

## Freislich Dam Walk



The following is a guide and checklist to some of the plant, bird and mammal diversity along the Freislich Dam Walk. This guide should be used in conjunction with the trail map. The arid zone is very unpredictable and stochastic. Thus plants germinate from seeds or other propagules according to rainfall, temperature and the run of the seasons. The checklist given here is indicative only and you may be able to add plant species during a good season and find few in a drought. Likewise few animals are sedentary on the scale circumscribed by the walk. The habitat is too patchy and the resources too stochastic. Thus the diversity of mammals and birds may rise and fall with the run of the seasons. To make a positive identification of a plant or animal you may need one of a number of excellent field guides that we recommend at the end. Some of these are too weighty to comfortably carry so you may have to record your observations in a notebook with a photograph or sketch for later confirmation. Please record any new species in the Sighting Book available in the Quarters where the maps and guides are distributed.

The sections are numbered sequentially according to the trail map although more emphasis is placed on transitions between different habitats. Thus section 1 is the trail from the starting point to the first numbered marker or habitat transition

### **Section 1 (Track under telephone posts to Fowlers Creek)**

The vegetation in this section is dominated by black bluebush and prickly wattles.

Several chenopods, like *Atriplex conduplicata* and *Atriplex vesicaria* (bladder saltbush) are relatively rare. (Most of them are juveniles growing on and along the

track. On the track grow mainly *Sclerolaena* sp., like pale povertybush, short-winged copperburr, silky copperburr etc.

Some tall groundsels (*Senecio* sp.) are obvious to see.

The most common mammal is the red kangaroo. Common birds include black kite, galah, Australian magpie and Australian raven.

### **Section 2 (Fowlers Creek)**

There are river red gums along both shores of the creek and also in the creek bed and there is much lemon scented grass on the banks.

The vegetation along the creek includes several western boobiallas, mitchell grass, silver-tails, cottony saltbush, fruit-salad plant, ruby saltbush and thorny saltbush.

At the gap (the old highway) there are some belahs and then more and more prickly wattles become a dominant species in this section.

The most common mammal is the euro. Birds are diverse and common species include crested pigeon, galah, little corella, mallee ringneck, mulga parrot, variegated fairy-wren, white-winged fairy-wren, chestnut-rumped thornbill, yellow-rumped thornbill, southern whiteface, spiny-cheeked honeyeater, striped honeyeater, white-plumed honeyeater, singing honey, yellow-throated minor, crimson chat, grey fantail, magpie lark, Australian raven, apostle bird, tree martin and mistletoebird.

### **Section 3 (Cross from Fowlers Creek to Freislich Dam)**

This section is first (in the "stony downs") dominated by black bluebush, bladder saltbush, prickly wattle and in the gullies by lemon-scented grass.

One of the markers to the "twin knolls" is on a quandong with several mistletoes on it.

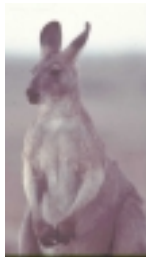
On the way to the twin knolls are 2 butterbushes to pass (marker on the second butterbush).

After leaving the "stony downs" the most abundant plants are bladder saltbush and more and more povertybushes, including pale, long-spined and streaked.

At the area of the "beer rocks" are some scattered belahs and rosewood and in the gullies prickly wattle, lemon-scented grass

and thorny saltbush. The amount of povertybushes increases the closer coming to the dam.

The common mammals are red kangaroos and euros. Birds are less diverse here but include galah, mulga parrot, white-winged fairy-wren, striped pardalote, yellow-throated minor, chirruping wedgebill, apostle bird, and welcome swallow.



#### **Section 4 (Freislich Dam)**

On the way to the dam wall there are many velvet potato-bushes growing.

Just behind the dam wall grows mexican poppy and tobacco bush.

Common mammals are red kangaroos and euros. A high and variable diversity of water and shorebirds occur on the dam with further species in the riparian vegetation. Common species include little pied cormorant, hoary-headed grebe, Australasian grebe, black swan, pacific black duck, pink-eared duck, hardhead, Australian wood duck, musk duck, black-tailed native hen, Eurasian coot, masked lapwing, black-fronted dotterel, black-winged stilt, crested pigeon, galah, little corella, mallee ringneck, spiny-cheeked honeyeater, yellow-throated minor, white-plumed honeyeater, willie wagtail, magpie lark, Australian raven, apostle bird, tree martin, and fairy martin.



#### **Section 5 (Crossing from Freislich Dam to Homestead Creek)**

The vegetation is almost the same as that in section 3, with bladder saltbush, pale, long-spined and streaked povertybushes.

There is lemon-scented grass grows abundantly in the gullies and some groundrels (*Senecio* sp.) are obvious to see

because they are bigger than the chenopods.

Closer to Homestead creek black bluebush and prickly wattle become increasingly abundant.

Common mammals are again red kangaroos and euros. Bird diversity is much lower but you are likely to see galah, little corella, mulga parrot, white-winged fairy-wren, spiny-cheeked honeyeater, gibberbird, chirruping wedgebill, magpie lark, Australian raven, and welcome swallow.

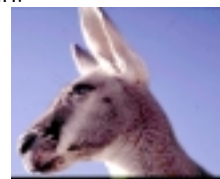
#### **Section 6 (Homestead Creek)**

Like most of the creeks, Homestead creek is dominated by river red gums.

Other plants very abundant in and along Homestead Creek include prickly wattle, thorny saltbush, lemon-scented grass and several black bluebushes.

There is one very obvious "tall sticky bushy shrub, [...] with resinous stems covered with thin reddish bark" with "lond-stalked, waxy, the upper surface glossy green"<sup>1</sup> leaves growing in the creek bed. It is a Sapandinacea and called broad-leaf hopbush, which has "green, red or purplish" fruits, with "3 or 4 spreading vertical wings".

Red kangaroos and euros are common. Birds include galah, little corella, mallee ringneck, mulga parrot, variegated fairy-wren, broad-tailed thornbill, yellow-rumped thornbill, southern whiteface, spiny-cheeked honeyeater, singing honeyeater, white-plumed honeyeater, crimson chat, red-capped robin, willie wagtail, apostle bird, and tree martin.



#### **Section 7 (Track back to Fowlers Gap Homestead)**

The track back to the station is dominated by black bluebush and many different kinds of *Sclerolaena* sp., including short-winged copperburr, all three kinds of povertybushes mentioned before and

<sup>1</sup> Plants of Western New South Wales, p. 473.

waterweed growing on the track itself and especially on its margin.

Red kangaroos and euros are common. The typical birds seen are galah, little corella, white-winged fairy-wren, crimson chat, orange chat gibber bird, chestnut-crowned babbler, magpie lark, Australian magpie, Australian raven and welcome swallow.

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**Credits:** This guide was prepared by Anke Frank (University of NSW and Bonn University) with the assistance of David Croft, Rebecca Montague-Drake, Amanda Bilton and Ingrid Witte (UNSW).

The guide is part of a UNSW research project in collaboration with the CRC for Sustainable Tourism and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. The aim of this project is to develop and implement products to support a vibrant wildlife tourism industry in the rangelands of the Outback. Some more information can be found at our web site <http://bioscience.babs.unsw.edu.au/rootourism/>.

**Field Guides:**

Cunningham, G.M., Mulham, W.E., Milthorpe, P.L. and Leigh, J.H. (1981). *Plants of Western New South Wales*. NSW Government Printing Office, Sydney  
 Dawson, T.J. 1995. *Kangaroos: Biology of the largest marsupials*. UNSW Press, Sydney  
 Simpson, K. and Day, N. 1999. *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*. 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. Penguin Books, Melbourne.  
 Strahan, R. 1995. *The Mammals of Australia*. Reed New Holland, Sydney



Crimson Chat ( <i>Epthianura tricolor</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Orange Chat ( <i>Epthianura aurifrons</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gibberbird ( <i>Ashbyia lovensis</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chirruping Wedgebill ( <i>Psophodes occidentalis</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chestnut-crowned Babbler ( <i>Pomatostomus ruficeps</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Red-capped Robin ( <i>Petroica goodeovii</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rufous Whistler ( <i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grey Fantail ( <i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Willie Wagtail ( <i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Magpie-lark ( <i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike ( <i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground Cuckoo-shrike ( <i>Coracina maxima</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grey Butcherbird ( <i>Cracticus torquatus</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Australian Magpie ( <i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Australian Raven ( <i>Corvus coronoides</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apostlebird ( <i>Struthidea cinerea</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welcome Swallow ( <i>Cheramoeca leucosternus</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tree Martin ( <i>Hirundo nigricans</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairy Martin ( <i>Hirundo ariel</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Richard's Pipit ( <i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mistletoebird ( <i>Nectarinia jugularis</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Checklist of plants

### POACEAE

Curly Mitchell Gras ( <i>Astrelba lappacea</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lemon-scented Gras ( <i>Cymbopogon ambiguus</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

### CASUARINAE

Belah ( <i>Casuarina cristata</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
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### SANTALACEAE

Quandong ( <i>Santalum acuminatum</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
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### CHENOPODIACEAE

<i>Atriplex conduplicata</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Old Man Saltbush ( <i>Atriplex nummularia</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bladder Saltbush ( <i>Atriplex vesicularia</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Babbagia dipterocharpa</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short-winged Copperburr ( <i>Sclerolaena brachyptera</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Green Copperburr ( <i>Sclerolaena decurrens</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grey Copperburr ( <i>Sclerolaena diacantha</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pale Povertybush ( <i>Sclerolaena divaricata</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Silky Copperburr ( <i>Sclerolaena eriacantha</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wooly Copperburr ( <i>Sclerolaena lanicuspis</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pearl Copperburr ( <i>Sclerolaena limbata</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-spined Poverty-bush ( <i>Sclerolaena longicuspis</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limestone Copperburr ( <i>Sclerolaena obliquicuspis</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cannonball ( <i>Sclerolaena paradoxa</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Streaked Povertybush ( <i>Sclerolaena tricuspis</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salt Copperburr ( <i>Sclerolaena ventricosa</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ruby Saltbush ( <i>Enchylaena tomentosa</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Satiny Bluebush ( <i>Maireana georgei</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black Buebush ( <i>Maireana pyramidata</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pearl Bluebush ( <i>Maireana sedifolia</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cottony Saltbush ( <i>Rhagodia gaudichaudiana</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thorny Saltbush ( <i>Rhagodia spinescens</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>AMARANTHACEAE</b>	
Silver-tails ( <i>Ptilotus obovatus</i> var. <i>obovatus</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PAPAVERACEAE</b>	
Mexican Poppy ( <i>Argemone ochroleuca</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PITTOSPORACEAE</b>	
Butterbush ( <i>Pittosporum phylliraeoides</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>MIMOSACEAE</b>	
Mulga ( <i>Acacia aneura</i> var. <i>aneura</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broad-leaf Mulga ( <i>Acacia aneura</i> var. <i>latifolia</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Umbrella Mulga ( <i>Acacia brachystachya</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Miljee ( <i>Acacia oswaldii</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needle Wattle ( <i>Acacia rigens</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dead Finish ( <i>Acacia tetragonophylla</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prickly Wattle ( <i>Acacia victoria</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>FABACEAE</b>	
Red-flowered Trefoil ( <i>Lotus cruentus</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broken Hill Pea ( <i>Swainsona fissimontana</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>SAPINDACEAE</b>	
Broad-leaf Hopbush ( <i>Dodonaea viscosa</i> var. <i>arborescens</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rosewood ( <i>Heterodendrum oleifolium</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>MALVACEAE</b>	
Malvastrum ( <i>Malvastrum americanum</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twiggy Sida ( <i>Sida instricta</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>MYRTACEAE</b>	
River Red Gum ( <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> var. <i>camaldulensis</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
River Red Gum ( <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> var. <i>obtusata</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>SOLANACEAE</b>	
Tobacco Bush ( <i>Nicotiana glauca</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Green-berry Nightshade ( <i>Solanum opacum</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Velvet Potato-bush ( <i>Solanum ellipticum</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>MYOPORACEAE</b>	
Western Boobialla ( <i>Myoporum montanum</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>CAMPANULACEAE</b>	
Bluebell ( <i>Wahlenbergia</i> spp.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>ASTERACEAE</b>	
Shrubby Groundsel ( <i>Senecio</i> sp.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Showy Groundsel ( <i>Senecio magnificus</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fruit-salad Plant ( <i>Pterocaulon sphacelatum</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saffron Thistle ( <i>Carthamus lanatus</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>