

Newsletter 222 October 2013

Description

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK inc Newsletter No. 222 October 2013

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<http://friendsofchiltern.org.au>

Dear Friends,

A pleasantly warm sunny day greeted us for our October meeting so with luck on our side weatherwise we began a day of nest box checking. Of course there is always more to nest box work than looking in boxes and this day was no exception. Attention often switched to the ground for flowers and insect life and overhead for birds. A number of boxes on the All Nations Road were occupied by Sugar and Squirrel Gliders with one box holding a family of Sugar Gliders in a very snug huddle. Web pic. Under an old fallen box lay a handsome specimen of an Orange Footed Centipede, *Cormocephalus aurantiipes*.



which offered a rare opportunity for photos.

After the customary and somewhat late morning tea we moved on to the Rutherglen Natural Features Reserve hoping to find a Tuan for our guest from Sydney. Unfortunately there were only Tuan nests this time around, and the usual gliders. The occupancy count for the day was really rewarding.



The Rutherglen block provided a different and interesting ground flora. Some plants recorded were *Pimelia curviflora*, Variable *Glycine*, *G. tabacina* with its dainty mauve flower spikes, Slender Tick-trefoil *Desmodium varians*, an uncommon plant with an insignificant pale cream and pinkish flower spike. On the bare ground there were carpets of yellow Pygmy Sunray, with the long name of *Triptilodiscus pygmaeus*.

Olives were abundant and plans are afoot to wage war on them.

Around the park:

While in the Mt Pilot section of the park Neil and I came across a turreted structure about six centimetres high. Wondering what owned it we did a bit of ‘fishing’ with a dry stem thinking we would get a spider. But no, out came an ant followed by a few more ants. They were not aggressive and they proceeded to drag the dry stem into their nest. The ‘turreted’ entrance was beautifully constructed in the granitic soil with chewed up grasses and other debris. The ant was of the *Camponotus* species of Sugar Ants.



There is a splendid show of wild flowers around the park. On the highest point of Tower Hill Road the Chocolate Lilies are spectacular and very hard to photograph well .Web pic

Musky Caladenias, *C gracilis* are in full flower and the Blue Pincushions, *Brunonia australis* are about to put on a good show. Some really lovely specimens of Showy Podolepis *P jaceoides* were found on Koala Track where it runs off Lancashire Gap Road.

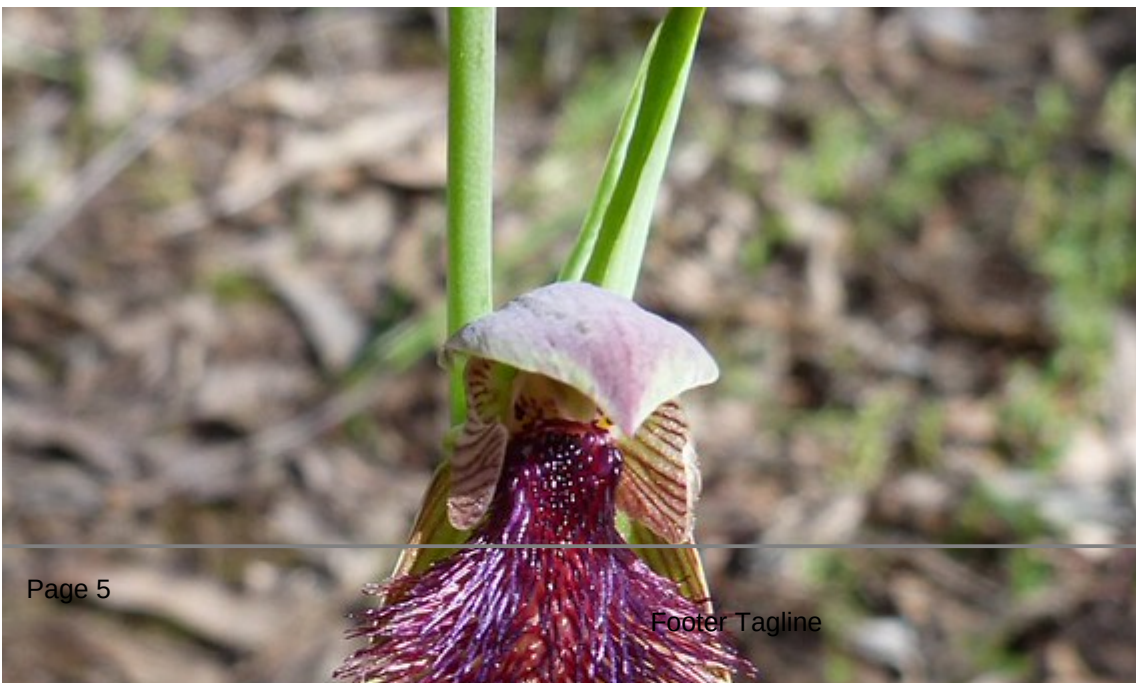


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Orchids.



fading fast as the weather warms up and the early greenhoods are all in seed mode. All in all there are just not enough hours in the day to visit all the interesting spots. We are so lucky to have this environment surrounding our town and for it to be so accessible to all.

Bird news: A Rainbow Lorikeet was seen at the caravan park with a Musk Lorikeet. Painted Honeyeaters are at Bartley's Block and at Depot Dam. Jan reported that there was good bird activity around Depot Dam.

The dams have been rather quiet but as the weather warms things should improve. During our nest box monitoring a large, noisy flock of White-browed Woodswallows was seen on Lancashire Gap Road. Orioles, Cuckoo-shrikes, cuckoos, Sacred Kingfisher and the odd Currawong were also seen. Other birds recorded over the week were White-throated Warbler and quail sp on Skeleton Track east, Beeaters and Wedgetailed Eagle. There are still a few Noisy Friarbirds about and the Little Friars are in great voice giving a variety of tricky calls until the bird is tracked down. Never a dull moment in the bird world.

Vale Dr Margaret Brownlie the news of Margaret's passing after a battle with a brain tumour has saddened all the members who knew her. Margaret travelled around Australia as a locum, enjoying her passion for birdwatching. On her frequent visits to Chiltern she engaged in Friends' activities with pleasure and energy and was very supportive of the group. She will be sadly missed.

Regent Honeyeater Release: We are still seeking volunteers for ongoing searching. If you are able to assist with this project please contact Glen Johnson glen.johnson@dse.vic.gov.au

Rainfall: September 59.5 mm over 5 days. Year to date: 517.8 mm over 46 days.

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY NOVEMBER 2ND

Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 9.00 am Byo lunch, binocs, sunscreen, hat, water Contact in the field : Eileen 0407 486 480

2014 FRIENDS CALENDARS AVAILABLE FROM MID NOVEMBER

The 2014 calendars will cost \$22 plus \$9.15 postage This is now the flat rate for ONE calendar countrywide.

For 2 to 3 calendars in same bag (max 3 per bag) add \$5.00 Please forward your order and cheque to: P.O. Box 60 Chiltern 3683. A limited number will be printed.

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Bank: WAW Credit Union Co-operative Ltd (Cuscal Limited)

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Please add your surname to the transaction.

Advise Neville (neville@nrbartlett.com.au) when you have made the payment so that we can keep track of payments

Category

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