

HFNC Excursion to Canunda National Park on 22-23 November 1997

Rod Bird

This was a weekend campout. Most of the group made the 2 hr 30 min drive through Millicent to Southend late Friday afternoon. Those who attended included John & Glenys Cayley, Janeen & Ken Grimes, Hillary Turner, Rod Bird, Diane Luhrs (recent new member) and Kunada. Diane arrived early on Saturday and Kunada (a visiting Blue Gum plantation forester from Japan) in the afternoon, having been a 'little lost' on the way.

From 8-10 am on Saturday we took a walk up a 4WD trail to cliff tops. Lots of midden areas, coastal wildflowers and interesting geological formations. There were Hooded Plovers and Red-capped Plovers along the beach. We then met Ken and Janeen, our leaders for the weekend, at the Ranger Station.

From 11 am to 1 pm we took the 'Sea Cliff' walk, near Southend. We had lunch in the shade of a cliff at the beach. It was a very hot and windy day. Time for a swim at the main beach then back to the camp to relax in the shade. The facilities at the camp were good but the trees were not very tall or shady.

At 5.30 pm we walked to Boozy Point and back along the coast to Southend. Diane and Janeen returned to Hamilton late in the afternoon, as did Kunada.

Mosquitoes were voracious at night but the clear view of the planets was a compensation: Venus, Mars and Jupiter to the SW, Seven Sisters to NW, Orion's Belt to the N, the inverted Taurus between. The Southern Cross lay low near the horizon. The Milky Way is not a feature in this season but the two Magellanic cloud patches to the E were clear. A twinkling red-blue star to the NE was perhaps Antares.

On Sunday morning Rod went birdwatching at 6 am before the others were up. A Rufous Bristlebird was the most noteworthy among the birds seen.

After breakfast we took a drive to Kyber Pass to look at the eroded dunes. Patches of vegetation perch oddly on isolated pillars of soil that have survived the erosion; the roots probably stabilising the column.

Next, we drove to another site to see the limestone cave (Dram DRAM) where Aborigines had mined the chert (silica oxidised to flint) columns in the limestone. There were digging marks on the walls and signs where small columns had been snapped off.

We continued on to Little Blue Lake and a nearby sinkhole to see a stromatolite (a microbial mat created by photosynthetic cyanobacteria) which starts about 4 m above the current water level.



Rod and Ken with plants on pedestals



John, Ken, Glenys, Hillary & Janeen at lunch

Diane supplied the photographs above.

We ended about mid-afternoon on Sunday, on another scorching day. Wisely, some stayed a little longer to avoid the heat. One member (Rod) became drowsy shortly after leaving Southend, intending to stop in

the shade of trees seen a little way ahead, but he fell asleep and was fortunate in being aroused by the rattle of stones and the noise from running over a packing crate as the vehicle drifted off the road. Luckily there were no other vehicles on that section of road at the time.

Birds seen at and about Southport and Canunda National Park on 22-23 Nov. 1997

1. Australian Magpie
2. Australian Pied Oystercatcher
3. Brush Bronzewing
4. Common Blackbird
5. Common Starling
6. Crested Tern
7. Eastern Yellow Robin
8. European Goldfinch
9. Great Cormorant
10. Grey Currawong
11. Grey Fantail
12. Hooded Plover
13. Little Pied Cormorant
14. Little Raven
15. Little Tern
16. Nankeen Kestrel
17. Pacific Black Duck
18. Peregrine Falcon
19. Red-capped Plover
20. Rufous Bristlebird
21. Silver Gull
22. Silvereye
23. Singing Honeyeater
24. Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
25. Superb Fairy-wren
26. Welcome Swallow
27. White-browed Scrubwren
28. White-faced Heron
29. Yellow-faced Honeyeater
30. Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo