

Bringing Back the Bunyip Bird



Australasian Bittern Conservation Summit 2022

Historic Hydro, Leeton - 1-4 February 2022



Event Program



Local Land Services



National Landcare Program



Murrumbidgee Irrigation



Murray Irrigation



LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL



YENDA PRODUCERS CO-OPERATIVE
"Your Partners in Farming"®



Planning, Industry & Environment

Bringing Back the Bunyip Bird



Australasian Bittern Conservation Summit 2022

Event Program

The Summit is a unique opportunity to connect with scientists, conservationists, wetland managers, birdwatchers and farmers who share a passion for the iconic Australasian Bittern. The below event program is subject to change but covers the speakers and field trips at December 2021.

Tuesday 1 February 2022

6.30pm Informal Welcome BBQ: Fivebough wetland

Wednesday 2 February 2022

When	What	Who
8.30 am	Registration open	
9.00 am	Welcome	Ray Willis (LLS)
	Welcome to Country	TBC
	Welcome to Leeton area	Paul Mayton
	Official opening of the Summit	TBC
9.40 am	Bittern-friendly rice farming: integrated water management, from growers to consumers	Matt Herring - NSW
10.20 am	Morning Tea	
10.50 am	Conservation actions for Australasian Bittern in southern and eastern Victoria	Andrew Silcocks - VIC
11.10 pm	Conservation actions for Australasian Bittern in north central Victoria	Damian Cook - VIC
11.30 pm	Management techniques and new survey opportunities helping bitterns in South-eastern South Australia and south-western Victoria	Bob Green – VIC/SA
11.50 pm	Lunch	
12.50 pm	TBC	Emma O'Donnell - NZ
1.30 pm	TBC	Colin O'Donnell - NZ
1.40 pm	Break	
2.00pm	Conservation of high priority bittern wetlands in the NSW Riverina through partnerships and environmental water management	Ali Borrell - NSW
2.20 pm	Monitoring responses of Australasian bitterns to water for the environment in the New South Wales Murray-Darling Basin	Jen Spencer - NSW
2.40 pm	Afternoon Tea	
3.10 pm	Conservation of the Australasian Bittern in Western Australia	Sarah Comer - WA
3.40 pm	Big booming data: Monitoring Australasian Bittern using acoustic monitoring in Tasmania	Liz Znidersic - TAS
4.00 pm	Panel Discussion - 'Monitoring' and 'Conservation'	All Speakers
4.20 pm	Closing remarks and summary of the day	
4.40 pm	Finish	
6.00 pm	Dinner - Whitton Malt House	

Thursday 3 February 2022

Field Trips 5.30am-11.00am, 3.30pm-9.00pm

- Bittern-friendly Rice Focus tours will include three bittern-friendly rice farms where sightings and breeding are highly likely, and Campbell's Swamp, a bittern hotspot.
- Natural Wetland Focus tours will include the Ramsar listed Tuckerbil Wetland, Turkeys Flat Wetland, Campbells Swamp and a single bittern friendly rice farm.

The morning trip has a maximum of 30 people per tour.

Field trips to be repeated in the afternoon if sufficient interest

Friday 4 February 2022

Extended tours: Self drive and provide own drinks. Refreshments will be held in the afternoon/evening.

Lower Bidgee (Balranald)

Or

Barmah/Millewa Forest (Deniliquin)

[Register now and save your spot!](#)

Thanks to our event partners and supporters



Local Land Services



National Landcare Program



Murrumbidgee Irrigation



YENDA PRODUCERS
CO-OPERATIVE
"Your Partners in Farming"



Our speakers



Matt Herring

Murray Wildlife/Charles Darwin University

mherring@murraywildlife.com.au

Over the past 20 years, Matt has worked as a wildlife ecologist on more than 950 farms in the Murray-Darling Basin. With a focus on wetlands and waterbirds, he's become a strong advocate for community engagement, working alongside farmers to unleash the conservation potential of private land.

He is passionate about the ideal of producing food and conserving biodiversity at the same time, and has been working on bitterns in rice over the past ten years. Matt recently completed his PhD on bittern-friendly rice farming, looking at population modelling, breeding success, conservation incentives, consumer values and novel water policy.



Damien Cook

Wetland Revival Trust

damien@wetlandrevivaltrust.org

Damien Cook is the senior ecologist at the Wetland Revival Trust. He has been a keen naturalist for 40 years and has developed a sound knowledge of flora and fauna ecology, identification, and habitat requirements.

His main interest is restoration ecology, with a focus on the establishment and management of wetland plants and the revegetation of semi-arid terrestrial ecosystems.

Damien has helped deliver some of the most complex ecological restoration projects attempted in Victoria, for which he received a Restoration Excellence Award from the Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia (SERA) in November 2016.



Liz Znidersic

Charles Sturt University

eznidersic@csu.edu.au

Dr Liz Znidersic is a Post-doctoral research scientist with Charles Sturt University. Her research interests are based on the application of novel monitoring techniques to detect wetland birds including rails, crakes and bitterns.

Liz's research has led her into the wetlands of Australia and the USA, searching for some of the most secretive wetland birds using acoustic and motion-activated camera monitoring. She has worked extensively in the field as a wildlife ranger, field ecologist and environmental educator.

With her hands-on knowledge of field ecology, she is well placed to focus on integrating technology into her monitoring repertoire.



Ali Borrell

Murray-Darling Wetlands Working Group

ali.borrell@mdwwg.com.au

Ali Borrell was initiated into the magnificence of wetlands and bitterns through her time at NSW National Parks in the Barmah-Millewa Forest.

Here, she assisted in coordinating environmental watering and monitoring in the Barmah-Millewa Forest. The Australasian bittern monitoring program in Barmah-Millewa was launched in 2015, and she has assisted in conducting the surveys in most years since. Since moving on from NPWS, she has been continuing to spend time in wetlands monitoring waterbirds, and works with the Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group, a non-government organisation.

Here she coordinates watering on private wetlands in NSW and Victoria, and runs a Saving our Species program for Australasian Bittern and Australian Painted Snipe at Gayini, a wetland complex on the Lower Murrumbidgee.



Bob Green

Avian Monitoring Services / BirdLife South East SA

shriketit@bigpond.com

Following a childhood immersed in nature with parents who loved the outdoors, the seed was sown.

A number of years later I was once again hooked. It was an almost instant addiction. Always wanting to learn more, I undertook a Graduate Certificate in Ornithology. I also started doing some paid bird survey work including a position as the South Australian Orange-bellied Parrot Regional Coordinator, and a position with BirdLife Australia as an Australasian Bittern Project Officer.

My passion and interest have been spurred on by wanting to make a difference, by contributing to saving threatened species, contributing surveys through Birddata, and publishing papers.



Andrew Silcocks

BirdLife Australia

andrew.silcocks@birdlife.org.au

I work for BirdLife Australia in the data collection and wetland bird team.

My interest in Bitterns started while I was undertaking monthly surveys at Edithvale and Seaford Wetlands. We would regularly encounter both Australian and Australian Little Bitterns at the site and I realised so little was known about them.

I started the BirdLife Bittern Project on the back of a dramatic reduction in the number of records between the first and second Atlases and lead to its nomination as a threatened species.

It is now very heartening to see so much interest and wonderful bittern work being undertaken in both Australia and New Zealand.



Jennifer Spencer

Water and Wetlands Team, Science, Economics and Insights Division, Environment, Energy and Science, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Jennifer.Spencer@environment.nsw.gov.au

Jennifer has worked for the NSW Government for more than ten years on waterbird monitoring projects in the NSW Murray-Darling Basin.

She completed a PhD in 2010 focused on migratory shorebird ecology in the Hunter estuary. In her current role Jennifer coordinates waterbird monitoring to support the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Water for the Environment Program.

Sarah Comer



Western Australia Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

sarah.comer@dbca.wa.gov.au

Sarah Comer is Chair of the WA Australasian Bittern Recovery Team and works for Western Australia's Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions as the South Coast Region's Ecologist.

In her 20 years in this role, Sarah has been involved in coordinating threatened species recovery programs, fire management for conservation, and adding to biodiversity knowledge of the region.

Sarah has led the noisy scrub-bird recovery program since 1999 and works on other threatened species conservation programs including for the western ground parrot, western ringtail possum and Australasian bittern.

Sarah is involved in efforts to improve introduced predator control programs, leading trials of landscape scale feral cat control through the delivery of Eradicat baits, and with her part-time PhD studies at the University of Western Australia.