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# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## *Newsletter – July 2019*

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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. In mid-May we had the Victorian Nature Photography Group visit Morwell National Park and the section from their newsletter reporting about their experiences over the day have been included later in this newsletter. Their wonderful photos are included.

### John's Jottings

This snippet on the activities of the Friends of Morwell National Park was sourced from early Newsletter files.

"March 29, 1990

Hello,

By all accounts, the Yinnar South Country Fair was a rip-roaring success, with our volunteers being kept very busy at the DCF&L caravan. A good indication of the success of the day was the fact that the damper supply ran out by early afternoon. Thanks go to the following folks who helped out on the day: Stan Glowacki, Wendy Steenbergen, Gail Roache, Johanna Aziz and the Aplin mob. Special thanks go to Yvonne, who was on board virtually all day. About \$25 in donations was raised; this will go towards the purchase of feral animal traps for the park.

The rubbish clearing day was well attended by a very efficient work crew. A trailer was filled in about 10 minutes from between the two river crossings. As the local tip was closed, the rest of the time was spent exploring the tracks that Rob has been re-discovering and clearing around the Lodge site. One track goes in a loop behind the Lodge site; another follows the small creek nearby, tentatively known as Side Creek. Rob was disappointed to discover the impact of foxes in the area, however the discovery of Lyrebird scratchings on the day indicates the potential the area has for wildlife once it is rehabilitated.

Speaking of rehabilitation, our next meeting on April 15, at 1:30 p.m., has us planting trees on the old Lodge site. All those familiar with the site can appreciate that revegetating the site will go a long way towards improving the area. We are meeting at the end of Tebb's Tce. so care along with any tools that may be useful.

Finally, word has it that the park management plan is back on the rails, and should be released in the near future.

Hope to see you on the 15th.

Steve"



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Other members: Margaret Barker, Mike and Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Graeme Busch, Kerry Campbell, Joelle Champert, Chris Lange, Peter & Wendy McDonald, Rose Mildenhall, Denis Nagle, Grant Pengelly, Wayne Pengelly, Joan Sikkema, Wendy Steenbergen, Australian Plant Society (Latrobe Valley).

## June Activity Report

This month we had Matt, Ken, Tamara, Rose, Graeme and Darren for our June activity. We had apologies from Beryl, Mike, Cathy and Gordon.

Over the last month Matt had received a hedge trimmer and two helmets to replace equipment stolen from the shed. These items came from the Parks' insurance. We will need to get another pair of protective chaps since these were also stolen but we could not get these thru insurance.

The JSA was discussed for the day's activity. The first task for the day was to remove a tree which had come down across Fosters Gully Track. We all drove in to Lindon's Landing and carried the chainsaw and other gear into the work site. The short walk was accompanied by the songs of many competing lyrebirds.

Matt operated the chainsaw on the large tree which had fallen across the track. The cutting went well for a short while until the chain hit the dirt and grit within the tree. The cutting became more difficult and the chainsaw needed maintenance before we could continue using it. Sadly the file could not be found, so Matt went to collect a file and another chainsaw. While gone, Graeme showed his skills with an axe and wedges to remove more segments of the tree. The sharpened chainsaw was able to remove the remaining section of the tree.



Coming back the group removed another tree over the track above head height. Lunch was taken back at Lindon's Landing. It was great to see many groups of walkers out enjoying the sunny winter's day. The Stringybark part of the park has been reopened to the public so after lunch the group travelled around Stringybark Track removing fallen branches and one tree from across the track. In the fire affected areas there is little regrowth, but some small orchids and fungi are emerging.



For our August activity we will be joining with the Yinnar-Yinnar South Landcare Group to undertake a direct seeding trial on Blue Gum Hill. Over the weekend we will have two activities:

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August – 2.00pm** - Presentation by Bronwyn Teesdale about direct seeding as a planting method for revegetation projects at Yinnar ARC (Switchroom)

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> August – 9.30 start** – Direct seeding trial on Blue Gum Hill



## VICTORIAN NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Sunday 12 May 2019 - Morwell NP

The following are Notes were provided by Linda – with our thanks.

At the Foster's Gully carpark we were met by Matt Campbell president, Ken Harris founding member of the Friends of MNP as well as David Mules and David Stickney. It was great to be surrounded by so much local knowledge as we explored this very special bit of remnant forest in the foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges.

(Photo: Joan Broadberry)



Although all of us had seen koalas before, Matt pointed out a furball high in a roadside eucalypt and told us the story of these particular animals. They are part of a very small group of a true remnant population in Strzelecki area and have been found to be the most genetically diverse koalas in Australia. This population is healthy, disease free and males have weighed in at around 15 kg. The rest of the koalas currently in Victoria have been through a genetic bottleneck as they have apparently descended from as few as three individuals who had been transferred to French Island while most of the mainland koalas were destroyed by the fur trade. At present Morwell NP is an excellent location for spotting wild koalas.



Photo: Ken



One of the first fungal finds along the track was a small bright orange fungus which has only been found in this Park since about 2012. This we were told is the **Favolaschia calocera** or orange pore fungus which is believed to have originated in Madagascar and has now spread widely around the world. It is considered an invasive species but it has not yet been documented that it has replaced other fungi in Australia. As we continued along the track, I found myself frequently near Ken Harris who was stimulated to tell tales of plants and animals along the way. Ken was a co-founder of the friends group. I will relate just a few of his stories here.

Photos: Maria



*Lycoperdon pyriforme*

Bright green leaves pushing up through the ground beside dead and dying plants from last year were pointed out as the native elderberry *Sambucus gaudichaudiana*. Unlike elderberry panax *Polyscias sambucifolia* which is a small shrub also found in MNP, *S. gaudichaudiana* dies down totally over summer, only to emerge in autumn after rainfall.

This plant supports the full life cycle of the colourful metallic shield bug *Scutiphora pedicellata* and photos of this animal's eggs, instars and adults can be found on the Friends of Morwell NP website.

Also common in the early part of the track were young muttonwood trees *Myrsine howittiana*. Ken has observed that these shrubs which produce both male and female flowers each year only set seed becoming covered with masses of purple fleshy fruit about one year in five. In 2017 such a flush of fruit occurred attracting large numbers of satin bowerbirds as well as fruit bats, the first seen in this NP.

Healthy plants of Butterfly orchids were found along the Foster's Gully track where 5 plots have been monitored since 1986. These orchids grown on many indigenous shrubs and there was one particularly notable *Pittosporum undulatum* in a gully that had as many as 50 individual orchid plants growing on it until the year it was flattened by a falling eucalypt. When asked Ken stated that there has been a gradual decrease in the number of orchid plants over recent dry years. Those who would like to see the butterfly orchid in bloom must come to the Park in the last two weeks of November or the first two weeks in December.

A stop at Lyndon's clearing was a place to contemplate the people such as the Lyndon family who took steps to save this unique piece of forest for future generations. It was also pointed out as a place where in season up to 80 *Cordyceps* fungus have been found. Lastly it was a place where Matt found a range of interesting fungus for photographers.



Photo: Linda

Further along the track, it was a particular pleasure to find two species of Terrestrial orchids in flower. They were the tiny greenhood *Pterostylis parviflora* and the autumn bird orchid **Chiloglottis reflexa**. Matt kindly took some who missed seeing these in the morning back to the exact spot in the afternoon.

In the evening we had field reports where the following highlights were mentioned:

Jannie had found a double *Cordyceps* along the track but lost it before being able to show the group. Geoff, our fungal expert, explained that this fungus grows when a particular caterpillar swallows a spore and digs into the ground to pupate. The fungus then grows in the caterpillar killing it and the fruiting body of *Cordyceps* pushes out of the ground but the shape of the caterpillar remains underground.

Another member reported that Matt told of Powerful Owls that prey on lyrebirds in the Park. Ken's lyrebird tale was about the Pilot bird (which some members photographed on the weekend) was so named because of its close relationship to the lyrebirds. In the 1800s when birds were killed and feathers collected for hats and such, collectors used the pilot birds to lead them to the lyrebirds.

The bird list for the day included the following: Eastern spine bill, yellow tailed black cockatoo, grey shrike-thrush, Lewins and Crescent honeyeaters, white browed scrub wrens and a bright yellow robin to delight us at our picnic lunch.



Yellow robin Photo: Jim

### **July Activity**

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July 10.00am

The group will meet at the Junction Road car park to complete the nesting box survey. You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.