

## Re-visiting Mallacoota

Driving from Eden to Mallacoota took us through some severely burnt out areas. Much of it shows signs of regeneration after recent rains, but some areas were so badly burnt that the trees remain charred reminders of the fires at the end of 2019 and early 2020.

The town of Mallacoota is starting to come back to life. There are a lot of new houses and many more being built. The caravan park is much bigger than it was when we were last here in 2009. It is apparently the largest park in the southern hemisphere with 650 spaces, but it is divided into sections and of course there aren't many people here in May. One shop keeper in Merimbula told me that May was the worse month, in June there is a long weekend and in Merimbula they also have a Jazz festival.

In a late afternoon walk around the Mallacoota foreshore I saw this little blue wren and a complex path to the sea.



The next day we travelled back to the main highway then down a 7km dirt road to Genoa Peak. When we were last in the area in 2009 we climbed this peak, so the walk was a challenge of our fitness 12 years on.

The walk is a 3km round trip which gradually rises about 200m, much of it is like a goat track. It took us an hour each way. There are two peaks and last time we got to the very top, but this time the first peak was enough for our aging bones.

## Re-visiting Mallocoota



It was wonderful to see some re-growth after this area bore the full force of the 2019/2020 bush fires. It is taking a long time for it to recover completely. There are still no kangaroos or larger animals in this area. One eagle flew overhead, but I don't think he'd find much to eat. There were a few little birds but

without nesting sites they aren't back either. We did see signs of insects, spiders, grasshoppers and one small lizard.

What was heart breaking was the areas, often at the top of the ridges where heat is most intense, that were struggling to regenerate at all. It will take a number of years before this area has recovered.



Later that day we went to Bastian Point where people were rescued during the fires, and found burnt trees down to the shoreline.

When we were here in 2009 I remember seeing the most amazing Banksia trees, 3 and 4m tall. We could find no sign of those trees. But I'm sure in time they will return as they rely on fires to open their seed pods.

## Re-visiting Mallacoota

On our last night we were treated to a perfectly clear sky so we could see the Milky Way and the Lunar eclipse which resulted in a blood red super moon. There are many joys in getting out into the country, and seeing the stars is one of them.

And the ever present pelicans are always a welcome sight.

