



Newsletter 185 June 2010

Description

The June 2010 newsletter signals the beginning of winter and the autumn rains auger well for vegetation recovery. The proceedings of the May meeting are discussed and a feature article on brush tailed phascogales or tuans by Keith Cherry is published.

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Dear Friends

Welcome to winter and the changes it brings to the bush. If the autumn rainfall pattern continues the bush, particularly the understorey, should have a chance to regenerate. There are countless tiny seedlings of wattles, peas and grevilleas along with leaves of the Waxlip Orchid, *Glossodia major* which, given good winter rains will thrive.



A crisp sunny day made the nest box work enjoyable. Three 20+ year old boxes were replaced in the Grevillea Track complex of eight boxes. The others were checked and all contained leaf nests some of which were very fresh.

The Chandler's Track group all had nests in them and the final one in that group, which was occupied at last check, was modified. The lone Ryan's Road box had a Squirrel Glider asleep in its nest. A second box was erected nearby.

Teal Track was the next site and both boxes had nests but no occupants. By this time it was past 1pm and lunch was calling.

A visit to the highest point of the newly acquired block gave us spectacular views of the valley and distant hills, a most enjoyable place for lunch.

Birds of the day

The sewage ponds adjacent to Teal Track provided Chestnut Teal, Shovelers, Grey Teal, Shelducks and Red-rumped Parrots feeding on the weeds around the edges of the ponds. In the bush nearby were Restless Flycatchers and Grey Fantails. Elsewhere we saw White-browed Babblers, White-

bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Black-chinned Honeyeaters, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters.



Birds in other areas include Regent Honeyeaters both wild and released, Swift Parrots, Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo, Golden Whistler, Red-capped, Yellow, Flame and Scarlet Robins, Red Wattlebirds and a few Noisy and Little Friarbirds.

The Ironbark blossom is holding up well and the White Box and Hybrid is flowering well. The rain has ensured there are plenty of insects and the honeyeaters are making the most of them.



Around the park

Parks have altered the entrance to Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam to encompass a parking area inside the gate. The large Peppercorns have been removed and mulched. Friends will plant shrubs at the entrance when the work is complete.

The Eldorado Dredge walkway has been replaced and the dredge is again accessible. The Woolshed viewing platform has been replaced using Replas materials. The picnic table from Replas has been ordered for the hide area. For every 50 kilograms of this product purchased, we have saved the equivalent of 1,250 2lt plastic milk containers that would have created 2.5 cubic metres of landfill"

BRUSH-TAILED PHASCOGALES IN DECLINE from Keith Cherry

As part of a long term monitoring program DSE recently completed its annual survey for Brush-tailed Phascogale in the Mt Pilot section of the park. Last year no phascogales were trapped which conforms to the general 10year decline observed here and Reef Hills, Benalla. Preliminary analysis of five sites monitored across the state indicate that the rainfall deficit was a principle cause in these two Ironbark dominated sites but not in those with different vegetation communities .

A second survey of sites in the Mt Pilot and Chiltern sections of the park and patches of remnant vegetation across the cleared land that separate them was conducted in March. Its objective was to identify how patches of remnant vegetation were used by phascogales to link populations of the two sections. Unfortunately this survey also failed to trap phascogales.

A specific issue for managing the Chiltern section is its isolation from the extensive forests of the Mt Pilot section including wetter vegetation communities. Dispersing, young phascogales may migrate from these areas and supplement a declining population but only if remnant vegetation is continuous enough to provide a bridge not a barrier for movement. In the absence of captures some evidence for the use of connective remnants can be derived from DNA analysis. If anyone finds a dead Brush-tailed Phascogale (eg. road or cat kill) could they please contact Eileen on 03 57 261 484 as soon as possible.

Thankyou Keith for this article.

Rainfall

May 68.5 mm over 5 days. Yearly total to date: 321.8 mm over 30 days.

Regent Honeyeater Release

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 SATURDAY JULY 3RD

Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 9am .BYO Lunch, chair, binocs. Contact: Eileen: 0357 261 484. Mobile in the field only: 0407 486 480 Activity will be nest box work but may change if the hide area is ready for planting.

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN NATIONAL PARK inc MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

P.O. Box 60 CHILTERN 3683

To assist, please mark the envelope Membership. Please ensure your contact details are current.
Thankyou.

Friends have achieved a great deal during the past year. Surveys for plants, birds and monitoring, replacing and erection of new mammal boxes, tree planting , weed control and the provision of a bird hide 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 find enclosed my membership of \$10 for 2010-11 The fee covers the whole family and includes 11 newsletters.

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1. Newsletters

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