



FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

Newsletter No. 347 - March 2025

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March Field Day – Liz Maertin (Secretary)

Despite being hot and dry on our March Field Day, the 11 Friends members, 3 Chiltern Landcare members and 2 Parks Victoria (PV) Rangers enjoyed a very interesting morning at Bartley's Block near Chiltern.

In anticipation of the heat (35 degrees predicted top that day) activities were limited to a couple of hours before morning tea.

The 8 Turquoise Parrot nest boxes on the site were located and their condition and occupancy checked. All were in good condition, but none revealed signs of recent use. This was not a total surprise as records indicate only one box in that area has shown signs of being used in the past.

Friends' member John Hawker was able to provide some interesting facts about the history of the Turq. Parrot. Their numbers declined steeply to the point it was thought to be extinct in the 1920s, but by the 1960s the population in Victoria had steadily increased, and as recently as early 2000s was still thought to be rising. With the help of experienced Friends' members (particular thanks to Jenny Davidson for her knowledge and trusty Weed Guide), those of us with limited knowledge were assisted to locate and identify several weeds on the block: Caper Spurge; Horehound; Vinca; Tree of Heaven (Ailanthus); Phalaris and Blackberry.

PV Rangers, Brad and Scott, talked about the benefit of Friends carrying out weed identification and mapping as it is hoped a PV database will be available for Friends to upload information in the future. With the appropriate planning, PV approval and safety systems in place, Friends will continue to carry out the removal, cutting and pasting of various weeds in many areas of the Park during Field Days.

Many thanks to everyone who attended and special thanks to our PV Rangers who were able to answer a variety of questions from the group.





Photos: Liz Maertin

Note from our Secretary (Liz Maertin)

New rules for earlier start time on some Field Days:

At our last committee meeting the question was raised how to manage Field Days when the temperature soars.

It was agreed that for a trial period of 12 months the following will apply:

- For the February Field Day (held on the first Sunday in February) our meeting/start time will be 8 am
- On any other Field Days when the top temperature for that day is forecast on the BOM app/website to be 35 degrees or above, our meeting/start time will be 8 am.

On all other Field Days our meeting/start time will be 9 am.

Upcoming Events and Training

Ovens Landcare Network (OLN) events:

Breakfast with Birds - Sunday 13th April 8-9 am - Chiltern No. 1 Dam. This activity is associated with the Off-Grid Living Festival.

Join the Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park for Breakfast with the Birds. Enjoy a light breakfast and hot drink as local experts guide you on a walk and learn about the amazing birds that can be found in the Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park. This is a short bush walk, please wear sensible clothes and shoes. If you have a pair of binoculars remember to bring them along. Ticket holders will be sent meeting site details, please contact Kerrie Warburton on 0418 427 730 or email landcare.kerrie@gmail.com if you have any questions. Cost \$10, all profits to go to Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park.

Booking essential - <https://events.humanitix.com/breakfast-with-the-birds-off-grid-living-festival>

Ranger's Report – Brian Pritchard

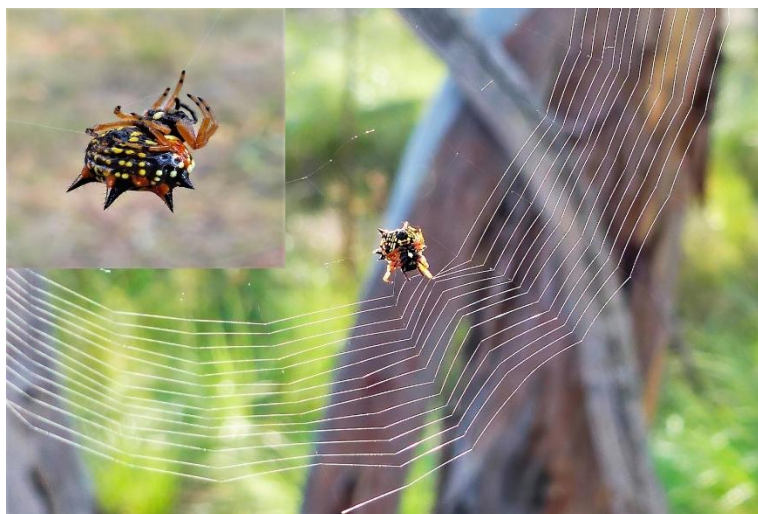
Contractors have completed works to reopen five informal tracks and provide access to camping sites along Reedy Creek. Tenders are being sought again for the repairs to Yeddonba as previous request received no applicants. There is still no firm date on when repairs may be completed

Planned burning is underway with burns listed near Barambogio in Chiltern Mt Pilot NP as well others in Beechworth HP and Baranduda Regional Park. Information on FFM burns can be found at <https://plannedburns.ffm.vic.gov.au/search-results/>

Brad will be undertaking a secondment to Mt Buffalo until the end of June and with internal reviews being undertaken the ranger position at Beechworth will likely remain vacant for the time being.

Unfortunately, a Powerful Owl has been found dead on a road in the park. it has been forwarded to Museums Victoria who are undertaking genomic tests on this rare bird. Recent surveys have also confirmed the reported presence of a pair of Barking Owls in the park.

Spiny Orb-weaver – *Austracantha minax* (Gasteracanthinae) – March image in the 2025 calendar



Spiny Orb-weaver – *Austracantha minax* (Gasteracanthinae). Photos: Neil Blair

Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austracantha>

An excellent description of this species, its habitat, ecology and behaviour.

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Rainfall: February 2025: 34 mm. Total year-to-date 2025 to the end of February: 54 mm. The corresponding total up to the end of February 2024 was 112 mm. The average rainfall till the end of February is 85 mm.

The average annual rainfall for Chiltern is 689 mm.

Data supplied by Mick Webster.

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NEXT MEETING – SUNDAY 6th APRIL 2025

Our Planned Activities for Sunday 6th April are:

Poisoning large Ailanthus, Tree of Heaven.

Removing small Ailanthus with mattocks or spades

Poisoning and/or removing other woody weeds we find in the Pine Rd area.

Where: meet outside the Chiltern Post Office

When : 9 am, Sunday April 6th

What to bring: water, hat, sturdy shoes, sunscreen, mattock or spade, handsaw; pruners.

PPE: for handling Ailanthus you will need to bring rubber gloves, wear long sleeves and trousers, and bring eye protection as the sap is an irritant

We will have at least 2 people on site with Chemical Handling (ACUP) qualifications as we will be using Glyphosate.

"Friends" will provide the Glyphosate; paint brushes and containers; and face masks.

We will break for morning tea so bring something to drink, and a chair or rug to sit on. "Friends" will provide something to share for morning tea.

Please use the link below to register for this activity on ParkConnect.

The link takes you to an "Activity Details" page. If you scroll down this page and click on the box "Register with ParkConnect" it will take you to a page where:

1) you can 'sign in' if you have previously joined ParkConnect

OR

2) you can 'register' to join ParkConnect.

<https://www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au/Volunteer/public-planned-activity/?id=d3c0415b-5c04-f011-a4dd-6045bdc39700>

If you have any questions about the activities for April 6th, or about signing in or registering on ParkConnect please don't hesitate to contact me (Liz Maertín)

NOTE: Daylight Savings ends 3am on Sunday 6th April.

Clocks should be turned BACK x1 hour

Our start/meeting time for the April Field Day is Sunday 6th, 9am

Remember to turn your clocks back, otherwise you will be x1 hour late.

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Field day dates for the remainder of 2025 and 2026

For 2025: Saturday 3rd May, Sunday 1st June, Saturday 5th July, Sunday 3rd August, Saturday 6th September, Sunday 5th October, Saturday 1st November and Sunday 7th December 2025.

For 2026: Sunday 1st February, Saturday 7th March, Sunday 5th April, Saturday 2nd May, Sunday 7th June, Saturday 4th July, Sunday 2nd August, Saturday 5th September, Sunday 4th October, Saturday 7th November and Sunday 6th December 2025.

Rule of Thumb: For even months, the field day is held on the first Sunday of the month and for odd months, it is held on the first Saturday of the month.

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