

Newsletter 088 August 2001

Description

Dear Friends

A dramatic overnight change in the weather threatened to mar our walk with Neville Walsh. Although it was cold the rain held off and we were able to enjoy the day.

Three and possibly four, new plants were added to the park list. In a wet depression near Magenta Neville found several tiny plants growing in the wet mud, a creeping plant, *Callitriche sonderi* and *Centipeda nidiformis* which is one of the sneeze weeds. Another *Centipeda* was also growing in this mud but we will have to wait until it flowers for its true identity to be revealed.

At one of the dams in Bartley's block a tall greyish *Juncus* caught our eye and Neville identified it as *Juncus semisolidus*. Apparently this species was originally labelled species O and has only recently received a 'real' name. I have since found some growing in a wet area on All Nations Road. It is quite an attractive and distinctive member of the *juncus* group.

Nodding Greenhoods were plentiful and some lovely groups of Dwarf Greenhoods were seen. However the excitement of the day came when we were looking at the Tall Greenhoods, *Pterostylis melagramma*, formerly *P. longifolia*. At least we thought that's what they were! Not so, they were *P. smaragdina*, the Emerald Greenhood. Not only were they new for the park but also new for the region, being only known closer to Melbourne. The question now was 'Do we have *P. melagramma* as well?' Neville explained the difference between the two species. The most obvious one being the bright green stripe on the labellum of the Emerald Greenhood in contrast to the very dark blackish-brown stripe on the labellum of *P. melagramma*. Christine and I went in search of the other populations that we knew of and found them to have dark labellums. Confirmation of the dark labellumed species will be given in the next newsletter.

Susie Duncan gave a vote of thanks to Neville for sharing this day with us and presented him with a tee shirt as a memento of his visit.

Later in the day we gathered in the warmth of the Senior Citizens' rooms for a shared tea and a chat. As usual the food spread before us was delicious and thoroughly enjoyed. Thanks to all the good cooks who brought along their favourite dishes.

A brief general meeting was held. The main information from that was the success of the grant application for the taxidermy.

The AGM followed. Office bearers for 2001-2 were elected. Convenor/Treasurer: E. Collins; Secretary, Neville Bartlett; Committee members, Philip Seely, Barry Traill, Christine Watson and June Gotham. Public Officer; Susie Duncan.

Our evening guest was Matthew Herring, a student from Charles Sturt University. Matthew had just completed his Honours Degree on Brolgas. The subject of his talk to us was 'Brolgas, Endangered Wetland Birds and their Habitat'.

Matthew presented a passionate and informative outline of the status Brolgas in the southern part of their range. He pointed out that by conserving the habitat of the Brolga we form an umbrella over the many other wetland species which inhabit the wetlands, such as Painted Snipe, Crakes, Rails and

Bitterns. The number of keen landholder volunteers in Matthew's project indicates that there is a great desire among them to preserve the wetland habitat to ensure this graceful bird survives in its southern range for future generations to enjoy. Matthew's study has raised the awareness of landholders to the plight of all wetland birds and in doing so he has made a great contribution to wetland conservation. Well done Matthew.

More on Truffles

A truffling matter perhaps! In Europe truffles are a delicacy but I wouldn't fancy the ones found at Cyanide Dam recently. While searching the wet leaf litter for Koala scats and tiny plants a visitor spotted some tiny orange fungi emerging from the litter. On examination they were found to be truffles. Further searching turned up two species. They were duly dried and sent to truffle specialist Teresa Lebel at the Herbarium for identification. Unlike most fungi, truffle spores are not released onto the ground, instead they rely upon animals to eat them and spread the spores via their faeces. More on these when the ID is received

Around the Park

The recent trashing and burning of the bollards, signage and saplings at the Greenhill was a senseless act of vandalism. The signage has been replaced and the area cleaned up.

Sightings about the park include Swift Parrots, still enjoying the White Box blossom, Regent Honeyeaters trying hard to nest, a magnificent Square-tailed Kite hunting over Cyanide Dam causing panic among the little honeyeaters. Spotted Pardalotes appear plentiful again this season, Turquoise Parrots have been noticed searching for nest hollows and the Gang Gangs continue to leave their trademark wreckage below eucalypts they have fed in.

Coming events for Threatened Species and Communities Week

September 9: Chiltern NP 1.30-4-30pm Bird surveys for Regent Honeyeaters and Swift Parrots and Nest Boxes for Arboreal Mammals. Meet at the Tourist Park, Main Street, Chiltern

September 20 Fire Ecology of Box Ironbark Forests 1.30-3.30pm Meet corner of Lancashire Gap and Yackandandah Rds..

NEXT MEETING SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 1st MEET AT CHILTERN POST OFFICE

We will be mapping nest logs on Donchi Hill, having tea at Chiltern Valley No2 Dam followed by a spotlight walk.

BYO everything. A compass would be useful. Contact: Phillip Seely 0260 215 313

To give away: Back copies of the VNPA Magazine, Park Watch Contact 03 57 261 484

NOTE: THIS IS THE FINAL NEWSLETTER FOR UNFINANCIAL MEMBERS.

Category

1. Newsletters

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