

Newsletter 216 April 2013

Description

Dear Friends,

Finally the rain arrived but gentle it was not! Over 60 mm fell in a very short time so did not soak in. A week later another 38mm and after a day or so the country took on a green tinge. Now we await the next fall to keep the bush fresh.



Our main activity for April was to search out Cootamundra Wattles which seem to be able to survive the toughest conditions. However our search party of twelve was pretty smart. On two sites along Lancashire Gap Road ten large ones were felled and many smaller ones pulled up. Magenta Road was targeted by a couple of us at the end of the day bringing the day's total to well over 60 plants.



Wandering around the park brings its surprises. Mick Webster spotted this large Stringybark encircled by a barrel hoop. The tree still has a bit of growing to do before the hoop tightens.



Before our morning tea break at Honeyeater Picnic spot we checked several nest boxes and were pleased to find a family of Sugar Gliders snuggled up in one box. After tea and bun and other goodies kindly brought by friends we went in search of honeyeaters, Scarlet, Black and Regent. Unfortunately none showed up. However there were plenty of Friarbirds both Noisy and Little and a few White-naped, Fuscous, Black-chinned and Brown-headed honeyeaters. The eucalypts are flowering well around that area. At lunchtime we had the pleasure of seeing two Rose Robins in the Silver Wattles near the dam and a Red-capped in the picnic area.

The afternoon nest box surveying along Coyle's Track was rather disappointing, out of seven boxes only one had animals asleep in it. We were surprised to find a number of olive trees in that area and needless to say they were quickly dealt with. Friends with saw and paste are lethal. Greenhill Dam was our next venue where another Rose Robin was spotted. Golden Whistler and Crested Shrike-tit were other good sightings along with the unusual sight of three brilliantly coloured Yellow Robins drinking

together. We stayed there until 5pm and birds were still coming to the water. The Golden Whistlers, resplendent in their black, gold and white plumage are plentiful and vocal throughout the park.



Bartley's Block continues to produce interesting sightings. Painted Honeyeaters and a Rufous Fantail have been seen, both species on their return trip to warmer climes. The Rufous Fantail sighting is only the third known recording for the Chiltern section of the park. Others were at Frogs Hollow and Varnish Track. A Barking Owl, roosting in the old Quince trees, was discovered by a mob of small birds and eventually they prevailed and it moved on. Another interesting observation, which occupied three of us for half an hour, was of a party of eight Fairy Wrens feeding on ants.



The huge ant mound was swarming with ants and the wrens would hop onto the mound, snatch an ant and quickly leave to consume it in safety. We discussed this event and came to the conclusion that other insect life was very scarce. We also noted that there were no other small birds to be found which is most unusual for the western edge of the block. Valley No 2 Dam has risen slightly post the rain events and the birdlife has decreased markedly. On a recent visit no pelicans, ducks, grebes, stilts, herons or ibis were seen. A Little Eagle and Whistling Kite cruised overhead and a lone Black-fronted Dotterel was finding enough to eat. The shore is now covered with soft green herbage and a walk along it provided numerous wrens and Yellow-rumped Thornbills taking advantage of the insect life on the greenery. A White-bellied Sea Eagle was sighted in early April.



Regent Honeyeater Release

This will take place on Wednesday April 17th at Magenta Mine area. We are still seeking volunteers for ongoing tracking. If you are able to assist with this project please contact Glen Johnson
glen.johnson@dse.vic.gov.au

Website

The website has undergone considerable change. Your feedback and or contributions/suggestions would be most welcome. We have been experiencing intermittent problems with the website but believe its now resolved.

Rainfall

March 93.2mm over 4 days. Year to date: 100.7mm over 7 days.

Next Meeting

Saturday May 4TH 2013 Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 9.00am Hopefully it will have rained again by then! Byo lunch, binocs, chair, gloves. The weather will determine which tasks we will undertake. Nest box checking as part of our afternoon walk. Looking for Regent Honeyeater arrivals will be part of the day's activity. Contact in the field : Eileen 0407 486 480 or 57 261 484

Category

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Author

eileen