

**THE FIELD NATURALIST**

**NEWSLETTER NO. 152: SPRING 2024**

**ALBURY-WODONGA FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB INC.**

Reg. No. A0023416K



**PRESIDENT**

Bernard Datson  
0490 497 032

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Peter Spencer  
(02) 6043 3431

**SECRETARY**

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0419 124 724

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0413 308 940

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Jenny Bleakley  
Phillip Seely  
David Coleman  
Robert Robinson  
Gill Robinson

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Gail Steed  
glesley28@gmail.com

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Contributions or corrections to this newsletter are welcome and should be emailed to Editor as above.



Hover Fly (D Andrews)



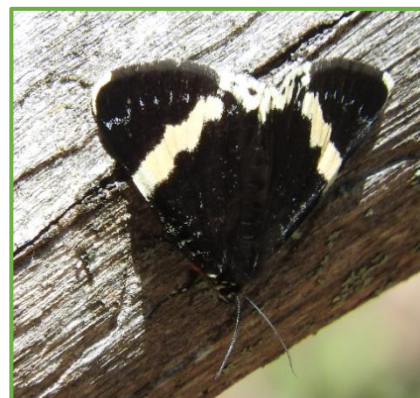
Australian Painted Lady Butterfly, male (P Spencer)



White Caper Butterfly– pale form (N Blair)



Wandering (or Black-faced?) Percher Dragonfly (D Andrews)



*Eutrichopidia latinus* Day-flying moth (P Seely)

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**OUTINGS**

**CHILTERN MT PILOT NATIONAL PARK**

**8<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

A large, keen group of 17 members participated in the outing in pleasant weather. The local climate has been dry for over 6 months, so whilst we found plenty to see and discuss, there was not the usual mass spring flowering.

FLORA seen and discussed included;

- a. **Wattles** – Juniper (*Acacia ulicifolia*), Varnish (*A. verniciflua*), Red-stem (*A. rubida*), Golden (*A. pycnantha*)



Juniper Wattle (N Blair)

- b. **Peas** – Small-leaf Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia phylloides*), Mountain Flat-pea (*Platylobium montanum*), Purple Coral-pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*)



Small-leaf Parrot-pea – flowers & narrow, twisted leaves  
(N Blair)



Handsome Flat Pea  
(P Spencer)

- c. **Honey-Pots** (*Acrotriche serrulata*) in flower showing early filled 'honey-pots'



Honey-pots (P Seely)

their



- d. **Orchids** – Dusky Caladenia (*Caladenia fuscata*), Blue Fairies (*Cyanicula caerulea*), Leopard (*Diuris punctata*), Emerald Greenhood (*Pterostylis smaragdyna*), Dwarf Greenhood (*P. nana*), Nodding Greenhood (*P. nutans*), Wax-lip (*Glossodia major*).



Leopard Orchid  
(P Spencer)



Emerald Greenhood  
(N Blair)



Wax Lip Orchid  
(D Andrews)

- e. **Others** - Pale Sundew (*Drosera hookeri*), Yam Daisy (*Microseris walterii*)

INVERTEBRATES noted included;

a. **Insects:**

- Butterflies - 2 species, Painted Lady and Caper White

Caper White Butterfly  
(N Blair)



- Dragonflies - 2 species, (identified later, thanks Dick & Karen Retra 😊)



Wandering Percher (D Andrews)

- European Honey Bees and Hover flies, &
- Meat Ants reacting rapidly to nest disturbance

- b. **Spiders:** Two-tailed Spider with nearby characteristic egg sac (see separate article, page 13)

VERTIBRATES;

Echidna activity was noted along with fresh Wombat holes but there were no vertebrate sightings.

**Neil Blair**

**Bird list (Bernie Datson)**

In the forest (Tower Hill Road, Honeyeater Picnic and adjacent areas):

Fuscous Honeyeater, Black-chinned Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Tufted Honeyeater, Painted Honeyeater (crest of Tower Hill Road), Mistletoe Bird, Grey Shrike Thrush, Kookaburra, Noisy Friarbird, Chough, Dusky Woodswallow, Weebill, Striated Pardalote, Spotted Pardalote, Turquoise Parrot, Fantail Cuckoo Superb Fairywren. (17)



White-naped Honeyeater (P Spencer)

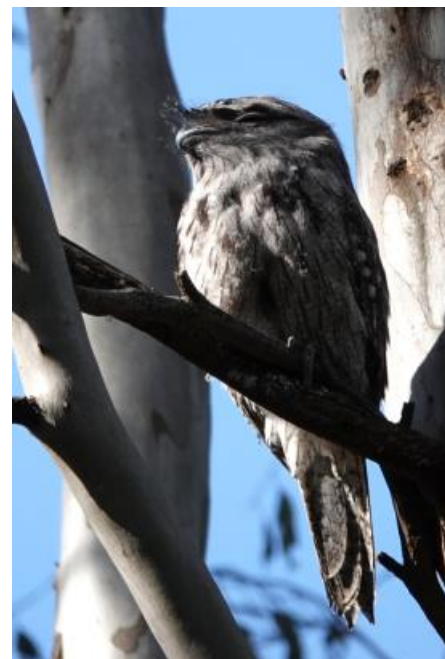


Mistletoe Bird (P Spencer)

At Dam Number one: Australasian Grebe, Great Cormorant, Masked Lapwing, Grey Fantail, White-plumed Honeyeater, Wood Duck, White-faced Heron, Pelican, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Magpie, Magpie-lark, Australian Raven, Little Black Cormorant, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Eastern Rosella, Crimson Rosella, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Little Pied Cormorant, Grey Teal, Hardhead, Coot, Blue-winged Shoveler, Mountain Duck, Black-fronted Dotterel, Welcome Swallow, Peaceful Dove, Tawny Frogmouth. (28)



Australasian Grebes (P Spencer)



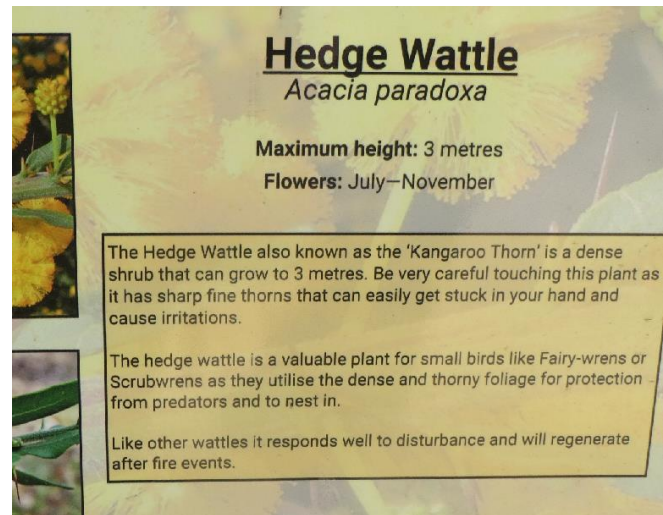
Tawny Frogmouth (P Spencer)



A pleasant day, well-attended by a large group, with a variety of plants and birds – even a startled Grey Kangaroo loafing about at the gardens edge...

We started at the Range Road entrance to Nail Can Hill and although a quiet day for birds, we were able to view many of the local plants (featured in the booklet ‘Along the Bush Tracks’). Excellent signage provided information which Bernie generously compiled in the following summary (page 7)

As last year, lunch was spent in the shade before a wander behind the summit back fence, along the adjacent western boundary and finally overlooking the on-site dam at the gardens.



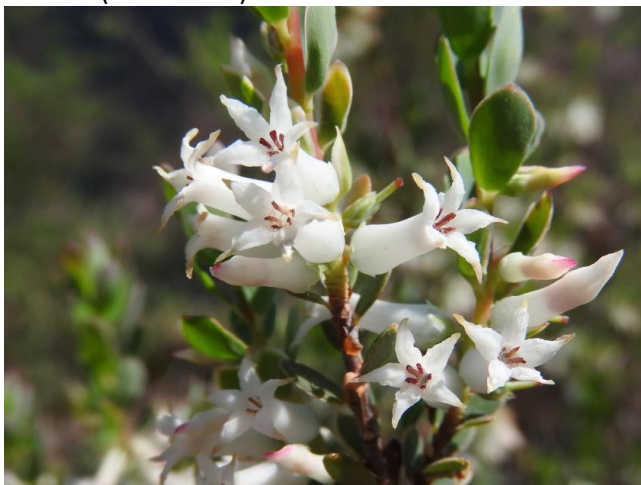
Hedge Wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*), with accompanying sign



Tree Lucerne Moth (*Uresiphita ornithopteralis*)  
(D Andrews)



Tree Lucerne Moth caterpillar on Broom Bush  
- Wodonga Oct 2021 (D Andrews)



Daphne Heath (P Seely)



Black Bean Aphid, *Aphis fabiae* on Cotton Fireweed? (P Seely)

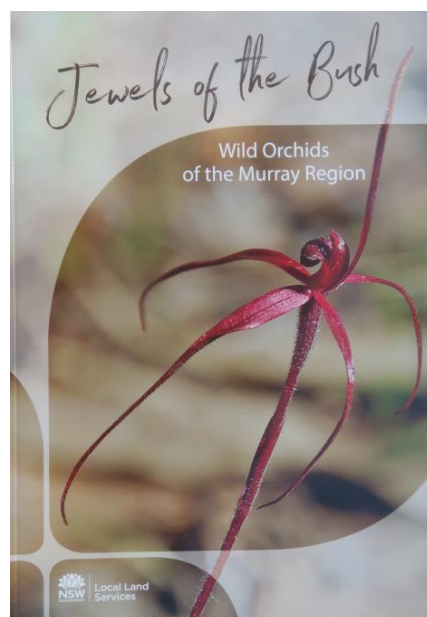
**Bird list**

Grey Fantail, Magpie, Magpie-lark, Weebill, Pied Currawong, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Red Wattlebird, White Ibis, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Galah, Eastern Rosella, Brown Thornbill, Superb Fairy-wren, Kookaburra, Australian Raven, Crested Pigeon, Masked Lapwing, Wood Duck, Black Duck, Noisy Miner, Willy Wagtail, Welcome Swallow, Pelican, Whistling Kite, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Chough, Yellow Thornbill, Red-browed Finch, Starling, Rainbow Bee-eater, Sacred Kingfisher.

**Bernie Datson**

At lunch-time Dick & Anne shared a new, local orchid publication – available (free) from the Murray Local Land Services, 931 Garland Ave. North Albury.

They particularly noted that the booklet was very useful in its inclusion of photos at different growth stages eg leaves and seeds, in much the same way as done for Chiltern Mt Pilot NP flora by Neil Blair & Eileen Collins.



Common name	Scientific name	Size	Flowering	Notes from the signage, including indigenous information
Cotton Fireweed	<i>Senecio quadridentatus</i>	50cm	Spring - Summer	Important food source for caterpillars, native butterflies and moths.
Chocolate Lilly	<i>Anthropodium strictus</i>	1m	Sept - Dec	Tubers can be eaten raw or roasted. Seeds can be ground to flour for bread.
Cherry Ballart	<i>Exocarpus cupressiformis</i>	3-8m	Dec - May	Stalks and fruits eaten by a range of wildlife. A shelter tree. Fruit can be eaten dried or fresh.
Red Box	<i>Eucalyptus polyanthemos</i>	25 m	Sept - Jan	Leaves much more rounded than most Eucalypts and the leaves are grey-green.
Red Stringybark	<i>Eucalyptus macrorhyncha</i>	35m	Feb - July	White flowers favoured by many insects. Birds rip off pieces of bark for their nests, eg Friarbirds.
Urn Heath	<i>Melicrus urceolatus</i>	1.5m	Mar - Nov	Attracts small Honeyeaters after nectar in urns. Prickly!
Green Rockfern	<i>Chellanthes austrotenuifolia</i>	45 cm	Non flowering	"Resurrection Fern". Readily responds to rain after disappearing in dry periods.
Sweet Bursaria	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	2-8 m	Nov - Mar	Flowers after most other shrubs. A haven for insects.
Kurrajong	<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>	20m	Mar - Oct.	Bark used for string and fishing nets. Plant used as medicine. Kurrajong Moths lay eggs on leaves and the larvae create shelters by joining leaves with silk.
Cat's claw	<i>Grevillia alpina</i>	2.5m	July - Dec	Attracts pollinating Honeyeaters and after flowering, King Parrots devour the seeds.
Raspwort	<i>Gonocarpus elatus</i>	50cm	Oct - Nov.	Can be overlooked in open, dry, rocky sites.
Purple Coral-pea	<i>Hardenburgia violacea</i>	15m (length)	July - Nov.	Flowers used for mouthwash for ulcers and chest infections. Stems used for ropes and baskets.
Kangaroo Grass	<i>Themeda australis</i>	1.2m	Sept -Nov.	Seeds used for flour for bread and porridge. Stems used for rope and baskets. Food for Parrots and Finches. Great habitat for insects, lizards and frogs.
Small-leaf Parrot-pea	<i>Dillwynia phyllicoides</i>	1m	Aug - Dec.	Great food resource for insects.
Sticky Everlasting	<i>Xerochrysum viscosum</i>	80cm	Sept - Dec	Important for native butterflies and their larvae.
Sundew	<i>Drosera sp.</i>	50cm	June - Dec.	Carnivorous. Found in shallow soils wet in winter and dry in summer.
Native Geranium	<i>Geranium solanderi</i>	60cm	Oct.-Jan	Underground tubers, leaves and petals used for food and medicinal purposes.
Lightwood	<i>Acacia implexa</i>	10-15m	Dec - April	Fast growing and long lived. A summer flowering Wattle.
Grey Guinea Flower	<i>Hibbertia obtusifolia</i>	1m	Aug - Dec	Good nectar source for insects.
Slender Rice Flower	<i>Pimelia linifolia</i>	50cm	Aug - Dec	Bark was processed into strong fine threads used for catching Bogong Moths.
Daphne Heath	<i>Brachyloma daphnoides</i>	1.5m	June - Nov.	Sweet honey like perfume attracts Honeyeaters.
Small-leaf Bush-pea	<i>Pultenaea foliolosa</i>	2m	Sept - Dec.	Seeds eaten by Finches and small Parrots. Nectar for native bees and wasps which attract insect eating birds. A good nitrogen-fixing plant
Blackely's Red Gum	<i>Eucalyptus blakelyi</i>	20m	Oct - Dec.	Local roosting habitat for Owlet Nightjars, Lace Monitors and Yellow-footed Antechinus.
Erect Guinea Flower	<i>Hibbertia riparia</i>	1.2cm	Sept - Feb.	Food plant for caterpillars of moths and butterflies.
Drooping She-oak	<i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i>	4-10m	Aug - Dec	Wood used for boomerangs, shields and clubs. The cones are a food source for Cockatoos and Parrots.



Nine members enjoyed a lovely sunny and windless day along a section of McGuinness Rd in the Mt Pilot area of the Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park. Although it has been a dry year with poor flowering in many parts of the Park, this was not the case in this section where the display of flowers was quite abundant in number and diversity.

Orchids were a feature with Large Green-combs (*Caladenia tentaculata*) and Wax-lips (*Glossodia major*) being most abundant.

Also present were the smaller Green-comb Spider-orchids (*C. parva*), Pink Fingers (*C. carnea*), Musk Hood-orchid (*C. moschata*), Purplish Beard-orchid (*Calochilus robertsonii*), Salmon Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra rubra*), Slender Sun-orchid (*T. pauciflora*) and the Peppertop Sun-orchid (*T. brevifolia*) in both its usual blue flower and rarer white flower forms.



Large Green-comb Green-comb Spider-orchid  
(P Seely)



Green-comb Spider-orchid  
(N Blair)



Peppertop Sun-orchid, Blue & white flower (N Blair)



Purple Beard Orchid (P Seely)

Other flowering herbs included Yam Daisies 'Murnong' (*Microseris walteri*), Pale Sundews (*Drosera hookeri*) and an occasional Tall Sundew (*D. auriculata*), Twining Fringe Lilies (*Thysanotus patersonii*), Dookie Daisies (*Brachyscome gracilis*), Bulbine Lilies (*Bulbine bulbosa*), Chocolate Lilies (*Arthropodium strictum*), Small Vanilla Lillies (*A. minus*), Creamy Candles (*Stackhousia monogyna*).



Flowering shrubs included an abundance of Erect Guinea-flowers (*Hibbertia riparia*) and pockets of Common Beard-heath. The sub-shrub Creeping Bossiaea (*Bossiaea prostrata*) was also seen.

Creeping Bossiaea (N Blair)



Wildlife (other than birds) was quiet with the notable exception of a basking Brown Snake disturbed by us. There was widespread evidence of wild pig rooting.

The outing ended with a late lunch in the picnic area at the foot of the summit walk.

## Neil Blair

### Bird Account – Mt Pilot

It has always been a thrill to see a Pardalote suddenly emerge from, or disappear into, a small bank tunnel. At our outing, studiously watching my immediate footstep ground for Orchids (so as not to step on them), an enormous elongated curled mass of Brown Snake about a meter and a half to my left, momentarily levitated, catching my peripheral vision then plopped to the ground passing in front of me to the right, and almost immediately disappearing into the grasses. Jen and Jan saw it as well. Things were quiet for a while and three of us stood still and saw two Spotted Pardalotes suddenly appear out of a depression about four meters away. Then the snake was spotted again moving further to the right but was not seen crossing the nearby road - which would have given us some confidence that our territory was safe. However we cautiously approached the area the Pardalotes emerged from to find a small tunnel hole in the bank of the depression: Their nest. Had they sensed the presence of the snake? The birds remained in the area waiting I guess, for us to move on. That was the second Pardalote nest find for the day.

As well as some marvellous wildflower sightings, the other special bird events were hearing the Leaden Flycatcher and Rainbow Bee-eaters.

### Bird list:

Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, Rufous and Golden Whistlers, Fuscous, White-plumed and Black-chinned Honeyeaters, Wattlebird, Noisy Friarbird, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Crimson Rosella, Oriole, Sacred Kingfisher, Grey Fantail, Grey Shrike-thrush, Crested Pigeon, White-throated Treecreeper, Superb Fairywren, Leaden Flycatcher, Western Gerygone, Yellow Robin, Magpie. Australian Raven, Yellow-rumped Thornbill (25)

## Bernie Datson

### BEECHWORTH & YACKANDANDAH

26<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Eight members and a guest participated in a morning walk in the Beechworth Gorge on a lovely cool and sunny day.

The forest was dominated by Black Cypress-pines (*Callitris endlicheri*) with Long-leaved Box (*Eucalyptus goniocalyx*) on the ridges and Red Box (*Eucalyptus polyanthemos* subsp. *vestita*) in the gullies. Scattered Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*) and Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum* – a common woody weed) were noted.



Black Cypress-pine (N Blair)



Cherry Ballart (N Blair) -

swollen receptacle red; fruit (drupe) green-brown

Box-leaf Wattle (*Acacia buxifolia*) and Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*), Austral Indigo (*Indigofera australis*), Wedge-leaf and Hairy Hop-bushes (*Dodonaea viscosa* subsp. *cuneata* and *D. boroniifolia*), Shiny Cassinia (*Cassinia longifolia*) formed the higher shrub layer with Common Correa (*Correa reflexa*), Daphne Heath (*Brachyloma daphnoides*), Honey-pots (*Acrotriche serrulata*), Slender Rice-flower (*Pimelea linifolia*) and Grey Guinea-flower (*Hibbertia obtusifolia*) contributing to the lower shrub layer.



Box-leaf Wattle – phyllodes  
(N Blair)



Bearded Heath – flowers  
(D Andrews)



Hairy Hop-bush – leaf  
(N Blair)

The ground cover included the Rock-fern and the Narrow Rock-ferns (*Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia* and *sieberi*), Common Raspwort (*Gonocarpus tetragynus*), Chocolate Lilies (*Arthropodium strictum*), Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*), Australian Carrot (*Daucus glochidiatus*) and Austral Bear's-ears (*Cymbonotus preissianus*).

Lunch was taken in the Beechworth Botanical Gardens before heading to Morgan's Lane, Yackandandah for the afternoon.

### Neil Blair

#### Bird Lists (Bernie Datson)

- Stop 1 Powder Magazine walk. Beechworth.

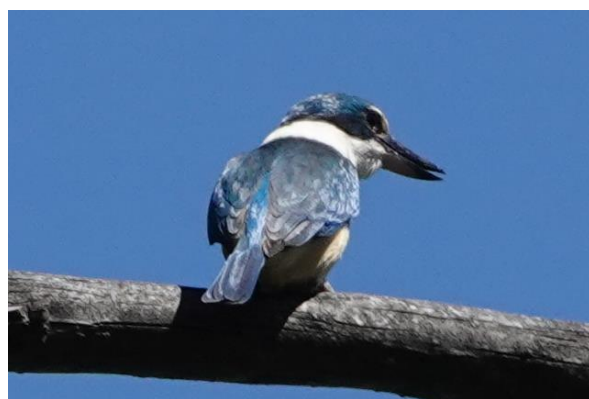
Magpie, Yellow Robin, Striated Pardalote, Rufous whistler, Galah, Brown Thornbill, Grey Fantail, Crimson Rosella, Kookaburra, White-throated Treecreeper, Weebill, Superb Fairywren, Grey-Shrike-thrush, Sacred Kingfisher, Spotted Pardalote, Crested Shrike-thrush.



Grey Fantail (P Seely)



Yellow Robin on nest (P Spencer)



Sacred Kingfisher (P Spencer)

- Stop 2 Mongans Lane Ridgeways Reserve Yackandandah.

Spotted Pardalote, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rufous Whistler, Sacred Kingfisher, Bowerbird, Weebill, Grey Fantail, Australian Raven, Kookaburra, Yellow Tufted Honeyeater, Welcome Swallow, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, White-throated Gerygone, Whipbird, Brown Treecreeper, Little Pied Cormorant, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Grey Shrike-thrush, Common (Indian ) Mynah, White-plumed Honeyeater, Wood Duck, White-naped Honeyeater, Dollarbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Welcome Swallow, Dusky Woodswallow, Peaceful Dove, Red-browed Finch, Eastern Rosella





Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike (P Spencer)



White-naped Honeyeater (P Spencer)

## YACKANDANDAH/ALLAN'S FLAT

24<sup>th</sup> October 2024

A dozen or so of us happily meandered along the Yackandandah Creek path to the Ridgeway memorial area & hut. Birds were numerous, busy and (like us) seemed to be enjoying the very pleasant change to cooler weather. In fact, we were surrounded by activity – frogs, birds, cicadas & other insects (which Dick kept disturbing!).



Unidentified Dragonflies (D Andrews)



Eastern Yellow Robin (P Spencer)



The victorious Orange Spider Wasp with defeated Huntsman (J Palmer)  
[Dick has a great video of the battle]

Jan and Jenny then hosted some short forays around and on their property before a relaxing, shared lunch on their verandah.



Many thanks to Jan and Jenny for their generous hospitality and Bernie for his amazing, carefully compiled test of our birdsong skills.... a highlight was when the specific bird in question, joined its electronic counterpart from the garden!

**Bird List:**

Sacred Kingfisher, Whipbird, Yellow Robin, Welcome Swallow, Rufous Whistler, Common Starling, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Australian Raven, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Grey fantail, Australian Magpie, Striated Pardalote, Magpie Lark, White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, White-throated Treecreeper, Wood Duck, Black Duck, White-naped Honeyeater, Grey Shrike-thrush, Spotted Turtle Dove, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Backbird, Superb Fairy Wren, King Parrot, White-browed Babbler, Oriole, Red Wattlebird, Noisy Friarbird, Kookaburra, Stubble Quail, Brown Quail, Golden-headed Cisticola, Pipit, Restless Flycatcher, Willy Wagtail, Bee-eater, Mistletoe Bird, White-plumed Honeyeater, Satin Bowerbird, Red-browed Finch, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Fairy Martin, Crested Pigeon, Dollarbird, Masked Lapwing, Peaceful Dove, Black-faced Honeyeater, Galah, White-browed Scrubwren, New Holland Honeyeater, Gang Gang. For future reference.

A bird that sounded very much like an Olive Whistler was heard several times. (52+1?)

**Phillip Seely and Bernie Datson.**



New Holland Honeyeater (P Spencer)



Superb Fairy Wren (P Spencer)



**ARTICLES / MEMBER OBSERVATIONS:**

**1. Two interesting invertebrate sightings on Chiltern outing.**

- a) The first was that of a spider egg sac hanging on a long thread from a tree trunk. This is seen occasionally on outings with the precise identification not previously pursued but erroneously thought by me to be that of a Whip Spider. Simultaneously a small spider was seen scurrying on the adjacent part of the tree trunk and a poor photo was all I could get due to movement and camouflage colours.



The egg sac was identified as that of a Two-tailed Spider and the spider photo was consistent with this.



Surprisingly, when I looked at my photo album I found a photo I had taken 5 years ago of a similar spider found on our car door on a trip in Mt Buffalo, which clearly show the two enlarged spinnerets that give the spider its name.

- b) The second sighting was of a small scampering insect on the car door frame noticed by Stephanie when getting out of the car at one of our stops. This was identified as a Planthopper nymph. It has 2 long antennae-like 'tails' and runs backwards and sideways to confuse predators (and this photographer) as to which end is head and which is tail.



Planthopper nymph (N Blair)

Planthoppers are sap sucking bugs that in this family live on Eucalypts which were the tree species where we parked. Again when I went to my photo album I found a photo I had taken of an adult Planthopper 7 years ago also found on the car.



Planthopper adult (N Blair)

Apart from these 2 examples over the years we have had a number of other interesting invertebrate findings found on our cars.

The above 2 identifications were made by Stephanie and her assistant, Mr. Google.

[I have to say, that of Neil's many impressive qualities, his ability to locate & reference previous photos/excursions, is definitely high on my envy list!]

**Neil Blair**

**2. Cottony Cushion Scale - a handsome, but not-so-interesting insect sighting in Rutherglen**

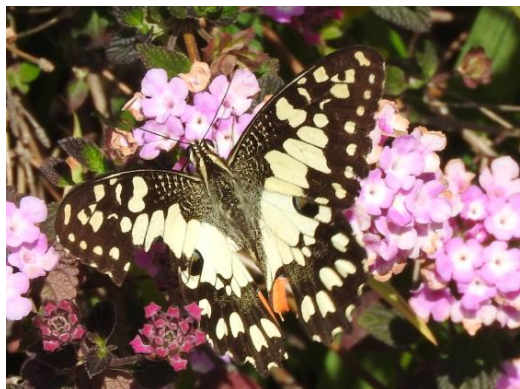


Cottony Cushion Scale (*Icerya purchasi*) on Sage plant in my garden.

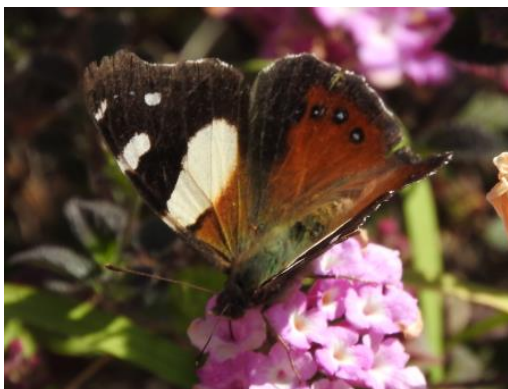
The body of the scale is at the top gripping the stem, with a large, (approx. 1cm) ribbed wax egg sac - cut open to show eggs. This scale reportedly has a wide range of hosts and has been accidentally introduced elsewhere in the world, where it has become a pest.

**Gail Steed**

**3. West Albury Sightings (P Seely)**



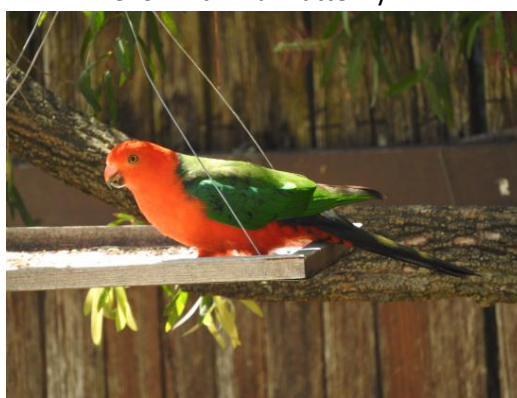
Chequered Swallowtail Butterfly



Yellow Admiral Butterfly



Unidentified, (September)



King Parrot, male



And to finish, a beautifully detailed photo clearly showing how a 'silver' eye is constructed 😊  
[captured by Peter Spencer in his back yard]



### Upcoming Summer Outings –

~ **8<sup>th</sup> December** – Yackandandah & Allans Flat, (9:30 at Isaacs Park). Contact Jan. - COMPLETE

**2025**

~ **12<sup>th</sup> January** – Kremur St Lagoons, (16:00 at boat ramp). Contact Bernie

~ **25<sup>th</sup> January** – Whitehead St Wetlands Corowa, (10:00 near carwash). Contact Phillip.

~ **7<sup>th</sup> February** – Baranduda, (9:30 Baranduda Community Centre). Contact Bernie

~ **9<sup>th</sup> February** – Wonga Wetlands (8:00 Wonga Wetlands car park). Contact Bernie.

~ **22<sup>nd</sup> February** – Chiltern Dams. (9:30 Chiltern Swimming Pool). Contact Gail

*Please confirm details via Ecoportal & contact the leader if you have any questions, need a lift or wish to confirm attendance (useful if weather could lead to cancellation).*

*[Also, this newsletter & club program are very kindly made available via Friends of Chiltern website under the 'News' tab. Thank you Tony 😊 ]*