



Newsletter 184 May 2010

Description

The May 2010 newsletter reports on the May meeting of Friends and the progress of the 2010 Regent Honeyeater captive bred release program

Dear Friends

Much as we would have welcomed more rain we accepted another balmy autumn day to finish the bank planting at the hide site. Some of the grasses from the previous month's planting were already peeping over the guards thanks to the rain that followed the work day. Since we had a good group of workers we split up and half worked on the bank and the rest on the fill in planting at the mains site and that all added up to an early morning tea!.

The valley dams are now very low. There were fewer birds present this month just a few dotterels, lapwings, grey teal and wood duck. Around the hide area a Golden Whistler and Western Gerygone were seen and White-plumed Honeyeaters were calling.

A pair of Little Eagles passed overhead. The Brolgas are back and were feeding in the stubble paddock just before the dam.



Magenta Mine area was our lunch spot as we intended to look for the wild Regents during our afternoon walk. Two Regents were located along Greenhill Road. Usually easily found by their calls,

these birds were calling softly and infrequently but thanks to the still conditions were easily found.

A few Swift Parrots are still around the park and more than likely will be found in flowering White Box. All sightings of Regent Honeyeaters and Swift Parrots may be reported to Freecall 1800 621 056 for Regents and 1800 665 766 for Swift Parrots. Please call as soon as possible after the sighting. Your call will be much appreciated.

Regents may have leg bands and if you are able to record them that too would be valuable information.

Around the park

The Autumn Greenhoods are just about over but if you look carefully for the dark green heart-shaped leaves of the tiny Gnat Orchid *Acianthus exsertus* you will be rewarded with flowers. The best spots for these orchids are in the Stringybark dominated areas of the park where there is a grassy understorey.



Rosettes of the Nodding and Dwarf Greenhoods are emerging and the autumn flowering Red-tipped Greenhood is sporting fat seed capsules thanks to the rains.

Avian Antics

In addition to the hard to find Regent Honeyeaters we had a little more excitement this month. One absentee member needed to remain at home, but he could not leave us alone, badgering us three times during our work with mobile phone calls. Yes, it was a very excited Joseph again! He had a Grey-crowned Babbler on his property which was with a small group of White-browed Babblers. Even more interesting was the fact that it was at an active nest with the group. Needless to say we paid a visit to see this interesting happening. The Grey-crowned was busy at the nest, re-arranging the sticks and

interacting with the White-brows.



The nearest known populations of Grey-crowns is north of Chiltern, which would be 20kms away and around Springhurst a similar distance. This was obviously an adventurous bird. I checked with Doug Robinson, the babbler specialist to see if there were any other records of this interaction. Only one was known and that was in the Grampians area. I guess the message to birdwatchers is “ look at and listen carefully to all babbler groups”.

Grey-crowns are much bigger than White-brows and are really obvious. The Yahoo call is also distinctive.

Neville captured some nice shots and one is on the website.

Rainfall April 48.3mm over 9 days. Yearly total to date: 253.3 over 25 days. Dry May so far.

Regent Honeyeater Release

As many of you will be aware via the TV and newsprint media captive bred Regents were released into the park this month. The birds were bred at Taronga and Adelaide Zoos. All of the birds have coloured legbands and 22 are fitted with transmitters to enable their movements to be tracked. Already some of the birds have mixed with the wild birds. Members of Friends and volunteers have been assisting with this work. Anyone who would like to volunteer their time may contact Sarah Kelly, DSE on mobile : 0427 619962 or 03 57 238 659

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY JUNE 6TH

Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 9am .BYO Lunch, chair, binocs. We plan to do some nest box monitoring. However members have the option of doing Regent monitoring. Contact: Eileen: 0357 261 484. Mobile in the field only: 0407 486 480

NEW DVD FEATURING DISTRICT BIRDS

One of our members has created a delightful DVD entitled “ A Twitcher’s Guide to Birding in the North-

east". There is no commentary on the DVD, just the lovely bird calls. All birds are named with their common and scientific name.

This DVD is for sale at \$15 plus \$2.30 postage and packing. If you would like to purchase a copy please forward your payment and postal details to: Friends of Chiltern N.P. P.O. Box 60 Chiltern 3683 OR purchase one from the Chiltern Post Office or the Chiltern Information Centre.

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