

## Duck Hunting in Royal National Park

Having a certain amount of success in some struggles with big business, I waltzed out of my unit with a lighter step and went “duck-hunting”! Here in NSW the duck hunting season appears to have opened. Now I know that in Victoria the Game Management Authority (“game” is such a strange word for slaughtering wildlife!) opened the duck season down in that state this year on 26<sup>th</sup> April and closed it on 30<sup>th</sup> May. I also know it set bag limits. Here in NSW, we have no bag limits on the ducks I hunted today and they did not block my use of a Canon!

I should explain: the duck I was hunting today is a tiny orchid (*Caleana major*) and it is not harmed one little iota if I shoot it. But, like duck hunting south of the border, some hunts fail and today was a total failure. No, I was not disappointed. I am sure I shall succeed very soon. The ducks are emerging!

Besides, there were so many other delights along the way!



Beards are budding! (a future *Calochilus* bloom)



Probably a hybrid of *Caladenia catenata* and *C carnea*

There was also an eccentric and delightful lady who was naughtily picking up pebbles on the fire trail. She knew it was wrong, confessed for her sins (three tiny pebbles) and it transpired that she crushed them and used them as natural colour in art. She was thrilled to learn it was iron laterite, the source of that reddish colour. It was as though she was of Country.

But my hunt continued, and as it was a busy day ahead, I shall just place some images here to enable readers to just revel in the colour, the shape and the variety that exists within Royal National Park.

I will, however, and in an aside, note that this national park was once simply called The National Park, became Royal National Park in a forelock tugging exercise when it was renamed in 1955 after Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia passed by in the train during her 1954 tour. I wonder how many names the area had once prior to occupation beyond 1788? I wonder how we would respond if we returned that park to ancient names of the peoples whose land it was! Whose land it is!

But let us go on that floristic journey!



















It would have been nice to have spotted a “duck” but who can complain after that gentle stroll! Our natural world is precious and delivers to those of us who open to it!