

Lake and Gap Trig Station Walk



The following is a guide and checklist to some of the plant, bird and mammal diversity along the Lake and Gap Trig Station 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 (Fowlers Gap Creek)

The creek is dominated by river red gum with a variety of shrubs (e.g. western boobialla) and grasses (e.g. lemon-scented grass) along the banks. The detailed guide commences where you enter Lake Paddock along Gum Creek (i.e. the following sections)

Section 2 (Lake Paddock)

The plains in section 2 are dominated by black bluebush and several copperburrs, including pale povertybush, short-winged copperburr and pearl copperburr. You are most likely to encounter red kangaroos, euros, Australian ravens and galahs in this habitat.

Section 3 (The creeks leading to lake)

Following the creek, section 3 is dominated by river red gum, western boobialla, black bluebush, prickly wattle, some groundsels (*Senecio* sp.), lemon-scented grass and some chenopods (*Atriplex* sp., *Sclerolaena* sp.).

A big cluster of old man saltbush lies to the right hand side, where you turn right into the side creek, leading to the dam wall in front of the lake.

Many velvet potato-bushes and fruit-salad plants grow close to the dam wall in front of the lake.

The most common mammal is the euro. Birds are quite diverse and common species are: black kite, galah, mulga parrot, variegated fairy wren, yellow-rumped thornbill, chestnut-crowned babbler, magpie lark, white-winged triller, Australian raven and tree martin.

Section 4 (The lake)

There are many river red gums growing around the lake. In the dried out parts of the lake-bed is much fruit-salad plant, Mexican poppy and common sneezeweed.

All four kangaroo species are likely to be seen drinking around dusk during warm weather. On the lake, the most common birds are hoary-headed grebe, Australian shelduck, grey teal, pink-eared duck. Around the margins of the lake you will likely see Australian wood duck, black-tailed native hen, black-fronted dotterel, little corella, variegated fairy wren, white-plumed honeyeater, black-faced cuckoo shrike and tree martin.

Section 5 (Crossing from lake to Gap Trig Ridge)

The first part of this section is dominated by black bluebush, but after passing the belahs (in the guidelines called black oaks)

the vegetation is then more dominated by pearl bluebush.

Thorny saltbush, quandong, bladder saltbush, and the several long-spined povertybushes are also present.

The most common mammal is again the euro. New common species of birds include the white-winged fairy-wren, spiny-cheeked honeyeater, pied honeyeater, white-breasted wood swallow as well as the previously encountered variegated fairy-wren, chestnut-crowned babbler, and tree martin.

Section 6 (On Gap Trig Ridge)

This section is dominated by belahs, which are scattered all over the ridge, as well as pearl bluebush, bladder saltbush and a few *Sclerolaena* sp.

The most common mammals are the euro and feral goats. You are most likely to see emu, white-winged fairy-wren, and magpie lark.

Section 7 (Curly Mallee on calcareous shale)

This section is dominated by curly mallee, the only part of any walk to include this species.

Pearl bluebush, black bluebush and erect mallee bush dominate the ground vegetation with a few satiny bluebushes, *Atriplex* sp. and *Sclerolaena* sp.

The common mammals are the euro and feral goat but you may also see the short-beaked echidna. Birds include galah, mallee ringneck parrot, white-winged fairy-wren, chestnut-crowned babbler, spiny-cheeked honeyeater, yellow-throated minor, Australian raven and tree martin.

Section 8 (Fowlers Creek)

Fowlers Creek is dominated by river red gum, fruit-salad plant, lemon-scented grass, prickly wattle, western boobialla and silver-tails.

Thorny saltbush and black bluebush are also present. Three-winged hopbush, belahs, saffron thistle and a few *Sclerolaena* sp. are growing relatively rare at the left hand bank of the creek.

The common mammals are euro and red kangaroo. Typical birds are galah, variegated fairy-wren, chestnut-rumped thornbill, spiny-cheeked honeyeater, singing

honeyeater, white-plumed honeyeater, welcome swallow and tree martin.

Section 9 (Homestead Creek)

The part of Homestead Creek included in this walk generally shows the same vegetation as described for Fowlers Gap Creek in section 8.

Some common birds are peaceful dove, galah and chestnut-crowned babbler.



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*. 6th Ed. Penguin Books, Melbourne.
 Strahan, R. 1995. *The Mammals of Australia*. Reed New Holland, Sydney

Checklist of mammals and birds

MAMMALS

Monotremes

Short-beaked Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*)

Marsupials

Red kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*)

Euro (*Macropus robustus erubescens*)

Placentals

Feral Goat (*Capra hircus*)

BIRDS

Emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*)

Little Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucus*)

Hoary-headed Grebe (*Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*)

Australasian Grebe (*Tachybaptus noevaehollandiae*)

Australian Shelduck (*Tadorna tadornoides*)

Grey Teal (*Anas gracilis*)

Pink-eared Duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*)

Australian Wood (Maned) Duck (*Chenonetta jubata*)

Black-tailed Native-hen (*Gallinula ventralis*)

Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*)

White-faced Heron (*Egretta (Ardea) novaehollandiae*)

Yellow-billed Spoonbill (*Platalea flavipes*)

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*)

Masked Lapwing (*Vanellus miles*)

Black-fronted Dotterel (*Elseyornis (Charadrius) melanops*)

Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*)

Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*)

Nankeen (Australian) Kestrel (*Falco cenchroides*)

Peaceful Dove (*Geopelia striata*)

Galah (*Eolophus (Cacatua) roseicapilla*)

Little Corella (*Cacatua sanguinea*)

Mallee Ringneck (*Barnardius zonarius barnardi*)

Mulga Parrot (*Psephotus varius*)

Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx basalis*)

Varigated Fairy-wren (*Malurus lamberti*)

White-winged Fairy-wren (*Malurus leucopterus*)

Chestnut-rumped Thornbill (*Acanthiza uropygialis*)

Yellow-rumped Thornbill (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*)

Southern Whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*)

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (*Acanthagenys rufogularis*)

Yellow-throated Minor (*Manorina flavigula*)

Singing Honeyeater (*Lichenostomus virescens*)

White-plumed Honeyeater (*Lichenostomus penicillatus*)

Pied Honeyeater (*Certhionyx variegatus*)

Chirruping Wedgebill (*Psophodes occidentalis*)

Chestnut-crowned Babbler (*Pomatostomus ruficeps*)

Hooded Robin (*Melanodryas cucullata*)

Rufous Whistler (*Pachycephala rufiventris*)

Grey Fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*)

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"/>
Buckbush (<i>Salsola kali</i> var. <i>kali</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
AMARANTHACEAE	
Silver-tails (<i>Ptilotus obovatus</i> var. <i>obovatus</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
PAPAVERACEAE	
Mexican Poppy (<i>Argemone ochroleuca</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
PITTOSPORACEAE	
Butterbush (<i>Pittosporum phylliraeoides</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
MIMOSACEAE	
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"/>
Creek Wattle (<i>Acacia rivalis</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dead Finish (<i>Acacia tetragonophylla</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prickly Wattle (<i>Acacia victoria</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
FABACEAE	
Broken Hill Pea (<i>Swainsona fissimontana</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
SAPINDACEAE	
Broad-leaf Hopbush (<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i> var. <i>arborescens</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rosewood (<i>Heterodendrum oleifolium</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
MALVACEAE	
Twiggy Sida (<i>Sida instricta</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
MYRTACEAE	
River Red Gum (<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> var. <i>camaldulensis</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
River Red Gum (<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> var. <i>obtusa</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Western Bloodwood (<i>Eucalyptus terminalis</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curly Mallee (<i>Eucalyptus gillii</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
BORAGINACEAE	
Paterson's Curse (<i>Echium plantagineum</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Australian Hound's Tongue (<i>Cynoglossum australe</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
SOLANACEAE	
Green-berry Nightshade (<i>Solanum opacum</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Velvet Potato-bush (<i>Solanum ellipticum</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCROPHULARIACEAE	
Blue-rod (<i>Morgania floribunda</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
MYOPORACEAE	
Western Boobialla (<i>Myoporum montanum</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
CAMPANULACEAE	
Bluebell (<i>Wahlenbergia</i> spp.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
ASTERACEAE	
Common Sneezeweed (<i>Centipeda cunninghamii</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
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"/>