

HFNC Excursion to Wannan River frontage Nigretta Falls to Four Posts on 05 July 1975

Rod Bird

This walk was proposed to provide information when preparing submissions about future status and management of Crown Lands to the Land Conservation Council (LCC) for the SW Area District 2 investigation. Information on the condition and flora of Crown frontages from Wannan Falls to Red Rd Bridge at Bulart was collected for that purpose. The day was quite cold, with showers.

General Comments

The area upstream from the Nigretta Falls Reserve is fenced on the North side. The frontage on the south side appears to be freehold and is unfenced for at least 1 km or more. Cattle therefore are able to cross the river in summer when the pools develop and graze the reserve on the northern, fenced bank. Because there are no cross-fences, the cattle can also graze all of the reserve up to Four Posts.

Much of the south bank has been cleared of trees. The northern bank has a good cover of tree vegetation for most of its length. A large mid-section area [T3 on the Wannan River Frontages flora report – see HFNC website] has a reservation as a Water Reserve. That section has the most intact vegetation and is the largest area, but it has been degraded to some extent by cattle from the south and possibly by sheep from an adjacent property to the north.

There appears to be only one open access point on the north side of the river where stock drink from the river. That point occurs on a bend about 200 m downstream from the Four Posts bridge.

A stretch of about 150 m of the north bank immediately below Four Posts is privately owned. The west portion rises steeply to the Dundas Tableland and is the source of seepage to the river. It hosts several fern, including several Soft Tree-fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*) that do not occur elsewhere on the Wannan. Pistol Club buildings near the river occupy the east end of that block.

Vegetation on the north bank

- *Acacia mearnsii* (Black Wattle) – very common throughout
- *Acacia paradoxa* (Hedge Wattle) – quite prevalent from the mid-area through to near the Four Posts. That might be due to cattle grazing eliminating competition
- *Acacia verticillata* (Prickly Moses) – prevalent but heavily browsed by cattle
- *Acaena anserinifolia* (Bidgee Widgee) – sporadic
- *Allocasuarina verticillata* (Drooping Sheoak) – a few at the Four Posts end, on higher ground.
- *Amyema pendula* (Drooping Mistletoe) – on a Black Wattle
- *Apodasmia brownii* (Coarse Twine-rush) – present
- *Banksia marginata* (Silver Banksia) – some fine, old specimens a little way upstream from Nigretta and a few further upstream, with a couple on higher ground on the south bank in the mid-section.[There is also a grove on the upstream end of the Nigretta Flora Reserve]
- *Bursaria spinosa* (Sweet Bursaria) – several bushes in the mid-section
- *Carex appressa* (Tall Sedge) – seen in the mid-section
- *Cassytha pubscens* (Downy Dodder-laurel) – present
- *Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia* (Rock Fern) – very common
- *Cyanogeton procera* (Water Ribbons) – common throughout
- *Drosera auriculata* (Tall Sundew) – common
- *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gum) – found sporadically along the river and in adjacent paddocks
- *Eucalyptus viminalis* (Manna Gum) – some fine stands in the mid-section
- *Exocarpos cupressiformis* (Cherry Ballart) – many trees were seen throughout the walk, particularly on the north side. Cattle have eaten off the lower branches and stripped small trees.
- *Ficinia nodosa* (Knobby Club-rush) – common
- *Gahnia radula* (Thatch Saw-sedge) – present
- *Goodenia ovata* (Hop Goodenia) – a few plants in the mid-section, eaten off by stock
- *Hibbertia riparia* (Erect Guinea-flower) – quite common in the mid-section (some flowers seen)

- *Juncus* sp. (Rush) – sporadic
- *Lepidosperma carphoides* (Black Rapier-sedge) – present
- *Lepidosperma longitudinale* (Pithy Sword-sedge) – seen throughout
- *Leptospermum continentale* (Prickly Tea-tree) – present on the mid-section only
- *Leptospermum lanigerum* (Woolly Tea-tree) – occasional clumps along the entire stretch of river
- *Leptospermum myrsinoides* (Heath Tea-tree) – one clump on a sandy area in mid-section
- *Leptospermum obovatum* (River Tea-tree) – a very common and dominant tall shrub. Some regrowth among/near the old, tall shrubs
- *Lomandra longifolia* (Spiny-headed Mat-rush) – present
- *Melicytus dentatus* (Tree Violet) – one healthy bush seen in the mid-section
- *Ozothamnus ferruginea* (Tree Everlasting) – one bush seen on the mid-section
- *Pelargonium rodneyanum* (Magenta Stork's-bill) – quite common
- *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed) – present at Nigretta end
- *Platylobium obtusangulum* (Common Flat-pea) – quite common in the centre section
- *Poa labillardierei* (Common Tussock Grass) – clumps common throughout
- *Pteridium esculentum* (Common Bracken) – common; heavy in patches, especially on the bank near the Pistol Club at Four Posts
- *Selliera radicans* (Swamp Weed) – common on water's edge
- *Senecio pinnatifolius* (Variable Groundsel) – a few plants seen in one area of mid-section towards the Four Posts end; cattle or rabbits have eaten them down
- *Styphelia humifusa* (Cranberry Heath) – sporadic, occurs only on the mid-section and towards Four Posts
- *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass) – sporadic, common at Four Posts end in spots where grazing is not heavy (especially in the fenced area downstream from the Pistol Club)
- *Xanthorrhoea minor* (Small Grass-tree) – very common, especially in the mid-section.



Lionel Elmore, Cliff Beauglehole, Peter Milne and Brian Lacy near a giant Silver Banksia, upstream from Nigretta Falls in Feb. 1978

Birds seen:

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| 1. Australia Magpie | 7. Golden Whistler | 13. Long-billed Corella |
| 2. Australian Wood Duck | 8. Grey Fantail | 14. Masked Lapwing |
| 3. Brown Thornbill | 9. Grey Thrush | 15. Restless Flycatcher |
| 4. Brown Treecreeper | 10. Laughing Kookaburra | 16. Superb Fairy-wren |
| 5. Crimson Rosella | 11. Little Pied Cormorant | 17. White-plumed Honeyeater |
| 6. Eastern Rosella | 12. Little Raven | 18. White-throated Treecreeper |

We saw 3 Eastern Grey Kangaroo, Swamp Rat runs, a Platypus in the river and a burrow at the water's edge in the river bank (perhaps a Water Rat or Platypus home).