



Newsletter 199 September 2011

Description

Dear Friends,

On a glorious spring day many friends and visitors had a superb day in the park with our guest Chris Tzaros, his wife Julie and delightful little son, Merlin, a budding birdo at almost three.



The morning walk on Greenhill Road failed to turn up the hoped for Regents and in fact was quiet compared to other mornings. After morning tea when we introduced Merlin to â??sticky bunâ?• we moved to Honeyeater Picnic area where we met the afternoon visitors and prepared for a lazy lunch.

However birds seemed to take a back seat as everyone, Chris included, marvelled at the stunning avenues of Varnish Wattle and drifts of Small-leaf Parrot Pea as we walked from Cyanide Dam along part of the White Box Walk track.



The cameras worked overtime on the flora some of which, notably the huge stands of purple Austral Indigo, was rather hard to photograph well.



People found all manner of interesting plants and fungi. Donkey Orchids,



Waxlips



and tiny Dusky Caladenias, were in full flower. Some pure white Hardenbergia twining around the black trunk of an Ironbark was the target of a few cameras.



This year's bounty of flowering will replenish the seed bank of peas and wattles. The delicately flowered Broom Bitter-pea was a mass of flower although not quite as showy as the parrot-pea. This spike-leafed pea is locally common but regionally rare. The large yellow Wedge-peas and Showy Parrot-peas are just beginning to flower and will provide continued colour for a few months along with the Heathy Bush-pea, still in bud, and myriads of Chocolate Lilies also still in bud. There will be a wonderful scent of chocolate when they flower as the weather warms up.

Later in the afternoon as we strolled down Cyanide Road Gary found a Bronze Cuckoo and as we watched there appeared a Speckled Warbler and a young streaky Yellow Robin then, to cap it off a close view of a beautiful male Rose Robin. Back at Honeyeater picnic spot a well earned afternoon tea was enjoyed after the two kilometre stroll which took a good two and a half hours! Yes, indeed, it was so interesting.

Not everyone came walking. David, an energetic member with a dislike of thistles took his shovel and waged war on them. Thanks David. Thirty-five members and guests gathered for dinner and a chat about the day's happenings after which Chris Tzaros gave his presentation. Chris talked about the plight of woodland birds, the continued habitat loss, efforts to make amends and the decline of certain species. The seasonal variations in the distribution of birds such as the Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater were illustrated with maps derived from many years of extensive data collection. These

high nectar seeking birds concentrate each year where the flowering is abundant. All records of woodland birds are very important and Chris urged us to report all sightings of threatened birds along with a list of other species associating with them. Neville thanked Chris for this informative and beautifully presented overview of the state of woodland birds.

Thank you to all members who contributed to the delicious evening meal. A curious event: While walking in west Albury Phillip noticed a Red Wattlebird attacking another one on the ground. As he approached he realised that the bird being attacked was dead! Another Wattlebird seemed to be overseeing the "fight". The pair flew off as he approached and on inspection he noted that the dead bird had been dead for some time. Wattlebirds are very aggressive but this was very strange behaviour indeed.

Around the park

Tuan Camp site enclosure has been sprayed for Capeweed ensuring that the majority of it will not flower. The recently discovered pea, *Templetonia stenophylla* is now in flower



and recently we came across another small population in the Donchi Hill block. Due to its sparse foliage and low growing habit it is almost impossible to find when not in flower. If anyone comes across more plants I would like to know. as it is uncommon throughout the state.

There are still a couple of Regent Honeyeaters around the Greenhill Dam area and perhaps the best chance of seeing them is when they come to the water. A lot of patience and repellant is required!

As the month progresses the selection of orchids will increase. There are some spectacular clusters of diuris to be found. Amongst the *Diuris pardina* and *Diuris chryseopsis* patches if you look carefully you can find a lovely hybrid form of the two. These three plants were on Donchi Hill



watermark



Recent interesting sightings: Painted Honeyeaters along Donchi Hill Rd near junction with Bull Ant Track western end. Square-tailed Kite over Peake's Track area. Swift Parrots in White Box and hybrid on Ballarat Road close to the junction with Cyanide Road.

Rutherglen Conservation Reserve

The recent nest box check produced Sugar and Squirrel Gliders and Tuan nursery nests. There were many young olives emerging and we need to plan an attack on them while they are still easy to deal with. The bird list for the morning totalled 24 species, the highlight being a small flock of White-backed Swallows flying quite low but very fast. Golden and Rufous Whistlers, Rufous Songlarks and Sitellas were among other interesting species.

Rainfall

August: 79.0 mm over 11 days. Yearly total to date: 682.2 mm over 70 days

NEXT MEETING : SUNDAY OCTOBER 2nd

Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 9.00am BYO lunch, binocs, chair. Morning activity will be nest box checking and in the afternoon an orchid walk with John Hawker. Contact in the field: Eileen 0407486480 or 0357261484 Coming events for Biodiversity Month see website. friendsofchiltern.org.au There are many events taking place in our area so be sure not to miss them.

Category

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