

HFNC Excursion to Weecurra State Forest & Wilkin Flora Reserve 30 September 2023

Diane Luhrs

Participants: D Luhrs & R Bird, P Lehmann, P Hocking, V Keiller & J Logan

The excursion plan mapped out by Rod and Diane 2 weeks earlier took us first to Weecurra State Forest where we hoped to see Brown Beaks (*Lyperanthus suaveolens*) in flower, and then on to Wilkin Flora & Fauna Reserve for a picnic lunch. Details of that route are shown in the Appendix.

Rod, Diane and Pam departed Hamilton at 9.00 am on a fine sunny day, aiming to meet some members (Peter, Virginia and Jo) at Digby at around 9.30 am. Along the way Rod's Jeep overheated as a result of a radiator hose leak, causing a change in plans. The RACV took the vehicle and Rod back to Hamilton. Meanwhile, Pam called Doug who enlisted the help of a friend to bring Pam's vehicle out to the wayside stop and the contingent at Digby came there too.

After conferring with those present, it was decided to reverse the order of the planned excursion to make it easier for the group to meet up at a definite locality. Peter, Virginia and Jo headed off first to Wilkin PS site via Casterton. After Doug arrived with Pam's vehicle, Pam and Diane drove to Wilkin via Digby and Casterton and met the others at the Wilkin School Reserve. They hadn't been there long. There was a large group camped at the school – vintage car people on a weekend campout – and thought we may have been part of their group. They were surprised that we were there to look for the spring flowers in the surrounding bush.

We had a great time looking for orchids at Wilkin – especially along the track behind the school – as well as seeing other species in flower too. In one small patch in particular we saw four different orchids within one square metre – a Beard Orchid, Waxlip, Leopard Orchid and Dotted Sun Orchid. Other orchids seen along this track included Salmon Sun Orchid, Slender Sun Orchid, and Tiny Fingers. The non-orchid species in flower included Smoke Bush, Peas including Running Postman, *Hibbertia* sp., Goodenia, Creamy Candles, Boronia, Trigger Plant, Tea-tree, Flame Heath, Beard Heath, Button Everlasting and Flax Lily.

Birds seen/heard in this area included Gang Gang Cockatoo, Superb Fairy-wren, Grey Fantail, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and Grey Shrike Thrush.

In the Wilkin Flora and Fauna Reserve



Thelymitra rubra – Salmon Sun Orchid



Thelymitra pauciflora – Slender Sun Orchid



Thelymitra ixioides – Dotted Sun Orchid



Caladenia pusilla – Tiny Fingers



Calochilus robertsonii – Purple Beard Orchid



Diuris curvifolia – Leopard Orchid



Goodenia geniculata – Bent Goodenia



Boronia sp.



Pultenea humilis – Dwarf Bush-pea



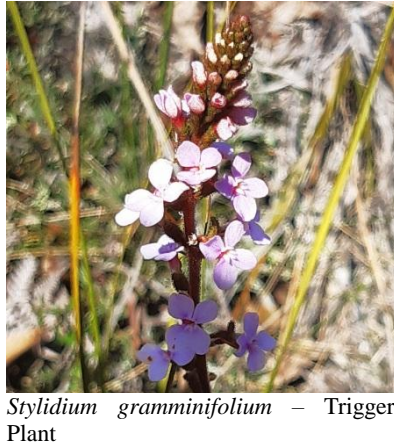
Stackhousia monogyna – Creamy Candles



Coronidium scorpioides – Button Everlasting



Dillwynia sericea – Showy Parrot-pea



Stylidium graminifolium – Trigger Plant



Stenantha conostephioides – Flame Heath



Hibbertia stricta – Erect Guinea-flower



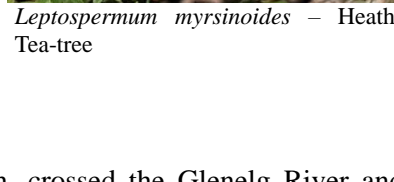
Leptospermum myrsinoides – Heath Tea-tree



Leucopogon sp. – a white Beard Heath



Kennedia prostrata – Running Postman



Leptospermum myrsinoides – Heath Tea-tree



Dianella revoluta – Black-anther Flax Lily

From Wilkin west we drove south, crossed the Glenelg River and then drove north along the West Killander Forest Rd and stopped at the heathland in Wilkin East that Rod and I had discovered on our pre-excursion survey (see Appendix). We set up our chairs here on clear spaces in the heath and enjoyed our lunch surrounded by heath, white everlasting daisies, pea plants, Running Postman, Pink Boronia and lots of yellows. We didn't see any orchids in flower here. We could hear the Laughing Kookaburras, Crimson Rosellas and had quite a discussion about a honeyeater flitting overhead in the Brown Stringybarks – which one? In the end we were able to see its head and to identify it as a White-eared Honeyeater.



Lunch at Wilkin heathland: Virginia, Jo, Pam and Peter amidst the Heath Tea-tree and orange pea flowers.



Epacris impressa – Common Heath



Dillwynia sericea – Showy Parrot-pea



Leptospermum sp. – Heath Tea-tree



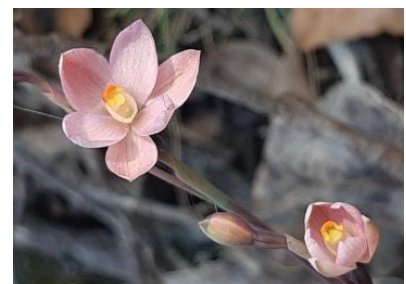
From Wilkin we travelled via the Casterton/Dartmoor Rd (seeing two Brolga as we passed by Pieracles Swamp) to the Strathdownie/Digby Rd to find Rocky Den Rd and the pile of large logs that marks the place to park. From here it is a short walk to find the *Lyperanthus suaveolens* Brown Beak Orchids.

Well, like last time, the strappy leaves were visible and indicated many plants present – but none were in flower. We did see *Glossodias* and *Caladenias* as well as other spring flowers. And having arrived at the proposed first place of the tour as the last place, the excursion ended and we each went our own ways home. Pam dropped me off at home.

Weecurra State Forest



Thelymitra rubra – Salmon Sun Orchid; there were lots of them.





Glossodia major – Wax-lip Orchid



Craspedia variabilis – Billy-buttons



Bossiaea prostrata – Creeping Bossiaea



Calochilus robertsonii – Purple Beard Orchid in bud



A *Brachyscome* daisy



Viola hederacea – Ivy-leaf Violet



Our tree of interest



Thelymitra antennifera – Rabbit Ears Orchid

Birds seen for the day:

Brolga
Gang Gang Cockatoo
Crimson Rosella

Laughing Kookaburra
Superb Fairy-wren
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

Grey Fantail
Grey Shrike Thrush
White-eared Honeyeater

Plant List

Species Name	Common Name
<i>Boronia pilosa</i>	Hairy Boronia
<i>Boronia</i> sp.	Boronia
<i>Bossiaea prostrata</i> .	Creeping Bossiaea
<i>Caladenia pusilla</i>	Tiny Fingers
<i>Calochilus robertsonii</i>	Purple Beard Orchid
<i>Coronidium scorpioides</i>	Button Everlasting
<i>Craspedia variabilis</i>	Billy-buttons
<i>Dianella revoluta</i>	Black-anther Flax-lily
<i>Dillwynia sericea</i>	Showy Parrot-pea
<i>Diuris curviflora</i>	Leopard Orchid
<i>Epacris impressa</i>	Common Heath
<i>Glossodia major</i>	Wax-lip Orchid
<i>Goodenia geniculata</i>	Bent Goodenia

<i>Hibbertia stricta</i>	Erect Guinea-flower
<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	Running Postman
<i>Leptospermum continentale</i>	Prickly Tea-tree
<i>Leptospermum myrsinoides</i>	Heath Tea-tree
<i>Leucopogon</i> sp.	a white Beard Heath
<i>Pultenaea humilis</i>	Dwarf Bush-pea
<i>Stackhousia monogyna</i>	Creamy Candles
<i>Stenanthera conostephioides</i>	Flame Heath
<i>Stylidium graminifolium</i>	Grass Trigger-plant
<i>Thelymitra antennifera</i>	Rabbit Ears Orchid
<i>Thelymitra ixioides</i>	Dotted Sun Orchid
<i>Thelymitra pauciflora</i>	Slender Sun Orchid
<i>Thelymitra rubra</i>	Salmon Sun Orchid
<i>Viola hederacea</i>	Ivy-leaf Violet

Appendix: Proposed route of the Weecurra and Wilkin excursion

Weecurra, Wilkin & Drajurk Excursion

- (00) At **Digby** turn north on Casterton Rd for about 1 km
- (01) At 0.0 km (set your odometer), turn left on **Strathdownie Rd**
- (02) At 7.1 km, perhaps stop at pool on roadside - melaleuca
- (03) At 10.5 km, turn left on **Rocky Den Rd**
- (04) At 13.0 km, stop at log pile near pines – look for wildflowers and morning tea stop
- (05) At 15.5 km, back at **Strathdownie Rd**, turn left (west)
- (06) At 27.0 km turn right at **Dartmoor-Casterton Rd** and go past Pieracles Swamp
- (07) At 42.7 km, turn left onto **North Killara Forest Rd**
- (08) At 44.4 km, turn left onto **West Killara Forest Rd**, through Wilkin Flora Res (East block)
- (09) At 44.7 km, stop at a wet heath site to look at wildflowers
- (10) At 54.1 km, cross the **Range Rd West**
- (11) At 56.8 km, turn right on **Pieracles-Myaring Rd**
- (12) At 58.5 km, cross the bridge over the **Glenelg River**
- (13) At 59.0 km, turn right onto **Grubbed Rd** (sealed)
- (14) At 62.2 km is the start of **Wilkin Flora Res (West block)**
- (15) At 63.3 km, stop near 2 big trees on LHS, perhaps look for orchids in the bush
- (16) At 65.4 km, turn right onto **Wilkin School Rd**
- (17) At 67.5 km, arrive at **Wilkin School (Community Hall)** – walk on adjacent track
- (18) Return on the Wilkin School Rd to Grubbed Rd
- (19) Turn right on **Grubbed Rd**
- (20) At about 73 km is the north end of Wilkin Flora Res
- (21) At about 75.5 km is the **Glenelg Highway** – turn right towards Casterton
- (22) At about 78.0 km is **Sandy Tk, Drajurk State Forest** (a floristically spectacular area)
- (23) Either continue on the Glenelg HWay to Casterton OR turn onto Sandy Tk and meet Penola Rd after about 6 km, then turn right to **Casterton**.

