

Newsletter 266 October 2017

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter 266 October 2017

Dear Friends

On Sunday, the first day of daylight saving, our group had much pleasure hosting visitors from the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalistsâ?? Club. For many of them it was their first visit to this part of the state. Despite the dry conditions many interesting plants were found and best of all the Regent Honeyeaters, a tick for all of them, put on a good show in the early morning.

The bird watchers amongst them assembled a good list. The Painted Honeyeaters, Rufous Whistlers and Western Warblers at Bartleyâ??s Block were in good voice. A large, sluggish Red-bellied Black Snake offered great photo opportunities before slithering into a huge tussock of Sedge.



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The abundant Dainty Bird-orchids in the damp gully were still fresh and were a new species for the visitors who took many photographs.

Lunch was enjoyed at Magenta Minea accompanied by the chatter of a huge mixed flock of Woodswallows, some of which were feeding noisily in the Red Box blossom.



After lunch we took a drive to Greenhill Dam to inspect some serious chewing on several of the Blakely's Red Gums. This is the work of Koalas. Copious give-away droppings were under both trees. The purpose of the chewing is not understood, perhaps it was tooth sharpening or maybe filling a dietary need.





This site provides an interesting article on Koala chewing.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-21/bark-eating-koalas-destroying-gumtrees-near-canberra/6928828>

There is a short camera clip at the end of the article showing a Koala in action!

Our last hours were spent at Muffler Track where we found the delicate Golden Moths *Diuris chryseopsis*, a few late Nodding Greenhoods, Beard Heath, *Leucopogon virgatus*, yellow Bulbine Lilies and an early flower of the common Wedge-pea, *Gompholobium huegelii*.

By this time afternoon tea was welcome and everyone enjoyed our traditional Chiltern Bakery Custard bun before we said our farewells.

Bird News

September 21st heralded the return of the Painted Honeyeaters at Bartley's Block. The familiar and foraging "Gee-gee" calls were heard again on the 24th. Western and White-throated



still good Ironbark flowering
they stay to breed.

Spring has brought with it some interesting sightings. Two beetles, a raft of eggs on a leaf edge, an unnamed moth and a nest box full of baby Tuans.

The colourful leaf beetle, *Paropsiter fastidiosa*, was photographed by Neil. Although common in Victoria is not often seen. It feeds on a wide variety of eucalypts. The larvae of this beetle are pale yellow and covered with small black spots and can be found on eucalypts



A strikingly marked rare ground beetle, *Laccopterum macleayi* was photographed at Mt Pilot by Neil Blair. There are only six records registered, this one, one north of Albury and the others in Sydney. As we were unable to find this species in any literature the photo was sent to Dr Ken Walker of Melbourne Museum for identification.



There are many species of ground beetle, some have short legs and are more likely to be found in soil, others like this one have long legs and may be found under bark or logs.



David Bird spotted a raft of amazing eggs on a Golden Wattle leaf. They were laid by a Gum Leaf Katydid *Torbia* sp. showing eggs and an early growth phase of a Katydid. This species feeds on a wide range of eucalypts but seemingly choose to lay their eggs on Golden Wattle.



Jan spotted this beautiful moth on the only known bush of *Rhagodia spinescens*. Presently it is puzzling the moth experts as it seems not to have been recorded for Victoria



It belongs in the Geometridae sub-family, Sterrhinae, *Idaea.sp*
Hopefully we will be able to give it a name in the next newsletter.

It is breeding time for the Tuans, Brush-tailed Phascogales, and this photo comes to us by courtesy of Will Ford of Trust for Nature. This mother, with at least five young attached to her teats, is inhabiting a nest box on the plains. It is to be hoped that we get some rain to improve their food supply and chance of survival once they leave the nest.



Tuan Campsite

Parks staff have completed the work at Tuan campsite. They have installed the new table provided by Friends, plus another flat table and a barbecue. The car park has been upgraded. Friends will undertake some planting in the coming weeks.



The *Acacia doratoxylon* in one of the enclosures is in magnificent flower at the moment. This wattle is the only species with catkin flowers in the box-ironbark section of the park. It is known in two sites only, on Cyanide Road and Skeleton Boundary Track.



Membership renewals

Thankyou to everyone who has renewed their membership. Membership now stands at 103.

Rainfall for September

7.8 mm over 5 days. Year to date : 360 mm One of the driest Septembers on record.

NEXT MEETING IS ON SATURDAY NOVEMBER 4TH

Meet at the Post Office at 9.00 am

Field contact 0407 486 480

2018 FRIENDS CALENDARS AVAILABLE FROM MID NOVEMBER

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Friends of Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park 2018 Calendar

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Chiltern Valley No 1 Dam

A selection of images depicting the wildlife that can be found in the Park



Category

1. Newsletters

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