

Newsletter 062 April 1999

Description

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Dear Friends

Friends gathered at Bartley's Block on Easter Saturday. In perfect autumn weather we attacked Spurge, Thistles, Pademelons and Sweet Briar. A new weed for the block, Bathurst Burr, was smartly removed. Recent rains had obviously benefited both the Burr and Pademelons. Bartley's Block is going to require regular attention to ensure these new weeds are eradicated.

Morning tea was shared and a brief meeting held before moving on to Fisher's Road to look for Grey Crowned Babblers and Apostle Birds. Two Babblers were observed feeding on the road. Closer inspection showed they had been enjoying an ant feast. Later we saw a group of four noisy birds. No sign of the Apostle Birds was found. The golden webs of the Orb Weavers were strung between the wattles and we observed the tiny males in the web. A Wedge-tailed Eagle was seen cruising over the paddocks and a pair of Brown Falcons were having a noisy altercation in an Ironbark while being harassed by Noisy Miners.

Processionary Caterpillars are out and about and one of their tent-shaped shelters was found at the base of a Golden Wattle. Enclosed in it were many moulted skins and lots of excreta. The more recognisable hanging "bag shelters" built and used as homes by the growing caterpillars do not appear to be present in the park. The local breed preferring the ground-based tent shelters usually at the base of an Acacia. According to an article by Graham Pizzey {Melbourne herald 196?} they have few predators, perhaps Cuckoos are able to digest them, and the eggs are attacked by parasitic wasps. Cattle and horses which have licked them have died from internal inflammation.

Lunch was shared at Ryan's Dam where the Little Friar-birds entertained us and an Olive-backed Oriole uttered its rasping call from the shelter of a Cherry Ballart. The Grey Box which had been flowering well had declined. The Daviesia genistifolia, Broom Bitter-pea is making a good recovery in this area following two periods of drought. Although plentiful in the park this plant is regionally rare.

On to Greenhill Dam for a bird watching session. We were joined by Natasha (catching up on her Regents I suspect!) who was spending Easter locally. It was good to renew friendships. Plenty of action on this warm afternoon. Thirty-one species were recorded. Interesting ones included Little Wattle-bird, Turquoise Parrot, Regent Honeyeater {10, one banded} Golden Whistler, Crested Shrike-tits and Yellow-faced Honeyeater. I think everyone returned home well satisfied with a day well spent.

From the Meeting:

* Friends agreed to place an advertisement in an edition of the Federal Standard which will be produced in October by the National Trust to mark the 140th anniversary of the founding of the paper.

The printing coincides with the Ironbark Festival in October.

- * The display for the southbound freeway stop is completed and in place. Cost for the two displays was \$106.00.

- * Accounts were passed for payment.

- * Ivan Gugger has kindly ripped the area along Pit Road for the May planting. Jim Blackney has sprayed the rip lines.

- * Fill in planting at Chiltern Valley No.2 is required. Volunteers required mid-week please. Contact me if you can assist.

- * Tree planting at Arthur Poole's will begin on May 10. Local volunteers would be appreciated to assist the Australian Trust For Conservation Volunteer group.

- * We plan to tie the tree guards to the stakes to prevent them being blown off. Can you help by providing 30 cm lengths of baling twine/string? If you are not up to planting trees there are lots of other tasks to be done.

Interesting Local Reports

- * A blind snake found by Vito Conticchio who lives near Black Dog Creek. Blind Snakes are non-venomous and harmless. Usually seen when moving about at night or when dug up from the ground or uncovered after rocks or logs have been moved.

- * Pied Butcherbird along Beechworth Road.

- * 100+ Little Ravens in a stubble paddock on Chiltern-Rutherglen Road.

- * 4 Swift Parrots perched on a dead tree and highlighted by the sun. One observant person said "And what are those green parrots on the dead tree?" Well spotted Ian.

- * ~50 White-browed Wood swallows taking nectar from Ironbark blossom. Wood swallows have brush tongues.

- * Orchids seen in flower this month: Parson's Bands, *Eriochilus cucullatus*; Tiny Greenhood, *Pterostylis parviflora*; Sharp Midge Orchid, *Genoplesium despectans*. Midge Orchids are dark red/purple and very hard to see. They usually grow on bare ground.

KILLAWARRA REGENT HONEYEATER SURVEY APRIL 24/25

Come prepared to camp overnight. Toilets at the site. Bring your own drinking water.

David has the forest mapped out. We need people to cover the area, it is LARGE!

In recent weeks Regents have been sighted at Lurg, Reef Hills and Glenrowan so there is fair chance we will get some on this weekend.

Information: 1800 621 056, office hours or 0357 261 484

WOODCHIPPERS ATTEMPT TO BAN FOREST FRIENDLY WOOD BOOK

Last week the National Association of Forest Industries attempted to ban the "Eco-friendly Timber Book" published by Alan Gray of Earthgarden Magazines. The book describes how you can make use of forest friendly plantation timbers for all your building needs.

In a blatant attempt to suppress information the Forest Industries Association threatened BBC

Hardware with legal action unless they withdrew the book.

To obtain the book try your local newsagent or contact Earthgarden directly on 03 5424 1819 or RMB 427 Trentham 3485 or email : earthmag@kyneton.net.au RRP \$9.95 + \$4.00 postage.

Buy a copy and learn how to help our forests while helping FREE SPEECH!

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Category

1. Newsletters

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