

Newsletter 154 August 2007

Description

Dear Friends

A large gathering braved the chilly conditions to enjoy an afternoon of varied activities on Sean Dooley's interesting Trust for Nature block which borders the national park on two sides. Sean spoke about his passion for box and ironbark country which led him to purchase this unspoiled block. Jim Blackney spoke about the aims of Trust for Nature then it was time to be active. Jim brought along trees and nest boxes and Sean took care of the bird watching. Thirty trees and shrubs were planted by Friends, while Jim and his group toured the nest boxes hoping to find some with gliders in them. They were rewarded with Sugar Gliders in one box giving some participants their first experience with these delightful little mammals which were all curled up and uninterested in the intruders. Two nest boxes contained quite odd materials, coarse straw and large feathers which we judged to be Ibis feathers plus an assortment of other materials. Starlings may well have been the culprits but there was no offensive odour usually associated with that bird. Further inspection may solve the riddle.

The birdwatchers had to work hard for their list but managed to find some "quality" birds including Sitellas, a male Golden Whistler, Buff-rumped Thornbills, Grey Fantail and Flame and Scarlet Robins. Sharp eyes noticed Buff-rumped Thornbills going into a nest which was neatly placed between the bark of a large Red Stringybark tree. Hopefully it will not be discovered by a hungry antechinus which will consider the eggs or young an easily gained meal.

It was a little early for wildflowers but the lilies and everlastings promised a good flowering. Some delicate sprays of Hovea were noted and a few plants of Ivy Goodenia were sporting bright yellow flowers. Ivy Goodenia is one of those plants which can be found flowering in almost every month of the year.

By 4.30 pm light drizzle began to fall and the cold really set in so we retired to the Senior Citizens' Rooms for a warm drink, nibbles, conversation and the preparation of the evening meal.

By 6pm we had 53 people ready to sit down to a dinner of very varied and delicious fare.

After dinner a brief AGM was held and a committee for 2007-8 was elected then it was over to Sean for the evening's entertainment.

Listening to Sean was like taking the trip around the country with him as he traversed Australia many times from east to west and north to south and by the sound of it often almost asleep on his feet, such was the urgency to achieve his dream of seeing 700 species in a year. To twitch a Little Bittern as number 703 after it eluded him so many times must have been sweet. Thankyou Sean for a most entertaining evening.

To everyone who contributed to the success of the AGM a very big thankyou. To our guests from Shepparton, Melbourne, Violet Town, Bright and Rutherglen thankyou sharing the day with us.

Around the park:

Parks have sprayed the Patterson's Curse at Bartley's Block. New signage has been placed on previously unnamed tracks. Many people have commented on the cutting of ironbarks at the Donchi Hill picnic area and of saplings at Honeyeater Picnic area. It is disappointing to see this abuse of the park.

One of our members, Krista, has become a Green Corps team leader and she is bringing her group to the park on August 21st to pull the Caper Spurge at Bartley's and to introduce them to box-ironbark forest. We will monitor a few nest boxes and hopefully reward them with some glider sightings. From August 18th -20th Phillip and Eileen hosted 21 birdwatchers from Warnambool, S Australia and Wagga. Despite the scarcity of birds in any number we did manage to list over 65 species for the weekend and our visitors enjoyed their time in our park and in the town.

Research Station Block:

The Birds Australia surveys were undertaken on August 2nd and birds were very scarce. We did find several large owl roosts with numerous small pellets containing mostly insect parts. We guessed the sites were Boobook roosts. Of the last 4 nest boxes put up in April this year three were in use. Squirrel and Sugar Gliders had one each and a third had a dead female Squirrel Glider in it. The box was taken down, cleaned out and replaced

Rainfall July 90.5mm over 14 days. Yearly total: 390.3mm over 68 days.

Committee members for 2007-8: Neville Bartlett, secretary, Peter Gotham, treasurer and public officer, Eileen Collins, newsletter, Jennifer Davidson, Phillip Seely, Mark Carey and John Hawker.

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 2ND MEET AT CHILTERN POST OFFICE AT 9.00AM
BYO Gloves, lunch, chair, binocs and energy. We will pull any remaining Caper Spurge and check out the Genista sites. Afternoon walk for orchids and early flowers. Contact Eileen 03 57 261 484
A GENTLE REMINDER: MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOW DUE.

Category

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