

Newsletter 207 June 2012

Description

The June 2012 Newsletter of Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park is now available

Dear Friends,

An overcast winter morning with threats of rain greeted our seven workers for the day. Our first task was to find and cull the Cootamundra Wattles on the Cemetery Bushland Reserve. These had exploded post the late 2009 fuel reduction burn and were ripe for the saw! It was thought there were only a few but after traversing the block the total number removed topped the hundred with a few Black Wattles, *Acacia decurrens*, which were probably garden escapees and a single apple seedling.

The fire has resulted in a massive stand of Golden Wattle and on the upper slopes masses of peas and Grass Trigger plants offer the promise of a beautiful spring. All over the park and including this reserve there are seedlings of Cherry Ballart. Throughout the park many of the older and taller Ballarts have fallen over. We checked the four nest boxes after dealing with the feral plants and were pleased to find two boxes with Sugar Gliders in residence. In one box there were at least four in a cosy nest.

By now morning tea was needed so we retired to Tuan enclosures where we enjoyed a bun and a special treat of Lamingtons! After which we worked to burn up the calories! The perimeters of the enclosures were sprayed, weeding and general tidying up was done and the last of the big Inkweeds were removed from around the dam. Before moving to Greenhill Dam for lunch we inspected a nearby nest box and found a Tuan in a neat, shredded stringybark nest. Shreds of fine green plant material and a few downy feathers had also been added along with a single green Golden Wattle leaf.



Unlike other Tuan nests we have inspected this one contained no large feathers or fur. Following this we erected a new box some distance away to replace an original twenty-five year old box. There is a thick ground cover of peas, *Grevillea alpina* and scattered wattles in this block which was control burned about five years ago. A good germination of peas followed the burn and the last two good

seasons have resulted in this amazing growth. Roll on spring!

Lunch at Greenhill Dam was a noisy affair with the noise provided by the birds. Dozens of Fuscous Honeyeaters were dipping and drinking along with a few White-naped and a male Golden Whistler. Grey Fantails, Scarlet and Flame Robins, a female Rose Robin, Restless Flycatcher, Little and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, Brown-headed, Yellow-tufted and Black-chinned Honeyeaters and Musk Lorikeets overhead were other species recorded. The afternoon walk along Pipeline Track east was very quiet until we struck the noise of a party of Choughs. As we walked back through the bush to the dam we disturbed the group and as they rose and flew overhead we estimated at least fifty birds were in the party. Back at the dam by 4.30pm things were quiet. The show was over for the day.

Fungi are abundant after the rain, *Grevillea alpina* is beginning to flower and scattered peas are flowering. The sharp eyes of Phillip spotted a large centipede hunting in the crevices of an Ironbark.



Centipedes prey on a variety of invertebrates, injecting venom to immobilise the victim before consuming its soft parts. An unusual soft sponge-like mass was seen at the base of an Ironbark and was being consumed by small white maggots. It is possibly a Slime Mould.

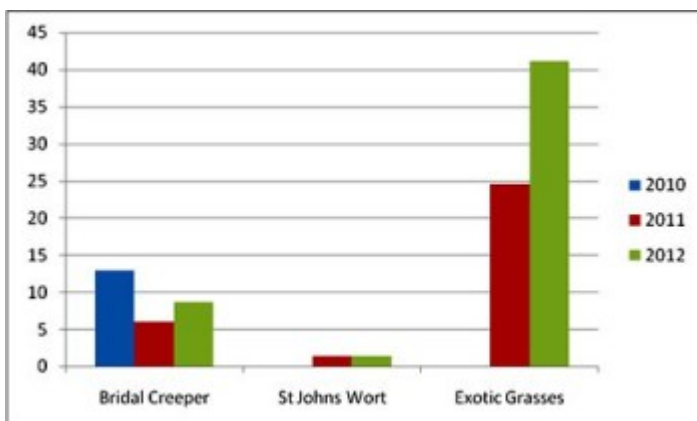


Around the park

This month should see the first flowers of the Golden Wattle brighten the winter days. We are unable to find any Regent Honeyeaters at present but Swift Parrots and Lorikeets are present in the flowering White Box. White Box Track above Muffler Road is still a good birding area. The Barnawartha Depot Block along Anderson's Fire Trail is also a good spot. Honeyeater Picnic area is good for smaller birds especially robins and treecreepers. Bartley's Block as always is rewarding for small birds including the Speckled Warbler. Sadly, one of the large Red Gums has fallen into Cyanide Dam. Of concern, is the lack of sightings for the Hooded Robin so if anyone records this species in the park or surrounds please let me know. Presently they are absent from their usual spots.

From the Ranger's Office:

Contractors are continuing to spray Bridal Veil Creeper in Chiltern. ABZECO have sent their results of the third year of Bridal Creeper monitoring and despite the wet years we seem to have held our own with the St John's Wort and B. Creeper but the exotic grasses have taken a rise to being found in just over 40% of the quadrants.



The grader has completed works in Pilot East and will continue to work in Pilot West whilst weather is suitable. Contractors have imploded the rabbit warrens at Chiltern Valley No 2 .

Rainfall

May 36mm over 6 days. Year to date: 543.8mm Over 33 days.

NEXT MEETING : SATURDAY JULY 7TH

Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 9.00 AM BYO chair, water, binocs, friend, repellent. Nest box checking, Valley No 2 Walk Track maintenance. BYO rake. Lunch at the hide Afternoon walk. . Contact in the field: Eileen 0407 486 480 or 57 261 484

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN NATIONAL PARK inc MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership expires on June 30th 2012 and can be renewed by following the procedures on the [membership page of the Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot Park](#)

Category

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