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# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## *Newsletter – May 2026*

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### April Activity Report

For the activity we had Caitilin, Mike & Cathy, Ken, Matt, Beryl, Graeme, Tamara, Peter, Gordon, Sharon, Rachel, Wendy & Darren. We had apologies from Anita, Jay and Joelle. The group was also joined by ten community members interested in the bird walk and Rangers Mark and Mark.

Latrobe Library had recently been promoting citizen science and birdwatching along with the day's Bird Walk. Morwell Library has had a display that included bird identification resources along with photos of birds from Morwell National Park. A complimentary copy of the Birds of Morwell National Park was given to some of the younger walkers.

The group split over multiple bird walks and another group of Graeme, Peter, Ken, Darren and the two rangers that travelled to Billy's Creek to undertake track clearing on Blue Gum Hill track.

Tamara and Matt led two of the Bird Walks and each have reported upon their walk. Firstly, Tamara's walk.

A cool, sunny autumn morning with barely a breath of wind made ideal conditions for our bird walk around the Fosters Gully circuit. Cathy, Mike, Beryl and Tamara guided an enthusiastic local family along the track, stopping often to admire the tall forest, including one impressive tree with a hollow trunk large enough for small children to step inside.

As we walked, conversation ranged from binocular brands to the documentary *The Listers*, and to how bird diversity shifts with habitat and season, especially when comparing the foothill forest here with the cool temperate rainforest of Tarra Bulga National Park.

Many of the smaller birds were heard but not seen despite our best efforts, including Brown Thornbills,

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Brown Gerygones, Rose Robins, Crescent Honeyeaters, Bassian Thrushes and Grey Shrike thrushes. Lyrebirds also called from the gullies but remained hidden. Even so, the walk offered plenty of highlights. A Sulphur Crested Cockatoo was seen disappearing into a hollow in a Mountain Grey Gum, and two Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos perched high in a tree, one making the distinctive begging calls of a young bird. We had good views of a male Golden Whistler, and a usually secretive Eastern Whipbird perched low beside the track. Crimson Rosellas fed quietly in shrubs, King Parrots screeched as they flew overhead, and a Wedge Tailed Eagle soared high above the canopy. Pishing coaxed in both a Grey Fantail and an Eastern Yellow Robin.

A range of different fungi were beginning to emerge along the track, adding splashes of colour to the forest floor. Near the edge of Lyndons Clearing, Tamara found an intriguing black larva with orange tipped spines; a quick iNaturalist search suggests it may belong to a Net winged Beetle (Lycidae).

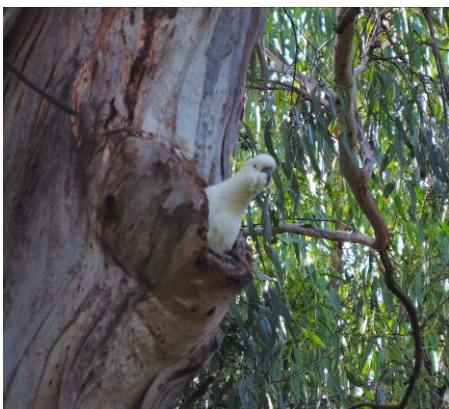


At Lyndons Clearing, we also spotted a koala resting high in a tree. The family turned back here for a nappy change break while the rest of the group continued around the circuit. As we left the clearing, a Lewin’s Honeyeater briefly flew in to investigate. Mike, moving slowly along the ridge, was rewarded with flowering Autumn Bird Orchids and a Tiny Greenhood, while the rest of us saw only leaves.

During lunch we added several more species to the day’s list: White throated Treecreeper, Superb Fairy wren, Pied Currawong and Australian Raven. Some members reported hearing Australian Shelducks in Fosters Gully earlier in the morning, but our group (starting around 10:30 am) neither saw nor heard them. The group walking Stringybark Ridge later saw Shelducks near the dams on West Boundary, along with a Scarlet Robin.

It was a relaxed and enjoyable outing, full of good company, lively discussion, and a satisfying mix of birds, plants, fungi and unexpected discoveries – everything that makes an autumn walk in our local bush so rewarding.

Mike and Cathy also collected a number of photos of birds, fungi, plants and flowers they saw on the Foster’s Gully walk. Some of these photos follow:



Cockatoo



Butterfly Orchid *Sarcocilus australis* with pod



Rooting Shank *Oudemansiella gigaspora*



Graceful Parasol *Macrolepiota clelandii*



Ruby Bonnet *Cruentomycena viscidocruenta*



Orange Pore Fungus *Favolaschia claudopus*



Wine Glass Fungus *Podoscypha petalodes*



*Mycena vinacea*



*Calocera* sp.



Now for the events on Matt's Bird Walk:

After our meeting, 5 of us headed off towards the Stringybark Ridge and West Boundary Tracks. Earlier in the day we'd had a lot of bird activity while Gordon, Caitilin and myself had cleared some small trees from Fosters Gully, including Gang-gangs, Sulphur-crested and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, along with King Parrots and Crimson Rosellas. Several Lyrebirds could be heard, and we also saw quite a few small birds such as Brown Thornbills, Grey Fantails and several different Honeyeaters. Mountain Ducks also seemed to be everywhere and were constantly flying overhead and calling. However, by the time the walks commenced, activity had really dropped off. We weren't seeing the numbers, but we did manage to see and photograph quite a few, including Lewin's, New-Holland, Crescent and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Brown Thornbills, Grey Fantails, Superb Fairy Wrens, White-throated Treecreepers, Bassian Thrush, Golden Whistlers plus the aforementioned Parrot species. We surprisingly had a Blue-winged Parrot fly across in front of us. This is around the time that they'd normally have left the area, so it was a nice addition. Also, while walking West Boundary, we could see

in the adjacent farmland Magpies, Wood, Black and Mountain Ducks, Hoary-headed Grebe, Australasian Coot, Australasian Swamphen and Masked Lapwing. One very obliging male Scarlet Robin sat on the farm fence, allowing us all a really good look. Raptors were oddly absent although we did see one Wedge-tailed Eagle high overhead when we returned. A bird that is normally quite abundant, the Yellow Robin, was also strangely nowhere to be seen but as I walked back home after the event, I came across half a dozen! Along with the birds, we found quite a few Skinks out basking (3 species) and a lot of fungi.



Bassian Thrush

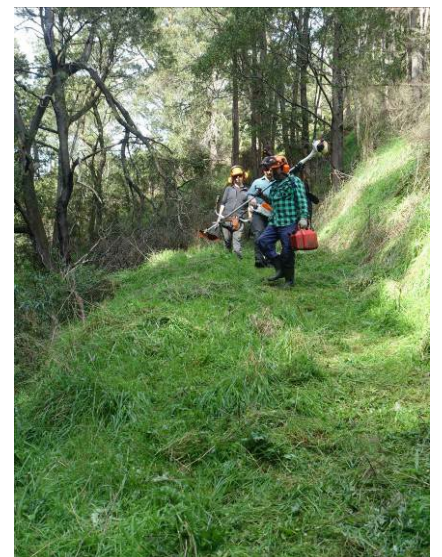


Lewin's Honeyeater

Thanks to Tamara and Matt for the reports on their walks. Following at the end of the newsletter is a report from Ken about the recent March moth activity.

The other group who went to work on the Blue Gum Hill track were met by David from the Friends of Baw Baw NP group in the Junction Road car park. The group drove to the base of Blue Gum Hill and organized the equipment while Ken started walking up the track. With chainsaws, brush cutters, hedge trimmers and fuel in hand the group followed Ken up the track. Parks rangers had previously cut and removed trees across the tracks on Zig Zag Track and at the beginning of Blue Gum Hill, so the group crossed the side creek and started clearing the main track.

A number of trees were across the track, so these were removed by ranger Mark while the track was cleared of other obstacles and slashed. Many ragworts and some inkweeds were also removed. Progress at the start of the track was slow with many weeds, rocks and trees to remove but as we moved out of the valley our speed increased.



After the sunny track that zag zags up the ridge we entered the tree line again. About three quarters of the way to the top of Blue Gum Hill, a massive tree has come down across two arcs of the track. Much work was done to remove the crown of the tree from the track, but the base (at least 2m across) remains across the track. So, access to top of Blue Gum currently blocked via the main track.

Ken was keen to continue on to the top, but it was time to stop for a late lunch, so the group gathered all of the gear and returned back via the main track to Billy's Weir to have lunch. Ken, after travelling all the way up, started the slow trip down the hill. It was likened to walking on a carpet compared to how the track was on the way up.

While eating lunch at the weir, there were two very friendly European Wasps buzzing around us. They were way too friendly. After the late lunch the group called it a day. Peter drove Ken out while Graeme and David trekked up the Blue Gum Spur Track to see what obstacles were on that, with the intension of surveying what obstacles remain at the top of Blue Gum Hill main track.

### May Activity

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May

## *Friends of Morwell National Park 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

12pm-4pm

Budgeree Hall

40 Roys Road, Budgeree

Finger food and drinks will be available.

## Light-trapping inn Kerry Rd. Car Park 14/3/2026 by Ken Harris

In parallel with the spotlight walk for our March Activity, three light sheets were set up in the Kerry Rd. Car Park by Matt Campbell, Gordon Duncan and Cathy and Mike Beamish.

Conditions were quite good and 151 different species were photographed during the evening. These can all be viewed on iNaturalist at:

[https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?on=2026-03-14&project\\_id=morwell-national-park&subview=table&verifiable=any](https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?on=2026-03-14&project_id=morwell-national-park&subview=table&verifiable=any)

We have been light-trapping insects in the park since 2009 and have recorded an amazing number of species. We have recorded 1581 species of invertebrates in the park, including 829 different species of moths. Finding additional species would seem likely to be uncommon now, but that night we found yet another 5 moth species not previously known in the park:

Species	Family
<i>Austroterpna paratorna</i>	Geometridae
<i>Ctenomeristis almella</i>	Pyralidae
<i>Oligeria hemicalla</i>	Lymntriidae
<i>Paonidia anthracias</i>	Erebidae
<i>Tymbophora peltastis</i>	Xyloryctidae



Figure 1 *Oligeria hemicalla*  
Photo: Matt Campbell



Figure 3 *Ctenomeristis almella*  
Photo: Mike Beamish



Figure 2 *Austroterpna paratorna*  
Photo: Matt Campbell



Figure 4 *Tymbophora peltastis*  
Photo: Matt Campbell



Figure 5 *Paonidia anthracias*  
Photo: Mike Beamish

Not only that, but an additional 7 species of moth, not yet fully identified are also probably new for the park:

Species	Family
<i>Chezala sp.?</i>	Oecophoridae
<i>Elachistidae sp.</i>	Elachistidae
<i>Garrha sp.</i>	Oecophoridae
<i>Lecithocera terrigena</i>	Lecithoceridae
<i>Lepidoscias sp.</i>	Psychidae
<i>Neumichtis nigerrima</i>	Noctuidae
<i>Oenochroa sp.</i>	Oecophoridae



Figure 7 *Elachistidae* sp.  
Photo: Mike Beamish



Figure 6 *Chezala* sp.  
Photo: Gordon Duncan



Figure 12 *Lepidoscias* sp.  
Photo: Mike Beamish



Figure 11 *Lecithocera terrigena*  
Photo: Matt Campbell



Figure 10 *Garrha* sp.  
Photo: Gordon Duncan



Figure 9 *Oenochroa* sp. Photo: Mike Beamish



Figure 8 *Neumichtis nigerrima*  
Photo: Matt Campbell

Moths were very much in the majority, but other insects were also present:

Order	No. of Species
Coleoptera (Beetles)	10
Diptera (Flies)	8
Hemiptera (Bugs)	8
Hymenoptera (Wasps etc)	6
Blattodea (Cockroaches)	2
Orthoptera (Grasshoppers)	1

In addition, one of the cockroaches, an *Austropolyphaga* species, was another new species for the park. It also represented a cockroach family, the Nocticolidae, known as Cave Cockroaches. It was the smallest cockroach that I have seen, and I was pleased to photograph a species new to me, although Matt's picture (below) was much better than mine.



Figure 13 *Austropolyphaga* sp.  
Photo: Matt Campbell

The Lacewings (Neuroptera) my own particular interest were unfortunately missing that night.

Altogether a successful evening lightrapping in Morwell National Park and adding a surprising number of species to our knowledge of the fauna of the park.