

Newsletter 131 July 2005

Description

Dear Friends,

A damp overcast morning was soon forgotten as we trekked the park looking for nest boxes. Our first box provided enjoyment as two Sugar Gliders peeped out of the entrance. Seemingly quite content to observe, one had its feet resting on the opening and its head more or less resting on its feet. The scene was taken in and we moved off expectantly to the next box. Finding a grey box on a grey barked tree was quite a challenge as we were working in the All Nations block which had been burnt some months back. Most of the tree trunks therefore were black! Two boxes were burnt completely in the fire, leaving just the metal lids. Two had lost their lids and were in a bad state of repair while the rest were in fair condition. Most showed signs of habitation, with green leaf and brown leaf nests inside. No other animals were recorded. Friends have decided to replace the lost and damaged boxes as soon as possible. Phillip has agreed to make the boxes and Friends will provide the materials and box designs. Parks Victoria will also provide some boxes to replace the lost ones and this is appreciated. There was a green tinge on the burnt soil as lilies, grasses, orchid leaves and quite a few Hardenbergia seedlings were showing through. In patches of unburnt vegetation greenhood rosettes were plentiful. Keen eyes observed cylindrical Koala droppings with their tell tale ridged surfaces. These were wet from the rain and pale greenish brown in colour. The chatterings of Swift Parrots kept us company as we worked and the usual honeyeaters were squabbling in the canopy. Early Golden Wattle flowers reminded us that spring is not too far away.

Lunch at Honeyeater Picnic area was enjoyed with the resident birds, cheeky Brown Treecreepers, and an occasional White-throated, Yellow Robins, stunning Spotted Pardalotes and a party of wrens with a lone male resplendent in full plumage.

Later in the afternoon some of us went in search of Regents but were luckless. In the Donchi Hill block the Hooded Robins appear to be doing quite well and parties of Diamond Firetails were found feeding along the fencelines. A great bird for the week was a Chestnut-rumped Hylacola seen feeding just inside the adjoining paddock among the Hooded Robins. These are shy little birds and very special to see. The 40+ party of Swift Parrots, first observed in late May, were seen feeding in Ironbark blossom and taking lerp on the ridge and earlier in the week were seen at Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam also feeding on lerp.

Around the Park: Inkweed, found in disturbed areas of the park, originated in America and is another weed producing hundreds of seeds. The juice from its ripe fruits makes a long lasting stain. Hence its name. At the re-veg site on Depot Road the trees are doing extra well as is the wretched Capeweed. Elsewhere, Tall Greenhoods, *Pterostylis melagramma*, are up and in bud and fungi is appearing. Plants of the rare (in Victoria) *Senecio garlandii* have been planted in the Chiltern and Mt Pilot sections of the park to extend the populations and some *Lotus australis* which was growing on the roadside has been moved to a safer site.

Rainfall:

June: 120mm over 12 days. Yearly total: 377.6mm over 39 days. What a welcome change!

New publications:

* *Wildlife of the Box-Ironbark Country* by Chris Tzaros : Covers all the parks in this very special country and is complemented by a delightful CD soundscape of wildlife calls and bush sounds by Andrew Skeoch. Detailed information on 249 species and where to find them. This is an innovative, beautifully presented work by someone passionate about Box-ironbark country.

* *Fungi Down Under* By Pat and Ed Grey with design and layout by Leon Costermans. This book is the product of the Fungimap project and is entirely the work of volunteers. Another innovative design with excellent photographs includes distribution data in map form, a list of names and their meanings and pronunciation along with a colour chart to match colors in the field. Proceeds from its sale will support the Fungimap project.

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY AUGUST 6TH. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Meet at 1.30pm Chiltern Post Office for an afternoon in the park.

Dinner at Senior Citizens Hall at 6pm to be followed by Guest Speaker Jim Blackney. Jim is the north-east Regional Manager for Trust for Nature. Jim will give a presentation on Trust for Nature's extensive work in the north-east.

**Friends please bring food to share. Visitors most welcome. Enquiries: Eileen 03 57 261 484

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN NATIONAL PARK inc MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

P.O. Box 26 CHILTERN 3683 To assist, please mark the envelope Membership.

Friends have achieved a great deal during the past year. Surveys for plants, birds and monitoring of mammal boxes, tree planting and weed control 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. Please ensure your contact details are current. Thank you.

Please find enclosed my membership of \$10 for 2005-6 The fee covers the whole family and includes 11 newsletters.

Name

Email

Address

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Category

1. Newsletters

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