



Sacred Kingfisher, Wonga Wetlands - P Seely



Swift Parrot, Hume Dam wall – P Spencer



Female Satin Bowerbird, Gap Flat – J Palmer



Male Satin Bowerbird, bower building – Cottontree Creek, J Shepherd

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

Autumn Issue, 2021:

	Page
Chiltern & Dams	2
Corowa & Redlands Reserve	3
Woomargama Station	5
Gum Swamp, Walla Walla & Morgan's Lookout	7
Eldorado	8
Mt Granya	10
Member photos	12
Starling mummuration	12
Fungal Footnotes	13
Upcoming Outings	13

We decided to look at two little-known dams in the Chiltern area. First of all we drove up to Lake Barambogie, formerly the water supply for Chiltern. This is situated south of the motorway, adjoining the Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park. The margins of the dam are heavily vegetated, and the surrounding woodland is in a relatively good condition. The stretch of water extends approximately north-south for about 200 m, but is surprisingly lacking in wetland birds. Between us, during three visits including this one, no waterbirds have been found; a rather puzzling state of affairs. However, the surrounding bush is well populated by woodland birds. Interesting Honey-eater species included Fuscous, White-plumed, New Holland and Eastern Spinebill. Other highlights were an Eastern Yellow Robin, two Rainbow Bee-eaters, and a flock of about ten Red-browed Finches.



Lake Barambogie (R Andrews)



Barambogie Dam (R Andrews)

The next site, owned by Vic. Parks and recommended by Neville Bartlett, was a dam called the Barambogie Block, found close to Chiltern between the railway and the Hume Motorway. Although the gate is locked, we all managed to squeeze through the fence. According to Neville, the water fills a natural depression in the landscape and is home to a significant range of waterbirds. Good sightings of Australasian Shovellers and Pink-eared Ducks were made, together with a White-necked Heron. Generally there are few woodland birds present because of the presence of Noisy Miners.

To finish the day, we went to No.2 dam, and while most people drove to the bird hide, I walked the circuit to atlas the birds. Remarkably there were few waterbirds on the dam, and only the commonest species of woodland birds were found. The best sighting was by Bernie Datson and myself near the entrance where we saw a number of Brown Treecreepers, possibly nesting in a large old log.

John Shepherd

[Thanks John, for introducing us to some new sites]



Lydia Lichen Moth (*Asura lydia*)
(R Andrews)



Common Grass Blue (*Zizina otis*) on Yam Daisy
(R Andrews)

T= Town, D= Chiltern Dam (1 or 2), B= Barambogie Dam

Bee-eater Rainbow	T	Grebe Australasian	B	Pigeon Crested	D1
Butcher Bird Grey	B	Heron White-faced	B,D2	Raven Australian	T,D1
Butcher Bird Pied	D2	Honeyeater Fuscous	T	Robin Eastern Yellow	T,D1
Chough White-winged	T,D2	Honeyeater White-plumed	T,D1	Shoveller Australasian	B
Coot Eurasian	B,D1	Honeyeater Yellow-faced	T	Shrike-thrush Grey	T,D1,D2
Cormorant Little Black	D1,2	Lapwing Masked	D2	Spinebill Eastern	T
Cormorant Little Pied	B	Magpie Australian	All	Swallow Welcome	D2
Duck Pacific Black	B	Magpie-lark	D1	Teal Grey	B
Duck Pink-eared	B	Martin Tree	C	Treecreeper Brown	D2
Fairy-wren Superb	T,D2	Pardalote Spotted	T,D1	Treecreeper White – throated	T
Fantail Grey	T	Pardalote Striated	B	Whistler Rufous (s)	T
Flycatcher Restless	D2	Pelican Australian	D2		

Bernard Datson

COROWA AND REDLANDS RESERVE

27th March 2021

On a stunning Autumn day, Phillip led about 15 of us to the Corowa sewage ponds. The shire do an excellent job in maintaining access and surrounds for walking and viewing.

The new, electronic bird list provided by Bernie, referenced against Phillip’s, largely tells the story: over 60 species - a rich environment for water birds, insects & visiting Field Nats! Phillip and David Bird kindly provided scopes for us to get closer views. The water level was higher than our previous visits so the Spotless Crake was not seen amongst the reeds in its usual spot. Also, raptors were in much fewer supply than on some previous visits. However, Phillip noted a mass exodus of birds from a distant tree before seeing the cause – the arrival of a juvenile White-bellied Sea Eagle. Personal highlights here were the overall number of species; the male, blue-billed ducks almost glowing in the sunlight; a sensational viewing of the Reed Warbler; the beauty and elegance of the Darter, and the Magpie Geese of course – especially when in group flight.



Juvenile White-bellied Sea Eagle – *Haliaeetus leucogaster*
(P Seely)



Magpie Geese – *Anseranus semipalmata*
(P Spencer)



Darter - *Anhinga melanogaster*
(P Seely)



Little Pied Cormorant - *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*
(P Seely)



Philobata arabella
(R Andrews)



Paper Wasp - *Polistes* sp.
(R Andrews)



Turtle nest & eggs dug up by fox
(P Seely)

Lunch was had in the riverside comfort near the Rowing Club, followed by a short walk at Redlands where we carefully manoeuvred around golden webs. Bernie scouted off in a different direction, tracking down a few more woodland birds not seen earlier or by the others. We met in the middle over a Chestnut-rumped Thornbill.



Female, ~ 4 cm



Male, ~ 6 mm



Egg sac, ~ 2 cm

Golden Orb-weaving Spider - *Nephila edulis* (P Spencer)

[According to a Queensland Museum Fact Sheet, this species was named '*edulis*' after the original describer noted indigenous people eating this spider in New Caledonia...]

Gail Steed

Bird list, **Corowa and Redlands**

27/03/21

C= Corowa, R= Redlands

Butcher Bird Grey	R	Gerygone Western	R	Rosella Crimson	C
Cockatoo Sulphur-crested	C	Goose Magpie	C	Rosella Eastern	C
Coot Eurasian	C	Grebe Australasian	C	Rosella Yellow (ssp)	C
Corella Little	C	Grebe Hoary-headed	C	Shrike-thrush Grey	CR
Cormorant Great	C	Heron White-faced	C	Silvereye	c
Cormorant Little Pied	C	Honeyeater Blue-faced	C	Spoonbill Yellow-billed	c
Darter Australasian	C	Honeyeater White-plumed	C	Starling common	C

Duck Blue-billed	C	Ibis Australian White	C	Swallow Welcome	c
Duck Maned (Wood)	C	Ibis Straw-necked	C	Swamphen Australasian	c
Duck Musk	C	Kingfisher Sacred	c	Swan Black	c
Duck Pacific Black	C	Kite Whistling	C	Teal Chestnut	c
Duck Pink-eared	C	Kookaburra Laughing	CR	Teal Grey	c
Duck Shelduck (Mountain)	C	Lapwing Masked	C	Thornbill Buff-rumped	R
Duck Shoveler	C	Magpie Australian	CR	Thornbill Chestnut-rumped	R
Duck White -eyed (Hardhead)	C	Magpie-lark	C	Thornbill Yellow-rumped	R
Fairy-wren Superb	CR	Pardalote Spotted	C	Treecreeper Brown	R
Fantail Grey	CR	Pardalote Striated	R	Treecreeper White -throated	R
Finch Red-browed	C	Pigeon Crested	C	Wagtail Willie	CR
Friarbird Noisy (s)	CR	Raven Australian	CR	Warbler Australian Reed	C
Galah	CR	Robin Eastern Yellow	R	Wattlebird Red	C
				Whistler Rufous (s)	C

Total = 62

Bernard Datson

WOOMARGAMA

11th April, 2021

We visited Woomargama Station on 11 April for a joint outing with Birdlife, led by Kylie Durant from Holbrook Landcare. The owner of the property, Clare Cannon, joined us and gave us a talk about the running of the station, which is partly a working farm and partly a conservation property. One of their specialities is the production of highest grade merino wool which is bought by a number of international clothing companies including North Face.

We were escorted by Kylie into a woodland valley with some open grassland and from here the participants spread out in all directions searching for birds. Unfortunately it was a freezing cold day and two participants left after about an hour before they froze to death. The margin of the grassland and woodland was unfortunately inhabited by a significant number of Noisy Miners and this more than likely reduced the bird count.



However, the bird list was still quite impressive, especially the sighting of Rose and Hooded Robins: the latter seen as we drove out and became the highlight of the day. These robins were very obliging and many photos were taken.



Female



Male

Hooded Robin - *Melanodryas cucullata* (P Spencer)

There is a very interesting website about the property – look up “woomargamastation.com.au”. It details their work, history, environmental stewardship and vision.

John Shepherd

Bird list, Woomargama Station

11/04/21

Butcher Bird Grey	Honeyeater White-plumed	Rosella Crimson
Butcher Bird Pied	Jack Winter	Rosella Eastern
Chough White-winged	Kestrel Nankeen	Shrike-thrush Grey
Cockatoo Sulphur-crested	Kookaburra Laughing	Spinebill Eastern
Cuckoo Fan-tailed	Magpie Australian	Thornbill Brown
Cuckoo Shrike Black-faced	Magpie-lark	Thornbill Buff-rumped
Currawong Pied	Miner Noisy	Thornbill Striated
Duck Maned (Wood)	Pardalote Spotted	Thornbill Yellow-rumped
Duck Pacific Black	Pardalote Striated	Thornbill Yellow
Fantail Grey	Pigeon Bronzewing	Treecreeper Brown
Friarbird Noisy (s)	Pigeon Crested	Treecreeper White -throated
Galah	Raven Australian	Wagtail Willie
Heron White-faced	Robin Eastern Yellow	Wattlebird Red
Honeyeater Blue-faced	Robin Hooded	Whistler Rufous (s)
Honeyeater Fuscous	Robin Rose	Woodswallow Dusky

45

Bernard Datson

And of course, birds were not the only things to be seen...



Pennyroyal - *Mentha pulegium*
(R Andrews)



Parsons Bands – *Eriochilus cucullatus*
(R Andrews)



Unidentified fungus
(P Seely)

The day was a lovely mild autumn day with light breezes and 14 members went to our first stop, Morgan's Lookout on the north bank of Billabong Creek, named after the bushranger 'Mad Dog' Morgan (né John Fuller) who operated in the area in the 1860's. After a quiet start and morning tea, with only a Pied Butcherbird welcoming us from the roof of a silo, over 20 different species of birds flew past from East to West, perching in the nearby trees briefly before moving on.



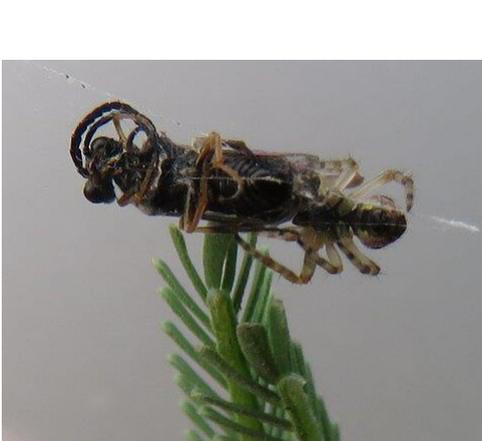
Rock Isotome - *Isotoma axillaris*, Morgans Lookout. (P Seely)

From there we went to view Wiesners Swamp Nature Reserve, a few kilometres to the north on Riders Road.

The swamp reserve covers 103 ha and is completely surrounded by open farmland. The reserve is a mix of River Red Gum and mixed Box trees. In the past it has been grazed and partly cleared. Today it is completely dry and little understory although there are signs of recovery and that revegetation has been carried out recently.

[The wetland is part of the Murray Wetland Carbon Storage Project, initiated in 2012, which works with landholders to rehabilitate wetlands to increase their capacity to store carbon and improve biodiversity values. It is a partnership between Murray Local Land Services and the [Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group Ltd](#). Approximately 3000 ha of wetlands across the Murray region are currently being rehabilitated under this project.]

There were very few birds to be seen but the centre was teeming with mosquitoes.



Unidentified spider and prey
(R Andrews)



unknown lacewing
(R Andrews)



mosquito (her last meal!)
(R Andrews)

For lunch we then went to Gum Swamp just north of Walla Walla, which has similar flora to Wiesners Swamp. Again the swamp was completely dry and Petrie’s Creek which flows through it was also completely dry. There were a few birds seen and heard, but it was a far cry from being recommended as a good canoeing venue and with a quoted 150 species recorded.



A trio of White-plumed Honeyeaters, *Lichenostomus penicillatus*- (P Spencer)

Birdlist, Gum Swamp Reserve/ Walla Walla/ Morgan’s Lookout 24/04/21

Butcher Bird Pied	Galah	Pigeon Crested
Chough White-winged	Gerygone Western	Raven Australian
Cockatoo Sulphur-crested	Heron White-faced	Rosella Eastern
Corella Little	Honeyeater White-plumed	Shelduck Australian
Cuckoo Shrike Black-faced	Kite Black-shouldered	Shrike-thrush Grey
Currawong Pied	Kookaburra Laughing	Starling common
Dove Peaceful	Magpie Australian	Thornbill Yellow-rumped
Duck Maned (Wood)	Magpie-lark	Thornbill Yellow
Egret Eastern Cattle	Martin Tree	Wagtail Willie
Fairy-wren Superb	Miner Noisy	Weebill
Fantail Grey	Pardalote Spotted	Whistler Australian Golden
Flycatcher Restless	Pardalote Striated	Whistler Rufous
Friarbird Noisy	Parrot Red-rumped	

39

Bernard Datson

ELDORADO

8th May, 2021

A good turnout converged on Edorado village on a lovely day for an outing. Many of us came via Old Coach Rd where Mick Webster of FOC led us through the Wheel Cactus control story in this part of the Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park. Some members will remember the article Mick wrote for our 2020 autumn newsletter (# 139). This was our opportunity to be reminded of how it works, see the program in the field and have our questions answered. He showed us 2 locations, took us through the methodology, and we witnessed his excitement on observing the doubling of previously noted infestation levels at the second site. We learnt how to distinguish Prickly Pear (*Opuntia stricta*) from Wheel Cactus (*O. robusta*) and the differences in their management.



In general, Cochineal biocontrol of Opuntoid cacti is cost-effective, reduces chemical use (not permitted in park anyway), kills small plants, reduces vigour of mature plants, can access host plants on inaccessible terrain (or where landholders are absent) and increases required follow-up time, making reinfestation easier to manage.

Disadvantages are that the agent can be very slow to establish (many years), is impacted by weather, and may be predated by ants or beetles. It is also more effective in dense populations, so Mick believes Wheel Cactus has the potential to be an even bigger problem in the park than Prickly Pear. The group has GPS'd all known locations and are keen to be notified of any sightings. If anyone is interested in assisting in this program they can contact Mick Webster (websterm@netc.net.au) or keep an eye on the Friends Facebook page.

[Be warned though, it seems that killing Wheel cactus is addictive??]

Biological control has had some devastating failures in Australia but when successful, is considered very cost effective. It was estimated in a 2006 Cooperative Research Centre paper that every \$1 invested in weed biocontrol has seen a return of \$23 to the economy. Once an equilibrium is established, agents are generally self-sustaining, work well in conjunction with other controls (i.e. flower/fruit management, burial, direct injection or removal, and other biocontrol agents) and able to be implemented with community group collaboration.

The process for establishing a biocontrol agent is to:

- a. Understand the weed ecology – native country 'vs' introduced;
- b. Investigate any natural, native predators; its impact on the target plant; its establishment requirements and the host range;
- c. Conduct host specificity testing;
- d. Determine Quarantine requirements; &
- e. Complete a full Risk assessment (data compiled by Agriculture Victoria Research Division).

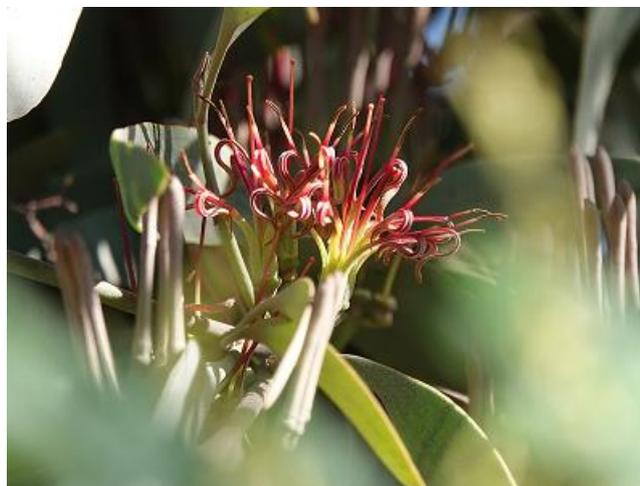
Some weeds where biocontrol has had significant success in many locations are - Patterson's Curse, English (Scotch) Broome, Prickly Pear, Wheel Cactus and Gorse.

Some others such as Blackberry, Serrated Tussock, Boneseed, Cape Ivy, Fireweed and Wandering Trad are still in the trial, implementation or 'pipeline' stage.

Lunch was had in town before moving on to the Dredge area, followed by Reid's Walk along Reedy Creek. There were some bird good sightings along the creek but I personally saw more when I returned & sat quietly. Later, watching a small, mixed group of Rufous Whistlers diving into the shallow water from overhanging branches was a lesson for me to be still and quiet more often. After such a stop/start year, it was enjoyable to catch up with everyone in a pleasant spot on a lovely day.



Restless Flycatcher – *Myiagra inquieta*
(J Palmer)



Grey Mistletoe – *Amyema quandang*, on acacia
(P Spencer)

Disappointingly I was unable to identify the small lemon yellow mushroom found growing on wood along the creek bank. I have included Dick's photos in the hope that someone else can? Thinking *Mycena* sp.....?



It appeared solitary, with white gills & spores, a smooth & cartilaginous stem, gill attachment probably free or adnexed, cap smooth and convex with lightly striate margin.

Gail Steed

Birdlist, Eldorado area

08/05/21

Blackbird Common	Honeyeater Brown -headed	Rosella Crimson
Bowerbird Satin	Honeyeater Fuscous	Rosella Yellow (ssp)
Chough White-winged	Honeyeater White-plumed	Shrike-thrush Grey
Currawong Pied	Honeyeater Yellow-tufted	Silvereye
Dove Peaceful	Kookaburra Laughing	Swallow Welcome
Eagle Wedge-tailed	Magpie Australian	Thornbill Brown
Fairy-wren Superb	Magpie-lark	Thornbill Yellow-rumped
Fantail Grey	Oriole Olive-backed	Treecreeper White -throated
Finch Red-browed	Pardalote Spotted	Wagtail Willie
Flycatcher Restless	Pardalote Striated	Wattlebird Red
Galah	Parrot Australian King	Weebill
Honeyeater Black-chinned	Raven Australian	Whistler Rufous
	Robin Eastern Yellow	

37

Bernard Datson

MT GRANYA

24th April, 2021

We met at Bellbridge and drove up to the Cottontree Picnic area, 2 kms from Granya village. Unfortunately the picnic area contained some noisy campers but we enjoyed morning tea - especially Jenny Bleakley's brownies. We then walked up to the Scout Hut. Here we found a good number of bird species including Yellow-faced and White-naped Honeyeaters, Brown Thornbills and two Red-browed Treecreepers. The latter are quite rare, although widely distributed in our region. We also saw a male Scarlet Robin and several Eastern Yellow Robins.

We drove up the bitumen on the Granya Road towards Bullioh, and stopped in a gully at the end of the Firebrace Track. Although the gully is very weedy and especially affected by brambles, we saw some good birds including an Eastern Whipbird, and Eastern Yellow Robins. Two mystery birds photographed by Peter Spencer turned out to be Brown-headed Honeyeaters.

Further up this road at the watershed, we stopped to have lunch and more brownies, and have a look for plants and birds. We drove along the dirt road to the summit of Mount Granya. As soon as we left the cars, we heard the loud calls of the Superb Lyrebird. He had a magnificent repertoire, but wisely kept out of sight. The spectacular views from the top make the drive worthwhile, and the day was sunny and clear.

John Shepherd

Some mushroom photos from Richard:



Spectacular Rustgill - *Gymnopilus junonius*



Parasol - *Macrolepiota clelandii*



Mycena sp. and Leafy liverwort – *Chilocyphus* sp.



Coprinellus dissematius?



Eastern Yellow Robin – *Eopsaltria australis*
(J Palmer)



Brown Thornbill – *Acanthiza pusilla*
(P Spencer)

Bird list, Mt Granya

24/04/21

Cockatoo Sulphur-crested	Magpie Australian	Scrubwren white-browed
Fairy-wren Superb	Magpie-lark	Shrike-thrush Grey
Fantail Grey	Pardalote Spotted	Shrike-Tit Crested
Finch Red-browed	Pardalote Striated	Spinebill Eastern
Honeyeater Fuscous	Raven Australian	Thornbill Brown
Honeyeater White-eared	Robin Eastern Yellow	Treecreeper White -throated
Honeyeater White-plumed	Robin Scarlet	Whipbird Eastern
Honeyeater Yellow-faced	Rosella Crimson	Whistler Australian Golden

24

More member photos:



Grey Shrike Thrush* – *Colluricincla harmonica*
Wodonga (P Spencer)

*The white eye-ring denotes it being female, & orange/brown eyebrow indicates a young bird.



Gang Gang – *Callocephalon fimbriatum*
Rowdy Flat (J Palmer)

....eating unripe Hawthorn berries

ODDSPOT

Starling Murmuration (New Scientist – 17 March 2021)



Photo - James Crombie; Article Gege Li; with the following article by Gege Li:

“This extraordinary image, taken as dusk approaches, looks like a soaring bird from a fantasy film. In reality, it is a murmuration – a huge swarm of starlings moving and pulsating as a single spectacular mass in the sky.

Murmurations can comprise up to hundreds of thousands of flying starlings, though few are quite as dramatic as this one. Photojournalist James Crombie captured it over Lough Ennell, a lake near Mullingar in Ireland, after more than 50 visits in which he took hundreds of shots.

Starlings are thought to form murmurations to protect themselves from predators, such as peregrine falcons, since it is much harder to single out an individual among such large numbers.

The birds can coordinate themselves because they respond so quickly to their neighbours. No single starling leads the swarm. Instead, each individual reacts as its neighbour changes direction or speed. We now know that starlings do this in groups of around seven: the movements of each small unit rapidly scale up to the entire murmuration, resulting in the shape-shifting masses.

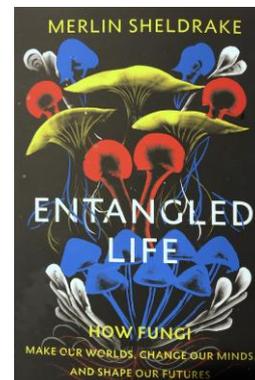
How the birds manage to avoid collisions is still a bit of a mystery, but one idea suggests that when certain starlings initiate a turn, the decision spreads through the rest of the murmuration like a wave.”

FUNGAL FOOTNOTES [the best kind ☺]

1. Dick has advised that Alison Pouliot ran 2 workshops at Wooragee 28/29 May, on Zoom because of the Victorian lockdown. Anyone can get the essence of her talks on Google. Enter Alison Pouliot, then go to News: Alison Pouliot Photography and find her new, 6 short Videos on Fungi, The Forgotten Kingdom. Well worth a look, some lovely photos as well.
2. Jenny has started reading a book by Merlin Sheldrake on how fungi make our worlds, change our minds and shape our futures. Entangled Life has received excellent reviews, with one from Helen Macdonald (author of "H is for Hawk"):

“One of those rare books that can truly change the way you see the world around you, Entangled Life is a revelatory, astounding and necessary read, brimming with infectious joy”

[PS I have ordered it from the Indigo Shire Library so you may have to wait until I finish!]



Upcoming Outings – Winter 2021

- ~ **5th June** – CANCELLED. (Killawarra, joint outing with Birdlife).
- ~ **13th June** – COMPLETE. Kentucky area; 9 am. SS&A Carpark Wilson St. Albury; contact Phillip Seely. [out of towners to meet 9:30 am on roadside near Howlong Sporting Park. Advise leader]
- ~ **26th June** – Sandy Creek & Lockharts Gap; 9 am Acacia Car Park; contact David Coleman. [out of towners to meet 9:45 am at Fire Station Building Sandy Creek. Advise leader]
- ~ **11th July** – Jindera Pub Lunch; 10 am SS&A Carpark Wilson St. Albury; contact Veronica Robertson

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