

Newsletter 140 May 2006

Description

Dear Friends

Such an Indian Summer we are experiencing with temperatures ranging from minus 3 to 20 degrees in the daytime. Such was the day we had for the April meeting. Four more nest boxes went up like clockwork giving us time to enjoy the Autumn Greenhoods, *Pterostylis revoluta*, and the Winter Greenhood, *Pterostylis parviflora*. Both species were in perfect condition but sadly two days later the large Autumn Greenhoods fell prey to some chewing insect which left a trail of flowers on the ground. Later in the afternoon we met with Aaron Organ from Ecology Partners who presented an interesting overview of frog biology and an introduction to the species we may find. It was particularly disturbing to hear of the impact of the Chytrid Fungus on frogs. The fungus attacks the skin of frogs and eventually causes death. This was followed by a search for frogs, in particular Bibron's Toadlet which we found calling happily in two sites. Aaron found one under a dried off tussock enabling everyone to see this special, very tiny species. Although it looks quite plain on its back it has the most striking white underbelly adorned with black marbling and very distinctive boomerang shaped ridges over the shoulders. The call is a single harsh creek repeated frequently.

Tea and a chat along with some birdwatching was enjoyed at Honeyeater Picnic spot. However it was disappointing not to be able to find the toadlet there as that was a previously known site. After tea we went to Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam and prowled around the flats where we found many Plains Froglets as well as a large Carabid Beetle with its black body outlined with iridescent green. The museum identified it from a photo as a Greenlined Ground Beetle, *Catadromus lacordairei*. Our presence upset the Masked Lapwings as they flew screeching overhead.

Searching the valley dam in the mild evening made a pleasant end to a very enjoyable day. Thankyou Aaron.

Looking Back: In 1994-5 Friends planted 3500 trees behind what was then the Chiltern Tip. In order to extend the landfill the EPA stipulated that the whole boundary be planted with trees to a depth of six rows wide. There was not a tree on the block when we commenced work. The ground was deep ripped and the task completed in a few months. Today those trees are flourishing and supporting numerous bird species. The hill that they enclose consists of dense native grasses, some peas, guinea flowers and everlastings.

There are a few ferals creeping into the lower part of the plantation and some old plastic guards that need to be removed. Hopefully in the coming months we may be able to find an hour or so at one meeting to remove them.

Rainfall: April 32.2mm over 4 days Yearly total to date : 73.0mm over 17 days

Rutherglen Bushland Reserve: On Saturday May 13th Friends with assistance from ranger Dave erected 6 nest boxes on the reserve. To our surprise we found 6 Swift Parrots feeding in the last of the Grey Box. The bird list for this lovely block is now past 40 species. The Yellow Box and Blakely's Red

Gum are in heavy bud and promise a good flowering season.
Later we went to Klotz Track to replace a damaged box and found it was repairable. It had a fresh green nest in it but the lid had been dislodged. Mark fixed it and we put the other box up close by.
Around the Park: Only a few Dusky Woodswallows remain. A Rose Robin has been seen at Greenhill Dam, a spot that has been unusually quiet this year. There are more smaller honeyeaters about, particularly White-naped. Swift Parrots are plentiful although very active and they are probably easiest to observe later in the day when they seem to gather prior to roosting. The Grey Box is all but over, Ironbark is flowering well, scattered Stringybarks have blossom and White Box is in fantastic bud. The dry conditions prevented any work being done on the Depot Road site during the May meeting.. Satin Bower Birds have been seen in the township gardens.
All the unserviceable nest boxes in the northern block have now been replaced, gps'd and mapped.
Friends of Warbys: Next meetings: June 10th Contact Peter 0357 218 937 July 8th Pangerang Lookout , David: 0357 221 213

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY JUNE 4TH MEET AT CHILTERN POST OFFICE 9.00AM
Nest box checking and weather permitting some work at the Depot Rd site. BYO lunch, chair binocs, gloves.
Contact: Neville 0260 208 632 or Eileen 0357 261 484

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN NATIONAL PARK inc. MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
P.O. Box 60 CHILTERN 3683 To assist, please mark the envelope Membership.
Friends have achieved a great deal during the past year. Surveys for plants, birds and monitoring and replacing of mammal boxes, and weed control are just some of our contributions. Your support for our activities is valued and your membership renewal is vital to our cause. Membership expires on June 30th. Please ensure your contact details are current. Thank you.
Please find enclosed my membership of \$10 for 2006-7 The fee covers the whole family and includes 11 newsletters.

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1. Newsletters

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Author

eileen