

**HFNC Excursion Report – Ewen’s Ponds & Piccaninny Ponds and a campout at  
Cenotes, Penambol on 4/5 April 2009  
Diane Luhrs**

**Attendees on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April** – John Cayley, Glenys Cayley, Reto Zollinger, Yvonne Ingeme, Rod Bird, Diane Luhrs, David Munro, Lyn Munro, Janeen Samuel, Ken Grimes, Hilary Turner, George Turner (& sons – Leonard and Albert)

Saturday was cool, overcast, with light showers on the way to Ewen’s Ponds – clearing skies – calm.

John & Glenys, Reto & Yvonne, Rod & Diane, David & Lyn met at the Hamilton information centre at 9 am and travelled via Digby, Winnap and Nelson to arrive at Ewen’s Ponds, SA, just after 11 am. Ken & Janeen were there to meet us. (John took us past the turn off to Port McDonnell – but travelling via Warreanga Rd, Tillers Rd, Treveort Rd and past the 8-Mile Creek Hall we found the spot.

Sightings on the way:

- Hamilton to Digby – Brown Falcon, Grey Shrike Thrush, Glossy Ibis (near Hamilton Wetlands), flock of 200 Swallows over a paddock.
- Lower Glenelg NP (Winnap Rd) – Swamp Wallaby, Grey Kangaroo, Red-necked Wallaby, many Crimson Rosellas, Emus (2 juveniles, 3 adults), Galah, Ravens, Magpies (entering dairying country near Nelson)
- Nelson to Ewen’s Ponds – dairying with centre-pivot irrigation, *Acacia longifolia* on roadsides, limestone outcrops a feature of the landscape – limestone used to surface the roads.

**Ewen’s Ponds Conservation Park-**

Rod, Diane, John and Glenys donned wetsuits and stepped into the first pond – in a sequence of 3 ponds linked by passage ways through the vegetation. Rod, John and Glenys had all explored these ponds years before.

Other members watched as we braved the cold water and disappeared around the bend – no reason to stay in the first pond as not much of interest was seen here – most plants were covered in the slimy algal growth and the water was cloudy with algal sediment – only a few fish were seen (mostly Galaxies) – not clear and beautiful as John, Glenys and Rod had remembered from their visit many years earlier.

The other 2 ponds also suffered the effects of algal build up and murky waters. The linking passages had a lot of vegetation but few fish and no other animal life. I saw one Spiny Crayfish back out from beneath a rock on the left side of the 2<sup>nd</sup> pool – and crawl back in. John and Glenys saw a number of larger fish and Rod identified several Bream along the length of the swim.

Other members met us at the platform of the 3<sup>rd</sup> pond – after only about 20 -30 minutes in the water. The current had carried us easily along – the wetsuits made swimming easy and comfortable for us.

Bursaria in seed, Blackwood, Kangaroo Apple in fruit, Epilobium (pink-flowered willow herb).

Birds seen around Ewens Ponds and on the way to Piccaninny Ponds:

- |                         |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ● White-faced Heron     | ● Little Ravens                |
| ● Brown Thornbills      | ● Little Wattlebirds           |
| ● Great Cormorant (juv) | ● Brown Falcon                 |
| ● Grey Fantails         | ● Wedge-tailed Eagle           |
| ● Superb Fairy-wrens    | ● Australian Magpies           |
| ● Red Wattlebirds       | ● Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo |
| ● Magpie-lark           | ● Silvereyes                   |
| ● Crested Pigeon        | ● Common Starling              |

**Piccaninny Ponds Conservation Park** – our objective there was to view the extensive waterways, to have lunch in the camping ground and to walk along the beach. Vegetation seen around the pools was Woolly Tea-tree, Dodder Laurel, Kangaroo Apple, Tree Everlasting, Pelargoniums in leaf.

Birds seen at Piccaninny Ponds (GPS 38-03-13/140-56-36):

- New Holland Honeyeater
- Brown Thornbills
- Hoary-headed Grebes (2)
- Australasian Grebe (1)
- Red Wattlebirds
- Little Wattlebird
- Little Grassbird
- Great Cormorant
- Superb Fairy-wren
- Eastern Great Egret (1)
- Australasian Bittern (1)

Rod, Diane, Lyn and David saw the Bittern and Great Egret on the return from the beach.

Walk to beach – Scaevola, Pelargonium, Bracken Fern, Superb Fairy Wrens.

Beach – freshwater stream flowing quickly into the sea – parallel to the sea with sand falling in on the outer curve of the stream – young boys Albert and Leonard had a great time skipping and jumping through the stream.

Birds seen at the beach:

- Red-capped Plovers (~50)
- Double-banded Plover (3)
- Silver Gulls
- Pacific Gull (1)
- Sandpipers (~8) flying over the sea.

**Penambol Camp**

After Ken showed us two sink holes in the limestone in the area, John & Glenys, Reto & Yvonne, Janeen & Ken, Hilary Turner, George Turner (& sons – Leonard and Albert) stayed overnight in the bush camp setting on Saturday night.

In the morning we looked for butterflies but few were to be found except the Common Brown. After a leisurely start to the morning we set off home. Diane and Rod went via Nelson and Wild Dog Bend (LGNP). *Eucalyptus willisii* (Peppermint) was noted along the way.

Birds at Nelson on the Lower Glenelg River estuary:

- Eastern Great Egret
- Musk Duck (5)
- Red Wattlebird
- Black Swan (21)
- Superb Fairy-wren
- Silvereyes
- Little Ravens
- Great Cormorant (1)
- Little Pied Cormorant
- Little Black Cormorant
- Silver Gulls
- Australian Pelican (18)
- Crested Terns (~100)
- Grey Teal (2)
- Pacific Black Duck
- Little Grassbird (1)
- Pacific Gull
- Australian White Ibis
- European Goldfinch

Wild Dog Bend (LGNP) – Silver Banksia in flower

Birds seen at Wild Dog Bend in the Lower Glenelg National Park:

- White-throated Treecreeper
- Crimson Rosellas
- Dusky Moorhen
- Grey Shrike Thrush

Rod's photos below:

- Ewens Ponds
- Group at Piccaninny Ponds beach
- Group at Piccaninny Ponds outlet stream
- Beach at Piccaninny Ponds outlet
- Australasian Bittern at Piccaninny Ponds
- Piccaninny Ponds outlet stream
- Pelicans and Crested Terns at Nelson

