

Newsletter 123 October 2004

Description

Dear Friends,

Despite the weather forecast indicating some showers the afternoon was sunny and very pleasant. The first stop was near the start of Donchi Hill Road and the wild flowers were lovely but few birds were about. The flowers included Small-leaf Parrot -pea, Dillwynia phylicoides, Chocolate Lilies, Grevillea alpina, Yam Daisies, Waxlips, Glossodia major and drifts of Golden Everlastings in bud. Further along Donchi Hill Road we walked along some of the tracks and found several pairs of Hooded Robins. One pair had just started building a nest and were in the middle of laying the foundations. We would not have found the nest if the female had not flown up to it and proceeded to place a piece of grass in it. A little further on we found a Restless Flycatcher gathering spider webs for a nest that was nearing completion. Overhead we saw a Wedge-tailed Eagle being harassed by a Raven and also saw an Olive-backed Oriole, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes and a single Fan-tailed Cuckoo watching us watch it. Red-rumped Grass-parrots were plentiful along with Eastern Rosellas and more Hooded Robins. The view out from the park southwards towards the railway line and beyond was very pleasant with the fields all lush and green and many birds about. Just as we were about to leave the park the call of a Rufous Songlark attracted our attention. Its call is so powerful and commands one's attention.

The evening saw a good roll up to the dinner followed by a brief AGM and an excellent talk by Dr Catherine Meathrel from LaTrobe University. Dr Meathrel is a world expert and very passionate about gulls. She spoke about Short-tailed Shearwaters (more commonly known as mutton-birds) as the research work has been going for 58 years and is focussed on the population in SE Australia that has about 23 million birds. By studying such a plentiful species, scientists such as Catherine Meathrel and Mark Carey (a new member on our Committee) are learning about the larger family Procellariidae, which contains about 60 species of tube-nosed sea birds including petrels, shearwaters and prions. All of the birds in the larger family have very similar life spans and breeding characteristics so it makes sense to study the abundant shearwaters. The results so far were of great interest and demonstrate that seabird breeding success varies greatly from year to year. Dr Meathrel was warmly thanked by an enthusiastic audience for a very interesting and entertaining talk. Thank you Neville for this report.

From the AGM:

The committee for 2004/5 is as follows:

Convenor: Vacant. As we have not had a convenor for the last six months and there were no nominations to fill the position, we will continue to operate without a convenor. All of the tasks are being shared amongst other committee members and it seems to be working well.

Secretary: Neville Bartlett. Treasurer: Peter Gotham Public Officer: Peter Gotham

Committee Members: Eileen Collins, John Hawker, Phillip Seely and Mark Carey.

Competition: The lucky winner of the lovely White Cypress Pine bowl created by Mr Hawker senior was Ian Lindner and the second prize winner was Eileen. Thank you to all who contributed.

Rainfall: Rainfall in September 75.2mm over 11 days. Yearly total: 401.6 mm over 78 days.

Around the Park:

Painted Honeyeaters and Cockatiels are two of the recent arrivals. Gang Gangs are still with us, Gerygones and Rufous Whistlers are in full voice. However in general bird numbers, particularly honeyeaters, appear to be low in comparison to other years. Maybe we are now seeing the effects of the dry years.

NEXT MEETING SATURDAY NOVEMBER 6TH

Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 9.00 AM Leaving the P.O. at 9.10 AM . A walk in the park to enjoy the wildflowers and the removal of a recently located patch of cactus on Riley's Road. Organiser. Eileen 03 57 261 484. 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

Author

eileen