

# FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

President: Vacant

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

## February Field Day

An excellent roll up, of 18 people, on a hot day for the start of the year with our attention focussed on olives and other woody weeds at the Rutherglen Natural Features Reserve. A small group checked out the Northern end of the reserve and the others spread out throughout the Southern section.



An earlier planting at the Northern end of the reserve is doing very well (left) and the White Cypress Pines are all making good progress (right). Photos: Neville Bartlett



A clump of olive regrowth (left) and a pile olives that been removed (right). Photos: Neville Bartlett



Even though the surrounding area is all paddocks used for farming, there are many olives along the roadsides and these provide the source of seed carried by birds into the reserve. Many hundreds of smaller olives were removed along with some clumps of regrowth. The day finished immediately after morning tea due to the hot conditions but it most satisfying to know that so many olives have ben removed.

## **Resignation**

Our president, Neil Blair, has resigned as President and committee member for personal reasons. During his time as President, he has guided us to clarify our role as a group, to arrange insurance for general activities, conducted some well attended wildflower walks and has encouraged us to take a much broader view of the park and its diversity.

We are very grateful for his contribution.

## **Rangers' Report – Scott Cunningham**

There have been some changes to staffing with Patrick Wernert backfilling a ranger position until June. Patrick is new to Parks Victoria but has worked in environmental management focusing on health and safety as well as education and as a project fire fighter.

Laura Collins has finished up in her ranger role to pursue a career with Fire Rescue Victoria as a professional fire fighter. We are currently seeking approval to fill this position.

Visitation over the summer holiday period has been relatively quiet and well behaved with staff conducting regular patrols.

Lastly, thank you to Neil Blair for his contributions to the group and taking on the challenges of president, no doubt we'll see you out in the park!

## **Large Striped Skink (*Ctenotus robustus*) – February image in the 2024 calendar**

The Large Striped Skink or Eastern Striped Skink (*Ctenotus robustus*) is a widespread species of reptile that can be found in many parts of Eastern Australia. It can grow up 30 centimetres in length and frequents rocks, logs and ground litter for shelter and nesting. Females lay 4 to 6 eggs in late spring (October–December) and hatch about 2 months later.



Large Striped Skink (*Ctenotus robustus*). Photo: Damian Michael

They are shy and very quick, so disappear into shelter when humans or other larger creatures are close by, this makes them difficult to spot.

Further information:

Reptiles of the NSW Murray Catchment. A Guide to Their Identification, Ecology and Conservation by: Damian Michael, David Lindenmayer. <https://www.publish.csiro.au/book/6255/>

Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ctenotus\\_robustus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ctenotus_robustus)

## Birds of Albury Photography Exhibition

Albury Library/Museum are organising a community photography exhibition called Birds of Albury. The image and the photographer must be from within 50km of Albury, so that includes the Park.

Please see the Albury City Council page for all details <https://www.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/whats-on/museum/birds-of-albury>

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**Rainfall** December 2023: 74 mm. Total for the year 2023: 799 mm, the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row above average. The corresponding total 2023 was 1,110 mm.

January 2024: 45 mm, the driest January since 2020.

The average annual rainfall for Chiltern is 689 mm.

Data supplied by Mick Webster.

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### NEXT MEETING – SATURDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> MARCH 2024

The activity will be weeding at Bartley's Block. There are quite a few vinca (blue periwinkle) seedlings to be removed. Depending on the weather, there may be a bird walk around the block or an excursion to the Tuan Campground area to check on the fenced areas.

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

Please bring suitable footwear, sun protection and morning tea.

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### Remaining dates for 2024

**For 2024:** Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May, Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July, Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August, Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September, Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October, Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November and Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

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