

HFNC Weed Control Report for Nigretta Falls Scenic Reserve 2017

African Weed Orchid (AWO): This weed is a serious environmental pest and was found on this Reserve in 2009. Work by HFNC to control it has continued annually in Oct-Nov-Dec.

The history of attempts to control this pest plant and some others on this reserve was given in the 2016 report.

Roger Thompson has again attacked this pest plant with zeal, searching on 7 occasions across the site, spending 11 hours on the work of digging up the plants.

Roger was assisted on the 18 Nov. by 7 members of HFNC who attended an excursion to the area, hoping to be able to cross the river to the Flora Reserve but were thwarted by rain the previous week that caused the river to rise. The extra workers enabled an increased area to be inspected on the Scenic Reserve, including the part east of the road from the entrance down to the Swimming Hole. That area had not been visited in previous years and it yielded about 115 AWO, some more than 30 cm tall in the long grass.

In all, 603 AWO were removed from the reserve in the spring-summer of 2017, before any seed could be shed.

- 06 Oct – 48 immature plants dug (1.25 hrs) – difficult to find at that early stage
- 13 Oct – 133 immature plants dug (1.45 hr)
- 19 Oct – 76 maturing plants dug (2.0 hr)
- 27 Oct – 79 plants dug (1.3 hr)
- 02 Nov – 52 plants (1.3 hr)
- 15 Nov – 52 plants (2.15 hr)
- 18 Nov – 163 plants (13.0 hr)

The 63% decline in number of AWO found in this ‘normal’ year, compared with 2016, may indicate that we are gaining ground – but that was what we thought on previous occasions! Incidentally, this decline was rather similar to the 68% decline in numbers of AWO removed from the Nigretta Flora Reserve in 2017. That comparison is close if we discount the 115 AWO removed from the area to the east of the road that was not covered in past years. The decline from the rest of the Scenic Reserve is then 70%. Whether the decline is due to our good work or simply to ‘natural’ variation (particularly in rainfall) remains a matter for conjecture.

A summary of works on this reserve since 2009 is given below:

- 2017 – 603 AWO dug (22.5 hr)
- 2016 – 1618 AWO dug (20.7 hr), incl. 244 in early Jan. 2017
- 2015 – 276 AWO dug (5 hr)
- 2014 – 787 AWO dug and 15 plants pulled (15 hrs) – 38 of those were dug in Feb 2015
- 2013 – 230 AWO dug (2 hr)
- 2012 – 70 AWO, 220 Wild Gladiolus, 50 Grevillea and dozens of *Ixia* pulled (2.3 hrs)
- 2011 – 50 AWO dug and 12 Grevillea plants pulled (4 hr)
- 2010 – 180 AWO dug; 615 AWO, 450 Wild Gladiolus, 70 *Ixia* & 87 Grevillea pulled (12 hr)
- 2009 – 217 AWO dug and 104 AWO and 10 *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* pulled (6 hrs)