

HFNC Excursion to Little Desert National Park & Jilpanger Flora Reserve 18-20 Sept. 2015

Rod Bird, Dave Munro, Jane Hayes & Diane Luhrs,

Present: Rod Bird & Diane Luhrs, Dave & Lyn Munro, Jane Hayes, Mollie Herrmann, Hillary Turner and two field naturalists from Millicent in SA who saw our program and contacted Dave.

Rod drove up mid-morning on Friday, stopping to look at Miga Lake where fishermen were about to set a dozen or so Yabby pots in the shallow water. Apparently these wetlands are well known as Yabbie 'hot spots'. Then, diverting off the Nhill-Harrow Highway to go west down the McDonald Highway to Broughton Waterhole. The latter 'highway' is nought but a sandy track and Rod was soon to find it had been 'bulldozed' along much of its 29 km length and the surface was deep sand! After letting the air pressure in the tyres down to 25 lbs and engaging 4WD it was non-stop thereafter for most of that distance, to avoid getting bogged. Definitely not a track to take a convoy of vehicles along. Much of the landscape had been burned and there were few flowers present there or on the unburned sections. That was rather disappointing. There was no-one at Broughtons Waterhole and no sign of recent visitors. The waterhole was about half full.

Birds seen at Broughtons Waterhole:

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|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Red-rumped Parrot | 5. Australian Wood Duck | 9. Scarlet Robin |
| 2. Little Raven | 6. Fan-tailed Cuckoo | 10. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo |
| 3. Grey Currawong | 7. Brown Treecreeper | 11. Galah |
| 4. Brown Falcon | 8. Grey Shrike-thrush | |

The trip out was via Sambels Track, 11.5 km SE to the park exit (an easy track until the last 100 m of deeper sand) and then a good road 11 km to Goroke. After another 3 km, back north to the Nhill-Harrow Highway and on to the Little Desert Lodge, 46 km from Goroke.

Others had arrived at the Little Desert Lodge and were settling in or walking around the nature trails bird-watching. Jane and Molly found Southern Scrub-robin; Dave & Lyn found the Heart-lip Spider-orchid.

Diane had driven up independently in her camper; others opted for the motel-style accommodation. We drove down the road to check out the flora and birds on the Stringybark Walk in the Little Desert National Park. Diane spotted *Diuris pardina* in the roadside spoon drain and *Glossodia major* and *Caladenia carnea* along the Stringybark Walk.

That evening Hillary, Diane and Rod had a bar-b-cue dinner in the shelter shed provided at the well-equipped camp ground. We heard Bush Stone Curlews calling from the enclosure to the SW. Molly, Jane, Lyn & Dave had dinner with the Keilor Plains SGAP Group that was also at the Lodge. That group spent the next day at Mt Arapiles and other places, where the floral display was better.

On Saturday morning our group drove down to the Stringybark Walk, stopping along the highway to check out the Leopard Orchids (*Diuris pardina*) and other flowers. Jane spotted a couple of Hooded Robins in the burned area west from the highway. At the Stringybark Walk we found that there was not a profusion of wildflowers but keen eyes soon found 8 species of orchids along the way, including a few plants of *Caladenia cardiochila* (Heart-lip Spider-orchid), *C. pusilla* (Small Pink Fingers) and *Pterostylis smaragdina* (Tall Greenhood). *C. carnea* (Pink Fingers) and *Glossodia major* were more prolific. A full list of flowering species seen is given in the table below.

Returning to the Lodge, we took our lunches down to the waterhole where we observed a Superb Fairy-wren chasing bees and nesting Galahs in a dead tree by the pond. Afterwards we took a walk through the wildlife enclosure, starting from the gate near the pool. Many birds were seen or heard there, including Variegated Fairy-wren, Rufous Whistler, Golden Whistler, Gilberts Whistler and Southern Scrub-robin. Jane compiled a list of birds seen at the Little Desert Lodge and thereabouts.

That evening we joined the Keilor Plains SGAP group for dinner; the guest speaker was Graham Goods, one of the authors of *Birds and Plants of the Little Desert: a photographic guide*. We all enjoyed the evening.



Plants in flower in the Little Desert and Jilpanger Flora Reserve – 18-20 Sept. 2015

Botanic Name	Common Name	Stringybark Walk	LDNL	JFR Stop 1	JFR Stop 2	JFR W Tk
<i>Acacia brachybotrya</i>	Grey Mulga	Y				
<i>Acacia euthycarpa</i>	Wallowa Wattle	Y				
<i>Acacia myrtifolia</i>	Myrtle Wattle				Y	Y
<i>Acacia paradoxa</i>	Hedge Wattle					Y
<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>	Golden Wattle			Y		
<i>Acacia spinescens</i>	Spiny Wattle	Y		Y	Y	
<i>Argentipallium blandowskianum</i>	Woolly Everlasting	Y				
<i>Arthropodium strictum</i>	Chocolate Lily			Y		
<i>Astroloma conostephioides</i>	Flame Heath	Y		Y		
<i>Baeckea ericaea</i>	Mat Baeckea	Y				
<i>Boronia pilosa</i>	Hairy Boronia	Y				
<i>Bossiaea prostrata</i>	Creeping Bossiaea			Y		
<i>Brachyloma daphnoides</i>	Daphne Heath	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>Brachyloma ericoides</i>	Brush Heath	Y				
<i>Bulbine bulbosa</i>	Bulbine Lily			Y		
<i>Caladenia carnea</i>	Pink Fingers	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>Caladenia cardiochila</i>	Heart-lip Spider Orchid	Y				
<i>Caladenia pusilla</i>	Small Pink Fingers	Y				
<i>Caesia calliantha</i>	Blue Grass-lily			Y		
<i>Calytrix tetragona</i>	Fringe-Myrtle			Y		
<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>	Common Everlasting					Y
<i>Clematis microphylla</i>	Small-leaf Clematis		Y			
<i>Correa reflexa</i>	Common Correa	Y				
<i>Cryptandra tomentosa</i>	Prickly Cryptandra		Y			
<i>Cynoglossum australe</i>	Sweet Hounds-tongue					Y
<i>Daviesia brevifolia</i>	Leafless Bitter-pea				Y	
<i>Daviesia ulicifolia</i>	Gorse Bitter-pea	Y				
<i>Dillwynia sericea</i>	Showy Parrot-pea			Y		
<i>Diuris pardina</i>	Leopard Orchid	Y		Y		
<i>Drosera peltata</i>	Pale Sundew			Y		
<i>Eutaxia microphylla</i>	Common Eutaxia			Y		
<i>Glossodia major</i>	Wax-lip Orchid	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>Hakea decurrens</i>	Bushy Hakea			Y		
<i>Hibbertia prostrata</i>	Bundled Guinea-flower			Y		Y
<i>Hibbertia riparia</i>	Erect Guinea-flower	Y		Y	Y	Y
<i>Hibbertia crinata (sericea)</i>	Silky Guinea-flower	Y				
<i>Hibbertia virgata</i>	Twiggy Guinea-flower	Y				
<i>Hypoxis vaginata</i>	Yellow Star			Y		
<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	Running Postman	Y	Y		Y	
<i>Leucopogon virgatus</i>	Common Beard heath	Y		Y	Y	
<i>Lomandra nana</i>	Small Mat-rush	Y	Y			
<i>Millotia sp.</i>	Millotia	Y				
<i>Microceris lanceolata</i>	Yam Daisy	Y	Y	Y		
<i>Neurachne alopecuroides</i>	Mulga Foxtail-grass			Y		
<i>Olearia ramulosa</i>	Twiggy Daisy-bush		Y			
<i>Pimelea glauca</i>	Smooth Rice-flower			Y		
<i>Pimelea stricta</i>	Gaunt Rice-flower		Y			
<i>Pterostylis smaragdina</i>	Tall Greenhood	Y				
<i>Templetonia stenophylla</i>	Leafy Templetonia			Y		
<i>Thelymitra antennifera</i>	Rabbit Ears	Y				
<i>Thelymitra rubra</i>	Salmon Sun-orchid			Y		
<i>Vittadinia gracilis</i>	Woolly New Holland Daisy					Y
<i>Wurmbia dioica</i>	Early Nancy			Y		
<i>Xerochrysum bracteatum</i>	Golden Everlasting	Y			Y	

Birds seen at the Little Desert Lodge and surrounds

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|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Noisy Miner | 20. Jacky Winter | 39. White-throated Treecreeper |
| 2. Red Wattlebird | 21. Hooded Robin | 40. Brown Treecreeper |
| 3. Black-chinned Honeyeater | 22. Scarlet Robin | 41. Magpie-lark |
| 4. New Holland Honeyeater | 23. Superb Fairy-wren | 42. Grey Shrike-thrush |
| 5. Tawny-crowned Honeyeater | 24. Variegated Fairy-wren | 43. White-winged Chough |
| 6. White-eared Honeyeater | 25. Tree Martin | 44. White-browed Babbler |
| 7. White-plumed Honeyeater | 26. Welcome Swallow | 45. Peaceful Dove |
| 8. Yellow-faced Honeyeater | 27. Dusky Woodswallow | 46. Diamond Firetail |
| 9. Weebill | 28. Blue-winged Parrot | 47. European Goldfinch |
| 10. Buff-rumped Thornbill | 29. Eastern Rosella | 48. Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo |
| 11. Inland Thornbill | 30. Galah | 49. Emu |
| 12. Slender-billed Thornbill | 31. Rainbow Lorikeet | 50. Southern Stone-curlew |
| 13. Yellow-rumped Thornbill | 32. Red-rumped Parrot | 51. Australian Raven |
| 14. Yellow Thornbill | 33. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo | 52. Little Raven |
| 15. Restless Flycatcher | 34. Masked Lapwing | 53. Wedge-tailed Eagle |
| 16. Willie Wagtail | 35. Australian Magpie | 54. Whistling Kite |
| 17. White-fronted Chat | 36. Golden Whistler | |
| 18. Grey Fantail | 37. Gilbert's Whistler | |
| 19. Striated Pardalote | 38. Rufous Whistler | |

Birds seen at Jilpanger Flora Reserve (southern block) on 20 Sept. 2015

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|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Laughing Kookaburra | 11. Red Wattlebird | 21. Brown Treecreeper |
| 2. Australian Magpie | 12. Australian Raven | 22. White-throated Treecreeper |
| 3. Common Bronzewing | 13. Magpie-lark | 23. Grey Currawong |
| 4. Striated Pardalote | 14. Galah | 24. Brown Treecreeper |
| 5. Spotted Pardalote | 15. Long-billed Corella | 25. Willie Wagtail |
| 6. Brown Thornbill | 16. Crimson Rosella | 26. Grey Fantail |
| 7. Mistletoebird | 17. Eastern Rosella | 27. White-browed Babbler |
| 8. Brown-headed Honeyeater | 18. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo | 28. Golden Whistler |
| 9. White-eared Honeyeater | 19. Superb Fairy-wren | |
| 10. Noisy Miner | 20. Grey Shrike-thrush | |

On Sunday morning, except for Jane and Molly and the Lucindale couple, we left the Little Desert Lodge at 9 30 am and drove south then east to Douglas, where we waited for anyone who may have elected to drive from Hamilton for the day out at Jilpanger Flora Reserve. No-one came so we left at 10.30 am. to drive a few km back to a block recommended to us by Euan Moore. Rod's Jeep was handicapped a little by the 4WD system mysteriously no longer operating (later found to be an 'unclipped selector cable'), so we were not going to attempt any of the sand ridge routes to the north. The southern block, off the Douglas-Wombelano Rd, was formerly the Stoney Scrub State Forest. It is now part of the Jilpanger Flora Reserve.

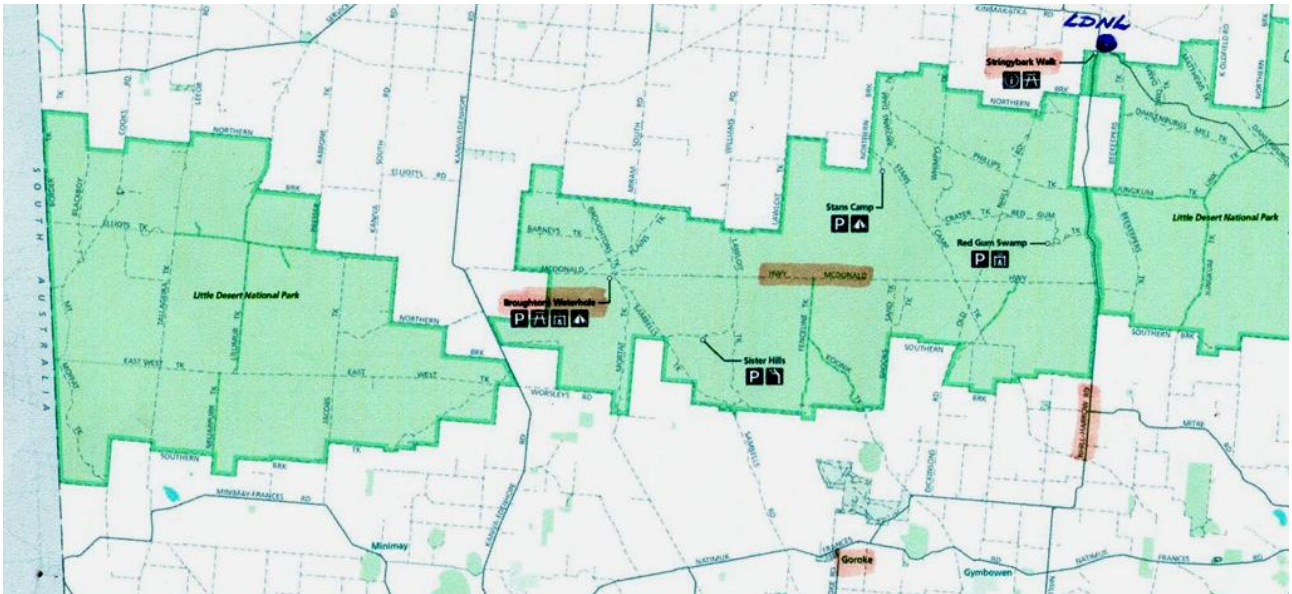


We spent a few hours travelling around the tracks in this block, which should be avoided in winter, but found only one small bog-hole on the track to dodge. We saw an Echidna seeking ants in a log. The reserve was quite dry as a result of poor spring rain but we found some nice wildflowers once one walked around in the bush. Plants of particular interest were Golden Everlastings, Woolly New Holland Daisy, Leopard Orchids and Leafy Templetonia. The list of plants in flower is shown above. The birdlist for this area is also shown above.

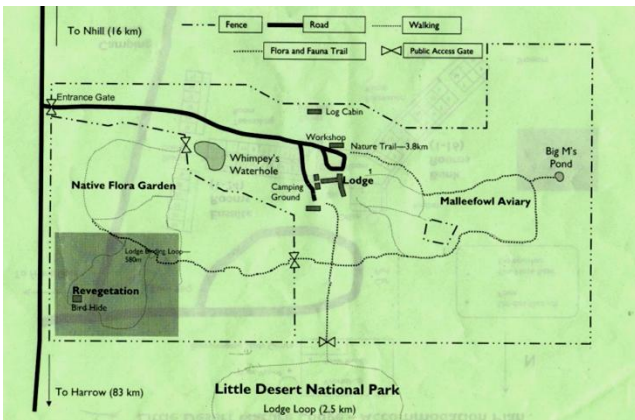
After lunch and further exploration of the varied landforms and soils on this reserve, which supported stands of Buloke, Stringybark, River Red Gum, Yellow Gum, Desert Banksia and Silver Banksia, we began our return to Hamilton at about 3 pm. Diane & Rod called in at the south beach area of White Lake to check the waterbirds. The water level was quite low and most birds in the middle appeared to be standing. We saw 130 Banded Stilts there, identified after viewing telephoto images taken with a Lumix (60X) camera.

Despite the poor spring rains and muted wildflower display we enjoyed the weekend, visiting a part of the Little Desert that was little known to most of us. The opportunity to attend the presentation on Little Desert flora by the Graham & Maree Goods, and to obtain a copy of their recently published photographic guide to the flora, was also appreciated. Graham also mentioned that the far western block that we did not see contained many species not found in the other blocks – a good destination for a future visit?

Map 1. Little Desert National Park – location of the Little Desert Nature Lodge (LDNL) and the Western, Central and part of the Eastern Blocks of the National Park (LDNP).



Map 2. Little Desert Nature Lodge (LDNL)



Map 3. Jilpanger Flora Reserve & White Lake.
We visited White Lake & Stonev Scrub.



1. Miga Lake



2. Broughtons Waterhole, LDNP



3. Sandy Heath at Sambells Tk



4. *Xanthorrhoea australis* in LDNP



5. Firebreak opposite LDNL



6. *Diuris pardina* in roadside drain



7. *Acacia brachybotrya* LDNP



8. *Acacia euthycarpa* LDNP



9. *Acacia spinescens* LDNP



10. *Argentipallium blandowskianum* LDNP



11. *Astroloma conostephioides* LDNP



12. *Baeckea ericaea* LDNP



13. *Brachyloma ericoides* LDNP



14. New Holland Honeyeater LDNP



15. *Leucopogon virgatus* LDNP



16. *Caladenia cardiochila* LDNP



17. *Pterostylis smaragdina* LDNP



18. *Caladenia carnea* LDNP



19. *Microseris lanceolata* LDNP



20. *Corea reflexa* LDNP



21. Galah at a nest hollow LDNL



22. *Pimelea stricta* LDNP



23. *Kennedia prostrata* LDNP



24. *Xanthorrhoea australis* LDNP



25. *Acacia myrtifolia* Jilpanger FR



26. *Davesia ulicifolia* Jilpanger FR



27. *Dillwynia sericea* Jilpanger FR



28. *Diuris pardina* Jilpanger FR



29. *Xerochrysum bracteatum* Jilpanger



30. *Templetonia stenophylla* Jilpanger

