

Newsletter 118 May 2004

Description

Dear Friends,

Heavy rain early in the morning caused the cancellation of the day's activities. Hopefully a start can be made on the box and log checking in June.

During May ecological burning was completed on the Donchi Hill block and the Dillwynia block.

The Echuca Bird Observers' group visited the park for three days and despite 20 people searching we were unable to turn up Regents or Swift Parrots. Apparently Swift Parrots are very scarce in Victoria so far this season and Regents equally so. This is puzzling as there is plenty of Ironbark in flower both in Chiltern and Killawarra. Equally puzzling is the fact that one Regent has been sighted on the Bellarine Peninsula! Among the other honeyeaters there is an apparent scarcity of White-naped Honeyeaters and more than usual Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. Perhaps a reason for the increase in Yellow-faced numbers has something to do with the fact that they are altitudinal migrants and their usual habitat has been fire affected. And what's in the majority? You've guessed it! The Noisy Friar-bird. Their smaller relation the Little Friar-bird is on the other hand very scarce. Small bush birds appear to be low in numbers too. Is it the season or are bird numbers drastically reduced post the drought and the poor breeding conditions it brought? Whatever it is it is a worrying trend for each year we have said 'Maybe next year will be a good season.'

The comment 'Small bush birds are scarce,' is commonly heard from visitors.

There are still a few Dusky Woodswallows about and the Robins have arrived to brighten the scene, in fact a highlight for the Echuca group was seeing a male Rose Robin at close quarters. Eastern Shrike-tits are active and a pleasure to watch.

We also had the Shoalhaven birdwatchers and some Adelaide visitors during May.

On the plant scene, despite the dry season, there are some Midge Orchids, *Genoplesium* sp, Autumn Greenhoods, *Pterostylis revoluta* and the dainty Parson's Bands, *Eriochilus cucullatus* in flower. The Golden and Varnish Wattles are in good bud giving the promise of good spring.

An Olive Legless Lizard, *Delma inornata* was found on Dillwynia Track during the burn off making this the second record for this rarely seen reptile in a few months.

From the April meeting:

Betty Carrasco tendered her resignation as convenor and also from the group. We thank her for her interest in the group. This position is open to anyone who wishes to fill it.

Rainfall: Rainfall in April was 21mm over 4 days. The yearly total is now 48mm. This is the lowest total for many years so let's hope the autumn break arrives very soon. Looking over the long term records I notice that in 1912 only 42mm fell in the first four months.

Congratulations to member, Sarah Taylor who has achieved her PHD. Sarah's study focused on the White-browed Babblers in the park.

Contributions: Anyone wishing to contribute to the newsletter can email their article to me.

NEXT MEETING JUNE 6TH

Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 9.00 am. Nest log/box surveying. Lunch at Greenhill Dam. BYO lunch, gloves, compass if you have one and energy. You will see a lot of the park on this day. Organiser: Neville Bartlett 0260 208 632 If the weather is at all doubtful please phone the organiser to check that the activity will go ahead.

Category

1. Newsletters

Date Created

2012/06/22

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