



Newsletter 162 May 2008

Description

The May 2008 newsletter is full of interesting news and photos especially about the release of 27 captive bred Regent Honeyeaters in the park and the associated tracking project.

Photograph courtesy Dean Ingwersen, Threatened Bird Network Coordinator, Birds Australia.

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN NATIONAL PARK inc

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Dear Friends

The May meeting day concentrated on the release of the 27 captive bred Regent Honeyeaters. Those who attended were rewarded with some good viewing and also experienced the â??newâ?• Regent calls. These calls were dubbed â??City Slangâ?• by the zoo staff present. Now it is easy to differentiate between the wild birds and the new ones. Regents are wonderful mimics so it is no surprise to hear these lovely new calls. One wonders, should they breed with wild birds, just what the calls of the young will be like!

Many thanks to the Friends and other bird watchers who have volunteered hours of radio tracking. Your input has been very important for data gathering and locating the birds. Hopefully all will have learned some new skills and enjoyed the experience. It is expected that monitoring will be ongoing until about the end of June so please call if you would like to contribute.

For those who wish to read more of the project David Geering has written an account for our website.

Around the park

The mining exploration/sampling in the Wallace Gully area is complete and the tracks and sites have been restored. No doubt more will be heard of the venture.

The heaps of Peppercorns at Chiltern Valley No 2 have been burnt. Perhaps some post fire native seedlings will emerge. The fall of 14mm of rain over the weekend of the 27/28th made an incredible difference to the bird life. The first Swift Parrots for the year were spotted by Ranger Dave on April 30th on the western section of Donchi Hill Road. Numbers among the little birds have built up and Little Lorikeets are plentiful indicating that the Ironbarks are producing sufficient nectar for bird life.

Much of the park has been covered on foot by the searching volunteers and there have been no reports to date of button-quail being sighted. A few Yellow-faced Honeyeaters have been recorded as well as all the usual species in small numbers.

Painted Honeyeater

While monitoring the Regent Honeyeaters Keith Cherry found a Painted Honeyeater among the blossoms. This is possibly one of the latest records of this species for this area.

Rutherglen Conservation Reserve

On April 20th we erected another 4 boxes on the reserve, modified two that were empty and checked out the rest. Our Tuan was at home and had added more sheep wool to its nest.



The nursery nest had added feathers and wool and was unoccupied, the Sugar Glider from a previous inspection having left of its own accord or been ejected. Sugar and Squirrel Gliders in the other nests totaled 8 from 6 boxes. It was good to be able to modify the existing boxes on site. A few minor glitches were solved and everyone was happy with the day's work. The weather was perfect for the day's work.

It will be interesting to see how long it takes for the new boxes to be investigated.

Tuans begin mating in May-June and give birth from June to early August. The average litter is 6. Males die after mating. Males are territorial and have a home range of ~100 ha compared to the female home range of 20-70ha. It would seem this block may support just one female, time will tell. Tuans are carnivores and forage in the ground litter and on the bark of trees. The lovely Yellow Box trees on this reserve, with their rough and flaky bark provide good homes for all sorts of bugs. Perhaps that's why we have Tuans on site. If you would like to read more about this animal this website is recommended

On the way home we called in at Valley 1 and 2 Dams. There were Shellducks on Valley 2 and Chestnut Teal on Valley 1 plus other normal species. A rather surprising find considering the dry weather was a lovely specimen of a Bolete Fungi.



This fungi has gills replaced by bright yellow pores. Our specimen was about 18 cms in diameter with a very thick stem. The picture on the website illustrates the features of this lovely fungi.

The recent low levels of both dams have changed the make up of the margins considerably. Valley No. 2 has an extensive growth of tall, weedy herbage from the high water level to the present low level. In contrast Valley No1 looks magnificent with its wide fringe of reed beds. Goodness knows what may lurk in that in spring!

The accompanying website photo shows the reed beds and the smoke haze from the fuel reduction burns.

A startling record

Recently, Darren was walking around South Corowa and heard calls of a black cockatoo. Into view came a Red-tailed Black Cockatoo being mobbed by a pack of Magpies. He watched as it flared its lovely tail showing the red markings and bemoaned the fact that he did not have his binoculars with him. Darren is very familiar with this bird having seen it many times in his travels.

Darren will be leaving us in June to live in Cairns. We wish him well in his new home and thank him for his input to Friends days. I am sure the birding will be good and a few more ticks will be added to his list.

Rainfall for April

17.2 mm over 4 days. Yearly total: 227.4 mm over 18 days.

NEXT MEETING: SUNDAY JUNE 1ST

MEET AT CHILTERN POST OFFICE AT 9.00AM

Nest box modification and checking.

Contact Eileen 03 57 261 484 Byo lunch, chair, binocs.

Category

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Date Created

2012/06/22

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