

Newsletter 144 September 2006

Description

Dear Friends,

As I write this it is pouring with most welcome rain. I hope wherever you are you are receiving your share.

Our September meeting day was unseasonably warm and the working group felt quite fatigued after the tree planting and mulching activity at the Depot Re-vegetation site. The final group of trees is now getting the benefit of the rain and the mulch will be well settled. Parks have fenced out two plantations and hopefully this will beat the kangaroos. One enclosure has been mulched and we hope to do the second one at the October meeting. Most of the protective guards have been removed from the enclosed plantings.

Lunch was welcome and also a chance to catch up with our Melbourne and Numurkah members. After lunch we met our guest speaker, Andrew Silcocks from Birds Australia, for a tour of the three wetlands. Andrew pointed out the value of making regular visits to the wetlands and sending records of sightings to the database. The recording of the bush birds around the wetlands was also valuable. To increase the value of records it is recommended that the same route be taken each visit and to note the habitat changes along the route. At high water this would be a little difficult on our wetlands.

In the evening we were joined by members of the Murray-Goulburn branch of BOCA and 50 people sat down to enjoy dinner and conversation. Before dinner Tony Marsh showed a very interesting documentary of the Baranduda Landcare nestbox project. This was followed by a presentation of the new Friends Website which Tony has been working on. Our present site, also created by Tony, is over ten years old and in need of change. It's certainly going to get it!

Now for the fun! Just as we finished the brief AGM there was a power outage! After some discussion between Andrew and Tony Andrew's presentation was linked up to Tony's laptop and the group gathered around to listen and watch. About a third of the way through the presentation the lights came on again and a cheer went up.

Waders are remarkable birds as Andrew demonstrated with the maps of their travels. For we in the inland who see only a few species of waders the identification section of the talk was excellent. The photographs clearly showed the features to look for.

Andrew's lifelong interest is in waders, both in Australia and in the British Isles, where he was born. He works at Birds Australia on many wetland projects as well as keeping the Atlas Database current. Thankyou, to everyone who helped at and attended our AGM. You ensured a very enjoyable and successful day.

Thank you to the efficient crew who planted the Research Station block trees in mid month.

Around the park:

At Chiltern Valley No 2: Parks have had the ripping done so there are more understorey plants to be put in.

The understory plants have been planted at the Research Station block. Migrant birds are arriving,

recent sightings have been: a pair of Square-tailed Kites, Fantailed Cuckoo, Rufous Whistler, Rufous Songlark, Gerygone and Mistletoe Bird. Our lovely winter visitors, the Swift Parrots and Regent Honeyeaters are still enjoying the last of the Ironbark and White Box. Quite a few Regents have been banded so if you happen to spot one try to note the band colours and report them.

Due to the extremely dry conditions over the past months the greenhood display was poor. Hopefully the rain now falling (so far 20mm) should help the emerging caladenia species. The first of the Diuris, D. pardina, are in flower and the Waxlips, Glossodia major, are ready to burst into flower. The dry conditions spoiled the Golden Wattle flowering and little or no seed pods have formed. The Varnish and Goldust Wattles are flowering well so there is colour in the park. The winter flowering Broom Bitter-pea grew very well after the summer rain but has failed to produce much flower. Life's a mystery in the bush.

Rainfall: August : 23.2 mm over 10 days Yearly total to date: 212.2 mm over 53 days. Getting rather serious now.

Can you help? There are about 120 understorey plants to go in at Chiltern Valley No 2. No digging, the ground is ripped. If you can help please give Eileen a call next week. This will be the last of the planting for this year.

Ironbark Festival: In Chiltern on Sunday October 15th. Parks Victoria will have a display, also Landcare and the Wangaratta Branch of the Native Plant Society. There will be a wide range of native plants on sale.

Newspaper: More needed for the mulching at Depot in October. Please save your spare papers.

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY OCTOBER 1ST MEET AT CHILTERN POST OFFICE 9.00AM

Working on the above tasks at Depot re-veg site. BYO gloves, trowel, shovel, pliers, binocs, chair and lunch. Newspaper has been collected. After lunch John Hawker will take us on an orchid ramble.

Contacts : Eileen on 0375 261 484 John on 0357 281 642

AFTER THE FIRES...A FLORA AND FAUNA UPDATE

WHERE...STAR THEATRE CHILTERN

WHEN...WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 27TH 7.30-9.00PM

WHAT...LAUNCH OF AN 18 MINUTE LOCAL COMMUNITY FILM ENTITLED

AFTER THE FIRES : A COMMUNITY RESPONDS

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