

# HFNC canoeing campout, 18-21 March 2022: Moleside to Sapling Creek in the Lower Glenelg National Park

Diane Luhrs

Participants (15): Whole weekend – Diane Luhrs (co-ordinator), Yvonne Ingeme, Reto Zollinger (RZ), Peter Hocking, Christine Ingeme, Patricia Sokolic, Felicity Sokolic  
Saturday – Janeen Samuel, Wendy and Peter McDonald  
Saturday and Sunday – Amanda Bush and Peter Hield  
Saturday to Monday – George Turner (GT), Steve (SM) and Debra Martinich

The weekend campout along the Glenelg River from Moleside Camping Ground to Sapling Creek allowed for multiple forms of participation with some participating in the day-time activities but not camping, one electing to not canoe but to spend the time in the bush along the riverside and another electing to canoe for one day and then to enjoy the bush and to explore nearby places. We were extremely fortunate that the weather was perfect for all activities – beautifully calm and sunny (not too hot) days. The campers noticed that night-time temperatures did drop significantly to make for very cold nights, but there were enough blankets for everyone to sleep well. The joy was to see Azure Kingfishers on the river each day (total = 14 for three days of paddling). We also enjoyed seeing many Eastern Yellow Robins at each camping spot along the river, and Gang Gang Cockatoos were plentiful – with many adults feeding juveniles at each camp.

Sightings at Moleside included:

Australian Magpie

Azure Kingfisher (3)

Brown Thornbill

Crimson Rosella

Eastern Yellow Robin (3)

Forest Raven

Gang Gang Cockatoo (many)

Golden Whistler

Grey Fantail

Grey Shrike-thrush

New Holland Honeyeater

Pied Currawong

Red Wattlebird

Silver Eye

Superb Fairy-wren

Tawny Frogmouth (heard)

Wedge-tailed Eagle

Welcome Swallow

White-throated Treecreeper

Yellow-faced Honeyeater

Koala



First night's camping – Pat, Felicity, Yvonne, Reto, Christine, Peter



There was even time for Diane to knit in front of the camp fire



Red-necked Wallaby

On Saturday morning, Ross and Marg Atkins, proprietors of Paestons Canoe Hire at Winnap, delivered Janeen and Peter and Wendy and the canoes and kayaks for those who hired them. They gave a thorough demonstration for the novices on how to manage the watercraft and of how to board and alight from them.

As the group was allowing for car shuffles between camping sites, all camping gear was loaded into the vehicles – packed lunches and water to drink that would be carried by the paddlers. Pat and Reto drove to Pritchards to leave one vehicle there and returned to Moleside to join the group. While they were away, the novices launched their watercraft and practiced paddling forwards and in reverse and steering. Once Reto and Pat had returned, all set off down river with Yvonne and Reto as leaders on the river. They stopped for lunch at Wild Dog Bend and had a rest stop at Saunders Landing before arriving at Pritchards for Saturday night's camping (camp sites 19 & 20).

The day's canoeing had been very successful with everyone making it without too much hassle – although the novices did feel the effect of all the paddling on their arms and shoulders. Paddlers were pleased to be joined by Steve and Debra in their foot-paddle kayaks coming from Pritchards and returning with them. Ross from Paeston's was waiting to pick up Janeen, Wendy and Peter and a canoe and kayak. At Pritchards, we were joined by Amanda, Peter and George making a party of 8 campers across two campsites that night.

New sightings along the river and at Pritchards included:

Black Swan  
Common Bronzewing  
Emu  
Galah  
Grey Fantail  
Laughing Kookaburra

Little Pied Cormorant  
Long-billed Corella  
Pacific Black Duck  
Purple Swamphen  
Rufous Bristlebird (heard)  
Silvereeye

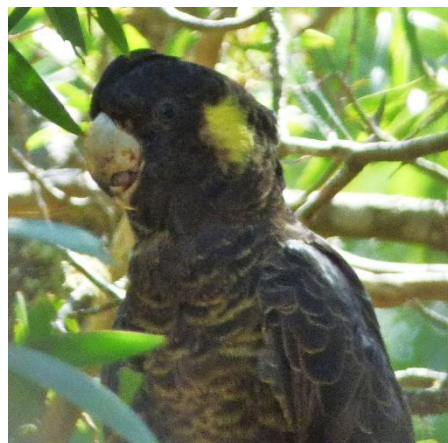
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo  
White-browed Scrub-wren  
White-faced Heron  
Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo  
Echidna  
Snakes (2)



Looking down over Moleside Jetty



... and they are off



Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo



Ross explains how to operate a kayak



White-browed Scrub-wren



Some practice before setting off:  
Janeen, Peter, Christine, Felicity



Superb Fairy-wren – immature and adult males



Arriving at Pritchards (SM)



A wave ...

After a leisurely start to Sunday, Reto and Felicity organized the car shuffle to Battersbys. On their return, 8 people returned to the water for the next stage of paddling from Pritchards to Battersbys.

Felicity decided to use the day to explore Nelson and Mt Gambier and I enjoyed spending more time birding at Pritchards, Saunders Landing and at Battersbys. Amanda and Peter left the group to return home at the end of the day's paddling. Battersbys provided a treat for us with a very sociable Rufous Bristlebird, and

many of us took photographs to record this usually very shy bird. This evening, Felicity produced a packet of marsh-mellows for us to enjoy after roasting them on the campfire.

New sightings at Pritchards, along the river and at Battersbys included:

Blue-billed duck (1)  
Chestnut Teal  
Darter  
Olive Whistler  
Purple-crowned Lorikeet  
Red-browed Finch

Rufous Bristlebird  
Shining Bronze Cuckoo  
Spotted Pardalote  
Wedge-tailed Eagles (2)  
Wood Duck

Peter's ant dance (after sitting on an ant's nest)  
Brown Snake (at jetty)  
Brush-tailed Possum  
Ring-tailed Possum



Preparing to set out for the day: Reto, Peter, Peter and Amanda



Azure Kingfisher (RZ)



New Holland Honeyeater



Peter Hocking leading the group (GT)



View near Battersbys – Glenelg Dr



Rufous Bristlebird



Steve & Debra in peddle canoes (RZ)



Gang Gang Cockatoo



Eastern Yellow Robin



The Glenelg River (RZ)



Purple-crowned Lorikeet



Pacific Black Duck (GT)



Battersbys jetty



A very sleepy Koala near the campsite



Yvonne and Reto cook their fish dinner – George in the background



Dinner around the campfire (GT): Yvonne, Reto, Felicity, Christine, Pat, Peter

As Monday 21<sup>st</sup> was to be our last day of paddling, we made an effort to depart the camp a bit earlier than on the previous days so that we would be at the last jetty at Sapling Creek in time to meet Marg from Paeston’s between 12.30 and 1.00 pm for the canoe pick-up. And the paddlers made it on time after a brief stop at Forest Camp South to stretch the legs. I arrived at Sapling Creek after driving through the magnificent Stringybark forest with large patches of Grass Trees (*Xanthorrhoea* sp.).

We helped Marg load the hire canoes and equipment. Peter headed back with Marg to collect his vehicle left at Paeston’s on Saturday morning. Marg also took Reto and George back to where their vehicles were left so that they could return to load up their canoes. After George and Reto returned we enjoyed our last picnic together. All agreed it had been a most enjoyable weekend made even more so by the superb weather for canoeing and camping.

New sightings at Sapling Creek:  
Striated Pardalote (heard)

White-naped Honeyeater



Yvonne and Reto



Limestone stalactites from now flooded and exposed caverns at the river’s edge (SM)



Picnic lunch at Sapling Creek: Felicity, Christine, Debra, Pat, Steve, Yvonne



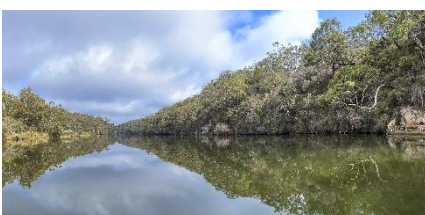
Eucalypt branches provide roosting spots for birds (SM)



White-faced Heron (SM)



Arrival at Sapling Ck



Perfect reflections (SM)



Brown Stringybark on the Glenelg Dr

**Birds for the weekend** (44 species)

Australasian Darter	Golden Whistler	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo
Australian Magpie	Grey Fantail	Silvereye
Australian Wood Duck	Grey Shrike-thrush	Spotted Pardalote
Azure Kingfisher (3)	Laughing Kookaburra	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Black Swan	Little Pied Cormorant	Superb Fairy-wren
Blue-billed Duck (1)	Long-billed Corella	Tawny Frogmouth (heard)
Brown Thornbill	New Holland Honeyeater	Wedge-tailed Eagle
Chestnut Teal	Olive Whistler	Welcome Swallow
Common Bronzewing	Pacific Black Duck	White-browed Scrub-wren
Crimson Rosella	Pied Currawong	White-faced Heron
Eastern Yellow Robin (3)	Purple Swamphen	White-naped Honeyeater
Emu	Purple-crowned Lorikeet	White-throated Treecreeper
Forest Raven	Red Wattlebird	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Galah	Red-browed Finch	Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo
Gang Gang Cockatoo (many)	Rufous Bristlebird	

Photos in this report were provided by Diane Luhrs, George Turner, Steve Martinich and Reto Zollinger).