



Newsletter 182 March 2010

Description

Dear Friends

Please note: the website address has a slight change. The address now consists of the former name plus .au on the end ie <http://friendsofchiltern.org.au>

Such welcome rain!

It was kind enough to cease for just a day for our March meeting.

Armed with all the usual nest-boxing gear we set out for the Grevillea Track complex. Walking through the bush was truly pleasurable again as long as one avoided the massive, golden and strong webs of the Orb Weavers. Although the spider is more upset than the human the tangled web around one's head and neck is not exciting.



One box had Sugar Gliders in residence and pleasingly all but one contained leaf nests. A box which we plugged at the last visit to exterminate bees was taken down and replaced with a new box. The box in question was full of dried up honeycomb. Thanks to June for offering to thoroughly clean it. There are three old boxes left on the site and we decided to replace them as soon as possible. Morning tea was next and was accompanied by a chorus of Noisy Friar-birds. Yes, they are back and the trees are in flower. I would expect the numbers and noise to build up over the next couple of months.

The Cemetery Bushland Reserve block was our next destination. This block was burnt in summer and the lower section was severely damaged with at least four mature trees now dead. A loss we cannot afford.

Two of the four boxes on this block were occupied, one with two gliders and another with at least four Sugar Gliders snuggled up in a heap.

Valley No 2 Dam was our lunch spot. The bird hide is now in place and looks quite special. Our thanks to Parks Staff for this work.



Friends will now landscape the area, stabilise and plant the bank and plant understorey around the hide area. Jan and Jenny from Sandy Creek Farm Trees have kindly donated the trees, grasses and sedges. We thank them for their ongoing support.

A meeting with Ranger John sorted out car parking and approaches, screening and planting areas and the placement of signage. When the plants are available we will need all hands on deck to complete the work.

We anticipate a formal opening with a BBQ lunch in early June separate from a Friends Day.

A late leisurely lunch, on a very pleasant day, was enjoyed on the bank of the dam. The only inconvenience was having to move as the sun moved! The upside was the absence of flies.

Wildlife included a healthy Black Snake, a few kangaroos, one a female with a joey in her pouch browsing along the dam margins. Birds included Sacred Kingfisher, Grey Shrike-thrush, Rufous Whistler, Grey Fantail, Dusky Woodswallow, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Little Friarbird, Beeaters, elegant Mountain Ducks, large numbers of Masked Lapwings, Grey Teal, Little Pied Cormorant and White Ibis. Of great interest and amusement was the sight of four Yellow-billed Spoonbills sifting the waters in unison as they moved across the middle of the dam. However long a spoonbill's legs are equals the depth of the centre of the dam! Shallow.

The consistently low level of the dam has changed the habitat significantly. Tall reeds have appeared and along with a forest of small red gums is creating a new margin. We wondered if we would ever see the dam full again, with the water level just below the hide as it was in previous years.

Around the park

The rain has induced the fungi to appear an aspect that has been absent for a few years. The dainty ones pictured were growing in leaf litter near the bird hide.



Unfortunately the run off has not been sufficient to make much impression on the water levels of the park dams.

Rainfall: February: 96.0mm over 9 days. Yearly total to date: 129.0 over 13 days. Long may it continue!

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY APRIL 11TH

Note the change to avoid Easter â?? we meet at Chiltern Post Office at 9am . BYO Lunch, chair, binocs, gloves, energy.

Contact: Eileen: 0357 261 484 <p>

Mobile in the field only: 0407 486 480 Eileen Initial planting at Valley No 2. Alternative: nest box work. â??You get so much more for your time and effort when you plant something where it belongs. Plant the right thing in the right area and make a long-term conservation differenceâ?• The late John Harris, Parks Victoria Ranger-in-charge, Wimmera Parks. Man of vision.

NEW DVD FEATURING DISTRICT BIRDS

One of our members has created a delightful DVD entitled â?? A Twitcherâ??s Guide to Birding in the North-eastâ?•



This DVD is for sale at \$15 plus \$2.30 postage and packing. If you would like to purchase a copy please forward your payment and postal details to: Friends of Chiltern N.P. P.O. Box 60 Chiltern 3683

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