

Newsletter 151 May 2007

Description

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the world of rain! How wonderful it has been. Hopefully wherever you are you have shared in the bounty.

A fine and sunny day was our lot for the May meeting. Thirteen volunteers turned up and we needed every one of them. We welcomed Margaret from Adelaide who was visiting for a week and kindly volunteered her services.

The piles of mulch and newspapers were daunting. However nothing beats our workers and paper was spread and mulch transported in many different ways! tarps, bins, buckets, trolleys and bags were employed.

Foreman Pete blew the whistle for morning tea and bun and no second call was required either. The second assault on the mulch pile ended at 12.30pm. A great deal had been achieved leaving just the centre of the large enclosure remaining uncovered. That will be the target for the June meeting when we will be treated to a barbecue lunch by Parks staff. Incentive??

Last year's enclosure is looking fabulous. We looked at photos taken last year of the work being done and then looked at the present scene. It was very encouraging and motivated us to complete these last two enclosures. Already there are little seedlings emerging, wattles and peas the seeds of which were in the mulch. Exactly what we hoped for. Care has to be taken weeding out the stray Capeweed plants as the new seedlings are very tiny. Outside the enclosures the Capeweed is thick and will have reveled in the 75mm of rain that fell on May 17th and 18th.

After lunch and a brief meeting we walked the Tuan Track to Bartley's Block and back, this is the route we plan to use as a loop walk from the Tuan campsite. Shortly a leaflet will be produced showing the route and pointing out interesting spots along the track and a little history of the Bartley Block. Visitors often ask for good walks and this one has been very popular when offered.

Birds were extremely scarce. Crested Shrike-tits, White-browed Babblers, Black-chinned Honeyeaters, Grey Shrike-thrush and Eastern and Crimson Rosellas were most obvious but sadly lacking, especially through Bartley's block, were the small birds, thornbills, wrens and robins.

Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot Survey Unfortunately a NIL count. However we did enjoy the company of the Narranderra Field Nats and they enjoyed the park. No Ironbark, Grey Box or White Box is in flower or bud. There is a little Red Stringybark out but nothing using it. Along Koala Track and Cyanide Road there is some Long-leaf Box coming out

No Regents were found in Victoria on the survey weekend. In NSW there are good numbers along the central coast feeding in Swamp Mahogany along with a variety of other honeyeaters. I wonder where our Victorian birds are hiding? Please look in any areas where there is flowering you just never know what you may find!

Around the Park: The drought has produced some little surprises, strangely, in the form of plant life. At Chiltern Valley No 1 Dam, which was reduced to a muddy puddle, the exposed mounds were covered in vegetation some of which produced new species for the park list. Among them were Hairy Carpetweed, *Glinus lotoides*; Pigweed *Dysphania glomulifera* (the name masks the beauty of this

delicate creeping plant); Plains Joyweed, Alternanthera sp 1, this record extends the range of the species. These are three of the seven uncommon species found. The Herbarium has retained the specimens for their collection.

After the May rain there was an explosion of orchid and lily leaves. Carpets of tiny Rock Fern are emerging from the ground litter all promising a good flowering year. The ground litter has at last become soft and silent to walk over.

The May rains have raised the levels of the park dams but the Valley Dams are still pitifully low. Flame Robins, King Parrots, Golden Whistlers and Scarlet Robins are about but notably absent are the Fuscous and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. Phillip has seen Fuscous in Albury but no reports of Yellow-faced have been forthcoming.

Nest box inspection in the Donchi Hill block revealed Phascogale use, and Sugar and Squirrel Gliders in residence.

Newspapers: we will require more for the June meeting so please bring along whatever you have.

PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN: The draft plan for the new park has been released for public comment. Please make an effort to read it and consider the recommendations. Submission close on May 28th

Rainfall: April 35.4mm over 5 days Yearly total: 151.0 over 31 days. And how welcome it was!

NEXT MEETING SATURDAY JUNE 2ND CHILTERN POST OFFICE AT 9.00AM

Parks Staff are providing a BBQ . BYO gloves, binoculars and chair and your favourite work tool.

The programme has been altered. We will complete the mulching at Depot . After lunch we will inspect a group of nest boxes Contact: Eileen 03 57 261 484

Category

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Date Created

2012/06/22

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