



## NEWSLETTER: DECEMBER 2019

### **Rolfes Reserve, Tyabb 2nd September**

Our destination for our regular birding outing in September was Gordon Rolfe Reserve/North Westernport Nature Conservation Reserve (the two reserves are adjoining; for convenience we call it all 'Rolfes Reserve'). While the main purpose of the day was birdwatching, being full-time field naturalists and only part-time twitchers we were diverted by the many other attractions of the location, namely various plants and animals.

The bush was not in full bloom but there were a few Acacias — *A. longifolia*, *A. oxycedrus* and *A. paradoxa* — along with Showy Bossiaea, Bundled Guinea-flower, Common Heath, and the small plant with the big flower, Scented Sundew. The most abundant flowering plant was Coast Tea-tree. The Wedding Bush was in bud but not yet in flower. Under the flowering Coast Tea-tree was a carpet of orchids.



All Photos: Lee Denis

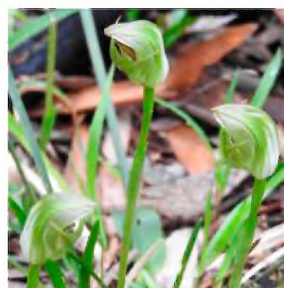
There were plenty of birds though, our final count being 45. A pair of swans was nesting on the wetland, on which there were very few other birds — eventually we sighted a couple of Coots and a pair of Black Ducks, some Swampheens and Australasian Grebe. A Black-shouldered Kite was perched in a dead tree overlooking the water. There were a few more waterbirds in the farm dam nearby.

Bush birds were the main sightings, but not in great numbers. Raptors included Swamp Harriers and a Whistling Kite; there were relatively few honeyeaters. Golden Whistlers were loud but hard to see, a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike put in an appearance, and White-fronted Chats were the only birds sighted on the salt marsh.

The wetland was alive with frog-calls. We could identify Pobblebonk, Common Froglet and Striped Marsh Frog.



*Eastern Long-necked Turtle*



*Blunt Greenhoods*



*Mayfly Orchids*

There was a large colony of Mosquito Orchids (*Acianthus pusilla*), which had largely finished flowering; an equally large patch of Mayfly Orchids (*A. caudatus*) just beginning to flower, and five species of Pterostylis: *P. concinna* (Trim Greenhood), *P. curta* (Blunt), *P. melagramma* (Tall), *P. nutans* (Nodding) and *P. pedunculata* (Maroonhood).



We were delighted with two sightings of Echidnas strolling across the tracks; we also came across an Eastern Long-necked Turtle (*Chelodina longicollis*). The final sighting for the day — a Koala perched in a dead Blackwood.— **Lee Denis**

Black Swan	Purple Swamphen	Rainbow Lorikeet	White-eared Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike
Australian Wood Duck	Dusky Moorhen	Eastern Rosella	White-plumed Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird
Pacific Black Duck	Eurasian Coot	Laughing Kookaburra	New Holland Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Australasian Grebe	Masked Lapwing	Superb Fairy-wren	White-fronted Chat	Grey Currawong
Australian White Ibis	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Yellow Robin	Australian Raven
Straw-necked Ibis	Common Bronzewing	White-browed Scrubwren	Golden Whistler	Little Raven
Black-shouldered Kite	Crested Pigeon	Brown Thornbill	Grey Shrike-thrush	Welcome Swallow
Whistling Kite	Galah	Red Wattlebird	Magpie-Lark	Common Blackbird
Swamp Harrier	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Noisy Miner	Grey Fantail	Common Myna

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**BERG- 21 Years of Vegetation and Habitat Restoration of the Balcombe Estuary Reserves, Mt Martha**

**Liz Barraclough, Field Officer, BERG – 11th September 2019**

The Balcombe Creek catchments start at the back of the Moorooduc Quarry at Mt Eliza, and also Devilbend Reservoir, and run into the sea at Mt Martha via the Estuary. The Estuary is popular for passive recreation, with a picnic ground and playground in the old campground site, which closed in 1986. The Boardwalk to The Briars is 3km, is wheelchair accessible, and used for bike riding, family walks and dog walking.

BERG is a very successful group with 500 members and 75 active volunteers. The group started 21 years ago when it was proposed to use the space for tennis courts and ovals. The public campaign to keep it as habitat and passive recreation led to the restoration of natural values.

The group’s activities include - site assessment, removal of pest plants, planting of indigenous plants, and control of feral animals such as foxes and rabbits. Water Watch and Estuary Watch, testing water quality. Building community awareness, knowledge and involvement, and working with other groups such as schools, universities, other environmental groups, and clubs, such as Rotary and the Yacht Club.

They have four on-ground working bee groups – the weekly Friday mornings, and monthly Bunyip on Tuesdays, Sunday Group and Coastal Wednesday groups.

Common weeds are Broom, Polygala and Mirror bush. When they plant new plants they have to erect wire fences to keep the rabbits out. Resident fauna includes birds, echidna, reptiles, micro bats, swamp rats and short finned eels. The short finned eels mass up waiting for the Estuary

to open to the sea. Sometimes people illegally dig a channel to see the water run out.

One of their successes was the former car park near the soccer ground, which was being used as an illegal rubbish dump. With Mornington Peninsula Shire’s help, they removed the rubbish, ripped the compacted ground, replanted and mulched. This site has great vegetation now.

They apply for grants - \$50-100,000 per annum, which also brings in the Shire. They raise community awareness with signage, newsletters and brochures. They involve school groups with weeding, assessing water health and litter audits. This established that the litter in the Estuary came from the Bay.

Ongoing local issues: dogs off lead, garden plants escaping into the reserve, dumping of litter, the loss of big trees due to possum browsing, and sedimentation. Unmade roads are part of the charm of Mt Martha, but the sediment is filling the Estuary, via eight drains. Each drain needs a different approach to capture the sediment, such as sediment traps and basins.

An interesting tip – to control Tradescantia, solarise it by covering with black plastic for 6 months over summer.

A new bird hide has been erected recently.

The BERG story is a remarkable success for both public recreation and the restoration of natural values. — **Judy Smart**

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**Crib Point and Stony Point  
14th September**

One perfect Spring day we went to see as much as we could of the flowers and orchids of this beautiful area. This time we were a month earlier than usual, to see what was different, and that we usually miss. The mosquitoes were as fierce as ever, that didn’t change. We saw Donkey orchids at every site, in good numbers. There were greenhoods still

out, but we were a few weeks early for the sun orchids. The highlight of the day was the Blue Fairy orchid at Stony Point, a rare sight for us.

We started at Lorimer St, where the flowers were prolific as always, and the site is well managed, being slashed in

January to keep the shrubs from taking over. There were plenty of donkey orchids, and sun orchids in bud. The swamp daisies were pretty, and the wattles in flower.



*Donkey Orchid at Lorimer St. All Photos: Lee Denis*

Next was Cyril Fox Reserve, Milne St Crib Point, where the brown beaks were in great numbers, along with the donkeys.

We had lunch at Woolleys Beach, and only just missed the ceremonial opening of the new toilet block, several hours earlier. There was a big patch of gnat orchids in the median strip, and a good sized patch of blunt greenhoods near the new toilets, fortunately not damaged in the construction.



*Gnat Orchid at Woolleys Beach*

*Brown Beaks at Milne St*

We finished up at Stony Point railway line, where the first thing we saw was a Blue Fairy orchid, quite an exciting sight. The tall leek orchids were in good numbers and condition, but we didn't see any of the other 2 species usually seen there. The sun orchids were only just starting. All in all, almost as good as a month later, and well worth repeating. — **Judy Smart**

**Orchids**

**Lorimer St**

- Caladenia* sp - Spider orchid - 1 only
- Cyrtostylis subulata* - large tongue orchid (in bud)
- Diurus orientis* - Donkeys
- Thelymitra antennifera* - Rabbits ears - in bud
- Thelymitra* sp. - tall sun orchids

**Cyril Fox Reserve, Milne St**

- Diurus orientis* - Donkeys
- Lyperanthus suavolens* - Brown beaks
- Pterostylis melagramma* - tall greenhoods

**Woolleys Beach**

- Acianthus pusillus* - mosquitos
- Cyrtostylis reniformes* - gnat orchids
- Diurus orientis* - Donkeys
- Pterostylis curta* - blunt greenhood
- Pterostylis nutans* - nodding greenhood

**Stony Point railway line**

- Pheladenia deformis* - Blue fairies - 1 only
- Diurus orientis* - Donkeys
- Prasophyllum elatum* - Tall leek-orchid

**Flora list – in flower, and caught my eye**

- Acacia longifolia*
- Acacia paradoxa*
- Acacia suavolens* - Sweet Wattle
- Billardiera scandens* – apple berry
- Bossiaea prostrata* - Creeping Bossiaea
- Brachyscome cardiocarpa* - Swamp daisy
- Chamaescilla corymbosa* - Blue stars
- Comesperma volubile* - love creeper
- Coronidium scorpioides* – Sunray
- Daviesia latifolia* - Hop Bitter-pea
- Dianella revoluta* - Flax Lily
- Dillwynia glaberrima* -parrot pea
- Epacris impressa* – Common Heath
- Hakea ulicina* – furze hakea
- Hibbertia riparia* – erect guinea flower
- Hypoxis vaginata* - Yellow stars
- Isopogon ceratophyllus* – horny cone-bush
- Kennedia prostrata* – running postman
- Leptospermum continentale* – prickly tea tree
- Leucopogon virgatus* - twiggy beard-heath
- Pimelea humilis* – dwarf rice flower
- Platylobium obtusangulum* – common flat pea
- Thysanotus patersonii* – twining fringe lily
- Wahlenbergia* sp – bluebell
- Wurmbea dioica* - Early Nancy
- Xanthorrhoea minor* ssp *lutea*- dwarf grass tree



*Blue Fairy at Stony Pt*

### Birding at Devilbend 30th September

Four members attended on a cloudy but fine day, winds light. Beginning from the Graydens Rd picnic ground we walked the circuit around the edge of the water, seeing 42 species of birds on the way, comparatively few of which were water birds. Coots were the most numerous, as usual, with a number of Swans, the odd Australasian Grebe and three different Cormorants. Pelicans and a lone Caspian Tern accounted for the rest, apart from a magnificent view of a White-bellied Sea-eagle soaring over our heads.

The majority of the birds sighted were bush birds, including Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoos, Swamp Harrier, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Crimson and Eastern Rosellas, and a number of honeyeaters. An Olive-backed Oriole could be heard in the distance, while Clamorous Reed-warblers were heard and briefly seen; ditto for a Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

For lunch we adjourned to Bittern Reservoir, mainly because the Graydens Rd picnic ground was overrun with children. The only birds on this reservoir were Coots, and four Musk Ducks. Across the road there were a few more bush birds, and in the wetland adjacent to the farmland were a Darter, nesting Swans, Chestnut Teal and Black Ducks and Swampheens. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were noisy in the trees overhead, and a large mob of kangaroos decided to leave as we arrived. A couple of Nankeen Kestrels completed our raptor sightings.

Our final total of 54 birds felt to us like a satisfactory result.

We looked for orchids, finding none along the Orchid Track, but a lot of closed sun orchids around the shore of Devilbend Reservoir. — **Lee Denis**



All Photos: Lee Denis

Musk Duck	Australian White Ibis	Common Bronzewing	Red Wattlebird	Olive-backed Oriole
Black Swan	Straw-necked Ibis	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Little Wattlebird	Dusky Woodswallow
Australian Wood Duck	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Galah	Noisy Miner	Grey Butcherbird
Pacific Black Duck	Swamp Harrier	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Chestnut Teal	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Crimson Rosella	White-eared Honeyeater	Grey Currawong
Australasian Grebe	Nankeen Kestrel	Eastern Rosella	New Holland Honeyeater	Little Raven
Darter	Purple Swamphean	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Eastern Yellow Robin	Welcome Swallow
Little Pied Cormorant	Eurasian Coot	Laughing Kookaburra	Grey Shrike-thrush	Clamorous Reed-Warbler
Little Black Cormorant	Masked Lapwing	Superb Fairy-wren	Magpie-Lark	Common Blackbird
Great Cormorant	Caspian Tern	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Fantail	Common Starling
Australian Pelican	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Brown Thornbill	Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike	Common Myna

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### **Pieces of Paradise – Australia’s Northwest Islands** **Tania Ireton, 9th October**

This was Tania’s third talk to us—her previous ones were on Sub-Antarctic islands, so a change of scenery this time. The islands visited were Ashmore Reef, Lacapedes Is, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, and Christmas Is. Ashmore Reef is between Timor and northern Australia, and is 3 islets surrounded by large sandbanks. There is limited access to West Islet, and usually none to Middle and East Islands, because they are Nature Reserves, and also

have extremely shallow access. Because they were doing a bird survey, they were able to visit all three.

The vegetation on West Islet is a few palm trees, low scrub and sparse grasses; just grass cover on the other two. The birds are in great numbers, as well as great variety. The residents are Boobies – Brown and Masked, Noddies esp Brown, Tropic birds, Frigate birds, Grey-tailed Tattler. Then

there are the vagrants, such as Island Monarch, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Oriental Reed Warbler, Barn Swallow, Eastern Yellow Wagtail and Collared Kingfisher. There were turtles nesting on the beach, and in the water sea snakes and an Oamai Whale.

Lacapedes Island is very sandy, and had turtles nesting and Gilbert's dragons as well as birds.

Cocos (Keeling) Islands consists of coral atolls around a central lagoon, and is 2300km north west of Perth, towards Jakarta. The islands were settled by the Clunies-Ross family as coconut palm plantations, with imported Malaysian workers. They completely cleared the rainforest (except on North Keeling Is). There are no passerines (song birds) resident, only vagrants. Saunders Terns, from the Middle East, are resident there, their only Australian home. There are lots of herons, Frigate Birds, White Terns, Red-

footed Boobies and Green Jungle Fowl, a spectacular resident. The golf course doubles as an airfield. The snorkelling was good, especially as there are no crocodiles, but Tania did see a dugong.

Christmas Island is the top of an undersea mountain, covered in rainforest, with high limestone cliffs. There is a detention centre there. The famous Christmas Island red crabs migrate in their thousands to the water's edge to lay their eggs. They need rain and a full moon for this. The robber crabs are famous too – huge carrion eaters, including eating a dead cat. Some of the fabulous birds were Imperial Pigeons, Christmas Boobook, Golden Bosun Bird as well as Silver Bosun Bird, and Christmas Is Goshawk.

Next time Tania is going to speak on the Desert. — **Judy Smart**

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### SEANA Camp, Castlemaine 4-7 October

This year's SEANA spring campout was held in the central goldfields, based around Castlemaine. In all ten members and associates of PFNC attended—with seven squeezing into a tiny cottage located at the back of a former pub that dates back to the goldrush. Castlemaine was the last posting of police sergeant Robert O'Hara Burke before he set off on the ill-fated attempt to cross the continent from south to north. A considerable monument stands on a hill to commemorate the expedition.

a Pallid Cuckoo.

Meetings and meals were held in nearby Campbells Creek, with excursions covering a wide area extending as far as Kyneton. Evening speakers were Geoff Park, a local field naturalist who showed some of his photos of local birds, and Dr Tim Entwisle, the Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens—who grew up in Castlemaine—speaking about Joseph Banks' herbarium.



Leopard Orchid. Photo: Judy Smart

Members of our group largely separated for the excursions. Reports on some of them are presented below.

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#### Kalimna Park Excursion

Kalimna Park is a bushland area a short walk east of Castlemaine on the edge of town. It is a rocky ridge, and is part of the Castlemaine FNC's regular 'Wednesday Wildflower Wanders' during September. We soon saw why, as conditions were dry but there was a glorious display of wildflowers. Yellow dominated, with the gold dust and rough wattles still in flower, sticky everlasting everywhere, and more yam daisies than I had ever seen before. Orchids were plentiful too – lots of wax lips, leopard orchids and pink fingers. Add to this waxflowers, mauve rough mint bush, pink bells, two kinds of bitter-peas, early nancy, creamy candles and many more (see list). There were plenty of birds I forgot to list, highlights being a Scarlet Robin and

Thanks to our leaders, Peter and Rosemary Turner, and the Castlemaine FNC our splendid hosts for the weekend, and the comprehensive brochures which helped us to identify the many and beautiful flowers. — **Judy Smart**

#### Kalimna Park Wildflowers 6th October 2019

- |                              |                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Caladenia</i> sp.         | Pink Fingers           |
| <i>Diuris pardina</i>        | Leopard Orchid         |
| <i>Glossodia major</i>       | Waxlip                 |
| <i>Acacia acinacea</i>       | Gold-dust Wattle       |
| <i>Acacia aspera</i>         | Rough Wattle           |
| <i>Craspedia variabilis</i>  | Billy buttons          |
| <i>Drosera</i> sp.           | Sundews                |
| <i>Daviesia leptophylla</i>  | Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea |
| <i>Daviesia ulicifolia</i>   | Gorse Bitter-pea       |
| <i>Goodenia blackiana</i>    | Primrose Goodenia      |
| <i>Grevillea alpina</i>      | Downy Grevillea        |
| <i>Microseris lanceolata</i> | Yam Daisy              |

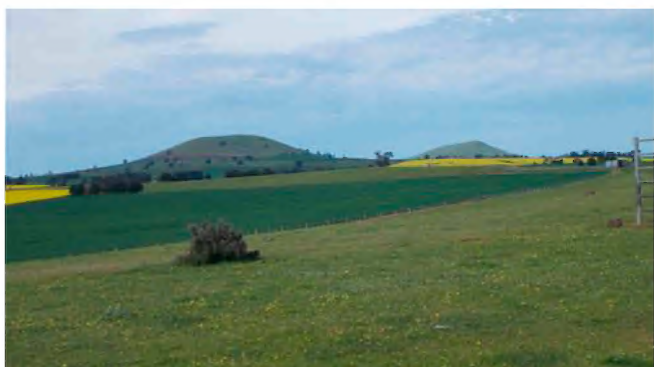
<i>Philothea verrucosa</i>	Fairy Waxflower
<i>Prostranthera denticulata</i>	Rough Mint-bush
<i>Stackhousia monogyna</i>	Creamy Candles
<i>Tetratheca ciliata</i>	Pink bells
<i>Wahlenbergia sp</i>	Bluebells
<i>Wurmbea dioica</i>	Early Nancy
<i>Xerochrysum viscosum</i>	Sticky Everlasting

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### Two Days at Castlemaine Goldfields

Our all day excursion on Saturday, October the 5th, started at Moolort Plains with a walk along the Long Swamp. Coralie, Heather and I joined a large group of naturalists led by Damien Cook, a wetland ecologist. We walked along dry wetland surface covered with native grass and wild flowers on basaltic soil. Mt Moolort, a volcanic crater in the north-east, is the most likely source of the basalt boulders all round the Plains.

After lunch at Rotunda Park in Newstead, our caravan, led by Professor Gary Gibson, a vulcanologist, drove south towards a number of volcanic cones. Equipped with very informative guide-papers and maps, we stopped and observed Moorookyle and Powlet Hill on the west and Mt Kooroocheang on the east side of the road. Mt Kooroocheang is one of the largest eruption points on the Victorian Central Plateau - it is a basaltic dune cone, 676 m above sea level. Mt Moorookyle is a prominent, heavily eroded, 600 m scoria cone.



*Mt Moorookyle (Left) and Mt Kooroocheang (Right)*  
Photo: Velimir Dragic

The oldest rocks in the area are Palaeozoic deep marine turbidites of the Castlemaine Group, which are located in the town of Castlemaine. They consist of thick imbedded turbidites and mudstone with occasional black shale. This anticlinal fold (see photo below) was formed 445 million years ago, when horizontal layers of sandstone and mudstone were squeezed by massive horizontal forces, from both the west and the east. It was uncovered in 1874 and remains unchanged today.

The next day, Heather, Doris and I joined the group for a Muckleford forest excursion and a visit to old Gold Rush mines on Red White & Blue quartz reef. When gold was found at the foot of Mount Tarrengower in 1853, and miners spread throughout the forest in pursuit of gold,

surrounding places quickly grew to become rich towns. Gold could be found everywhere: on the sandstone outcrops, quartz reefs and shallow alluvial (stream) deposits.



*The Lyttleton Street rocks show how the oceanic floor looked half a billion years ago. Photo by Velimir Dragic*

Early miners initially carried out shallow digging for alluvial gold deposits. As gold become harder to find miners used other methods such as sluicing, stream diversions and puddling machines to separate the gold. Later methods included quartz reef mining, open cut and shafts. Here at Red, White and Blue Reef, they started using steam-powered pumping and winding machinery.

From Maldon, quartz mining extended south along Sandy Creek and eastward all the way to the top of Mt Tarrangower. Shallow alluvial mining was also carried out extensively along Back Creek. Gold was found at Dunn's Reef in the 1850s. The first shaft was sunk into Red, White and Blue quartz reef in 1871. Between 1909 and 1915 a total of 2,269 ounces of gold was mined. — **Velimir Dragic**

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### Plants and Birds of the Goldfields

One of the appeals of attending a SEANA camp is finding out about a different part of the country from the locals. At the Castlemaine camp, as always, there were some different plants and birds and some that were quite familiar. Saturday morning saw us at Railway Dam, a local birding spot, where some of the birds not seen on the Peninsula were White-winged Chough, Fuscous Honeyeater, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike and Rufous Songlark. The majority of the birds were more familiar—such as White-throated Treecreeper, Eastern Yellow Robin, Crested Shrike-tit, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Yellow-faced and White-eared Honeyeaters. Pallid Cuckoo and Olive-backed Oriole were calling all morning; an Oriole was finally spotted, but not the Cuckoo.

We were also struck by the flowers—there seemed to be a carpet of Billy-buttons, Waxlip Orchids, Milkmaids, Yam Daisy and Early Nancy. This turned out to be typical of the whole weekend.

Saturday afternoon held a visit to Eureka Reef in the Castlemaine Diggings Historical Park. No new birds, but a couple of different plants in White Marianth and Primrose

Goodenia. A set tour takes you around the old mining works and settlement, including a chimney built by Cornish miners which, rather than being vertical in the traditional manner, consists of a covered channel going up the slope and getting the length and height that way. Here we found Gorse Bitter-pea and some Spider Orchids, but no-one could confidently say what species of Caladenia they were.



Granite Ridge at Bald Hills. Photo: Lee Denis

The next day's excursion was to Bald Hills Reserve near Kyneton, which includes two significant vegetation communities—Basalt Grassy Woodland and Granitic Grassy Woodland, both dominated by Manna Gum. There is also a third community, Valley Grassy Forest, in which the overstory is mostly Narrow-leaved Peppermint. Herbs included Swamp Daisy, Bulbine Lily, Common Buttercup, Austral Bears-ear and Tiny Violet. A white-winged Triller attracted a lot of attention, as did a koala. Our guides took us on a circuit showing us the revegetation efforts of the

Friends group.

Then on to Fryers Ridge NCR, with a walk along the Coliban Water Channel, still in use—in fact water began to flow as we were walking beside it. The most intriguing find there was an unusual introduced plant, called Miners Lettuce, which originates in the Americas and was used as a vegetable. It is in the Portulaca family



Miners Lettuce (Claytonia perfoliata). Photo: Lee Denis

My final excursion on Monday morning was to Muckleford Forest, primarily looking for orchids. Actually we didn't have to look, because the locals had already found them and led us to them. Orchids included Pink Fingers, Musky Caladenia, Swan Greenhood and Bearded Greenhood. Another unfamiliar plant was a small pea which the locals thought was a species of Dillwynia, although the leaves didn't quite match the description.

A weekend full of interest, and those in the cottage got to know each other a little better! —Lee Denis



Rough Wattle (*Acacia aspera*)

Austral Bear's-ear (*Cymbonotus preissianus*)

Downy Grevillea (*Grevillea alpina*)

Dillwynia phyllicoides (?)

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### Wonthaggi Heathlands 12th October

We last visited Wonthaggi Heathlands, principally a wildflower destination, quite a number of years ago. Once again we were shown around by Terri Allen of the Friends Group, on a fine but windy day. As Terri advised, most of the orchids seemed to be later this year, so we saw more leaves than flowers. Those noted in flower were various sun orchids *Thelymitra ixioides*, *T. pauciflora*, and *T. rubra*; a few Donkeys (*Diuris orientis*), and some Nodding Greenhoods (*Pterostylis nutans*). Leaves of Red-beaks, Slaty Helmet-orchids and Pink Fairies were also seen.

There was a profusion of other plants in flower; some of those not, or not commonly, seen on the Peninsula included *Pimelea serpyllifolia* (on the coastal dunes), *Viola seiberiana*, *Sphaerolobium vimineum*, *Stackhousea monogyna* and *Cynoglossum australe*. Terri also pointed out the Gippsland Peppermint *Eucalyptus willissii*, as well as all three species of Dodder-laurel.

We wound our way through the heathland down to the sea,

on the way noting the extensive stands of invasive Coast Tea-tree. On the dunes was the sea-spurge invading most of the Victorian coast, *Euphorbia paralias*.



View across the Heath. Photo by Lee Denis

We sighted a total of 20 bird species, including a Nankeen Kestrel hovering over the heath, Goldfinches, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Golden Whistler and Silvereyes. A mob of about 30 kangaroos watched us closely.

Our thanks to Terri.

On the way home we dropped in at the desalination plant and went for a short walk in the extensive pattern of trails. The plant itself is partly below ground and is surrounded by a large area of low scrub from which we were observed by a mob of kangaroos. A small wetland was home to White-fronted Chats.

<i>Diuris orientis</i>	Donkey Orchid
<i>Eucalyptus willissii</i>	Gippsland Peppermint
<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	Running Postman
<i>Leptospermum laevigatum</i>	Coast Tea-tree
<i>Leucopogon australis</i>	Spike Beard-heath
<i>Leucopogon parviflorus</i>	Coast Beard-heath
<i>Leucopogon virgatus</i>	Common Beard-heath
<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i>	Swamp Paperbark
<i>Melaleuca squarrosa</i>	Scented Paperbark
<i>Patersonia fragilis</i>	Short Purple-flag
<i>Patersonia occidentalis</i>	Purple Flag
<i>Pimelea humilis</i>	Common Rice-flower
<i>Pimelea serpyllifolia subsp serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme Rice-flower
<i>Pterostylis nutans</i>	Nodding Greenhood
<i>Pyrorchis nigricans (leaves)</i>	Red-beaks
<i>Senecio pinnatifolia</i>	Lance-leaf Groundsel
<i>Sphaerolobium minus</i>	Eastern Globe-pea
<i>Stackhousia monogyna</i>	Creamy Stackhousia
<i>Thelymitra ixioides</i>	Spotted Sun-orchid
<i>Thelymitra pauciflora</i>	Slender Sun-orchid
<i>Thelymitra rubra</i>	Salmon Sun-orchid
<i>Thysanotis pattersonii</i>	Twining Fringe-lily
<i>Viola hederacea</i>	Ivy-leaf Violet
<i>Viola seiberiana</i>	Tiny Violet
<i>Wahlenbergia (2 species)</i>	Bluebells

Plants in Flower - Wonthaggi Heathlands 12th October 2019	
<i>Acacia suaveolens</i>	Sweet Wattle
<i>Acacia verticillata</i>	Prickly Moses
<i>Acaena nova-zelandiae</i>	Bidgee-widgee
<i>Burchardia umbellata</i>	Milkmaids
<i>Caladenia latifolia (leaves)</i>	Pink Fairies
<i>Cassaytha glabella</i>	Slender Dodder-laurel
<i>Cassytha melantha</i>	Coarse Dodder-laurel
<i>Cassytha pubescens</i>	Downy Dodder-laurel
<i>Chamaescilla corymbosa</i>	Blue Squill
<i>Clematis microphylla</i>	Small-leaved Clematis
<i>Corybas incurvus (leaves)</i>	Slaty Helmet-orchid
<i>Cynoglossum australe</i>	Australian Hounds-tongue



Austral Hounds-tongue

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### Birding at Coolart 4th November

Traditional spring bird-watching in Coolart took place this year as well. Eight of us attended, and despite the cold and rainy weather, we weren't sorry at all, even though we had

to endure a couple of showers. We were a bit disappointed with the walk to the open ocean because we didn't see any Red-capped Plovers, nor any other birds – not even a Silver



Gull. Nevertheless, we were pleased with the number of birds we observed in the wetlands and the woodlands. We also saw a young koala, which was sitting on a branch of a tall eucalyptus tree. A heavy shower after lunch forced us to move to the Information Centre, where we took our time

collating a bird list, waiting for the rain to stop. We made a bird list, but we decided not to continue with the afternoon bird-watching. Primarily because 43 types of birds is not a negligible number at all.— **Velimir Dragic**

<b>Bird List for Coolart 4th November 2019</b>				
<b>Anseriformes</b>	<b>Cuculiformes</b>	<b>Accipitriformes</b>	Crimson Rosella	Australian Magpie
Australasian Shoveler	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Swamp Harrier	<b>Passeriformes</b>	Willie-wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Pallid Cuckoo	<b>Coraciiformes</b>	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Fantail
Grey Teal	<b>Gruiformes</b>	Laughing Kookaburra	Noisy Miner	Magpie-lark
Chestnut-breasted Teal	Common [Eurasian] Coot	<b>Psittaciformes</b>	Little Wattlebird	Little Raven
<b>Podocipediformes</b>	Purple Swamphen	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Red Wattlebird	Eastern Yellow Robin
Hoary-headed Grebe	<b>Suliformes</b>	Galah	New Holland Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
<b>Columbiformes</b>	Little Pied Cormorant	Little Corella	Brown Thornbill	Common [European] Starling
Spotted-necked [Turtle] Dove	Little Black Cormorant	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Grey Shrike-thrush	Common [Indian] Myna
	<b>Pelicaniformes</b>	Australian King Parrot	Australian Golden Whistler	Common Eurasian] Blackbird
	White-faced Heron		Grey Butcherbird	European Goldfinch
	Australian White Ibis			
	Straw-necked Ibis			

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**Walking The Overland Track, Tasmania  
Judy Smart  
13th November**

I had been talking about walking the Overland track from Cradle Mountain to Lake St Clair for decades, but was put off by having to carry everything. Then it got to the now or never stage of life, and so we booked the soft option of going on the Tasmanian Walking Co. guided walk, with huts and meals provided, last February.

they aim for a zero environmental impact. Food and supplies are helicoptered in twice a season, and all wastes created are composted on site and helicoptered out. Our guides were knowledgeable, the food and wine good, our fellow walkers good company, and I recommend the experience.



*Bellendena montana - Mountain rocket.*  
All Photos by Judy Smart



*Richea scoparia in foreground*

The set up is a group of 12 walkers, with 2 guides/cooks, and you just carry your clothes and lunch and water. They have their own huts, hidden away well off the track, and

The first impression I got was of geology – during the first hour we came to Crater Lake, one of a series of glacial lakes, carved out by glaciers during a series of Ice Ages 500,000 years ago. Then we started to see the dolerite sills

of Cradle Mountain. Tasmania's scenery is dominated by dolerite sills, from the Jurassic age 174 million years ago. Magma rose up from the mantle and forced its way between layers of sandstone. The lighter sandstone above the intrusions 'floated' on the magma, which cooled slowly creating sills 300m deep, some of the largest in the world. Over the next 160 million years dolerite and sandstone were buffeted by earthquakes, folding and faulting, with a number of ice ages and much erosion. Virtually all overlying sandstone has been removed, along with much dolerite and underlying sandstone, leaving the sills.



*Buttongrass*

As we walked upwards the characteristic vegetation of the Track came into view. A lot of the walk is through Myrtle Beech rainforest, *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, which is also widespread on the east coast of Australia, but there is also *Nothofagus gunnii*, the deciduous beech, endemic to Tasmania, and the star of many calendar photos. Out in the open were conifers - King Billy Pines, *Athrotaxis selaginoides* and *A. cupressoides*, *Diselma archeri*, the Cheshunt Pine, and *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius*, the Celery-top Pine, all endemic. Mixed in were *Richea pandanifolia*, Pandanus, the tallest heath in the world, and also a star of calendar photos. Over the next five days we saw a lot of the other two Richeas, *R. scoparia* and *R. sprengelioides*; a great variety of low growing berry plants, cushion bushes, and the golden glow of Button Grass, *Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus*.

Button Grass is a sedge, grows in damp nutrient poor soils and peat, and loves fire. It is widespread as a result of Aboriginal burning. Button Grass moorlands are characteristic of Tasmania, but Bunyip State Park in Victoria has a Button Grass area. One of my favourite plants was Mountain Rocket, *Bellenden montana*, which

surprisingly for a soft low growing plant is from the Proteaceae family.

Along the way there were remnants of coal mining from the 1890s, and copper mining from 1890 to 1920. How the area came to be a National Park and not just a commercial resource was due to the efforts of Gustav and Kate Weindorfer. There is a Field Naturalist connection - Gustav was Austrian and Kate from a Tasmanian farming family. They met at the FNCV in 1903—she was an amateur botanist, and the only woman to present a paper in 1903. They were both inspired by Mt Buffalo NP, which was a new National Park then. They spent their honeymoon in 1906 camped on Mt Roland in Tasmania near Sheffield, looking towards Cradle Mt. In 1909 they visited Cradle Mt and bought land there, building Waldheim Chalet a few years later. Only a few years later Kate died of cancer, but Gustav continued with hosting guests at the Chalet, actively promoting both tourism and preservation, and on the Board of Management of the Scenic Reserve after it was reserved in 1922. Gustav died in 1932, soon after the Reserve doubled in size, and it was made World Heritage in 1982.

On Day 4 we were lucky to have the opportunity to climb Mt Ossa, Tasmania's highest mountain at 1617m. The track is steep and rocky, so it can only be climbed if it hasn't rained. It traditionally rains 275 days per year on the track, but we had five exceptionally dry days, and it only drizzled on the last day, lucky for us, but not so good for the bushfires which were raging at Huonville and the Central Plateau at the time. Mt Ossa is quite a climb, with great views of Frenchmans Cap and all the other mountains in every direction.

Day 5 is Waterfall day – we visited Fergy's, D'Alton and Hartnett Waterfalls, all beautiful. The last day is just a short 3 hours down through the eucalypts to Lake St Clair, Australia's deepest natural lake, and our last glacial lake after many.

A great many of the plants we saw were endemic to Tasmania, and quite a number had the species name *gunnii*. They were named for Ronald Campbell Gunn, 1808 – 1881, botanist, public servant and politician. After migration from Scotland, he was superintendent of convicts, magistrate, private secretary to Sir John Franklin, managed large estates, was elected to the House of Assembly for a few years, and then held a wide range of government positions. He was a collector of specimens for Professor W Hooker of Glasgow University, collected on expeditions with his son JD Hooker and sent a living Thylacine to British Museum, among many other achievements. His herbarium is now at the National Herbarium in Sydney. — **Judy Smart**

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### **Kurth Kiln Regional Park 16th November**

This park, just out of Gembrook, is named for the kiln, one of several around the country following a design by Professor E E Kurth of the University of Tasmania, built

there during World War II for the purpose of producing charcoal to be used in gas producer units to power motor cars as a substitute for scarce petrol. The kiln remains, in

good condition (there is a Friends Group that maintains it), together with cottages once inhabited by kiln workers.

However the Regional Park covers 3500 hectares, mostly of forest dominated in different locations by Messmate, Mountain Ash and Manna Gum. It is extensively used for camping, horse riding, mountain bike riding and picnics, as well as bushwalking. Dogs on leash are permitted — so of course many are off leash.

For our visit we completed two loop walks along Tomahawk Creek which passes close to the kiln. These walks are rated at about one hour combined, so naturally the first took us three hours, and the second about two.

We first took the Tomahawk Creek Track which heads upstream, before crossing the Creek to return. It passes through a fairly open Messmate woodland, with an understory in which *Bauera rubioides* and *Tetratheca ciliata* are most obvious, and also includes several Acacias, *Banksia spinulosa*, *Coprosma quadrifida* and a lower story containing *Amperea xiphoclada*, *Stylidium graminifolium* and *Goodenia geniculata*. Some Common Bird Orchids were spotted, and also the Bushy Clubmoss, a Gondwanan relic that we have seen before nearby at the Button Grass Walk in Bunyip State Park.

Other sightings included a butterfly called a Silky Hairstreak, which is one of the butterfly species that relies on a particular attendant ant species to protect its larvae, which feed on Acacias, especially *A dealbata* and *A. melanoxylon*. Several Varied Sword-grass Browns were also seen.

Birds included Golden Whistler—whose song in this area differs markedly from that in our local area; Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo, White-eared and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Red-browed Finch and White-throated Treecreeper. This was a very enjoyable walk with much of interest.

Lunch in the picnic area was closely observed by four Kookaburras; later some other visitors fired up the barbeque and attracted six Kookaburras. Watch those sausages!

After lunch we debated whether to try the other walking track—would we see anything different? Eventually we decided to try it and were very glad we did, as this track—the Thornton Track—led through a very different piece of forest. The slopes were still covered with Messmate, but in the gullies majestic Mountain Ash dominated, and several understory plants not seen in the morning included Blanket Leaf, Elderberry Panax, both Tree and Holly-leaved Lomatia and Bootlace-bush. Most of the ferns in the list below were seen on this walk. Other plants we were not used to seeing included Forest Pennywort, a *Hibbertia* (*H. appressa*?), the local variety of Common Correa (*C. reflexa* var *lobata*), which has a long flower with a deeply lobed calyx, and *Pultenaea juniperina*.

The track passes extensive wombat burrows—no wombats stirring—and several areas of scratching suggesting

lyrebirds, though none were seen. There were also a number of fungi beside the track, including the bolete that graces the cover of Bruce Furber's book, named by him *Boletus barragensis*. Several bracket fungi and what we believed to be a slime mould were observed.

Seedlings of the Mountain Clematis (*C. aristata*) were abundant; most of these must not survive, since the forest would be covered in them if they did. We were intrigued to see the tracks of a leafminer on some of the leaves. There are several species of fly which lay their eggs on species of Clematis, and the larva feed inside the leaf leaving this track. One species of fly has been introduced to New Zealand as a biological control of an introduced Clematis species.

A most enjoyable day. This walk is highly recommended for field naturalists.—Lee Denis

#### Plant Species noted at Kurth Kiln RP, November 2019

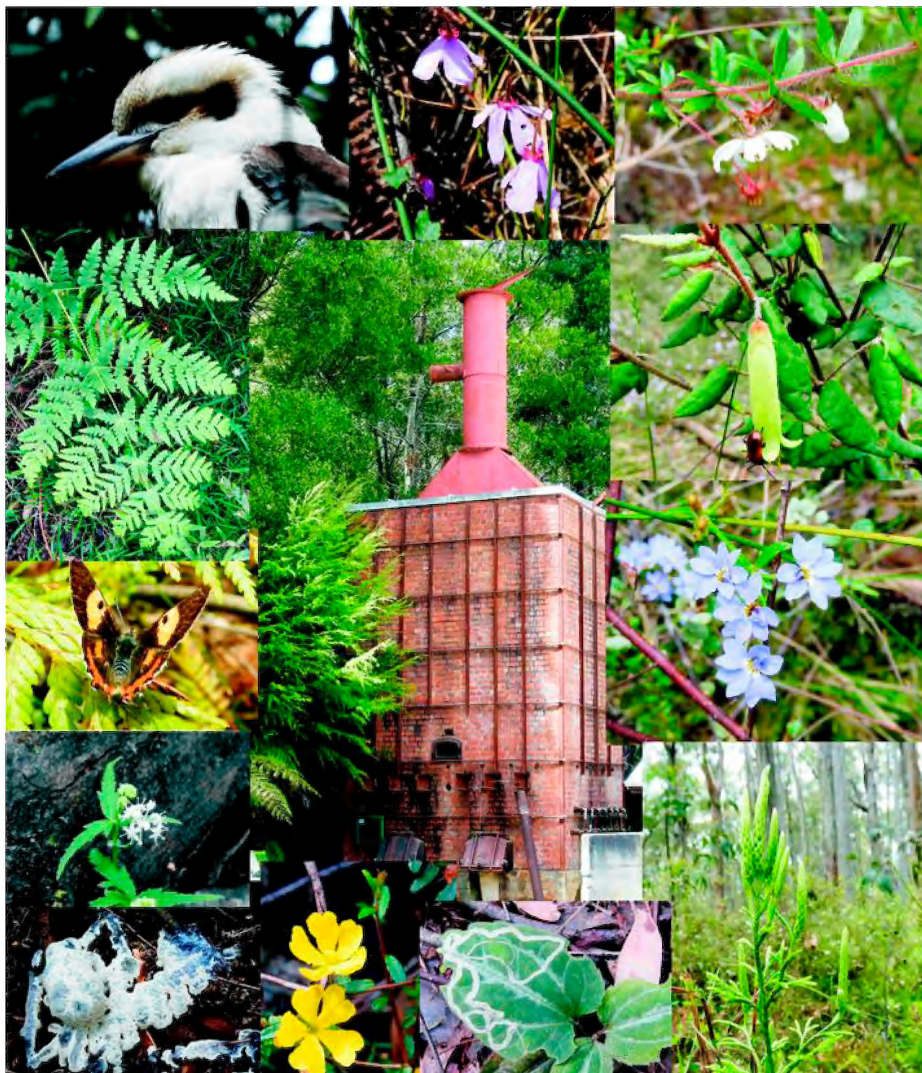
<i>Acacia dealbata</i>	Silver Wattle
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood
<i>Acacia myrtifolia</i>	Myrtle Wattle
<i>Acacia oxycedrus</i>	Spike Wattle
<i>Acacia verticillata</i>	Prickly Moses
<i>Amperea xiphoclada</i>	Broom Spurge
<i>Banksia spinulosa</i>	Hairpin Banksia
<i>Bauera rubioides</i>	Wiry Bauera
<i>Bedfordia arborescens</i>	Blanket Leaf
<i>Billardiera mutabilis</i>	Common Apple-berry
<i>Clematis aristata</i>	Mountain Clematis
<i>Coprosma quadrifida</i>	Prickly Currant-bush
<i>Correa reflexa</i> var <i>lobata</i>	Common Correa
<i>Dampiera stricta</i>	Blue Dampiera
<i>Drosera macrantha</i>	Climbing Sundew
<i>Eucalyptus baxteri</i>	Brown Stringybark
<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i>	Messmate
<i>Eucalyptus regnans</i>	Mountain Ash
<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i> ssp <i>viminalis</i>	Manna Gum
<i>Goodenia geniculata</i>	Bent Goodenia
<i>Goodenia ovata</i>	Hop Goodenia
<i>Hakea</i> sp.	
<i>Coronidium scorpioides</i>	Button Everlasting
<i>Hibbertia appressa</i> ?	Guinea Flower
<i>Hovea heterophylla</i>	Common Hovea
<i>Hydrocotyle geraniifolia</i>	Forest Pennywort
<i>Kunzea leptospermoides</i>	Burgan
<i>Leptospermum continentale</i>	Prickly Tea-tree
<i>Lomatia fraseri</i>	Tree Lomatia
<i>Lomatia ilicifolia</i>	Holly Lomatia
<i>Melaleuca squarrosa</i>	Scented Paperbark
<i>Olearia lirata</i>	Snowy Daisy-bush
<i>Pimelia axiflora</i>	Bootlace Bush
<i>Pimelia flava</i> ssp <i>flava</i>	Yellow Rice-flower
<i>Platylobium montanum</i> ssp <i>montanum</i>	Mountain Flat-pea
<i>Pomaderris aspera</i>	Hazel Pomaderris
<i>Polyscias sambucifolia</i>	Elderberry Panax
<i>Prostanthera lasianthos</i> var <i>lasianthos</i>	Victorian Christmas-bush
<i>Pultenaea hispidula</i>	Rusty Bush-pea
<i>Pultenaea juniperina</i>	
<i>Rubus parvifolius</i>	Native Raspberry
<i>Stackhousia monogyna</i>	Creamy Stackhousia
<i>Spyridium parvifolium</i>	Dusty Miller
<i>Stylidium graminifolium</i>	Grass Trigger-plant
<i>Tetratheca ciliata</i>	Pink Bells
<i>Viola hederacea</i>	Native Violet
<i>Burchardia umbellata</i>	Milkmaids

*Dianella tasmanica*  
*Chiloglottis valida*  
*Adiantum aethiopicum*  
*Blechnum cartilagineum*  
*Blechnum minus*  
*Blechnum watsii*  
*Calochlaena dubia*

Tasman Flax-lily  
 Common Bird-orchid  
 Maidenhair Fern  
 Gristle Fern  
 Soft Water-fern  
 Hard Water-fern  
 False Bracken

*Cyathea australis*  
*Gleichenia dicarpa*  
*Gleichenia microphylla*  
*Histiopteris incisa*  
*Lindsea linearis*  
*Lycopodium deuterodensum*

Rough Tree-fern  
 Pouched Coral-fern  
 Scrambling Coral-fern  
 Bats-wing Fern  
 Screw Fern  
 Bushy Clubmoss



Main photo: the Kiln. Clockwise from top left: Kookaburra, Pink Bells, Wiry Bauera, Correa reflexa var lobata, Blue Dampiera, Clubmoss, Clematis with leafminer track, Hibbertia, slime mould, Forest Pennywort, Silky Hairstreak, Bats-wing Fern

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**Peninsula Field Naturalists Club Inc**

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month with a field trip the following Saturday. Further information and current Programme of Activities can be found at our website.

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 Coralie Davies

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