

Newsletter 297 Aug 2020

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter #297 August 2020

Dear Friends,

August Field Day – Neville Bartlett

The August field day took place with the expectation of tighter COVID-19 restrictions being imminent and a few days later this proved to be the case. Once again, we formed two groups and headed to different parts of the Park to inspect mammal boxes. One group headed North to the Donchi Hill Road area and the other headed South to the All Nations Road area.

The photographs below show typical Tuan nests with feathers and bark placed with varying degrees of tidiness but all feature droppings in one corner.

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Two Tuan nests and Richard carefully inspecting a box . Photos: Neville Bartlett



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Tuan nests are quite often very messy and this one makes the ones above look like models of Tuan tidiness.

Photo: Neville Bartlett

Farewell Sugar Glider, welcome Krefft's Glider – Chris Tzaros

Taxonomy is an evolving science, and changes to the naming and classification of several species have recently been proposed and accepted. In most cases, taxonomic revision 'splits' widely distributed species into smaller geographic areas within their range. In some cases, there may be distinct morphological (i.e. physical form and appearance) differences that help separate species. In other cases, genetic analysis can reveal differences and lead to species being reclassified and renamed.

Recent research into the widely distributed and familiar Sugar Glider has combined genetic and morphological analysis and has resulted in a three-way split recognising a species in Australia's north (the Savanna Glider, *Petaurus ariel*), and two species in eastern Australia. A key finding is that the research identified distinct differences between the gliders found in eastern Australia. It confirmed that the glider we know as the Sugar Glider in Victoria (and inland of the Great Divide in NSW and Queensland, and that is introduced in Tas.), has significant genetic differences to the gliders found in coastal areas of NSW and far south-east Queensland. As a result, the study recommends that the glider in coastal areas remains as the Sugar Glider (*Petaurus breviceps*) (based on the discovery location of the original type specimen), whilst the species occurring in Victoria, throughout the rest of NSW, Queensland and Tasmania, be named Krefft's Glider (*Petaurus notatus*), after German zoologist and palaeontologist, Gerard Krefft who collected the original type specimen.

There is no evidence to suggest that Krefft's Glider (*P. notatus*) co-occurs with the Sugar Glider (*P. breviceps*) except at the boundary of their distributions, and they would be difficult to separate in the field as there are no significant morphological differences. Luckily for us here in Victoria, we do not need to consider the zone of overlap or what an animal might look like because we are clearly in the range of Krefft's Glider only.

What this means for us is that we all should now use Krefft's Glider when formally referring to this species. Inevitably, there will be many of us who still call the animals Sugar Gliders, and perhaps the recommended name should have included the word 'sugar' to make matters a bit easier for people to get their heads around. For those interested in reading more, details of the paper are as follows:

Cremona, T., Baker, A.M., Cooper, S.J.B., Montague-Drake, R., Stobo-Wilson, A.M. and Carthew, S.M. (2020). Integrative taxonomic investigation of *Petaurus breviceps* (Marsupialia: Petauridae) reveals three distinct species. *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society* XX, 1-25.



Krefft's Glider family. Photo: Neil Blair

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.

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.

*** We have received some excellent images so far and look forward to more coming in. ***

Around the Park

Mick Webster reports that the *Banksia marginata* plants on Settlers Road are all looking very well. These were planted by Friends early in June this year. The wheel cactus cochineal beetles are having an impact in the places where they have been introduced and more plants have been found.

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Falls on Clear Creek (above) and Wheel Cactus (below) showing clear evidence of cochineal beetles at work – Photos: Mick Webster



Elke Jasper has made some interesting finds in the Park including some bright Fungus Gnat larvae and a Bibron's toadlet. Thanks go to Ken Walker at Museums Victoria for identifying the fungus gnat larvae and Damian Michael for help with the ID of the toadlet.

Fungus Gnat larvae Photos: Elke Jasper





and Bibron's Toadlet – Photos: Elke Jasper

The [Friends' Facebook group](#) has some excellent photos of orchids, other flowers and birds taken over recent weeks.

Ranger's Report – Brian Pritchard

With Stage 3 Covid Restrictions back in place our parks are only open for people to exercise close to their homes. All visitor facilities except toilets are closed.

All volunteer activities are currently suspended, and our staff continue to monitor visitation and will report breaches to police.

Patrols and basic park maintenance are still being done but staff who can work from home continue to do so.

Team Leader Brian will be on leave for the next month and Luke will act in the role until mid-September. Hannah will be back in late August after working at Kinglake for the last month.

Our new Area Chief Ranger Jess Reid commences in the job from 17 August. Jess has previously worked in our district and is currently ACR at Colac/Otway's area. Hopefully Jess can connect with Friends Group when the COVID-19 situation stabilises.

The viewing platform at Yeddonba has been closed until further notice due to an engineering report identifying some structural issues due to rotting timbers. Funding is being sought to rectify the problem.

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 Stage 3 COVID-19 restrictions are shaping so much of what we can do.

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

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.

Rainfall For July: 42 mm. Total for 2020 year-to-date: 495 mm. In 2019 we had 302 mm up to the end of July.

The higher rainfall this year is having a great impact on flowering.

NEXT MEETING – CANCELLED

Due to the corona virus/COVID-19 restrictions, Park Victoria's latest advice is that all gatherings / community group activities are to be postponed until further notice.

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 renewal is important to our cause. Please ensure your contact details are current. Please find enclosed my membership of \$15 for 2020-21. 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.

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