



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter June 2013

Previous Sunday Meeting 19th May - Nature Trail & Pauline's Patch

A glorious autumn afternoon greeted the nine hardy volunteers who turned out for this working bee. Newer members learnt to name more native plants as well as weeds, and admired the encouraging evidence of past weeding sessions.

Pauline's Patch on Fencepost Hill is always lovely. To keep it so, the team removed Fleabane *Conyza sp.* and Aaron's Rod *Verbascum thapsus*. Of the St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum* poisoned there in the summer of 2011/12, only a few mature plants remained visible. We'll keep watching it. We ripped out Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus*, Sweet Briar *Rosa rubiginosa*, and a range of deciduous fruit tree seedlings *Prunus spp.* After planting out two Hop Bush *Dodonaea viscosa* seedlings near the dam, the lower party met up with the top team who'd worked on the Trail. African Lovegrass *Eragrostis curvula* joined the list of weeds removed. Stayers enjoyed a sociable afternoon tea.

Top Job



Photo: Pat Ryan

Our managers have done an excellent job of fixing the steps to Cooleman Trig. Thankyou so much!!

Future programme

Next Meeting – Sunday 16th June Group Area North – Chauvel

Access from Chauvel Cct or Kathner Street entrances.

- 1.30 pm – 4 pm
- Plant ID; remove exotic growth.
- Wear long sleeves and trousers, enclosed shoes, hat and gloves.

Study in progress

Tatiana has been a volunteer with Cooleman Ridge Park Care group for the last three years. She is in her final year of study for a Diploma of Ecology and Environmental Management at the Canberra Institute of Technology. Tatiana is using the Fence Post Hill regeneration area for an environment project. The aim is to monitor the distribution of native plant species. Started in March 2013, the project will finish in November 2013. Two blocks of land (10m X 100m) on the eastern part of the hill were chosen. One block has been cleared of weeds. The other has been left untouched. Samples (50cmX50cm) are taken from the top, the middle and the bottom of the chosen blocks at recorded intervals.

At the end of the project, the results from the two blocks will be analysed and compared – how quickly native species have established in the first block, where weeds were removed, compared with the block where weeds were left growing.

What's around

Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*

Family: *Policipedidae*.

Grebes are short-billed diving birds, with legs far back on the body. Unlike ducks, which are web-footed, they have lobed toes. They cannot walk well on land. There are three species in Australia – this is the smallest.



Photo P. Ryan

We've been seeing these diminutive waterbirds with their short, pointed bills on both dams recently. Each dam seems to have two. We detect signs of breeding plumage - black head, chestnut neck, bright yellow 'tear drop'. They dive rather than flee danger (or birdwatchers!) by flying.

- Refs – 1. Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT – McComas Taylor & Nicolas Day
2. Field Guide to the Birds of Australia (6th Ed) – Simpson & Day

Myna Information

On Wednesday 19th June, the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group (CIMAG) is running a one-day conference on current and effective ways to reduce Indian Myna numbers.

In our region, Indian Mynas have dropped to 20th on the list of most-often-observed bird species.

When trapping began, they were third.

For details of the conference, call Bill - president of CIMAG - on 6231 7461.

Clean Up Report

At the ParkCare & Landcare Coordinators' Meeting on 7 May, Rebecca Dawson, (Project Manager, Restoration of Waterways and Surrounds Project) gave a fascinating talk. The floods of December 2010 dumped lots of debris in our waterways. Since then, blue-green algal blooms have been a problem. Rebecca described the clean-up.

New Members

We welcome Sharon and Ian to our Group. Ian has been attending our monthly work

Linda's War on ALG

Linda walks her dogs on the Ridge, weeding her way along the tracks. She writes that African Love Grass *Eragrostis curvula* "... is particularly obvious at the moment, and even small, non-flowering plants are obvious from their curly leaves. And in the mornings when the dew is on the inflorescence, and catches the morning light, it shines like a beacon!"

The Word on Wallabies

"The unidentified wallabies mentioned in the [previous issue] ... most likely were a female wallaroo and young (females have that paler colour and quite yellowish tail; males are dark grey almost black.) They are stocky looking macropods. I have seen two wallaroos on Cooleman Ridge myself, probably came across from the Murrumbidgee River corridor."

Will Osborne

parties for some time. Sharon joins the Friday Weeders at Kathner Street.