

THE FIELD NATURALIST

NEWSLETTER NO. 124: March, 2016

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



Black & White Tiger Moth
Spilosoma glatignyi (female)
Photo: N Blair, ID E Collins

Gang Gang Cockatoo,
Callocephalon fimbriatum
Photo: P Spencer



This Issue:

	Page
President's Report	1
The Rock Nature Reserve	3
Mt Benambra	5
Mt Big Ben	6
Colac Colac	8
Mt Buffalo	12
Falls Creek - Mountain	13
Grasshopper	
Wonga Wetlands - Cicadas	14
Corowa Sewage Ponds - Magpie Geese	17

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Field Naturalists' Club
Inc.

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

Presidents Report: Presented at AGM 12th February, 2016

2015 was another busy and successful year for the club. Over the year we held 18 regular outings, 1 night outing, 2 "campouts", a Social luncheon and 3 night talks. We have a healthy membership of 24 and a median attendance at outings of around 10.

This year we maintained our policy of spreading the outings to a wide variety of habitats encircling Albury/Wodonga and visited The Rock, Balldale, Corowa/Rutherglen, Chiltern/Mt Pilot, Beechworth, Mt Buffalo, Myrtleford, Bright, Mt Big Ben, Falls Creek, Mitta Mitta, Dartmouth / Mt Benambra, Cudgewa/Walwa. Closer to home we also visited Baranduda, Wirlinga, Nail Can Hill, Wonga and Kremur St wetlands. Planned trips to Warby Ranges and Benambra NP unfortunately had to be cancelled due to weather and illness. The night visit to Baranduda was very successful with 12 members and 3 visitors attending, suggesting we should look at evening/night outings as a regular event on our calendar. Our social luncheon day was again a highlight with 25 members and guests attending. Our campouts numbers were down, and although both were held when a number of our members were unwell, we may need to look again at these.

Our night talks attracted good numbers as a starting point, and I think we can look to further meetings this year with guest speakers.

Our club profile has improved with listings on Ecoportal, Friends of Chiltern/Mt Pilot NP website and brochures in all Tourist Centres. Many thanks to those who achieved this and a special thanks to David Coleman who continues throughout the year to have our activities posted in the Border Mail.

Our newsletter is a delight to read. A big thanks to our editor, Gail, and her many contributors.

My thanks again to all the committee members for planning and contributing to all the above and a special thanks to David Bird for his behind the scenes work as Treasurer and for his regular updates on our finances and memberships.

Neil Blair

Our thanks to John Hawkins who generously gave up his evening and took the group through a presentation outlining the history of the Wonga wetlands, its role in the reclaimed water process, its management and proposed future plans. It was fascinating to learn of its 'natural, wet/dry cycle' and that 5 of 7 possible floodplain wetlands are represented there. Also pleasing to hear, are the roles bird habitat and ecology are planned to play in its development. [Ed]

After this newsletter, we will be trialling a slight format change. Our bird sighting data will be compiled by Glenda & Neil into a centrally maintained Excel file, allowing data to be filtered eg for sites visited or specific species sightings. A relevant listing will be able to be taken at each outing, but will not be published in full as part of the newsletter.

A reminder too, that subs are now due & remain same cost as last year (see page 1)

Note: Electronic Payments -

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

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*(Please note, the account name should be written in its abbreviated form as shown, and don't forget to include **your** name)*

On a slightly overcast day, a large group headed into the Riverina to a 'new' location - The Rock Nature Reserve (or Kengal Aboriginal Place).

The reserve is relatively small (340 ha) and surrounds a large, distinctive quartzite outcrop, shaped like a crouching lion. The summit has full panoramic views, is 360 m above the Riverina plain and is accessed via the Yerong Nature Trail (a well signed and maintained track, but steep in parts). The uncleared open woodland forest is valuable refuge habitat for vulnerable bird species such as Turquoise Parrot, Pink Robin & Glossy Black Cockatoo (none of which we saw, of course). It is one of the few conservation areas in the Riverina Bioregion and considered a representative sample of the SW slopes region, of which only 0.32% is conserved.



The reserve is also an important area for the protection of Woolly Ragwort (*Senecio garlandii*), a perennial shrub with an extremely restricted geographical distribution and classified as Vulnerable. This is its largest known population and one of the few protected areas within which the species grows.



Hover Fly (Syrphidae species) on *Senecio garlandii*
(Photo – P Spencer)

Our group split into two, one group ascending to the summit & the other investigating the lower slopes (see Phillip's bird list next page). The vegetation at the reserve as seen by the 'climbers', changed with altitude. As the slopes became steeper & the soils thinner, the trees Blakely's Red Gum & Grey Box gave way to White Box & Currawang. As we rose, shrubs along the ridge included Sticky Wallaby bush & Common Fringe Myrtle. At the base of the cliffs were the Woolly Ragworts.

Gail Steed

Birds: The Rock		(P Seely)
Butcher Bird	Grey	
Chough	White-winged	
Corella	Little	
Cuckoo	Shining Bronze	
Fantail	Grey	
Galah	Pink & Grey	
Gerygone	Western	
Hawk	Sparrow	
Kite	Black	
Kookaburra	Laughing	
Magpie	Australian	
Pardalote	Striated	
Raven	Australian	
Robin	Red-capped	
Robin	Yellow (with young)	
Shrike-thrush	Grey	
Thornbill	Buff-rumped	
Thornbill	Chestnut-rumped	
Tree-creeper	White-throated	
Warbler	Speckled	
Whistler	Rufous	
Wren	Superb Fairy	
Total Australian Bird species		22



View from the summit



Artist's impression (S Jakovac)



Currawang (*Acacia doratoxylin*)



Common Fringe Myrtle (*Calytrix tetragona*)
(Photo P Spencer)

In bright spring sunshine, ten members set out for the fire lookout tower. Mt Benambra, at an altitude of 1465 m above sea level, is part of the Great Dividing Range & Alpine National Bioregion. As we moved upwards, this excursion provided an opportunity to view montane and sub-alpine flora, as well as hone our pea & wattle identification skills. A late lunch at the towerman’s hut doubled the bird listing (see below, as provided by Bernie Datson)

Gail Steed

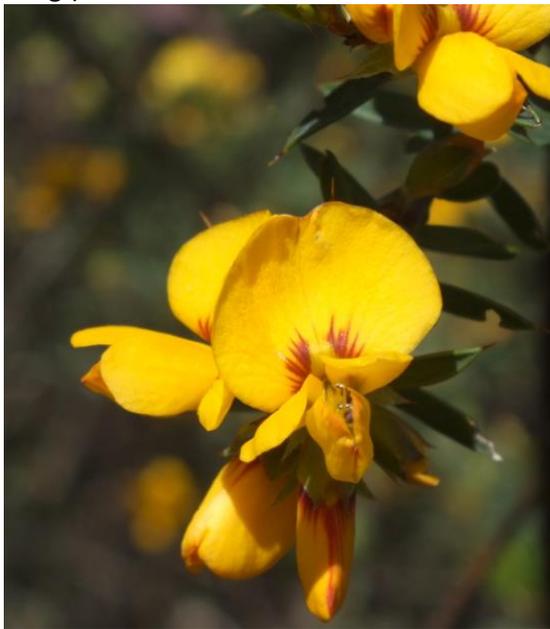
Birds: Mt Benambra	(B. Datson)
Brown Thornbill	
Crimson Rosella	
Fantail Cuckoo	
Flame Robin	
Golden Whistler	
Grey Fantail	
Grey Shrike-thrush	
Laughing Kookaburra	
Noisy Friarbird	
Olive-backed Oriole	
Pied Currawong	
Red Wattlebird	
Rufous Whistler	
Sacred Kingfisher	
Spotted Pardalote	
Striated Pardalote	
Striated Thornbill	
Superb Blue Wren	
White-browed Scrub Wren	
White-throated Treecreeper	
Yellow Robin	
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	
Total: 22 species	



View of Lake Dartmouth from fire tower



Handsome Flat Pea – *Platylobium formosum* (Photo – P Spencer)
(spot the bug!)



Prickly Bush Pea, *Pultenaea forsythiana*
(Photo P Spencer)

MT BIG BEN STATE FOREST

8th November, 2015

Along with a few others – walkers, motor bike riders, 4W-Drivers & various day trippers – 7 of us took advantage of the still, perfect day which had followed recent rain.

In this excursion we continued with the theme of montane and sub-alpine vegetation and moved from Box & Stringybark Eucalypts, through Blue Gum and Peppermint forest to Snow Gum stands in subalpine woodland. It was noted that in more fertile, protected lower elevations, Snow Gums can grow relatively tall (see photo next page).

Of personal interest was the white violet at the summit and the Potato Orchid (Cinnamon Orchid) at our last stop. The Potato Orchid is a leafless saprophytic orchid. The flowers are bell shaped with the labellum or lip enclosed by the rest of the flower with the sepals and petals joined together forming a tube. The flowers are light brown or cinnamon coloured, purportedly with a cinnamon scent, and with a cream coloured inside. The stems grow to about 75 cm tall and produce clusters of up to twenty flowers. Flowering is in late spring and early summer from about October to January varying according to range. The brown stem grows from a thick tuber. The fruit is an oval-shaped capsule growing to about 15 mm.

Gail Steed



Snow Gums at summit (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*)



White violet (*Viola betonicifolia*) at summit



'Scribbles' made by insects on bark of Snow Gums



Cinnamon Bells (*Gastrodia sesamoides*)

Mt Big Ben	(N Blair)
Cuckoo	Fan-tailed
Dove	Peaceful
Eagle	Wedge-tailed
Finch	Red-browed
Honeyeater	Yellow-tailed
Kookaburra	Laughing
Mistletoe Bird	
Robin	Scarlet
Rosella	Crimson
Shrike-thrush	Grey
Silvereye	
Spinebill	Eastern
Thornbill	Brown
Tree-creeper	White-throated
Warbler	Speckled
Whistler	Rufous
Total Australian Bird species	22

COLAC COLAC WEEKEND

20 – 23rd November, 2015

Day 1 of the weekend started with an en-route lunch at the Thomas Mitchell Reserve near Shelley, followed by the Mountain View Walk. Day 2 explored the Bluff Creek/ Falls Nature Trail in the morning & attempted an ascent of The Pimple later that afternoon. Day 3, the Wermatong track was followed by lunch at Walwa and a short visit to the Kurrajongs (Mt Lawson NP)

Botanical notes

Four walks were undertaken in 2 different environments.

A – Wetter gully walks - Mountain Creek Nature Trail at Shelley

- Bluff Creek Nature Trail at Burrowa NP

The upper story was dominated by Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus bicostata*), Peppermint (*Eucalyptus dives* and *radiata*) and Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*).

The middle story contained Shiny Cassinia (*Cassinia longifolia*), Burgan (*Kunzea ericoides*), Musk Daisy-bush (*Olearia argophylla*), Tree Lomatia (*Lomatia fraseri*), Hazel Pomaderris (*Pomaderris aspera*), Dusty Miller (*Spyridium parvifolium*), Prickly Currant-bush (*Coprosma quadrifida*), Blanket Leaf (*Bedfordia arborescens*) and Broad Leaf Hop-bush (*Dodonaea rhombifolia*).

Amongst the ground story was Tasman Flax Lily (*Dianella tasmanica*), Grey Rice Flower (*Pimelea treyvaudii*), Derwent Speedwell (*Derwentia derwentiana*), Austral Bugle (*Ajuga australis*), Prickly Starwort (*Stellaria pungens*), Native Raspberry (*Rubus parviflora*) and Silver Tussock Grass (*Poa caespitosa*).

B – Drier ridge walks - Mt Burrowa Walking Track to the Pimple

- Along Wermatong Track

The upper story was dominated by Peppermint (*Eucalyptus dives* and *radiata*), Stringybark (*Eucalyptus macrorhynchia*), Candlebark (*Eucalyptus rubida*) and Brittle Gum (*Eucalyptus mannifera*).

The middle story contained Dogwood (*Cassinia aculeata*), Mountain Mirbelia (*Mirbelia oxylobioides*), Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*), Pale-fruit Ballart (*Exocarpos strictus*), Red-stem Wattle (*Acacia rubida*), Hop Bitter-pea (*Daviesia latifolia*) and Rough Coprosma (*Coprosma hirtella*).

Amongst the ground story was Heath Milkwort (*Comesperma ericinum*), Grey Guinea-flower (*Hibbertia obtusifolia*), Small Boronia (*Boronia nana*), Common Fringe-lily (*Thysanotus tuberosus*), and a Pink Hyacinth Orchid

Neil Blair

Thank you Neil for a full, carefully thought out and excellently organised weekend, as well as a comprehensive report. Bird sightings & photos follow [Ed].

Colac Colac weekend (G Steed)		DAY 1 (Shelley) Tom Mitchell Reserve & Mountain Walk	DAY 2 Bluff Ck Falls NP; Mt Burrowa Flaggy Ck. walking track	DAY 3 Wermatong Track; The Kurrajongs, Mt Lawson SP
Bowerbird	Satin	*		
Chough	White-winged			*
Cockatoo	White		*	*
Cockatoo	Black	*		
Cockatoo	Gang Gang		*	
Cuckoo	Fantail	*(h)		
Cuckoo	Shining Bronze		*	*
Currawong	Grey		*(h)	
Falcon	Peregrine		*	
Fairy Wren	Superb Blue	*	*	*
Fantail	Grey	*	*	*
Finch	Red-browed		*	
Flycatcher	Restless	*		
Friarbird	Noisy	*	*(on nest)	
Honeyeater	Fuscous		*	
Honeyeater	Brown-headed		*	
Honeyeater	Yellow-faced	*	*	
Kookaburra	Laughing	*	*(h)	*(h)
Oriole			*	*(h)
Pardalote	Striated	*		*
Pigeon	Wonga		*	
Raven	Australian			*
Robin	Yellow		*	
Rosella	Crimson	*	*	*
Shrike-thrush	Grey	*	*(h)	*
Shrike-tit	Crested		*	
Silver eye		*	*(on nest)	
Spinebill	Eastern		*	
Thornbill	sp	*		
Thornbill	Brown		*	*
Thornbill	Striated			*
Tree-creeper	White-throated		*	*
Warbler	Speckled			*
Wattlebird	Red			*
Whipbird	(male)		*	
Whistler	Golden		*(h)	
Whistler	Rufous	*	*	
Woodswallow	Dusky		*	
No of species per site		15	27	16
Total no. of species: 38				



Bower of Satin Bower Bird (Photo – P Spencer)



Burgan, *Kunzea ericoides* (Photo – N Blair)



Native Raspberry, *Rubus parviflora* & Tree Lomatia, *Lomatia frazeri* (Photos – N Blair)



Wonga Pigeon (S Jakovac)



Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo (P Spencer)



Bluff Ck Falls (N Blair)



Galaxia (Photo P Spencer)



Peppermint Bark (Photo – N Blair)



Fringed Lilly (*Thysanotus tuberosus*)



Lace Monitor, *Varanus varius* (Photo S Jakovac)



Hmm....are you sure.....??



View from The Pimple
(for those that didn't make it!)

And the Bluff Creek Nature trail inspired Stephanie, on the spot....

AMONGST THE FIELD NATS (S Jakovac)

Few years ago, 5 or 6 now, I met this interesting man,
Not what you would call it: 'from a common clan'.
He took me to the environment already familiar to me,
And showed me the plants, a new world of knowledge to be.

I have been trying to learn the names that sit hard in my mind,
Like: Pyrantheum or Spiridium, nothing like my kind.
In memory I go back to my youth when I was shown the forest in its useful way,
So I keep searching for the names that match the plants and smell like hay.

The scent of the trees, like mint, gum and eucalyptus,
Calm my mind and keep me safe from laryngitis.
The song of the birds is music to my soul,
The sound of the stream aspires me to a higher goal.

I enjoy this new world of knowledge,
It inspires me to walk the bush and forage.
The berries, the fruit, the fungi all over the hills,
Become another chapter in my culinary skills.

I like to drink the water from the creek and pick the fruits on my walks.
The camera does its job and the nature continuously talks.
Serenity and peas are under our hats,
What a pleasant company are all the Field Nats.

4 members attended the Christmas outing to Mt Buffalo. The weather was lovely and cool all day and we enjoyed two leisurely walks. The morning walk was the Dicksons Falls Nature Walk and the afternoon walk was the Gorge Heritage Walk. In between we enjoyed a late lunch at the base of The Cathedral. Both walks revealed the botanical biodiversity of the region with a large plant list but it was noted that there was no great display by any one species.

The botanist's bird list was as follows:

- Flame Robin
- Black Duck
- Coot
- Australian Raven
- Nankeen Kestrel
- Crimson Rosella
- Fan-tail Cuckoo
- Yellow-faced Honeyeater
- Red Wattlebird
- Spotted Pardalote
- Grey Fantail

Mt Buffalo has 4 endemic plant species ie found nowhere else.

- Buffalo Grevillea – *Grevillea alpivaga*
- Buffalo Sallee – *Eucalyptus mitchelliana*
- Buffalo Sallow Wattle – *Acacia phebophylla*
- Fern-leaf Baeckia – *Sannantha crenulata*

The Fern-leaf Baeckia has been a taxonomists delight, having had 5 Genus name changes with the more recent being *Baeckia*, then *Babbingtonia* and now *Sannantha*. The species name, *crenulata*, has been more consistent. It has been listed as Vulnerable in both Victoria and Australia.

Nice, healthy examples of this shrub can be found along the Eurobin Creek bank, adjoining the picnic area at the entrance to the Park.

Neil Blair (Photos & article)



4 members went on this year's alpine camp, again staying at Viking Lodge, and participating in the following program.

Day 1. Mountain Creek Gully walk, Howman's Gap back road,

Day 2. Walk out to Tawonga Huts,

Day 3. Walk from Cope's Hut to Wallace's Hut and after a wet period a walk along the Falls Creek Village aqueduct.

Day 4. Home via the Bogong High Plains Rd and Omeo Hwy to Mitta Mitta with walks to Faithful's Hut and the Mitta Mitta Pioneer Mine.



Mountain Creek Gully (Photo – D Andrews)



Southern Water Skink, *Eulamprus tympanum* (Photos N Blair)



Forest Mint - *Mentha laxiflora*



Walk to Tawonga Hut
(Photos D Andrews)



Euphyia sp. moth on Orange Everlasting (*Xerochrysum subundulatum*)



Tawonga Huts



Cope's Hut (Photo – S Jakovac)



Faithful's Hut (Photo – N Blair)



Glen Wills Cemetery (Photos S Jakovac)

Once again it was a most enjoyable trip. The weather was cool and although there were rainy periods these had only a minimal effect on the outings, preventing a walk on the afternoon of Day 3. Over 100 plant species were identified and although the species diversity was present, the usual proliferation seemed a little subdued this year. Around 26 bird species were noted with the list including the Yellow-faced, White-eared and Singing Honeyeaters and the Wonga Pigeon (Mitta Mitta). The alternative route home provided a very pleasant day, visiting a number of campsites along the Big River, Mitta River and Snowy Creek as well as the Glen Wills Cemetery, in addition to the above mentioned walks.

As the number of participants has fallen away in the last couple of years, the Club needs to review whether it wishes to keep Alpine trips on its agenda.

Mountain Grasshopper – *Acripeza reticulata* (found on walk to Faithful's Hut)



(Photos - D Andrews)

Although called a grasshopper this species belongs to the cricket suborder of Orthoptera, in the superfamily Tettigonioides, which contains the commonly named long-horned grasshoppers, bush crickets and katydids, rather than true grasshoppers.

It is widely spread in eastern Australia from the plains near Broken Hill to the subalpine woodlands, although in Tasmania it is found above the treeline in the snow country. It is often found on Daisy Bush (*Olearia*) and Snow Beard Heath (*Leucopogon*).

Male and female have similar body markings but only the males have wings. The blue and red/orange markings are warning bands used when disturbed. Often when disturbed the female will fall from the shrub and play “dead”. Interestingly the male may be found lying on its side on the ground, basking.

Birds noted on Fall’s Creek Outing:

Mountain Ck	Howman’s Gap	Falls Ck
Noisy Friarbird	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Flame Robin
Sacred Kingfisher	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Grey Fantail
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Pied Currawong	Singing Honeyeater
Superb Blue-wren	Raven	Silvereeye
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Richard’s Pipit	Striated Thornbill
Grey Fantail		Raven
Brown Thornbill		Nankeen Kestral
Kookaburra		Richard’s Pipit
Olive-backed Oriole		Magpie
Satin Bowerbird – female		Little Black Cormorant
White-throated Treecreeper		Great Cormorant
		White-eared Honeyeater
		Spotted Pardalote

WONGA WETLANDS

10th January, 2016

The heat was on, but 9 brave people turned up for a morning walk through Wonga Wetlands. We put the telescope to a good use, spotting many different bird species. Amongst them, up high on the dead tree, were two resident Sea Eagles. Sitting still, the heat did not seem to worry them. It was a sheer delight to observe them from a few different vantage points. There were also summer visitors like Dollar Bird and the Rainbow Bee-eater.

The ponds were buzzing with water birds. It was nice to spot Chestnut Teal Duck in breeding plumage (see list below, provided by Glenda Datson).



Sea Eagle pair



Dollar Bird
(Photos – Dick Andrews)



Rainbow Bee-eater

Another interesting find was numerous Cicada shells, left behind on many trees. The sounds of the summer were in full and deafening blast with the songs of the male, Black Prince cicadas.



Adult Black Prince

Final nymphal skin (Photos – Dick Andrews)

Australian Cicadas (Stephanie Jakovac

- over 200 species in Australia
 - female lays eggs in bark of tree branches. Eggs hatch after several weeks and nymphs fall to ground, dig down to 40cm and feed on sap from tree roots. All nymphal stages occur underground taking up to 6 or 7yrs (in USA up to 17yrs).
 - emerging adult climbs upright structure (tree, fence post, building etc.) and a few hours after dusk sheds final nymphal skin, dries wings and flies off leaving skin still clinging to its structure.
 - only males sing and each species has its own mating song. Noise levels in some common species singing together can be painful to human ears, being louder than a pneumatic drill but the cicadas protect their own ears against the noise. There are two components of the call; a rhythmic revving, which is more prevalent when the weather is cooler, and a continuous call, more common in hot weather
 - adults feed on sap from a range of plants from eucalypts to grasses. The adult life-cycles lasts only a few weeks in most species. Major predators during this time include birds and wasps.
- [For more information, Google 'Australian Cicadas' and click on the Australian Museum site]

The Song of Cicadas by Roderic Quinn

Yesterday there came to me
 From a green and graceful tree,
 As I loitered listlessly
 Nothing doing, nothing caring,
 Light and warmth and fragrance sharing
 With the butterfly and bee,
 While the sapling-tops a-glisten
 Danced and trembled, wild and willing,
 Such a sudden sylvan shrilling
 That I could not choose but listen.
 Green cicadas, black cicadas,
 Happy in the gracious weather,
 Floury-baker, double-drummer,
 All as one and all together,
 How they voiced the golden summer!
 Stealing back there came to me
 As I loitered listlessly
 'Neath the green and graceful tree,
 Nothing doing, nothing caring,
 Boyhood moments spent in sharing
 With the butterfly and bee
 Youth and freedom, warmth and glamour,
 While cicadas round me shrilling,
 Set the sleepy noontide thrilling
 With their keen insistent clamor.
 Green cicadas, black cicadas,
 Happy in the gracious weather,
 Floury-bakers, double-drummers
 All as one and all together—
 How they voiced the bygone summers!

Wonga Wetlands Species (List provided by Glenda Datson)	
Black Duck	Mistletoe Bird
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Mudlark
Black-fronted Dotteral	Pelican
Black-winged Stilt	Rainbow Bee-eater
Chestnut Teal	Red-browed Finch
Clamorous Reed Warbler	Red-rumped Parrot
Coot	Royal Spoonbill
Crimson Rosella	Sacred Ibis
Darter	Sacred Kingfisher
Dollar Bird	Superb Blue Fairywren
Eastern Scrubwren	White-bellied Sea Eagle
Great Egret	White-faced Heron
Grey Fantail	White-plumed Honeyeater
Grey Shrike-thrush	Willy Wagtail
Grey Teal	Wood Duck
Kookaburra	Yellow Rosella
Lapwing	Yellow Spoonbill
Little Pied Cormorant	Yellow-crested Cockatoo
Magpie	
Total: 38 species	

COROWA SEWAGE PONDS

February 14th, 2016

Again this location didn't disappoint and is an ideal waterbird spot for a scope. A small band of 4 enjoyed a leisurely and slightly cooler day. As can be seen from the bird list below, some extra duck sightings this year included the musk and blue-bill duck. A particular highlight was the family group of Magpie Geese out on the water, complete with 6 or 7 tan goslings (see article). The actual numbers of birds was generally less than at last year's visit (a month later in March, at opening of duck season) but the species count was slightly up.

Corowa Sewage Ponds Species			
<i>Common name</i>		<i>Common name</i>	
Cockatoo	Sulphur-crested	Kite	Whistling
Coot	Eurasian	<i>King Fisher</i>	<i>Sacred</i>
Corella	Little (Corowa)	Kookaburra	Laughing (Corowa)
Cormorant	Little Black	Lapwing	Masked
Cormorant	Little Pied	<i>Martin</i>	<i>Fairy</i>
Cormorant	Great	Magpie	Australian
Darter	Australian	Magpie-lark	
<i>Duck</i>	<i>Blue Billed</i>	Miner	Noisy (Corowa)
Duck	Freckled	Moorhen	Dusky
<i>Duck</i>	<i>Musk</i>	Lapwing	Masked
<i>Butcher Bird</i>	<i>Grey (h)</i>	<i>Parrot</i>	<i>Red-rumped</i>
Duck	Pacific Black	Pelican	Australian
Duck	Pink-eared	Pigeon	Crested
Duck	Hardhead	Raven	Australian
Duck	Wood	<i>Spoonbill</i>	<i>Yellow</i>
Egret	Great	Shoveler	Australasian
<i>Fantail</i>	<i>Grey</i>	Swallow	Welcome
Goose	Magpie (with goslings)	Swamphen	Purple
<i>Grass Bird</i>	<i>Little</i>	<i>Swamp Harrier</i>	
Grebe	Australian	Swan	Black

Corowa Sewage Ponds Species			
<i>Common name</i>		<i>Common name</i>	
Grebe	Hoary-headed	<i>Starling</i>	
<i>Hobby</i>	Australian	Teal	Grey
Heron	White-faced	<i>Teal</i>	<i>Chestnut</i>
Honeyeater	White-plumed	Wagtail	Willy
Ibis	White	<i>Warbler</i>	<i>Reed</i>
Ibis	Straw-necked	Woodswallow	
Kite	Black	Wren	Superb Blue
	Total Australian Bird species		54

Note: Birds in italics were not recorded last year



Magpie Goose (*Anseranas semipalmata*) with chestnut goslings

In pre-European times the magpie goose was widespread across northern and southern Australia but by 1911 or soon after it had disappeared from all southern regions. Today there are sporadic breeding groups in the southern states, and the Corowa Sewerage Ponds has one.

On this outing we saw a larger number than we have previously recorded with 11 or more adults. But the highlight was a family group of 3 adults and 6 or more goslings swimming in one of the dams, keeping close to the bank which had lots of protective vegetation.

It was noted that one of the adults had a more prominent knob on its head, seen with age and perhaps more so in males. This would be consistent with the observations that, although magpie geese mate for life, the male may have two females who lay their eggs in the same nest and all three adults share incubation and parenting duties.

On average incubation takes 24 days and fledging takes 77 days. During this time predation from crows, eagles, goannas, foxes etc. can take its toll. Happily our group seem to have a high survival rate.

[According to a Food Australia article “...the native goose is making its way south.” No, not to our swamps or lakes, but to our kitchens it seems. They are an expanding part of the indigenous native foods industry – the Larrakia people of Darwin coordinate the slaughter of 200-300 Magpie Geese a week & some are destined to supply a host of high end, southern restaurants. Ed]

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**Upcoming Outings**

**~13<sup>th</sup> March - Chiltern Valley Dams 1 & 2**

**~10<sup>th</sup> April – West Albury Wetlands**

**~23<sup>rd</sup> April – Bright**

**~8<sup>th</sup> May – Baranduda**

**~28<sup>th</sup> May – Henty area**

*Full outing details published in separate list (contact Secretary for a copy)  
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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Joke submitted to Herald Sun (20/01/16), by Hannah, of Rochester (thank you Phillip, for sharing this)



More than 200 crows were found dead recently and there was concern that they may have died from avian flu. A bird pathologist examined the remains and, to everyone's relief, confirmed the problem was not avian flu, but rather vehicular impact.

Various colours of paints appeared on the birds' beaks and claws. By analysing the paint residues it was determined 98% of the crows had been killed by trucks, while only 2% were hit by a car.

An ornithological behaviourist was hired to determine if there was a cause for the disproportionate percentage of truck kills versus car kills. He very quickly concluded the cause: when crows eat roadkill, they always have a lookout crow in a nearby tree to warn of impending danger. He discovered that while all the lookout crows could shout "Cah", not a single one could shout "Truck"!