

Newsletter 006 January 1994

Description

Newsletter No.6 January 1994

Dear Friends,

Welcome to 1994. This newsletter reports on the December and January meetings and includes your programme for 1994.

The Christmas breakfast meeting coincided with the Bird Observers` Twitchathon so by the time the breakfasters arrived the barbecue was well and truly alight. It wasn`t long before the smells of bacon and sausage filled the air. A most enjoyable breakfast was followed by a brief meeting. But good things come at a price so it was off to deal with St. John`s Wort around the Cyanide Dam nature trail for the main group while four others went to remove Privet on Lancashire Gap Road.

After morning tea and a chat some twitchers left us. But not before they had enjoyed Judy`s Christmas Cake. Nice thought, thankyou Judy.

A long and leisurely walk around Bar Trail came about by accident when the leader missed a turn. The changes in the vegetation were very obvious along the route, beginning with stands of Ironbark and changing to stunted Blakeley`s Gum with a thick understorey of Grevillea alpina {Goldfields Grevillea} on the ridges, descending to the wetter clay area the Red and Grey Box became dominant. The walk was especially interesting thanks to Phil`s detailed explanations of the geology. Many bits of rock were examined with fool`s gold being plentiful.

Lunch was welcome at 2pm! Afterwards, armed with ladders we trooped off to examine the nest logs which had contents. A baby ringtail possum, predated parrot eggs and a house full of sheep wool

Whatever filled its log with wool was a very industrious animal for it was 70cms deep!

The day ended at 6.30pm and was well spent.

January Camp Out, Sat/Sun 8/9th. Twenty two of us braved yet another "summer" day. A howling wind made it too dangerous to light a fire. After tea we split up into groups to do some stag watching. John had selected eight trees which looked favourable and at dusk everyone scanned the branches in the dimming light with torches at the ready. The wind had dropped and it was an ideal night for this activity, but the animals had other ideas. The prizes were two Brushtail Possums and those that didn`t get them felt cheated! Swamp Wallabies, Kangaroos and two foxes were recorded. Despite the lack of cooperation from the animals everyone enjoyed the experience

The Swamp Wallaby, Wallabia bicolor, is generally a solitary animal but sometimes several feed together. In Chiltern Park it is often seen in early morning or late evening, browsing in the gullies. By day it shelters in old logs or depressions left from mining activity. It is an attractive animal and will often

sit quite still , believing in its camouflage, to allow good views to be had. According to literature it prefers “coarse browse supplied by shrubs and bushes rather than grass.”

Breakfast on Sunday morning was fantastic. It`s amazing what children and adults can demolish in the fresh air! The barbecue blazed and the mist rose off Cyanide Dam{ for those up early enough to see it} .Everyone was relieved that the wind had died away.

The Privet thickets were tagged in readiness for the spraying programme. The presence of Privet and stray fruit trees in this area is a legacy of settlement in the mining era. Good news! The Privet has received its lethal dose. Now that`s action for you! I have a feeling the weeds are in for a hard time.

A trip around White Box Walking Track seemed to be an activity to suit the weather. Birds were scarce until we reached the Sedge gully on Ballarat Road where we encountered many species feeding young. A sleek Brown Snake slithered from his basking hollow into a small hole which went under the track. It was fairly sluggish, testimony to the temperature no doubt.

Further along the walk keen eyes spotted Koala droppings, a beautiful breast feather from a Powerful Owl, various beetles and Dragonflies. The newly prepared leaflet for the track was tested out and found wanting in one area. Telling the walker to take a well earned rest at one point and enjoy the scenery was a good idea but what to rest upon was the problem. A rest area at the spot was part of the overall plan for the walk and Friends will complete the task in the near future by constructing natural seating under the guidance of our Ranger, John.

The Leafless Indigo was inspected for seed and found to be carrying plenty which should ensure many new plants. The browsing Kangaroos and Wallabies find it attractive so it is kept well trimmed. Most of the pea shrubs had shed their seed, but the Austral Indigo pods show no sign of spreading their contents. I spoke to Glen Johnson about this and he felt they were probably awaiting the arrival of summer like most of us!

Dean`s Wattle, *Acacia deanii* was beginning to flower, it too had its predators in the form of caterpillars. Life`s hard, it seems, if you are a rare plant.

The bird list totalled 53 species for the day. Ten Turquoise Parrots were recorded on the walking track. Highlights were Crested Shrike-tit with two flying young, Red-capped Robin, Striated Thornbill, Diamond Firetail. The most common were Fuscous and Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY SUNDAY MARCH 6th

At the December meeting friends agreed to take part in the clean up, targetting the main roads through the park.

1994 PROGRAMME

The attached programme may be altered if weather conditions are unfavourable or an unexpected event occurs. It is printed on a separate page to enable members to refer to it easily.

Category

1. Newsletters

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