

Newsletter 324 February 2023

Description

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

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February field day at Bartleys Block and the Rutherglen Natural Features Reserve

The day started with a quick visit to Bartleys Block to check out the area where Blue Periwinkle (*Vinca major*) had been removed some time ago. Most of the area has regenerated well with sedges and carex relishing the wet seasons over the last year. A few Blue Periwinkle plants were quickly removed.

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Former vinca area at Bartleys Block Photo: Neville Bartlett



A bag of Caper Spurge – photo: Neville Bartlett

A quick round-up of seeding Caper Spurge (*Euphorbia lathyris*) plants was carried out as this plant has a high risk of getting away from us and in recent years plants have been found closer to Howlong

Road.

Our previous visit to the Rutherglen reserve was in mid 2022, so we were very interested in how previous plantings had faired and expected a fair crop of olives and other weeds. Most of the mammal boxes were checked and did not disappoint.



A typical tuan nest





Gliders resident in mammal boxes

Photos: Friends pole camera – Neville Bartlett

A follow-up visit in mid-February enabled the remaining mammal boxes to be checked and a weed scan took place in the North-Western section of the block. One mammal box that had bees in 2022 had been left open and the bees were now long gone.

Olive Leaf Lace Bug (*Froggattia olivina*) – Eileen Collins

The native Mock Olive (*Notelaea longifolia*) is the natural host of this native insect.

Yellowing leaves on introduced olive trees may reveal the presence of this native sap sucking insect.

The accompanying photographs (see link below) illustrate the damaging effects of an infestation on

feral olives.

The tiny black eggs are laid on the underside of the olive leaves from May to June. Hatching takes place in September and October and the nymphs go through five stages of growth before becoming winged adults.

Heavy infestations along with stressful conditions may kill young trees.

The spread of this invasive species to cultivated olives is of concern to olive producers.

Natural predators include Ladybird species, Assassin Bugs and Green Lacewings.

More detailed information may be found at:

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/priority-pest-insects-and-mites/olive-lace-bug>



Olive Leaf Lace Bug: dorsal view



Olive Leaf Lace Bug ventral view (above)

Photos: Neil Blair

Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam – February image in the 2023 calendar

This dam is something of an enigma being so far away from the rest of the Park but it is one of the Park's treasures. It is always worth a visit as there is always water present even in very dry times. It quickly refills after rain and attracts a very wide variety of birds and other creatures such as Yellow-footed Antechinus (*Antechinus flavipes*) are often found in the area near the bird hide. Swift Parrots (*Lathamus discolor*) were observed in the area in June 2020.



Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam sunrise Photo: David Skinner

Ranger's Report – Brian Pritchard

Visitor numbers over the holiday period were reasonably high particularly along Reedy Creek. Rangers focussed on ensuring prospectors were meeting miner's right conditions and removing dogs from the park.

Monitoring and trapping of pigs is continuing with about ten more being removed recently and trees have been removed from White Box Walk. Preparations have been completed for burn planned for this Autumn near Mt Pilot.

A collapse of the former Golden Bar Mine has resulted in the permanent closure of Bar Track to ensure public safety at the site. We are still waiting for advice on funding to repair flood damaged roads and Yeddonba remains closed until repairs can be completed.

A recent decision by Government will see most of Parks Victoria's Fire funded programs moving to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action from the first of July. Locally at Beechworth, this will result three staff and eight project fire fighters moving to DEECA.

Full details of the impacts these changes are still being worked through, but rangers still will remain in Parks Victoria.

Friends 2023 Calendars

The 2023 calendars have nearly sold out. A few A3 format calendars are still available from.

- Tony Murnane

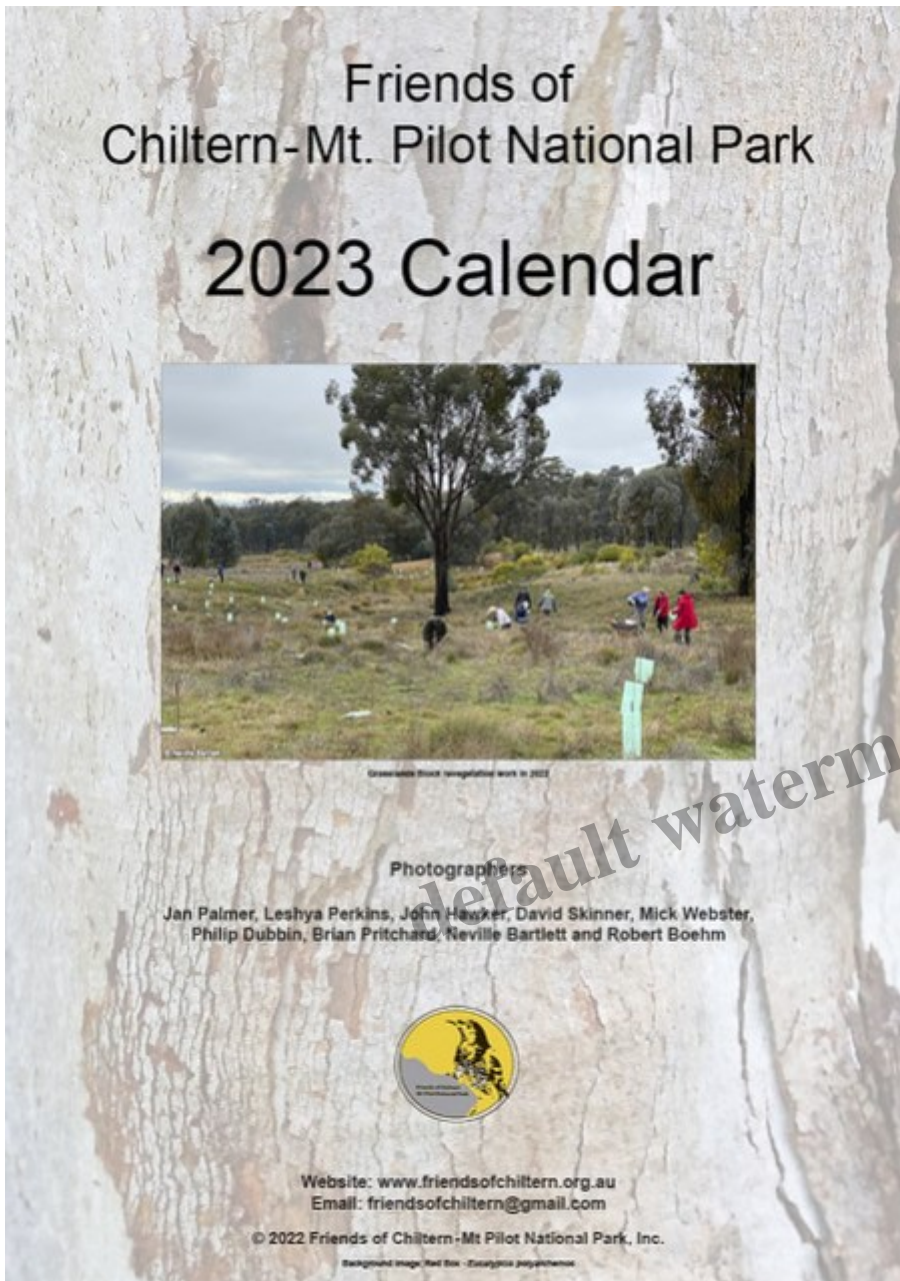
(Secretary/Treasurer – Friends of Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park)

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Thank you very much to Emma and Matt Williams at the Chiltern Post Office for selling an outstanding number of calendars. We are very grateful for their support.

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Rainfall December 2022: 39mm. Total for the year 2022: 1,110mm. This is the wettest year since 1939 (1,293mm) and the second wettest since records have been kept (137 years since 1885). The corresponding total for the full year 2021 being 887mm. Six of the last eight years have had mean or higher rainfall.

January 2023: 127mm. Rainfall in January 2022 was a record 245mm.

The average annual rainfall for Chiltern is 689 mm.

Data supplied by Mick Webster.

NEXT MEETING – SATURDAY 4th MARCH 2023

Activities will include some more planting, weeding and tree guard removal at the Grasslands Block.

Meet at the Chiltern Post Office at 9:00am.

Dates for 2023

For 2023: Saturday 4th March, Sunday 2nd April, Saturday 6th May, Sunday 4th June, Saturday 1st July, Sunday 6th August, Saturday 2nd September, Sunday 1st 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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