

HFNC Excursion to Gringegalgon Settlers Reserve, Vasey Rail Reserve and Dundas Range Scenic Reserve on 4 July 2009

Reto Zollinger

Participants: R Zollinger, Y Ingeme, Liz Fenton, Hilary Turner, Roger Thompson, Jane Hayes & Prue Leeming.

We left Hamilton at 9.00 am on a rainy morning and visited Gringegalgon Settlers Reserve first, followed by an inspection of the Vasey Rail Reserve Siding site. This site and the Gringegalgon site were targeted for work on weed control and signage installation, funded by a 2009-12 Bush Guardian Grant facilitated by the Department of Sustainability & Environment.

At Gringegalgon, most of the Harlequin Flower (*Sparaxis bulbifera*), Cape Tulip (*Moraea flacida*) and Cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*) weeds are restricted to approximately 20 m from the adjoining farmland. The vegetation was wet and so it restricted us from spraying or herbicide-wiping those weeds. However, we did cut some Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) on the reserve and adjoining road reserve. We painted the cut stumps with herbicide. The source of the infestation appears to be from the trees to the south of the Gringegalgon Hall. Work on the weed control is planned for September.

Many leaves of lilies were seen, promising to produce a good spring wildflower display. A list of native plants that have been recorded at this site over the years is available on our website.

Jane made notes on birds and commented on the abundance of honeyeaters in the Gringegalgon Reserve, 8 species, more diverse than she would see in the Grampians. The attraction here was the flowering of Swamp Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*). Jane's list for the Gringegalgon reserve is appended.

The Vasey Rail Reserve is an unused rail station ground on the Hamilton-Noradjuha rail line that was closed in the late 1970s. The weeds at Vasey were mostly concentrated near and around the corners and along the edges as well as along the actual railway cutting. The weeds included Sparaxis, Cape Tulip, South African Weed Orchid (*Disa bracteata*), Angled Onion (*Allium triquetrum*) and St John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*). Sparaxis was especially dense in the furthest section of the reserve and St John's Wort along the rail line and moving into the grassland.

We found some piles of old wire and other dumped rubbish that needs to be cleaned up. Treatment of the weeds is planned for September 2009 and in 2010-11 following.

A juvenile Shingleback (*Tiliqua rugosa*) was seen on the site.

We proceeded to the Dundas Range Scenic Reserve, approaching from Lyons Rd and then following the fire track along the west side. We stopped at one point and took a walk towards a rocky outcrop where we spotted Midge Orchid (*Acianthus pusillus*) flowering and many other orchid leaves, including Red-beaks (*Pyrorchis nigricans*). Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*) and Emu Heath (*Stenanthera conostephioides*) displayed a feast of red and white flowers. Among the rocks Hairy Correa (*Correa aemula*) were also flowering.

We observed in the adjacent farmland that all of the lower limbs of the River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) in a paddock had been smashed off by an implement such as a front-end loader bucket. The debris had been piled around the base of the trees. This approach is a result of increased cropping in the district. It is done to allow cultivation close to the tree trunks. Both the close cultivation and the smashing of branches damages the trees and no doubt hastens their demise, but there is apparently no legislation prohibiting it. One consequence would be that a fire in the paddock would certainly kill the trees once the wood piles caught the flame. That might even happen from stubble-burning.

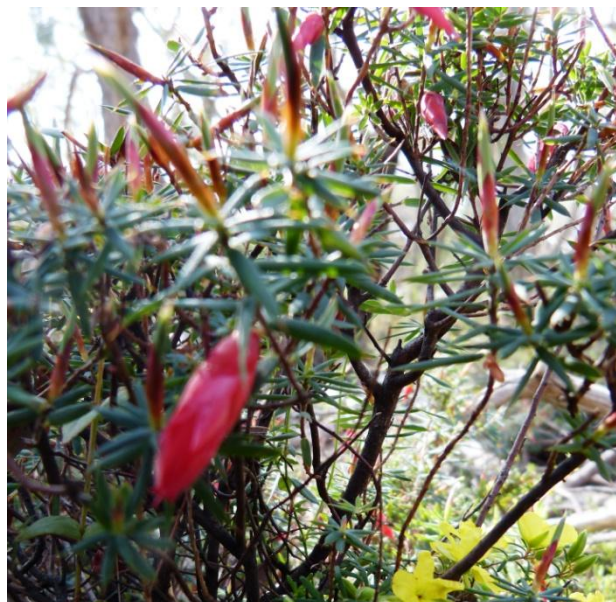
On our way out of the Dundas Range Scenic Reserve the lead vehicle picked up old ringlock fence wire which ended up tangled around the drive shaft. It took about half an hour to cut the wire away before we could continue home.

Birdlist for Gringegalgona Settlers Reserve (recorded by Jane Hayes)

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Australian Magpie | 9. Restless Flycatcher |
| 2. Crimson Rosella | 10. Superb Fairy-wren |
| 3. Forest Raven | 11. White-eared Honeyeater |
| 4. Fuscous Honeyeater | 12. White-naped Honeyeater |
| 5. Grey Fantail | 13. White-plumed Honeyeater |
| 6. Laughing Kookaburra | 14. White-throated Treecreeper |
| 7. New Holland Honeyeater | 15. Yellow-faced Honeyeater |
| 8. Red Wattlebird | 16. Yellow-tufted Honeyeater |



Hairy Correa (*Correa aemula*)



Emu Heath (*Stenantha conostephioides*)



Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*)