



## Night

Kookaburras bid farewell as strange silhouettes of the night replace the familiar world of the bush.

At night, sounds give away the presence of wildlife. As you walk along this track, leaves rustle among the trees as a possum moves away. Your torch may reveal a ringtail possum, common in areas with leafy understorey, foraging for tender leaf shoots.

Flowering plants attract many nocturnal mammals. Grey-headed flying foxes search for nectar and native fruits. Gliders scurry among the branches seeking nectar.

Under the moon's dull glow on a summer's night, male frogs call in a frenzy to attract mates. At least eight different species live in this valley, including the Peron's Tree Frog, which you can find calling from shrubs near the water. Try spotlighting along the creek. Fish hunt for tidbits on the surface while yabbies lurk in the muddy bottom below.

Venture out into the bush at night by following the reflective markers along this track.

Before setting out make sure your torch has well charged batteries and tell someone where you are going. Search methodically in the trees and listen carefully for a sudden rustle or call. You are sure to be amazed by the diversity of wildlife that lives in the bush.



Photos: D. Wilks

## Remember

- All fauna, flora and any natural or cultural features are protected and should not be removed or defaced.
- Pets must be leashed at all times, unless in a leash free area.
- Keeping to the tracks will minimise soil erosion and damage to the vegetation.
- Please use rubbish bins if provided, or alternatively take your rubbish with you.
- Observe fire bans – do not smoke near flammable vegetation.
- When passing near homes respect residents' privacy.

## Further Information

*Urban Wildlife of New South Wales*  
edited by John Pastorelli  
Collins A & R 1990

*Burnum Burnum's WILDthings around Sydney*  
by G Sainty, J Hoskins, P Abel, S Jacobs,  
M Dalby-Ball, Sainty & Assoc 2000

*Native Plants of the Sydney District*  
by A Farley & P Moore, Kangaroo Press 1989

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*This brochure available at [www.kmc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kmc.nsw.gov.au)*

## Public Transport

Information about Public Transport to STEP Track can be obtained by phoning Shorelink on 9457 8888 or visit the website: [www.shorelink.com.au](http://www.shorelink.com.au)



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## STEP Track

Kingsford Avenue  
via Lane Cove River loop

Ku-ring-gai Walking Tracks



# STEP Track

The STEP Track links with the Great North Walk. Keep a look out for the directional markers. Allow at least one hour for the round trip through the valley and ridgetops.

This walk allows you to enjoy the bush morning, noon and night.

## Morning

With the first hint of daylight, bird calls turn the bush into a chorus of sound as they forage hungrily for breakfast.

Honeyeaters' long beaks plunge into delicate wildflowers in search of nectar. Fantails twist and turn snatching insects as they tumble through the air. Pardalotes scour the leaves for sweet lerps and honeydew. In the shrubs, eastern yellow robins wait patiently to pounce upon their unsuspecting prey while thornbills flit through the branches after insects. Quiet bushwalkers may see red browed finches combing the ground in search of seeds or blue wrens hunting for insects.

**Birdwatching** can be difficult for the inexperienced. Here are a few hints that will help you get closer to the birds:

- Approach from the shade, keeping the sun behind you.
- Wear two tones of clothing and use natural barriers to hide your leg movements.
- Avoid looking directly at the bird until the last minute, staring eyes will scare them away.
- Finally, use binoculars. They let you get a lot closer to birds without scaring them away.

## Noon

As you move down the creek towards Fantail Creek notice how the environment changes. The soil beneath your feet increases in moisture and nutrients and plants become softer. On the ridges, woodlands and heath, plants have adapted to thrive under the harsh local environmental conditions of soils low in nutrients and moisture.

Stop and carefully feel some different leaves along your walk. Harsh, spiky and tough leaves help plants to save water. Plants with these adaptations are known as sclerophylls. Some of these plants, such as hakeas and banksias, also have woody seed pods. These prevent seeds from burning during a passing bushfire. The pods then burst to release the seeds into the ash laden soil.

Coachwoods and black wattles line the main creekbed forming a low canopy overhead. Ferns thrive in the humid conditions and thousands of tiny mosses form a blanket over exposed rocks.

Along the Lane Cove River, the impact of urbanisation becomes evident. Natural soil conditions have been altered here by stormwater, discouraging native species while giving weeds a helping hand.

Take a closer look at the plant life and the environment in which it occurs. Unless we think about what we do in our own backyards, these environments may be changed forever.



Purple Hyacinth  
*Dipodium punctatum*

## Map

