



Newsletter 201 November 2011

Description

The November 2011 newsletter as usual presents a comprehensive report on the wonderful conditions in the Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park and the upcoming Christmas meeting Dear Friends,

Greeted by a very warm morning, our band of workers tackled the immense growth at the Tuan enclosures. The capeweed and thistles were targeted first then the trees and shrubs were weeded around. The enclosure boundaries have since been cleared by whipper snipping and any new growth which emerges following the last rains will be sprayed. All the native plants in the enclosures are doing well despite the competition. The only plant which seems to dislike the soil is Golden Wattle. There are some lovely specimens of Currawang, *Acacia doratoxylon* in two enclosures. This wattle is the only species in the park with catkin flowers. Austral Indigo, *Grevillea* and assorted peas are doing well in the other enclosures. The eucalypts that emerged outside the enclosures are making good growth and in a year or so the area should look more "park-like" as they suppress the weeds. As the reader may imagine morning tea was doubly welcome this meeting .

The next stop was Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam and the hide area. Here we undertook thistle chipping and grass spraying before settling down to lunch and some bird watching. The planted shrubs have grown very well. In autumn we will fill in the spots where some have died. The young Night-heron was in its usual spot, hiding in the dead brown leaves of a limb which had fallen in the water. Cheeky Diamond Firetails bathed in full view with their weight supported by the floating leaves of Water Primrose, *Ludwigia peploides* . This is an attractive and useful creeping water plant with bright yellow flowers. Its seeds are food for waterbirds. Rufous Whistlers, White-plumed Honeyeaters, Sacred Kingfisher, White-breasted Woodswallow, Black Swan, large and little Black Cormorants and Red-rumped Parrots were amongst other birds noted. A very productive day and a big thankyou to all workers.



cushions, *Brunonia australis*,



Fringea cyanea.

Along the eastern end of Skeleton Boundary Track the Fringe-lilies are on show.



Tall stands of Red-anther Wallaby-grass with its brick red pollen hanging from the flowers is eyecatching throughout the park. The memorable show of peas ended with the flowering of Twiggy Bush-pea, *Pultenaea largiflorens*. A Baillonâ??s Crake was spotted at the swamp opposite Chiltern Valley No 1 Dam and this is a new bird for the Chiltern list. Night Herons are plentiful and at least four young birds can be seen at Valley No 1. As the waterline recedes we should see more waders over summer. A Banded Landrail was seen skulking in sedges bordering the dam at Bartleyâ??s Block and a pair of Australasian Grebes provided quite a spectacle as they caught small fish from just under the surface. A very easily obtained meal indeed. Spring has been bountiful, now for summer!

Interesting behaviour of Bee Flies : *Comptosia insignis* is a member of the BOMBYLIIDAE family.



These flies superficially resemble bees due to their stoutly built bodies which are covered in hair and their long thin proboscis. This along with their flight habits have earned them the common name of bee flies. Adults can often be seen resting on or hovering over blossoms or patches of bare ground in sunny locations. Adult bee flies feed on nectar from a wide variety of flowers and may be important plant pollinators. Although little is known of the Australian species, the larvae of bee flies are believed to parasitise the larvae of other insects and may prey on the eggs in egg-masses of grasshoppers and locusts. Information courtesy of Dr Ken Walker of the National Museum of Victoria.

Several of us witnessed a colony of these flies buzzing low to the ground and depositing eggs in the soil on a sunny bare patch. After many attempts I finally managed to secure a photograph. Suddenly later found that they are only active in bright sunlight.



Rainfall: October 29.0 mm over 4 days. Yearly total to date: 776.8 mm over 80 days Very dry month.

NEXT MEETING : SUNDAY DECEMBER 4TH CHRISTMAS TEA MEETING Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 3.30PM OR GO DIRECTLY TO CHILTERN VALLEY NO 2 DAM AND THE BIRD HIDE

PICNIC AREA. BYO chair, tea, binocs, friend, repellent. Contact in the field: Eileen 0407 486 480 or 57 261 484 This is a no work social evening to wind up the year.

2012 FRIENDS CALENDARS AVAILABLE FROM NOVEMBER 21ST

The 2012 calendars will cost \$22 plus Victorian postage of \$8.35 (includes a padded bag). NSW postage \$10.35. For 2 to 3 calendars in same bag add \$4.00 Please forward your order and cheque to: P.O. Box 60 Chiltern 3683. Only 90 will be printed and 74 have already been ordered so be quick or be disappointed.

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Category

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