The rain cleared overnight and we woke to sunshine and a cool breeze, eager to see how many birds and other creatures would be out and about in such delightful weather. The group this month consisted of Marg and Jeff, Julie, Susan, Gail and David. Thanks to Susan’s efforts we were allowed to enter an area of private land behind Geissmann Oval which offers a mixed habitat of rainforest, eucalypt woodland and open, grassy paddocks.

First we wandered down to the banks of Sandy Creek, admiring the fine, tall hedge of Macadamia integrifolia on our right.

We didn’t find many birds along this track though the usual Brown Thornbills and Lewin’s Honeyeaters were active in the trees on our left (these look like young brush box (Lophostemon confertus) but might be tallow wood (Eucalyptus microcorys) – must check them out).

Bar-shouldered Doves and Little Wattlebirds were also seen and heard. Down near the creek Gail spotted a very fine specimen of the terrestrial orchid Dipodium variegatum, commonly called the hyacinth orchid, which some of us photographed. This plant is one of the treasures of the rainforest which also springs up freely in some gardens around the mountain.

Red-necked pademelons (Thylogale thetis) were hopping about here and there, including a mother and joey which had us all oohing and aahhing for a while. No matter how many times we see these small, generally shy creatures we still get a thrill from observing their habits.

After this we were greeted by Kiwi Rob, guardian of the property, and his co-guardian Fearsome Fudge.
For this part of the expedition we were accompanied also by Raymond Cantrell, aka “The Dog Whisperer”, to protect us from Fudge, who turned out not to be quite so fearsome as reputed, once he got to know us. Rob and Fudge showed us the way down to that section of Sandy Creek, where the rainforest is quite thick, and then around the back of the property in search of the waterfall. Recent heavy rain and the thick scrub made the going difficult so we didn’t reach the waterfall but vowed to return another day, in drier weather.

Birds seen in this more open habitat included Rufous Fantail, Green Catbird and female regent bowerbirds, while Whipbirds and Logrunners were making their presence known, vocally, in the forest backdrop.

Kiwi Rob showed Susan and Julie an unusual fern growing epiphytically on a large staghorn fern (*Platycerium superbum*). Julie has tentatively identified this as *Vittaria elongata*, commonly known as tape or ribbon fern; the only fern of this type in Australia. Rob says he has seen several examples of this fern growing in apparent symbiosis with platyceriums. We also admired a large specimen of the locally-occurring cycad *Lepidozamia peroffskyana* with a large female cone. Three pale-headed rosellas flew past as we headed back down the track in the direction of the Geissmann Oval picnic area. While the rest of us got stuck into coffee and either smoko or a late breakfast; Susan went exploring and found a spring bubbling from the ground, at the edge of the football oval. This spring is only obvious in wet weather and offered an interesting glimpse of the valuable but usually unseen water resources that lie under the surface of our mountain.

The group then walked along Knoll Road, inspecting spiders’ webs and looking for butterflies (see list below). A notable sight was the old gum tree bearing two magnificent platyceriums in perfect juxtaposition – an elkhorn on the left and a staghorn on the right. (see first photo at top of report). A useful display for those who find it difficult to tell these two epiphytic ferns apart.

After a brief detour to search for black-breasted button quail platelets (we didn’t find any) Susan, Julie and David had to leave the group because of other commitments – but not before Susan found Julie a male Golden Whistler, thus ensuring Julie’s maxim that “any day you see a Golden Whistler is a good day!”

Marg, Jeff and Gail then continued to The Knoll picnic area where they picked up a few more birds, notably Yellow-faced & White-throated Honeyeaters, Striated Pardalote and Cicadabird. They also saw a Sigma Darter (Austroaeschna sigma) Dragonfly.
The morning ended with a visit to see the White-necked Herons breeding on a private property, where the remainder of the group had great sightings of the adult bird coming to the nest and feeding the two chicks.

Other Wildlife
Red-necked Pademelon
Common Eastern Froglet
Common Crow Butterfly
Blue Triangle Butterfly
Sigma Darter Dragonfly

Bird List
Lorikeet, Rainbow
Honeyeater, Lewin’s
Magpie, Australian
Dove, Bar-shouldered
Bowerbird, Satin
Currawong, Pied
Wattlebird, Little
Thornbill, Brown
King-Parrot, Australian
Cockatoo, Sulphur-crested
Whipbird, Eastern
Scrubwren, White-browed
Scrubwren, Large-billed
Kookaburra, Laughing
Miner, Noisy
Rosella, Pale-headed
Logrunner
Robin, Pale-yellow
Brush-turkey, Australian
Treecreeper, White-throated
Fantail, Rufous
Bowerbird, Regent
Catbird, Green
Silvereye
Swallow, Welcome
Butcherbird, Grey
Rosella, Crimson
Cuckoo-Dove, Brown
Shrike-thrush, Grey
Lyrebird, Albert’s
Whistler, Golden
Honeyeater, White-throated
Pardalote, Striated
Honeyeater, Yellow-faced
Cicadabird

Report by Julie Lake
Photos by Julie Lake,
David Sykes,
& Gail Molson

Magnificent tall gums amongst the Rainforest.