



The Clematis



The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Bairnsdale & District Field Naturalists Club Inc. A0006074C

P.O. Box 563, Bairnsdale Victoria 3875 www.bairnsdalefieldnaturalists.com.au



Issue No. 135

Autumn 2023

Page 1

Executive 2023

President

Andrew Bould 041 934 7845
abould01@bigpond.net.au

Vice President

Jen Wilkinson 040 854 5648
wilkinson@eastvic.net

Secretary

Marlo Campbell 0474 274 589
marlo.campbell27@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Margaret Regan 045 856 2541

Ordinary members and

Coordinators

Botanic Group

James Turner (03)5155 1258
jturner.kw@gmail.com

Bushwalking Group

Noel Williamson 0457 291 869
nwilliamson_7@hotmail.com

Junior Field Naturalists Group

Connie Tuck 0409 421 390
1221lct@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Pauline Stewart 0419 522 137
happycats@eastvic.net

Website Administrator

Jen Wilkinson 040 854 5648

Facebook Administrator

Christine Bittner 0438 384 914

Date of issue: December 2022

Photographers

Connie Tuck	CT
Dianne Weir	DW
Jen Wilkinson	JW
John Saxton	JS
Pauline Stewart	PS
Rob Clay	RC



Reedy Creek swamp.

JW

Callistemon citrinus, Hakea ulicina and Melaleuca squarrosa
with Comesperma retusum in front. (see page 5)

CONTENTS

Club Information	2
Programme— March to June 2023	3
Rainforest Excursion	4-8
Timbarra	9-12
Marlo Plains	13-16
Lake Tyers Kayak Junior Excursion	17
Bushwalk - Pettman Beach	18-21

CORRESPONDENCE TO: The Secretary, P.O. Box 563, Bairnsdale 3875

www.bairnsdalefieldnaturalists.com.au**MEETINGS**General meetings take place at:

The Hub

27 Dalmahoy Street, Bairnsdale

as per program at 7.30pm *sharp*Committee meetings take place at:

members homes as per

program at 10.00am.

THE CLEMATIS

The Clematis is issued quarterly.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this newsletter rests with the author of the article.

All articles for Winter 2023 Clematis must be sent to the Newsletter Editor by 1st June 2023.

SUBSCRIPTION FEES 2023

Single membership	\$30
Family membership	\$45
Mid-year fee (new members only)	\$15

Subscriptions can be paid to the Treasurer at meetings or excursions or by EFT or cheque by downloading a Membership Application form from our web site.

VISITORS

Visitors are welcome to come along to sample club activities twice as non members before being required to join the club as a member.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- To further the awareness and study of all branches of natural history within the East Gippsland community through field excursions, regular surveys, specialist guest speakers and publications.
- To observe and strengthen the laws for the preservation and protection of indigenous flora, fauna, habitat and important geological features.
- To promote the formation and preservation of National and State Parks and Reserves.
- To collaborate with other groups and agencies with similar environmental interest.

FIELD TRIPS

It is your responsibility to contact the coordinator of each field trip or bush walk to notify them of intention to participate.

The coordinator will notify you if the trip has to be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances.

Please take note of safety procedures in your Bairnsdale & District Field Naturalists Club Inc.

‘RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY’ booklet.

This can be downloaded from our web site.

RULES TO OBSERVE DURING FIELD TRIPS

- Excursions are cancelled on days of TOTAL FIRE BAN.
- Participants to keep a visual on the car in front and behind.
- When making a turn, give signal, and stay at intersection until following car has also turned.
- If separated from other cars, stop, and stay with your car.
Other members will return to find you.
- The Car Pooling Cost Calculator is used to assist drivers and car pool passengers to share fuel costs and can be found on our web site.

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY FOR BUSH WALKS

Walks vary in distance between 10 to 16 km.

Easy: Flat, good firm track.

Moderately easy: Mostly flat, track in good to fair condition.

Moderate: May be undulating, track in good to fair condition.

Moderately Difficult: May be some steep sections, track may be rough in places.

Difficult: May have long steep sections, track may be non-existent at times.

Contact the leader of the walk for a rating if it's not included in the program.

CONTACTS for Field Trips

James Turner: 5155 1258 m. 0427 290 838
Noel Williamson 0457 291 869
Connie Tuck 0409 421 390

Marlo Campbell 0474 274 589

Date	Activity	Time	Meeting Place	Destination/Subject	Rated	Leader/Speaker
MARCH						
Sun 19th	Excursion	9.00am 9.45am	Bridge Club Red Knob	Gelantipy		James Turner
Sun 26th	Bushwalk	9.00am 9.20am 9.30am	Bridge Club Car park behind IGA Paynesville Ferry	Raymond Island	Easy	Marlo Campbell
APRIL						
Sun 2nd	Junior Excursion	9.00am	All Abilities Playground	Colquhoun Forest		Connie Tuck
Tue 4th	Committee meeting (if required)	10.00am	Margaret Regan's home			
Sun 23rd	Excursion	9.00am	Bridge Club	Meerlieu-Providence Ponds		
Sun 30th	Bushwalk	8.30am 9.45am	Bridge Club Orbost Visitors Centre car park	Orbost area	Not yet rated	Noel Williamson
MAY						
Sun 7th	Junior Excursion	9.00am	All Abilities Playground	Bengworden		Connie Tuck
Tue 9th	Committee meeting & Planning meeting	10.00am	Pauline Stewart's home			
Frid 19th	Meeting with guest speaker	7.30pm	The Hub	Plant Taxonomy		Kevin Thiele
Sun 21st	Excursion	9.00am 9.30am	Bridge Club Forest Tech	Colquhoun Forest, Toorloo Arm, Fungi Trip		
Sun 28th	Bushwalk	9.00am	Bridge Club	Colquhoun Forest	Easy	Noel Williamson
JUNE						
Sun 4th	Juniors Excursion	9.00am 9.45am	All Abilities Playground Bruthen toilets	Washington Winch		Connie Tuck
Tue 6th	Committee meeting (if required)	10.00am	Marlo Campbell's home			
Sun 18th	Excursion	9.00am 9.45am	Bridge Club Nowa Nowa	Mottle Range		
Sun 25th	Bushwalk	9.00am	Bridge Club	Roaring Mag Road, Mitchell River NP	Not yet rated	Noel Williamson

By Margaret Regan

Our first rainforest was at the Drummer Rainforest Walk, adjacent to the Thurra River. All the rainforests we saw on the day were warm temperate rainforest. In Victoria warm temperate rainforest is confined to coastal river valleys from Wilsons Promontory eastwards. The principal tree species are Lilly Pilly (*Syzygium smithii*) and Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*). There are many ferns, epiphytes and fleshy-fruited plants. Climbers are common. (The Thurra River is in the same condition today as it was at the time of the arrival of Europeans in Australia. The base of the river is embedded with logs from centuries of riparian vegetation falling into the river. This makes the river bed very stable and the course of the river hasn't changed in maybe 5,000 years, as found from a core drill. This is unlike the nearby Cann River, which has been settled by Europeans for 150 years. The removal of riparian vegetation and woody debris has changed the depth, width and course of that river.) The area was not affected by the 2019-20 horrific Black Summer fires.

The vegetation surrounding the rainforest included the large trees, Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) with mostly smooth, white peeling bark, long narrow leaves and buds in 3s; River Peppermint (*E. elata*) whose bark is dark and subfibrous below and smooth, white and ribbony above, the leaves are long and narrow and the buds are numerous; and Mountain Grey Gum (*E. cypellocarpa*) with greyish gum bark, long (to 35cm) dark green leaves and elongated buds (up to 7) on a flattened stalk. Two smaller slender trees were Hazel Pomaderris (*Pomaderris aspera*) whose large dark green leaves have deeply impressed veins and paler undersurfaces; and Blue Oliveberry (*Elaeocarpus reticulatus*) with toothed leaves and absolutely gorgeous pendent fringed pinkish flowers, followed by blue fruits, which if ripe, are edible. Elderberry Panax (*Polyscias sambucifolia*) is a much-branched tall shrub with bluish green pinnate leaves and round edible translucent fruits.



Elderberry Panax (*Polyscias sambucifolia*) JW

Along the edges of the track were many bushes of the small shrub Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*) which has large shiny leaves with toothed edges and yellow irregular flowers. Other common, but smaller plants were Forest Starwort (*Stellaria flaccida*), with weak scrambling stems, non-prickly leaves and white starry flowers; and Ivy-leaved Violet (*Viola hederacea*) with its mauve and white flowers. An endangered plant in the iris family Iridaceae was Branching Grass-flag (*Libertia paniculata*), a densely tufted herb with long narrow leaves and white flowers. There was also a huge pandanus-like Tall Saw-sedge (*Gahnia clarkei*) whose flowering stalk can grow to 10m. The fern here was the delicate Common Maidenhair (*Adiantum aethiopicum*). Along the track we saw many conical holes, presumably dug by bandicoots. The Southern Brown Bandicoot has a stocky body with a short snout and short, rounded ears. It has a relatively short tail and its feet fur is brown. It is endangered in Victoria, and is nocturnal and omnivorous, feeding on insects, spiders, worms, plant roots, ferns and fungi. They detect their food by scent, sniffing the ground before digging with their sharp claws. This digging behaviour is a critical component in the maintenance of the ecosystems in which they live. The Southern Brown Bandicoot is an ecological engineer. It helps aerates soil and leaf litter assisting in natural litter breakdown, the penetration of seedlings, and organic mixing, thus improving nutrient availability for plants. It is estimated that a single bandicoot displaces around 3.9 tonnes of soil each year. The Long-nosed Bandicoot is a similar marsupial, but slightly larger with a long nose, more pointed ears and white furred feet.

Nearing the actual rainforest was the woody climber Jasmine Morinda (*Gynochthodes jasminoides*) which has ovate shiny leaves, white to pale purplish flowers and finally fleshy orange fruits. In Victoria it is only found in rainforests in East Gippsland. Once inside the rainforest, the canopy forming the dense shade was mostly the tree Lilly Pilly with red-brown bark, shiny ovate leaves, numerous tiny creamy flowers and white, pink or lilac fleshy round edible fruits. Along the watercourse was Kanooka (*Tristaniopsis laurina*) which has pale brown papery bark, yellow flowers and cup-shaped woody fruits. One giant has been estimated to be 300 years old! Unlike eucalypts, rainforest trees hold their leaves horizontally to catch the sunlight; thus very little light reaches the forest floor. A lower layer consisted of tree-ferns, one of which was Soft Tree-fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*) with a stout trunk hidden by adventitious roots and fronds to 4m forming a large crown.

Ground ferns were two water-ferns, both with separate barren and fertile fronds - Hard water-fern (*Blechnum watsii*) has harsh dark green fronds with pinnae on short stalks; and Fishbone water-fern (*B. nudum*) has mid-green fronds with pinnae attached to the stipe by broad bases. Other smaller ferns were growing on the trunks of trees and tree-ferns (epiphytic). One of these was Weeping Spleenwort (*Asplenium flaccidum*) which has leathery, pendent, usually bipinnate fronds and was seen on the giant Kanooka. Others were Kangaroo Fern (*Microsorium diversifolium*) with light green fronds which are undivided or once lobed; Common Finger-fern (*Notogrammitis billardieri*) which has simple long narrow fronds to 15cm with pairs of oblique sori on the upper part of the underside of the frond; and the closely related Gipsy Fern (*Notogrammitis heterophylla*) with pinnately-divided fronds and similar naked sori. There was also a tiny filmy-fern (*Hymenophyllum* sp.) with two-lipped cups containing the spores.

New climbers (lianes) were Bearded Tylophora (*Tylophora barbata*) which has opposite ovate shiny stalked leaves and loose groups of tiny dark purple fleshy flowers which are hairy inside; the robust Milk-vine (*Leichhardtia rostrata*) which also has ovate shiny stalked leaves, but the creamy flowers are in tight clusters;



Milk-vine (*Leichhardtia rostrata*) JW

and Twining Silk-pod (*Parsonsia brownii*) which has milky sap, sprays of tiny yellow flowers and long pods which open to reveal silky plumed seeds. The tiny rare Tangle Orchid (*Plectrohiza tridentata*) was discovered



Twining Silk-pod (*Parsonsia brownii*) JW

on two different shrubs – Large Mock-olive (*Notelea venosa*) and Prickly Currant-bush (*Coprosma quadrifida*). Large Mock-olive is a tall shrub with opposite large thick leaves, sprays of small yellow flowers and later dark-purplish fruits. It is in the same family Oleaceae as the edible Olive (*Olea europea*). Prickly Currant-bush is a similar sized shrub with spiny smaller branchlets. Its leaves are much smaller and its minute flowers produced small red fruits. The Tangle Orchid has dark green to purplish lanceolate leaves, long tangled roots and small green to brown sweetly perfumed flowers.

Along the Princes Highway east of Cann River, on the way to the Drummer Rainforest, we had crossed Reedy Creek. We noticed that the vegetation there was brimming with flowers, so although it wasn't rainforest, but a wet treeless heathland, we couldn't resist stopping there on our journey to our next rainforest. Large shrubs were our Shire floral emblem, Crimson Bottlebrush (*Callistemon citrinus*) which has stiff flat leaves and flower spikes, whose bright red flowers have black anthers; Furze Hakea (*Hakea ulicina*), an upright plant with narrow sharp-pointed leaves with branches covered with white flowers and smooth, short-beaked woody fruits; and Scrub Sheoak (*Allocasuarina paludosa*) which has striate older branches and ovoid cones. Smaller plants were Blue Dampiera (*Dampiera stricta*), whose irregular flowers have rusty hairs outside; Heath Milkwort (*Comesperma ericinum*) which has pink pea-like flowers; and Common Rice-flower (*Pimelea humilis*) whose clusters of flowers are cream. Daisies were Fringed or White Everlasting (*Chrysocephalum baxteri*) which has woolly white stems

and under leaves, and an inflorescence of central yellow disc florets surrounded by obvious white papery bracts; and Button Everlasting (*Coronidium scorpioides*)



White Everlasting (*Chrysocephalum baxteri*)

with similar foliage, but with tiny brownish-gold bracts beneath the yellow disc florets.

Two lily-like plants were Tufted Blue Lily (*Thelionema caespitosum*) with a tuft of long narrow leaves and a wide-spreading inflorescence of erect flowers; and Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*) with few grass-like leaves and fragrant flowers in umbels (flower stalks arising from the same point), each with a burgundy carpel. There was a purple-flag (*Patersonia* sp.). A tall grass (to 1.8m) was Silvertop Wallaby-grass (*Rytidosperma pallidum*) with very distinctive bright orange-red anthers. Orchids found were both Copper Beard-orchid (*Calochilus campestris*); and Purple Beard-orchid (*C. robertsonii*). All beard-orchids have a solitary basal linear leaf. The flowers have a large labellum, usually with a densely bearded lamina. The Copper Beard-orchid has two thick metallic-blue plates at the base of the labellum, whilst the Purple Beard-orchid has purplish papillae. There was also a flowering onion-orchid (*Microtis* sp.); and the oblong elliptic leaf of the Large Tongue-orchid (*Cryptostylis subulata*) which flowers in summer. A tiny fern hiding in the grasses was Screw Fern (*Lindsaea linearis*).

We returned to warm temperate rainforest at the McKenzie River Rainforest Walk. It is in the Bemm River Scenic Reserve at the junction of the Bemm and McKenzie Rivers. Again the rainforest is surrounded by drier eucalypt forest. The walk is a 1 km loop with a sealed pathway, boardwalks and two swing bridges. Overstorey eucalypt trees were River Peppermint and Messmate (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) which has fibrous bark and dark glossy leaves. The leaves are asymmetrical and are oblique at the base. Again along the river were Lilly Pilly and large Kanooka with a coating of the small delicate Common Filmy-fern (*Hymenophyllum cupressiforme*) whose fronds have divided pinnae and whose spores are borne in two-lipped toothed sori. There were both Soft Tree-fern and a *Cyathea* sp. Other ferns were Common Ground-fern (*Calochleana dubia*) which looks similar to Austral Bracken, with a large much divided open frond, but whose fronds are a much lighter brighter green and whose sori are round, unlike the linear sori of Austral Bracken. Another fern was Mother Shield-fern (*Polystichum proliferum*) with dark green divided fronds, which often produce buds at the ends of fronds.

At the edges of the rainforest were the large shrubs, Hazel Pomaderris and the daisy Blanket Leaf (*Bedfordia arborescens*) with large shiny green leaves which are white woolly beneath (like a blanket), and sprays of yellow flower heads. Other new shrubs were one of the mint-bushes, the very pretty aromatic Victorian Christmas Bush (*Prostanthera lasianthos*) which has large soft toothed leaves and sprays of white irregular flowers; Austral Mulberry (*Hedycarya angustifolia*) with stiffer glossy green toothed leaves and yellow inedible compound fruits; and Muttonwood (*Myrsine howittiana*) with smooth



Austral Mulberry (*Hedycarya angustifolia*) JW

leathery shiny dark green leaves with wavy edges and blue round fruits in clusters. Herbs included the

perfumed Sweet Hound's-tongue (*Cynoglossum suaveolens*) with tiny white flowers and tongue-like leaves; the nasty Scrub Nettle (*Urtica incisa*) whose leaves are covered with stinging hairs; and the daisy Indian Weed (*Sigesbeckia orientalis*) which is native here, so is not a weed. It does grow in other countries including India. It has largish hairy toothed leaves.

Two closely related stout climbers were Sweet Sarsaparilla (*Smilax australis*) which has ovate leaves with sometimes tendrils off their stalks, sometimes prickles, unisexual flowers and black berries; and the endangered White Supplejack (*Ripogonum album*) (to 6m) with elliptic leaves, fragrant white bisexual flowers and dark red berries. In Victoria it is confined to the lower catchments of further eastern rivers and is typically associated with rainforest dominated by Lilly Pilly and Kanooka. A Southern Water Skink was identified. These attractive skinks are brown above with black flanks with small white to yellow spots. These diurnal sun-loving skinks feed on insects and are livebearers. (A fairly tame family live under the wood box by my front door – the box can no longer be used for storing wood!)

Our last stop was to be the Cabbage Tree Creek Flora Reserve which had been badly affected by significant flood and storm, and all visitor areas were closed. Some Field Nats soldiered on along flooded roads to see the damage caused by the storm, but this scribe didn't get there.

Many thanks to Paul Harvey for taking us through these fascinating warm temperate rainforests, that we don't often visit. Thanks also to Len, Jacquie and any other ornithologists for the bird list.

Plants:

Acacia melanoxylon Blackwood
Adiantum aethiopicum Common Maidenhair
Allocasuarina paludosa Scrub Sheoak
Asplenium flaccidum Weeping Spleenwort
Bedfordia arborescens Blanket Leaf
Blechnum nudum Fishbone Water-fern
B. wattsi Hard Water-fern
Burchardia umbellata Milkmaids
Callistemon citrinus Crimson Bottlebrush
Calochilus campestris Copper Beard-orchid
C. robertsonii Purple Beard-orchid
Calochleana dubia Common Ground-fern
Chrysocephalum baxteri Fringed or White Everlasting

Comesperma ericinum Heath Milkwort
Coprosma quadrifida Prickly Currant-bush
Coronidium scorpioides Button Everlasting
Cryptostylis subulata Large Tongue-orchid
Cyathea sp. a tree-fern
Cynoglossum suaveolens Sweet Hound's-tongue
Dampiera stricta Blue Dampiera
Dicksonia antarctica Soft Tree-fern
Eleocharis reticulatus Blue Oliveberry
Eucalyptus elata River Peppermint
E. cypellocarpa Mountain Grey Gum
E. obliqua Messmate
E. viminalis Manna Gum
Gahnia clarkei Tall Saw-sedge
Goodenia ovata Hop Goodenia
Gynochthodes jasminoides Jasmine Morinda
Hakea ulicina Furze Hakea
Hedycarya angustifolia Austral Mulberry
Hymenophyllum cupressiforme Common Filmy-fern
Leichhardtia rostrata Milk-vine
Libertia paniculata Branching Grass-flag
Lindsaea linearis Screw Fern
Microsorium diversifolium Kangaroo Fern
Microtis sp. an onion-orchid
Myrsine howittiana Muttonwood
Notelea venosa Large Mock-olive
Notogrammitis billardieri Common Finger-fern
N. heterophylla Gipsy Fern
Parsonsia brownii Twining Silk-pod
Patersonia sp. a purple-flag
Pimelea humilis Common Rice-flower
Plectorrhiza tridentata Tangle Orchid
Polyscias sambucifolia Elderberry Panax
Polystichum proliferum Mother Shield-fern
Pomaderris aspera Hazel Pomaderris
Prostanthera lasianthos Victorian Christmas Bush
Ripogonum album White Supplejack
Rytidosperma pallidum Silvertop Wallaby-grass
Sigesbeckia orientalis Indian Weed
Smilax australis Sweet Sarsaparilla
Stellaria flaccida Forest Starwort
Syzygium smithii Lilly Pilly
Thelionema caespitosum Tufted Blue Lily
Tristaniopsis laurina Kanooka
Tylophora barbata Bearded Tylophora

Urtica incisa Scrub Nettle

Viola hederacea Ivy-leaved Violet

Mammals

Signs of Southern Brown or Long-nosed Bandicoot

Reptile:

Southern Water Skink

Birds:

Drummer Rainforest Walk

Pacific Black Duck

Wonga Pigeon

Topknot Pigeon

Fan-tailed Cuckoo

Sacred Kingfisher

Gang-gang Cockatoo

Rainbow Lorikeet

Superb Lyrebird

Satin Bowerbird

White-throated Treecreeper

Superb Fairywren

Eastern Spinebill

Lewin's Honeyeater

Yellow-faced Honeyeater

Red Wattlebird

Scarlet Honeyeater

White-naped Honeyeater

Spotted Pardalote

White-browed Scrubwren

Large-billed Scrubwren

Brown Thornbill

Brown Gerygone

Grey Shrike-thrush

Golden Whistler

Pied Currawong

Rufous Fantail

Grey Fantail

Black-faced Monarch

Australian Raven

Rose Robin

Eastern Yellow Robin

Silvereye

Bassian Thrush

McKenzie River Rainforest

Shining Bronze-cuckoo (chick being fed by
host parent: Grey Fantail)

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo

New Holland Honeyeater

Striated Pardalote

Eastern Whipbird

Olive-backed Oriole

Australian Magpie

Mistletoebird

Red-browed Finch

42 species



Cabbage Tree walk, members mourning the horrific destruction and loss of many Cabbage Tree palms in the storm of June 2021

JW

By Margaret Regan

From Red Knob we headed north towards Buchan, turning north-west just south of Buchan onto Timbarra Road. Our first stop along the road was at a corner with a creek. Here a eucalypt was Broad-leaved Peppermint (*Eucalyptus dives*), a small tree with grey-brown sub-fibrous bark, grey-green leaves and pear-shaped fruits. Its leaves are rich in oil, which is used commercially. Another tree was the ubiquitous Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*) which has pinnate foliage and smooth dark bark. A small shrub was Common Correa (*Correa reflexa*) with its tubular red and green flowers. Herbaceous daisies were Sticky Everlasting (*Xerochrysum viscosum*) which has narrow sticky leaves and the inflorescence is surrounded by golden-yellow bracts, with yellow central florets; Spoon Daisy (*Brachyscome spathulata*) with a basal rosette of round-toothed leaves, mauve or blue ray florets and central yellow florets; and a New Holland Daisy (*Vittadinia* sp.) which has blue ray florets. There was also the scrambler Small-leaf Bramble (*Rubus parvifolius*) with strong curved prickles and pink flowers; and Ivy-leaved Violet (*Viola hederacea*) which has mauve and white flowers.

On one side of the road was a steep cliff with many plants. A small fern was Narrow Rock-fern (*Cheilanthes sieberi*) which has narrow fronds with widely spaced pinnae. There was a very tall (2m) Fireweed Groundsel (*Senecio linearifolius*) whose inflorescences have up to 200 yellow flower heads. A shrub known for growing on rocky steep slopes in eastern Victoria was Velvet Pomaderris (*Pomaderris velutina*) with minutely velvety leaves and clusters of golden flowers. A prostrate pea shrub was Matted Bossiaea (*Bossiaea buxifolia*) with tiny almost round leaves and narrow-oblong pods.



Matted Bossiaea (*Bossiaea buxifolia*) JW

Two perennials were Diggers' Speedwell (*Derwentia perfoliata*) which has opposite grey-green leaves joined at the base and sprays of many mauve flowers; and the

Thrift-leaved Triggerplant (*Stylidium armeria*) with a basal tuft of linear leaves and a flower stalk with up to 120 pink flowers.

Further along the road, new shrubs were Manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*) (to 5m) with roundish pointed leaves and white teatree flowers; the almost prostrate Trailing Shaggy-pea (*Podolobium procumbens*) which has ovate leaves, nearly orange flowers and hairy pods; and the small Heath Pink-bells (*Tetratea bauerifolia*) with leaves in whorls of 4-6 and deep lilac-pink flowers.

Continuing along Timbarra Road, our first orchid was Slender Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra pauciflora*) with up to 12 blue flowers, each with a yellow hooded post anther lobe. Why is the specific name 'pauciflora' when 'pauci' means few in Latin and 'flora' is flower, and there can be up to 12 flowers?? A small shrub was Curved Rice-flower (*Pimelea curviflora*) which has hairy stems and leaves, and clusters of greenish-yellow or reddish tubular flowers. Aromatic daisies were the perennial Fireweed Groundsel (*Senecio linearifolius*) (to 1.5m) which has linear to ovate leaves and up to 200 cylindrical yellow flower heads, each with 4-8 ray florets and 8-14 disc florets; and the annual *S. minimus* (to 120cm) with yellow flattened flower heads with only disc florets. It is a common coloniser after fire or soil disturbance (? roadside grading), and is often found in association with Fireweed Groundsel. Other herbs were Lesser Loosestrife (*Lythrum hyssopifolia*) with pink, blue or purple flowers; the pea Clover Glycine (*Glycine latrobeana*) which has short hairy stems, trifoliolate leaves and mauve flowers; and the creeping Stinking Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle laxiflora*) whose inflorescence has 30-50 offensively smelling flowers.

A tufted plant with a tall branched inflorescence and gorgeous mauve flowers was Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*). Grasses were Hedgehog Grass (*Echinopogon ovatus*) with a rough flowering stalk (culm) and spikelets in a dense ovoid terminal cluster; and Silvertop Wallaby-grass (*Rytidosperma pallidum*) whose culms can be 1.8m tall and the spikelets in the inflorescence have bright orange-red anthers. Another strappy plant was the very common Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*) which has separate male and female inflorescences, with the flower clusters above spiny bracts.

Now on Nunnett Road, a new orchid was Tall Sun-orchid

(*Thelymitra media*) which may have up to 30 sweetly scented blue flowers. The post anther lobe is yellow with a dark collar and the column arms are directed forward with white hair tufts. A new pomaderris was the fairly common damp-loving large shrub Hazel Pomaderris (*Pomaderris aspera*) with large leaves, whose lower surface is covered by rusty star-shaped hairs. Medium shrubs were Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*) with soft leaves and irregular yellow flowers; Common Cassinia (*Cassinia aculeata*) with dark green very narrow leaves and crowded flower heads which were pink in bud; and Prickly Bush-pea (*Pultenaea forsythiana*) which has linear pointed leaves and mostly yellow flowers. Two climbers were the very robust woody climber Mountain Clematis (*Clematis aristata*) with three-part leaves and white flowers with many stamens; and the tiny Common Apple-berry (*Billardiera scandens*) with hanging cream tubular flowers. Forest Starwort (*Stellaria flaccida*) is an herbaceous perennial with weak scrambling stems and white flowers with five bifid petals. Tasman Flax-lily (*Dianella tasmanica*) has a basal tuft of long (to 95cm) narrow leaves with rough midribs, and an inflorescence of bright blue flowers which are followed by brilliant blue berries.

On our way to Timbarra Gardens we passed below Mountain Gum (*Eucalyptus dalrympleana*) which can grow to 40m with gum bark, a straight trunk and large crown. It has long narrow leaves, and buds and fruits in threes. In some parts there were banks of the bright green Fishbone Water-fern (*Blechnum nudum*) with the pinnae on the frond attached by broad bases.

Timbarra Gardens, in a subalpine area, is a lower open treeless plain around a small watercourse. Denser cold air tends to be trapped in these depressions or frost hollows, and prevents the growth of trees, as happens with an increase in altitude in alpine areas. In the subalpine areas the plains are surrounded by forest. We were searching for the Mignonette Leek Orchid (*Prasophyllum morganii*) which had been thought to be extinct in Victoria, but is now only found in the subalpine herbfields of the Nunniong Plateau. It is now classified as vulnerable. It has a flowering stem which can be up to 25cm with up to 80 tiny greenish-purple fragrant flowers. Fourteen specimens were seen, but seemed not to be very vigorous. Other orchids were Common Bird-orchid (*Chiloglottis valida*) which has two opposite flat leaves and a single dark purplish-brown flower whose labellum is on a mobile hinge and has numerous dark calli; and Mountain Golden Moths (*Diuris monticola*) with grass-like leaves and 1-4 bright yellow flowers with dark brown striations in central parts.

Small shrubs were the erect heath *Epacris gunnii* which has pungent (pointed, prickly) leaves and copious white flowers up the stems; the pea Leafy Bossiaea (*Bossiaea foliosa*) with tiny leaves and uniformly bright yellow flowers;



Leafy Bossiaea (*Bossiaea foliosa*) JW

and Small-fruit Hakea (*Hakea microcarpa*) which has round sharp-pointed leaves, small white clustered flowers and small fruits with a tiny projection at the tip of each valve. An herbaceous daisy was tufted Field Daisy (*Brachyscome decipiens*) which has a few white ray florets and central yellow disc florets. Two rare herbaceous plants was the endangered Mountain Aciphyll (*Aciphylla simplicifolia*) which has a basal tuft of long narrow leaves, and separate male and female branching inflorescences which ending in terminal umbels of white flowers;



Mountain Aciphyll (*Aciphylla simplicifolia*) JW

and the critically endangered Eyebright (*Euphrasia collina* subsp. 1) with toothed leaves and terminal snapdragon-like white to purple, blue or pink flowers. Other herbs were Mountain Woodruff (*Asperula gunnii*) which has leaves in whorls around its rough stems and white tubular male or female flowers; Showy Violet (*Viola betonicifolia*) with deep purple flowers and a basal tuft of obovate leaves; and the endangered Early Forest-Gentian (*Gentianella polysperes*) which has a terminal inflorescence of flowers with white petals with grey-violet veins. There was also the pretty fine bluish-green Blue Snow-grass (*Poa phillipsiana*).

Thank you once again, James, Len and Jackie.

Plants:

Acacia mearnsii Black Wattle
Aciphylla simplicifolia Mountain Aciphyll
Arthropodium strictum Chocolate Lily
Asperula gunnii Mountain Woodruff
Billardiera scandens Common Apple-berry
Blechnum nudum Fishbone Water-fern
Bossiaea buxifolia Matted Bossiaea
B. foliosa Leafy Bossiaea
Brachyscome decipiens Field Daisy
B. spathulata Spoon Daisy
Cassinia aculeata Common Cassinia
Cheilanthes sieberi Narrow Rock-fern
Chiloglottis valida Common Bird-orchid
Clematis aristata Mountain Clematis
Correa reflexa Common Correa
Derwentia perfoliata Diggers' Speedwell
Dianella tasmanica Tasman Flax-lily
Diuris monticola Mountain Golden Moths
Echinopogon ovatus Hedgehog Grass
Epacris gunnii a heath
Eucalyptus dalrympleana Mountain Gum
E. dives Broad-leaved Peppermint
Euphrasia collina subsp.1 an eyebright
Gentianella polysperes Early Forest-Gentian
Glycine latrobeana Clover Glycine
Goodenia ovata Hop Goodenia
Hakea microcarpa Small-fruit Hakea
Hydrocotyle laxiflora Stinking Pennywort
Leptospermum scoparium Manuka
Lomandra longifolia Spiny-headed Mat-rush
Lythrum hyssopifolia Lesser Loosestrife
Pimelea curviflora Curved Rice-flower

Poa phillipsiana Blue Snow-grass
Podolobium procumbens Trailing Shaggy-pea
Pomaderris aspera Hazel Pomaderris
P. velutina Velvet Pomaderris
Prasophyllum morganii Mignonette Leek Orchid
Pultenaea forsythiana Prickly Bush-pea
Rubus parvifolius Small-leaf Bramble
Rytidosperma pallidum Silvertop Wallaby-grass
Senecio linearifolius Fireweed Groundsel
S. minimus a groundsel
Stellaria flaccida Forest Starwort
Stylidium armeria Thrift-leaved Triggerplant
Tetratheca bauerifolia Heath Pink-bells
Thelymitra media Tall Sun-orchid
T. pauciflora Slender Sun-orchid
Viola betonicifolia Showy Violet
V. hederacea Ivy-leaved Violet
Vittadinia sp. a New Holland Daisy
Xerochrysum viscosum Sticky Everlasting

Birds:

Incidental sightings while travelling via Buchan South, Timbarra and Nunnet Roads

Australian Wood Duck
 Sacred Kingfisher
 Australian Magpie
 Pied Currawong
 White-winged Chough
 Satin Flycatcher
 Magpie-lark
 Rose Robin

Stop No.1 Timbarra Road

Fan-tailed Cuckoo
 Superb Fairy-wren
 Brown Thornbill
 Yellow-faced Honeyeater
 Red Wattlebird
 Eastern Whipbird
 Grey Shrike-thrush
 Olive-backed Oriole
 Grey Fantail

Stop No.2 Timbarra Road

Rufous Whistler

Stop No. 3 Timbarra Road

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

Laughing Kookaburra

Spotted Pardalote

Striated Pardalote

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

Stop No.4 Timbarra North (lunch stop)

White-naped Honeyeater

Golden Whistler

Red-browed Finch

Stop No.5 Orchid Site

White-throated Treecreeper

Stop No,6 Orchid Site (2)

Yellow-faced Black-Cockatoo

Crimson Rosella

White-eared Honeyeater

Grey Currawong

Low species numbers and higher elevations go hand in hand.



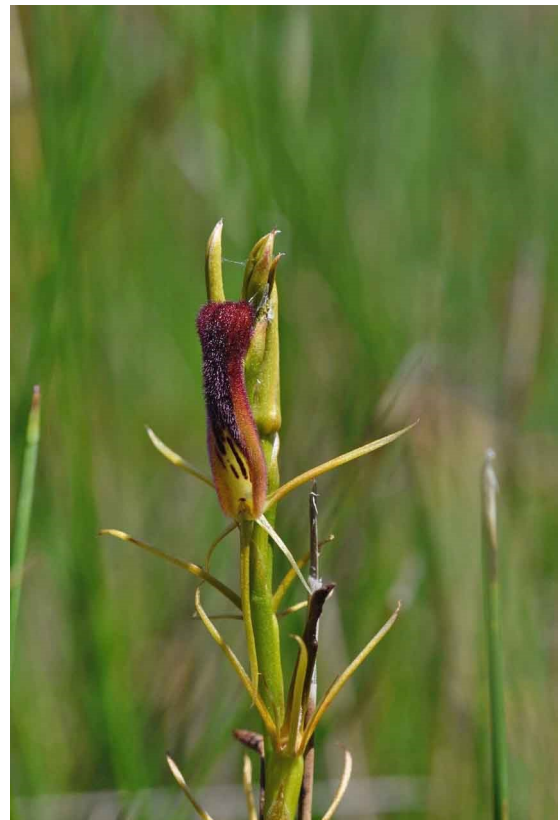
Heading back to the cars after a successful day plant hunting at Timbarra JW

By Margaret Regan

Our first search was on the outskirts of the Marlo Aerodrome. We were mostly looking for bonnet or tongue-orchids (*Cryptostylis* spp.) and we saw three of the four species that grow in Victoria. Three of the species have erect leathery leaves, one (the Leafless or Furred Tongue-orchid) is a leafless saprophyte. [A saprophyte takes its nutrients from dead organic matter, working in association with a fungal mycorrhizal partner.] All the species have a large showy labellum. The commonest is the Large Tongue-orchid (*C. subulata*) which is widespread through southern Victoria. Its flowers have a reddish-brown leathery labellum which is curved over and downwards with a dark knobby appendage on the underside. The endangered Bonnet Orchid or Tartan Tongue-orchid (*C. erecta*) flowers have a labellum which is projected upwards and bonnet-like with purplish streak and blotches. The also endangered Leafless or Furred Tongue-orchid (*C. hunteriana*) flowers have a reddish-brown labellum which is curved upwards and covered with short glandular hairs. The Leafless Tongue-orchid was named for William Hunter, a surveyor from Bairnsdale, who collected from Marlo, the type specimen which was formally described by William Nicholls in 1938. The only other orchid here was Horned Orchid (*Orthoceras strictum*) which has 2-5 long grass-like leaves and 2-5 greenish-brown flowers with a hooded dorsal sepal and long narrow erect lateral sepals (the horns).



Bonnet or Tartan Tongue-orchid (*Cryptostylis erecta*) DW



Leafless or Furred Tongue-orchid DW
(*C. hunteriana*)



Large Tongue-orchid (*C. subulata*) DW



Horned Orchid (*Orthoceras strictum*) DW



Chris Robbins photographing *Cryptostylis* spp. JW

The area to the west of the aerodrome is a wettish grass-tree plain, with the grass-tree being Spear Grass-tree (*Xanthorrhoea resinosa*).

Spear Grass-tree is mostly without a trunk and the long narrow leaves form an erect spreading tuft. The bases of the leaves produce a yellowish resinous exudate. This resin was used by the indigenous people as glue in spear-making and patching up water containers. The flower spikes made fishing spear shafts and firesticks; the tough seed pods were used as cutting tools, and the flowers' nectar forms a sweet, slightly fermented drink. Near this grass-tree plain was also Small Grass-tree (*X. minor*) with an underground trunk and a smaller slender flowering spike.



Spear Grass-tree (*Xanthorrhoea resinosa*) JW

Large shrubs were the dense erect Scrub Sheoak (*Allocasuarina paludosa*) which has somewhat ovoid cones; and Scented Paperbark (*Melaleuca squarrosa*) with small ovate leaves in 4 ranks and the stamens of the flowers with creamy yellow filaments (stalks). In the family Goodeniaceae was the small shrubs Blue Dampiera (*Dampiera stricta*) whose irregular blue flowers have rusty hairs beneath their petals; and the

prostrate rosette of Swamp Goodenia (*Goodenia humilis*) which has two-lipped yellow flowers.



Swamp Goodenia (*Goodenia humilis*) JW

Two peas were the shrubs Leafless Globe-pea (*Sphaerolobium vimineum*) which is rush-like with dense clusters of yellow and red flowers, and the similar-looking Golden Spray (*Viminaria juncea*) with pendulous branches and the leaves reduced to just their petioles (stalks). A small daisy was Scaly Buttons (*Leptorhynchus squamatus*) with cottony stems and leaves and an inflorescence of yellow disc florets. Two milkworts were Heath Milkwort (*Comesperma ericinum*) with elliptical leaves and a terminal raceme of pink pea-like flowers; and Leafless Milkwort (*C. defoliatum*) with few or no leaves and a terminal raceme of blue flowers. Climbing over other plants was the small Slender Dodder-laurel (*Cassytha glabella*) which is hemiparasitic. It does have leaves, but these are reduced to scales, and the stem is green, so it can photosynthesise a little. It has haustoria along its stems which allow the plant to tap into the transport systems of the host plant and steal nutrients and water. A tiny herb was Golden Weather-grass (*Hypoxis hygrometrica*) which isn't a grass. Its leaves and stem have long silky hairs and the yellow flowers have deeply divided anthers. A lily-like plant was Common Fringe Lily (*Thysanotus tuberosus*) whose gorgeous pink flowers have petals with fringed margins. There was also the tiny Screw Fern (*Lindsaea linearis*).

Our next visit was to the East Cape Picnic area at Cape Conran for lunch, and we quickly looked at the nearby grass-tree plain where new plants were the small pea shrub Common Wedge-pea (*Gompholobium huegelii*) with tripartite leaves and all yellow flowers; and the robust aquatic perennial Running Marsh-flower (*Ornduffia reniformis*) with long leaf and flower stalks, so that in deeper water they reach the surface. The leaves are kidney-shaped and flat on the surface of the water. The yellow flower petals have wavy margins.

Next we moved to Old Coast Road and paused at

another Spear Grass-tree plain with Scrub Sheoak. Again we found Large Tongue-orchid and Leafless Tongue-orchid. New shrubs were Prickly Geebung (*Persoonia juniperina*) with long rigid pointed leaves, yellow flowers and later yellow-green edible fruits; Woolly Xanthosia (*Xanthosia pilosa*) which has hairy 3-part leaves and white flowers; and Yellow Stackhousia (*Stackhousia viminea*) with elliptic leaves and a spike-like inflorescence with spaced yellow tubular flowers. Pea shrubs were the rush-like Globe-pea (*Sphaerolobium minus*) which has few linear leaves, clusters of mostly yellow terminal flowers and round pods; and Smooth Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia glaberrima*) with linear rounded leaves, dense terminal clusters of mostly yellow flowers whose posterior petal (standard) is wider than long, and oval pods. There was also the rush-like Slender Yellow-eye (*Xyris gracilis*) with long narrow leaves and long-stemmed 3-tepalled flowers. Another new plant was Tufted Blue Lily (*Thelionema caespitosum*) which has linear leaves folded towards the base and a taller inflorescence with numerous, usually blue, flowers.

At the corner of Old Coast Road and Gravel Road (very original naming!) was Rosy Hyacinth-orchid (*Dipodium roseum*) which is a leafless epiparasite, as are all the species of hyacinth-orchid in Victoria. It has an association with a mycorrhizal fungus in the soil from which it takes its nutrients and water, possibly through the fungus from another nearby plant. Its flowering stalk can be to 100cm with maybe 30 flowers which are pink with dark blotches. The tips of the tepals are recurved and the labellum is usually striped. We also saw the very pretty Hairy Fan-flower (*Scaevola ramosissima*) with its purple irregular flowers.

North along Gravel Road we saw the pretty tall shrub Forest Boronia (*Boronia muelleri*) which has divided leaves and 4-petalled white to pink flowers;



Forest Boronia (*Boronia muelleri*) JW

and the tiny subshrub White Marianth (*Rhynchospora procumbens*) whose leaves are usually 3-tipped.

The only orchid was the unusual Flying Duck (*Caleana major*) whose upside down reddish-green flower has a duck-shaped labellum on a trigger mechanism. When stimulated by a visiting insect the labellum swings down into the flower and delivers its pollen to the visitor. There was the large tussock-forming Red-fruit Saw-sedge (*Gahnia sieberiana*) with flat rough leaves and a tall inflorescence with red fruits.



Red-fruit Saw-sedge (*Gahnia sieberiana*) JW



Red fruits of (*Gahnia sieberiana*) JW

A scrambling fern was Pouched Coral-fern (*Gleichenia dicarpa*) whose fronds are open and much branched with pouched final pinnules, each with two sporangia. There was also the fern ally, the tiny Swamp Selaginella (*Selaginella uliginosa*) with erect stems with leaves in 4 rows and sporangia at the tips of the branches loosely clustered in cones.

Our final stop was north of the Princes Highway along the eastern end of the Murrungower Forest Drive. This was at the Falls Creek Memorial Trail. It is dedicated to Peter Geary, a young forester who tragically lost his life. There is a short walk through stringybark forest and fern gullies to the small waterfalls on Falls Creek. The Field Nats were somewhat taken aback to find Western Australian kangaroo paws growing there. There is also an attractive metal sculpture comprising a bird bath surrounded by eucalypt foliage and wrens.

Thank you yet again to James, Len and Jacquie.

Plants:

Allocasuarina paludosa Scrub Sheoak
Boronia muelleri Forest Boronia
Caleana major Flying Duck
Cassytha glabella Slender Dodder-laurel
Comesperma defoliatum Leafless Milkwort
C. ericinum Heath Milkwort
Cryptostylis erecta Bonnet or Tartan Tongue-orchid
C. hunteriana Leafless or Furred Tongue-orchid
C. subulata Large Tongue-orchid
Dampiera stricta Blue Dampiera
Dillwynia glaberrima Smooth Parrot-pea
Dipodium roseum Rosy Hyacinth-orchid
Gahnia sieberiana Red-fruit Saw-sedge
Gleichenia dicarpa Pouched Coral-fern
Gompholobium huegelii Common Wedge-pea
Goodenia humilis Swamp Goodenia
Hypoxis hygrometrica Golden Weather-grass
Leptorhynchus squamatus Scaly Buttons
Lindsaea linearis Screw Fern
Melaleuca squarrosa Scented Paperbark
Ornduffia reniformis Running Marsh-flower
Orthoceras strictum Horned Orchid
Persoonia juniperina Prickly Geebung
Rhizidoporum procumbens White Marianth
Scaevola ramosissima Hairy Fan-flower
Selaginella uliginosa Swamp Selaginella
Sphaerolobium minus Globe-pea
S. vimineum Leafless Globe-pea

Stackhousia viminea Yellow Stackhousia
Thelionema caespitosum Tufted Blue Lily
Thysanotus tuberosus Common Fringe Lily
Viminaria juncea Golden Spray
Xanthorrhoea minor Small Grass-tree
X. resinosa Spear Grass-tree
Xanthosia pilosa Woolly Xanthosia
Xyris gracilis Slender Yellow-eye

Birds:

Marlo Aerodrome

Common Bronzewing
 Swamp Harrier
 Nankeen Kestrel
 Masked Lapwing
 Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo
 Laughing Kookaburra
 White-throated Treecreeper
 Superb Fairy-wren
 Brown Thornbill
 Spotted Pardalote
 Yellow-faced Honeyeater
 Red Wattlebird
 New Holland Honeyeater
 White-naped Honeyeater
 Grey Fantail
 Willie Wagtail
 Australian Raven
 Eastern Yellow Robin
 Welcome Swallow

Sailor's Grave (East Cape Conran)

Fan-tailed Cuckoo
 Eastern Spinebill
 Little Wattlebird
 Dusky Woodswallow
 Pied Currawong
 Magpie-lark

Gravel Road/Old Coast Road Junction

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo

Falls Creek (Memorial Walk)

Rufous Whistler
 Grey Shrike-thrush
 Black-faced Monarch
 Satin Flycatcher

30 species. A constant strong breeze and hot humid conditions meant that most recordings were by calls not actual sightings.

By Connie Tuck

The previous day being windy had not looked promising, but the morning of the excursion had calmed to a lighter wind. It was slightly overcast but fined to a sunny day. A nice start to kayaking the Nowa Nowa Arm of Lake Tyers. We launched our 6 kayaks from the Nowa Nowa boat ramp and headed off as group down the lake towards the southern ocean. Lake Tyers had opened earlier in the spring season with consistent rainfall, but at present was closed to the ocean. We started a leisurely pace. The arm is narrow as Boggy Creek merges into the lake and we had a good view of both banks through the wetland area. We explored the wildlife, vegetation and the soil banks with potential for limestone fossils.

There was a large flock of masked lapwings on the shore, possibly more than fifteen birds in total. They were on a green area of low vegetation and we saw them in the same area on the return too.

We were lucky further along to see an Azure Kingfisher...thanks for your keen bird spotting Jack. There were a number of fish jumping...probably the mullet. In the tannin and brackish water there were large numbers of jellyfish or pieces of them. None looked alive and it was a little surprising to me to see 'blue bottle / sausage' shape rather than the familiar transparent circular species which were commonly seen in the lake.

We stopped a few times, to check out the vegetation, and the first stop was a lovely sandy bank. The second stop was a creek entry, and the mud at the shore was deep and oozy so not at all lovely. It was shin deep and sticky as we waded to shore. We saw deer prints everywhere but there was some nice fresh samphire growth.

Whilst having a morning tea stop we saw a large wedge-tail eagle circling, and later a group of white faced herons, possibly with some juveniles. We saw a White-bellied Sea-Eagle too, but unfortunately did not make it far enough down the lake system to find any decent fossils. I had some samples of Gippsland *Clypeaster* sea urchins and some brachiopod fossils from previous excursions and explorations to show our keen juniors. The limestone banks lining the lake have a distinctive orange colour and the fossils drop into the lake as they erode. We did find some banks of limestone but the fossil quality was low where we explored. Our kayak back up the lake saw an additional Azure kingfisher and we returned to Nowa Nowa by late lunch. All up we possibly did five kilometres and had an active yet relaxing morning.



Junior members paddling the Nowa Nowa Arm of Lake Tyers CT



Best laid plans by group leaders don't always work out! The Bushwalk for February was scheduled to take place at Pettman Beach east of Nowa Nowa as this is a favourite route for the late summer bushwalk enabling members to catch the ocean breeze if the day turns out to be hot. Usually, we walk three and a half km west from the Pettman Road beach access, along the beach to the access point over the sand dune to Gibbs Track and return in a circuit to the start of the walk through the bush track along Morass Break Road. On a reconnaissance a week or two earlier it was found that Morass Break Road west of Pettman Road had been closed off for public safety, so another plan was hatched. *Plan B* for the bushwalk was that we would walk west along the beach to Gibbs Track then turn around and head back to the cars along the beach again. On the day of the walk the weather forecast was for a mild overcast day which would be perfect walking conditions. However, on the drive to the site the little convoy left the fine weather behind in Bairnsdale and ran into steady easterly rain from before Nowa Nowa through to Pettman. After parking the cars on the corner of Morass Break Road, raincoats and ponchos were brought out from bottoms of back packs and donned for the two and a half kilometre walk down to the beach where we stopped for a soggy morning tea.



Morning tea at Pettmans PS

As conditions on the beach looked somewhat bleak *Plan C* was hatched by our leader.



Members walked to the top of the sand dune at the Pettman Beach access to be greeted by a potentially bleak walk. PS

Leaving the stormy looking beach behind, we walked back up the road to where the cars were parked and then east along Morass Break Road (which hadn't been closed off). By this time the rain had stopped, and walking conditions improved. Although not many plants were flowering it was a very pleasant 11km walk that everyone enjoyed by being out in the bush with our Field Nat friends.

A thank you to Noel as undaunted as ever in changing plans when deemed necessary.

On the day of the Bushwalk, while driving towards the beach along Pettman Road a pair of **Spotted Quail-thrush (*Cinclosoma punctatum*)** raced across the track in front of the lead car and two more individuals were seen crossing the road later in the day. Spotted Quail-thrush are shy, insectivorous, ground-dwelling birds found in open forest down Australia's east coast. They like lightly forested areas with lots of leaf-litter, clumps of grass and low shrubs. The birds are well camouflaged and are very difficult to observe on the forest floor, however they are sometimes seen running across the road after being disturbed by passing vehicles.



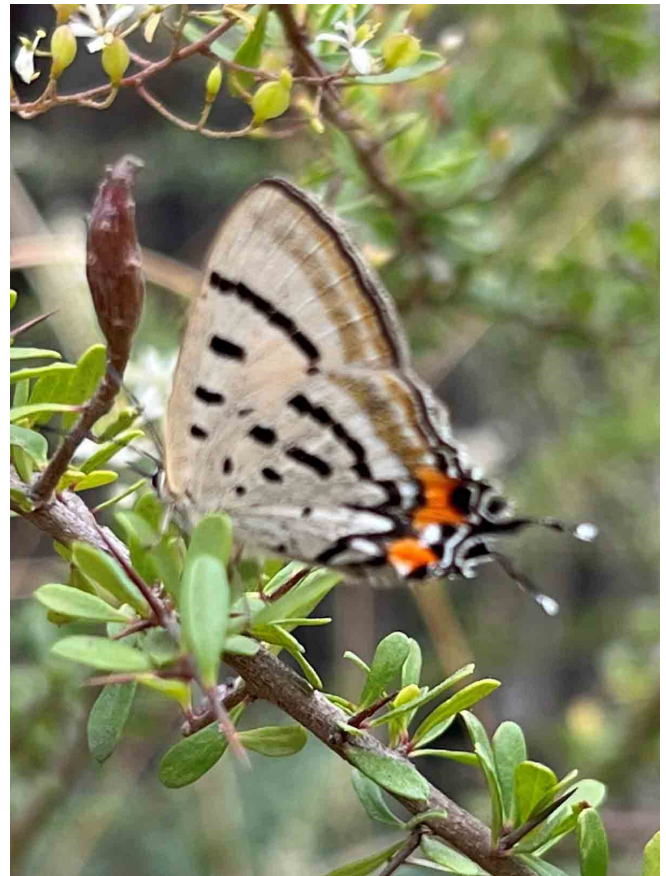
RC

Spotted Quail-thrush - a thank you to Rob Clay of Birdlife East Gippsland who photographed this illusive bird





There were many Common Imperial Blue Butterflies gathered on a flowering Sweet Bursaria beside Pettman Road PS



Common Imperial Blue Butterfly showing underside of wing PS



Common Imperial Blue Butterfly showing upper wings PS

On the reconnaissance trip to Pettman Beach a week or so prior to the scheduled bushwalk, it was a sunny day and there many butterflies fluttering about as the leaders walked along to check on some of the tracks. Seen were the **Common Imperial Blue Butterfly (*Jalmenus evagoras*)**. This butterfly is locally common in many parts of southern Australia and is the largest species of the genus. The underside of the forewings is pale yellowish-brown with three black spots and a black band. The hindwings have several black spots and bands, and reddish-orange spots near the tails ending with white tips to the tail. The upper wings are a metallic blue with a black band around the edges. This pattern is difficult to see as in its habitual posture it has its wings folded. When the butterfly is resting the tail at the base of each wing moves in the wind rather like an antenna. It is thought that this movement may deceive predators into attacking the tail rather than the butterfly's head.¹ The sexes are similar in size and coloration; females tend to be slightly larger than males. Eggs are laid in clusters on the terminal shoots of the food-plants, which are usually various wattle species with the most favoured being Black Wattle (*A. mearnsii*). The fully grown larvae are gregarious, and blackish in colour with dorsal rows of tubercles (a small, usually rounded, outgrowth of the body wall). They are always attended by myriads of small black ants which obtain a sweet substance from them. Pupae are black and gregarious.²

The **Sword-grass Brown Butterfly (*Tisiphone abeona*)** is found along the eastern seaboard of Australia from a little north of Brisbane to along the coast of New South Wales, Victoria and into South Australia. It is a large butterfly with a wingspan of up to 6cm and its colouring is dark brown with a central orange band and a blue-centred ocellus (eyespot) to the forewing and the hindwing having a red-ringed eyespot.

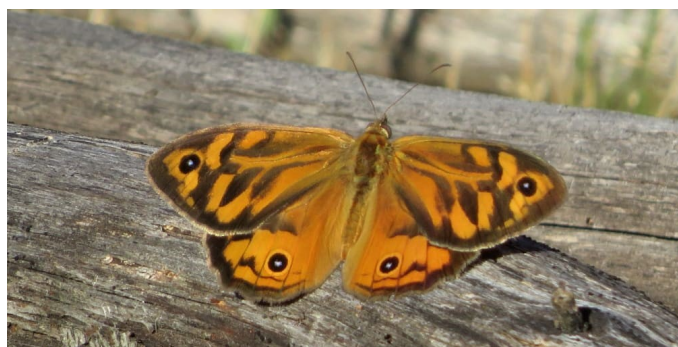
The Sword-grass Brown butterfly has a slow undulating flight and can be seen in spring and autumn usually around swamp areas on the coast close by to *Gahnia* species on which they breed. The large egg is fairly smooth and can be a bright green yellowish colour; usually laid singly on young central shoots of food plants or older drooping foliage near the ground.³



Sword-grass Brown Butterfly JS

The adult male and female **Common Grass Butterfly (*Heteronympha merope*)** look very different. The extreme sexual colour variation is called sexual dimorphism. The underside of the male's forewings are orange with black markings, while that of the hindwings is yellowish-brown with irregular reddish-brown wavy lines.⁴ The females above forewing is orange, the outer half black enclosing two large irregular yellow patches, with prominent blue-centred ocellus near the apex, and an irregular yellow spot below it. The hindwing is orange with black bands with a prominent, blue-centred ocellus near the tornus (outer angle of the wing).⁵

An interesting thing about this butterfly is that males appear on the wing in about October, several weeks before females, and in the summer females only persist. That is because the males are actively flying low over grasses in spring and summer. The females at that time are resting in cool shady places, so less obvious. Later in the season the males start flying higher, at treetop level and they are harder to see. After the males mate they die, so by autumn there are almost no males, only female butterflies will be seen.⁶



Common Grass Butterfly (male)



Common Grass Butterfly (female)

With thanks to Echidna Walkabout Nature Tours for the Common Brown Butterfly photographs.

References:

- 1 Australian Plant Society of NSW
- 2 Alexander Burns & E.R. Rotherham - *Australian Butterflies in Colour*
- 3 I.F.N. Common & D.F. Waterhouse - *Butterflies of Australia*
- 4 Alexander Burns & E.R. Rotherham - *Australian Butterflies in Colour*
- 5 I.F.N. Common & D.F. Waterhouse - *Butterflies of Australia*
- 6 Koala Clancy Foundation