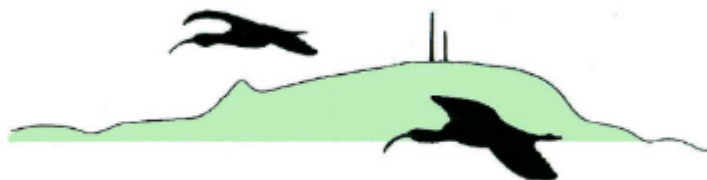


ORANGE FIELD NATURALIST AND CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc



NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2026

Next Talk

Thursday 10 September, 7.30pm

Biocultural restoration: addressing linked declines of ecosystems and Aboriginal cultural values to create uniquely Australian ways of caring for Country.

at Nguluway Ngurang Seniors Village Hub North Room, southern side of Harris Farm and Woolworths carpark

Next Excursion

Sunday 13 September, 9.00 am
Mandagery Nature Reserve and Mingham Springs

Next Talk – Thursday 10 September, 7.30 pm

Biocultural restoration: addressing linked declines of ecosystems and Aboriginal cultural values to create uniquely Australian ways of caring for Country.

Speaker: Associate Professor Emilie Ens leads the Cross-cultural Ecology, Education and Restoration Group at Macquarie University, Sydney.

Biocultural restoration is emerging in international to local dialogues as a practical way to simultaneously restore environments and Indigenous cultural knowledge systems and values. Australia has a shocking record of species decline and Aboriginal cultural impacts since European colonisation only 238 years ago. Over the last 20 years, Emilie has worked with Aboriginal groups and Elders across Australia to explore how we can work together to conserve our unique environments and species while also supporting the maintenance and/or revitalisation of Aboriginal languages, knowledge, and cultural responsibilities for Country. In this talk Emilie will describe some of this work: from remote Arnhem Land to the epicentre of European colonisation in Sydney (Dharug

Ngurra), with some initial thoughts about how we can also ignite biocultural approaches in the Central West, to create uniquely Australian ways of caring for Country.

Emilie is the co-founder of the Wuyagiba Bush Uni, southeast Arnhem Land. She is also an Australian Research Council Future Fellow exploring biocultural restoration of native edible root grounds. Emilie grew up at Bilpin, forged her early career in weed ecology and bush regeneration. She has since spent 20 years working with Aboriginal ranger groups in remote Arnhem Land to advance cross-cultural approaches to conservation. Having moved to Byng Emilie is now exploring new opportunities to combine Western science with the knowledge and values of local and Indigenous land custodians to care for Country. Emilie is also a Field Nats member.



Emilie (centre) with Yolŋu colleagues Djuna Wunumurra (right) and Milirripin Gumana (Djuna's daughter) on the Gurrumurru coastal floodplain in northeast Arnhem Land. Combining Western and Yolŋu science to assess the impact of pigs, buffalo, and sea level rise on traditional staple food, rākay (Eleocharis dulcis), also known as water chestnut. Photo Oscar Jones.

Next Excursion - Mandagery Nature Reserve and Mingham Springs.

When: Sunday 13 September.

Leader: Dick Medd.

Grade: 4 – moderate for active walkers. No formed trails, some uneven surfaces and slopes. The walk is a round trip of 3kms.

Meeting place: Orange High School Bus Bay 9.00 am to carpool. 4WD or high clearance vehicles required.

Weather and tracks permitting we hope to go to Mandagery Reserve and Mingham Springs. This will be a month later than last year and plants will be flowering. Mingham Springs is on vacant Crown Land to the southwest of Manildra. Access is through the Mandagery Precinct of the Southwest Woodlands Nature Reserve. At Mingham Springs there is a gorge that has an unusual diversity of ferns and wonderful views down the gorge.



*Contemplating the Mingham Springs gorge.
Photo Chia-Chi Liu.*

To get there we will drive via Manildra and farmland to the Mandagery Reserve. We will stop and explore along the fire trail in the reserve and then walk to the top of the gorge. The first part of the walk is through open woodland, but it becomes more difficult about 300m from the gorge when there is a scramble down rocks to get to the top of the gorge. We **will not** be walking into the gorge.



*Above the gorge at Mingham Springs.
Photo Rosemary Stapleton.*

This will be a full day excursion so please bring lunch, water, and any essential medications you may need. As we will be having lunch at the

gorge you will need to carry it in a pack. Please wear closed walking shoes and suitable clothing.

As the track through the reserve can become boggy, access may not be possible if there is lots of rain between now and then. If it is too wet an alternate location will be chosen and any changes will be publicised.

Last Talk: Thursday 13 August.

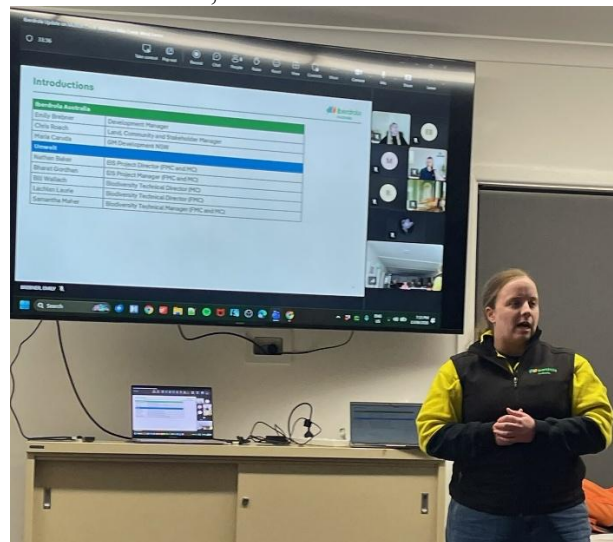
Iberdrola Update on Mullion Creek and Four Mile Creek Wind Farms.

Speakers: Emily Brebner, Development Manager in NSW from Iberdrola and Bill Wallach, Biodiversity Technical Director from Umwelt.

Report by Jenny Pratten and Rosemary Stapleton.

Iberdrola is proposing two wind farms near Orange. The Four Mile Creek one is in Canobolas State Forest (SF) to the south of Mt Canobolas SCA. The Mullion Creek one is in the Mullion Range SF. Iberdrola are using Umwelt (Newcastle team) as the environmental and social consultants. Umwelt is German for environment or surroundings, and the company have “sustainability at our core”.

Emily gave an overview of the two proposals and the work that had been done to date. We were fortunate to have late notice that Umwelt, would join online. Bill spoke of the issues and assessments of biodiversity that will need to be considered and undertaken for the proposals. Chris Roach, from Iberdrola also joined us and Samantha Maher, from Umwelt was online.



Emily introducing Bill Wallach and Samantha Maher, from Umwelt. Photo Tony Caine.

The Four Mile Creek Wind Farm proposal details are:

- 21 turbines up to 250m tip height producing 132KV
- Targeting Canobolas SF, a pine forest so an already largely disturbed area
- Using existing access tracks
- Is approx. 1km south of Mt Canobolas SCA
- 2km buffer from turbines to dwellings and sensitive areas
- Avoiding areas identified as having cultural, social and environmental constraints
- Underground electrical connection between turbines.

The Mullion Creek Wind Farm, with similar criteria as the Four Mile Creek one, is proposing:

- 33 turbines producing 333KV
- Targeting the Mullion Range SF, a pine forest so an already disturbed area
- Adjacent to Boshes Creek Flora Reserve
- Ready to begin construction in about three years if approved.

Assessment of biodiversity values by Umwelt is still underway in both areas and will continue for several years. Some surveys are being carried out four times each year.

The Four Mile Creek assessment has identified three threatened ecological communities -

1. White Box Woodland Critically Endangered Ecological Community (this is Commonwealth EPBC Act listed also)
2. Mount Canobolas *Xanthoparmelia* Lichen Endangered Ecological Community. A question Umwelt have posed is 'should a requirement for the identification of Lichen be by an approved expert or should its presence be assumed?'
3. Tableland Basalt Forest.

The Mullion Creek assessment has identified one threatened ecological community -

1. White Box Woodland Critically Endangered Ecological Community (this is Commonwealth EPBC Act listed also).

Habitat features and species data is reviewed to predict the likelihood of threatened species occurring within the project area. And quite a few threatened species have been identified from known records in databases such as BioNet.

Targeted surveys are done using BAM (Biodiversity Assessment Method) which provides requirements to assess biodiversity values at impact sites, e.g. identifying the time of year to survey each species.

All wind farm proposals must include bird and bat utilisation surveys to determine likelihood and consequence to species due to turbine strikes. Minimising the interference in their flight paths must be considered. Two surveys will be done each season for 2 years. Proposals must also strive to maintain habitat connectivity and all hollow-bearing trees.

Recent listing of Canobolas Leek Orchid as critically endangered species and the preliminary listing of the Canobolas Velvet Worm as a critically endangered species provide assessment challenges for Umwelt, in the Four Mile Creek area, as data is limited. The survey method for other threatened species of concern will also have to be confirmed by the regulator. *Acacia meiantha*, listed as an endangered species, is the challenge in the Mullion Creek area due to its scattered distribution.



Acacia meiantha in the Mullion Range SF.
Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

During the talk, many questions were asked and Emily or Bill responded. A selection of the questions and answers are below:

- Are you aware of AVISTEP (Avian Sensitivity Tool for Energy Planning) promoted by Birdlife International/Australia and is it useful?
Umwelt – we do use AVISTEP as an extra tool/resource.

- Research suggests red tint lighting is preferred around turbines to protect bats.
Umwelt – there is limited data in Australia for bat mitigation, but we can draw conclusions therefore most wind farms in Australia try to avoid lighting that attracts insects (and therefore bats and birds) so red tinted is used.
- Are you including assessment of the route for transport of turbines to the construction sites in your assessments?
Umwelt – a desktop study will map impact areas which will be factored into the project assessment so the transport route will be included in the EIS and so available to the public.
- You will need to map private woodland areas that include bird corridors etc and not just the State Forest areas.
Umwelt – yes, we have progressed this since the early scoping documents.
- *Acacia meiantha* is scattered throughout the Mullion Creek Wind Farm area so how will you avoid damage. This species needs fire regularly and responds well to pine clearing due to additional light.
Iberdrola – we will be mindful of this information and acknowledge that this Acacia would be “temporarily disturbed”. Any consent would include biodiversity management plans looking at mitigation.
- What experience has there been with pine forest fires around the world and wind farms?
Iberdrola – a bushfire risk assessment would be done as part of the EIS.
- The Four Mile Creek Scoping Report suggests agreements with neighbours and councils and funding to do things like improve roads and infrastructure. As the SCA is also a neighbour will they also receive funds as a ‘near neighbour’ for activities such as pig and blackberry control or removal of pine wildings?
Iberdrola – The business does do things like this. We have consulted with NPWS in scoping but not about benefits such as pig control.
- The Scoping Report for Mullion Creek Wind Farm does not include the cumulative impact on biodiversity.

Iberdrola – assessment has progressed since scoping, and it will be included in the EIS.

- If the height of turbines is 250m what is the dimension of the base? The bases must interfere with underground water?
Iberdrola – this depends on the turbine chosen for a particular site. We are using 250m in planning to assess maximum impact as we can always go lower. For underground water we do studies to assess this.
- Earthquakes are occurring near Four Mile Creek presumably due to Cadia. Is this of concern?
Iberdrola – turbines are made according to standards including against earthquakes and have a 30-year life.
- What happens to turbines after 25-30 years?
Iberdrola – They are largely steel which can be recycled. The blades are fibreglass so flexible and elsewhere in the world are buried. However, in Australia we are looking into how they can be recycled, such as into surfboards, sneakers. Some components may be replaced giving the turbines another 5-15 years. If the wind farm is decommissioned the turbines are taken down and the site is rehabilitated. If the proposals are approved Iberdrola will need to produce a decommission plan and fund this and the rehabilitation.

As it was getting late the talk had to be drawn to a close. Geoff thanked Emily and Bill for telling us about the projects and answering our questions. Hopefully, Iberdrola and Umwelt will be happy to speak to Field Nats again to update us on the progress of the proposals and answer the questions that people ran out of time to ask.

Editor’s note: Having Umwelt join online gave us a chance to trial the new large screen in the north room of the Hub. Thanks to Orange City Council for upgrading the facilities there.

Last Excursion: Sunday 16 August.

Snow Grass Trail, Mt Canobolas SCA.

Report by Jenny Pratten.

Our planned trip to explore small peaks in the Canobolas State Forest was changed last minute due to fire trails being closed, so Col Bower led

us for a walk in the SCA along Snow Grass Trail. Jack Fry, NPWS ranger, had approved the change of location.

Before turning off the Gum Ridge Trail, we looked at two Breccia rock formations covered in lichen and mosses. These are made up of sharp angled rock pieces cemented together by finer grained material and were expelled from volcanic activity, so older than I can imagine. Maybe the lichen on them is the Mount Canobolas *Xanthoparmelia* Lichen Endangered Ecological Community?



*Breccia covered in lichen and moss.
Photo Jenny Pratten.*

We also learnt about the “Mt Canobolas Bluebell” being described by Col and very soon to be named. Largely restricted to Mt Canobolas basalt rocky outcrops, it has also been found around Orange in the Bloomfield area and at Lake Canobolas. Col has been studying four sites in the SCA for several years and believes it is a new species (the 29th for bluebell) and probably a threatened species with a population of about 50 at this rock plate on Gum Ridge Trail.



*Looking at the Bluebells on a rock plate.
L - R – John Zimmer, Rosemary Stapleton, Nigel Hobden and Col Bower. Photo Marita Sydes.*

We saw it's small Winter leaves which grow to 10cm high and flower in November. Watch this space for more news of this *Wahlenbergia* and see the report about it in the August 2025 newsletter.

<https://orangefieldnats.com/newsletters/>



*Tiny Mt Canobolas Bluebell.
Photo Jenny Pratten.*

Hidden under one of the breccia outcrops on Gum Ridge Trail Nigel found this Licorice Strap liverwort, *Asterella drummondii*, with fruiting bodies (below). He also found an Earth Star fungi (*Gaestrum* sp.) among the thick grass under the trees near Snow Grass Trail.



Photos Nigel Hobden.



I was then excited to hear of a spotting of a Scarlet Robin, but disappointed it wasn't me who saw it. The Scarlet Robin is listed as

Vulnerable in NSW and found in the SCA, but it would have made my day (and more) to see it. Along the trail I loved seeing so many hollows - in standing trees and fallen ones - I guess so many due to the age of the huge gums here as this area survived the 2018 fires. Animals and birds must abound but on our walk the cockatoos reigned in charge and there was evidence of wombats. There was also damage from pigs.



The Snow Gums and other large trees were spectacular along the way. Photo Jenny Pratten.

Most of us didn't know that this tag (below) means beware of a fox injector bait. Feral pigs can also take it. Be careful and stay away about a metre from the peg just to be sure.



Photo Jenny Pratten.

Near the end of the trial was another lichen/mossy rock plate area worth exploring including the Tea Trees nearby (below). Col suggests this should be recognised as a distinctive vegetation community that is

dominated by the Tree Tea. Although the sites where it occurs are small as the Tea Trees have largely been cleared in the Central West.



The stand of Tea Trees. Photo Jenny Pratten.

Murray Fletcher (via WhatsApp) identified this beetle, that Catherine Stapleton photographed (below), as from the Meloidae family, also known as blister beetles. According to Murray, this one is probably an undescribed species.



After we walked back to the vehicles and had a bite to eat, we drove into the SCA and walked along the Northern Boundary Road to get a feel for what the Four Mile Creek wind farm would look like. We stood there and got a sense that the turbines would be higher than the summit of Towac and wondered at the cost and logistics of such a proposal.



The view south of the SCA to the small peaks where wind turbines are being proposed. Photo Jenny Pratten.

OFNCS Committee News

We again welcome Bonny Campbell.

At the August meeting the committee agreed that the online talks had worked well. It has been pleasing to see that members who live away from Orange have been able to participate. It has also been good that members from Orange come in person and enjoy catching up over tea and coffee. Thanks to Sandra, Penny, and Andy for organising and providing the sweet treats.

In future if an excursion has to be postponed it will be held on the following Sunday providing the leader is available and the conditions at the location are okay. The committee agreed to offer people who join and pay for a 2026 membership during September's Biodiversity Month a free membership for 2027.

CWEC Meeting **2 August 2026**



Along with reps from seven other groups and two individual members Rosemary joined the Zoom as the OFNCS rep.

Mining Update - Independent Planning Commission hearing dates are yet to be announced for two proposed mining developments. The hearing for the Moolarben Open Cut 3 proposal is likely to be late August in Mudgee with a rally and media conference being organized for 9am. All agreed that CWEC should speak against the coal mine development, and other groups were asked to attend the hearing to support the local communities objecting to the proposals. The other IPC hearing will be for the Bowden's Lead mine, at Lue, later in the year.

It was pointed out that the argument used by the proponents that these proposals would boost employment no longer applies as renewable projects are creating more than enough jobs in the area for at least the next 10 years.

Lithgow Environment Group raised that in May 2026 the NSW Upper House passed a Bill to remove the state ban on uranium mining moving to overturn the 1986 ban on such mining. A later update has been that the ALP and Greens voted against it in the Upper House, with the Coalition and right-wing crossbenches voting for it. CWEC has advised that it has not been tabled for a second reading and is unlikely to get through the Lower House.

Renewable Energy Update - Developments are continuing in the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWOREZ) with towers being built and transmission lines rolled out. Bev Smiles has been reappointed as the CWEC rep. on the CWOREZ Community Reference Group and Sally Neeves, from Blayney, will represent the Bathurst Catholic Diocese which includes the Mudgee Region.

Pumped hydro projects in several places are still being planned. The waste to methanol project by Cenagen at the old cement works at Kandos is being actively campaigned against. Major concerns are air pollution, transport, and water use.

Rosemary raised the issue of renewable projects publishing location details of registered Aboriginal Heritage sites and site cards. Broad location maps of threatened species are also being published and that would allow people to identify the general location of critically endangered plants. The issue has been taken up with NPWS.

Water Update - Nick, Rosemary, and Cilla shared feedback from the recent talk to ECCO on the Murray Darling Basin Plan Authority 'What we heard report'. When he spoke to ECCO Peter Thomas, from the MDBPA mentioned there had been a high level of engagement from the Central West environment groups. Peter emphasized that MDBA is an advisory body with no power and that states hold the power and influence. He commented on groundwater issues at Dunedoo from renewable energy project use for dust suppression and also with declining water levels in the Great Artesian Basin that are a concern for Narramine's main town water supply that is taken from bores. A final Basin Plan Review report will be released in November 2026. This will inform the development of Draft Basin Plan #2.

The possible impact of H5 Bird Flu on local wetlands and wildlife was noted. CWEC agreed to write to politicians outlining the significance of bird flu on native species and the need for increased conservation funding.

The next CWEC meeting will be face to face on Sunday 1 November. Staff from the Yes 2 Renewables Campaign will be invited as guest speakers.

Spring Creek Reservoir Quarterly Bird Survey Report (winter).

Report by Cilla Kinross, photos by R Stapleton.

On a rather chilly morning, Nick, Rosemary, and I braved the walk along Spring Creek Reservoir on Thursday 6 August. It actually turned out to be a lovely day, helped by the sighting of 32 bird species over the two km and two hours of the survey. The highlight was 19 blue-billed ducks, a mixture of males and females. Unfortunately, they were a little too far away for photos, but Rosemary managed to get a lovely shot of this golden-headed cisticola (below).



We also saw one lone black swan, an even lonelier pelican, a desperately lonely purple swamphen, a whistling kite (who might have been a pair, so probably not lonely), several whiskered terns, and a rakali, who looked to be in a hurry to be somewhere else.

It's worth mentioning, too, that there were developments in the area. Workmen were flattening an area for a car park at the entrance gate. Sites for a couple of picnic tables were being prepared in the area where fishing is now allowed. Less happily, we observed that a very serious-looking fence has been constructed at the bend before the Kinross boat-house. I did consider scaling it, but didn't want to burden the others with a broken ankle to deal with. We will look into getting a key as we need to go past the boat-house to finish the survey properly, as in all previous surveys.

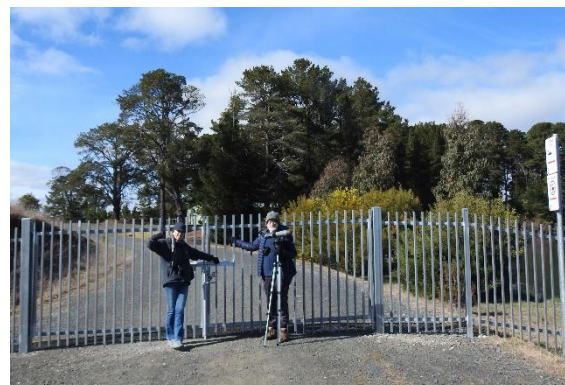
Editor's Note:

Having just seen a list of species in Australia and their susceptibility and national risk scores for H5 Bird Flu I thought I would check out the species Cilla has mentioned.

Whiskered Terns, Swans, and Pelicans have a high national risk score. Blue-billed Ducks, Purple Swamphens, and Whistling Kites have a

moderate national risk scores. Rakali's national risk score is moderate.

A full list of risk scores for native animals is at <https://www.dcccew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/national-risk-scores-h5-bird-flu-native-birds-mammals.pdf>



Cilla and Nick at the new fence and locked gate at the southern end of Spring Creek Reservoir.

October OFNCS Activities

Thursday 8 October Talk

Acoustic monitoring of Koalas in the Clifton Grove area 2025.

Sunday 11 October Excursion

Birri Birri Burial Stone Site and Clear Creek Cliffs, Turon State Forest.

FalconCam News

Report from Cilla Kinross.

All going well in peregrine land. Mating now up to four times a day and each coupling lasting about eight or nine seconds! And Gimbir (the young male) has finally realised that he needs to bring courtship gifts in spades if he wants to win the heart of the lady - and that she doesn't like starlings, particularly unprepared. One poor corpse was stashed for three days in the box, studiously ignored by Diamond (the much older female) until he finally removed it, plucked and ate most of it, then presented the remains, which she grudgingly accepted!

One morning he brought a rather unusual gift - a cockatiel. At least I'm pretty sure that's what it was based on the identification of one foot and leg! Someone's aviary escapee, perhaps?

Eggs expected in a couple of weeks! Watch this space, or better still find the FalconCam Project, CSU, Orange on your Youtube. Help with data collection always appreciated.

Vale Cyril Smith

Cyril was a Field Nats member for a number of years and was well known for his advocacy and knowledge on water issues.

Geraldine Mangrai, Chair of Central Tablelands Local Landcare, expressed how many in the conservation community felt about Cyril in their August newsletter. Many of Geraldine's words are reproduced below with permission.

'It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Cyril Smith, who died peacefully on Saturday (1/8/26), surrounded by his family.'

Cyril was a dedicated volunteer, advocate and former Public Officer of Central Tablelands Landcare. Through his generosity, practical knowledge and commitment, he helped shape a stronger Landcare community and left a lasting mark on our region.

Mysie and I had the privilege of visiting Cyril on Friday, where he shared his hopes for the future of Landcare. True to his lifelong commitment to the environment, he encouraged us to continue building partnerships with ECCO and Rotary, while maintaining a strong focus on urban tree planting and healthy waterways. Even in his final days, Cyril was thinking about the landscapes and communities he had spent a lifetime caring for.

We are deeply grateful for everything he gave to Landcare and will honour his legacy by continuing the work he cared so deeply about.'

Like Central Tablelands Landcare, Orange Field Nats extends our heartfelt condolences to Cyril's family and friends.

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 6 September 10 am – 1pm. Orange City Council **planting day at the southern end (ie Stirling Ave end) of Ploughmans Wetlands** to celebrate the commencement of Biodiversity Month. Supported by ECCO and the Ploughmans Wetlands Care Group. All welcome. Barbeque to follow.

Central Tablelands Landcare are running two short workshops that fit well with Biodiversity Month. They will be held at the ELF on Leeds Parade. Booking is via Humanitix.

Introduction to Sustainable Gardening

Monday 7 September 10.30-12pm

Creating a Nature Enhancing Garden

Monday 7 September 1 – 2.30 pm.

Biodiversity Month Tree Planting at CSU

Wednesday 9 September 9.30 – 12pm.

Registration at the [Biodiversity Month website](#).

Spotlighting. Two events

Wednesday 16 September 7-9pm.

Orange Botanic Gardens.

Friday 18 September 7-9.30pm.

Clifton Grove Reserve.

These are LLS Biodiversity Month activities that will be led by Nigel Hobden with support from Tim Nalder, CT LLS, and OFNCS volunteers.

Register at the [Biodiversity Month website](#)

Sustainable Living Expo, 20 September 9am-2pm, Naylor Pavilion, Orange Showground.

2026 Cowra Bird Survey Dates: 14 – 18

October when the updated Bird Routes of Cowra will be launched. Surveyors are asked to be at a get together on the Friday night to meet their survey team and get site instructions and maps. Contact **Jayden Gunn** for more information or to register for the surveying at jayden.gunn@birdlife.org.au

Aussie Bird Count – 19-25 October 2026.

Dubbo Field Nats will be visiting Borenore

Caves on 25 October. If you would like to join them, you need to register at their website <https://www.dubbofieldnats.org.au/> or you can email trip leader Robert Quinan directly at quinanr@tpg.com.au

Sightings around Orange

If you see anything interesting, please email orangefieldnats@gmail.com or post it on Facebook.

Things with Wings

On 10 August heard on ABC Central West Radio that Murray McCloskey had a pair of plovers (Masked Lapwings) nesting on his front lawn. During that wild wintry day one sat stoically (and inspirationally) on the three eggs in their nest. So maybe Col's nest building magpies are starting too early.

Sometimes ibis, aka Bin Chickens, and seagulls can be a problem when lunching or dining in urban areas, however I have never experienced a **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** choosing to share my meal. On a recent stop for lunch at Bulls Camp Rest Area near Woodford on the Great Western Highway we were about to get out of the car to go to a picnic table. Before we could three cockies arrived and if we hadn't shut the car windows they may well have come inside.



One friendly or hungry Cockatoo.
Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

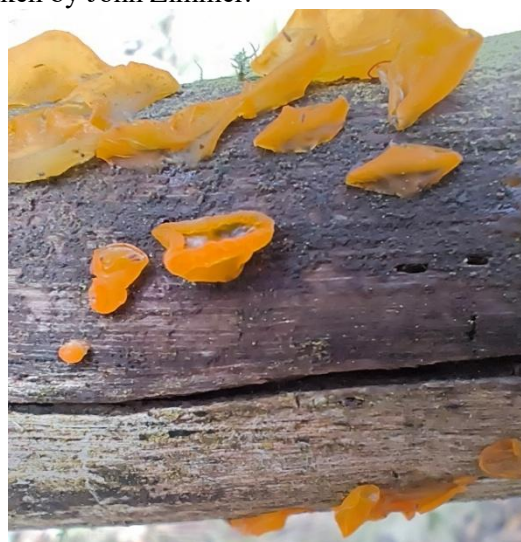
Fungi

There were several types of fungi found along Snow Grass Trail. A few are below.

Marita Sydes shared the photo below of a **Dung roundhead**, *Protostropharia semiglobata*, and as the common name suggests it grows on dung or soil containing manure.



Nigel found some **Orange Jelly fungi** growing on a fallen dead branch. The photo below was taken by John Zimmer.



Creatures of the Month

***Clematis microphylla*, Small-leaved Clematis.**
Article as a separate attachment.

Committee Member of the Month

Bruce Hansen, Treasurer.

- What was your first memory of a nature experience?
I had early memories of nature as we lived on the then edge of Sydney's west when there was still lots of bushland nearby and within 100m of a creek, so we used to go down to Green Valley creek and catch tadpoles and Eastern snake-necked turtles. There were possums and birds and lots of wattles. Later, in high school I joined the school cadets and when we went camping in the bush I just loved it!
- Who inspired you to become involved in nature?
What got me involved in nature was that very bushland I mentioned above. I was doing an assignment for Geography in year 11 and did it on the Cabramatta/Fairfield Creek system. They were carrying out flood mitigation works and dredging Green Valley Creek to make the channel wider. In some places putting in concrete lined channel. In doing so they devastated all the vegetation, frogs, fish, possums and birds were gone just so people could build closer to the creek, it just became a gutter and a place to dump stuff. ☹️

I remember thinking why don't they just build farther away and Cabramatta could be like leafy Lane Cove not a gutter. From then on, I wanted to protect nature and advocate for development that did not destroy nature. That was 1976. Amazingly 30 years later I got a contract with Fairfield Council carrying out bush regeneration restoration works along those very creeks. They ripped out the concrete and brought back the bush. That was very satisfying. ☺



Bruce at Mingham Springs on the excursion last August.

- What specific aspect of nature are you most interested in?
Everything! Ecology, Ecological communities, particularly, Endangered Ecological communities.....how it all interconnects. Fire ecology, for example the interaction between, the Purple Copper Butterfly, Bursaria spinosa sub sp. latophylla and a particular ant species and then how fire also has a role to play in maintaining that relationship, or orchids and insects etc. My favourite thing to do as a consultant was getting paid to do bird watching and then surveying for and catching microbats and the different techniques used. I also used to love collecting plant specimens and then sitting down with a microscope and a pile of books and keying them out! It made me feel like a detective! And then I knew what it was. I also loved teaching ecology through LEAP (Land & Environment Action Program for 15-21 yr old youth), school and TAFE. Sharing nature with kids is a joy.

- What is your favourite bit of bush/ natural place you like to visit?
Dunn's Swamp east of Rylstone, wonderful spot. I first went there with a LEAP group, and we worked on one of the first walking trails there. And going camping with my family or just me and my Grandson. I also love the BOX Woodlands out around Eugowra -Forbes.

- What was your most memorable Field Nats talk or excursion?
Mine of course! No, they're all good.

- What is your favourite song about nature and who is it by?
I can't have just one!!! (note that Bruce knows music and plays in a pipe band.)

"Cootamundra Wattle" by John Williamson. A song about nature and life and how important nature is to happiness.

"Its July and the winter sun is shining, and the Cootamundra wattle is my friend and all at once my childhood never left me cause wattle blossoms bring it back again".

Very poignant for me given the first native plants I remember were the wattles along the creek at home.

*"Tapestry" by Don McLean
Especially the last stanza.*

Every fish that swims silent, every bird that flies freely

Every doe that steps softly

Every crisp leaf that falls, all the flowers that grow

On this colourful tapestry, somehow they know

That if man is allowed to destroy all they need

He will soon have to pay with his life, for his greed

And "Down by The River" by Albert Hammond

- If there's one thing you could change for nature's benefit, what would it be?
Removal of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme. While it has some benefits it should only be used as a last resort. If an endangered community or species is present the development should not go ahead and you should not be able to buy credits to that may not exist to destroy it.



*Lunch just outside the western gate to the Gum Ridge Trail in Mt Canobolas SCA.
Front- Bonny Campbell, Begs Lund, Jenny Pratten and Rosemary Stapleton.
Back – Marita Sydes, Nigel Hobden, John Zimmer, Tony Caine, Cath Stapleton, and Col Bower.
Photo Penny Todman.*

To join please pay by **EFT to:** BSB 802 129 Account 100014678 OFN & Cons Soc Inc

Please identify payments with your name and send confirmation of the payment to orangefieldnats@gmail.com. You can also pay by cash at a meeting or at Orange Credit Union.

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Orange Field Naturalist & Conservation Society acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, including the people of the Wiradjuri Nation. We recognise their continuing connection to lands and waters. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.

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