

# THE FIELD NATURALIST

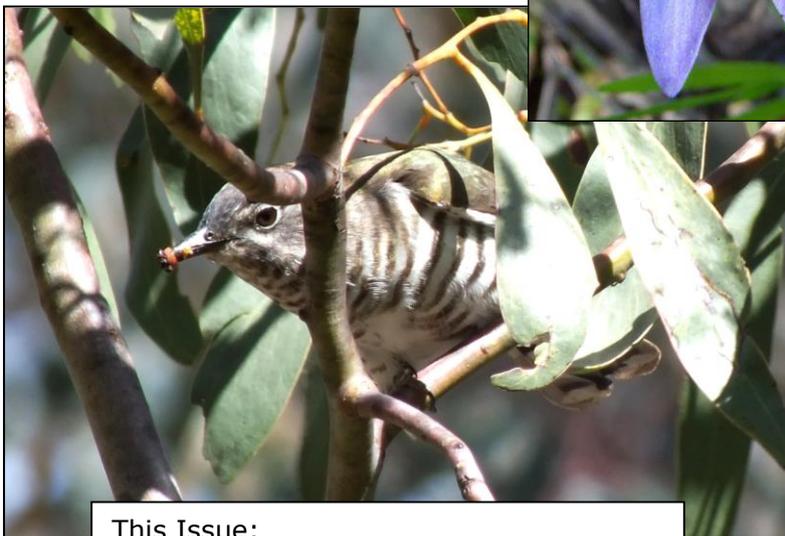
NEWSLETTER NO. 123: October, 2015

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



Berrigan Spider Orchid -  
Photo: R Andrews

Bluebeard Orchid,  
*Pheladenia deformis*  
Photo: R Andrews



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newsletter are  
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Editor, PO Box 251,  
Albury, 2640.

Over the last few months, our president has presented educational talks on local wattles & peas, designed to help us recognise and identify plants we are likely to come across on outings. Each session was attended by approximately 10 members.

We greatly appreciate the time and knowledge he so enthusiastically shares. Subsequent excursions have found us looking downward as often as skyward – a testament to his teaching skills.

An identification list has since been compiled at each subsequent outing (see Table 1, Page 4).

With Neil's support, this is planned to be an ongoing project for the next 12 months.

Neil has provided a comprehensive list to members as well as the following summaries and photos.

#### A. WATTLES – ACACIAS

On the 29<sup>th</sup> July the club had an evening meeting on 25 local wattles, both native and invasive weeds (\*). After distribution of a list of these species, all species were examined photographically highlighting how habit (tree, shrub etc), leaf and phyllode along with inflorescence can lead to an identification. Some specimens were then examined.

**Wattles with bipinnate true leaves (colour, pairs of pinnae, numbers of pinnules, position of glands, time of flowering)**



*Acacia deanei sub-species paucijuga (Deane's Wattle)*

**Small phyllode shrubs (leaf shape, prickly stipules, inflorescence)**



*Acacia acinaceae (Gold-dust Wattle)*

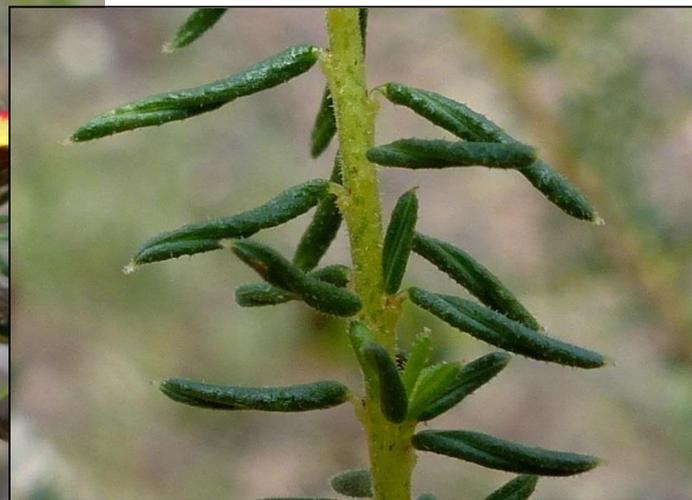
## Miscellaneous Acacias



*Acacia buxifolia* (Box-leaf Wattle)

### B. "PEAS" – FABACEAE

A second talk was held at the Wonga Wetlands facility on the 9<sup>th</sup> September, this time looking at a list of 52 local species in the Fabaceae family. Photos of the habit, leaf, flower and pod of each species were viewed with emphasis on the features that distinguish both the 26 genera and the 52 species listed. On the following outings 17 species were identified (see Table 1, Page 4).



*Dilwynia phyllicoides* (Small-leaf Parrot Pea)



*Eutaxia microphylla* (Common Eutaxia)

**TABLE 1 Wattles & Peas identified on excursions**

<i>Wattles (Acacia spp)</i>		<i>Peas (Fabaceae)</i>	
<b>Wodonga / Beechworth Rd.</b>			
*Cootamundra Wattle	<i>A. baileyana</i>	Not considered this trip	
*Qld Silver/Mt Morgan Wattle	<i>A. podalyriifolia</i>		
Varnish Wattle	<i>A. verniciflua</i>		
Red-stem Wattle	<i>A. rubida</i>		
Silver Wattle	<i>A. dealbata</i>		
*Early Black Wattle	<i>A. decurrens</i>		
Box-leaf Wattle	<i>A. buxifolia</i>		
*White Sallow	<i>A. floribunda</i>		
Blackwood	<i>A. melanoxylon</i>		
<b>Kentucky State Forest</b>			
Deane's Wattle	<i>A. deanei</i> subsp. <i>paucijuga</i>	Common Eutaxia	<i>Eutaxia microphylla</i>
		Broughton Pea	<i>Swainsona procumbens</i>
		Tree Lucerne	* <i>Chamaecytisus palmensis</i>
		Leafy Templetonia	<i>Templetonia stenophylla</i>
<b>Chiltern / Mt Pilot NP</b>			
Gold-dust Wattle	<i>A. acinacea</i>	Broom Bitter-pea (in pod)	<i>Daviesia genistifolia</i>
Drooping Wattle	<i>A. difformis</i>	Hop Bitter-pea	<i>Daviesia latifolia</i>
Hedge Wattle	<i>A. paradoxa</i>	Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea	<i>Daviesia leptophylla</i>
Golden Wattle	<i>A. pycnantha</i>	Small-leaf Parrot-pea	<i>Dillwynia phyllicoides</i>
Juniper Wattle	<i>A. ulicifolia</i>	Showy Parrot-pea	<i>Dillwynia sericea</i>
		Twining Glycine	<i>Glycine clandestine</i>
		Common Wedge-pea	<i>Gompholobium huegelii</i>
		Purple Coral-pea	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>
		Common Hovea (in pod)	<i>Hovea heterophylla</i>
		Austral Indigo	<i>Indigofera australis</i>
		Handsome Flat-pea	<i>Platylobium formosum</i>
		Twiggy Bush-pea (leaves, no flowers)	<i>Pultenaea largiflorens</i>
		Heathy Bush-pea (leaves, no flowers)	<i>Pultenaea procumbens</i>

## WODONGA / BEECHWORTH RD

8<sup>th</sup> August, 2015

Due to bog conditions in the forests, the focus of the outing changed from fungi to acacias (see previous article). Stops were made along the road from Wodonga to Wooragee to look at wattles before stopping at Woolshed Falls where early Helmet orchids (*Corybas incurvus*) and Small Gnat-orchids (*Cyrtostylis reniformis*) were found. Following lunch in Beechworth we had an afternoon walk in the Gorge noting the flowering Correas (*Correa reflexa*) and three types of Hopbush (*Dodonea boroniifolia* – Hairy; *D. viscosa* subsp. *angustissima* - Slender; *D. viscosa* subsp. *cuneata* – Wedge-leaf:)

Some of Peter Spencer's photos follow:



Gnat orchid bud (*Cyrtostylis reniformis*)



Unidentified fungus



Helmet orchid (*Corybas incurvus*)

## MITTA MITTA AND SURROUNDS

23<sup>rd</sup> August 2015

On an 'almost-Spring', late Winter day we set off to revisit Mitta Mitta and the Pioneer Mine Walk. We were last here in Autumn 2013, and again a brief, diversion to the Upper Kiewa Reserve provided another platypus sighting.



En-route, a closer inspection of the Fairy Martin nests seen previously at the Sandy Creek turnoff, suggested that Tree Sparrows & spiders have since taken up residence.

Over the last 100 years, the bush in the open cut amphitheatre of the Pioneer Mine has regenerated, creating a pleasant and cool walk through ferns, Peppermint Gums, tea-tree and wattles.



The leading group were lucky enough to surprise a Lyrebird, which may have been responsible for the “Whipbird” call heard earlier. Fungi were less abundant than last time but the tougher polypores, a purple coral fungus and a small red mushroom, protected in the leaf-litter and moss were still found.



*Coral fungus (Ramaria versatilis?)*



*Hygrocybe spp*

Numerous satin bowerbirds were seen in trees around town and the historic park provided sightings over lunch, including perhaps the same Yellow Robin who watched over the construction of a (now complete) nearby new building. Our final short walk, which took us adjacent to the Bharatralia Jungle Camp, provided some good bird viewing, including what appeared to be a distant flock of Red-browed finches. (See listing next page)

**Mitta Mitta – Pioneer Mine walk (23/08/15)**

Common name:		Sandy Creek Reserve	Pioneer mine walk, park & adjacent Bharatralia camp
Blackbird			*
Bowerbird	Satin		*
Coot		*	
Cormorant	Great	*	
Cormorant	Little Pied	*	
Currawong	Pied		*
Duck	Black	*	
Duck	Hardhead	*	
Fantail	Grey		*
Finch	Red-browed		*
Galah	Pink & Grey	*	
Grebe	Australian	*	
Honeyeater	New Holland		*
Honeyeater	White-plumed	*	
Ibis	Straw-necked	*	
Jacky Winter			*
Kookaburra	Laughing	*	
Lark	Magpie	*	
Lyrebird			*
Moorhen		*	
Pardalote	Spotted		*
Parrot	King		*
Raven	Australian	*	
Robin	Eastern Yellow	Heard	*
Rosella	Crimson		*
Shrike-thrush	Grey		*
Spinebill	Eastern		*
Swan	Black	*	
Swallow	Welcome	*	
Teal	Grey	*	
Thornbill	Brown		*
Tree-creeper	White-throated		*
Wagtail	Willy	*	
Wattlebird	Red	Heard	
Whip Bird			Heard
Whistler	Golden		Heard
Wren	Superb, Fairy	*	*
Wren	White-browed Scrub		*
Also: Platypus		*	
Number of bird species per site:		20	20
<b>Total Australian Bird species</b>		<b>38</b>	

An early spring visit following good rainfall provided us with the opportunity to see this area outside of Autumn. This Box-Cypress Pine forest is a delightful island in a sea of crops & pasture with some excellent examples of White Cypress or Murray Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*).



Various ground orchids were seen on the day as well as the less common Berrigan Spider Orchid (*Caladenia callitrophila*) - see photo front page. Also enjoying the warmth was a smallish Lace Monitor, which disappeared into the hollow of a dead branch as we watched on. Later Philip noticed the footprints and tail marks of what appeared to be a larger goanna at the entrance of an expansive burrow. It was unclear if the burrow was home or a hunting ground. A pleasing sighting along the roadside were Grey-crowned Babblers. The "Yahoo" breeds in cooperative groups and its numbers decline when its habitat becomes too fragmented to support a group large enough to be viable. It is endangered in Victoria but there is enough connected remnant vegetation here to support them. [Note: Because the bird uses 5-6 year old vegetation, it can respond relatively quickly to habitat restoration]

Other sightings on the way to Redlands Hill were Swainsonia, Eutaxia and a very handsome group of Whistling Ducks on a roadside pond – a brilliantly organised route!



Broughton Pea (*Swainsonia procumbens*)



We completed the day at Redlands Hill, particularly noting peas and wattles (see list page 4). Of interest was the Leafy Templetonia (*T. stenophylla*) which was not recorded on either the reserve's species list or the Plants of Western NSW. [Corowa Land Care have been advised]



Leafy Templetonia (*T. stenophylla*)



Varnish Wattle (*A vernicflua*)

Kentucky State Forest / Redland Hill Reserve (13/09/15)

Common name:		Kentucky SF	En-route	Redlands Hill
Apostle Bird				
Babbler	White-browed	*		
Babbler	Grey-crowned		*	
Butcher-bird	Grey		*	
Butcher-bird	Pied		*	
Chough	White-winged	*		*
Cuckoo-shrike	Black-faced	*		
Duck	Pink-eared		*	
Duck	Whistling		*	
Dove	Peaceful	*		*
Falcon	Brown		*	
Fantail	Grey		*	
Galah	Pink & Grey	*		
Honeyeater	White-plumed	*		
Jacky Winter		*		
Kookaburra	Laughing	*		
Lark	Magpie		*	
Miner	Noisy		*	
Owl	Boobook			
Pardalote	Striated		*	
Pelican			*	
Parrot	Red-rumped		*	
Raven	Australian		*	
Robin	Red-capped			
Robin	Hooded	*		
Rosella	Eastern		*	
Shrike-thrush	Grey		*	
Thornbill	Yellow-rumped		*	*
Thornbill	Chestnut-rumped			*
Thornbill	Yellow	*		
Tree-creeper	Brown			*
Tree-creeper	White-throated	*		
Warbler	Western	*		
Wooduck			*	
Whistler	Rufous	*		*
Also:				
Kangaroo		*		
Sugar-glider (remains)		TBC		
Wood cockroach		*		
Goanna		*		
Blue-tongued Lizard			*	
<b>Number of bird species per site:</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Total Australian Bird species</b>			<b>35</b>	

Following the Wattle and Pea theme 13 members, visitors Carol and Anne Young's daughter Margaret, and her two granddaughters, Freya and Annika, visited Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park on a glorious spring day with temperature of about 21°.

We had two stops along Rileys Road which is at the northern end of the park where on arrival we noticed the park was alive with drifts of yellow and gold. The wattles were in splendid colour although September has been dry and the park is drying out fast. We saw amongst others : Sticky Everlasting - *Xerochrysum viscosum*; Hop Bitter Pea - *Daviesia latifolia*; Yam Daisy - *Microseris lanceolata*; Golden Wattle - *Acacia pycnantha*; Gold Dust Wattle - *Acacia acinacea*; Hedge Wattle - *Acacia paradoxa*; Mountain Grevillea - *Grevillea alpina*; Austral Indigo - *Indigofera australis*; Donkey Orchid, Leopard Orchid - *Diuris pardina*; Hoary Guinea Flower - *Hibbertia obtusifolia*; Common Fringe Lily - *Thysanotus tuberosus*; Bulbine Lily - *Bulbine bulbosa*; Purple Coral Pea - *Hardenbergia violacea*; Pink Fingers Caladenia - *Petalochilus fuscatus*; Common Beard Heath - *Leucopogon virgatus*; Daphne Heath - *Brachyloma daphnoides*; Digger's Speedwell - *Derwentia perfoliata*; Cotton Fireweed - *Senecio quadridentatus*; Cherry Ballart - *Exocarpos cupressiformis*; Wax Lip Orchid - *Glossedia major*.



Hedge wattle (Photo – P. Spencer)



Cut-leaf Goodenia  
(Photo – R. Andrews)



Waxlips (Photo – P. Spencer)

Our young visitors found the remains of a small creature - possibly a Tuan, Sugar Glider or similar which will be identified. Neil explained how the prevailing Lichen responded to the smallest amount of water becoming soft and sponge like.

During morning tea Dick Andrews advised of the passing of Dick Southcombe the founder and longtime President and supporter of SEANA and ANN gatherings.

We then moved on to Bull Ant Track which is off Donchie Hill Road north west of Chiltern where we had lunch to the accompaniment of many bird calls. We had very little opportunity to lift our eyes sky wards but Peter spotted a Shining Bronze Cuckoo - *Chalcites hucidus* as identified by Phillip and an Olive-Backed Oriole - *Oriolus sagittatus* observed by most members. Please see Phillip's bird list (next page) for a comprehensive list of other birds observed on the day.

Plants observed in this area amongst others were: Chocolate Lily just coming into flower - *Arthropodium strictum*; Common Early Nancy - *Wurmbea dioica*; male and female flowers on the same stem; Musky Caladenia - *Stegostyla gracilis*; Bed Straw – *Galium sp*; Common Wedge Pea - *Gomphalobium huegellii*; Pale Sundew - *Drosera peltata*; Black-Anther Flax-Lily in bud - *Dianella revoluta*; Many-flowered Mat-Lily - *Lomandra multiflora*; and the highlight being the Bluebeard Caladenia - *Pheladenia deformis*. This orchid is uncommon here and is said to respond to smoke or fire.



Early Nancy (Photo – R. Andrews)



Yam Daisy (Photo – P Spencer)



Bluebeard Orchid (Photo – P Spencer)

Common name:		Riley's Rd	Donchi Rd/ Bullant Track
Cuckoo	Shining bronze	*	
Cuckoo	Fantail	*	
Cuckoo-shrike	Black-faced		*
Chough	White-winged		*
Dove	Peaceful		*
Friarbird	Noisy	*	
Friarbird	Little		*
Gerygone	Western	*	
Honeyeater	Black-chinned	*	
Honeyeater	fuscous	*	
Honeyeater	Yellow-tufted		*
Kookaburra	Laughing		*
Lark	Magpie		*
Lorikeet	Little		*
Mistletoe bird		*	
Oriole	Olive-backed	*	
Shrike-thrush	Grey		*
Weebill		*	
Woodswallow	Dusky		*
<b>Number of bird species per site:</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Total Australian Bird species</b>			<b>19</b>

### “Life of a Meat Eater” (Dr. Victor Hurley)

In August, Bethanga Landcare organised a presentation by Dr Hurley, president of the Australian Raptor Association. He spoke with great familiarity, experience and passion about raptors in our region. He explained the different groups; how to recognise them; their habitat; what they ate and how they hunted; mortality rates and causes; their nesting habits and sensitivity to disturbance. A large and varied group of listeners were entertained as he translated raptor appearance and behaviour into easily understood analogies. And, oh yes, it just happened to be one of the best catered BBQs I have ever attended!

The group is keen to hear of any suggestions for future presentations. If you would like to contact them, the email address is: [bethangalandcaregroup@gmail.com](mailto:bethangalandcaregroup@gmail.com)

### Swamps, Rivers and Ranges Project

A simple, strategic environmental project is being developed in NE Victoria and managed by Stephen Routledge. On October 7<sup>th</sup>, Rutherglen Landcare hosted Chris Tzaros outlining the project as part of a birdwatching workshop.

Funded by the Norman Wettenhall Foundation, it is a 2 year project to seasonally monitor birds in fifty local, 2 ha transects (i.e. 4 /year). 103 species were identified at the initial monitoring in July this year.

Five focal landscapes have been chosen – Winton, Rutherglen, Boorahman, Wooragee and Burgoigee - with 10, generally paired, sites in each landscape. Sites have mainly been chosen on the basis of habitat type and condition, spatial configuration and connectivity. The project will provide data to help identify important areas as well as the impact of season, habitat condition and management approaches. The project also aims to increase community participation and awareness, and build capacity in Landcare networks.

Chris then took us through a brief birdwatching workshop, illustrated by his magnificent photos. He was engaging, informative and generous with his knowledge.

As well as bird appearance (including regional variation, of course!), Chris stressed the importance of call recognition, and then overlaying this information with any relevant behavioural characteristics eg gleaning vs feeding in flight. He even provided a 'checklist' to help separate those elusive 'small brown jobs'.

If anyone is keen to participate or find out more, they can go to the 'Swamps, Rivers and Ranges website homepage and register on the website blog ([swampsriversandranges.org/blog](http://swampsriversandranges.org/blog))

Thank you to the Rutherglen Landcare group for their excellent organisation and hospitality in facilitating the night.

~~~~~

### Upcoming Outings

~11<sup>th</sup> October ~

#### **The Rock Nature Reserve**

- Somewhere new for us, with a unique biophysical position. Explore the Reserve and maybe reach the lookout with its scenic views. [Report next Newsletter]

~24<sup>th</sup> October ~

#### **Mt Benambra**

- One of the peaks overlooking Dartmouth Dam. It has a wide variety of montane botany and birds and spectacular views over the Dam from a platform on the lower level of the tower. Good 2WD road all the way to the top.

~8<sup>th</sup> November ~

#### **Mt Big Ben & Yackandandah**

- A chance to explore the lower reaches of the Stanley State Forest behind Yackandandah and then onto Mt Big Ben with its Lobelias and Hyacinth orchids a feature on previous trips.

~20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> November ~

#### **Colac Colac Weekend**

- An opportunity to further explore the Upper Murray High Country in more depth. A number of Cabins have been held in reserve for members at the Colac Colac Caravan Park, some with ensuites and some without. Caravans and camping also available. Please book direct with the Park 0260761520 and mention you are with the AWFN's Club. Bookings can now be made and are on a first in basis. More details about the itinerary will be sent to members by email.

~13<sup>th</sup> December ~

#### **Mt Buffalo NP**

- Our Christmas get together. Bring lunch to share and enjoy the alpine summer.

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

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#### **Note: Electronic Payments -**

Payments to the club can be made via Internet banking using details below.

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