

Newsletter 078 September 2000

Description

Dear Friends,

Brady's Reef Bushland Reserve is now free of unsightly rusted metal rubbish, bottles and tins thanks to a hard working trio. Judging by the number of skinks we found the block is particularly good habitat for reptiles. The beautifully patterned *Hemiergis decresiensis* was observed several times and one juvenile, which lacked the black and yellow underparts, was also caught. We were unsure of the species of other skinks seen.

This bushland reserve, despite its proximity to farmland is relatively weed free. A few Cootamundra Wattles were felled and the large *Pinus Radiata* was left for park staff to deal with. Varnish Wattle, *Acacia verniciflua* and Silver Wattle, *Acacia dealbata*, dominate the understorey with Red Box, *Eucalyptus polyanthemos* as the dominant tree species.

After an enjoyable lunch with visitors from Albury Wodonga Field Nats at Magenta Mine, a group went in search of Regent Honeyeaters. There are four birds around the Greenhill Road, Klotz and Langs track block. They are not advertising their presence with calls and are difficult to find. Towards the end of the circuit three birds burst from the canopy and gave the visitors good views. One pair appeared to be seeking nest sites but eventually they flew off and were not seen again. None of the birds carried leg bands.

Several days later I made a further search of the area with visitors from Kiama and none were seen. At Magenta we encountered a magnificent male Red Headed Mouse Spider, *Missulena occatoria*. As the name implies it had a deep red head with a shiny black thorax and legs and a blue-black abdomen. We decided to move it from the car park for its safety and were rewarded with its very aggressive display. Rearing up on its back legs it exposed its fangs in a very threatening manner. In winter, and following rain, the males are often encountered moving over the ground in search of females. Mouse Spiders belong to the Trapdoor group. They are to be treated with caution as they can inflict a nasty bite.

Trees to plant

The trees planted on the Barnawartha Road during May have grown really well. A further 50 trees are still to be planted and volunteers are needed for this job. Due to the continuing wet spell the work will probably need be done towards the end of September.

Around the Park

Swift Parrots can still be found in the park. A walk along Greenhill Road has regularly produced several Swift Parrots. White Box Ridge and Muffler Road have good patches of flowering White Box at present and Swift Parrots have been recorded feeding in the White Box flower. There are plenty of honeyeaters

feeding in the blossom and a couple of Purple-crowned Lorikeets were also recorded. A pair of Square-tailed Kites can generally be found along Greenhill Road and the Pipeline Track intersection is a good place to spend time as they have often been seen in that area.

The first Donkey Orchids *Diuris pardina* are in flower. Blue Caladenias *Caladenia caerulea*, are abundant this year and the first of the Pink Fingers are beginning to show. Waxlips, *Glossodia major*, are about to flower and the continuing damp weather has ensured a longer life for the many species of Greenhoods. Sharp eyes will be able to find the common Helmet Orchid, *Corybas incurvus*. However, look carefully at the flower it just could be *C. dilatatus*, the Veined Helmet Orchid. The leaves of both species are rounded and are green on both upper and lower sides *Hardenbergia*, wattles {there are five species in flower} and peas are adding more colour to the park each day so make sure you find time to enjoy what promises to be the best spring for several years.

Cyanide Dam Walk Friends agreed to provide finance for two interpretive signs to enhance visitor enjoyment of the walk. Ecological Burns Several areas are under observation following late summer and autumn burns. On the Ironbark Track site several tracts have been fenced out to exclude grazing animals which find new growth delectable. It will be interesting to compare the fenced and unfenced sites later in spring. Inspection of the site last week revealed an incredible germination of peas and the regeneration from rootstock of *Hibbertia*, *Daphne Heath* and *Diggers* Speedwell. If you have an interest in fire ecology these spots would be good to visit.

Freeway Block A good stand of remnant Ironbark on crown land between the freeway and the Barnawartha Road has recently been fenced off under a project run by Jim Blackney. Direct seeding of understorey is planned for a later date.

Ironbark Festival

Sunday October 15th is the date for this year's festival. Parks Victoria will set up an information tent. Friends merchandise will be on sale. Volunteers are needed to man the tent. Please let me know if you can assist.

2000 A TIME TO REFLECT

In 1984 Rabbit Calicivirus Disease broke out in the Nanjing region of China and spread to Europe by 1987. RCD was brought to Australia for trialling as a potential biological control agent in 1991. Extensive testing from 1991 onwards confirmed that the virus only affected the European Rabbit. On the 29th of September 1995 a dead rabbit was found outside the quarantine area on Wardang Island on the Yorke Peninsula. Only weeks later dead rabbits were found near Broken Hill, 350 kilometres away. The Rabbit Buster Initiative funds landholder group projects to back up RCD with traditional rabbit control campaigns.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SUNDAY OCTOBER 1ST Guest Speaker: Jim Blackney. Jim will present an illustrated talk about his work for the Trust For Nature and Land For Wildlife. Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 2pm for a park walk to be followed by tea at the Senior Citizens Hall in Conness Street at 6pm. The AGM will commence at 7.15 and will be followed by the Guest Speaker. The main

course along with tea and coffee will be provided. Friends are asked to bring along salads or nibbles to share. To assist with catering please phone 03 57 261 484 on or before September 21 to register your intention to attend. All welcome and bring a friend.

NOVEMBER MEETING ADVANCE NOTICE Trip to Hattah National Park November 3rd-7th, Cup Weekend. We will be staying at Ouyen Caravan Park. Anyone wishing to join the weekend is welcome. Facilities at Ouyen include cabins, on-site vans, campsites and a camp kitchen. Caravan Park Phone number is 50 921 426 if you wish to make a booking.

Geordie Marsh

Friends send their loving support to the Marsh family as they cope with their son Geordie's illness. Geordie was diagnosed with leukemia a couple of months ago and is undergoing chemotherapy. There is a 90% chance of a complete recovery. The latest news from Tony is that Geordie is making good progress following a series of treatments and wouldn't you guess it he's a Harry Potter addict!! And he's been on TV!!

Category

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