



Newsletter 170 February 2009

Description

The February 2009 Newsletter reports on the state of the park in these desperately hot and dry circumstances

Dear Friends

Well what can one say about the weather with its record temperatures! As one member pointed out, "Friends created a record of their own with the first cancellation of a meeting in sixteen years".

A tour of the dams on February 3rd showed Depot Dam is reduced to a grey puddle; the upper dam in Bartley's is holding up well; Cyanide remains dry; Greenhill and Lappins Dams are good, while Ryan's Rd and Mt Pleasant Road dams are seriously low.

Of the Valley dams Valley No 1 looks the best. The waterbirds obviously think so too as there are plenty of ducks and dotterels, White-faced Herons and a few Yellow-billed Spoonbills. A large flotilla of Pelicans performing their "herding" fishing behaviour indicates there is food available so let's hope they are eating carp!



As the water level at Valley No 1 drops the old post and rail fencing is once more becoming exposed so reminding us of past use.

At Valley No 2 there are some very low clumps of Box Mistletoe which are supporting some luxuriant

growth of Fleshy Mistletoe *Amyema mirabilis*. This more up-right bushy mistletoe, with bright red flowers, appears to grow on the haustoria of the Box Mistletoe. Fleshy Mistletoe is a larval plant for the Satin Azure Butterfly.



Tuan Track Walk

Over the past year the walk from Tuan Campsite to Bartley's Block and return has been traversed by many people. A pamphlet has been designed and printed and the last stage in the project will be the placement of the signage.

Parks staff will drill the holes and provide the signage. Our task will be to place the signage and arrows along the walk. There are seven signs to be erected. A pamphlet box will be erected inside the campsite enclosure..

This walk will provide visitors with an introduction to the park's northern block. Apart from the section through Bartley's Block it follows park tracks.

Vicki McCartney provided a delightful line drawing of a Tuan for the front of the pamphlet. Thanks Vicki for sharing your skills.

Around the Park

All I can say is that it is drier than I have ever seen it. With two weeks of temperatures reaching between 37 and 41 degrees you may imagine the toll it is taking on the ecosystem. Small birds have departed for ?? where. Notable disappearances are the White-browed Woodswallows which were in huge numbers in spring and early summer. The resilient White-winged Choughs and White-browed Babblers are still braving the conditions.

The plants in the enclosures at the campsite have, so far, stood up to the extreme conditions. With some summer rain they should be secure. The storms that crossed the area on February 2nd dropped variable amounts of rain. Totals varied from 4mm in town and the park to 29mm at Chiltern south.

Ovens and Murray Bird Observers Group

The occasional newsletter along with the [year's programme of outings](#) will be lodged on our website for the convenience of bird watchers.

Rainfall for December2008

73.3 mm over 9 days. Total for year: 580.4 mm over 96 day

FOR January 2009

27.9 mm over 3 days. Total for the year: 29.9 over 3 days.

NEXT MEETING SATURDAY MARCH 7TH 2009 MEET AT CHILTERN P.O AT 9.00AM

Installation of the Tuan Track signage. Nest box modification and checking.

Hopefully the weather will be reasonable. BYO chair, lunch, binocs, water, energy and a shovel or ramming tool. The holes will have been drilled provided Parks are not occupied with fires and machinery is available.

A change of activity may be necessary.

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Category

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