

ASFNC Self-Guided Tour: Santa Teresa Road

Created by Pamela Keil & Michael LaFlamme
Tuesday 3 September 2013



Some cautionary notes:

The locals often drive very quickly down this road... We recommend going around 40 km/hr or less to keep down the dust and allow you to see the flowers. Try to pull over to let cars pass more safely, but be careful of ruts and sand piles along the verge.

If you follow our suggestions, you'll be stopping regularly to get out and look at the flowers along the roadside. **Be sure to pull over completely off the main track** – people go very quickly and it's difficult for them to change sides because of the ruts and dust piled in the centre of the track. The shoulders are decently hard, but there is usually a rut or berm to cross, so be careful when pulling over. There is plenty of rutting and corrugation in the road, but it's not necessary to have a 4WD.

The sun sets just after 6 and it is getting dark around 6:30. The cows are fenced off the road for most of the journey, but we will be crossing a grid toward the end. Be careful if you're out after dark – there are definitely roos around!

Some trip notes:

Michael and I have structured stops that will allow you to sample the varied habitats and hopefully find as many different species of flower as possible in a short time.

The flowers have changed quite a lot since Michael and I first went on this trip a month ago. Many of the Brassicaceae have finished flowering and gone to seed and so have most of the Common Yellow Top Daisies. We saw a few of these still flowering on the weekend, but not many. At the same time, many new species have popped up that we didn't see at all on that first trip!

For anyone who takes the journey (whether with us or later on your own), please keep good notes/photos on what you see and where, and we can put together a seasonal species list so we'll know what to look for in the future! This will be a great resource for the website and future field nats trips. I've left room for notes on the info sheets – be sure to put in the date that you took the trip!

You can use the km markers or our stop numbers as your location for your notes. Feel free to stop in places we haven't marked if you see something special! Bring extra paper or use the back of these pages if single-sided printing to write down anything that doesn't fit in the notes column.

TIP #1: Photograph your trip odometer each time you stop for a good record of where you were when you took the photos that follow...

TIP #2: Be careful – if you spot something interesting as you pass it and decide to backtrack in your car, make sure you note how much extra travel you did... and then subtract!

A fly net is highly recommended – cattle country...

NOTE: For ease of finding it, we have set 0.0 km to be the point where the track changes from bitumen to dirt. Be sure to reset your trip odometer!

km	Habitat	Interesting Species & Planned Stops	Your Notes
		Date: 1/9/13 and 2/9/13 trips	Date:
0.0	<p>Mixed Acacia Woodland</p> <p>Dominant species include Ironwood, Witchetty, and Mulga with occasional <i>Hakea</i> species</p> <p>Density varies</p>	Start of track, where the bitumen becomes dirt. Be sure to reset your trip meters!	
0.0-0.5		<p>Lots of <i>Eremophila longifolia</i> (Emubush) in bloom along the roadside; <i>Acacia murrayana</i> (Colony Wattle) & <i>Acacia victoriae</i> (Prickly Wattle) blooming as well; <i>Senna artimisioides</i>.</p> <p>Unfortunately, also plenty of Rosy Dock along the roadside....</p>	
1.6 - 1.7		<p>Undergrowth largely buffel grass below, with <i>Eremophila longifolia</i> and <i>Senna</i> intermediate.</p> <p>Unfortunately, a patch of Mexican Poppy can be seen at the edge of the road (left-hand side).</p>	
3.1		<p>Daisies start to appear closer to the sides of the roads. Lots of <i>Senna</i> as well, and some <i>Wahlenbergia</i>.</p>	
3.8	<p>Sandy, slightly more open area along the roadside within the woodland habitat.</p>	<p>STOP #1: A profusion of Daisies in the sandy roadside! Careful to pull all the way over, as this stop is along a sweeping curve. Be sure to check both sides of the road for the different species in flower.</p>	
5.7	<p>Mixed Acacia Woodland</p> <p>less <i>Eremophila longifolia</i>, but still some present</p>	<p>Paper Daisy clumps start to be seen along the roadside and further back.</p>	
6.0		<p>Lots of Paper Daisies in a field to your left.</p> <p>Unfortunately, some Paddymelon vines starting to grow along the roadside as well.</p>	
6.6	<p>Open area with a bit of harder soil.</p>	<p>STOP #2: A large yellow field on the right-hand side of the road on a much harder packed soil. Button Daisies and <i>Sida</i> abound. Large clumps of <i>Goodenia</i> along the left-hand side of the road just prior to and just after the stop.</p>	

7.7	Coolibah Swamp	Habitat change: Coolibah swamp; Lots of Paper Daisies to be seen in the understorey.	
8.0		STOP #3: Coolibah Swamp species & Paper Daisies & chenopods (left-hand side of road); plus a look at the fence line (right-hand side of road). Saltbush is also present, but very small.	
8.6		A slight rise around the road, and there is an isolated stand of mixed Acacia woodland surrounded by Coolibah.	
8.8		Back to Coolibah. Fewer paper daisies in the understorey in this section of the swamp.	
10.2	Ironwood dominated Woodland	Habitat change: Denser woodland than before the Coolibah swamp, and dominated by Ironwood with a few Mulga.	
11.3	Fields and Meadows Opens out with a few isolated shrubs and trees (mostly ironwood & <i>Hakea</i>) Occasionally denser patches of woodland near the road, but mostly open fields.	Habitat change: Opens out into fields and meadows. Lots of Daisies flowering away from the roadside, behind the Buffel covered berms. Keep your eye out for Falcons and Bearded Dragons (both spotted along this stretch in recent trips)	
16.8		STOP #4: More of a pause really, just to see what's around the single Bloodwood tree that sits just by the roadside here... some clumps of <i>Swainsona</i> peas and <i>Solanum</i> start to show up soon afterward.	
18.2		STOP #5: Some gorgeous trees (one in particular) off in the distance (left-hand side of road), and a bit of a brief bird watching stop... Also some Paper Daisies in a parking area off the left side of the road.	
18.5	Mixed Acacia Woodland	Habitat change: Back into denser woodland; dominated by Ironwood with patches of Mulga.	
19.3		A clump of Poached Egg Daisies by the left-hand side of the road.	

21.9	Rocky Hills with Mulga and/or Mallee Woodland	New habitat: Rocky hills; Mulga becomes more dominant, with <i>Senna</i> and <i>Eremophila freelingii</i> in the understory.	
22.1		STOP #6: A walk over the hill (left-hand side of road) showcases the different species that grow on the different aspects. Several different species of <i>Ptilotus</i> can be seen. No cattle impact, the cryptic crust is gorgeous, careful how you step!	
22.4		Grid... And then a few tall <i>Solanum</i> and a mixed Mallee/Mulga scrub starting up (compare left- and right-hand sides of road)	
22.5		Some interesting boulder piles off to the right with ghost gums behind them. A single specimen of <i>Eremophila duttoni</i> (?) on the left-hand side.	
23.3	Spinifex & Mallee covered hills	STOP #7: A lovely patch of <i>Eremophila christopheri</i> and some new species along the side of the road. At least five different versions of <i>Senna</i> as well. A Spinifex and Mallee dominated hillside can be seen in the distance (left-hand side).	
24.1		Bee-eater holes can be seen along the roadcut (left-hand side).	
24.5		STOP #8: Spinifex and Mallee dominated area, but heavily trampled by cattle. CAUTION: Pull all the way over! Stop is just past a hill rise and just before the turn-off to the station.	
24.7		Some Chocolate <i>Senna</i> begins to appear on the left-hand side of the road.	
25+	Variable...	<p>If you continue along the road, you will see long lines of rocky hills as you pass across them. Each hosts a wonderful microhabitat for flowers.... It will be great to continue this journey in the future to see what this undulating country has on offer.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the impact of cattle is also much greater along this area, and the roadsides are no longer fenced...</p>	