



Satin Bowerbird, female (P Spencer)



Feather-horned Beetle
(R Andrews)



Jacky Winter (P Seely)

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An outing schedule until September 2019 is available upon request or via Friends of Chiltern website & Ecoportal

With an extraordinarily dry start to the year, plants and fungi were inconspicuous this Autumn.(until Mitta Mitta!) However, the mild weather provided some pleasant & interesting outings with insect & bird activity to enjoy. Hopefully welcome recent rain will set up a sensational Winter & Spring!

KIEWA RIVER AREA

10 March 2019

[Four sites in the Bonegilla area were visited and I have compiled this report from John Shepherd's comprehensive record and Neil Blair's flora report, as well as data from Bernie Datsons's and Phillip Seely's bird lists. Thank you all.– Ed]

1. The Kiewa River downstream from the Murray Valley Highway at Killara:

This was grazed River Red-gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) country with both Basket (**Salix X fragilis*) and Weeping (**Salix babylonica*) Willows lining the river banks. Removal works of the willows was underway. River Bottlebrush (*Callistemon sieberi*) was the predominant shrub. The ground cover was sparse and weedy due to the drought and cattle grazing.

We walked down approximately one kilometre birdwatching and the river was flowing, but well below capacity. Bush birds were mainly seen because the swamps adjacent to the river were dry with high *Phragmites* in places. Several Sacred Kingfishers were sighted together with Brown Thornbills, Grey Fantails, Rufous Whistlers, Eastern Yellow Robins and a Golden-headed Cisticola the highlights of 19 species recorded here (see complete list next page).



Golden-headed Cisticola (P Spencer)



Grey Fantail (P Spencer)

Australian Raven	Magpie -lark	Weebill
Brown Thornbill	Rainbow Bee-eater	White -plumed Honeyeater
Galah	Rufous Whistler	White -throated Treecreeper
Golden -headed Cisticola	Sacred Kingfisher	Yellow- crested Cockatoo
Grey Fantail	Spotted Pardalote	Yellow Robin
Kookaburra	Straw-necked Ibis	
Magpie	Superb Blue Wren	19

2. Gullifer Lane Rail Trail Access (Whyte's Road to Bonegilla section)

Bernie Datson then took us in to Gullifers Road nearby and showed us some large hollow-bearing trees, but the creek was dry. There is access to the Rail Trail, a good walk in cooler weather. There were few birds apart from a White-faced Heron. John Geltch and Stephanie Jakovac spotted some old agricultural remains piled up and John took some pictures.

3. Ryan's Lagoon

We then drove via McIntoshs Road to the River Murray lagoon area with large farms on the alluvial flats. Alongside Snowdons road is a large horseshoe-shaped lagoon on Bill Boer's farm and this was very low but generally has interesting wading birds. A total of 9 species were seen with highlights being Black-fronted and Red-kneed Dotterels - virtually side by side, a White-bellied Sea Eagle and various water birds.

Australian Raven	Masked Lapwing	Purple Swamp-hen
Black-fronted Dottere	Red-kneed Dottere	Whistling Kite
Grey Teal	Pelican	White-bellied Sea Eagle



Red-kneed Dotterel (R Andrews)

Next stop was lunch at the Hume Dam, where White-necked Heron & Dusky Wood Swallow were added to the list.

4. Hume Dam spillway (Victorian side)

Next to Haywoods Bridge at the state border there is a reserve on the Victorian side of the Murray, situated below the Hume Weir. Again, grazed River Red-gum country. This site has good stands of Eucalypts with a Tree Violet (*Melicytus dentatus*) understory and some native grasses. It is grazed by cattle, but is in reasonable condition. Water birds are at significant numbers in the river and the back-water lagoon, and bush birds in the woodland. Both Brown and White-throated Treecreepers are resident (we did not see the Brown), together with a large population on Superb Fairy Wrens, regularly recorded in our Bird Data atlas surveys. The site is opposite and across the river from the Hawkview property.



Little Pied Cormorant (P Seely)

Blackbird	Dusky Moorhen	Silver-eye
Black Duck	Great Cormorant	Starling
Black Swan	Great Egret	Welcome Swallow
Coot	Little Friar Bird	White-throated Tree-creeper
Crested Shrike-tit	Little Pied Cormorant	Willy Wagtail
Darter	Noisy Miner	Wood Duck
Dusky Woodswallow	Reed Warbler	Yellow Rosella

A total of 53 species of birds were recorded on our visit.

John Shepherd, Neil Blair, Bernie Datson & Phillip Seely

WANGARATTA WETLANDS

23rd March 2019

Mullinmur Billabong was our first stop. Situated within the city limits at the northern end of Phillipson St. it is in a floodplain dominated by River Red-gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) and an understory of Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*). Weed infestation is a big problem with each flood bringing in a new lot of seed, making management difficult. Bird life, whilst sparse, produced a good species list and there were insects everywhere, including the handsome Feather-horned Beetle (*Rhipicerca femorata*) shown on the front cover. No other wildlife was seen but there was a large number of nest boxes catering for birds, bats, possums and gliders. A smaller waterhole next to the entrance has a healthy wetland flora.



Bat nestbox (R Andrews)



Water primrose – *Ludwigia peploides* subsp *montevidensis*

We were fortunate to meet Ian Minns, and Kelvin Berry from the Wangaratta Sustainability Network (Restoring Our Waterways). Ian leads the small group of volunteers who manage the site, and we learnt that the land is largely owned by the Catholic Church. Along with a smaller piece of Crown Land, the area is used as an educational site by the schools and a research site by the Arthur Rylah Insitute. As well as learning of fish survey work, we were shown current projects involving local government to naturally filter local stormwater drains that then run into the Billabong. It is open to the public with good walking tracks and map.



Group with Ian (P Spencer)



White Ibis (with lunch) (P Spencer)

After lunch we went to the Big Kaluna Park on the banks of the King River. Access is along the levee bank off the Oxley Flats Rd, soon after crossing the King River. After ‘fording’ the river on the concrete plinths there is a well-defined circular path. This is a grazed floodplain dominated by large, hollowed River Red-gums and Silver Wattle with Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and River Bottlebrush (*Callistemon sieberi*) adding to the understory. The only flowering species were weeds and the bird life quiet, but again a fair list of species and the only other wildlife seen were butterflies, grasshoppers and small, unidentified skinks.

Neil Blair



Common Brown Butterfly, female (*Heteronympha Merope*)
(P Seely)



(R Andrews)



Grasshopper (*Macrotona sp?*)
(P Seely)

Birdlist Mullinmua Billabong and Big Kaluna Park – Bernie Datson

Australian Raven	Silvereye
Azure Kingfisher	Spotted Pardalote
Black Duck	Spotted Turtle Dove*
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Striated Pardalote
Blue-faced Honeyeater	Striated Thornbill
Brown Thornbill	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Brown Tree-creeper	Superb Blue Wren
Crimson Rosella	Welcome Swallow
Eastern Rosella	White Ibis
Eastern Shrike-tit	White-browed Scrubwren
Grey Fantail	White-faced Heron
Grey Shrike-thrush	White-necked Heron
Grey Teal	White-plumed Honeyeater
Kookaburra	White-throated Gerygone
Magpie	White-throated Tree-creeper
Magpie-lark	Willy Wagtail
Oriole	Yellow Robin
Red-browed Finch	Yellow Rosella
Rufous Whistler	Yellow Thornbill
Sacred Kingfisher	
Total: 39	
Highlights: both Herons, both Treecreepers, both Kingfishers.	

Bernie Datson



Juvenile male Superb Fairy Wren (P Spencer)



White-throated Gerygone (P Spencer)

A combined group of 23 birdwatchers and field naturalists began the day just south of Beechworth on the corner of Bartsh Road and Diffey Road where a huge abundance of noxious weeds, predominantly gorse and blackberries, give shelter to an amazing variety of birds, even in this very dry year. We walked a circuit along Diffey Road, up Fighting Gully Road to the Rail Trail and back along the Rail Trail and Bartsh Road to the cars – and morning tea.

Next we headed to the grounds of the historic Old Murmungee Hall, primarily meant as a toilet stop and a lunch venue, but the splendid Yellow Box trees proved a home to Golden Whistlers, Red -capped Robins, Brown Thornbills, Eastern Spinebills, Satin Bowerbirds (including a mature male), and friendly Yellow-rumped Thornbills. A local alerted us to the remains of a 'woolly' Noisy Friarbird's nest although its residents were long gone.

After lunch we moved on to the Murmungee Bush Reserve, passing a family of choughs on the way. Brown Treecreepers, a pair of Crested Shrike-tits and a Sacred Kingfisher were added to the list.

Jan Heywood

Birdlist for the Beechworth/ Murmungee outing 6 April 2019 - (in the Birdlife sequence for atlassing) – We saw 53 species at the Bartsh/ Diffey Road area, Murmungee Public Hall, and Witherows Reserve, Murmungee:

Australian Wood Duck, Australasian Grebe, White-necked Heron, Australian White Ibis, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Nankeen Kestrel, Dusky Moorhen, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeon, Peaceful Dove, Gang Gang Cockatoo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Australian King Parrot, Crimson Rosella, Eastern Rosella, Red-rumped Parrot, Laughing Kookaburra, Red-browed Treecreeper, Brown Treecreeper, Superb Fairy Wren, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Red Wattlebird, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Jackie Winter, Scarlet Robin, Red-capped Robin, Eastern Yellow Robin, Crested Shrike-tit, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Magpie Lark, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike, Dusky Woodswallow, Australian Magpie, Australian Raven, White-winged Chough, Satin Bowerbird, Red-browed Finch, Mistletoe Bird, Welcome Swallow.

John & Jenny Shepherd

[I noticed that our outings this season had provided Peter Spencer the opportunity to capture a nice set of Thornbill photos using his new camera.....

I find these small and fast brown birds difficult to identify so enjoyed grouping his photos – Ed]



Brown Thornbill (note the red eye; as here, often in shrubs)



Buff-rumped Thornbill (white eyes)

Yellow-rumped Thornbill (brown eyes) Both on ground.



Yellow Thornbill (black eyes; generally in shrubs and canopy)

11 members participated in the outing to Eldorado on a pleasant, fine day.

Our first stop was at Middle Dam on the outskirts of the village where good bird watching was had around the dam and over the road in some farm paddocks where Diamond Firetails and Yellow-rumped Thornbills were plentiful, enjoying the seed on the ground. There was no native flora flowering.

We then proceeded to the sportsground to walk the bush around the dredge. Here the Grey Mistletoe (*Amyema quandang*) was both plentiful and flowering with good nectar, attracting a variety of honeyeaters including New Holland, Black-chinned and Eastern Spinebills. A Brown Goshawk hunted overhead and a large group of White-browed Babblers foraged in the understory.



Wildlife was scarce. A solitary Black Swamp Wallaby was seen at the Dam but no reptiles were seen on a fine but cool day. Heliotrope moths were present and the Swallows over the Dam were busy but little insect life was found elsewhere. No fungi were seen in the very dry ground.

Neil Blair

A. quandang var. *quandang* - Grey Mistletoe (N Blair)

Eldorado Bird List – (P Seely)

Australian Raven	New Holland Honeyeater
Australian Grebe	Nankeen Kestrel
Blackbird	Noisy Miner
Black-chinned Honeyeater	Peaceful Dove
Brown Goshawk	Red-browed Finch
Brown Thornbill	Pied Currawong
Crested Pigeon	Red Wattlebird
Crimson Rosella	Silvereye
Coot	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Diamond Firetail	Superb Blue Wren
Eastern Spinebill	Swamp-hen
Goldfinch	Welcome Swallow
Grey Shrike-thrush	White-browed Babbler
Hardhead	White-faced Heron
House Sparrow	White-plumed Honeyeater
Jacky Winter	Yellow Robin
King Parrot	Yellow Rosella
Kookaburra	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Magpie	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater
Magpie-lark	Willy Wagtail
Masked Lapwing	Wood Duck
Total: 42	



Nankeen Kestrel (P Spencer)



Welcome Swallow (R Andrews)



Yellow Robin (P Seely)



Diamond Firetail (P Seely)



White-browed Babbler (P Spencer)

COROWA (Sewage Ponds) / REDLANDS

5th May, 2019

[Again I have compiled this report from John Shepherd's comprehensive outing record and Neil Blair's flora report – Ed]

Joint outing Birdlife Ovens and Murray and Albury Wodonga Field Naturalists Group

Phillip Seely was the leader for this outing to Corowa on a beautiful, sunny autumn day with a cool breeze. We started at Nixon Street (Corowa Sewage Ponds) where we were pleasantly surprised to see a new fence and gate access recently installed by Federation Shire. So we had no longer to gain furtive access! The walk starts on the southern boundary and a path between the ponds leads to the rear, large pond now out of bounds with a new high fence presumably for safety reasons.

There were 21 of us looking for the birds and again we were not disappointed. Of especial note were the Magpie Geese (Bill Hayes counted 38) and this seems to be an increase over previous years. However, Birdata lists these as “vagrants” for Corowa, but as far as I know they are residents. A water rat appeared briefly and a Spotless Crake entertained us by dashing in and out of a hidey hole in the sedges at the water’s edge, but it proved very difficult to photograph. Peter Spencer and Phillip Seely managed to get a front-on view but alas, I only got the rear end!



Water Rat (P Spencer)



Spotless Crake (P Spencer)

Blue-billed, Pink-eared and Musk ducks were sighted as well as Australian Shovelers and Hardheads. Philip kindly set up (& carried) a ‘scope’ to assist our viewing and identification.

Immature and adult White-bellied Sea Eagles turned up, the latter terrorising the ducks in the rear pond before taking flight then returning. A Swamp Harrier was seen cruising low over the first pond and a variety of smaller bush birds added to the birding experience.



White-bellied Sea Eagle (P Spencer)



Swamp Harrier (P Spencer)

The vulnerable listed birds we identified were the Blue-billed Duck and a female Flame Robin.



Neil Blair examined a ground cover plant growing on the track between the two ponds and pronounced it to be Black Roly Poly. Checking the South West Slopes Revegetation Guide on page 117 indicates that the Latin name is *Sclerolaena muricata* var. *semiglabra*. Thank you to Neil for pointing out this interesting plant.

Photo source ALA

A picnic lunch on the Murray River bank near the football field was highlighted by a spectacular aerial display of synchronized flying by the local Corellas and we then drove northwards to the Redland Hills Reserve. This has a canopy of Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*), Yellow Box (*E. melliodora*), White Cypress (*Callitris glaucophylla*) and Drooping She-oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*). The shrub layer was dominated by Gold-dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*). Conditions there were very dry and ground cover was destroyed by the drought. We split up in to two parties- Val and Heather checked out the roadside boundary finding the vulnerable Brown Treecreeper and some Brown-headed Honeyeaters. Most of us navigated the “blue arrowed” loop track and the birds were sparse. A highlight was that Bill helped to flush out, near to the edge of the Reserve fence, some vulnerable-listed Grey Crowned Babblers. This is one of the few sites around Corowa where these birds have survived.

There was an outbreak of aptly-named, small (approx. 4 mm) red Arachnids along the path, some carrying their young on their back, with an occasional millipede and Heliotrope moth noted. Meat Ant nests were numerous and the ants very active and aggressive. Larger wildlife was conspicuous by its absence.



Red Velvet Mite, with young
(P Spencer)



Large unidentified spider, seen at afternoon tea
(P Seely)

We all had a good day in nice weather conditions and it was pleasing to see such a good participation. The total number of bird species over the day was 64.

John & Jenny Shepherd and Neil Blair

[Jan identified the red arachnids as mites, from the family Trombidiidae, in which there are numerous species. All are bright red, often have a velvety appearance due to a covering of short stout hairs on their body and are relatively large (for mites!), They are regarded as beneficial predators in cropping systems – various stages predated on redlegged earth mites, blue oat mites, lucerne flea and aphids.

Source: PestFacts south-eastern, Issue No. 2 - 26th May 2016. Cesar P/L.

Thanks Jan!]

Corowa – Sewage Treatment Works & Rowing Club Park Birdlist (John & Jenny Shepherd):

Australasian Darter	Grey Fantail	Red-browed Finch
Australasian Grebe	Grey Teal	Red-rumped Parrot
Australian Raven	Hardhead	Red Wattlebird
Australian Shelduck	Hoary-headed Grebe	Tree Martin
Australasian Shoveler	House Sparrow	Spotless Crake
Blackbird	Little Black Cormorant	Straw-necked Ibis
Black Duck	Little Corella	Superb Fairy-wren
Black Swan	Little Pied Cormorant	Swamp Harrier
Blue-billed Duck	Magpie	Weebill
Blue-faced Honeyeater	Magpie Goose	Welcome Swallow
Brown-headed Honeyeater	Magpie Lark	Whistling Kite
Chestnut Teal	Myna	White-bellied Sea Eagle
Coot	Masked Lapwing	White-necked Heron

Crested Pigeon	Musk Duck	White-plumed Honeyeater
Crimson Rosella (yellow)	Pelican	White Ibis
Flame Robin (female)	Pied Butcherbird	Willy Wagtail
Galah	Pied Currawong	Wood Duck
Great Cormorant	Pink-eared Duck	
Great Egret	Purple Swamp Hen	
Total = 55		

Corowa – Redland Hills Reserve Birdlist (John & Jenny Shepherd):

Brown Treecreeper	Golden Whistler	White-plumed Honeyeater
Grey Butcherbird	Kookaburra	Willie Wagtail
Eastern Rosella	Magpie	Yellow Thornbill
Grey-crowned Babbler	Magpie Lark	
Grey Shrike-thrush	Noisy Miner	
Total = 13		

MITTA MITTA/ LOCKHARTS GAP

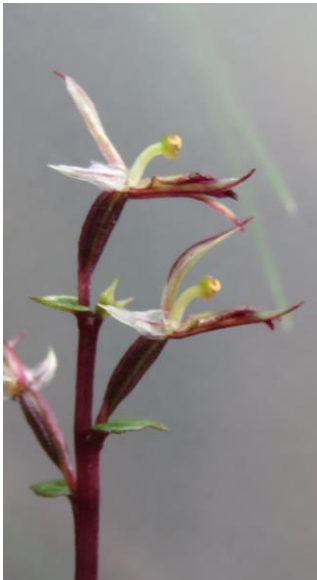
25th May, 2019

[Ahhh, at last – some fungi! – Ed]

Nine members braved a cold day at Pioneer Mine Walk via Lockharts Gap but were rewarded with a good range of fungi plus lichens, Liverworts, some orchids and spider lairs decorated by cobwebs with raindrops.



Lockharts Gap as the fog lifted (P Seely)



Veined Helmet Orchid; *Corybas diemenicus* (P Spencer)

Mosquito Orchid; *Acianthus pusillus* (R Andrews)

Fungi seen included:



Mycena interrupta (Pixie Parasol) - unique bright blue caps with dark central discs (P Seely)

Mycena cystidiosa; a tall *Mycena* with rizomorph strands- distinctive hair-like strands with tiny round tips
(R Andrews)



Phlebotus marginatus with unusual growth
Giant Bolete, (P Seely)



Mycena albidocapillaris (with water drop on stipe)
(R Andrews)



Macrolepiota clelandii (Parasol Mushroom);
(P Seely)



Armillaria luteobubilina (Honey Fungus)
(P Spencer)



Boletus barragensis?
(P Spencer)



Boletellus obscurecoccineus (Rhubarb Bolette)
(P Seely)

The pore surface of *Boletus barragensis* is reddish brown with a deep depression around the stem where it joins the cap, distinguishing it visually from *Boletellus obscurecoccineus* where the pore surface is yellow.



Psilocybe sp – note the remains of a cobweb-like veil, coloured purple/black with mature spores

Eucalyptus Milk Cap; *Lactarius eucalypti*
Spectacular Rustgill; *Gymnopilus junonius*
Scarlet Bracket Fungus; *Pycnporus coccineus*
Golden Jelly Bells; *Heterotextus pezizaformis*
Roseta fungus; *Podoscypha petalodes* (like pencil shavings)
Rooting Shank; *Xerula australis*
Earth Star; *Geastrum triples*
Egg Yolk Fieldcap, *Bolbitius vitellinus*
Russula sp.
Clitocybe clitocyboides

R Andrews & G Steed

Mitta Mitta Birdlist (Phillip Seely)

Lockhart Gap	Mitta Mitta / Pioneer Walk	
Crimson Rosella	Blackbird	Red Wattlebird
Grey Shrike-thrush	Brown Thornbill	Wedge-tailed Eagle
Satin Bowerbird	Crimson Rosella	White-browed Scrubwren
Superb Fairy Wren	Kookaburra	Yellow Robin
White-throated Treecreeper	Magpie	
	(King Parrots had arrived at the rotunda when we returned later in the day)	
Total = 14		

GOODBYE PETER STOKIE OAM

We have been recently saddened by the sudden death of Peter, who joined the group following his move to the North-east: his gentle manner, enormous knowledge, twinkling eyes and quiet wit will be missed by us all, as well as the other groups he generously contributed to.

We extend our sympathy to his family and friends.

A memorial service will be held at Feathertop Winery, Friday June 14 at 2 pm

Upcoming Outings – Winter 2019

~ **9th June** – 9 Mile Hill; 9 am SS&A Carpark Albury; contact John Shepherd.

~ **22nd June** – Chiltern / Mt Pilot NP; 9 am Acacia Carpark Wodonga; contact Neil Blair.

~ **14th July** – Pub Lunch Dederang; 9 am Acacia Carpark Wodonga; contact David or Veronica

~ **27th July** – TBA (this planned Corowa outing was brought forward and may be replaced or rescheduled). Outing will be confirmed later via email, Ecoportal or Border Mail.

~ **11th August** – Baranduda; 9 am Acacia Carpark Wodonga; contact Richard Andrews.

~ **24th August** – Chiltern / Mt Pilot NP; 9 am Acacia Carpark Wodonga; contact Phillip Seely.

~ **8th September** – Warby Ranges; 9 am Acacia Carpark Wodonga; contact Neil Blair.

Please confirm outing details in Saturday's Border Mail and contact the outing leader in the week prior if you need a lift.