

Newsletter 292 March 2020

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter #292 March 2020

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

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Dear Friends,

With the outbreak of coronavirus/COVID-19, gatherings are now postponed until further notice.

Some of us will be out and about in the Park enjoying the open air and will be inspecting Turquoise Parrot boxes as well as looking out for weeds, eucalypt blossom and Regent Honeyeaters. If you venture out into the Park, please report what you find. We are particularly interested in what robins can be found.

March Gathering

A very pleasant day welcomed us as we arrived at the Rutherglen Natural Features Reserve. Inspection of the 14 mammal nest boxes was the main activity with much interest as to what impact the dry conditions might have on these creatures. The reserve has many kangaroos and large mobs would often approach and then veer off as they saw us.



Nestbox results: 1 Tuan in glider nest,



1 Sugar Glider in multi-use nest



1 Sugar Glider in a Tuan nest

As well as 6 empty Tuan nests, 4 empty glider nests and 1 damaged box.

Photos: Neville Bartlett

While some of us checked mammal nest boxes, others tackled the olives as they were discovered.



Olive removal in progress â?? Photo: Neville Bartlett



Philip Seely spotted this butterfly Lesser Wanderer (*Danaus petilia*) â?? Photo: Philip Seely

Here is ID reply from an expert â?? â??Thanks its *Danaus petilia* â?? the Lesser Wanderer. Occasional visitor to northern Victoria; common across most of inland Aust. Please obtain a find site for it if possible with GPS. Iâ??m hoping to see one of those on Mount Buffalo!!! Very obvious when they fly past!!!â??.

The special sightings did not end there. Two Superb Parrots flew over us and a group of about 6 birds were found near the Southern boundary of the reserve.



Superb Parrots (*Polytelis swainsonii*) â?? Photos: Neville Bartlett



Barking Owls â?? Simon Bennett

Simon has been unobtrusively monitoring a breeding pair of Barking Owls (*Ninox connivens*) with their two fledglings. Here is an image of the youngâ??uns taken with telephoto thermal imaging equipment. The darker areas in the image show cooler areas while the pale areas are warmest. Owls are very well

insulated by their feathers so only their warmer eyes, feet and flight muscles may be evident. Most mammals are less well insulated and generally show more warm areas such as the Swamp Wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*) in the second image. The thermal imager is entirely passive and emits no illumination whatsoever.



Young Barking Owls



and Swamp Wallaby

Photos: Simon Bennett

The Saving of Harriet â?? Jo Mitlehner

Last month Jo informed us about the rescue of Harriet the Wedge-tailed Eagle. Here is the follow-up reported by Eileen Collins.

On March 14th a healthy, robust Harriet was set free in Harrietville Cemetery. As she flew off she was mobbed by every Magpie within the area!



Harriet is free again! â?? photo: Jan Palmer

It was a truly rewarding moment for Jo who had cared for her.

Adult Ant Lion â?? *Heoclisis fundata* â?? Eileen Collins

The usual signs of Ant Lion presence are the little sand trap pits of the larval stage built to trap ants and other insects. The adult stage is quite a beautiful insect. This one is a female with an emerging egg at the tip of her abdomen.



Adult Ant Lion ??? photo: Eileen Collins

Antlions are beneficial insects being predatory both in the larval and adult stages.

NEXT MEETING ??? CANCELLED

Due to the coronavirus/COVID-19 outbreak, Park Victoriaâ??s latest advice is that all gatherings / community group activities are to be postponed until further notice.

Membership Itâ??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.

