

Newsletter 083 March 2001

Description

Dear Friends

Our March meeting was varied and exciting. Friends and Green Corps plus a visitor turned out for the annual Clean Up Oz Day activity. The target roads, the main bitumen roads through the park and town approaches received a good clean up. The majority of the rubbish originated from the food, beverage and tobacco industries. The oddest pieces collected included a cricket bat found by Debbie, while Darren scored a pair of black knickers! Indigo Shire took care of the rubbish and the cans collected went to the Friends collection.

Many thanks to Green Corps, Friends and visitors for giving their time.

Lunch was indeed welcome and was enjoyed at Cyanide Dam with musical accompaniment provided by nature. Birdsong was varied, Leaden Flycatcher, Willie Wagtail, Scissors Grinder and Rufous Whistler were probably the most consistent. Oriole calls, piping of the Yellow Robin and the ringing calls of the Treecreepers provided the background.

Some visitors reported hearing "raucous noises" coming from a tree hollow along the dam walk so we set off to locate the culprits. The entrance to the hollow was so small that we concluded the occupants were most probably Turquoise Parrots.

On our way to the northern block we stopped along Ballarat Road to look at the environmental burn site. Of special interest was the patch of Western Golden Tip, Goodia medicaginea, which germinated shortly after the burn. Initially there were over 200 seedlings. Many grew quickly, flowered and set seed. However the long hot summer has sorted out the weaklings and reduced the population. At this spot the White Box was in heavy bud and the Ironbark also looked promising. It's a Regent Honeyeater site so birdwatchers be on the alert as you pass through.

Among the birds at this site were Oriole, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Rufous Whistler, Grey Fantails and a juvenile Fan-tailed Cuckoo which perched obligingly in full view for a long time allowing good views. Overall it was a very dark brown bird, particularly on the head, with faint streaking on the lower breast.

It was our intention to visit the Grey Box area on Ryans/Rileys Rd intersection to look for Regent Honeyeaters but the warm afternoon got the better of us so we settled down in our chairs at Greenhill Dam for afternoon tea and what was to become a memorable afternoon.

A large Red-bellied Black Snake was spotted on the opposite side of the dam, its body draped over a log and its head buried in the Sedge at the water's edge. We watched it for a while and as the bird life was quiet we took a walk around the dam. Ian spotted the snake swimming the dam and disappearing into the Sedge.

Back on the chairs the bird noise began. Twenty-five species were recorded for the afternoon including Yellow Rosella, Grey Butcherbird, Bee-eaters, Sacred Kingfisher, and little Lorikeets hanging from the foliage above our heads. Amongst all the activity a Willie Wagtail darted through the shadows in front of us followed by a very dark bird. "What was that?" was the cry in unison. That was a Regent Honeyeater, our first for the year 2001. {Although there had been two unconfirmed sightings in February}

Soon there were more Regents though it was difficult to tell how many as they were rather sneaky. Having observed them coming and going for an hour and a half we decided there were at least six

birds. Towards the end of the day a brilliantly coloured and banded bird came to drink accompanied by a duller bird. This was white/red on the right leg, banded at Frogs Hollow in May 1998 and in August that year was breeding along Cyanide Road. Not to be denied its place in the scheme of things an Echidna waddled down the bank unnoticed until Ian spotted it drinking with the Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters. It remained at the water for six minutes, taking long slow draughts, with just the tip of its beak in the water before ambling up the bank oblivious to the delighted onlookers.

At 6.40pm the Turquoise Parrots turned up- it had been a long and rewarding day, reluctantly we packed up.

Warm Autumn days by a dam in the park are very rewarding. A visit is highly recommended, take your chair and enjoy a relaxing time.

Friends now have a trailer and a 200litre water tank which has been provided by Parks Victoria. It entered service on Clean Up day. Thanks to ranger John for organising this for Friends.

Around the Park: In late February a Square-tailed Kite was seen along Klotz Track and three Gang Gang Cockatoos were observed drinking at Cyanide Dam. Gang Gangs enjoy the ripe seed capsules of the Stringybarks. Crimson Rosellas have also been spotted. Both parrot sightings are unusually early for Chiltern.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Friends of Warbys Meeting Dates

Saturday March 17th Sunday April 8th Saturday May 12th

Contacts: Helen 0357 218 937 David 0357 662 855

Friends Network Conference March 30-April 1 2001 at Wilson's Promontory

Cost: \$65 includes meals but not accommodation.

You are invited to attend and enjoy talks, walks, snorkeling, beaches and friendship.

Further information: 0357 261 484

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY APRIL 1, 9.00 am AT THE POST OFFICE

AM Bushland Reserves, Flora and Fauna inventory PM Park walk and Regent search.

BYO Lunch, gloves, chair and a friend. Hope to see you there.

Category

1. Newsletters

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