

Newsletter 290 December 2019

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter #290 Dec 2020

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

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Dear Friends,

December Gathering

The gathering at the Honeyeater Picnic Area was always in doubt as rain and cold conditions were forecast for the afternoon. About a dozen people turned up and seemed reluctant to call off the gathering so we had a quick meeting to elect Peter Gotham to the committee and to approve some expenditure items. A good discussion followed round a small fire that Mick lit in the BBQ pit. We enjoyed a lovely meal that people contributed and, as the rain returned, we all retreated homewards after about two hours.

We wish everyone a happy festive season and best wishes for 2020.

Wattle Goat Moth – Eileen Collins



Wattle Goat Moth – photo: Eileen Collins



Wattle Goat Moth close-up of its head – photo Peter Marriot

This beautifully patterned female Wattle Goat Moth, *Endoxyla lituratus*, belongs to the Cossidae family.

The egg laden females are amongst some of the largest moths in the world. *E. lituratus* larvae bore into the stems of various Acacia species. The larvae feed for several years before emerging from the soil in their golden pupal case.

The tell-tale case, about 10 centimetres long, is left protruding from the soil.

The photo on the left was taken in late November just prior to rain.

The Entomological Society of Victoria has published a book entitled “Damselflies and Dragonflies of Victoria” by Reiner Richter & Ian Endersby. This book is highly recommended for anyone wanting to find out more about families of insects.

Cacti in the Park – Mick Webster

[Prickly pear with cochineal beetles](#)

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Two species of cacti are found in the Park, both natives of central and South America. Common prickly pear (*Opuntia stricta*) has been established for many years especially in the rocky granite soils along the Woolshed Valley and around Eldorado. It is identified by its more or less oval cladodes (the fleshy ‘leaves’ with spines), is usually less than 1 metre high, and is reasonably well controlled by cochineal beetles chewing away from the inside. Some hill-slopes which were smothered in prickly pear 30 years ago have very few today -although new plants are always popping up in areas we haven’t seen them before.

Prickly Pear with Cochineal Beetles – photo: Mick Webster

However a new problem plant appearing more and more in the Park is wheel cactus (*Opuntia robusta*), which can be identified by its large round cladodes, viciously long spines, and larger size – up to 3 metres high. Recently we have identified quite an area of wheel cactus off the far western end of Old Coach Road, North of Eldorado, and we have removed as many flowers from these plants as we can find – this will at least stop those plants spreading seeds this year.

[Wheel cactus in flower](#)

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Wheel Cactus plant (above) and removed flowers with cladode (below) – photos: Mick Webster

Wheel cactus flowers and cladode

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This will only be stop-gap measure, of course, and we have hopes that a special colony of cochineal beetles being cosseted by Ranger Hannah Clemen in Beechworth will be able to be released some time over summer – the beetles are highly selective of which species of cactus they will eat, so unfortunately the prickly pear beetles won't affect wheel cactus.

If you find any other areas of wheel cactus in the Park – let us know!

2020 Friends Calendar

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Friends of Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park

Friends of Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park 2020 Calendar

Photographers
Eileen Collins, Ann Kileen, Kim Radnell, Karen Retra, Kaye Trainor,
Simon Bennett, Joseph Birkhead, Neil Blair, Philip Dubbin, Chris Edwards,
Brian Pritchard, Neville Bartlett and Kit Haselden Photography

Website: www.friendsofchiltern.com.au

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The calendar is almost sold out and the last few copies are available from the Chiltern Post Office or Tony Murnane (anthonymurnane9@gmail.com). Thank you very much to Emma and Matt for their support with selling calendars. Thank you also to Tony for managing the sale and distribution of the calendars this year – well done Tony.

Ranger's Report – Brian Pritchard

Most of our efforts over the past few weeks have been focused on the numerous fires across the North East.

We would like to thank Friends for their great contribution across this year and we look forward to continuing working together next year.

Rainfall For November: 60 mm. Year to date: 429 mm. Last year we had 365 mm for the year up to the end of November.

NEXT MEETING – SUNDAY 2nd FEBRUARY 2020

This will be our first field day for 2020 and we will pick an activity closer to the day when we have a weather forecast.

Meet at the Chiltern Post Office at 9:00am. Field contact: Neville on 0412 399 239

Membership It's Time to Renew

Memberships expired on June 30th 2019. Thank you to all who have taken out membership this year. We hope you will continue your support. Friends have achieved a great deal during the past year. Surveys for plants, birds and monitoring, maintaining and surveying mammal boxes, tree planting, weed control and provision of brochures, interpretive signage and park furniture 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 of each year.

Please ensure your contact details are current.

Please find enclosed my membership of \$15 for 2019-20. The fee covers the whole family and includes 11 newsletters.

Name:.....

Telephone:.....

Email:..... Receipt required: Yes
/ No

Address:..... Postcode:

If you wish to use electronic payment the details are:

Acc Name: Friends of Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park

Bank: WAW Credit Union Co-operative Ltd (Cuscal Limited)

BSB number: 803070

Acc number: 81167

Please add your surname to the transaction.

Please advise Tony (anthonymurnane9@gmail.com) or Neville (neville@nrbartlett.com.au) when you have made the payment to help us keep track of payments.

Category

1. Newsletters

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