

Newsletter 106 April 2003

Description

Dear Friends

Another section of the Mt Pleasant Road block is now free of Olives thanks to our hard working crew who removed 32 Olive trees wielding saws, loppers, secateurs and paste. As we walked the block on a pleasant sunny morning we tried to imagine the conditions the miners worked under as they systematically worked the leads. This area holds many excellent examples of puddling circles and water races along with very deep water holes which must have been dug by hand in the late 1800s. The gold was certainly hard won!

There are still some Olives remaining on the east side of Mt Pleasant Road behind the dam. As it had reached twelve o'clock we decided they must wait for another day. The dam, despite its depth was dry.

Greenhill Dam still contained water so it was the obvious choice for lunch. And what a long lunch it was!

The drought has brought many rewards for bird watchers and Greenhill Dam produced some exciting birds for the new birdwatchers amongst us. Regent Honeyeaters will always be the park's specialty bird and they were there for all to see accompanied by such treasures as Black, Pied and White-fronted Honeyeaters.

Black and Pied Honeyeaters have been recorded in previous dry years when the Mistletoe has flowered well. However we were astounded to see a White-fronted Honeyeater fly in and perch on a log before going to the water to drink. A new record for the park and a big tick for most people present.

A party of Gang Gang Cockatoos creaked their way into the saplings at the water's edge. We speculated as to whether they were a family group and the ensuing behaviour confirmed our speculation. The adult male, with his delicate orange-red crest accompanied by the female took long drinks while the other two birds remained on their perch. When the adults returned to the perch there was much begging and it was quite a sight to see the female feed water to one young and the male to the other accompanied by noisy guttural sounds. Later they were seen eating the seeds from the Red Stringybark capsules. The drought is claiming many Stringybarks, especially along the slopes of Donchi Hill.

Other interesting birds seen included three species of Woodswallow, Dusky, White-browed and Masked,

Turquoise Parrot, Little Lorikeets, very Noisy Friar-birds, immature and adult Olive-backed Orioles, Diamond Firetails, White-naped and Black-chinned honeyeaters.

Several of us returned the following day to re-live the spectacle, adding a Painted Honeyeater, Brown Goshawk and Grey Butcher-bird to the count. Since March 27th, 55 species of birds have been

recorded at the dam. Species expected but not recorded include Beeater, Common Bronzewing, White-browed Babblers, Red-capped Robin, Swift Parrot (these are presently in the town), Yellow Rosella and restless Flycatcher.

Ironbark is beginning to flower in most parts of the park however, according to the apiarists the nectar is thin and pollen scarce. Apparently rain and cold weather are required to thicken the nectar flow.

The noticeable lack of bathing by the honeyeaters and the Regents in particular may be attributed to the fact that the thin and less sticky nectar does not adhere to the feathers. We doubted whether the colour of the water was a deterring factor.

From the meeting:

1. A donation of \$300 was made to V.N.P.A for campaign work.
 2. We decided to purchase wooden stakes to replace the stolen star pickets on the Depot project.
 3. Holes will be dug at the Depot site as soon as we receive rain and planting will take place when conditions improve.
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NEXT MEETING SATURDAY MAY 3RD AT 1PM AT CHILTERN POST OFFICE

Please note the afternoon meeting time

Activity will depend upon the weather. There will be little if any flora to survey so we may tackle the remainder of the Olives on Mt Pleasant block . Tea at 5pm at Cyanide Dam followed by a spotlight walk with Barry Traill. BYO tea, gloves, secateurs, saw, insect repellent for evening. Contact: Eileen 03 57 261 484

Category

1. Newsletters

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