



Incorporation number A0031385X

Friends of Tarra-Bulga National Park Newsletter Winter 2015

Upcoming Events

20th June - Tree Guard Construction
18th July – Planting Day (Diaper Tk)
19th August – Planting Day (Grand Ridge Rd)
12th September - AGM

www.friendsoftarrabulga.org.au

Email: friendsoftarrabulga@gmail.com

Phone: 0488 035 314

The weather may be cooling down but there is plenty going on at Tarra-Bulga National Park. Look out for more information about the upcoming events soon.

Lyrebird Numbers Up, Brush Bronze-wing Population Explodes! Remote Camera Results 2014

We have now been using remote cameras within the park to monitor wildlife for over three years. The table below shows results adjusted for the number of days cameras have been active in the field. We currently have eight cameras that are moved around to different sites on a regular basis. As of January 2015 the cameras had spent a combined total of over 5000 days in the field and were triggered by animal movements over 10,000 times.

The results show a number of interesting trends. For mammals most species have not varied much in the frequency of sightings over the 3 years with a few exceptions. There was a large jump in Koala sightings in 2014 most were at one site where a Koala developed a routine of passing by every couple of days. Feral Cat numbers have risen each year.

There has been a massive jump in the numbers of birds that the cameras are detecting. The number of Lyrebirds

passing cameras have doubled each year. Bassian Thrush (*Zoothera lunulata*) sightings increased around 600% in 2014 and Brush Bronze-wing numbers skyrocketed from only 15 sightings in 2013 up to 404. Crimson Rosellas, Eastern Whipbirds, Pilotbirds and Common Blackbirds all had a significant rise in detection. Two smaller species the White-browed Scrubwren and the Superb Fairy Wren were also 'captured' more often.



Figure 1 Brush Bronzewing on Remote Camera.

A reason for the jump in bird numbers may be due to camera placement. One site used in 2014 was very popular for ground dwelling bird, however this does not fully explain the rise, other camera sites were used in both years and showed a big increase ground dwelling birds from 2013. Fox control efforts in recent years may also be a factor helping the bird numbers increase. Our results have picked up a small rise in Fox numbers over the last few years. As our monitoring continues, time will tell if

this greater abundance of bird sightings will be maintained.

Species	2012	2013	2014
Antechinus	54	73	59
Bassian Thrush	136	135	639
Brown Gerygone	0	0	1
Brown Thornbill	0	2	0
Brush Bronzewing	2	15	404
Brushtail Possum	176	171	169
Common Blackbird	19	10	125
Common Bronzewing	0	1	4
Crimson Rosella	5	5	195
Dog	0	1	1
Eastern Whipbird	21	14	98
Eastern Yellow Robin	2	3	8
Echidna	16	16	43
Fantail, Grey	0	2	0
Fantail, Rufous	2	2	5
Feral Cat	16	33	64
Fox	131	220	230
Grey Currawong	5	11	16
Grey Shrike-Thrush	2	3	6
Human	0	0	1
Koala	2	9	81
Kookaburra	0	6	3
Large Mammal - Unidentifiable	33	16	29
Long Nosed Bandicoot	197	81	185
Lyrebird	319	618	1239
Magpie	2	0	0
Olive Whistler	5	9	5
Pied Currawong	2	4	7
Pilotbird	14	35	93
Rabbit	126	39	24
Rattus Species	82	146	152
Raven Species	0	1	3
Ring-tailed Possum	5	58	20
Satin Bowerbird	14	5	2
Small Mammal - Unidentifiable	47	67	44
Sugar Glider	0	3	1
Superb Fairy-wren	2	3	45
Swamp Wallaby	513	947	761
Tawny Frogmouth	0	0	2
Unidentifiable Bird	103	101	119
Wedge tailed Eagle	2	0	0
White Throated Tree-creeper	0	0	3
Scrubwren	61	49	181
Wombat	138	160	120

Working Bee Report (Tutsan and Sycamore Maple)

On Saturday March the 21st we held our first working bee of the year, unusually Rangerless our group of volunteers including new members Martin and Bernadette went in to continue work on a

large infestation of Tutsan which we have targeted to bring under control. A large portion of the site had been sprayed in the previous week by contractors. As the plants had only been recently sprayed there were no signs of death and the only way we could tell if a plant had been treated or not was to find small traces of a blue marker dye that was used with the spray. After some exploration we found areas on the outskirts of the infestation that had not yet been treated and we set to work cutting off the stems close to the ground and painting the cut area with herbicide gel.



Figure 2: Update: Tutsan a month after spraying now showing signs of herbicide spray.

Pleasing that there were no Sycamore Maple seedlings to be found, it is a weed that we have been working to eliminate from this site for a number of years now. This is the first working bee the group has had that has specifically targeted Tutsan, with the help of the contractors to get us started we will now regularly work on this site with the aim of reducing the cover of Tutsan and promoting native vegetation to take its place. The next scheduled date here is October 10th.

The funding for the contractors was provided by a Communities for Nature grant that we obtained for this project. The grant also provided for some new weeding tools (photograph below) for our group to help us with our ongoing efforts to control weeds at this site and other locations. We will be back at this site later in the year. Thanks to Pam and David P for putting on an awesome BBQ for the workers, which has become an annual tradition.



Figure 3: Our new weeding gear!

Diaper Track Site April 18th.

Another working bee with a small but cheerful crew, despite overcast conditions making things a bit Leechy. We walked into our project site along Diaper Tk to do some follow up weeding, maintenance and preparation for our planting day coming up there on July 18th. Craig set to work cutting tracks through the scrub so we can get in to plant more overstorey.



Figure 4: Martin, Bernadette and Eddie surrounded by scrub.

The rest of us concentrated on searching for Sycamore Maple seedlings to pull and at the same time check on the health of last years plantings. Most of the Mt Ash planted were doing great although in many cases the wire mesh tree guards had been bent at the base due to either Wallabies or Wombats cannoning in to them.



Figure 5. Mt Ash planted last year going great.

It was encouraging to see that some planted tree seedlings (mainly on the higher part of the site) that had not been guarded but hidden amongst Snowy Daisy Bush or fallen branches had evaded Wallabies and were starting to take off.



Figure 6 Seedling hidden among daisy bush has emerged!

There were some guarded plants that had died from natural causes or from their guards being damaged and in these cases the guards were repaired and new trees planted.



Figure 7 Pixies Parasols - *Mycena interrupta* on a Maple stump at the Diaper Tk site.

Due the damp conditions we headed back to the visitors centre to have lunch happy with the progress being made in transforming this site.

2015 Lyrebird Survey Report

We always cross our fingers and hope for favourable conditions on the morning of our annual Lyrebird Survey which this year was held on Saturday May 30th. This year there was no rain but unfortunately the wind was up and noisy gusts were swirling through the canopy.

The logistics of getting a large crew of volunteers up and ready to participate at 6.15am means that we can't afford to be flexible with our dates so it is a matter of carry on regardless. This year we had 22 volunteers turn up for the count, with most people pairing up, we were able to cover 12 out of our 16 monitoring stations, as is often the case the 4 stations in the southern section of our count area were left out.



Figure 8 Lyrebird Monitoring Station #4

Volunteers did a great job of arriving by 6.15 and by the time instructions were given and stations allocated it was still a rush to get into position. I found that the sun was rising and some birds had started calling a few minutes before I made it to my monitoring point at 6.55am.

The next ½ hour was spent listening out for birds, at our site we could hear calling from three directions and once bearings were taken and noted we just settled in and enjoyed the surrounds. I noted some

noisy Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos moving in the canopy overhead as well as the odd loud crack from randomly scattered Eastern Whipbirds may potentially cause confusion for novice counters. Once our time was up we headed back along the track and soon came across a live sighting of a female Lyrebird (or perhaps a juvenile male?) wandering along the path.

Back at the guest house we once again had a great breakfast (thanks to Torben and Pam). After all the monitoring sheets were handed in it was time to analyse the results. The number of birds detected this year was down, although hopefully this is not cause for alarm; the survey relies on hearing the calls and the background noise of the wind makes them more difficult to detect. We definitely had 4 male birds calling in the survey area with one other likely one. Instances where it was noted that birds were calling very close to monitoring stations, helped to identify some of the Lyrebird locations with certainty.



Figure 9 - Lyrebird captured via remote camera.

A big thank you to everyone who made the effort to drag themselves out of bed so early and travel up to Balook to help out, your efforts to help conduct our annual surveys and monitor the local Lyrebird population is very much appreciated. Also thank you to our Ranger Craig who does a fantastic job setting up the monitoring stations and organising the troops. At the start of the count Craig pointed out that this was our

20th Annual Lyrebird Survey and that he had attended every one. Next year will be a big one (our 21st). A map showing the results of this years count can be found on our website.

New Display Boards

Thanks to a grant from Wellington Shire along with cash contributions from ourselves as well as Parks Victoria we are now the proud owners of five new display boards in the visitors centre. They feature a newly designed Information panels about Cool Temperate Rainforest as well as a reprint of the history themed panels (the old ones had become faded). They look like a great new addition so be sure to check them out next time you get the opportunity.



Figure 10 - New Display Panels

Guard Construction Day

Our next activity is on Saturday 20th of June where we will be constructing tree guards out of wire mesh ready for our planting days coming up in July and August. Meet at the visitors centre at 9.30am. BYO lunch.



Figure 11 - Craig with a couple of wire mesh tree guards.

Contributions:

Any interesting photos taken in the park or other items of interest would be gratefully accepted. They could be used in the newsletter, or on our website or Facebook, email then to friendsoftarrabulga@gmail.com or post on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/TarraBulgaNP

2015 Memberships now due

I would like to remind everyone that the Annual Subscriptions for 2015 are now due: \$10 an individual, and \$15 a family (two or more people). Our Treasurer is Pam Pattison, and cheques payable to the *Friends of Tarra-Bulga National Park Inc.* can be sent to Pam (c/- 2119 Grand Ridge Road, Balook 3971) or left at the Park Office. You may also leave cash at the Park Office for Craig to pass on to Pam, but please ensure that you leave it in a labelled envelope to make our life easier.

Contact Details:

David Akers: 5189 1330, 0488 035 314
or e-mail dakers@activ8.net.au
(President)

Ranger Craig Campbell: 5196 6166
(Park Office), 5172 2508 (Traralgon Office), or e-mail cicampbe@parks.vic.gov.au (Park Postal Address is: 1652a Bulga Park Rd, Balook 3971)

Pam Pattison: 5196 6140 or email balook01@bigpond.com (Volunteer Roster, Treasurer)

Website Address:
www.friendsoftarrabulga.org.au

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/tarrabulga

Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/TarraBulgaNP>