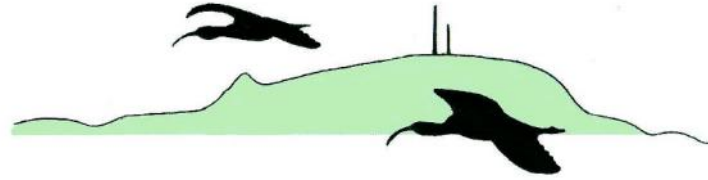


ORANGE FIELD NATURALIST AND CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc



NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2023

NEXT MEETING

**Thursday 12th October, 7.30pm.
Exploring Orchid Pollination.
Speaker Dr Col Bower.**

Face to face at Nguluway Ngurang Senior
Citizens Centre North Room
(Opposite side of carpark to Harris Farm)

Committee Meeting 6.30pm.

**Excursion
Sunday 15th October
Calula Range – exploring orchid pollination
in the field.**

**Next Meeting - Thursday 12th October.
Exploring Orchid Pollination with Dr Col
Bower.**

Col will talk about the clever mechanisms that orchids have evolved to attract and manipulate insects to pollinate their flowers. It might be through nectar reward, food deception or sexual deception. He will share his extensive knowledge of orchid pollination and illustrate his talk with some amazing photos that he has captured of insects pollinating orchid flowers. I am sure this is a not to be missed talk.



Chiloglottis valida with its exclusive pollinator, *Neozeleboria monticola*, a Flower Wasp (*Thynnidae*). Photo R Stapleton.

**Next Excursion – Sunday 15th October –
Calula Range – exploring orchid pollination
in the field.**

Col will lead us to a location in the Calula Range, an offshoot of the northern Mullion Range, which he finds is the best place to study orchid pollinators. He will give a demonstration of the field pollinator choice tests that he has used to distinguish various orchid biospecies from each other. Following this demonstration and orchid tour Col has suggested we have lunch at the old Calula marble quarry. We will then return to Orange.

Meet at Orange High bus bay at 9am to organise car-pooling. 4WDs are required as the track is very rough in places. There will be some walking over rough ground so wear covered walking shoes and long pants. Bring your lunch, all your own supplies, including water and sunscreen as it may be warm.

**Last Meeting – Thursday 14th September.
The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust
& its role in private land conservation.**

Speaker - Tiffany Mason, BCT Senior Ecologist.

Report by Rosemary Stapleton.

This talk was of interest to many members as well as the five people who heard about it through the LLS Biodiversity Month program. Cilla warmly welcomed Tiffany and related how they had done bird banding many years ago. Tiffany has worked with the BCT since it was formed and was able to answer the many questions asked during her talk, especially from the people who were considering conserving some of their properties.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) came into being in 2017 because of the Native Vegetation reforms. It aims to conserve and manage biodiversity on private land by partnering with landholders. The BCT encourages landholders to enter long-term

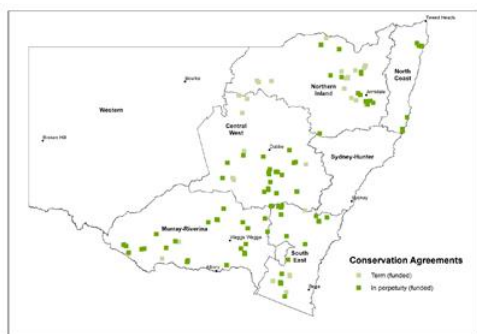
agreements of at least 15 years and ideally in perpetuity.

Parcels of land are assessed using four criteria, at this stage mainly based on vegetation and its condition. These are that the land has:

- High conservation value
- Connectivity and resilience to climate change
- Comprehensive, adequate, and representative vegetation and biodiversity
- Threats and pressures to that vegetation community.

At present the BCT has entered into funded agreements with 446 landholders to conserve 311,790 ha. This has helped protect 131 threatened species and 23 ecological communities. The BCT Programs are:

- The Conservation Management Program that includes both conservation tenders, where landholders tender for funds, and the Fixed Price Offer (FPO) Program. The FPO provides annual management payments based on land capability class and LGA land value. Landholders enter a binding agreement to protect, manage and enhance their land for biodiversity. This is registered on the title and a condition is that the land cannot be subdivided. A management plan is developed, and management payments are made annually. Many of these agreements are in the sheep-wheat belt, including the Central West, which is a high priority for BCT investment as so much of the Grassy Box Woodland communities have been cleared. Since 2021 the BCT has done more work in the Far West, where very large areas have been conserved.



Location of conservation agreements.

- The Conservation Partners Program is a program of voluntary agreements and wildlife refuges. There is no annual

funding for these although partners can apply for annual grants. These are mainly along the coast.

- The Biodiversity Offset Program was part of the BCT but was stopped in July 2022. It is now managed by, and continues under, the Credits Supply Taskforce. The BCT audits these agreements (Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements) once they are registered.
- There is still a revolving fund for properties that were conserved under the former Nature Conservation Trust Program.

Tiffany discussed what was included in a management plan and the guidelines to assist landholders. These guidelines include ones for grazing, ecological thinning, vegetation restoration, artificial hollows, conservation and wildlife friendly fencing and fire as a management tool. They can be found at <https://www.bct.nsw.gov.au/info/guidelines-land-management-conservation>

For each agreement, a Site Values Report is provided to the landholder. It documents the condition of the site at the time the agreement is registered and contains biogeographical information as well as a list of known and likely threatened species and ecological communities.

Tiffany concluded with examples of properties with BCT agreements. One was Spring Forest at Cowra, a site Field Nats have visited. Tiffany was excited to have seen 12 honeyeater species there in flowering Ironbarks (below) all while standing in the one spot. They were Blue-faced, White-plumed, Fuscous, Yellow-faced, Yellow-tufted, White-eared, Brown-headed, White-naped, Black-chinned, Noisy Friarbird, Spiny-cheeked and Striped Honeyeater. Superb and Turquoise Parrots are also found there.



A Mugga Ironbark in full bloom at Spring Forest. Photo Tiffany Mason.

At another property in far western NSW, which has not yet entered into an agreement, the BCT discovered a plant thought to be extinct in NSW. The plant was *Rhaphidospora bonneyana* and was found in a rare community dominated by Lancewood, *Acacia petrea*. This is currently protected in only one National Park (Brindingabba).



The rare community dominated by Lancewood, Acacia petrea. Photo T Mason.

There were many questions of Tiffany indicating that people found the talk and the BCT activities very interesting. The questions centred around the role of fire and the consequences of catastrophic fires on agreements as well as BCT's role in monitoring of the conserved land. The BCT is establishing permanent monitoring sites which will be monitored every five years. They are trying to encourage landholders to record sightings and use soundscape technology. A citizen science project has also been established to aid in monitoring.

Thanks to Tiffany and Viv Howard at the LLS for organising the talk. I am sure those who were able to come on the excursion were interested to view a BCT agreement in action at Mirrambeena.

Last Excursion – Sunday 17th September.
A visit to 'Mirrambeena', a private land conservation property at Baldry.
Report by Rosemary Stapleton.

Despite many competing activities ten people gathered at the bus bay to travel to Baldry to visit Lisa McCann's property 'Mirrambeena'. Lisa, and her son Lachlan, welcomed us to their Wiradjuri country. They described their journey with the Biodiversity Conservation Trust to place 1,142 ha of it under a private conservation agreement. See a photo at the end of the newsletter.

Before we drove to the wooded areas that had been conserved Lisa showed us how she hoped

to provide water sources during drought periods for smaller native animals. Drainage pipes had been converted into capped water storage tubes to allow ready access to water for animals like birds and bats. They would be placed on tree trunks or posts and could be filled regularly.

We carpoled into 4WD's and Lisa and Lachlan's side by sides and headed to the hills. The contrast between the neighbour's cleared paddocks and the conserved woodland was stark. There was a white fringe of a *Leptospermum*-type plants around the woodland. The Creature of the Month article describes Jenny Medd's conundrum with it.

Lisa led the way into the woodland searching for orchids and unusual plants. Lachlan kept a check on those who were slower. It didn't take long to spot plants of interest: *Diuris*, *Dampiera*, *Indigofera*, pea flowers and more. There was discussion about the Yam Daisies as the leaves were strappy and some of the flowers were much taller than those we see at Orange. However, photos from Lisa confirmed they were Yam Daisies.

As we walked up the hill the woodland opened out a little and more orchid species were seen; three species of *Caladenia* and Midget Greenhood spikes. Towards the creek line there were flowers of Early Nancy and a small patch of Swamp Isotome (*Isotoma fluviatilis*).



Caladenia atrovessa. Photo Swee Chuak.

Nigel headed further along the track and spotted some feral pigs at a dam but also a turtle. Lisa commented that it had been hard to control pigs since the rain in 2020 using the Hoggone bait trapping system. She suggested that there had been such a variety of feed for their diet in the landscape that they didn't need to eat the offered grain.

Those needing a break rested on the slope in the shade of the Callitris. Hai managed to spot a Gnat Orchid along the creek line as he walked back to the car. After a lazy chat over lunch and watching a small goanna being harassed by two Grey Fantails, we headed back to the cars.



The goanna after a feed. Photo Hai Wu.

The afternoon walk was to a more open area of Stringybark. Lachlan pointed out some unusual rocks with iron pellets and Sandra noticed a wonderful old nest camouflaged with lichen.



Well disguised nest. Photo R Stapleton.

Before we left everyone expressed their thanks to Lisa and Lachlan for a wonderful day in the bush. Lisa and Lachlan's commitment to preserving and enhancing the natural environment was impressive and should be commended.

When asked Swee said *'The Mirrambeena excursion marked the start of my spring orchid hunt in NSW. Caladenia galore, Diuris,*

Pterostylis and so many other plants. It was a privilege to have the opportunity to visit. Huge thanks to Lisa and Lachlan for the invitation and taking the time to share their knowledge and experience. It's astounding to see only a portion of their property and the reality of the challenges of maintaining Mirrambeena.'

Bonny, who is looking to conserve some of her property commented, *'It was so uplifting to see private land being managed specifically for biodiversity rather than for livestock. I loved the colour and variety of plants, and it was heartening to see what is possible as part of a truly 'mixed' farm. Lisa and Lachlan should be congratulated for being trailblazers in private land conservation and it was great to hear their passion for what they were doing. The amount of work they have taken on is huge and I'd like to thank them for taking some time away from their busy schedule to show us around. I'd love to see more of the property sometime in the future if possible.'*

After the excursion lots of photos were shared, including from Lisa who showed us some of the other interesting species she has seen.

Following the excursion Lisa said *'Lachlan and I appreciate that you came to visit!! We have not hosted a group before and were a bit nervous! The main thing to us is that you came to explore and share, you used all of your senses during your connection, and our only hope is that Mirrambeena is a little bit special to you too. The gifts you all have of knowledge, teaching/learning, experiences are admirable and we appreciate your visit. The gifts of how different Mirrambeena can be in different seasons and conditions is one that you hopefully will experience as time goes on. You all are welcome to visit at any time.'*

Bird species seen were Grey Shrikethrush, Rufous Whistler, Striated Pardalote, Willie Wagtail, Grey Fantail, Eastern Rosella, Welcome Swallow and Australian Raven. As I drove out I stopped at a flowering eucalypt in the drive and added Blue-faced Honeyeaters, Noisy Miners and heard Grey-crowned Babblers.

Lisa is happy for anyone to visit and has shared her number with those who attended. Mirrambeena will be added to the list of possible excursion locations and perhaps Field Nats will return at a different time of year to see how the conserved area has developed.

OFNCS Committee News

Don't forget the launch of 'The Orchids of Central Western NSW' book, Tuesday 17th October 5.30pm – 7pm at Orange City Library, 147 Byng St. You can book at [Eventbrite](#). The book will be for sale for \$35, **cash only**. Financial members of OFNCS will be able to purchase **one copy** at the wholesale price. Dick and Col will also be selling the book at the Picnic for Nature on 21st October.

Several Field Nats members were part of the CWEC meeting with Trish Doyle MP and Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, Heritage, Climate Change and Energy. Some members also joined the Spotlighting that night. See reports below.

We welcome new members Leonie Coleman and Paris Capell.

November Talk and Excursion

Our November activities will be a change in direction. Instead of looking down at the ground for orchids we will be looking to the sky, the stars and the planets. It will be all about astronomy.

**Thursday 9th November, The Night Sky
A Visual Approach with John Zimmer.**

Sunday 12th November, an evening of star gazing with John at Banjo Paterson Park.

Spring Creek Reservoir Quarterly Survey 30th September 2023.

Report by Rosemary Stapleton. Photos Cilla Kinross and Nigel Hobden.

We gathered at 8am and as Nigel commented later 'We almost saw more birds at the start before we left the cars than along the whole walk. We almost didn't leave the car park'. A Golden-headed Cisticola posed for a photo high in one of the dead trees.



Golden-headed Cisticola. Photo Cilla Kinross.

I noticed a female Red-capped Robin and was curious as I had recorded them nesting in the area in October 2018. A male Superb Fairywren was distracted by his reflection in the shiny car surfaces. Nigel captured the action (below). I suspect the Fairywren continued to be agitated all morning because of all the vehicles that were parked there.



Is he saying aren't I superb or buzz off this is my territory? Photo Nigel Hobden.

As often happens on the water there were Coots along the length of the reservoir. While there were six species of ducks, there were not the numbers we have often seen. It was good to see three Blue-billed Ducks, a threatened species, which Nigel (Sethack) had seen on his walk earlier in the day. We debated the grebes, with Australasian and Hoary-Head Grebes being seen. This proved helpful as Cilla's friend Cheryl remarked later 'It was great, now I can recognise a grebe. It's beautiful out there'.

On the winter survey only 25 species were seen so a list of 48 species made this 2-hour spring survey much more interesting. Many migrant species had returned such as Australian Reed Warblers, Rufous Whistlers and Grey Fantails. The best sightings were two pairs of Red-capped Robins, the Cisticola and a White-winged Triller. A Whistling Kite returned a few times to the pines across the water from the boat shed, and the Dusky Woodswallows were back. Were these going to nest here as we had suspected in previous years?



Male Red-capped Robin. Photo Nigel Hobden.

Cilla summed up the survey saying 'It started off as nice and cool with lots and lots of birdies before we left the cars. A good spring-time survey and then it got hotter and hotter, and we were quite glad to finish'.



Cheryl, Cilla, Nigel S and Nigel H catch up on the birds that we'd seen at Spring Creek Reservoir. Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

CWEC Meeting with Trish Doyle, MP.

Report by Rosemary Stapleton.

After the NSW election CWEC wrote to Penny Sharpe, Minister for the Environment, Heritage Climate Change and Energy highlighting the environmental issues of concern to CWEC members. In response Trish Doyle, who is Parliamentary Secretary for this ministry, replied and expressed interest in meeting the groups. On 29th September Trish visited Orange and met with representatives from groups in Mudgee, Dubbo, Bathurst, and Orange (OFNCS, ECCO and CCA). They raised issues related to water, invasive/feral species, climate change, mountain biking and the NPWS Cycling Strategy. Other representatives raised concerns about Cadia, the expansion of coal mining around Mudgee and the mine proposals at Lue and Kings Plains.



Trish Doyle (in pale green to the left of Nick King) meeting with CWEC representatives. Photo Trish Doyle.

All expressed concerns about planning and development laws that allowed biodiversity and heritage to be destroyed and how often concerns of communities were ignored. Some groups also congratulated the government on deciding not to go ahead with the Wyangala Dam Project and the weir at Gin Gin. Nick King, Andrew Rawson, and I represented the groups from Orange.

As Trish had expressed interest in visiting Gaanha bula Mt Canobolas Andrew and I took her to the mountain. We met NPWS Ranger Jack Fry at the summit. Steph Luke from Bathurst joined us. We visited four locations and pointed out to Trish its biodiversity and heritage significance. The proposed routes of the mountain bike tracks were highlighted as was the inadequacy of the NPWS Cycling Strategy that could allow such developments.



Trish Doyle, Andrew Rawson, Jack Fry, Rosemary Stapleton, and Steph Luke at Federal Falls Picnic Area. Photo Trish Doyle.

Trish posted the following on her Facebook page. You can see more photos there. <https://www.facebook.com/trishdoylebluemtns/>

'As NSW Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, Heritage, Climate Change & Energy it was my pleasure and honour to join the [Central West Environment Council](#) in Orange yesterday & hear their concerns and suggestions for respecting our precious environment, including the health of local communities. We discussed many issues & also visited Gaanha-bula for a tour of this spectacular area: one that also deserves / needs protection.

Thanks to the many individuals and organisations, including Jack from [NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service](#) for your time and passionate advocacy.

I look forward to sharing your views & requests with our Ministers [Penny Sharpe MLC](#) and [Rose Jackson](#).

Andrew then thanked Trish by posting ‘*Thank you Trish, for your visit to Orange and continuing advocacy for the environment. We greatly appreciate your visit and hope this is just the beginning of a great partnership with our region and the many people here who are so passionate about protecting and nurturing our remaining natural environment. It was a great pleasure to meet with you and I hope you enjoyed your stay.*’

Gaanha bula Mt Canobolas Update

Note: The Lonely Mountain Ultra Marathon will be held on Gaanha bula Mt Canobolas on 14-15 October. I understand that **the SCA will be closed to the public** for much of the weekend. Exact times for the closure should be posted as an alert on the NPWS website soon.

As usual the vegetation on the mountain is awakening more slowly than at lower altitudes. Some orchids are in bud and Col Bower reports that the *Caladenia fitzgeraldii* patch on one of the southern trails is about to flower with 15 buds recorded. He is still monitoring the populations found following the fire and the ones in that location are doing well. However, the population near Mt Canobolas Road is not doing so well with one plant being taken out by pigs and only one plant likely to flower this year. One other population appears to have been badly affected by the very wet winter in 2022. Col has also noted that there was very little leaf predation in August but a month later predation was much higher. He thinks that as the leaves reach a nice size the macropods descend on them.

Spotlighting at Gosling Creek, **29th September. Report by R Stapleton.**

Spotlighting is always a bit hit and miss but the lure of seeing nocturnal animals drew about 20 people to Gosling Creek Reserve. It was the last activity of the LLS Biodiversity Month. Nigel Hobden (OCC) and Mark Thomas (LLS) co-ordinated the activity and were ably assisted by Sandra and Glen. They were trained earlier in the year for the OFNCS Glider Surveys. Several families joined as well as Paris and some of the Intrepid Landcare members. Three groups headed off in different directions.

The full moon was high in the sky and helped light our way. Catherine and I joined Nigel’s group to walk through Hinton Reserve. We had dipped out after walking halfway around the track and started to wonder if we would see

anything. The group Mark was leading met us half-way, as they were walking in the opposite direction. They had seen a few things including a Brushtail Possum with a baby on her back. This must have changed our luck as we started seeing eye shine, although not always identifying whose eyes they were. We spotted the Brushtails as well as a regal Tawny Frogmouth and a few microbats. The highlight was back at Bloomfield Park a few trees away from the carpark where Nigel spotted a small glider. Another two were higher in the same tree. One was lying along a white branch with its tail curled down. As it was crouched its slightly wrinkled gliding membrane was easy to see through binoculars. Nigel thinks these were Squirrel Gliders as they were large for this style of glider.

Back at the cars there was the usual exchange of sightings. Each group saw Brushtail Possums. The light in the eyes of one of the young girls was wonderful to see as she related that she had seen 3 spiders, a possum and 3 kookaburras, Oh and 3 microbats! Nigel asked if anyone would like to see the gliders nearby. And of course, everyone said YES!! A great end to a night out in nature.

Hello World – Peregrine News.

The first Peregrine Falcon chick hatched on 2nd October with some anxious waiting for Cilla to see if the other two eggs would hatch. Fortunately, a second one hatched the next day, and both appear healthy and strong.



This nest box cam photo shows Xavier on the ledge and Diamond feeding the chicks. Cilla said, ‘*Diamond would have taken the food from the stash*’. I noticed Xavier doing some caring of the chicks and Cilla commented ‘*he is a really nice, gentle father and Diamond trusts him with the chicks even while really tiny (unlike some pairs)*’.

A new juvenile female peregrine has been flying around and checking out the area however it has been chased off by the resident pair. Cilla is certain it is not one of the chicks

from previous years as none of them have been females.

Dates for your Diary

Cowra Archibird photography competition closes on **15th October**. Details of the competition and entry form are at <https://www.cowracouncil.com.au/Community/Events/Archibird-Prize-2023>

Submit your photographs of native birds that have been taken within 100km of Cowra. Some fabulous entries, including from Brian and Nigel are already at <https://www.facebook.com/Cowra.NRM/>

2024 Cowra Woodland Bird Survey dates are February 17/18. Contact Sue Proust for more information or to register for surveying at sueproust@bigpond.com

Aussie Bird Count, 16-22nd October – take up the opportunity to participate in some citizen science and count birds for 20 minutes in your backyard or favourite place. Details can be found [here](#).

Saturday 21st October - Picnic for Nature.
12 midday to 3pm. BYO everything.

The Picnic for Nature is an initiative of the Nature Conservation Council. The environmental groups in Orange are hosting a picnic at the Federal Falls Picnic Area. The picnic is about celebrating the natural beauty of our area and connecting with community. It is also a chance to get together and talk about what we can do to protect nature and act on climate change. There will be a few activities for children and acoustic music, maybe even some people we know playing the ukulele.

Sightings around Orange

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

Fauna

Grey-headed Flying Foxes (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) are back along Ploughmans Lane. Nigel Hobden reports that they arrived around 21st September. He undertook a count on 27th September for the DPE national flying fox monitoring program and estimated that there were about 2,200. This is quiet an increase on previous years. It is currently a mix of male and females in the camp with no signs of young. Will they survive the rain and cold?



Above - A small section of the Flying Fox colony along Ploughmans Lane. And below a close up of the Flying Foxes.
Photos Nigel Hobden.



Other Things with Wings

Ian Roth has had this **Tawny Frogmouth** in his garden in West Orange for a few weeks as he saw it in mid-August and again on the 6th September.



Col Bower reports ‘some interesting birds in Somerset Park in September: Sacred Kingfisher, White-winged Triller, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Thornbill, Silvereye, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Grey Fantail, Reed Warbler, Red Wattlebird and Red-browed Finch. The Rufous Whistlers seem to have set up shop in a localised area suggesting they may nest. There have been nests of Pied Currawong(1), Magpie Larks (3), Magpies (3), Masked Lapwings (on their second brood after the first brood was taken probably by a cat)’.

He also found a freshly killed Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo on his back lawn.

An unusual sighting of a moulting juvenile **Australasian Darter** was made by Cath Stapleton at Manna Creek west of Corinella.



Nigel Sethack photographed this juvenile **Brown Goshawk** at Spring Creek Reservoir on 17th September.



Plants

Tracee Burke was excited to find this ***Buncochilus stenosepalus* (*Pterostylis stenosepala*)** (below) in flower on the roadside into the Ironbark Fire Trail in Conimbla National Park on 2nd September. Tracee also found Yass Daisies (*Ammobium craspedioides*) near the Healeys Road junction.



Ecological importance of mistletoe – Tracee Burke, from Mid-Lachlan Landcare has passed on details of the YouTube recording of this webinar with David Watson. (Just ignore the 5 minutes of chat at the start.) Rather than a parasitic pest, mistletoe is beneficial for biodiversity and plays an important role in the landscape. Access the recording [here](#)

Creature of the Month

***Leptospermum divaricatum* or *Gaudium divaricatum*?**

Text and photos by Jenny Medd.

The excursion to “Mirrambeena” last month turned up a taxonomic conundrum for one untrained in botany, but keen to find the correct name for a species: when do revisions of a species that result in a name change become the accepted classification rather than simply a synonym?

I was totally confused by the *Leptospermum* which, along with *Acacias*, fringed the woodland on the hill-sides and was so eye-catching as we drove into the property. As you can see below it was so wonderfully abundant and in full flower.



Any other *Leptospermum* would hold hard, very recognisable fruiting bodies on stems and or branches (as below); there was no sign of them to be found on this species and I was absolutely convinced that it was instead a species of *Baeckea* and not *Leptospermum* at all!



Fruit of *Leptospermum rotundifolium*.

A copy of a 1997 Veg survey of Goobang NP (which borders the property) revealed two species of *Baeckea* recorded there:

B. densifolia and also *B. cunnighamii*. Unfortunately, neither really matched satisfactorily. The only *Leptospermum* listed in that report was *L. divaricatum* --- which no longer appears on the PlantNet species list for NSW. Further searching turned up an old link (to a PlantNet page!) which indicated a name change to *Gaudium divaricatum* but provided no plant description. Under the latter name both *L. divaricatum* and *L. trivalve* are now given as synonyms.

The important clue was initially located elsewhere: “The nuts have a hairy surface and shed early”. Hence, at flowering one shouldn’t expect to see fruit remaining on the shrubs! It would appear that the taxonomists have been reworking the genus and several name changes were listed as recently as June 2023 (scientific papers not accessible). More detail was finally located in PlantNet on the genus page for *Gaudium*, which provides a key to 15 of the 22 species which mostly occur in eastern Australia. “Species in this genus were formerly included in *Leptospermum* but are distinguished by the lack of woody fruits that are usually deciduous” (text by Peter G. Wilson, Aug.2023).



The flowers on the shrubs at Mirrambeena.

A.L.A. gives the following brief description: “*Leptospermum divaricatum* is a species of plant that is endemic to inland New South Wales. It is an erect or weeping shrub with compact fibrous bark, elliptical to egg-shaped leaves, white flowers arranged singly on short axillary side shoots and woody fruit that fall off when mature.” Further conundrums were revealed in cross-checking *Baeckea* species. One source “When is a *Baeckea* not a *Baeckea*?”

(<https://anpsa.org.au/APOL24/dec01-2.html>) produced names of another four possible genera, all of which have flowers that are very similar to *Leptospermum*. Learning to use keys to genera becomes an important skill!



Lisa and Lachlan McCann (right and second from right) introducing some of the excursion group to the conserved woodland that we were about to explore at Mirrambeena. Photo R Stapleton.



Oakey Creek, 3rd September. Photo Nigel Hobden.

Other snippets.

- I recently watched a Common Starling collect a beak full of thyme twigs and at another time parts of mint leaves from my garden and fly away, I assume to a nest. Do I have discerning Starlings? And at a completely different level.....

- A Latham's Snipe banded by Yoshiya Odaya in Japan on 28th August 2021 as a first year bird was resighted on 5th September 2023 at Lake Lismore by Lachlan Cooper (see photo). So it is a 3 year old bird. Dr Brigita Hansen, who runs the Snipe Monitoring Program emailed that *'while there have been thousands of resightings of other leg flagged shorebird species over time across the flyway, there has never been a single re-sighting of a Latham's Snipe outside its country of capture (to our knowledge). And even within its country of capture, leg flag re-sightings of snipe are exceptionally rare.'* Lismore Lake is beside the Wilsons River to the west of Lismore. It is great place to watch birds. A flight from Japan to Australia is amazing. Remember this when you see a Snipe in Orange.



To join please send your cheque or money order made out to "OFNCS" to the Hon. Treasurer, Dr Dick Medd, OFNCS, PO Box 369 Orange NSW 2800.

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Orange Field Naturalist & Conservation Society acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, including the people of the Wiradjuri Nation, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

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