

HFNC Excursion to Dundas Range Scenic Reserve on 20 June 2021

Rod Bird

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We left Hamilton at 9.30 am to visit the northern end of the Dundas Range. Our last visit to this site was in 1993, when we walked the ridge line to the Dundas Gap Rd. Our plan this time was less ambitious.

We drove off the Balmoral-Cavendish Rd on Bells Lane and then left to Masons Rd to the Coleraine Field and Game Shooting Range at the NW tip of the reserve. The Gun Club had been operating there, under licence, in the 1980s on a small scale. The LCC recommendation (1982) was '*this licence could continue, subject to the requirements of the management authority*'. At that stage there had been no clearing near the cliffs or extension along the range.

We observed a significant impact on the native vegetation on the area the Gun Club operates on and the proliferation of unsightly sheds in this part of the Dundas Range Scenic Reserve. We are very concerned at the current expansion of tracks, the proliferation of sheds and the associated vegetation clearance that now extends south 350 m along the range from the main building.

Some developments since 2011 can be seen in Google Satellite Images on 17-03-2011 and 2021. The most recent activity was in mid-June, as indicated by the freshness of the disturbed soil caused by the bulldozing of more tracks on the range and the extensive clearing of adjacent heath and tree vegetation. That would suggest forthcoming installation of more shooting sites along the range.

Several photos of the Gun Club site are shown below. We have notified Parks Victoria, DELWP and Southern Grampians Shire of our concerns about the impact of current operations on the natural environment of this reserve, and enquired as to what '*the requirements of the management authority*' are.



Clearing on East side of range



Clearing on west side of range



Clearing far Sth on west side of range



Clearing west side of range



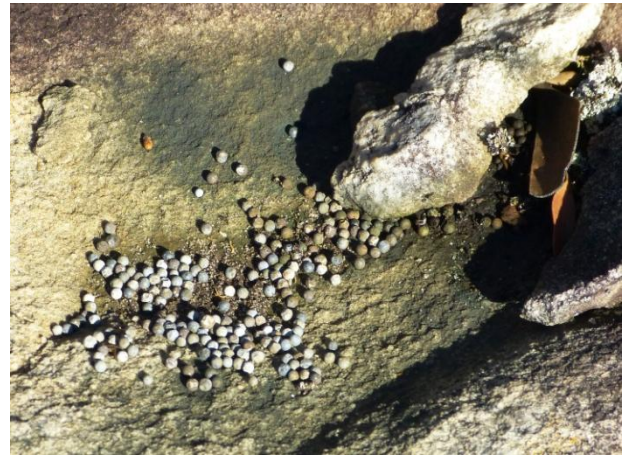
More recent clearing on mid-west side of range



Target litter



Rock pool on top of the range



Lead shot in the rock pool and crevices



Some of the built structures at the site

We found a rock pool of about 1.5 m diameter circle and depth 20 cm of water on the top of the range (gps 37-25-9.45/141-52-31.5) about 100 m Sth beyond the new track extension. In the crevice of all of the adjacent rocks and in the pool were many hundreds of shot pellets. If that is lead shot, then the water (and possibly the vegetation) would be toxic to native fauna that appear to use this water source. The original alignment of a shooting stage appears to have allowed the spent shot to fall several hundred metres south into the bulk of the Scenic Reserve.

There were quite a few plants with flowers, among them one orchid species – *Acianthus pusillus* (Mosquito Orchid) – common among the Brown Stringybark (*Eucalyptus baxteri*) in the area. A list of species seen at this visit is shown in the **Appendix**. More prominent were fungi of many species.



Mosquito orchid (*Acianthus pusillus*)



Hemimycena sp.



Coral Fungus (*Ramaria* sp.)



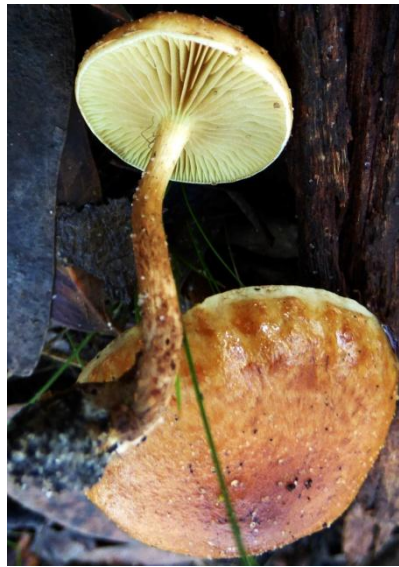
Jelly Fungus (*Tremella fuciformis*)



Cortinarius sp.



Hygrocybe sp. (Waxy-gill)



Laccaria lateritia



Mycena clarkeana



Rassula sp.



Sterium hirsutum (Hairy Sterium)

We walked down the range for a distance of about 1 km, partly on the top of the range, and returned on the western slope about 100 m away from the base of the rocky ridge.

After a picnic lunch back at the parking area, where we met Liz Fenton who had arrived late, we decided to drive along Masons Rd down the western side of the reserve and take a walk into the range from there.

We stopped at a woodland area about halfway along the western edge where the trees were a mixture of Swamp Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*), River Red Gum (*E. camaldulensis*) and Yellow Gum (*E. leucoxylon*). The Swamp Gum were in flower and attracted a number of birds, including Red Wattlebirds and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters.

We walked along an old trail bike track, now a marsupial trail, and soon left the woodland fringe (part of which had, in time past, been used to dump old farm machinery, bottles and other junk).

On the foothills of the range we were among Stringybark trees, Austral Bracken and heath vegetation. At this point a pair of Gang Gang cockatoos were seen in a tree, cracking open seed capsules. The birds took no notice of us while we observed them feeding.



Gang Gang Cockatoo with Stringybark capsules

Our birdlist was rather short, the highlights being close sightings of several Eastern Spinebills near the end of the range and the Gang Gang Cockatoos on the eastern side of the reserve:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Australian Magpie | 7. Grey Fantail | 13. Wedge-tailed Eagle |
| 2. Brown Thornbill | 8. Grey Shrike-thrush | 14. White-eared Honeyeater |
| 3. Buff-rumped Thornbill | 9. Laughing Kookaburra | 15. White-throated Tree-creeper |
| 4. Crimson Rosella | 10. New Holland Honeyeater | 16. Yellow-faced Honeyeater |
| 5. Eastern Spinebill | 11. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo | |
| 6. Gang Gang Cockatoo | 12. Superb Fairy-wren | |

Appendix. Native flora identified at the Dundas Range Scenic Reserve on 20 June 2021

Note that these were incidental sightings and no detailed survey was conducted

Botanic Name	Common Name	hfnc 2021
<i>Acacia mearnsii</i>	Black Wattle	L
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood	L
<i>Acacia verticillata</i>	Prickly Moses	L
<i>Acianthus pusillus</i>	Small Mosquito Orchid	F
<i>Acrotriche serrulata</i>	Honey-pots	L
<i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i>	Common Maidenhair	L
<i>Banksia marginata</i>	Silver Banksia	F
<i>Brunonia australis</i>	Blue Pincushion	L
<i>Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia</i>	Rock Fern	L
<i>Chorizandra enodis</i>	Black Bristle-rush	L
<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>	Common Everlasting	L
<i>Conospermum mitchellii</i>	Victorian Smokebush	L
<i>Correa aemula</i>	Hairy Correa	F
<i>Correa reflexa</i>	Common Correa	F
<i>Cyrtostylis reniformis</i>	Small Gnat Orchid	L
<i>Dianella revoluta</i>	Black-anther Flax-lily	L
<i>Dichondra repens</i>	Kidney-weed	L
<i>Drosera glanduligera</i>	Scarlet Sundew	L
<i>Eucalyptus baxteri</i>	Brown Stringybark	L
<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	River Red Gum	L
<i>Eucalyptus leucoxydon</i>	Yellow Gum	L
<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i>	Swamp Gum	F
<i>Exocarpos cupressiformis</i>	Cherry Ballart	L
<i>Gahnia radula</i>	Thatch Saw-sedge	L
<i>Hibbertia riparia</i>	Erect Guinea-flower	F
<i>Hibbertia virgata</i>	Twiggy Guinea-flower	F
<i>Hydrocotyle laxiflora</i>	Stinking Pennywort	L
<i>Isopogon ceratophyllus</i>	Horny Cone-bush	L
<i>Leptoceras menziesii</i>	Hare Orchid	L
<i>Leptospermum continentale</i>	Prickly Tea-tree	L
<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>	Manuka	L
<i>Leucopogon ericoides</i>	Pink Beard-heath	F
<i>Leucopogon virgatus</i>	Common Beard-heath	L
<i>Lomandra filiformis</i>	Wattle Mat-rush	L
<i>Lomandra sororia</i>	Small Mat-rush	L
<i>Pelagonium rodneyanum</i>	Magenta Stork's-bill	L
<i>Platylobium obtusangulum</i>	Common Flat-pea	L
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	Bracken	L
<i>Pterostylis melagramma</i>	Tall Greenhood	L
<i>Pultenea humilis</i>	Dwarf Bush-pea	L
<i>Pyrorchis nigricans</i>	Red Beaks Orchid	L
<i>Senecio quadridentatus</i>	Cotton Fireweed	L
<i>Senecio squarrosus</i>	Leafy Fireweed	L
<i>Stenantha conostephioides</i>	Flame Heath	F
<i>Styphelia adscendens</i>	Golden Heath	F
<i>Styphelia humifusa</i>	Cranberry Heath	L
<i>Tetratea ciliata</i>	Pink-bells	L
<i>Viola hederacea</i>	Ivy-leaved Violet	L
<i>Xanthorrhoea minor</i>	Small Grass-tree	L

F = plants with flowers

L = plants without flowers and identified by leaves