

Newsletter 218 June 2013

Description

Dear Friends, The rain of May 31st to June 1st has more than made up for one of the driest summer in years. Over the two days 106 mm has fallen, rather wet! However our Sunday meeting day turned out to be a glorious sunny day. We had shrubs to plant at the hide site and the rain provided ideal conditions for the tasks, ease of digging and hammering in the stakes. As always we had a capable and willing crew. Richard collected used wooden posts and wire from Tuan campsite. The stakes were trimmed, the wire was clipped together by Peter and helpers and the rest of us planted the shrubs. The aim of this planting was to expand the little understorey area on the western side of the picnic area. The initial plantings have survived the dry summer. We thank Jan and Jenny of Sandy Creek Farm trees for donating the shrubs. The Valley Dams are filling fast and the waterbirds are back. A flock of 20 Pelicans flew over as we were working hopefully they will feed on carp! Shrike-tits and an Antechinus (one of many seen for the day) were spotted near the hide. The vegetation on the walking track was too wet to spray and as it was on the proposed track to the western edge of the dam. Those tasks will be tackled at the next meeting. After morning tea we travelled to Donchi Hill to do some nest box inspections and afterwards to enjoy lunch in the sun in the company of plenty of birdsong.

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While wandering around checking boxes we came across an unusual wattle which turned out to be Spreading Wattle, *Acacia difformis*. There are some good stands of this wattle around the Howlong Road/Ryan's Road block but this is the first recording for the Donchi Hill block. It is suckering species, with dull narrow leaves and is summer flowering. It is uncommon in Victoria but common in NSW in the Wagga and Wyalong areas. After lunch we decided to go to Teal Track and look for Regent Honeyeaters and as there were nest boxes on the way they were checked. We were thankful for the GPS as one of our boxes was found on the ground. Phillip carried out minor repairs to the wire and it was cleaned out and re-erected. There is a first for everything and that was the first fallen box since the surveys began. Speaks volumes about the hanging procedure and our ingenious members. The sun was getting low when we reached the Regent spot but we managed to get some band colours and enjoyed watching their antics as they interacted. Lots of gleaning insects, some "beaking", not sure if it was male /female behaviour but it was interesting to see. The cooling air and impending frosty night signalled the end of the day's fun.



Bird news: Numbers of Noisy Friarbirds have decreased but Red Wattlebirds remain in good numbers. There is an odd Swift Parrot about but you have to be alert to find one. The Crimson Rosellas are down from the hills and are in all plumages from adult to teenage. Currawongs appear not to be so plentiful so far this season. Golden Whistlers are vocal and Crested Shrike-tits are flashing their brilliant colours. Lorikeets are buzzing around and feeding in ironbark and the odd Purple-crowned has also been sighted. Pelicans have returned to the valley dams. Quite a few magnificent Wedge-tailed Eagles have been sighted in recent weeks. On the forest floor Yellow-footed Antechinus are busy searching the litter for insects they are also fossicking on the bark and feeding in the blossom.





The leaf litter is now soaked and fungi are appearing so the breaking down process is beginning.



Orchid leaves of the pterostylis and glossodia groups are emerging and winter flowers will not be far away. Projects under consideration: Plans are underway to produce a series of postcards featuring local birds. The interpretive plaque for Bartley's Block is being prepared and we are seeking funding to assist with the cost. Regent Honeyeater Release: We are still seeking volunteers for ongoing tracking. If you are able to assist with this project please contact Glen Johnson glen.johnson@dse.vic.gov.au. This change in the weather will test the resilience of the birds and so far they have withstood the weather. Two of the 2010 release birds have returned and only continued searching will tell if others are present. To date no wild birds have been found. Flowering remains quite good with White Box and a few hybrids beginning to flower and the rain will encourage insect life. The challenge is to find and photograph a wild bird!

Rainfall May 54.8 mm over 7 days. Year to date: 174.4mm over 20 days.

CALENDAR PHOTOS FOR 2014 EDITION

If you have an image you would like to submit for inclusion in the 2104 calendar please forward it in high resolution. The image should relate to the park.

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY JULY 6TH 2013

Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 9.00am. Bring lunch, binoculars, chair, gloves. The weather will influence the activity for the day. Nest box checking will be part of our afternoon walk. Looking for Regent Honeyeater arrivals will also be part of the day's activity. Contact in the field: Eileen 0407 486 480

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN Mt PILOT NATIONAL PARK inc MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL P.O. Box 60
CHILTERN 3683

To assist, please mark the envelope Membership. Please ensure your contact details are current. Thank you.

Friends have achieved a great deal during the past year. Surveys for plants, birds and monitoring, replacing and erection of new mammal boxes, tree planting , weed control and the provision of a bird hide and gates are just some of our contributions. Your support for our activities is valued and your membership renewal is vital to our cause. Membership expires on June 30th.

If you wish to pay electronically please contact Neville Bartlett, Secretary, by email:
neville@nrbartlett.com.au

<http://friendsofchiltern.org.au/index.php/friends/membership>

Category

1. Newsletters

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