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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – February 2013

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaean.net>

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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. I hope that the New Year has started well for you all.

Over the last month we have seen a bit of variation in the temperature but not the rainfall. Temperatures have varied from warm to hot in short cycles, but there has been little rain. After a wet spring, summer has been very dry. At the end of spring, the plants and grasses were very green and lush. Over summer these have died back leaving a dry heavy ground cover. A number of plants which looked lush in spring have been sun burnt during summer.

In the Park there has been slashing on most of the tracks. These tracks are good to walk and most parts of the Park are now very accessible. Two tracks not slashed were Blue Gum Hill (a narrow track with difficult doglegs) and the Grand Strzelecki Track. To improve the Grand Strzelecki Track we will work on at our next activity. We will work on Blue Gum Hill track in some of the activities later in the year.

Over the last month I have had the opportunity to walk most of the tracks in the Billy's Creek part of the Park. In these walks I have seen much wildlife including these wombats. I have seen the evidence of wombats around the Park, but not seen them in the Park until now. If you get out early there is more wildlife around. I ended up seeing five wombats on three different occasions in different areas of the Park.



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January Activity Report - Nesting Box Survey

Sunday 20th January

At this month's activity we had Ken, Beryl, Brenda, Peter, John, Margaret, Darren, Tina and Craig. The group met in the car park to organize keys, find the paperwork from last month and then divide the group into working teams.

The group split with John and Peter completing nesting box repairs and the remainder completing the nesting box survey. John and Peter made a list of boxes to be repaired or replaced (those that had come off the tree) from last month.

The remainder of the group went in to where we finished the survey last month. Craig and Tina drove in with the ladder and pole mounted camera. The rest of the group enjoyed the walk in and spotted a koala and cub. The first job was to locate the boxes. Some we found were done last month and one was difficult to locate since it was in the undergrowth at the base of the tree. Some new bat boxes were located and added to the list.

The groups met up for an early lunch. Over lunch we gave John and Peter a new list of boxes located during the morning which needed to be repaired and refitted to trees. After lunch we completed the survey of the remaining five boxes. The inventory of the boxes indicated that two had not been accounted for, so part of the group went back to check these. Some of us also went to Clematis Track to remove a tree down across the track.

When all of the groups met up near the last nesting box to be surveyed, it was noticed that the koalas had remained.

Over the day we had located more possums and antechinus. Over the two months we had observed an increase in animal use of the boxes. More than double the number of animals were sighted this year in comparison to last year. Some of the newer boxes which had no animals last year, had animals using them this year. The totals are listed below.

It is interesting to note that in these nesting boxes made for birds and bats we have not sighted any birds or bats using them. These boxes have been used extensively by small mammals, which is good considering twenty years ago this area was cleared farm land.

Next month we will look through the Butterfly Orchid photos collected last year.



	Sugar Gliders	Agile Antechinus	Ringtail Possums
December 2012	29	2	2
January 2013	7	4	0
Total 2012/13	36	6	2
Total 2011/12	16	2	1

February Activity

Sunday 17th February

The group will meet at 10.00am at the Junction Road car park to start working upon the Grand Strzelecki Track to remove weeds and grass from the track and other weeds from the creek. The track is very overgrowth and currently not easy to use. The track needs to be slashed and there are many weeds to be removed from the creek. You will need to bring your lunch and suitable clothing for the weather conditions on the day. To get to the work site there a few creek crossings to make, so you may also need to consider suitable footwear.

