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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – January 2016

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaean.net>
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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. This month we have a different voice with Matt being good enough to write up the December activity report and distribute the newsletter to you all.

John's Jottings

This month I am providing ongoing snippets lifted from the Morwell National Park Management Plan (1998) which I'm sure will make interesting reading for you too.

Management Plan continued from last month.....

“6.1 Friends and volunteers

Friends groups, volunteers and other interested groups and individuals make valuable contributions towards the protection, conservation, maintenance and development of parks, assisting in projects for which resources may be not available and which would not otherwise be achieved. Their assistance will be encouraged and supported.

Since 1986, the Morwell National Park Friends group has assisted with revegetation programs, weed removal, and flora and fauna surveys. The Friends group has been an invaluable source of knowledge and assistance for Park staff, for the Park and in the preparation of this Plan.

Aim

- Continue to encourage the Morwell National Park Friends group and encourage other volunteers to assist with park management activities.

6.2 Community awareness and the Park neighbours

Many of the adjacent residents were attracted by the area's natural environment, and value the Park. Encouraging sound management actions by Park neighbours will benefit the Park, as will increasing their awareness of their role as Park neighbours (section 7.2.2).

There are major opportunities for the community to become involved in management-related activities, particularly in the control of environmental weeds (section 4.2). Local schools could assist in collecting data, e.g. on water quality. There are also excellent opportunities for promotion of community awareness of the Park, its values, and management practices.”



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc: PO Box 19, Churchill, 3842, <http://morwellnp.pangaean.net>.

President: Matt Campbell

Vice-President: Ken Harris

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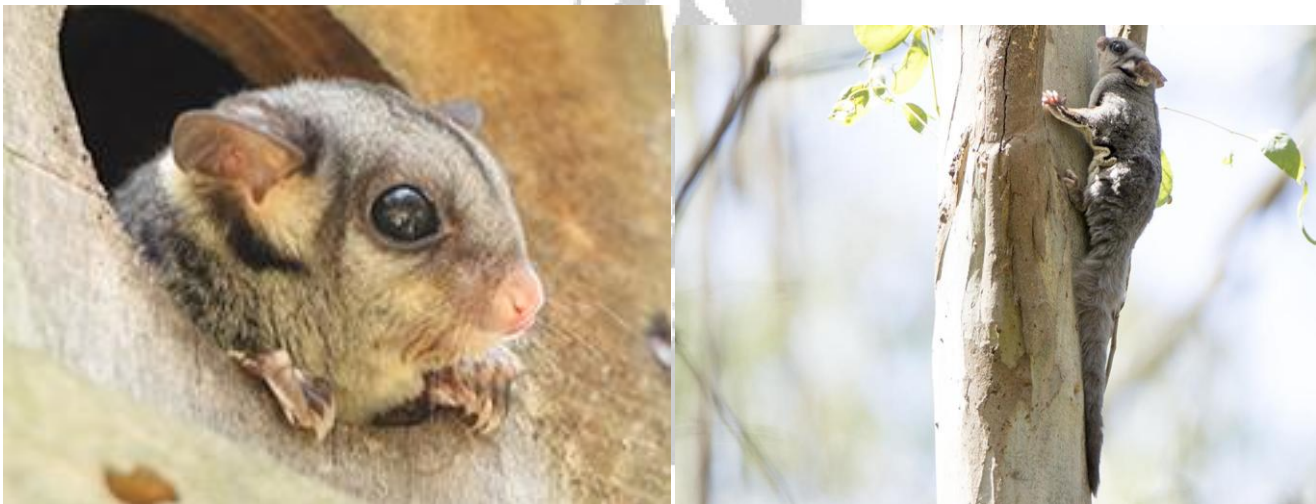
Other members: Mary Austin, Margaret Barker, Mike and Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Kerry Campbell, Brenda Chetham, Tamara Leitch, Wendy McDonald, Joan Sikkema, Neil Slater, Wendy Steenberg, Australian Plant Society (Latrobe Valley).

December Activity Report

For the December activity we had Ken, Peter, Mike and Matt. John also showed up early to give his apology and to make final arrangements for the BBQ to be held later in the day. Other apologies received from Tamara and Wendy S. Craig had informed us that he would not be able to attend due to the cutback of weekend work for Rangers. Wendy M, Margaret, Beryl and Cathy couldn't make the morning session but would meet us later up at Kerry Road.

The group met at Junction Road a bit earlier than usual in the hope that we could survey all of the nest boxes before the BBQ was due to start. The day was already warm at that time and was forecast to hit 40 which it exceeded by a couple of degrees) so it was decided to skip the usual car park meeting and get stuck right in. The first few boxes produced nothing more than leaf litter and cobwebs however it wasn't long before we started getting some Sugar Gliders on the camera.

What was noticeable on the day was that due to the warmer temperatures, the Gliders appeared more restless than usual and on several occasions we had them either looking out of the box as we approached or leaving the box altogether. One even scaled the full height of a rather tall Swamp Gum before gliding 15 to 20 m to a nearby tree.



We had quite a surprise at Box 50. The boxes not only allow arboreal animals to shelter and breed in re-vegetated areas but in turn allow the top end predators such as owls to move back into these areas and have a reliable food supply. However, animals such as owls aren't the only ones to take advantage and at Box 50 we found a Tiger Snake of around 1.2m in length tucked up among the bark a metre from the box. No doubt this snake knew what was available inside. Going on what we found it appeared the snake had already been inside the box and was waiting for its venom to take effect before returning for its meal.

All up we ended counting 43+ Sugar Gliders and a lone Agile Antechinus. Not as high as most recent surveys but still a good number. It may well have been higher except that we skipped 5 boxes due to at least one of the occupants leaving the box as we approached. We managed to wrap up the survey in 3.25 hours which then allowed us plenty of time to get prepared the end of year BBQ. Along with the box dwellers we encountered many other species during the day including those shown below, a beautiful Olive-backed Oriole and a Koala.



By 1pm everyone had gathered at the Kerry Road picnic area, including those that for various reasons could not attend the morning session. John did a wonderful job yet again as chief chef and nobody went home hungry! An impromptu meeting was held just as the first rain in some time began to fall. There wasn't a lot to discuss however the group voiced its disapproval to the proposed changes to grant applications that Parks Victoria has enforced. Grants are hard enough to obtain already without more bureaucracy and forms being forced upon us. A meeting will be requested with Parks Victoria in the near future. At around 3.45pm everyone started to pack up and head off home, having celebrated another successful and productive year.

January Activity

Sunday 17th January

The group will meet in the Junction Road car park and then travel to Reidy Road to undertake weed removal and track clearing. You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.

