

Regent Honeyeaters at home in the wild

Thirty-six of the 44 captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters released in the Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park two weeks ago have been confirmed at home in the wild. We have recorded sightings of 36 individual released birds, all with unique colour leg bands, within the National Park in the past week, Birds Australia's (BirdLife Partner) National Regent Honeyeater Recovery Coordinator, Dean Ingwersen said. We have also had sightings of at least eight wild Regent Honeyeaters and what is really exciting is that released birds are routinely interacting positively with the wild birds. Mr Ingwersen said most of the released birds are travelling together in groups of six or so, as they naturally would, and are moving happily throughout the Park in search of food. The Mugga Ironbark, which is a primary food source for the birds, has been flowering well and the White Box and the box and ironbark hybrid trees have commenced flowering. This will provide the birds with a good ongoing food source, particularly when combined with the insects we've been watching them feed on. Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) Senior Biodiversity Officer, Glen Johnson, said that while the majority of the birds have remained within the Park boundaries, a few more adventurous birds have visited large flowering eucalypt trees within the Chiltern township. Local support for the program has been terrific, and we are pleased that the cold mornings have not deterred the many volunteers who come out each day to monitor and radio-track the released birds. These volunteers are invaluable to the success of the monitoring program, as is the support of Parks Victoria and our ongoing partnership with Birds Australia and the Taronga Zoo. Monitoring bird behaviour, movements and habitat use will continue until mid July.