

HFNC excursion to Victoria Point, Grampians NP, 23 June 2013

Dave Munro

Present: Ken and Janeen Grimes, Hilary Turner, Craig Carpenter and Amanda Smith, Ross Simpson, Karen Simpson, Lyn and Dave Munro.

After a chilly 3°C start at Penshurst, rising to a balmy 8°C at Victoria Point the rest of the day proved to be perfect for a leisurely walk around the most southwesterly part of the Grampians-Gariwerd National Park. Before we started the walk we had encounters with a couple of Swamp Harriers on the way and three Common Pheasants which were on the bridge over the Wannon River. These birds are frequently seen in this vicinity as escapees from an adjacent farm which breeds them for “sport”. A patch of feathers in the car park caught our attention. They were white and grey some with brown barrings. Unfortunately there were no wing or tail feathers or feet to help us make more than a tentative identification as possibly an owl or a raptor. There were many suggestions.

The walk took us through a forest dominated by Brown Stringybark with a heathy groundcover. It was noted that this groundcover had thinned out significantly over the last 20 years despite there having been no fires in the area. The main plants that had survived were Flame Heath and Heath Tea-tree. The dry 2000s and macropod browsing may have been factors in the thinning, as is the possibility of natural succession.

The walk took us in an easterly direction through the bush till we reached an old track heading northwards. On the way to the track we found a couple of patches of Striped Greenhoods and Banded Greenhoods which have survived despite the loss of much of their former cover. It will be interesting to see how they fare in future. We noted many “ant hills” as well as evidence of recent Echidna activity.

It was obvious that the bush along the track had been popular as a dumping ground for household rubbish. This gave much joy to our amateur archaeologists who scrounged several items of treasure (?). We also found Mosquito Orchids under some Grass Trees near one of the dump sites. This brought to three the number of orchids in flower seen on the day. To compensate for this we identified a number of leaves and buds so there is hope for a better show in the near future. (see list below).

Another sighting of interest at the dump site was a pair of Gang Gangs feeding in a *Callitris rhomboidea* (see photo). Another pair was sighted later in the day. A male Scarlet Robin provided a welcome flash of colour.

Lunch, for those with foresight or had listened to Janeen, was at a rocky outcrop looking up the Vic. Range.

We made our way downhill to the Fire Track on the edge of the Park and hiked back to the cars. There the, by now, ravenous folks who had left without lunch made a beeline for their food and drink. Ross found a sleepy Shingleback near the car park before the party split up. Some headed up McCutcheons Rd while others headed home.

Orchids (Flower F, Bud B, Leaf L)

<i>Acianthus pusillus</i> (Mosquito Orchid)	F	<i>Acianthus caudatus</i> (Mayfly Orchid)	L
<i>Pterostylis striata</i> (Striped Greenhood)	F	<i>Corybas</i> sp. (Helmet Orchid)	L
<i>Pterostylis sanguinea</i> (Banded Greenhood)	F	<i>Cyrtostylis reniformis</i> (Gnat Orchid)	L
<i>Pterostylis diminuta</i>	B	<i>Glossodia major</i> (Waxlip)	L
<i>Pterostylis</i> sp. (nana or concinna)	B	<i>Pyrorchis nigricans</i> (Redbeaks)	L
<i>Pterostylis nutans</i> (Nodding Greenhood)	L	<i>Thelymitra</i> sp. (Sun orchids)	L

The only plants in flower (other than orchids) were Flame Heath, *Ixodia* and *Corea reflexa*. A photo of Banded Greenhood (*Pterostylis sanguinea*) is shown below.

Fungi

Only 2 Fungi were identified *Omphalina chromacea* (Little Belly-buttons) and *Tremella mesenterica* (Orange Jelly Fungus).

Birds

Swamp Harrier
Common Pheasant
Superb Fairy-wren

Gang Gang
Crimson Rosella
Scarlet Robin



Photos by Amanda Smith & Craig

Pterostylis sanguinea (Banded Greenhood)

Gang Gangs feeding in a *Callitris rhomboidea*

Pterostylis sanguinea (Banded Greenhood)

