

Newsletter 243 September 2015

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter 243 September 2015

Dear Friends,

Greeted by a beautiful sunny day eighteen of us gathered at Honeyeater Picnic spot to enjoy the offerings of spring .

There was plenty to see as we made our way up towards All Nations Road from the carpark. The delicate white flowers of the Beard Heath viewed through a magnifying glass revealed its true beauty, a few Donkey Orchids were breaking open, tiny Caladenias were looking so fragile in the woody debris and fungi were pushing up through the drying soil. Then there were the birds! All the usual residents, Noisy Friarbirds, and other honeyeaters were in good voice and among the songs someone heard Swift Parrots!

Swift Parrot

The walk came to a stop for some time while the birds were photographed and admired. On the homeward track we found Hovea, some peas in flower, Tiny and Nodding Greenhoods, Pterostylis nana and nutans respectively.

Back at the picnic spot it was time to carve up the bun and Neville who is accomplished in this task did a neat job.

By now the evening air had some bite in it so we retired to the hall for the evenings proceedings. Thirty seven members and friends attended the evening session. As usual, members provided a great array of food. While this was being prepared and drinks enjoyed, Steve, one of our new members, played his harp. Such talent in the group! Steve made his harp out of recycled ash!

Our guest speakers, Jan and Neville Lubke from the Nature Conservation group, outlined the work they are doing to re-introduce Stone Curlews to the Riverina. Like many ground dwelling birds they face threats from many fronts and unsurprisingly foxes and feral cats are the main culprits. Curlews need good habitat to survive, remnant woodland with plenty of ground litter, fallen timber and short grasses. The birds are released into habitat that has been cleared of foxes and where fox baiting will continue to catch any invaders. Jan and Neville have devoted themselves to Curlews and their concern for the longevity of the species is admirable.



Around the Park

The last weeks of August gave us a spectacular display of Golden and Silver Wattle to brighten up the last of the winter days. The Gold Dust, Varnish and Silver Wattles will continue the splash of colour well into September. Closer to the ground the dainty cream-coloured Ploughshare Wattle is flowering. Beard Heath, Hovea and early peas are adding colour. There was good rain in the last two weeks of August but we need September rain to produce a good spring wildflower show. There was spectacular irruption of the fungi Morel on White Box Walk but sadly they lasted but one day after being found. All were neatly harvested! Just a reminder that it is illegal to remove native species from the park. This act deprived people of the enjoyment of this unusual event.

At Magenta Mine, Parks are re-designing the parking and picnic area. This should be completed in a week or so weather permitting. On completion Friends will do some re-vegetation of the surrounds.

Jan and Eileen's Fungi Forays

I guess the stars of August for me have been the Morels. I was stunned to come across a patch of some 200 in an area of about 100 square metres.



Janâ??s finds were very different. A spined fungi, *Hydnum repandum* and a small cherry red slime mould with a tongue twister of a name, *Dictydiaethelium*.



Rutherglen Natural Features Reserve

The last pile of concrete has been removed from the mining site so the whole area is now free of rubbish. A small area near the mine site has been planted out and the plants guarded with steel posts to prevent kangaroo and herbivore damage. In a few years the planting will have softened the degraded area. Some of the larger concrete bases that held the mining machinery were cleaned off revealing many grooves and bolts. The damage to the enclosure fence was repaired and flagging tape attached to the top wire to prevent further collisions. A very temporary “gate” was constructed by the innovative crew.



Weed report Mick Webster

A visit to the Mt Ophir Bushland Reserve revealed quite a few weeds including a big patch of Prickly Pear. Mick and Tony have removed all the outlying small plants to help reduce the spread. The larger ones will require chemical control. Peppercorns and a few other weeds were also removed.

[Prickly Pear Mt Ophir BLR](#)

A weed program for the coming months:

1. Briars at the entrance to Tank Track;
2. At the Grassland block briars and a patch of Bathurst Burr;
3. Freesias at Wallace Gully Track area to be sprayed by contractor;
4. Thistles at Rutherglen Block to be sprayed by contractor;
5. Olives will be checked in next month or so.

The Agave attack looks to have been successful. The piles of uprooted ones have been added to the ones in the pit and are rotting nicely helped by the constant rain and frosts. Chiltern Valley No2 is now free of woody weeds â?? peppercorns, briars and Ovens Wattles! Thank you Mick for this report.

The budget cuts to Parks Victoria mean that there is NO money for weed control, feral animals and threatened species work. In effect this means that gains made over the past years will be lost. This is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs and we have communicated this to the Minister and the Premier.

Life of a Meat Eater: Birds of Prey of Lake Hume

I attended a talk by Dr Victor Hurley, president of the Australian Raptor Association on â??Life of a Meat Eaterâ??. We learned about raptors of the region: their habitat preferences, prey, and identifying characteristics. The Peregrine Falconâ??s ecology was discussed in detail, based on Hurleyâ??s years of studying them, and served as a focus to help understand birds of prey more generally. Like most raptors, Peregrines specialise in hunting certain species â?? in their case, birds in flight. While I knew about their nesting on cliffs and sky-scrapers (urban cliffs) I did not realise that Peregrine Falcons also nest in Red Gums and abandoned Wedge-tailed Eagle nests in flatter country. The talk served as a good reminder too, about the caution required around nests. Peregrines will attack all comers whereas other species like Wedge-tailed Eagles will readily abandon their nest at the slightest disturbance. The talk attracted a large and enthusiastic audience of bird lovers and local landholders. Thanks to the Bethanga Landcare Group for all the effort they put into this fantastic event. Thank you Joseph for this report.



From the AGM

Election of Office Bearers for 2105-16

President: Eileen Collins Vice President: Richard Jerome

Secretary: Neville Bartlett Treasurer: Peter Gotham.

Committee: Mick Webster, Jennifer Davidson, John Hawker, Neil Blair, Phillip Seely, Jim Oâ??Toole, June Gotham.

To everyone who has renewed their membership thank you. The annual report [may be accessed on the website here.](#)

Rainfall for August

110.0 mm over 5 days. Year to date : 534.6 mm

Rural Living Fair at Wooragee

Sunday September 13th between 10am and 2pm at Wooragee hall and school
Mick has organised a table for Friends and would appreciate some help on the day. If anyone can spare a couple of hours to help please contact Mick on: 0429 017 229.

Next Monthly Meeting Sunday Oct 4

Further work on the grassland block attacking briar and other weeds. BYO gloves, sunscreen, lunch, chair and any other needs. Afternoon park walk. Contact in the field 0407 486 480

Friends Facebook Group now has 164 members

We are a group of people interested in Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park in North-Eastern Victoria. People can find much more information on the Park, activities of the Friends and membership details at <http://friendsofchiltern.org.au/>

Why not become a Member, not just a Facebook member? [only \\$15 a year!](#)

Rainfall

Rainfall for July: 77.6 mm over 7 days. Year to date : 424.06mm

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN Mt PILOT NATIONAL PARK inc MEMBERSHIP

Membership expires as at June 30th 2015 - the cost is \$15 for 2015-16 The fee covers the whole family and includes 11 newsletters.

For full details on how to join or renew your membership follow the link below

[Join or Renew your membership now](#)

Category

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