

HFNC Excursion to Deep Lead Nature Conservation Reserve, 23 Sept. 2017

Dave Munro

On a sunny, warm day with a forecast of a slight chance of rain and increasing winds about mid-day, the club took off over the Divide into the Box-Ironbark forest/woodlands west of Stawell.

The main party consisting of Reto Zollinger and Yvonne Ingeme, Rod Bird and Diane Luhrs, and Peter Hocking with Daryl Delahoy, travelled from Hamilton to meet up with Jane Hayes, Lyn and Dave Munro at Dunkeld. We then travelled in convoy slowly to appreciate the avenue of spring flowers along the Grampians Rd. Although the wattles were not as bright as they had been only a few days earlier they still provided a very pleasant spectacle. Species identified were *Acacia mucronata* (Narrow-leaf Wattle), *A. myrtifolia* (Myrtle Wattle), *A. oxycedrus* (Spike Wattle), *A. mearnsii* (Black Wattle), *A. melanoxylon* (Blackwood) and *A. verticillata* (Prickly Moses).

Deep Lead Nature Conservation Reserve is a significant remnant of the Box-Ironbark woodlands which once covered much of central Victoria. Today only 17% of the original three million hectares remains. The Reserve covers 1823 Ha and contains at least 21 threatened species of plants and birds. Efforts have been made to declare the area a National or at least a State Park. They have all failed.

At 11.00 am we arrived at the intersection of Deep Lead Rd/Hodges Tk, adjacent to the Three Jacks Reserve (which we briefly inspected), to meet with Joan & Nick Pitaro and Margaret Burbidge from Ararat. This is the southernmost point of the Deep Lead Nature Conservation Reserve.

It was disturbing to see the influx of *Freesias* growing amongst the native plants near the road. This area has always had a few but they seem to be spreading and could easily be controlled.

Not far along Hodges Tk we stopped to spend some time exploring the wealth of wildflowers. Masses of *Glossodia major* (Waxlips) greeted us as soon as we stepped out of the cars but they were very soon overlooked as more and more visual gems revealed themselves. The highlights were many but undoubtedly the display of *Caladenia fulva* (Tawny Spider Orchids) was appreciated by all, despite many having been recently grazed. This threatened orchid has a very limited distribution, recorded only from the Stawell-Ararat district. Comments were made about the colour variation within the population.



Caladenia fulva colour variation on the labellum, petals & sepals



A single specimen of *Pterostylis cynnoncephala* (Swan Greenhood) was found. This is a plant we don't often see, partly due to its diminutive size.

One large blood-red spider orchid stood out as being quite different. It looked very similar to the *Caladenia formosa* (Elegant Spider Orchid) which is usually found to the west of the Grampians. Over the recent two decades spider caladenias have undergone many taxonomic changes. This has created confusion even among "awkwardologists".



Swan Greenhood



Elegant Spider Orchid (*Caladenia formosa*) (?)



After many photos we drove to the McCann Dam on the East-West Rd. where we had lunch before setting off in small groups to explore the surrounding open woodland. A *Caladenia fulva* site which had held many blooms 2 weeks earlier was less generous today. The forecast increase in wind strength took place which made photography difficult. The area was drier than expected for this time of year.

We noted a large recently built exclusion fence. We concluded that it had been built to include the site of the only plant in the Deep Lead area of the highly endangered orchid, *Caladenia audasii* (McIvor Spider Orchid). The only other plants known are in the region of Bendigo.

Late in the day we found two rare sun orchid hybrids: *Thelymitra x macmillanii* (Crimson Sun-orchid) and what appeared to be *T. luteocilium* (Fringed Sun-orchid). They were growing close to a patch of *T. antennifera* (Rabbits Ears), one of the parents of the *T. macmillanii*.



Crimson Sun-orchid



Fringed Sun-orchid



Rabbits Ears

Of the other flowering plants seen, *Baeckea ramosissima* (Rosy Baeckea), *Grevillea alpina* (Cats Claw), *Eutaxia microphylla* (Common Eutaxia), *Micromyrtus ciliata* (Heath Myrtle), *Brachyscome multifida* (Cut-leaf Daisy), *Prostanthera denticulata* (Rough Mint-bush), *Acacia pycnantha* (Golden Wattle) and *Lissanthe strigosa* (Peach Heath) stood out. Photos of some of these species are given below, together with a list of plants seen in flower and a bird list.

The excursion concluded mid afternoon with all agreeing it had been a successful visit to a locality which we rarely visit as a club.



Rosy Baeckea



Cats Claws



Cut-leaf Daisy



Heath Myrtle



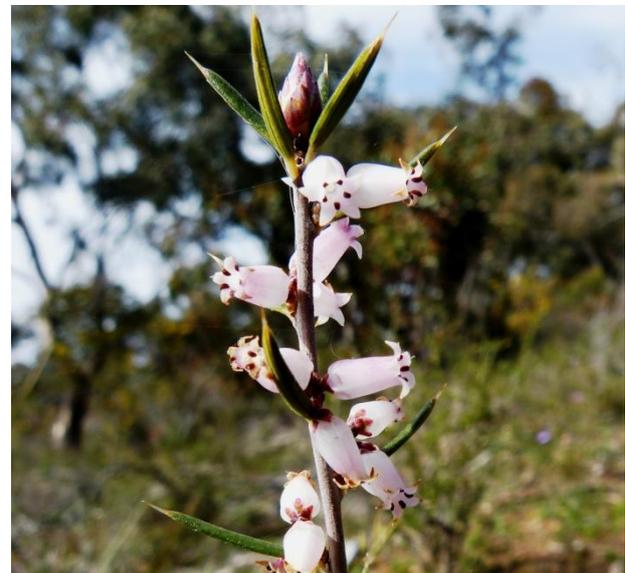
Rough Mint-bush



Golden Wattle



Common Eutaxia



Peach Heath

Birds seen at Deep Lead

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Australian Magpie | 6. Little Raven | 11. Welcome Swallow |
| 2. Crimson Rosella | 7. Noisy Miner | 12. White-plumed Honeyeater |
| 3. Grey Fantail | 8. Red Wattlebird | 13. White-winged Chough |
| 4. Jacky Winter | 9. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo | 14. Willy Wagtail |
| 5. Laughing Kookaburra | 10. Weebill | |

Plants in flower (excluding orchids) at the Deep Lead Nature Conservation Reserve

<i>Acacia paradoxa</i>	Hedge Wattle
<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>	Golden Wattle
<i>Astroloma humifusum</i>	Cranberry Heath
<i>Baeckea ramosissima</i>	Rosy Baeckea
<i>Brachyscome multifida</i>	Cut-leaf Daisy
<i>Bulbine bulbosa</i>	Bulbine Lily
<i>Calytrix tetragona</i>	Fringe Myrtle
<i>Chamaescilla corymbosa</i>	Blue Stars
<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>	Common Everlasting
<i>Crasspedia variabilis</i>	Billy Buttons
<i>Davesia brevifolia</i>	Leafless Bitter-pea
<i>Drosera glanduligera</i>	Scarlet Sundew
<i>Drosera peltata</i>	Pale Sundew
<i>Eutaxia microphylla</i>	Common Eutaxia
<i>Goodenia geniculata</i>	Bent Goodenia
<i>Grevillea alpina</i>	Cats Claws
<i>Hibbertia exutiaces</i>	Spikey Guinea-flower
<i>Hibbertia sericea</i>	Silky Guinea-flower
<i>Hypoxis vaginata</i>	Sheath? Star
<i>Lissanthe strigosa</i>	Peach Heath
<i>Microceris sp.</i>	Yam Daisy
<i>Micromyrtis ciliata</i>	Heath-myrtle
<i>Podolepis jaceoides</i>	Showy Podolepis
<i>Prostanthera denticulata</i>	Rough Mint-bush
<i>Pultenea pedunculata</i>	Matted Bush-pea
<i>Rutidosis multiflora</i>	Small Wrinklewort
<i>Stylidium sp.</i>	Trigger-plant
<i>Templetonia stenophylla</i>	Leafy Templetonia
<i>Wurmbea dioica</i>	Early Nancy



White-winged Chough nest



White-winged Chough



Slime Mould

Orchids in flower in the Deep Lead NCR

<i>Caladenia caerulea</i>	Blue Caladenia
<i>Caladenia formosa ?</i>	Elegant Spider-orchid
<i>Caladenia fulva</i>	Tawny Spider-orchid
<i>Caladenia fuscata</i>	Dusky Caladenia
<i>Caladenia parva</i>	Small Greencomb Spider
<i>Diuris chryseopsis</i>	Golden Moths
<i>Pterostylis cycnocephala</i>	Swan Greenhood
<i>Pterostylis sp. sanguinea ?</i>	'Tall' Banded Greenhood
<i>Pterostylis nana</i>	Dwarf Greenhood
<i>Thelymitra antennifera</i>	Rabbit-ears
<i>Thelymitra luteocillum</i>	Fringed Sun-orchid
<i>Thelymitra x macmillanii</i>	Crimson Sun-orchid
<i>Thelymitra rubra</i>	Salmon Sun-orchid



Lunch time at Deep Lead, McCann Dam

Photos: Diane, Rod, Reto and Dave