

Newsletter 311 November 2021

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter #311 November 2021

Dear Friends,

Our November field day featured three activities that attracted an impressive roll-up. Mick Webster gave a short show-and-tell about the Wheel Cactus work and then led a small team off to Edorado to spread more infested cactus pieces into new areas.





Wheel Cactus (*Opuntia robusta*) at Eldorado. Photos: Mick Webster

A second group headed off to Bartley's Block to plant Sedge (*Carex appressa*) and Wallaby Grass (*Rytidosperma spp*) in the area that was once infested by Blue Periwinkle (*Vinca major*). About 60 plants were quickly planted in the area that had been cleared of weeds.





Sedges and grasses were planted and protected. Photos: Neville Bartlett

A large group headed to the top end of Ironbark Track for a wildflower walk with Neville Walsh, the Senior Conservation Botanist at the Royal Botanic Gardens. Participants were treated to quite a range of flowers but a bumper crop of Large Duck-orchids (*Caleana major*) proved to be the highlight. These orchids are very difficult to see even when they are in plain sight.





Large Duck-orchids (*Caleana major*). Photos: Neville Bartlett

Turquoise Parrot Nest Box Update

During the 2016-17 year we installed nearly 50 Turquoise Parrot nest boxes in the Park in yet another attempt to find out if Turquoise Parrots would use them. Previous nest box installations had failed to attract interest from the parrots.

The latest design had been used very successfully in the Warby Ranges but up until recently our Turquoise Parrots have not shown any interest. Throughout this season, Turquoise Parrots have been frequently observed at Bartley's Block and it was clear that breeding activity was imminent.

At our November field day, a visitor pointed out that one of the current boxes (T12, near the car park at Bartley's Block) had a nest of Turquoise Parrots in it. A quick check revealed a nest of four very healthy birds that were at an advanced stage of growth. It was estimated that they were between two

and three weeks old and would hopefully fledge at about the four week mark. This proved to be the case and the birds fledged recently.

Turquoise Parrot (*Neophema pulchella*) nestlings 6 Nov 2021

Turquoise Parrot (*Neophema pulchella*) nestlings 14 Nov



Proud male Turquoise Parrot Photos: Neville Bartlett

A quick check of all the remaining boxes found no other Turquoise Parrot nests but one box contained a nest of Eastern Rosellas (*Platycercus eximius*).

Friends 2022 Calendars

The 2022 Friends' calendar features images covering many aspects of the Park and comes in two formats (original A3 and compact A4).

[Click here for a flier with details and an order form](#)

Thank you very much to those who submitted images for our judging panel to consider. It was quite a

team effort to pull this year's calendar together.

AGM Deferred until February 2022

We usually hold our AGM early in September, but this year's AGM has been deferred until later in February 2022.

Last year's AGM was conducted via email, but this year we would like to revert back to having a gathering centred on the AGM. Details will be announced closer to the time.

Rangers Report – Brian Pritchard

The seasonal conditions have been favourable for the Park but also many weed species as well. This can be challenging to address with the limited funding available.

Preparations for the fire season are continuing with track clearing and fuel management mowing works being completed at key sites. Our new Project Firefighters have commenced are undertaking training.

The current fox baiting program is completed and further works are planned for autumn. Some small pockets of pigs are still being found and are being monitored for feeding and trapping.

Unfortunately, we are also noticing an increased amount of rubbish dumping in the park and other illegal activities still occurring .

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers for their efforts in supporting us with looking after the Park in these challenging times, and wish everyone all the best over the festive season.

Rainfall October 2021: 56 mm. Total for year-to-date 2021: 703 mm.
In 2020 we had 712 mm up to the end of October.

The average annual rainfall for Chiltern is 689 mm.

NEXT MEETING – SUNDAY 5th DECEMBER 2021

Our traditional Christmas gathering.

BYO food, drink and chair.

Dress for the weather and terrain.

If it's raining we will meet at the Senior Citizens Hall in Chiltern

Meet at the Chiltern Valley No 1 Dam picnic area from 4:00pm.

We request that people attending abide by the prevailing COVID-19 advice:

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/directions-issued-by-victorias-chief-health-officer>

Dates for 2021-22

For 2021: Sunday 5th December.

For 2022: Sunday 6th February, Saturday 5th March, Sunday 3rd April, Saturday 7th May, Sunday 5th June, Saturday 2nd July, Sunday 7th August, Saturday 3rd September, Sunday 1st October, Saturday 5th November and Sunday 4th December.

Rule of Thumb: For even months, the field day is held on the first Sunday of the month and for odd months, it is held on the first Saturday of the month.

Turquoise Parrot (*Neophema pulchella*) nestlings (Upper Left: 6 Nov, Upper Right: 14 Nov)

Proud male (Lower: 14 Nov). Photos: Neville Bartlett

A quick check of all the remaining boxes found no other Turquoise Parrot nests but one box contained a nest of Eastern Rosellas (*Platycercus eximius*).

Friends 2022 Calendars

The response to our request for images produced an excellent and varied collection of images for our judges to select from. Our 2022 calendar will come in two formats so that purchasers will have a choice.

The first format (original A3) is the same A3 size and layout as in previous years.

The second format (compact A4) comes as an A4 size that is much more compact and is a little over half of the weight.

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Category

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