

Newsletter 326 April 2023

Description

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

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April field day reports

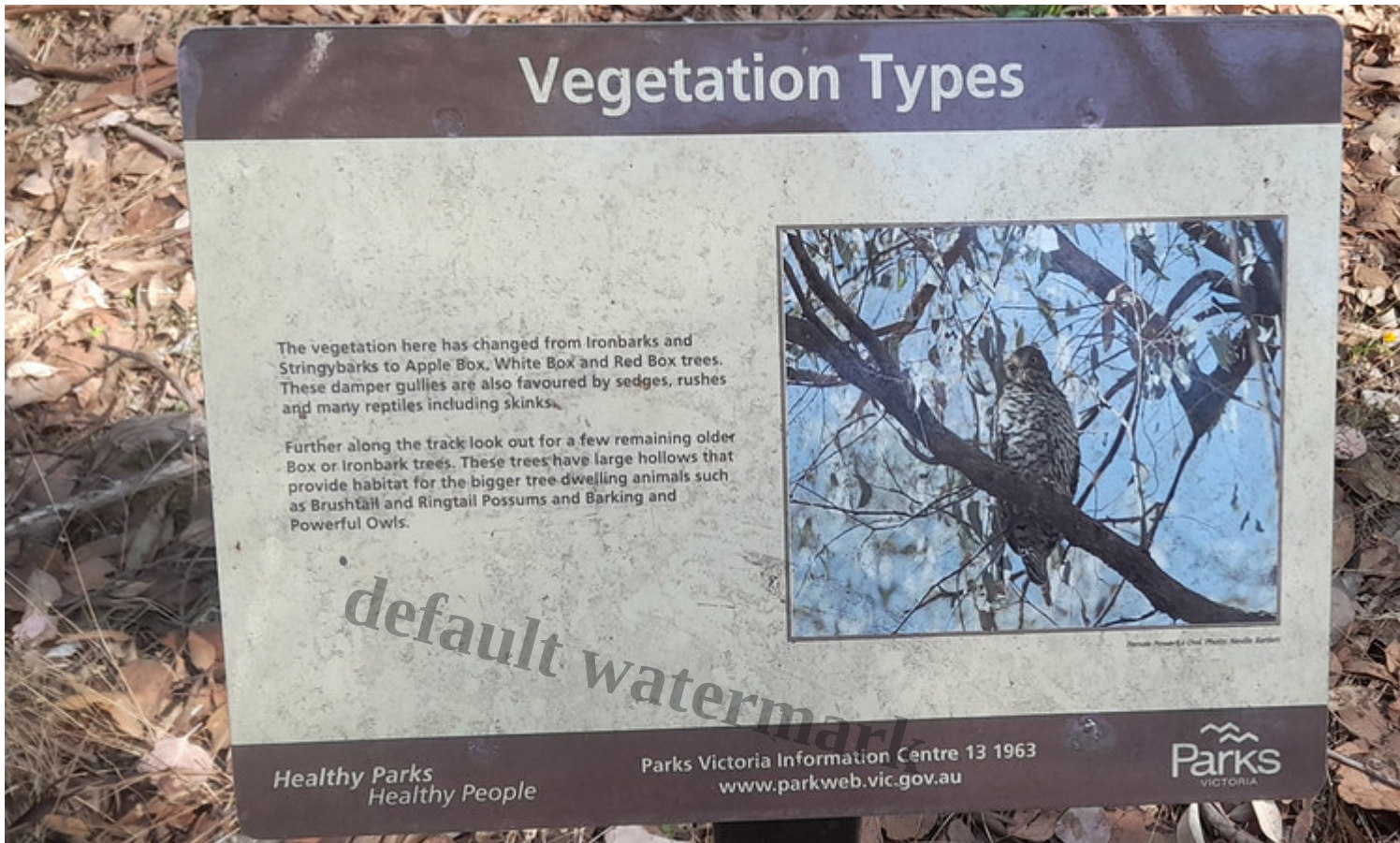
Thirteen Friends met on a bright Autumn day to audit the White Box Walk Track and check mammal nest boxes. Mick and Graeme went off to check the boxes on Donchi Hill and at the pioneer cemetery.

1. White Box Walk audit

Helen Carse The rest of the group drove to Honeyeater Picnic Area and then divided into three groups to audit different sections of the White Box Track. Parks Victoria staff have been working on the track and have replaced and added to signage so that very little additional signage was required to mark out the route.

The Friends, using the PV brochures, checked the condition of the photo boards and looked for points of interest where additional photo boards could be placed, and for spots where a bench or seat could be placed for rests or quiet contemplation. Thanks to all the Friends who participated on the Field day â?? their efforts are really appreciated.

There are 7 photo boards all of which look faded and need replacing/resiting or cleaning and touching up. The Parks brochure may need need to be updated in parts to reflect these changes. The information and photos with any additional information Friends wish to contribute will be collated and discussed at the next committee meeting. The Park rangers will be given the collated information with Friends suggestions and ideas. It is likely that the Friends will contribute to the cost of replacing photo boards, adding benches/seats and updating the brochure, if required.



One of the interpretive signs on White Box Walk Photo: Tony Murnane

2. Mammal nest box monitoring â?? Mick Webster On the April field day Graeme Ellis and I surveyed 14 boxes North of Chiltern, of which 6 were occupied by gliders (mostly Krefftâ??s), an excellent result. Even better is the fact that all of the boxes that were occupied by feral honeybees a year ago have been cleaned out and re-occupied by the resident gliders (saving us the work of maintaining them). Another bit of interesting news from our nestboxes is that all of the boxes we re-installed in the area burned in the Barnawartha fire in 2015 have now, after 7 years, been occupied by gliders.





Krefftâ??s in a typical bowl nest of fresh leaves. A box that was full of honeycomb and very aggressive bees a year ago. Photos: Mick Webster



This delightful family portrait of Tawny Frogmouths was captured by Bill Harding. Although listed as “common” these masters of camouflage are never easy to spot during daylight. After nightfall however their deep “oo-oom” calls gives away their presence. These patient hunters of the night have a varied diet of ground dwelling creatures including larger insects, frogs, small mammals and ground dwelling birds. They employ a “listen, watch and silently swoop” method of capture.

Breeding: The nest is built on a flat fork. Up to 5 eggs may be laid although how more than two can survive in such a flimsy nest is mystifying.

Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*) family Photo: Bill Harding

Fungi workshops organised by Wooragee Landcare “ May 20th and 21st 2023

The Friends group is providing financial support for a series of fungi workshops organised by Wooragee Landcare. These workshops are being conducted by Alison Pouliot, a renowned fungi expert on Saturday 20th May (fungus ID and survey around Wooragee/Chiltern area) and Sunday 21st May 2023 (slow mushrooming and identifying edible fungi). Alison’s latest book “Underground Lovers” will be launched at Wooragee on Friday 19th May 2023 (see link below).

Saturday 20th May 2023: Fungus ID and survey around Wooragee/Chiltern area [SOLD OUT] Sunday 21st May 2023: Slow mushrooming and identifying edible fungi [SOLD OUT]

Friday 19th May 2023: the launch of Alison's latest book - free event [tickets available]
<https://events.humanitix.com/book-launch-alison-pouliots-latest-book>

Southern Boobook (Ninox boobook) - April image in the 2023 calendar - John Hawker

Southern Boobook owls (Ninox boobook) are permanent territorial residents in dry heathy forest throughout Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park. They hunt at night for small vertebrates, invertebrates and flying insects. This owl was photographed in the western sector of Chiltern-Mt Pilot National park during an afternoon walk in February 2019. Large tree hollows are uncommon in this area of the Park, as about a century ago timber was heavily harvested to provide energy for the Eldorado dredge and township. The old-growth eucalypt in the photo is a Blakely's Gum (Eucalyptus blakelyi). Roosting owls aren't often noticed, as they are well camouflaged in the dimly lit interior of tree hollows.



Southern Boobook (Ninox boobook) roosting in tree hollow Photo: John Hawker

Ranger's Report Brian Pritchard Pig monitoring and trapping is continuing in Mt. Pilot with smaller numbers being found. Some minor repair works have commenced on our flood damaged roads, but we are still waiting for confirmation of insurance funding. Several roads have had overhanging vegetation removed.

A program of trapping and monitoring for phascogales, that was originally undertaken following the 2003 bushfire, has been completed in Mt Pilot for the first time in ten years. Weather was not great but two phascogales, ten antechinus and two ringtails were recorded over four trap nights. Students from Charles Sturt University have also completed their annual monitoring of Callitris plots which were established in the park following the 2003 fire to record growth and survival rates.

Litter dumping continues to be a problem and with the onset of winter illegal firewood removal increases.

Rainfall March 2023: 55 mm. Total for the year 2023: 189 mm. The corresponding total until the end of March 2022 was 309 mm. The average annual rainfall for Chiltern is 689 mm. Data supplied by Mick Webster.

NEXT MEETING SATURDAY 6th MAY 2023

1. Planting of thirty Acacia genistifolia to complete the planting for the Bush for Birds Grant at the Grasslands Block. There are an extra ten A. genistifolia which can also be planted to replace some of the losses. The other plantings can be checked to see what needs replacing and to remove guards, if required.

2. Checking the planting at Frog's Hollow with weeding and removing guards, as needed.

Mammal nest box checking at Bartley's Block. Meet at the Chiltern Post Office at 9:00am.

Dates for 2023 For 2023: Saturday 6th May, Sunday 4th June, Saturday 1st July, Sunday 6th August, Saturday 2nd September, Sunday 1 st October, Saturday 4th November and Sunday 3rd December 2023.

Rule of Thumb: For even months, the field day is held on the first Sunday of the month and for odd months, it is held on the first Saturday of the month.

Category

1. Newsletters

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