

# HFNC excursion – Mooralla Golf Club, Victoria Lagoon and Glenisla Flats 20 October 2013

Diane Luhrs, Dave Munro & Rod Bird

**Participants:** Diane Luhrs, Rod Bird, Lyn & David Munro, Reto Zollinger, Yvonne Ingeme, Ross Simpson, Raj and Oxana (visitor working at DEPI).

## Places visited

Our party met at the Hamilton Visitor Information Centre at 9 am and then headed north to Cavendish in three vehicles. Some of us detoured along Montana Lane and the East-West Rd, to enjoy the vista of arching gums over the road and the distant view of the Victoria Range, before meeting up with the others at the Mooralla Golf Club.

Our day's excursion comprised two different types of grassland/woodland localities –an unburnt section (the Mooralla Golf Course and Victoria Lagoon) and the areas burnt in the 2013 fires (Glenisla flats in and adjacent to the Grampians National Park). The day was quite mild and without rain.

We walked to the Victoria Lagoon edge noting that there was water to the edge of the Wildlife Reserve. A Swamp Harrier cruised over the relatively shallow, reed-covered wetland. *Sparaxis* and pasture weeds infested the grasses, but we enjoyed the Chocolate Lilies, Bulbine Lilies, Blue Grass-lilies, Milkmaids and Blue Sun-orchids near the water's edge. *Villarsia* leaves and *Lobelia* plants were also evident near the water.



We walked across the golf course from the 5<sup>th</sup> 'Green' (an oiled sand scrape) on the edge of Victoria Lagoon. We found quite a few native plants in the 'rough' areas, including Kangaroo Grass, Chocolate Lilies, Milkmaids, Bulbine Lilies, Swan Greenhood, Bent Goodenia, Billy-buttons, Dwarf Spider Orchids, Pink Fingers, Onion orchids, Blue Sun-orchids, Yellow Stars, and Running Postman (see complete list below). The Swan Greenhood was a particularly interesting small orchid to find.

Along with the profusion of *Sparaxis bulbifera* (Harlequin Flower) near the lagoon and in patches in the rough of some fairways, we were disappointed to see two large infestations of Cape Tulip (one near the machinery shed and one patch between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> fairways in the middle of a patch of Chocolate Lilies). Diane will contact the Golf Club president to see what action has been planned to control the spread of these weeds into the 'rough' areas that still retain native species, despite over zealous slashing of large swathes along the edge of the wide fairways. The fairways have been drained and planted with pasture grasses, supered and kept closely mown. Old River Red Gums are found throughout the golf course although regrettably many were removed to construct the course. Large overhanging branches ('overhead bunkers') were also removed when some members complained that it was too difficult to play the course.

After lunch we headed north to look for orchids in the areas burnt in the 2013 summer fires. We stopped at several sites along the Glenisla flats and near the road into the Billywing. It was obvious that the fire had been extensive and very severe; most of the bush vegetation had been completely burnt and the taller trees and shrubs were blackened along the trunks and branches into the leaf canopy. New growth was evident along the branches of the taller trees but many of the smaller shrubs appeared dead. There were many seedlings showing through the burnt soil. One large, old Yellow Box tree near the road had been cut down despite it having a solid core – apparently no effort had been made to extinguish a small fire high in the tree.

We had hoped to find the rare *Thelymitra epipactoides* (Metallic Sun-orchid); several plants had been seen in the general area 2 weeks previously. We did not succeed but were more than happy with the 19 orchid species that we did find and photographed. Among the orchid list were 3 species of Beard Orchid, including the beautiful Copper Beard-orchid (*Calochilus campestris*) which has 2 smooth purplish plates at the base of the labellum. Other lovely orchids included the Azure Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra azurea*) which was new to our group. We saw at least 2 species of Leek Orchids (*Prasophyllum odoratum* and *P. elatum*). The former has a sweet scent to the flowers while the latter is taller and the robust stem and outer sepals appear almost black before the small flowers open. Photos of these and other orchids are shown below.



On our way home we stopped to admire the magnificent spectacle of flowering Grass Trees (*Xanthorrhoea australis*) on the eastern side of the road near what was a major stand of Desert Banksia (*Banksia ornata*). The banksias had all been burned (seedlings are beginning to rise again) and in that general area were many Red-beak Orchids (*Pyrorchis nigricans*), some still in full bloom but the majority appearing in their dark “undertaker” dress of senescence. One interesting sighting in this area was Nodding Greenhoods (*Pterostylis nutans*) still freshly in bloom so late in the year (usually August-flowering plants). Slender Candles were also in flower.

On the west side of the Henty Highway the flower spikes had developed but the flowers had not yet opened. These grass trees were very small and may have been *Xanthorrhoea minor*. We also removed six African Weed Orchids in the spoon drain on the west side of the road.

#### Birds seen at the Glenisla Flats area

A flock of Masked Wood Swallows was heard in the distant outwash Yellow Box-Yellow Gum woodland and heath areas of the Grampians and numbers flew high over us. A Fan-tailed Cuckoo was heard and Crimson Rosella were sighted but there were few birds about in the burned areas.

#### Some plants in flower (other than orchids) at Glenisla

<i>Arthropodium strictum</i>	Chocolate Lily
<i>Bulbine bulbosa</i>	Bulbine Lily
<i>Burchardia umbellata</i>	Milkmaids
<i>Chaemaescilla corymbosa</i>	Blue Squill
<i>Caesia calliantha</i>	Blue Grass-lily
<i>Acaena novaezelandiae</i>	Bidgee-Widgee
<i>Drosera peltata</i>	Pale Sundew
<i>Oxalis perennans</i>	Grasslands Wood-sorrel
<i>Leptorhynchus squamatus</i>	Scaly Buttons
<i>Microceris lanceolata</i>	Yam Daisy
<i>Craspedia variabilis</i>	Billy Buttons
<i>Wahlenbergia spp.</i>	Austral bluebells
<i>Hydrocotyle spp</i>	Pennyworts
<i>Goodenia pinnatifida</i>	Cut-leaf Goodenia
<i>Goodenia geniculata</i>	Bent Goodenia
<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	Running Postman
<i>Lobelia sp.</i>	Lobelia
<i>Villarsia reniformis</i>	Running Marsh-flower
<i>Stackhousia viminea</i>	Slender Candles
<i>Xanthorrhoea australis</i>	Grass-tree
* <i>Moraea flaccida</i>	One-leaf Cape Tulip
* <i>Sparaxis bulbifera</i>	Harlequin Flower



*Thelymitra aristata* at Glenisla Flat

**Orchids Identified**

Mooralla Golf Course

*Caladenia carnea*  
*Caladenia parva*  
*Disa bracteata\**  
*Diuris sp aff. chryseopsis*  
*Microtis unifolia*  
*Pterostylis cynnocephala*  
*Thelymitra megacalyptra*  
*Thelymitra pauciflora* group  
*Thelymitra sp.*

Pink Fingers  
 Small Greencomb Spider  
 African Weed Orchid  
 Golden Moth  
 Onion Orchid  
 Swan Greenhood  
 Scented Sun-orchid  
 Slender Sun-orchid  
 (tall, multi flowered)

Glenisla Flats

*Caladenia parva*  
*Caladenia pusilla*  
*Caladenia tentaculata*  
*Calochilus campestris*  
*Calochilus paludosis*  
*Calochilus robertsonii*  
*Diuris orientis*  
*Diuris pardina*  
*Microtis unifolia*  
*Prasophyllum elatum*  
*Prasophyllum odoratum* group  
*Pterostylis nutans*  
*Pyrorchis nigricans*  
*Thelymitra azurea*  
*Thelymitra antennifera*  
*Thelymitra aristata?*  
*Thelymitra flexuosa*  
*Thelymitra ixioides*  
*Thelymitra pauciflora* group  
*Thelymitra rubra*

Small Greencomb Spider  
 Small Pink Fingers  
 Mantis Orchid  
 Copper Beard-orchid  
 Red Beard-orchid  
 Purplish Beard-orchid  
 Wallflower Orchid  
 Leopard Orchid  
 Onion Orchid  
 Tall Leek-orchid  
 White Leek-orchid  
 Nodding Greenhood  
 Red Beaks  
 Azure Sun-orchid  
 Rabbits Ears  
 Great Sun-orchid  
 Twisted Sun-orchid  
 Dotted Sun-orchid  
 Slender Sun-orchid  
 Salmon Sun-orchid

*Prasophyllum odoratum*  
 at Glenisla Flat



**Birds seen at Mooralla/Victoria lagoon**

Australian Magpie	Varied Sitella	White-plumed Honeyeater
Little Raven	Grey Shrike-thrush	Weebill
Rainbow lorikeet	Striated Pardalote	Rufous Whistler
Superb Fairy-wren	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Fantail
Swamp Harrier	Brown Thornbill	
Laughing Kookaburra	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	

**Mooralla Golf Club**



*Thelymitra pauciflora*  
*Thelymitra megacalyptra?*  
*Caladenia parva*  
*Pterostylis cynnocephala*

# Glenisla Flats



- *Thelymitra aristata*, *T. pauciflora*, *T. rubra*, *Thelymitra* sp.
- *Prasophyllum odoratum*, *Pr. elatum*, *Thelymitra ixiooides*, *T. azurea*
- *Calochilus robertsonii*, *Caloch. campestris*, *Caloch. paludosis*, *Caladenia pusilla*
- *Prasophyllum elatum*, *C. tentaculata*, *Diuris orientis*, *Diuris pardina*
- *Thelymitra azurea*, *Pyrorchis nigricans*