

# HFNC Excursion to Dry Creek Native Forest Reserve, South Australia on 18 Mar. 2023

Steve Martinich.

**Participants:** Rod Bird, Diane Luhrs, Steve & Debra Martinich, Peter Hocking, Wendy & Peter McDonald, Ross Simpson, Glenys Cayley.

Early morning Southern Ocean mist tumbled in, tempering the forecast fire warnings. Overcast skies provided ideal walking conditions for the Dry Creek Trail located 3km North of Donavans in South Australia.

From the Dry Creek Trail car park, following along the clearly marked Wagon Trail Loop we stroll through (DC1 to DC4) savannah like grass lands. Sheltered in the ancient creek bed is a refuge of swamp gum, manna gum, stringybark and peppermint gum. The limestone skeleton of Dry Creek laid bare as it snakes towards the Glenelg River. A mob of cautious kangaroos bound to safer ground.



On a small forested rise there are several large and deep smooth shafts with warning fences. There is much discussion on how they might have formed . A daunting entrance to the home of the critically endangered southern bent wing bat.



Castle Rocks stands as sentinels to mark the track for wagons making their way between Mount Gambier, Port MacDonnell and Portland via McLennan's Punt on the Glenelg River. Iron wagon wheels have ground ruts in the limestone to mark the historic trading route.



Along the sandy bottom of Dry Creek there are many large burrows and “cubic” scats which we took to be evidence of wombats.



A very short drive to the sheltered and shady Dry Creek landing for lunch. Small birds take advantage of the large eucalypts nestled in Dry Creek gorge before it joins the Glenelg River. Some native raspberry grows amongst self-sown nectarines. Rustic shacks jostle for a riverside perch. Free campers enjoy the facilities, and many small boats make use of the landing.



Returning to the Dry Creek Trail car park we set off for the Glenelg River part of the Dry Creek Trail to the lookout (DC1 to DC8).

Low open scrub gives way to a clearing that provides an expansive vista of the Dry Creek valley. Suddenly the vegetation changes and large mature stringybark trees provide canopy as we approach the Glenelg River limestone cliffs.



Bracken marks the entrance to the aptly named Grass Tree Hill. Fine specimens of grass tree with tall flowering stems line our path. Occasionally there is a Silver Banksia in flower.

Occasionally we glimpse the smooth reflection of the Glenelg River below as it gently flows to the Southern Ocean.



There is a welcome sea breeze rustling through the forest, funnelling up the Glenelg River gorge. A lookout balcony beckons with fine river views down the cliffs festooned with Moonahs in full bloom.



We re-trace our steps back to the carpark. For some, Dry Creek was new country and a springtime visit to see wildflower gully, the mossy forest and native grasslands might be a future excursion.

Thanks to Wendy McDonald for the flora and fauna list and to Rod Bird, Diane Luhrs & Peter Hocking for feedback.

Common Name	Location
Little Wattlebird	Nelson Picnic Area
New Holland Honeyeater	“
Silver Gull	“
Australian Magpie	“
White-browed Scrubwren	“
Red Wattlebird	Dry Creek walk
Pied Currawong	“
Grey Fantail	“
Australian Magpie	“
Galah	“
Superb fairy-wren	“
Wedge-tailed Eagle	“
Fork-tailed Swift	“
New Holland Honeyeater	Dry Creek Camp area
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	“
Crimson Rosella	“
White-browed Scrubwren	“
Forest Raven	“
Brown Thornbill	Dry Creek River walk
White-throated Treecreeper	“
Forest Raven	En route
Emu	“
Grey Kangaroo	Dry Creek walk
Swamp Wallaby	“
Fox	“

Common Name	Scientific Name	Location
Coastal Beard Heath	<i>Leucopogon parviflorus</i>	Dry Creek Walk
Brown Stringybark	<i>Eucalyptus baxteri</i>	“
Sallow Wattle	<i>Acacia longifolia</i>	“
Western Peppermint	<i>E. falciformis</i>	“
Messmate	<i>E. oblique</i>	“
Silver Banksia	<i>Banksia marginata</i>	Dry Creek Camp Area
Native Raspberry	<i>Rubus parvifolius</i>	“
Black Wattle	<i>Acacia mearnsii</i>	Dry Creek River Walk
Swamp Gum	<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i>	“
Silver Banksia	<i>Banksia marginata</i>	“
Brown Stringybark	<i>Eucalyptus baxteri</i>	“
Grass Tree	<i>Xanthorrhoea australis</i>	“
Cranberry Heath	<i>Astroloma humifusum</i>	“
Sweet Bursaria	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	“
Blue Bell	<i>Wahlenbergia stricta</i>	“
Moonah	<i>Melaleuca lanceolata</i>	“
Sallow Wattle	<i>Acacia longifolia</i>	“
White Spyridium	<i>Spyridium</i> sp.	“
Speargrass	<i>Austrostripa</i> sp.	“
Correa sp. See Note 1	<i>Correa</i> sp.	“
Milkmaids	<i>Burchardia umbellata</i>	“
Blue Pincushion	<i>Brunonia australis</i>	“
Everlasting . See Note 2	<i>Helichrysum</i> sp.	“
Pink weed. See Note 3		“
Blackwood	<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	“
Bluebell creeper (WA)	<i>Billardiera heterophylla</i>	“
Field Scabious	<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	“ An introduced species

Note 1 May have been *C. alba* (White Correa), if white-flowered. Otherwise it was *C. reflexa* (Common Correa), which may have green flowers

Note 2 May be Button Everlasting (*Coronidium scorpioides*)

Note 3 May be Common Centaury (*Centaurium erythraea*)