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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – March 2026

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February Activity Report

For the activity we had Caitilin, Anita, Mike & Cathy, Ken, Matt, Beryl, Jay, Joelle, Graeme, Rose. We had apologies from Tamara, Peter, Olga, Gordon & Darren.

We met in the Kerry Road car park, and spent a fair bit of time chattering about what we all had been up to over the past month (Entomology Society visit [Ken], bat monitors and training sessions [Jay] and more on the 40th anniversary of the group [Caitilin]).

40th anniversary

The Budgerie Hall has been booked on Sunday 17 May for our 40th anniversary celebration and arrangements for catering are currently being sorted out. If you have any dietary preferences or requirements you'd like to take into consideration, please let Caitilin know. We have already requested vegetarian and gluten-free options. We are also working on a guest list for the event. If you know of anyone who has been involved in the Friends group or who has contributed to the care of the park over the past 40 years that you would like to invite, do let Caitilin know.

Volunteer Connections Event

Latrobe City is running their annual Volunteer Connections Event from 9am to 12pm on Saturday 23 May in the forecourt of Traralgon Library and Gippsland Performing Arts Centre. The event will be held during National Volunteer Week and will coincide with the monthly Traralgon Farmers Market. Anyone who thinks Friends of Morwell National Park should attend and/or is willing to staff the stall is invited to get in touch with Caitilin.

At the end of the newsletter is the report from Ken about the Entomological Society visit to the park in January.

For the day's activity the group split with one group travelling over to Stringybark Track while another group worked around Fosters Gully Track. Jay and Joelle left after the meeting, and Ken did not participate in the activity but stayed in the car park area.

Graeme, Rose and Caitilin conducted some much-needed maintenance at the top of Stringybark Ridge Track, finding it quite overgrown with Austral Bracken in some places. They cleared a few branches and other encroaching vegetation on Stringybark Ridge Track, West Boundary Track and the start of Muttonwood Creek Track, and attacked some thistle and blackberry along the way.

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Vice-President: Anita Pither

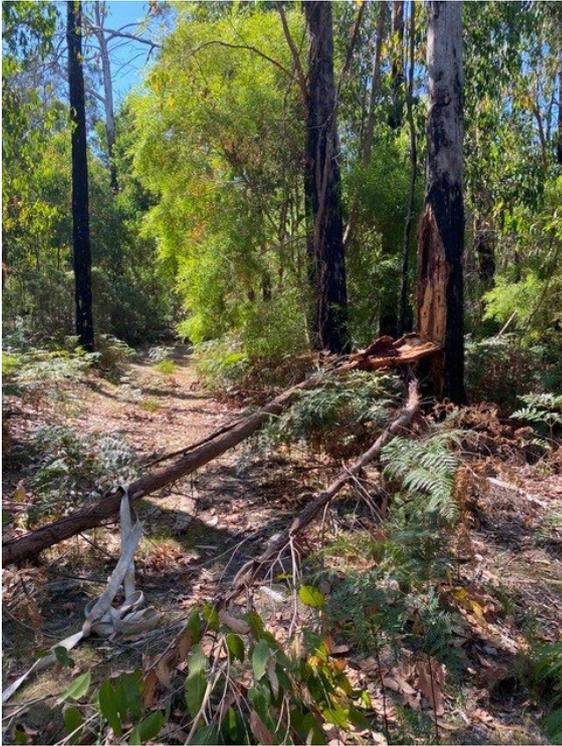
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Beryl, Cathy and Mike decided on a loop of Foster's Gully, clockwise instead of the usual anticlockwise. There was Koala scat on the road halfway up to the Ranger's Hut, so while we were gazing up into the trees, the Koala walked across the road behind us, unusual to see them on the ground during the day, though Beryl had seen a mother and joey wandering along Hazelwood Estate Road on the way over. I paused between the two hut access roads to take some photos of a nice Rose Hyacinth Orchid (*Dipodium roseum*) and then hurried to catch up with the ladies, putting my foot down next to a wary (flattened neck) Eastern Tiger Snake (*Notechis scutatus* subsp. *scutatus*) sunning himself beside the path. I managed not to completely brick and backed off a few paces, but the snake never flinched, not even after the ladies came back for a look and I sidled in again for the photos. Beryl reckons she must have walked past it within a few centimetres without seeing it, probably why it was flattened out when I got to it.

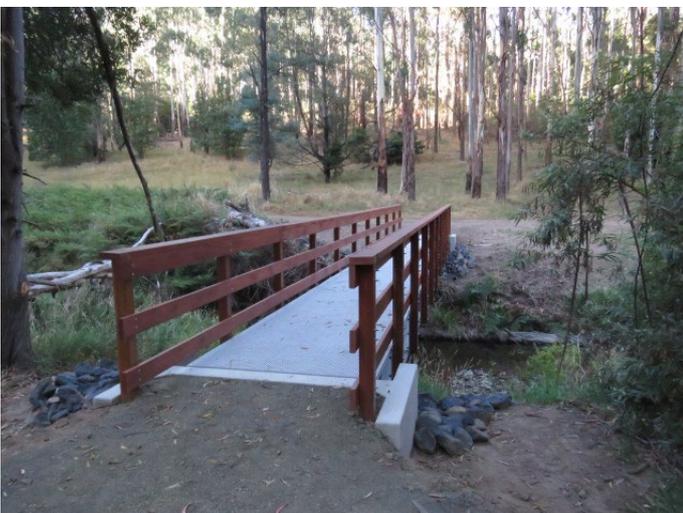




After my pulse had settled down a bit, we continued on our way. The track didn't need much attention, mainly a few ferns to knock back on the top section (and meeting Anita walking in the opposite direction) and again on the section just beyond Lyndon's Clearing. The occasional Daisybush or Currant Bush seedling needed pruning, a couple of overhangs too, but most of the work was throwing small dead branches off the track. There is daisybush also just past Lyndon's that is slowly toppling, but there is still plenty of clearance to get under it for the time being, although a chainsaw will be required for the 20cm trunk eventually. A Lyrebird was scratching around in the gully, but we didn't get good luck, just glimpses of movement through the ferns. A couple of the Butterfly Orchids, opposite the one that was stolen last year are sporting seed capsules, so hopefully there will be some recruitment in the future.

Back in the car park, all the Friend's vehicles, except Rose's, were gone. There was a MOP wandering about looking for the Carpark Koala (it was there, though we didn't see it earlier, about 5 trees back [100m?], but in plain sight). We had our lunch, no-one appeared, so we called it a day and headed home. Thanks go to Mike and Caitilin for writing about and taking photos from the day's activities.

In the week following the activity the work on the new bridges across Billys Creek was completed. This part of the park is now reopened for public use. Now the public can access Billys Weir without needing to enter the creek. Caitilin has taken photos of the new (and existing) bridges across Billys Creek.



New bridge linking Baniff Road track and Weir Track



New bridge (third on track) near Potato Flat



Existing bridge (second on track) with new rock beaching



New 4th bridge on track near Billy Weir

March Activity

Saturday 14th March 6.30pm

The group will meet in the Kerry Road car park to undertake BYO Picnic & Spotlight Walk & Moth survey.

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 of the evening. Torches and spotlights will also be useful for the evening walk.

If you want to come just for the spotlight walk or moth survey, these activities will occur when it starts to get dark.

Anyone who is curious about the nightlife or insect life in Morwell National Park is welcome to join us for these activities.

Note: This is a Saturday night activity rather than our normal Sunday morning activity.

Entomological Society of Victoria visit 24/1/2026 by Ken Harris

On Saturday 24th January 2026 a small group of Entomological Society of Victoria members visited Morwell National Park. There were about 8 present including 3 of our members - Gordon Duncan, Matt Campbell and myself (Ken Harris).

We met at Fosters Gully Cap Park at 3.00 pm and all but I went for a walk, some round Fosters Gully and some on Stringybark Ridge, mainly finding what insects they could. At 7.00 pm we ate together and two mothing sheets and lights were set up. Matt set a sheet up at his adjacent property, but his findings are not recorded here.

It was a very hot day and there was not a lot of wind, so it was a good night for attracting insects to the sheets.

Between the walks and the light sheets a total of 185 species of Arthropods were recorded, mostly insects, but including a few spiders.

My own special interest, the Lacewings, was disappointing for me as I didn't see one, but David Aker's sheet (which I only visited briefly attracted 4 species including the Blue Eyes Lacewing (*Nymphes myrmeleonoides*) and in the same family a Lacewing that is new to the park *Osmylops sejunctus*.



Figure 2 *Nymphes myrmeleonoides*



Figure 2 *Osmylops sejunctus*

Matt's sheet (not in the park attracted 10 Lacewing species, including one that I have never seen! It seems I spent the evening at the wrong sheet!

We have already recorded 815 species in the park, nevertheless we added at least 3 extra species. Including the beautiful *Eucyclodes buprestaria*:

Beetles seemed to predominate and some 36 species were recorded, including at least 4 species were new to the park and maybe more as others get identified.

Family	Species
Cupedidae	<i>Adinolepis youanga</i>
Elateridae	<i>Rangsia macleaya</i>
Lucanidae	<i>Safrina jugularis</i>
Passalidae	<i>Pharochilus rugiceps</i>

Two spectacular Scarab beetles were not new but good to see: The Queen Beetle *Anoplognathus viriditarsis* and the Cowboy Beetle *Chondropyga gulosa*.



Figure 3 *Eucyclodes buprestaria*



Figure 5 *Anoplognathus viriditarsis*



Figure 5 *Chondropyga gulosa*

the four new species so far are



Figure 7 *Adinolepis youanga*



Figure 7 *Rangsia macleayi*

A lot of small insects were photographed but many have not yet been identified. These were mostly bugs (Hemiptera) and Flies (Diptera). Two new species for the park, both Aphalaridae, are *Creiis lituratus* and *Spondylaspis plicatuloides*. One more bug, already known from the park, was identified as the species *Epiona kirejtshuki* in the Achilidae (previously just to Genus).



Figure 9 *Safrina jugularis*



Figure 9 *Pharochilus rugiceps*



Figure 12 *Creiis lituratus*



Figure 12 *Spondylia sp. plicatuloides*



Figure 12 *Epiona kirejtshuki*

One large insect rather like a lacewing is a Dobson Fly *Archichauliodes guttiferus* (Megaloptera). Several were on the sheets all night, but it took me 2.25 hours to get a picture with the wings spread. Several species of flies were present, at least 7 species. These included two species of Crane fly and the Black Pasture Fly *Hydrellia tritici* (Ephydriidae). The latter was far the commonest species present, David's sheet had tens of thousands covering the sheet (see Figure 1) and surrounding it in clouds (that kept me away after one short visit. Tiny flies are associated with pasture. David's sheet was set on mowed grass. Gordon's sheet, only 100 metres away, was in the car park and had very few of these flies.



Figure 14 Archichauliodes guttiferus



Figure 14 Hydrellia tritici

I wish to thank the following for the use of their photos:

5 David Akers

5 John Eichler

2 Sam Drivanto

1 Matt Campbell

1 Ken Harris