

Newsletter 278 November 2018

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter 278 November 2018

Dear Friends,

On a pleasantly cool morning after the heat of the past few days we gathered at Bartley's Block to tackle the Vinca seedlings, Spurge and wild Garlic. The Vinca and Spurge seedlings are demonstrating their ability to germinate despite the dry conditions. Around five hundred small Vinca seedlings were removed and fifty plus of the Spurge, some of which were already sporting seed heads.

The remains of the wild garlic were removed.

More plants of Sedge were planted and guarded in the drainage line. They were well watered in and will be watered again if the forecast rain does not arrive. Although the area looks bare, close inspection reveals emerging sedges and quite a few small everlastings are persisting all just waiting for the rain .

We retired to Chiltern Valley No 2 for morning tea and and lunch. The plantings around the hide area are thriving. We discussed the area in which to extend the planting of understory and have made plans to undertake an Autumn planting.



The two nest boxes were checked, one had two Sugar Gliders in residence and the other was empty.

Jan spent time spraying the thistles and a patch of Bridal Creeper. The weeds have certainly had plenty of attention this month!

Ever on the lookout for things small and interesting Jan snapped this colourful parasitic wasp, *Gotra sp.* belonging to the Ichneumon family. It is armed with a long ovipositor through which it injects its eggs into a moth or butterfly larva.



[Bird watching time.](#)

The bird list was pretty good. Dusky and White-browed Woodswallows were noisy and active, one was even seen to harass an antechinus! White-plumed and Black-chinned Honeyeaters, nesting Willie Wagtails, Sacred Kingfisher and Mudlarks were in the bushland. On the water there were Pelicans, Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Mountain Ducks, Black-winged Stilts, Black-fronted Dotterels, White-faced and Pacific Herons. No raptors were noted which was unusual for Valley 2





s and butterflies. Bee

A handsome Green Bottle Fly



and a Golden Tachinid Fly



The Green Bottle Fly is partial to carrion and by contrast the Bee Flies feed on nectar and pollen and are important pollinators and are frequently seen resting on bare ground. The Golden Tachinid parasitises caterpillars of moths and butterflies.

Jason Lawrence was excited to find a colourful Peacock Spider in his workshop at Barnawartha.



One was seen last year at Magenta Mine This is an interesting clip showing their amazing behaviour : | https://youtu.be/HPh_Gi7PCqs

A few immature Bowerbirds are around. One is building a bower (probably a practice one) on a farm at the edge of the park and I have one in my garden.



Rutherglen Reserve: The Swainsonas have been watered to help them through the dry spring. Of the thirty planted this year five have failed to survive. Most of the others are beginning to flower. Follow up watering will be needed if rain does not fall.

President's report:

At the October meeting we met our two newest Parks Victoria rangers, Hannah and Luke. They talked about some of the challenges that they face as rangers dealing with all sorts of issues.

We are delighted to have met them because we greatly respect the work that they do to make the Park a better place for everyone to enjoy.

A week or so back, another photographer and I were taken to a piece of private land just outside the Park where a pair of Regent Honeyeaters have nested and are raising two fledglings. The pair are an unbanded female (either wild or a fledgling from an earlier release) and a captive-bred male who has lost one of his coloured bands. This meant that he was one of six possible birds – all males with a green band on the right leg. This mating combination featuring a –wild– female has not been observed before. Our mission was to photograph the metal band that contains a 5 digit number that is unique for each bird. We arrived at the spot and got a couple of glimpses that indicated that the birds were still there but very high up a large flowering Red Box. After a while we gave up hope of getting any useful photographs and started to photograph other birds drinking at a dam nearby. Suddenly we were treated to the arrival of our target male that had come down for a bath. Lots of shots were taken but the key numbers on the metal leg band were very elusive. A second visit to the water by the same bird was

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