
Flora and Fauna Assessment 228 Falloons Road, Tylden

Prepared for Ashbourne Landcare Group



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In 2021, the Ashbourne Landcare Group commissioned the author to conduct flora and fauna assessments across twelve private properties occurring within the Ashbourne district. The project was funded by a grant provided by the North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA).

The surveys confirmed that the private lands across the Ashbourne district are of very high conservation significance. The following ecological values were recorded across the 12 properties:

- 306 separate plant species, 220 which are indigenous and 86 introduced,
- 59 separate bird species,
- eight plant species listed as *Endangered* or *Critically Endangered* under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee List,
- numerous plant species of regional significance,
- 43 of the plant species observed have not previously been (officially) recorded in the area according to a 10km radius search of the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA). Twenty-five of these are indigenous and 18 are introduced.

This report presents the results of the flora and fauna assessment at 228 Falloons Road, Tylden. It provides a list of the flora and fauna species that were recorded, a description of vegetation and habitat values and some recommendations for the maintenance and enhancement of ecological values.

1.2 Study area

The property at 228 Falloons Road is approximately 16.4 hectares in size. The eastern half of the property supports bushland while the western half is characterised by open paddocks with scattered trees. A dam is located in the western section of the property, with a drainage-line running across the property to the north. The house is located north-east of the dam.

1.3 Methods

228 Falloons Road was assessed for approximately three hours on the 8th of December 2021. As much of the property was surveyed as possible in the time allocated, prioritising the bushland in the east and around the dam. These areas were all traversed on foot and a list was compiled of all flora and fauna species observed. For fauna, most species were recorded from identification of calls (e.g. birds, frogs) or scats and tracks (e.g. Black Wallaby). Notes were taken on the vegetation, habitat features and management issues, whilst photographs were taken of representative areas.

2.0 RESULTS

2.1 Flora species

During the December 2021 survey, a total of 87 flora species were recorded at 228 Falloons Road (see Appendix 1). Of these, 66 are indigenous species and 19 are introduced or non-indigenous native species (e.g. Sticky Wattle from the Gippsland region). No FFG-listed or regionally significant species were observed on the property. Locally significant plants recorded including Showy Violet (*Viola betonicifolia*) and Common Trigger-plant (*Stylidium armeria*).

2.2 Vegetation description

The bushland in the eastern half of the property is dominated by Messmate Stringybark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) and Narrow-leaf Peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata*) with a mid-storey of scattered Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*). The ground layer supports a diverse assemblage of ferns, small shrubs, grasses, forbs and lilies including Austral Bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*), Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea (*Daviesia leptophylla*), Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*), Grey Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia cinerascens*), Red-anther Wallaby-grass (*Rytidosperma pallidum*), Blue Pincushion (*Brunonia australis*), Common Bird-orchid (*Chiloglottis valida*), Pale Vanilla-lily (*Arthropodium milleflorum*), Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*) and Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*).

The dam supports a narrow fringe of Rushes (*Juncus amabilis*) while the drainage-line to the north contains wetland sedges such as Floating Club-sedge (*Isolepis fluitans*) and Common Spike-sedge (*Eleocharis acuta*). A patch of Swamp Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*) trees is situated between the dam and the drainage-line.



Plate 1 Messmate Stringybark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) with a grassy understorey dominated by Red-anther Wallaby-grass (*Rytidosperma pallidum*) in the eastern section of the property.



Plate 2 the dam contains a narrow fringe of native rushes (*Juncus* spp.).

2.3 High threat weeds

Of the weeds recorded within the property, four are considered to be high threat species that are recommended for control. These species are listed in Table 1 below. All are scattered at low density throughout the bushland area.

Table 1 High threat weeds recorded at 228 Falloons Road, December 2021

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Acacia howitii</i>	Sticky Wattle
<i>Billardiera heterophylla</i>	Bluebell Creeper
<i>Rubus anglocandicans</i>	Common Blackberry
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse

2.4 Fauna

During the December 2021 survey, a total of 28 fauna species were recorded, including 22 bird, five mammal and one frog species (see Appendix 2). The property would support a much greater diversity of fauna species, however due to the high mobility and cryptic nature of many species, it would take a survey across multiple years and seasons to prepare a detailed list.

Habitat features observed within the property included:

- Several large trees with hollows in the forest area in the east. These trees are essential for many local birds and mammals which rely on hollows for breeding.
- Scattered small to large logs in the forest area in the east. These are important for fauna that live or feed at ground level to provide cover from predators. Large-old logs often have hollows that may be utilised for shelter and nesting.
- Healthy litter layer in the forest area in the east, including sticks, leaves, bark and humus. A healthy litter layer is essential for many insects.
- Diverse plant communities in the forest area in the east, providing food and habitat for various mammals, birds, insects and other fauna. Plant communities with many different species are better quality habitat than low diverse communities due to the variation in different flowers that attract specific insects. They are also more structurally diverse and provide better cover and shelter.
- The dam would provide habitat for waterbirds, frogs and waterbugs. It would also serve as a source of drinking water for many animals.

The bushland within the property is also connected to other extensive areas of forest and is therefore an important part of a network of corridors that allow fauna to move across the landscape.

2.5 Management issues and recommendations

Maintaining and enhancing the ecological values of the property will require protection of the bushland and occasional management. The following actions should be considered by the landowners:

- Control of high threat weeds shown in Table 1. Smaller plants can be removed by hand, however larger plants may need to be cut at ground level and painted with herbicide. If the landowner wishes to avoid using herbicide, plants can be regularly cut at ground level. They will continue to re-shoot but at least will be kept at a low height and will not spread further seed.
- Retention of as many logs across the bushland area as possible, particularly the larger ones.
- Additional areas for hollow dependant fauna could be provided by installing nest-boxes in the forested area.
- Avoid excessive disturbance in the bushland areas, particularly where there are dense areas of wildflowers.
- The landowner's have expressed an interest in planting a habitat corridor to link up the bushland area in the east to the area around the dam. This would be of great value to increase the extent and connectivity of habitat, as well as making it easier for many fauna to have access to water. The wider the corridor, the more value it will have for fauna, so it is up to the landowners to decide how much of the paddock area they would like to plant out. It is suggested that the corridor is at least 30m wide to ensure that it is suitable for most birds and mammals.

Ideal tree and shrub species for planting within the corridor include Swamp Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*), Yarra Gum (*Eucalyptus yarraensis*), Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*), Messmate Stringybark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), Narrow-leaf Peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata*), Snow Gum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*), Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*), Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*), Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*) and Prickly Tea-tree (*Leptospermum continentale*).

3.0 CONCLUSION

A total of 87 flora species and 28 fauna species were recorded during the brief assessment at 228 Falloons Road. The property also supports good quality habitat and is part of an important biolink that allows fauna to move across the landscape.

Maintaining and enhancing the ecological values of the property will require protecting the bushland from excessive disturbance, controlling high threat weeds and potentially planting a habitat corridor to link the bushland in the east to the dam area in the west.

Appendix 1 - Flora species recorded at 228 Falloons Road, December 2021

Key to symbols	
*	Introduced species
#	Non-indigenous native species

Status	Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG Status
	<i>Acacia dealbata</i> subsp. <i>dealbata</i>	Silver Wattle	
#	<i>Acacia howitii</i>	Sticky Wattle	
	<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood	
	<i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i>	Bidgee-widgee	
*	<i>Acetosella vulgaris</i>	Sheep Sorrel	
	<i>Acrotriche prostrata</i>	Trailing Ground-berry	
*	<i>Aira elegantissima</i>	Delicate Hair-grass	
*	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass	
	<i>Arthropodium milleflorum</i> s.s.	Pale Vanilla-lily	
	<i>Arthropodium strictum</i> s.s.	Chocolate Lily	
	<i>Asperula scoparia</i> subsp. <i>scoparia</i>	Prickly Woodruff	
*	<i>Billardiera heterophylla</i>	Bluebell Creeper	
	<i>Brunonia australis</i>	Blue Pincushion	
	<i>Burchardia umbellata</i>	Milkmaids	
	<i>Cassinia aculeata</i> subsp. <i>aculeata</i>	Common Cassinia	
	<i>Cassinia sifton</i>	Drooping Cassinia	
*	<i>Centaurium erythraea</i>	Common Centaury	
	<i>Chiloglottis valida</i>	Common Bird-orchid	
	<i>Clematis aristata</i>	Mountain Clematis	
	<i>Coronidium scorpioides</i> s.s.	Button Everlasting	
*	<i>Cynosurus echinatus</i>	Rough Dog's-tail	
	<i>Daviesia leptophylla</i>	Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea	
	<i>Dianella revoluta</i> var. <i>revoluta</i> s.l.	Black-anther Flax-lily	
	<i>Dichelachne rara</i>	Common Plume-grass	
	<i>Dichondra repens</i>	Kidney-weed	
	<i>Dillwynia cinerascens</i> s.s.	Grey Parrot-pea	
	<i>Drosera auriculata</i>	Tall Sundew	
	<i>Eleocharis acuta</i>	Common Spike-sedge	
	<i>Epacris impressa</i> var. <i>impressa</i>	Common Heath	
	<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i>	Messmate Stringybark	
	<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i> subsp. <i>ovata</i>	Swamp Gum	
	<i>Eucalyptus radiata</i> subsp. <i>radiata</i>	Narrow-leaf Peppermint	
	<i>Euchiton japonicus</i> s.s.	Creeping Cudweed	
	<i>Exocarpos cupressiformis</i>	Cherry Ballart	

Status	Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG Status
*	<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	
	<i>Geranium potentilloides</i>	Soft Crane's-bill	
	<i>Gonocarpus tetragynus</i>	Common Raspwort	
	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	Purple Coral-pea	
*	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog	
	<i>Hovea heterophylla</i>	Common Hovea	
	<i>Hydrocotyle foveolata</i>	Yellow Pennywort	
	<i>Hydrocotyle laxiflora</i>	Stinking Pennywort	
	<i>Hypericum gramineum</i>	Small St John's Wort	
*	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Flatweed	
*	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	English Holly	
	<i>Isolepis fluitans</i>	Floating Club-sedge	
	<i>Isolepis hookeriana</i>	Grassy Club-sedge	
*	<i>Isolepis levynsiana</i>	Tiny Flat-sedge	
	<i>Isotoma fluviatilis subsp. australis</i>	Swamp Isotome	
	<i>Juncus amabilis</i>	Hollow Rush	
*	<i>Juncus articulatus subsp. articulatus</i>	Jointed Rush	
	<i>Juncus bufonius</i>	Toad Rush	
	<i>Juncus planifolius</i>	Broad-leaf Rush	
	<i>Lagenophora stipitata s.l.</i>	Common Bottle-daisy	
	<i>Lomandra longifolia subsp. exilis</i>	Cluster-headed Mat-rush	
	<i>Luzula meridionalis var. flaccida</i>	Common Woodrush	
	<i>Microlaena stipoides var. stipoides</i>	Weeping Grass	
	<i>Olearia lirata</i>	Snowy Daisy-bush	
	<i>Opercularia varia</i>	Variable Stinkweed	
	<i>Oxalis exilis</i>	Shade Wood-sorrel	
	<i>Oxalis perennans</i>	Grassland Wood-sorrel	
*	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort	
	<i>Poa sieberiana var. sieberiana</i>	Grey Tussock-grass	
	<i>Poa sieberiana var. hirtella</i>	Grey Tussock-grass	
	<i>Podolobium procumbens</i>	Trailing Podolobium	
	<i>Poranthera microphylla s.l.</i>	Small Poranthera	
	<i>Pteridium esculentum subsp. esculentum</i>	Austral Bracken	
*	<i>Rubus anglocandicans</i>	Common Blackberry	
	<i>Rytidosperma geniculatum</i>	Kneed Wallaby-grass	
	<i>Rytidosperma pallidum</i>	Silvertop Wallaby-grass	
	<i>Rytidosperma spp.</i>	Wallaby Grass	
	<i>Schoenus apogon</i>	Common Bog-sedge	
	<i>Senecio hispidulus s.l.</i>	Rough Fireweed	
	<i>Senecio minimus</i>	Shrubby Fireweed	
	<i>Senecio phelleus</i>	Stony Fireweed	
*	<i>Stellaria media</i>	Chickweed	

Status	Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG Status
	<i>Stellaria pungens</i>	Prickly Starwort	
	<i>Stylidium armeria</i>	Common Triggerplant	
	<i>Thelymitra pauciflora s.s</i>	Slender Sun-orchid	
*	<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Suckling Clover	
*	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse	
	<i>Veronica calycina</i>	Hairy Speedwell	
	<i>Veronica gracilis</i>	Slender Speedwell	
*	<i>Vicia sativa subsp. nigra</i>	Narrow-leaf Vetch	
	<i>Viola betonicifolia</i>	Showy Violet	
	<i>Viola hederacea sensu Entwisle (1996)</i>	Ivy-leaf Violet	
	<i>Wahlenbergia stricta subsp. stricta</i>	Tall Bluebell	

Appendix 2 - - Fauna species recorded at 228 Falloons Road, December 2021

Key to symbols	
*	Introduced species
L	Recorded previously by the landowner

Status	Common name	Scientific Name	Type	FFG Status
	Australian Magpie	<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	Bird	
	Australian Wood Duck	<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>	Bird	
	Black Wallaby	<i>Wallabia bicolor</i>	Mammal	
	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	Bird	
	Brown Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	Bird	
*	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Bird	
	Common Bronzewing	<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	Bird	
	Common Froglet	<i>Crinia signifera</i>	Frog	
	Crimson Rosella	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>	Bird	
	Eastern Grey Kangaroo	<i>Macropus giganteus</i>	Mammal	
	Eastern Spinebill	<i>Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris</i>	Bird	
	Eastern Yellow Robin	<i>Eopsaltria australis</i>	Bird	
	European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	Mammal	
	Grey Currawong	<i>Strepera versicolor</i>	Bird	
	Grey Fantail	<i>Rhipidura albiscapa</i>	Bird	
	Grey Shrike-thrush	<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>	Bird	
L	Koala	<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>	Mammal	
	Laughing Kookaburra	<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	Bird	
	Little Raven	<i>Corvus mellori</i>	Bird	
	Pied Currawong	<i>Strepera graculina</i>	Bird	
	Rufous Whistler	<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	Bird	
	Sacred Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	Bird	
	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chalcites lucidus</i>	Bird	
	Short-beaked Echidna	<i>Tachyglossus aculeatus</i>	Mammal	
	Striated Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus striatus</i>	Bird	
	Striated Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza lineata</i>	Bird	
	Superb Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	Bird	
	White-eared Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus leucotis</i>	Bird	
	White-throated Treecreeper	<i>Cormobates leucophaea</i>	Bird	