

Newsletter 236 February 2015

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to year 2015!

January has been unusually cool and wet but it seems we may be paying the price for the comfort in the form of a very warm and dry February with the temperatures forecast to be in the 40s in the second week. Luckily for our first meeting of the year it was very mild so we were able to top dress the picnic area at Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam with fresh bark chips. A wonderfully energetic team of sixteen shifted two truck loads of mulch in quite smart time. Extra wire guards were made and placed around the last plantings replacing the plastic guards and the walking track was cleared of vegetation at the northern end. When we get the autumn break we will make a final planting at the site.

Moving

After morning tea, and a long chat to catch up with each other and a meeting to plan the year's activities, we finished for the day. Highlight of the down time was the appearance of three small baby turtles, Macquarie Turtle *Emydura macquarii* making their way across the bark chips and oddly enough away from the water. They were duly caught and photographed for identification.

Macquarie

After lunch a few of us sat at the dam watching the waterbirds. Pelicans, White-faced Herons, Black Cormorants, Great Egret, Masked Lapwings, Coots and Maned Geese were present. Notably absent were Dotterels, Stilts and ducks. The Reed Warblers and Little Grassbirds have left. Bush birds included Rufous Whistler, Yellow Robin, Weebill and Brown Treecreeper. A lone Whistling Kite cruised over the dam.

Some challenges for 2015

Apart from the work on the Rutherglen Block our main effort will be directed towards the olives in the reference area during the cooler months. Mick has undertaken to manage the mapping and removal. His prophecy : 'Olive free by 2016' was amended by Neil to 'Not an olive to be seen, by two thousand sixteen'. That gives us two years to fulfill the prophecy! As well as programmed days there will be mid-week sessions for those who wish to offer further help. A plan for the work at the Rutherglen

block will be ready for discussion at the March meeting. Freesias will be sprayed again in late winter. It was suggested that we spray the weeds on the old house foundations at Bartley's Block. Cootamundra Wattle sites will be monitored in spring when they are in flower and easy to spot. Nest box checking will be ongoing. Suggestions for further activities are welcome.

Olive report from Mick

Went out to the ref area and as well as killing 4-5 big trees and pulling out dozens of little ones down to a cm high, found a new big thicket of olives in the south-facing gullies. At least they're easier to get to than the northern ones. I have mapped all sites. At least all the ones near the 100 babies have been poisoned and littlies pulled up. I will be available on odd mid-week days to go to the olives, and if anyone else is interested they can contact me on 0429017229 or by email websterm@netc.net.au and I'll send an email around, maybe on Sundays when I see weather forecasts. No obligation to come of course and cool days only. It would be good to get to the big fruiting ones as soon as possible! The smaller ones can wait for Friends days - plenty to do there! Some of the trees which were treated last year have shown signs of reviving, so they will have to be treated again.

What am I ?

This exquisite image was captured by Ross Heywood in December. Your challenge is to identify it! Jan Heywood and I tried but both failed. Answer in the next issue. Prize? A mini Mars Bar!

[What](#)

From the Ranger's Office

Parks Staff are mainly focusing on general maintenance and planning for the upcoming burn season.

World of Insects

It has been an interesting period for insect life. Neil photographed Paper Wasps nest building and captured a great shot of the worker wasps with green balls of plant material to create new cells in their nest. [Paper](#)

I watched a smaller wasp on a vine and photographed it. When it was enlarged it showed the wasp chewing the vine shoots. Quite a coincidence.

[Vespid](#)

An interesting spider with very long legs and a fine body turned out to be a Net Casting Spider, also known as an Ogre Faced Spider.

[Net](#)

Regent Honeyeater

Release dates are: Tuesday and Friday April 13th and 17th respectively.

Relaxation tip from a mammal

photo courtesy Joseph.

[Koala](#)

“The best thing we can do for nature is simply spend more time in it. From there, reverence grows and action flows.” • M. Herring, 2013.

Next Monthly Meeting Saturday March 7TH 2015

Meet at 9.00 am at the post office. Activity will depend upon weather conditions but olive weeding is programmed if the temperature is kind. If you have a favourite tool for uprooting small olives please bring it along. BYO all your needs, lunch, binoculars, sunscreen, repellent. The reference area is a pleasant place in which to work. Contact in the field 0407 486 480

Friends Facebook Page

The Friends Facebook page has over 100 members now “ amazing “ well done Mick Webster “ any messages posted are received by all these people which makes a powerful and immediate communication mode

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/556332777763388/>

Rainfall

Rainfall for January: 115.5 mm over 5 days. Year 2014 : 115.5 mm over 5 days. Forecast for autumn is dry!

Category

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Date Created

2014/11/06

Author

eileen
