

PO Box 19
Churchill
3842



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – April 2022

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaeaan.net>
Official Address of FMNP - contactfmnp@gmail.com
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Welcome to this month's newsletter. This month we have our regular Activity Report and an update from Jay who wants help in identifying deer in and around the Park.

March Activity Report

For the regular activity we had Ken, Matt, Mike, Cathy, Graeme, Rose, Tamara, Gordon and Darren. Along with the regular members of our group we also had Cathy, John, Rachel and Sharon. We had apologies from Beryl and Anita.

We were greeted with a beautiful evening. In the picnic area Cathy was busily erecting a mothing sheet for later and far overhead there was a koala watching our activities.

Over the last few months Park staff have fixed the main gate (where a large tree fell and the gate post was lifted when the tree's root ball came out of the ground). The directional sign at the beginning of the Foster Gully Walk has also been replaced. A new sign has been erected on Junction Road at the Billy's Creek entry to the park.



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President: Gordon Duncan

Vice-President: Cathy Beamish

Secretary & Public Officer: Beryl Nelson

Treasurer: Mike Beamish

Publicity: Tamara Leitch

Newsletter Editor: Darren Hodgson, darren.hodgson@education.vic.gov.au

Other members: Eulalie Brewster, Graeme Busch, Matt & Kerry Campbell, Joelle Champert, Wendy Davies, Jay Duncan, Ken Harris, Hayley Mildenhall, Rose Mildenhall, Anjali Pal, Anita Pither, Grant Pengelly, Wayne Pengelly, Chris Sikkema, Joan Sikkema, David Stickney & Wendy Steenberg.

Dinner was enjoyed by all and it was a collection of cold meats, chicken and a variety of salads. Cathy had done a wonderful job of putting this all together and the cheese cake and chocolate cake (both homemade) were also greatly enjoyed.

After dinner we had a short meeting. Gordon reported that both the brush cutter and chainsaw are now repaired and ready for future use. Matt has looked into the charging of the pole mounted cameras and has decided that a battery pack for the existing cameras is the best option.

Matt left to set up a second mothing sheet on the main track between the carpark and the shed, while the rest of us socialized, (what an unusual concept!) awaiting nightfall.

When it was fully dark, Cathy, Ken and Matt started observing the early arrivals around the mothing sheets. The rest of the group went for a spotlight walk around Foster's Gully. It was a lovely calm evening for a night walk. There was a lot of animal movement both on ground and in the tree canopy.

On spotlight walk the group saw multiple friendly Swamp Wallabies, at least two Greater Gliders, Sugar Gliders, many ringtail possums, Bobucks (the Mountain Brushtail Possum), another Koala and an Owlet Nightjar. Many bird calls were heard. Since we were enjoying this walk most of group completed the full Foster's Gully circuit.

The walk finished at Matt's mothing sheet where a wide array of moths could be found. The group then drifted to Cathy's mothing sheet to find a different collection of moths, including a Dragonfly and a Butterfly (strange night-time visitors). It was a good night for moths, being a calm evening with no clouds. One new moth species (to the park) was found.



An update from Jay (from the Yinnar/Yinnar South Landcare Billy's Creek project):

As you are no doubt aware, feral deer are a big threat to our native bush.

Seems like deer numbers are now a problem even in Scotland. There, they have been re-wilding with wolves to try and limit deer numbers and restore balance!

Before it comes to wolves, and closer to home, our local Parks Vic ranger, Gabrielle Browne is currently collecting evidence of the presence of deer in and around the Morwell National Park.

Yinnar, Yinnar South Landcare group has been working on a revegetation project on Billy's Creek upstream from the Park, and deer are of great concern to us. This is because they browse our emerging plants and because there is intact forest on and adjacent to our re-veg site that the deer are currently damaging. Deer control inside the Park would help to manage the numbers of animals roaming up and down the creek valley and into adjacent farmland and forests. It would also be good for the National Park. Like proper scientists, they are calling for evidence to support any future action.

You may not have seen the deer themselves, but you may have evidence that they have been either in the National Park or on adjoining or close-by properties.

Attached are illustrations of the type of damage Sambar Deer do from Bil Peel: A Rainforest Restoration Manual for South Eastern Australia; and a photo of a wallow on private property close to the Park Boundary.

Destruction of vines in rainforest is typical of Sambar activity



Figure 8.107. Marl Island, Victoria. Sambar have wiped out all mature vines in this Littoral Rainforest remnant and this photograph represents the last record of them ever having been there (apart from the author's teenage memories of them)! Once the vine is on the ground, all of the foliage is browsed off and any regeneration from resprouts of the fallen vine or by seed is browsed until everything is dead.

What a gap in Warm Temperate Rainforest used to look like before Sambar got to it



Figure 8.108. Reedy Arm, Lake Tyers, Victoria. A rainforest gap covered in ferns and tree-ferns before Sambar arrive.



Evidence of deer can be seen when they have been:

- Making wallows.
- Pulling down vines and eating the leaves and any emergent re-growth.
- Browsing herbs, shrubs and trees.
- Rubbing their antlers on trees. (This can cause so much damage that the tree dies.)
- calling

There's a handy guide to deer species and tracks and scats here. Locally it's Sambar and Fallow deer that are the most common.

<https://www.feraldeeralert.com.au/identify>

Please send evidence of deer sightings and/or deer damage to: Gabrielle.Browne@parks.vic.gov.au

April Activity

Sunday 17th April 10am

The group will meet in the Kerry Road car park to complete track maintenance. You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.