

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

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Website: <http://www.friendsofchiltern.org.au/>

December Gathering

About a dozen Friends gathered at the picnic table near the bird hide at Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam. The day was an excellent example of fine December weather in a great shady location. Simon erected a spotting scope so that people interested in birds could discuss and identify the more distant birds along the Southern edge of the dam.



Friends December gathering at Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam.
Photos: Neville Bartlett

Rangers' Report – Brian Pritchard and Scott Cunningham

The majority of our funded weed control works will be completed by Christmas. With funding from the “Good Neighbour” program, contractors have been busy spraying Blackberry, Gorse and Broom in areas adjacent to private property.

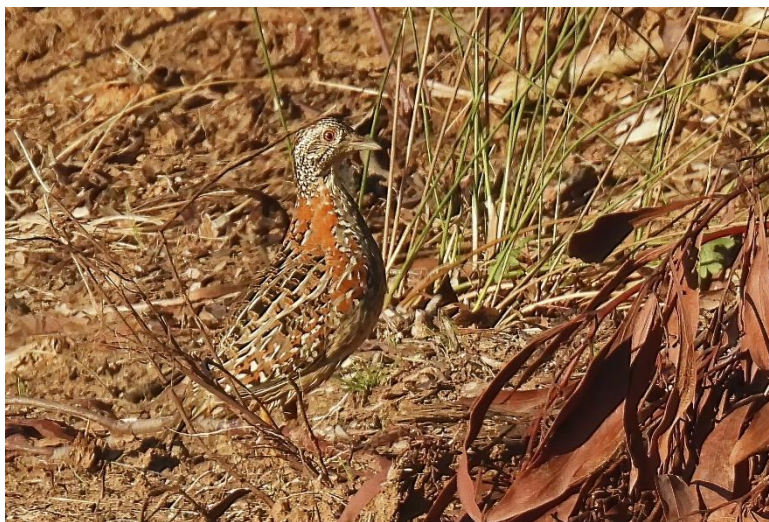
Interviews for the vacant ranger position have concluded and we hope to appoint in the new year.

With limited resources, staff are continuing to maintain visitor facilities and prepare for a busy holiday season. Pig trapping is ongoing and expected to expand next year with staffing and funding from DEECA for a landscape wide effort.

Many of you will know and have worked with Glen Johnson (Natural Environment Program Officer with DEECA). Glen has decided to retire, his tireless efforts to promote and protect flora and fauna in our area will be greatly missed.

Painted Button-quail (*Turnix varius*) – December image in the 2023 calendar

Painted Button-quail have been observed fairly frequently in recent times after a period when they have been relatively scarce. Usually, one sees them crossing roads well ahead of you and by the time that you reach that point of the road they have melted into the park. At other times, they flush when you get quite close to them and it is difficult to determine what species has just flown off. Consequently, they are hard to photograph and the image below was captured in one of the rare occasions that they are discovered before they flush.



Painted Button-quail (*Turnix varius*). Photo: Robert Boehm

Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*) – January image in the 2024 calendar

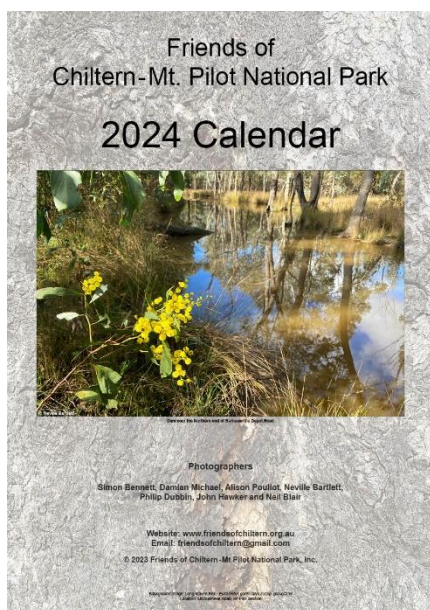
These birds are international travellers that spend the months September through to April in our part of the world. Breeding takes place in the area around Northern Japan. Migrating such large distances makes these birds very strongly fliers. Their plumage enables them to blend in to the wetlands that they inhabit. Recent sightings have taken place at Wonga Wetlands in Albury and Tabletop. They can be expected to be found at Barambogie Dam, Chiltern Valley No 1 Dam and the nearby wetlands near the junction of Wenkes Road and Pit Road.



Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*). Photo: Simon Bennett

2024 Friends calendar

The Friends calendar for 2024 is **now available** in two formats (A3 and A4) as was the case for the 2023 calendar.



The calendars are now available from the Chiltern Post Office, the Rutherglen Information Centre and from our Secretary – Tony Murnane. Prices of the calendars have not changed but the postage has increased.

- January – Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*)
- February – Large Striped Skink (*Ctenotus robustus*)
- March – Fungus (*Laetiporus portentosus*)
- April – Pixie's Parasol (*Mycena interrupta*)
- May – White-headed Digger Bee (*Amegilla albiceps*)
- June – Nankeen Night Heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*)
- July – Brown Quail (*Coturnix ypsilophora*)
- August – Dwarf Greenhood (*Pterostylis nana*)
- September – Red-stem Wattle (*Acacia rubida*)
- October – Rabbit-ears Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra antennifera*)
- November - Sloane's Froglet and habitat (*Crinia sloanei*)
- December – Turquoise Parrot (*Neophema pulchella*).

Rainfall November 2023: 97 mm. Total for the year to date 2023: 725 mm.
The corresponding total last year was 1,171 mm.
The average annual rainfall for Chiltern is 689 mm.

Data supplied by Mick Webster.

NEXT MEETING – SUNDAY 4th FEBRUARY 2024

The activity will be announced closer to the day.

Meet at the Chiltern Post Office at 9:00am.

Please bring suitable footwear, sun protection and morning tea.

NOTE: Members attending are encouraged to register their attendance for the activity via ParkConnect. If unsure how to do this please bring your ParkConnect password to the activity and we will help you register.

Dates for 2024

For 2024: Sunday 4th February, Saturday 2nd March, Sunday 7th April, Saturday 4th May, Sunday 2nd June, Saturday 6th July, Sunday 4th August, Saturday 7th September, Sunday 6th October, Saturday 2nd November and Sunday 1st December 2024.

Rule of Thumb: For even months, the field day is held on the first Sunday of the month and for odd months, it is held on the first Saturday of the month.
