



THE BLACK-EARED MINER

The Black-eared Miner *Manorina melanotis* and the Yellow-throated Miner *Manorina flavigula* both occur in mallee habitat. They are capable of interbreeding to produce fertile offspring that display a range of intermediate plumages. A “key to Black-eared Miners, hybrids and Yellow-throated Miners” is available from the Visitor Centre.

Black-eared Miners (BeM) inhabit thick stands of old-growth mallee habitat that has not been burnt for at least 50 years. In contrast, Yellow-throated Miner (YtM) colonies are found in more open country and on the fringes of dense stands. The clearing of vast tracts of mallee has resulted in bringing the two species into close contact, leading to the genetic swamping of the BeM.

In the Bookmark Biosphere (which includes Gluepot) there is a large area of contiguous old-growth mallee where the BeM has managed to survive, when it was almost extinct elsewhere. Recent surveys indicate that there are over 200 colonies of BeMs in the Bookmark area.

Like other members of the genus *Manorina*, the BeM is colonial with colonies consisting of 8-40+ individuals. Each colony contains several breeding pairs which nest in close proximity. The other adult non-breeding individuals act as helpers at the nest.

BeMs are opportunistic breeders, breeding when conditions are suitable. It is interesting that the ratio of male birds is higher in the adult colonies, but in nestlings the opposite

occurs. It is the young females that disperse from a colony, so it would appear that they are experiencing higher mortality than the males before they gain reproductive status.

In the breeding season the members of a colony feed within close proximity of the nest site. When not breeding they move as groups over territories of several hundred hectares. They eat mainly invertebrates and lerps, which they obtain from gleaning and probing decorticated bark and mallee foliage. They also forage on the ground and hawk flying insects.

Although a large number of colonies are known to exist in the Bookmark region, not all members of a colony are pure BeMs, with many hybrids being present in many colonies. The threat of more genetic swamping in this area has been halted by the cessation of mallee clearance. However, with most of the best quality BeMs occurring in this one big tract of mallee, a large fire could remove most of these birds.

Relocating BeM colonies

In order to avert a major catastrophe as a result of a big fire, colonies of BeMs have been captured in Bookmark and transferred to suitable habitat in Victoria’s Murray-Sunset National Park. These translocations have proven to be highly successful with translocated colonies breeding within two weeks of being moved. More translocations are planned in the future with some going into NSW as well.

Birdlife Australia Gluepot Reserve
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WALK DETAILS

17 km. 3.5-4 hours easy walking, some sand

Note: Bicycles are not permitted on walking tracks

This circuit walk begins at the car park on the western side of track 2 near its junction with Track 6. This track junction is about 1/2 km from the Visitor Centre along Track 2.

The walking track heads south-west, then west from the carpark following the old telegraph line track. Three optional walks are available:

Option 1 17 km

Follow the telegraph line track west to Track 4. Go north along Track 4 for 400 m then east along the Oil Line Track. This returns to Track 2 and a 900m walk south-east along Track 2 returns to the car park.

Option 2 5.6 km

A short loop track. After about 2.3km from the start turn north onto a cross track marked with orange triangles. After about 550m turn east along the Oil Line Track for 1.8km to meet Track 2, then 900m south-east to the car park.

Option 3 9.5 km

After about 4.4km from the start turn north onto a cross track marked with orange triangles. After about 500m turn east along the Oil Line Tack for 3.7km to meet Track 2, then 900m south-east to the car park.

THIS WALK IS HABITAT FOR

Black-eared Miner, Hooded Robin, Chestnut Quail-thrush, Shy Heathwren, Inland Thornbill, Mistletoebird

IF YOU BECOME LOST ON THIS WALK
walk south to intercept track 1

MISTLETOE

A positive view of a parasite

Mistletoes are flowering plants that are partly parasitic on the host plant. They can produce their own energy through photosynthesis but must obtain mineral nutrients and water from their host. The leaves of a mistletoe mimic the shape of the host plant. There are several theories as to why this is so.

The flowers and the fruit are important food sources for birds and many insects.



SAFETY GUIDELINES

A few simple precautions should always be taken when walking at Gluepot.

Dehydration is always a real risk

as the temperature can get extremely high (over 45°C), and humidity is normally very low.

- Carry sufficient water
- Protect yourself from the sun
- If on a long walk take at least one piece of warm clothing
- Carry a compass & plan or map
- Carry a snake bite kit.

W4

OIL LINE WALK

Various walking track options
A variety of habitats



Black-eared Miner *Manorina melanotis*

GLUEPOT RESERVE
WALKING TRACK NETWORK
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South Australian
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