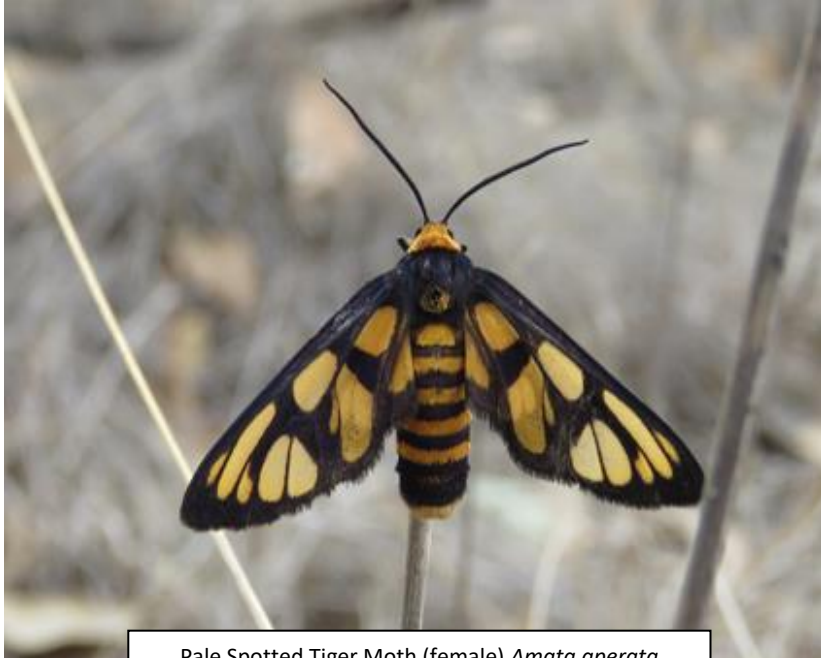


THE FIELD NATURALIST

NEWSLETTER NO. 132: AUTUMN, 2018

ALBURY-WODONGA FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB INC.
Reg. No. A0023416K



Pale Spotted Tiger Moth (female) *Amata aperata*
(Photo - Richard Andrews; ID J Heywood)



Long-legged Fly (Dolichopodidae) on an
Allocasuarina gall (Photo - P Seely; ID N Blair)



Gum Leaf Grasshopper - Acrididae (*Goniaea* sp)
N Blair

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**THURGOONA**

**11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

Eleven members braved a 35 degree sunny autumn day, which commenced at Bell's TSR off Table Top Road. We initially walked along a section of the Hume and Hovell track and then did a circuit of the TSR back to the cars. The Reserve has an overstorey of Yellow Box and Blackely's Red-gum with a sparse understory, mainly Wedge-leaf Hop-bush (*Dodonaea viscosa subsp. cuneata*). The ground cover lacks any flowering plants and was mainly dry grass. There were few birds to be found even around the still partially full dam. Walking was made difficult in places by the abundant webs of the Spiny Orb-weavers (Gasteracanthinae), and Grasshoppers and Crickets were abundant in the dry grass. A Robber Fly (Asilidae) landed close by and Dragonflies (Blue Skimmers - *Orthetrum caledonicum*) were plentiful around the dam which was noted to have tiny fish, initially mistaken for tadpoles.



Spiny Orb-Weaver - *Austracantha minax*

....and now from the underside (Photos - P Spencer)



Blue Skimmer - *Orthetrum caledonicum*  
P Seely

Fish in the TSR dam  
P Seely

Dragonflies  
P Spencer



Black Field Cricket – N Blair  
*Teleogryllus commodus*



Robber Fly – N Blair  
*Cerdistus* sp



Short-horned Grasshopper - P Seely  
*Acrida conica*



arachnophobes look away .....more spiders (D Andrews)

Lunch was had at the Bowna Reserve Picnic Area.

We then proceeded to another more southerly section of the Hume and Hovell Track which runs along a creek bed and has a number of waterholes and several dams. This is associated with the TAFE and University Environmental Studies areas and has extensive restoration with a dense and diversified tree and shrub cover. Here the bird life, both bushland and waterbirds, was much more prolific even in the hot mid-afternoon (see bird list, provided by Bernie & Glenda Datson). Perhaps because of this the insect life was less visible.



Juvenile Little Friarbird showing yellow throat (P Seely)

Despite the hot, dry conditions no reptiles were reported as seen.

It was a reflection of the enthusiasm of the group that the outing finished at 4.00 pm despite the warm conditions!

**Neil Blair**



White and Straw-necked Ibis - P Spencer

In the multi-Ibis photo above, the adult Straw-necked birds have a distinct dark stripe down the front of the neck extending from the chin, whereas the immatures have a mainly white chin and neck. It is similar with the White Ibis where the immatures have indistinct grey flecked feathers under the chin and the adults black feathers under the chin

| Bells Reserve, Thurgoona    | TAFE, NEC Dams          |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Australian Grebe            | Crested Pigeon          |
| Australian Raven            | Dusky Moorhen           |
| Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike   | Eurasian Coot           |
| Eastern Rosella             | Great Egret             |
| Galah                       | Grey Shrike-thrush      |
| Grey Butcherbird            | Little Friar Bird       |
| Grey Fantail                | Little Pied Cormorant   |
| Kookaburra                  | Magpie-lark             |
| Magpie                      | Pacific Black Duck      |
| Magpie-lark                 | Royal Spoonbill         |
| Noisy Miner                 | Sacred Kingfisher       |
| Red-browed Finch            | Starling*               |
| Rufous Whistler             | Straw-necked Ibis       |
| Spotted Pardalote           | Welcome Swallow         |
| Striated Pardalote          | White Ibis              |
| Superb Blue Wren            | White-faced Heron       |
| Weebill                     | White-plumed Honeyeater |
| White-throated Tree-creeper | Yellow-rumped Thornbill |
| White-winged Cough          |                         |
| Yellow (Little) Thornbill   |                         |
| <b>20</b>                   | <b>18</b>               |

About eleven of us spent an overcast but pleasant morning at the Corowa settling ponds, before lunching with the Corellas alongside the river. At the treatment plant, relatively clean effluent is held for about four weeks, mainly for disinfection by sunlight. The treatment is a trickling filter process – a primary sedimentation tank followed by a trickling filter, then another sedimentation tank after which the effluent reaches the pond system. The waterbirds certainly like it. An interesting find was a remarkable-looking growth on the Allocasuarina and closer inspection showed what was possibly Long-legged Flies (see cover photograph). It is unclear if the two are causally connected.



Hoary Headed Grebe – non-breeding plumage (left) & breeding plumage (right) – P Spencer



Gall – P Seely

We then ventured south across the border to Lake Moodemere and the Lake Moodemere Conservation Reserve where the forecast rain threatened and we disbanded. The bird count at the ponds was similar to previous visits although the lake and reserve were dry and quiet, allowing the group to again focus on insects and chase moths.



Little Corella – P Spencer

**G Steed**

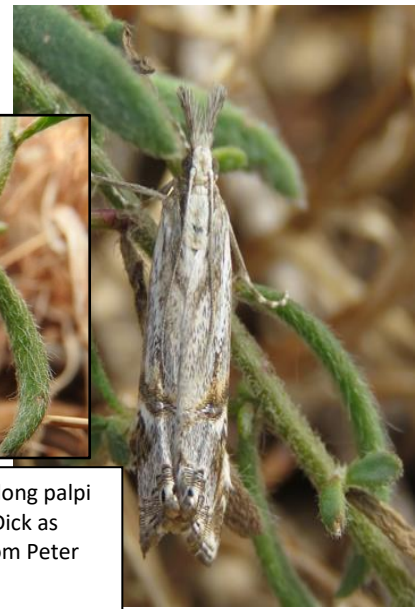


Heliotrope Moth – R Andrews



Pasture Webworm or 'Snout' moth (with long palpi held straight forward) – identified by Dick as *Hednota longipalpilla* with assistance from Peter Marriot

Photos - P Seely & R Andrews



**Bird list (P Seely)**

| <b>Corowa / Rutherglen 24/03/18 - overcast day; light breeze.(P Seely)</b> |                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Corowa 'Settling' Ponds</b>                                             | <b>Lake Moodemere/ McDonalds Road</b> |
| Australasian Grebe                                                         | Australian Darter                     |
| Australasian Shoveler                                                      | Australian Pelican                    |
| Australian Magpie                                                          | Crested Pigeon                        |
| Australian Pelican                                                         | Little Black Cormorant                |
| Australian Raven                                                           | Little Black Cormorant                |
| Black Swan                                                                 | Magpie-lark                           |
| Chestnut Teal                                                              | <i>Peaceful Dove</i>                  |
| Dusky Moorhen                                                              | <i>Wedge-tailed Eagle</i>             |
| Eurasian Coot                                                              | <i>White-bellied Sea Eagle</i>        |
| Freckled Duck                                                              | White-faced Heron                     |
| Great Cormorant                                                            | <i>Yellow Rosella</i>                 |
| Grey Teal                                                                  | <i>Yellow Spoonbill</i>               |
| Hardhead Duck                                                              |                                       |
| Hoary-headed Grebe                                                         |                                       |
| <i>Indian Myna</i>                                                         |                                       |
| Kookaburra                                                                 |                                       |
| <i>Little Friarbird</i>                                                    |                                       |
| Magpie-lark                                                                |                                       |
| Magpie Goose                                                               |                                       |
| Masked Lapwing                                                             |                                       |
| Pacific Black Duck                                                         |                                       |
| Pink-eared Duck                                                            |                                       |
| Purple Swamphen                                                            |                                       |
| Superb Blue Wren                                                           |                                       |
| <i>Red Wattlebird</i>                                                      |                                       |
| Welcome Swallow                                                            |                                       |
| Whistling Kite                                                             |                                       |
| <i>White-bellied Sea Eagle</i>                                             |                                       |
| White-faced Heron                                                          |                                       |
| White-plumed Honeyeater                                                    |                                       |
| White Ibis                                                                 |                                       |
| Willy Wagtail                                                              |                                       |
| <i>Tree Martin</i>                                                         |                                       |
| <i>Yellow Rosella</i>                                                      |                                       |
| <b>43</b>                                                                  | <b>7</b>                              |

A large group headed to Jindera via the Bungowannah (said to mean the parting of the rains) Road. Unfortunately there had been no rains to part and everywhere paddocks looked dry, some fertilised, waiting to sow crops. Once assembled, the combined Birdlife and Field Nat group proceeded to an ancient sand-dune (lunette) woodland. White Cypress trees predominated (*Callitris columellaris*) and some wattles (*Acacia salicina*) were identified by Glenda and others (refer below for full plant & bird list compiled by Glenda & Bernie). The lunette is on the eastern shoreline of a well-preserved relic lake in the Riverina Plain, approximately equidistant between the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers. Lake Urana closely resembles other lakes of the Murray Basin including Mungo and Tyrrell. Here, it was interesting to see a small lily - the Garland Lily - of a wholly endemic Australian genus, *Calostemna*. *C purpureum*, the most common member of the genus, is a well-known plant of the Riverina district. The yellow flowered *C luteum* was also seen.



*C purpureum*



*C luteum*



Singing Honeyeater



White-faced Heron – Photos P Spencer



Red-capped Robin, male – N Bartlett



Red-capped Robin, female – R Andrews

After a break during which family property owner, Pat Bourke generously shared some history and his local knowledge, we visited the Bimbadeen property situated on the eastern side of Lake Urana. Bimbadeen is a large property of 16,000 acres, including an area of approximately 25% of the lake floor. It is a mixed farming strategy including growing barley for the beer industry! Observations by farm staff, Jenny and me indicate that Brolgas like to feed on barley stubble. The marsh area adjacent to barley stubble where the Brolgas were last year is now dry and the birds are elsewhere. On the high sand dune (a lunette) the land is owned by Forests NSW and the northern end of the lunette is another private property.

Lake Uranagong is a smaller version of Lake Urana and we gained access through the Fox Travelling Stock Reserve. There are River Red Gums around the shoreline and White Cypress in the reserve.

[Thank you to both Pat and John for the time, access and knowledge so readily provided to make this special outing possible. Ed]



Lake Uranagong - R Andrews

**John Shepherd & Gail Steed**



**Bird list and plants of note (G & B Datson):**

| <b>On the way</b>         | <b>Sandhill near Lake Urana</b> | <b>Lake Urana</b>        | <b>Travelling Stock Reserve</b> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Crimson Rosella           | Spotted Pardalote               | Black Swan               | Black Swan                      |
| White-winged Chough       | Whistling Kite                  | Striated Pardalote       | Pacific Black Duck              |
| Magpie                    | Singing Honeyeater              | Yellow Thornbill         | Weebill                         |
| Magpie-lark               | Red-capped Robin                | Sulphur-crested Cockatoo | Grey Butcherbird                |
| Raven                     | Western Gerygone                | White-plumed Honeyeater  | Welcome Swallow                 |
| Kookaburra                | Diamond Firetail                | Mountain (or Shell) Duck | Tree Martin                     |
| Starling*                 | Pelican                         | Willy Wagtail            | Chestnut-rumped Thornbill       |
| Crested Pigeon            | Grey Fantail                    |                          |                                 |
| Willy Wagtail             | Yellow-rumped Thornbill         |                          |                                 |
| Galah                     | Chestnut-rumped Thornbill       |                          |                                 |
| Kestrel                   | Willy Wagtail                   |                          |                                 |
| Pied Butcherbird          |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Noisy Miner               |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Eastern Rosella           |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Darter                    |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Pied Cormorant            |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Sacred Ibis               |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Straw-necked Ibis         |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Grey-crowned Babbler      |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Welcome Swallow           |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Wood Duck                 |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Little Grebe              |                                 |                          |                                 |
| White-faced Heron         |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Yellow-billed Spoonbill   |                                 |                          |                                 |
| Red-rumped Parrot         |                                 |                          |                                 |
|                           |                                 |                          |                                 |

## Plants of note

| On the way                                   | Sandhill near Lake Urana                                                                          | Lake Urana                                   |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Weeping Myall ( <i>Acacia pendula</i> )      | Spiny Burr-grass* ( <i>Cenchrus incertus</i> )                                                    | <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>              |
| Bull-oak ( <i>Allocasuarina luehmannii</i> ) | Garland (or Wilciana) Lily (in creamy flower)                                                     | Hairy Carpet-weed ( <i>Glinus lotoides</i> ) |
| Grey Box ( <i>Eucalyptus macrocarpa</i> )    | Qandong ( <i>Santalum acuminatum</i> )                                                            | Sneezeweed ( <i>Centipeda cunninghamii</i> ) |
| Needlewood ( <i>Hakea leucoptera</i> )       | White Cypress Pine ( <i>Callitris glaucophylla</i> )                                              |                                              |
|                                              | Fleshy Mistletoe ( <i>Amyema miquelii</i> ) - in beautiful red flower - on <i>Acacia salicina</i> |                                              |
|                                              | Acacia salicina (Cooba or Willow Wattle)                                                          |                                              |
|                                              | Yellow Box ( <i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i> )                                                       |                                              |
|                                              | Ruby Saltbush ( <i>Enchylaena tomentosa</i> )                                                     |                                              |

“GALATEAH”, TABLE TOP

28<sup>th</sup> April, 2018

### Outing to the Galateah Property

**Background:** The property is located at the base of the northern facing slope of Big Budginigi Hill at Table Top. According to CSIRO landscape mapping, the summit is composed of a Devonian age (419-443 millions of years ago) volcanic plug of acid (ie. “granitic”) geochemical composition. There are also banded rhyolites and tuffs on the Hill. The surrounding host rocks are Ordovician age metamorphic sedimentary rocks (443-491 millions of years ago). The ancient plug has been exposed by millions of years of denudation.

When the Willincks bought the property it had been extensively cleared almost to the last tree, but the Eucalypts had been white box and Blakeley’s red gum with yellow boxes on the lower slopes.

Some landscape modifications have been carried out on the gentle slopes going down to the edge of Lake Hume. The purpose of this is to enhance the lagoon habitats and ensure that the minor creeks feed these. Note that these lagoons are not dependent on the lake water except at higher lake levels the lagoons are flooded.

Native tree planting largely began about 20 years ago and recently the emphasis has been on establishing understorey vegetation. This is a far tougher proposition according to Jan who propagates his own plants; the whole enterprise is an amazing effort.

Many bird species have moved in and nested on the property and it is a jewel in the area. Jenny and I are atlasing 3 sites regularly to record the bird populations and entering data on Birdata.



Gum blossom



Paper Wasps



Casuarina, female flowers

Photos – R Andrews

On arrival we were ushered in to the Willinck’s superb residence for morning refreshments that Jan and Anneliese provided, thank you! The views from the house are stunning, across the re-planted woodlands to Lake Hume and Woomargama in the background.

After tea we climbed up behind the house in to the mixed woodland with lots of understorey plants. There are also numerous Eucalypt species with the understorey of Callistimons, Cherry Ballarts, Melaleucas and various pea flowering plants. The latter have proved to be difficult to establish. This is marvellous habitat for woodland bird species and we saw as I recall, Honeyeaters, Rosellas and Grey Shrike Thrushes.

Next we went down to Bonny Lagoon and walked through a forest (all re-planted) of River Red Gums and Casuarinas which floods at the higher lake levels. Further on we walked past Placid Lagoon where there were Grey Teal and a White-bellied Sea Eagle flew over us. (We later saw the nest in the distance.) A family of White-browed Babblers entertained us and Peter Spencer was challenged trying to photograph them as they moved through the woodland.

We then drove the cars on the track to Peggy Island with its fireplace clearing in the re-planted woodland. The trees include Boxes, *E. sideroxylon* (Ironbark) and *Acacias*. This was a good venue for lunch and we all drew up our chairs in a circle. The day was most enjoyable on such a beautiful property and we thank Jan and Anneliese for being great hosts.

**John Shepherd**

**YACKANDANDAH**

**26<sup>TH</sup> May, 2018**

Numbers were down for this trip with several members away. Six of us left Wodonga and met up with three more at Yackandandah. Onto Bells Flat Rd and Service Basin Rd where we parked in a newly gravelled car park near the reservoir. On the ‘reccie’ a few days earlier there was much road grading and army manoeuvres taking place but all this had halted for the weekend; we only had cyclists and noisy off-road bikes to contend with. After morning tea we walked along one of the bike tracks through the bush and found fungi (mostly *Mycena* sp), mosses including the fern-like *Thuidiopsis* sp and lichens like Pixie Caps (*Cladonia* sp).



*Mycena* sp



*Thuidiopsis* sp



*Cladonia* sp

There were also liverworts, old man’s beard and white punk brackets on a tree. Honey-pot flowers were still in a wrapped up stage. One interesting discovery was a possible Spider Ant (identified with help of “Insects of South Eastern Australia”).



Honey-pot in bud



Spider Ant



White-browed Scrubwren

We then drove on to find several birds and a convenient place for lunch on Nine Mile Creek. A pleasant day when the sun was out but cooled off early and we broke up soon after lunch.

Bird list (P Seely)

|                                                         |                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Yackandandah – Pleasant, cool day; sunny periods</b> |                            |
| Australian Raven                                        | Striated Thornbill         |
| Brown Thornbill                                         | Sulphur-crested Cockatoo   |
| Eastern Spinebill                                       | Superb Fairy Wren          |
| Grey Shrike Thrush                                      | White-browed Scrubwren     |
| Pied Currawong                                          | White-eared Honeyeater     |
| Quail (unidentified)                                    | White-throated Treecreeper |
| Red-browed Finch                                        | Yellow Robin               |
| Spotted Pardalote                                       | Yellow-tufted Honeyeater   |
|                                                         | <b>16</b>                  |

**Richard Andrews**

**HEALESVILLE (SEANA Autumn Get-together)**

**27-29<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2018**

This was an enjoyable weekend with a really good program in pleasant, like-minded company (even if the dry weather meant the hoped for - by me, anyway- fungi weren’t about). As usual, the only difficult part was choosing from a diverse range of options. On Saturday I attended a guided, behind-the-scenes visit to the threatened species and wildlife health centres at the Sanctuary, followed by an interesting walk from Maroondah Dam to Donnellys Weir. Sunday, the fungi special interest group welcomed a mixture of adults and children along to their survey and identification foray at Dom Dom Saddle where I noted that “Bruce” seemed the most widely used reference...

Thank you to the FNCV group and the hard-working members who made it possible.

**Healesville Sanctuary**

This visit to the Threatened Species Program touched on Helmeted Honeyeaters, Mountain Pigmy Possums, Southern Corroboree Frogs, Tasmanian Devils and Orange-bellied Parrots.

In no particular order, some observations:

- Achieving an ‘ecologically sustainable population’ is critical and various methods are used to increase effective population size and resistance (a reproductive biologist is shared across the 3 zoos).
- Support groups such as DEWLP, ‘friends’ groups eg Birdlife and specialist groups ie Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Team are also critical to program success
- Training may be required before release eg alarm call recognition for Helmeted Honeyeaters to reduce predation by Goshawks
- Ongoing modification of strategies is based on observation and research eg when female Tasmanian Devils choose their own partners, breeding outcomes improve; and Orange-bellied Parrot chicks need a 22 degree, air conditioned corridor.



Container breeding 'house'



Emerald dove with head injury



Post-mortem in action

**Maroondah Reservoir Park**

The dam was completed in 1927 and the area below the wall was landscaped in the early English tradition which became an interesting blend of native and exotic elements. We walked over the wall, up to a lookout and on to Donellys weir. Personal highlights were the park itself, its history and the pair of Powerful Owls which eyed us haughtily from a large Pine alongside the path (not sure what they would make of the Maroondah Dam Trail Run the following day...)

I am including my very average photo, just to prove they *were* there.



Dam wall from park, showing historic valve house



Powerful Owl pair

**Upcoming Outings – Winter 2018**

~ **23<sup>rd</sup> June** – George’s Creek; 9 am SS&A Carpark Albury; contact David Coleman.

~ **8<sup>th</sup> July** – Members afternoon, 2 pm; 411 Jamieson St, Albury; contact Neil Blair.

~**28<sup>th</sup> July** – Mid-year pub lunch; 9 am Acacia Carpark Wodonga; contact Neil Blair.

~ **12<sup>th</sup> August** – Sandy Creek; 9 am Acacia Carpark Wodonga; contact Richard Andrews.

~ **25<sup>th</sup> August** – Chiltern / Mt Pilot; 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.*

