

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

President: Tanya Thompson – Email: president@friendsofchiltern.org.au

Correspondence to Secretary: Liz Maertin – Email: secretary@friendsofchiltern.org.au

Treasurer: Neville Bartlett - Email: neville@nrbartlett.com.au

Newsletter Editor: Neville Bartlett – Email: friendsofchiltern@gmail.com

The email: newsletter@friendsofchiltern.org.au is expected to be operational soon.

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Website: <https://friendsofchiltern.org.au/>

December End-of-year Gathering

The heavy rains at the end of November and a fallen tree forced a change of venue for the December end-of-year gathering to the Chiltern Valley Recreation Reserve at the corner of Chiltern Valley Road and Marengos Road. This site is just on the Rutherglen side of Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam.

Jennifer Davidson reported: “A pleasant gathering. I think there were a dozen of us, plus two energetic dogs. Tony Marsh stopped by for a while on his way home from Melbourne, where Jenny has just had a hip replacement. The site, discovered by Tanya and Dave, was excellent. There was shelter (not needed), large table and toilet. It wasn't the Park but the outlook was pleasant and the ground was firm for parking (no risk of getting bogged!)”.



Chiltern Valley Recreation Reserve. Photo: Tony Murnane

The Friends' 2025 calendar is still available

Our 2025 calendar in A3 and A4 formats features images of the flora, fauna and scenery in the Park.



The 2025 calendar comes in two formats:

- (i) A3 format as in previous years (\$25 each, plus postage if required), and
- (ii) A4 format that unfolds to A3 size (\$22 each, plus postage if required).

Calendars can be purchased from:

- Chiltern Post Office, 54 Main Street, Chiltern Vic 3683
- Rutherglen Wine Experience, 57 Main Street, Rutherglen Vic 3685
- From Liz Maertin
(Secretary – Friends of Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park)
Email: secretary@friendsofchiltern.org.au

NOTE: Liz reports that the A3 calendars are in short supply but there are A4 calendars available.

A special thank you to everyone who contributed images for the calendar: Neil Blair, Robert Boehm, Philip Dubbin, John Hawker, Stephanie Jakovac, Damian Michael, Leshya Perkins, David Skinner, Mick Webster and David Woolcock.

Ranger's Report – Brian Pritchard

Things in Parks Victoria a little unsettled at the moment with the Government undertaking a review of the organisation and the CEO departing. We have an acting CEO in place until end of March whilst a replacement is recruited.

We are currently working on reopening of some the ad hoc tracks that were recently closed at Reedy Creek. Ranger staffing will be a bit light on for the next few months with Scott taking leave until mid-February. Our main focus will be on visitor management and keeping the park Safe, Open and Clean. DEECA have completed slashing work and clearing of tracks prior to the fire season but will need to revisit due to recent weather events. Planning is also underway for this seasons planned burn program.

Contractors have commenced weed control spraying at Rutherglen Nature Conservation Reserve.

Turquoise Parrot (*Neophema pulchella*) – December image in the 2024 calendar



Turquoise Parrot (*Neophema pulchella*). Photo: Neville Bartlett

This small parrot has been one of the emblematic species of the park for many years. It feeds on the ground in grassy open forest and woodland. Usually seen in pairs or small groups feeding amongst grasses and herbs. It rarely flies far or above the canopy. Nesting often takes place in posts or tree stumps that are very close to the ground. Efforts to tempt this species to use man-made nestboxes have largely failed with only one instance where a nest box has been used.

The question of whether this species is mainly found in the Chiltern section of the Park was posed to the Head Park Ranger, Brian Pritchard and his response was: "I see Turq's are quite often in the Pilot and Barambogie areas from Indigo Valley end through to Eldorado. More often in the flatter open areas." DEECA Senior Scientist Ornithology, Bruce Quin replied: "Further to Brian's observations, I think the granite country habitat of Mt. Pilot/Barambogie is more to the Turquoise Parrot's liking than the sandstone country habitat around the Chiltern township. The numbers of Turq's in the park around Chiltern declined markedly during the drought but people were still reporting Turq's frequently around Mt. Pilot/Barambogie. I was glad to hear of several pairs of Turq's being seen recently in the eastern area of the park south of the highway recently."

Personal note: Many years ago, I contacted Eileen Collins to find out the best spots to see Turquoise Parrots. This led to my involvement with the Friends' group that continues today.

Rainfall: November 2024: 147 mm. Total for the year-to-date 2024: 558 mm. The corresponding total up to the end of November 2023 was 725 mm. This was the wettest November since 1912. We need 140 mm more in December to reach the annual average.

The average annual rainfall for Chiltern is 689 mm.

Data supplied by Mick Webster.

NEXT MEETING – SUNDAY 2nd FEBRUARY 2025

Activity to be advised closer to the time.

Meet at the Chiltern Post Office at 9am.

Field day dates for 2025 and 2026

For 2025: Sunday 2nd February, Saturday 1st March, Sunday 6th April, Saturday 3rd May, Sunday 1st June, Saturday 5th July, Sunday 3rd August, Saturday 6th September, Sunday 5th October, Saturday 1st November and Sunday 7th December 2025.

For 2026: Sunday 1st February, Saturday 7th March, Sunday 5th April, Saturday 2nd May, Sunday 7th June, Saturday 4th July, Sunday 2nd August, Saturday 5th September, Sunday 4th October, Saturday 7th November and Sunday 6th December 2025.

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.
