

Friends of Mount Majura (FoMM) April 2009 newsletter

- Mountain magic
- Swift Parrots – have you seen them?
- Majura Portraits – invitation for contributions
- Woody weeds working bee – Sunday 19 April

Dear Friends

Mountain magic - exiting things are happening on Mount Majura. A week ago large numbers of White-eared honeyeater have arrived at the mountain and last Friday I saw large flocks of Spotted Pardalote crossing over at the summit. Sunday morning I observed dozens and dozens of these beautiful little birds foraging on eucalypts up on the slope behind the lower Hackett reservoir off Rivett / French streets. They were often accompanied by other woodland birds such as Grey Fantails, Shrike-thrush, various thornbills and treecreepers. Spotted Pardalotes are usually difficult to observe as they forage in the high canopy and switch quickly between the plants. However on Sunday morning I observed many of them picking up insects from dead branches and at one occasion I observed ten adult and juveniles lining up on a dead branch. I could hear the gentle tapping noise when their tiny bills hit the wood. I couldn't see what they were foraging however I assume they were after the winged termites or ants which are emerging from their nests after the recent rain. Later on Sunday at the working bee with the Mount Ainslie Weeders, we observed a large flock of mixed species woodland birds including Speckled Warbler, a ground nesting species of the grassy woodlands that is in steep decline due to the loss of habitat.

Have you observed Swift Parrots? The Bundy or long-leaved box (*Eucalyptus goniocalyx*) at the lower slopes of Mount Majura have just started flowering - there is a wonderful specimen growing adjacent to the reservoir. Some of you might remember that Swift Parrots visited Mount Majura during a prolific bundy blossom in autumn 2005 and that for a month or so many people went on a pilgrimage to Mount Majura to glimpse this rare and endangered parrot. April was the peak time of Swift parrots visiting Mount Majura in the past years. Please contact me if you have observed Swift Parrots, I would be grateful to receive information on date, time of the day, location and number of birds observed. You can find more information on Bundy and Swift Parrots on our website (www.majura.org) including some beautiful photographs of the parrots taken by Geoffrey Dabb of the Canberra Ornithology Group.

So there are many reasons to go for a stroll: see (and smell!) the bundy flowers, watch out for Swift Parrots and observe the many woodland birds browsing the woodlands and forests of Mount Majura.

Do you like photographing, investigating, writing up little stories? You will notice a new rubric "Majura Portraits" on our website. Over time I'm hoping for a collection of miniature portraits of wildlife - native plants or animals or even significant weed species - geological features and cultural heritage items with illustrating photographs taken on the mountain. I would like to invite contributions. If you have a story to tell and photographs to share I'd love to hear from you.

And last not least on Sunday 19 April we will have another working bee to remove briar roses and other woody weeds at the northwest slope of Mount Majura; see below for details. On our last working bee we managed to clear weeds from about half of a heavily infested area. It would be great if you could help to perhaps finish the job at our next working bee.

See you there.
Waltraud

Woody weeds working bee jointly with the Watson Woodland Working Group

When: Sunday, 19 April, 2009, 9.00 am to noon

Where: Meet at the car parking / nature park entrance off Antill St opposite Carotel (map: www.majura.org)

Bring and wear: Sun protection, enclosed foot wear and body-covering clothing

Equipment and morning tea will be provided.