

Newsletter 145 October 2006

Description

Dear Friends,

Nothing has changed, it's still dry and getting drier. Despite the weather we are still able to find highlights in the park.

Working at the Depot site to the song of Western Gerygones and Painted Honeyeaters was one of the highlights. Nine of us tackled the mulching of the enclosures. One is completed but the second one is only partly covered as we ran out of mulch! Methods for moving the mulch were varied. Our wheelbarrow was rendered useless as it would not fit through the gates. Tarpaulins, seed bags and large buckets were employed to get the job done. We were grateful to our hard working visitors for their help. The parks crew have added metal gates to each enclosure to complete the job. The Capeweed in the centre of the block is thriving despite the lack of rain. The new group of trees planted last month were watered and are doing well.

Morning tea was delectable. Neville secured a blueberry and apple ring from the local bakery and it was a real treat. Thank you.

We decided on Lappin's Dam for a lunch spot. Sitting on the bank overlooking the water was most relaxing after our strenuous morning activity. Birds were bathing, woodswallows were chattering overhead and a couple of Yellow Robins were very vocal.

Later we walked up to the Peake's Track area where Mark got an unexpected "tick" of the birding kind. Low over the canopy a magnificent Square-tailed Kite put on a great display of gliding giving us good views of the underwing colours and markings. In the same spot a large group Woodswallows was extremely noisy. They were mostly White-browed and Masked busily feeding in the blossom of the White Box. Turquoise Parrot and Painted Button-quail were in the same spot. Along the paddock fenceline we hoped to see Hooded Robins instead we found a glider impaled on the barbed wire, very sad.

We did find the Robins further along the track but in general this part of the track was lacking in birdlife. Back at the dam the birds were drinking and so were we as the afternoon was quite warm.

Part of the track we walked was burnt in 2004 and following the wet summer of 2005 there was an explosion of wattles. In particular there are lovely dense stands of Goldust and Varnish Wattle. The previously ragged bushes of Sweet Bursaria have put on fresh strong growth from their bases.

Around the park:

Gold Dust Wattle is now at its best and is providing some ground colour. Orchids and lilies are practically non-existent this year due to the long dry autumn and winter. Any that can be found are stunted and stressed. Hopefully in a week or two the peas will brighten up the park. At present the best birding is to be had at Bartley's Block, with Painted Honeyeaters, Turquoise Parrots, Western Gerygones, Spotted Pardalotes and the usual honeyeaters all present. In general thornbills and cuckoos are scarce and at the time of writing I have only heard one Sacred Kingfisher and no one has

recorded any Bee-eaters in the park. Both the Valley Dam levels are receding as is Honeyeater Picnic area dam, (Cyanide Dam).

Chiltern Valley No 2 Plantings:

Mid-month 5 members and a volunteer visitor planted 120 understorey plants into the ripped area to make the total for this planting 175. The last plantings were done using weedmat and it will be interesting to see if the survival rate is improved. It is hoped that Parks will undertake some watering if the weather stays dry.

No sooner had we left the site than vehicles turned up with canoes aboard. Wanting to get to the water's edge they weaved a passage through the plantings. No damage was done on this occasion however it may be necessary to form/indicate a passageway to the water to avoid any future damage. Thanks to those who helped to complete this task.

Rainfall:

September : 35.8 mm over 8 days Yearly total to date: 248 mm over 61 days. Getting desperate. Looking over the 100 year records this has not been the driest September (9mm in 1973). However the months prior to the 9mm of 1973 had reasonable falls of rain in contrast these have been absent this year.

Friends of the Warbys:

It is with regret that I have to report the closing of the Friends of the Warbys. Due to lack of volunteers and the advancing years of the present volunteers this has been a hard decision and their only choice. The biggest losers will be the environment and Parks Victoria. Users of the park have the Friends group to thank for the planned walking tracks and the lovely arboretum. The plants for the arboretum were propagated, planted and nurtured by their small but dedicated band. It is a sad reflection on a centre the size of Wangaratta that support cannot be generated.

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.

NEXT MEETING SATURDAY NOVEMBER 4TH MEET AT CHILTERN POST OFFICE 9.00AM
Mt Pilot Ramble with Mark Carey. BYO lunch, binocs, sunscreen and chair.
Come along there is NO work to be done! Contact: Mark 0357 281 572

Category

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