. He reported it on the birding hotline in Sydney and there were many sightings of it for a week or so. It was reported missing for a few days but was rediscovered in the same area but with a serious leg injury. It appears that it had been attacked by a dog and its leg was broken. The vets from Taronga Park Zoo were contacted and the bird was caught and taken to the zoo for treatment. Unfortunately the injuries were more severe than a broken leg and the bird had to be put-down.

Max O'Sullivan

The SIGNIFICANCE of BIRDS to SIBELIUS by Mike MORPHETT

From a 2007 newsletter of the Illawarra Bird Observers Club

Come September I expect there will be much attention given by the Finns to commemorate the death fifty years ago of their famous composer, Jean Sibelius at the age of 91. I became a 'Sibelian', a devotee of his music, when a 21 year-old student, after attending a concert in the Kent city of Canterbury. The last item was his Symphony No. 5 in E flat major, and the impact of the closing six widely-spaced fortissimo chords, likened to Thor's hammer blows, is still as strong for me now as it was then; however, it was not until just recently that I became aware of the avian link to the third movement. Selfcritical Sibelius twice revised the work after its first presentation on his fiftieth birthday. During its four years of gestation, he was affected by certain events, including the First World War. He and his family had to seek refuge in Helsinki with the threat of Russian domination when civil war broke out between the Red and White Guards. He felt further fear for his welfare and life when diagnosed with throat cancer, requiring a number of operations; the tumour was later found to be benign. Prone to bouts of depression (I suspect bordering on bipolar disorder), he grieved over the death of his friend and wealthy patron, Axel Carpelan, but which spurred him into finalising the work. For him, a symphony was 'more an inner confession at a given stage of one's life than just a composition'.

Besides having nationalistic pride, Sibelius was an avid reader of the classics and Scandinavian mythology, notably the Kalevala. But it was his love of, and spiritual connection with, nature, particularly reflected in his later works, that appeals to me. Among those prominent in the music world the conductor Leopold Stokowski attested to his closeness to nature. Sibelius's home, from 1904 and named Ainola in honour of his wife (she died in June 1969), was built on a high hill at Järvenpää, nearly 40 km north of the capital, and, to Carpelan's senses, smelled of the forest. It was extended to provide him with an upstairs study that looked over the treetops to Lake Tuusula, which gave him much inspiration. The villa also housed his six daughters, one of whom died in early childhood, and the youngest two he called his snow buntings.

The annual migration of birds and the changing seasons were significant in the composer's life. To son-in-law and conductor, Jussi Jalas he made these observations about himself: "About 100,000 years ago I must certainly have been related to swans and wild geese, because I feel drawn towards them" (August 1940), and "I am related to the wading birds; they too live without a clock as I have done during long periods of my life" (June 1943). The call of the crane Sibelius considered was the leitmotif of his life. According to his secretary, Santeri Levas, he determined that "a bullfinch sang C# -D, but a larger bullfinch twittered between D and D#". Elsewhere he is said to have identified nightingales singing in E minor. Like Scriabin, Messiaen, Liszt and Rimsky-Korsakov, Sibelius is thought to have created much of his music through synaesthesia, whereby sense perceptions are mixed rather than experienced separately. Latest research suggests that women are more likely to have these sensations and that letters and colours are a common combination. It appears Sibelius saw notes as colours, and birdsong and smells of the forests became sounds in his ear. I'd venture to say he may well have shown signs of being a synaesthete in early childhood, for as an example of his vivid imagination, a story relates that while his mother played the piano, he crawled under and tried to associate notes he heard with colours of the stripes in the rug.

One of his biographers, Erik Tawaststjerna states: 'Sibelius responded with exceptional intensity to the moods of nature and the changes in the seasons: he scanned the skies with his binoculars for the geese flying over the lake ice, listened to the screech of the cranes, and heard the cries of the curlew echo over the marshy grounds just below Ainola. He savoured the spring blossoms every bit as much as he did autumnal scents and colours'. Levas records the composer's reaction to a flock of swans one spring day: "They have flown over the lake. I can't see them but I breathe the same air as they do, and that is something. Nobody has any idea what the flight of migrant birds in the spring and autumn means to me. Once they were very late. On Christmas Eve a flock of about fifty swans flew very low over our house. I could hardly have thought of a better Christmas present for myself."

Sibelius himself kept written records of his thoughts and experiences, referring to his diary as the mirror of a sensitive soul and also as a spittoon, into which he could deposit comments he would be too ashamed to raise in conversation. Translated, an entry for 21 April 1915 reads: 'Today at ten to eleven I saw 16 swans. One of the great experiences of my life! Lord God, how beautiful! They circled over me for a long time. Disappeared into the sun's haze like a gleaming, silver ribbon...Nature's mysticism and life's Angst!' The sound of those swans calling became the source of the swaying, triple-time theme for the trumpets and horns in the finale of his fifth symphony, which has since become known as the 'Swan Hymn'. On 20 September 1957 Sibelius died of a cerebral haemorrhage. Coincidentally, that same evening Malcolm Sargent conducted the fifth symphony in a concert broadcast from Helsinki. According to Tawaststjerna, two days earlier he had returned 'from his customary morning walk. Exhilarated, he told his wife Aino that he had seen a flock of cranes approaching. "There they come, the birds of my youth," he exclaimed. Suddenly one of the birds broke away from the formation and circled once above Ainola. It then rejoined the flock to continue its journey'. Both he and Aino lie buried on the southern slope of Ainola, which since 1974 has served as a museum in tribute, and where birds are said to still congregate.

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc

Held 7.30 pm on Thursday 13 March 2008 at the Dept of Primary Industry, Yanco

Present: Bill Moller, Dennis Moretto, Eric Whiting, Nella Smith, Rowena Whiting, Sue Allen, Barry Allen, Betty Bradney, Neville James, Kath Mahy, Dot Eurell, Bill Draper Phil Tenison

Apologies: Roy Wade, Joy Young, John & Jan Cameron, Jan & Garth Strong. Peter Draper, Max O'Sullivan

Matters Arising From Previous Minutes:

1. Seed Collecting: Narrandera, Griffith, Leeton, Carrathool and Murrumbidgee Councils and Narrandera RLPB have different requirements for native seed collecting.
2. Membership to NPA
3. Website information: Johanna is working hard on the website and requires input about important areas as outlined in previous meeting. Some details on the website need changing. Some of our exchange newsletter organizations need to be informed about our change of website domain.
4. Constitution needs finalising.

Correspondence:

In: 1. Click Print & Copy Quote for Griffith Bird Trails Brochure

2. IBOC news

3. News of Friends of Grasslands

4. Birding NSW Newsletter

5 The Granite Belt Naturalist

6 Volunteer- Newsletter of the Threatened Bird Network

7. Marsh Certificate of Currency of Insurance Policy

8 Leeton Shire Council- Parks & Horticultural Services

9 Carrathool Shire Council

10 Narrandera Rural Lands Protection Board

11 Charles Sturt University Public Lecture by Adjunct Professor Water, Drought & Climate Change

Out: Narrandera Shire Council Scott

Landholders about the Glossy Black Cockatoo Count: Looby, McLay, Hehir, Davies, Gordon, Holmes, Balas, Hibard, Charles, Thompson, Woods, Day, Dahlenberg, Elwin, Allen.

Financial Report: Presented by Phil Tenison

General Business

- 1) Activities program is a guide , depends on availability of personel and the weather. Refer to the newsletter for activities.
- 2) Elliott Traps- Bill will get quote for freight and put in an order.
- 3) Application for a scientific license requires members listed: Bill, Nella, Terry, Neville, Dennis, Warwick
- 4) Glossy Black Cockatoo survey at 6.30 pm. Sausage sizzle at Yarrabimbi afterwards
- 5) Birding Hotspots of Griffith- by Griffith members, Quotes to print are being sought
- 6) Newsletter articles- Articles for the newsletter required from a range of sources and people to maintain standard integrity.
- 7) DECC Discussion Question- Barry has sent responses to Discussion questionnaire.
- 8) Narrandera Range Plant Book- Needs to be presented to the meeting and the logistics of its production to be negotiated at a committee meeting: formed consisting of Nella Bill Barry and Johanna
- 9) April Meeting Suggestions Rodney Martin, Ian Lunt, Bev Smiles, for surveying methodology

Dennis showed us some spectacular Photo Media Production of SW Western Australia. Great photography of an awesomely diverse area of Australia, thanks Dennis.

Next Meeting: Thursday 10th April

Meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

The Waradgery-Murumbidgee Language

from "Early Days in Borellan and District

Contributed by Nella

Aboriginal names of places –I like these because they describe the place

Bunganbil - Scrubby mountain

Billinbah - Man fell out of a canoe

Burrabogie - Big bathing hole

Bobblegigbie -Kick in the behind

Benerembah - Man run away with a gin

Bygoo - Kangaroo

Bygalorie - Red kangaroo

Brobenah - Hopping along

Boonoke - Playing sticks

Bethungra - Black mountain

Barnawatha - Deaf and dumb

More another time

Griffith Meeting Minutes 27 March 2008

Present : Sue Chittick-Dalton, June Sell, Col Sell, Enid Atkinson, Johanna Botman

Apologies : Nan Simpson, Jan Condon

Matters Arising:

1. Website reconstruction is coming along. Members are again asked to contribute.
2. Short Film Night. First film has been received. Johanna is organising tutorials again. Ring her to find out details.

General Business:

1. Col drew our attention to an article in the latest Australian Geographic about birdwatching. Fivebough is mentioned and three members are photographed.
2. Sue read a letter that she has submitted to Griffith City Council regarding the use of a Mallee Ringnecked Parrot as the City's emblem instead of an Ibis at the upcoming Expo in Harbin - Griffith's Chinese sister city.
3. This week's outing will be to Ironbark Creek in the Cocoparra National Park. Meet at 8.30am at Beelbangera or 9am at Woolshed Flat.

Next Meeting: April 24th.

SIGHTINGS

Black-shouldered Kite	Murrami Road, Murrami	09/03/08	Bill Draper
Fruit Bats (In River Red Gum)	Narrandera Common, near lake	10/03/08	Betty Bradney
Little Friarbirds (In Plane trees)	Cnr Larmer & Robert Sts, Narrandera	02/03/08	Betty Bradney
Common Sandpiper	Causeway, Lake Wyangan	22/03/08	N Palframan, J Botman
Major Mitchell Cockatoo [12]	Griffith	21/03/08	Sue Chittick-Dalton
Mistletoe Bird	Griffith	21/03/08	Sue Chittick-Dalton
White-bellied Sea Eagle	Lake Wyangan	21/03/08	June & Col Sell
Black-fronted Dotterel	Lake Wyangan	21&28/03/08	June & Col Sell
Royal Spoonbill [12]	Lake Wyangan	28/03/08	June & Col Sell
Black Swan [30]	Lake Wyangan	28/03/08	June & Col Sell
Chestnut Teal [5 male]	Lake Wyangan	28/03/08	June & Col Sell
Major Mitchell [30]	Gordon Street, Griffith	02/04/08	June & Col Sell
Brolga [~60]	Fivebough Swamp	29/03/08	Max O'Sullivan
Major Mitchell Cockatoo	Shepherd's Hill	Easter '08	N Smith, M O'Sullivan
Shy Heathwren	Shepherd's Hill	Easter '08	N Smith, M O'Sullivan
Southern Scrub Robin	Shepherd's Hill	Easter '08	N Smith, M O'Sullivan
Black Falcon	Shepherd's Hill	Easter '08	N Smith, M O'Sullivan
Black-eared Cuckoo	Shepherd's Hill	Easter '08	N Smith, M O'Sullivan
Hooded Robin	Shepherd's Hill	Easter '08	N Smith, M O'Sullivan
Spotted Nightjar	Shepherd's Hill	Easter '08	N Smith, M O'Sullivan
White-bellied Sea Eagle	Rocky Waterholes, Narrandera	28/03/08	Neville James

Brolgas return

Some out-of-town birdos reported 40 brolgas at Fivebough the week before Easter and on a recent visit there (Sat. 29 March 2008) I counted 61 birds from Hooley Rd lookout. This was at 3pm so I would expect more to roost there overnight.

I also had a call from a farmer at Whitton who reported 6 birds on his property and as far as he could work out, they roosted overnight on his place. I also have reports of other birds at Murrami as well and they seem to be roosting on the property rather than at Fivebough. So there must be a big influx of the birds in the area at the moment.

When I lived in Cairns and spent time on the Atherton Tablelands, the Brolgas and Sarus Cranes would return to the one spot in large numbers every evening to roost for the night and then fly out to various locations each day. It seems they don't do that here at this time of year anyway.

Max O'Sullivan

COMING EVENTS CALENDAR

- 10 April Thursday** **Leeton Meeting** at 7:30pm in the Seminar Room 1, Block 34 at Department of Primary Industry Enquiries Jan Cameron on 6955 2202
Guest Speakers: Penny and Phillip Williams with a presentation on their trip to **Kangaroo Island**
- 12 April Saturday** **Outing to Galore Hill.** **Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210**
Check time and meeting place at the meeting or phone Nella. Bring lunch.
- 13 April Sunday** **Annual Koala Count, Narrandera Common**
Time 9:30 to 12:00
Sausage sizzle and drinks available at minimal cost – courtesy Narrandera Rotary
Contact: Nella Smith 6959 1210
- 20 April Sunday** **Bush Walk - up Mt Bunganbil**
Meet in the Bunganbil State Forest by the dam
Contact: Bill Moller on 6920 1341
- 24 April Thursday** **Griffith Meeting – 7.30 pm, Griffith DPI Conference Room.**
Contact: Johanna Botman on 6963 4855. Guest Speaker TBA
- 27 April Sunday** **Outing - to be advised**
Contact: Bill Moller on 6920 1341
- 30 April Wednesday** **Copy for May newsletter is due**
- 1 May Saturday** **Short Film Tutorial**
A four hour tutorial will be held to refresh memories about creating a short film for our second festival on June 21. Places are limited, so you need to book in with Johanna to ensure you go to the right place. We have a new venue. Phone 0418 625 503 or email johanna@griffithgateway.com
- 8 May Thursday** **Leeton Meeting** at 7:30pm in the Seminar Room 1, Block 34 at Department of Primary Industry. Enquiries Jan Cameron on 6955 2202
Guest Speakers: To be arranged

OTHER DATES

- 21 June Saturday** **Short Film Festival and Soup Night – contact Johanna.**
- 18-19 May** **National Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot Survey**
- 15 November** **Superb Parrot count**

www.mfn.org.au

Our Website is being rebuilt

The rebuilding of our website is progressing

Please go and have a look at www.mfn.org.au

I am still looking for those volunteers and would like to hear from anyone who would like to assist.

I think that our website should be a repository of information about our part of the Murrumbidgee Valley. It should contain details of where to go, what you might expect to see and some details of how to get there. We can gather some of this information as we make our regular visits. I was hoping that some of you may get out to these places more frequently and would like to make a contribution.

As the 'pages' roll in, I will put them up on the web so you can see the progress.

Please get in touch with Johanna re comments and/or contributions on 0418 625 503 or johanna@griffithgateway.com – she would love to hear from you.

Johanna