



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter June

2008

Previous Sunday Meeting May 18th

The new section of the Nature Trail is gradually becoming better-known and showing signs of more and more frequent use, even by a horse. Malcolm regularly tops up the pamphlets in their box. The path itself is more obvious, and the near-by weeds are being rolled back. The plant list grew by one, as two little Gazanias were documented before removal.

How nice to have local resident and daily walker Linda drop out of the blue, and prove her aptitude with the mattock. ☼

Future programme

Next meeting, Sunday June 15th

- GAN/Chauvel for clearing of exotic growth and plant ID
- 1.30 p.m. to 4 p.m.
meet at the Kathner St entrance or GAN/Chauvel
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet ☼

People

Bess was last heard from visiting England, no doubt as usual for the last time.

Sheila, our link with the Sydney walkers who came in April, spent the Friday morning at the end of their tour weeding along side us in the Fence Post Hill enclosure. It was instructive to see how the Sydney pros go about things, and she was left in no doubts about her welcome next time.

Arminel and Pat are still in the Never-Never.

Reet's heading for Estonia.

No sooner does Gösta touch down on the last of four continents than Tammy prepares to leave for Scotland for a couple of months. She recognises that verbasum will be waiting for her when she returns to her patch beside the northern Arawang Summit Track.

Alan is revisiting the desert flora.

Tobias has taken out membership as our birder. He frequents the Ridge with his photographic equipment and skills, as well as telling us *What's around*. Welcome!

So who's left for the next work party? Luckily Doug is home from NZ. ☼

Census of the Vascular Plants of the ACT

Here is Part 2 – from Brendan Lepschi's detailed response to our worries. See our April newsletter for Part 1.

"As the Census co-ordinator, I am keen to speak to local botanists and for them to contact me regarding any Census issues. We are always happy to offer advice or identification services, and to hear of potential new additions, changes in status (i.e. collections of plants treated as 'formerly' or 'doubtfully' naturalised, etc), receive specimens and be advised of any errors or problems with the Census. We try to be as accurate and up to date as possible, but perfection is (as always) completely bloody elusive.

Contact details:

Brendan Lepschi, Curator, Australian National Herbarium;
Brendan.Lepschi@csiro.au; (02) 6246 5167

I would encourage people to contact me for any ACT Census matters.

Interested local botanists wishing to keep up to date with changes to the ACT Census should keep an eye on the website. The Census will be uploaded every six months, regardless of the number of changes or alterations. At this stage, I already have an additional 27 taxa not listed on the current version, and a further 40 taxa have had taxonomic or nomenclatural changes, another 40 have had changes to their occurrence status and four have been deleted for various reasons. These (and doubtless other changes) will all be included in the next update. I intend to itemise these changes individually so people can see what has been added, removed, changed, etc, and (where relevant) why those changes have occurred. We have nominated a six-monthly update system to save on endless changes dribbling through and potentially becoming lost. This is the system adopted by the Victorian Census as well, and seems to work well."

Census now available at: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/cpbr/ACT-census/index.html> ☼

Weed management guides

The latest weed management guide is now available on the Weeds CRC website. There are 20 Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) presented. This is followed by the Alert List for Environmental Weeds, comprising 28 non-native plants that threaten biodiversity.

www.weeds.crc.org.au/publications/weed_man_guides.html

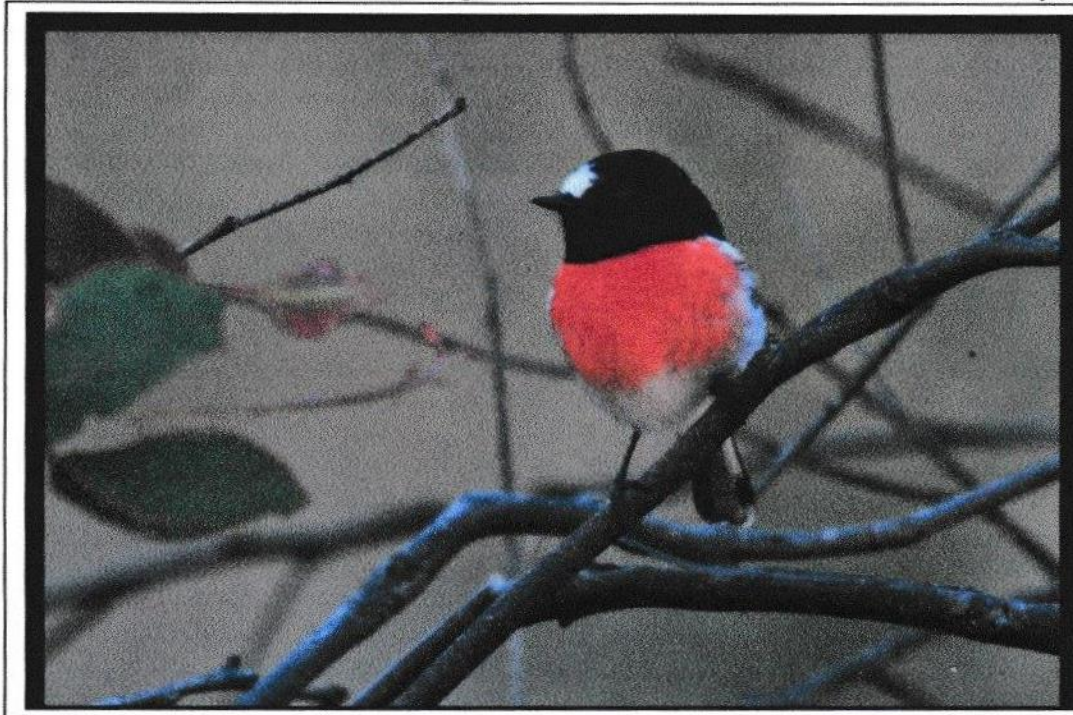
The Molonglo Catchment Weed Information Pack is also available:
www.molonglocatchment.com.au

Although Cooleman Ridge is actually just outside this catchment area our problems are pretty similar. ☼

What's around

Scarlet Robin (male), Cooleman Ridge

Photo: Tobias Hayashi



Birdlife

Thanks to Tobias for this note:

"During autumn, a number of different types of birds come to stay at Cooleman Ridge. The summer species have departed in April (e.g. cuckoos, friarbirds, orioles, woodswallows etc) but a number of other species fill the gap.

This time of the year is particularly good for robins. Pairs of Scarlet Robins can be found quite easily in the lightly wooded areas, while flocks of Flame Robins are often present in the open grasslands. The males of both species have bright red breasts (the Flame is lighter red), but the females are much browner. Scarlet and Flame Robins are altitudinal migrants which breed in the ranges and winter at lower altitudes.

You will often notice groups of birds feeding, especially mixed feeding flocks containing Yellow-rumped and Buff-rumped Thornbills, Weebills, Grey Fantails and Scarlet Robins. This is typical of winter (as opposed to summer when the birds breed separately).

Some honeyeaters come in the area during winter as well, most notably the White-eared Honeyeater. This bird is dark olive to black with a distinctive white 'ear' patch and a 'chopping' call. Golden Whistlers may still be moving through the area, although a lot will have left". ☼

Which assets?

Over a year ago corridor meetings at Stromlo Forest Headquarters were held to present maps showing proposed asset protection activities along the urban/nature park interface that were designed to ensure uniform fire management standards across the ACT. "To achieve this objective it is planned to remove rock, stumps and native vegetation, including regrowth and level uneven ground." At the last work party we heard that this activity was about to commence. ☼

DRAFT: TOWARDS A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR COOLEMAN RIDGE CANBERRA NATURE PARK (cont)

FIRE MANAGEMENT

The scenario in which a large intense fire approaches from the west or northwest could pose the greatest danger to life and property. Under such conditions - and particularly so if other fires were occurring at the same time - fire crews could be spread thinly. At one metre per second, the fire would spread 4 km in one hour. Faster rates of spread are possible. The substantial fuels and local slopes on the Ridge would raise the intensities of the fire edges. The Metropolitan Brigade would be ready to protect the houses. Fire intensities would decline where the fire burned downhill toward the houses but could be substantial where slopes are relatively small and where there are saddles between hills. If the wind was from the northwest the houses in most danger would probably be those at the northwestern end of Percy Crescent and perhaps those between Chauvel Circle and the southwestern end of Ordell St. If the wind was from the west or southwest the area near Darrell Place might be expected to be the most exposed. Houses on the uphill side of Percy Crescent might be exposed to the brunt of a fire burning with a westerly wind also. Just what would happen is difficult to predict because of the swirling nature of winds in hilly terrain. Burning brands would likely be produced from the mature eucalypt plantations and isolated trees, especially indigenous (*E. macrorhyncha*) and non-indigenous (*E. cinerea*) stringybarks. The biggest fires would most likely occur in summer or early autumn when grassy fuels were cured (ie. dead) and high temperatures, low humidities and strong winds can occur.

Note: the whole draft, submitted in 1998, can be read on our web site. ☼