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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – February 2024

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaeon.net>
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Welcome to this month's newsletter.

January Activity Report

For the first activity of the year, we had Ken, Gordon, Graeme, Tamara, Joelle, Jay, Mike B, Cathy, Caitlin, Beryl and Darren. We had apologies from Matt, Anita and Rose. Joining the group was Andy who was collecting photos to show the range of activities Field Naturalist are involved in.

The group met in the carpark and caught up upon any news from over the new year. Progress on the bird book continues, with the most recent meeting setting a range of deadlines. The group are continuing to apply for grants to fund the printing of the books. They want to collect photos of each of the different habitat types within the park for inclusion within the book.

Caitlin has organized snake bite first aid kits that can be used at each of our activities. So, for the day's activity we had three first aid kits available for use.

For the day's activity we were completing a survey of the nesting boxes along the Billy's Creek track. Graeme had collected the pole mounted camera and maps while Beryl had printed and collated the record sheets.

We started off with Mike and Beryl managing the camera, Darren locating the next boxes while Joelle recorded the findings. The first box contained a rare find with it containing three eggs. Only on one other occasion have we found eggs in the boxes. Jay completed some research which indicated that the eggs could be Common Myna.

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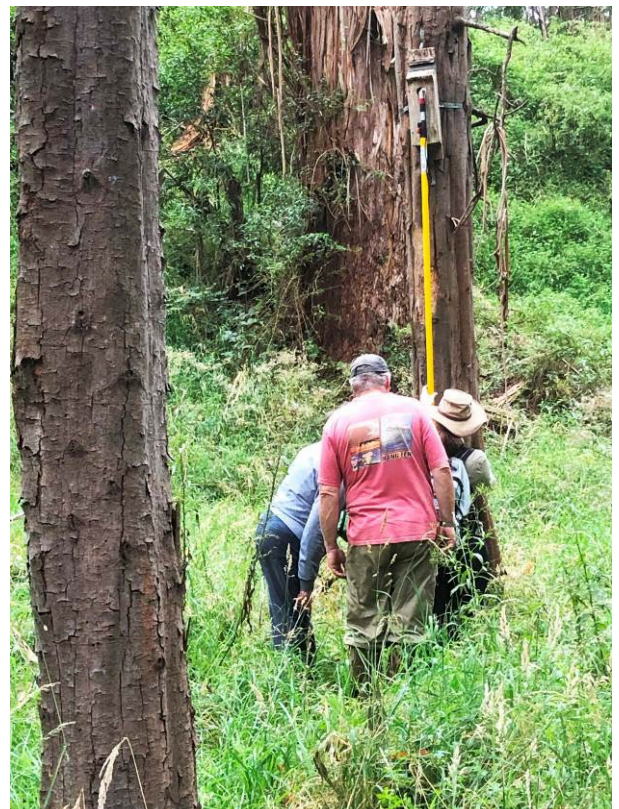
Other members: Melina Bath, Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Graeme Busch, Matt & Kerry Campbell, Joelle Champert, Wendy Davies, Gordon Duncan, Jay Duncan, Hayley Mildenhall, Rose Mildenhall, Anjali Pal, Anita Pither, Grant Pengelly, Wayne Pengelly, Chris Sikkema, Joan Sikkema, David Stickney, Wendy Steenbergen & Mike Williams.



While the boxes were being surveyed, others (mainly Graeme and Caitlin) were removing weeds. Many tutsan, ragwort, thistle, ivy, teasel and foxgloves were removed. With the healthy summer rains the weeds have been growing strongly throughout the park.

Throughout the morning the survey of the boxes continued until the survey team returned to the vehicles to find Graeme, Cathy, Ken and Gordon enjoying their lunches. Lunch was had and then some light drizzle fell. Fortunately, it stopped since the camera is very sensitive to moisture.

After lunch the group moved to the next section with Mike and Tamara handling the camera. A few of the boxes were not located and few other boxes were found on the ground. These boxes will be replaced in a future activity.



After completing the boxes at the base of the Butt Butt Track, the group needed to decide how to get to the Baniff Road boxes. With the bridge missing it was either a long walk around or short trip across the creek in the vehicles. While some walked back to the car park the remainder who could fit into the vehicles drove across the creek to complete the survey and remove many weeds. Graeme ended up with a car full of bagged weeds.

After the activity I was lucky enough to look thru the footage collected. When you can look more carefully at the footage, you are able to find a few more sugar gliders not observed when collecting since you don't what to distribute the gliders.

Over the day 57 sugar gliders and 3 eggs were found in the nesting boxes. In some of boxes adult and baby sugar gliders were found. This is first time that we have found baby gliders in the boxes. This a good healthy sugar glider population with this figure being the highest we have recorded in a few years.

Caitlin took some lovely photos of the wildlife she saw during the activity. Some of these are shown below:



Sacred Kingfisher (*Todiramphus sanctus*)



Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*)



Pied Currawong (*Strepera graculina*)



Ringed Xenica (*Geitoneura acantha*) with damaged wings

February Activity

Sunday 18th February 6.30pm

Spotlight walk and moth survey

The group will meet in the Kerry Road picnic area for a picnic dinner, spotlight walk and moth survey.

Please note the later starting time for this activity and there will be no morning activity. The evening will start with a BYO dinner. This will be followed by an evening walk and the setting up of moth sheets.

You will need to bring your own food and drink for the picnic (folding chairs would also be useful) and wear clothing and footwear suitable for the conditions on the evening. Torches and spotlights will also be useful for the evening walk.

If you want to come just for the activity, it will occur when it starts to get dark.

Anyone who is curious about the night life or insect life in Morwell National Park is welcome to join us for this activity.