

Newsletter 316 May 2022

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter #316 May 2022

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

President : Neville Bartlett

neville@nrbartlett.com.au Ph: 0412 399 239

Correspondence to: Tony Murnane Secretary/Treasurer: anthonymurnane9@gmail.com

Newsletter: Neville Bartlett: neville@nrbartlett.com.au

Dear Friends,

The May field day activity, at the Rutherglen Natural Features Reserve, consisted of checking of mammal boxes, removal of olives and planning for our winter planting at the Northern end of the block. Fourteen mammal boxes were checked with one having gliders, one with a Tuan and one with feral honeybees.





Two Tuan nests with the one on the bottom showing a Tuan looking out. Photos taken using the Friendsâ?? pole camera.

On the same day, a Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot survey, led by Glen Johnson, was attended by over 50 people. Groups of people were assigned to different areas of the Park with one group being fortunate enough to find a large flock of Swift Parrots (*Lathamus discolor*) near survey point CHT.035 on Ryanâ??s Road. At one point a flock of over 200 Swift Parrots were observed and this is quite remarkable for a species that is believed to have a total Australian population of about 750 birds.





Swift Parrots (*Lathamus discolor*) near Ryan's Road. Photos: Philip Dubbin

There have been recent reports of Swift Parrots still being seen in the Ryan's Road area but not in such high numbers.

Grasslands Block - Bush for Birds - Project - Neville Bartlett

The Friends group has received a grant from Bush for Birds to carry out some spraying of weeds and revegetation work in a gully on the North-eastern part of the Grasslands Block. This is a section of ground around two dams that has many patches of herbacious/grassy weeds such as Cape Weed, Yorkshire Fog Grass, Cranesbill, St. Johns Wort and Rye Grass. Plants have been ordered and the first planting day has been planned for our field day in August.



Two views of the gully. On the top is a view looking eastwards and below is a view looking to the west.

Photos: Neville Bartlett



Anthelid â?? Anthela ocellata â?? Eileen Collins



Eyespot anthelid (*Anthela ocellata*) moth and caterpillar. Photos: Neil Blair (moths) and Richard Andrews (caterpillar)

The moth and caterpillar of this species may be found in all states with the exception of Western Australia.

It is a common species and may be found from spring through to autumn. Both the moth and caterpillar are nocturnal.

The caterpillars feed on a wide variety of grasses both native and introduced. Amongst this wide variety is the declared noxious weed Chilean Needle Grass which is found on roadsides in our area.

The caterpillars feed at night, resting during the day at the base of their food plants. When fully mature the caterpillars create a woven cocoon into which they incorporate some larval hairs to deter predators. They pupate in loose soil or leaf litter.

Ranger's Report Brian Pritchard

We currently have a full complement of staff for the first time in a long time and staff have been focussing on finalising our pest animal programs including pig and goat control.

Grading of some key access roads will be completed in next few weeks. Planning has commenced for repairs at Yeddonba and we are hopeful works will be completed later this year.

We are dealing with an increasing number of illegal activities within the park including off road use, rubbish dumping, and firewood removal and a number of infringement notices have been issued recently.

Operations are planned to further address these issues over the coming months.

It has been a real positive to see the number of Swift Parrots recorded in the park and hopefully some Regent Honeyeaters are still to be found. The wet year has seen a large and diverse range of fungi flourishing in the park.

Just a reminder that all volunteer activities within in the park need to be approved by our staff in Park Connect prior to being undertaken and anyone who does not hold a Working with Children's Check will no longer be able to volunteer on Parks estate after 30 June 2022.

A record of proof must be obtained and uploaded onto ParkConnect and whilst this may cause angst with some it is a clear direction from Parks Victoria to comply with Victoria's Child Safety Standards.

Working With Children

As you can see from Brian's report above, we are now required to have passed a working with children check in order to volunteer on Parks Victoria managed parks and reserves.

It is worthwhile to report on the background to how this came about.

A while back the Victorian Government passed a law that requires anyone working with children to have passed a 'working with children check'. This seemed quite a reasonable requirement until it became evident that all people volunteering in Victoria would have to pass this check regardless of how unlikely it was that they would encounter children as part of the volunteering work. This has led many groups and organisations of friends groups to lobby for less stringent requirements but such representations have been rejected by the government. To make matters worse, failure to meet this requirement is being implicitly linked to the provision of insurance cover while volunteering.

Some of us have already gone through the process of applying for and receiving this check. It takes a few weeks to receive your card once the application process is completed.

You can get started by going to this web address: <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

and starting an application. People who have recently gone through the application process, highly recommend the approach of doing it through a local Post Office. In my case, even though I attempted to do it completely online, I did need to go to a Post Office to verify my ID.

If you have any questions, concerns or need some assistance, please contact us.

2022 AGM

The 2022 AGM has been deferred slightly this year and will now take place at the usual time on Saturday 5th November 2022. It is hoped that it will take the usual format of an afternoon walk followed by a dinner, the AGM and a guest speaker.

First Aid Training

A number of us have just completed a first aid training course that consisted of an on-line component followed by a face-to-face morning, at Indigo Health in Chiltern, where we were given further training and tested on our knowledge and skills. The course covers how to approach a first aid situation, CPR and a broad range of first aid topics. It is highly recommended by those who took part and we encourage anyone who is interested to take the course.

Rainfall April 2022

52 mm. Total for year-to-date 2022: 363 mm.

In 2021 we had 243 mm up to the end of April.

The average annual rainfall for Chiltern is 689 mm.

NEXT MEETING â?? SUNDAY 5th JUNE 2022

We will be undertaking an audit of White Box Track which is a circular walk within the Park from, and returning to, Honeyeater Picnic Area (where we can have morning tea and bun). We will be looking to check the state of the track, signage and whatever else can be done to improve the function of the walk, as well as noting interesting things along the way. At the post office we will break into three groups and each will do a one third section (about 2.5 km) of the walk (we will use some car shuffling). The sections vary in grades, so people can choose which to go on.

You will need: sturdy water shoes, warm clothes, probably rain gear, water and maybe a snack.

Meet at the Chiltern Post Office at 09:00am

Upcoming field days

Saturday 2nd July 2022: Frogs Hollow dam: planting 140 plants above dam. Rutherglen Natural Features Reserve: planting 65 plants at the north end. Holes to be dug at Frogs Hollow with volunteers on Wednesday 29 June (Call Helen Carse on 0448 131 280 or Margaret Considine on 0419 282 710).
Sunday 7th August 2022: Grasslands: Bush for Birds planting, 600 trees. This will be a big effort, so all those who can come, can they please put this day aside.

Dates for 2022-23

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

For 2023: Sunday 5th February, Saturday 4th March, Sunday 2nd April, Saturday 6th May, Sunday 4th June, Saturday 1st July, Sunday 6th August, Saturday 2nd September, Sunday 8th October, Saturday 4th November and Sunday 3rd December 2023.

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.

Category

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Author

neville

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