

Newsletter 296 July 2020

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter #296 July 2020

Dear Friends,

July Field Day â?? Neville Bartlett

A very foggy day greeted us as we arrived at Chiltern so two groups headed to different parts of the Park. One group had the objective of clearing the walking track at Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam as well as tackling any weeds that could be found. Briars, peppercorns, Wyalong wattles, an olive and many Watsonias were removed. Thank you very much for an excellent effort.



The newly cleared walking track at Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam Photo: Mick Webster



Friends volunteers at work Photo: Mick Webster



Two Pelicans pretending to be asleep Photo: Mick Webster

A second group of Friends took up the weed challenge at Bartley's Block. The wet season has resulted in a bumper year for weeds and many hundreds of Caper Spurge seedlings were pulled up. The job has not been completed yet, but some return visits have been useful, and one or two more visits will be made so that no stragglers are allowed to go to seed.



Caper spurge Photo: Neville Bartlett

The bare area that was once occupied by Blue Periwinkle (*Vinca major*) is being taken over by other weeds such as Capeweed (*Arctotheca calendula*) along with a few Blue Periwinkle seedlings that have been easily removed. It is planned to plant some Wallaby grasses in this area in the coming weeks.



Volunteers at work Photo: Neville Bartlett



Caper Spurge seedlings – the desired result Photo: Neville Bartlett

Call for Images for the Friends 2021 Calendar – Neville Bartlett

Each year the Friends group produces a calendar featuring animals, birds, plants, fungi or scenes that showcase the full range of natural aspects of the Park. This is one of our main means of fund-raising.

We could easily fill the calendar with bird photographs but that would not do justice to the diversity of nature that can be found in the Park. It is often possible to handle images from a wide variety of sources including mobile phones, so you do not need sophisticated or expensive equipment.

So, if you have images that you would like to be considered or have seen some taken by other people then please get them to send the images to us. We do not need high resolution versions in the first instance. No images are used without the owner's approval and we always acknowledge the

photographer along with the image and on the front cover of the calendar.

Images may be sent to: neville@nrbartlett.com.au or any other committee member and they will be passed onto the judges for consideration. We would appreciate entries and/or suggestions by 30th August 2020 so that we can get the calendar ready for printing in plenty of time for sale in late October and onwards.

Regent Honeyeater Sightings â?? Neville Bartlett

During early June of this year, two Regent Honeyeaters were sighted in the Park and some neat detective work, aided by photos taken by Greg Hardham, enabled Dean Ingwersen to identify the male bird. He is Orange/Metal Black/Green and was released at Chiltern in April/May 2017. The plastic bands are no longer present and he only has the metal band left with his unique ID code 053-12280 on it. The other bird was an un-banded wild female.

Since this first set of sightings, no further Regent Honeyeater sightings were made until early in July when a visitor from Melbourne reported two Regents near the Hume Weir dam wall on the NSW side. A flurry of activity by local Regent Honeyeater enthusiasts confirmed the sighting and, after a lot of photos and a bit of luck, it was confirmed to be the same male as the one sighted earlier in Chiltern with presumably the same un-banded female. The trees in that area are flowering profusely with lots of bud yet to open. The border closure with the check-point just up the road has meant that the birds are currently in a very quiet spot.

Glen Johnson has asked us all to be on the alert for Regent Honeyeater activity. Should any breeding activity be discovered then the birds will be left undisturbed so that the chances of success are maximised.

The male regent honeyeater photo Neville Bartlett



4 Legs and 2 bums â?? Photo Neville Bartlett



The shy female Photo Neville Bartlett



Around the Park â?? Various Reporters

The signs are very encouraging for a great wildflower year in the Park as evidenced by the posts on the Friendsâ?? FaceBook group. Antechinus have often been sighted at Chiltern Valley #2 Dam along with Swift Parrots in good numbers. Now is a good time to take advantage of the season and spend some time in the Park if you can.

For our readers who are in lockdown or can not travel to the Park, we greatly appreciate your role in helping to get all of us through the challenge that COVID-19 poses.

Rangerâ??s Report â?? Brian Pritchard

The challenge of COVID-19 continues for us all. Wherever possible, staff who can work from home are still working from home, but we still have limited staff carrying out essential work. Increased monitoring and cleaning of visitor sites is continuing and we are noticing a significant increase in the number of

people utilising our parks to exercise. Unfortunately, illegal activities continue to be detected and a significant number of infringement notices have been issued for firewood and off-road offences. Ranger Hannah will be acting in a Team Leader role at Kinglake for the next month, but we will still have ranger presence in the park. Jessica Reid has been appointed to our vacant Area Chief Ranger role and will commence in mid-August.

Friends AGM

Our usual form of AGM featuring a walk in the Park, dinner at the Senior Citizens hall, AGM and a talk is not appropriate while COVID-19 is shaping so much of what we can do.

Therefore, we have decided to have the AGM via email. The steps are:

1. Send out the annual report of activity and a financial report. Comments and suggestions will be most welcome. Along with these reports will be a call for nominations for office-bearers and the committee with a deadline for nominations.
2. A list of resolutions to accept the reports and an election for the positions will be sent out with responses by email required by the date of the AGM. This will most likely be later in September.
3. At the end of the AGM day, results will be reported back to members. The AGM results will then be formally reported to Consumer Affairs Victoria as required for all registered organisations.

Saturday 5th September will become a field day starting at 09:00am under the COVID-19 restrictions that apply at the time. This will hopefully be a series of wildflower walks as the signs are very promising that the wildflowers will be great this year.

Rainfall For June: 63 mm. Total for 2020 year-to-date: 453 mm. In 2019 we had 240 mm up to the end of June.

NEXT MEETING AGM Sunday 2nd August 2020

We will be inspecting mammal nest boxes in two different parts of the Park.

In order to meet the COVID-19 requirements that limit the number of attendees in one place, we will have two groups each with a bun.

Meet near the Post Office at 9.00am. Field contact: Neville on 0412 399 239

Membership

It's time to renew Membership as it expires on June 30th. 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 few years. 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

