

## 7 The mallee in transition

Mallee trees are very diverse; seven species are found in the Reserve. Hollows in the slender trunks provide homes for bats and birds such as tree martins, woodswallows and parrots. The understorey is sparse but very diverse. In some places it is dominated by semi-succulent plants of the saltbush/bluebush family (chenopods) found in the more northern arid zones and in other places by sclerophyll shrubs typical of the higher rainfall areas.

## 8 Gullies and creek beds

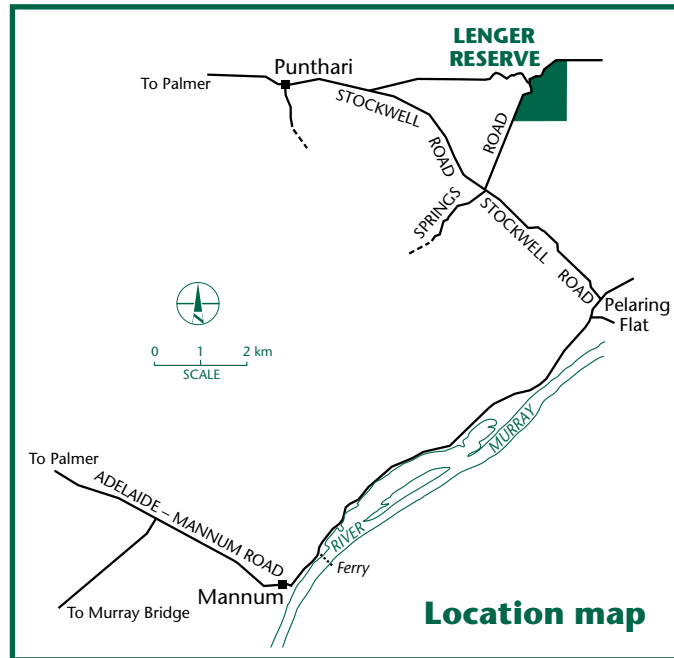
Tributaries of Saunders Creek have cut deep gullies through the limestone plateau. Rocky overhangs, crevices and small caves provide homes for goannas, skinks and geckos as well as echidnas and wallaroos. Fauna surveys undertaken since 1998 have identified 20 species of reptiles and 2 frog species in Lenger Reserve.

## 9 Cypress pine grove

Young native cypress pines, *Callitris gracilis* and *C. verrucosa*, are favourite tucker for most grazing animals, both native and introduced. Many young trees can be seen here; they have grown since grazing ceased in 1978. Rabbits have been actively controlled since 1997. Other small trees found on the reserve are quandong, native apricot, false sandalwood and leafless cherry. The large bushy shrubs near the creek are dryland tea-tree, *Melaleuca lanceolata*. These provide habitat for small birds such as the diamond firetail, variegated wren and several species of thornbill.



photo P Phillips



Since its formation in 1955, the National Trust of South Australia has established a network of 29 conservation reserves which contain:

- a valuable diversity of plant communities
- significant wildlife habitat
- a number of rare and threatened species and
- sites of geological and Aboriginal significance.

The management of these reserves is overseen by the natural heritage section through a volunteer network and is funded by

- membership subscriptions to NTSA
- donations and bequests
- State and Federal Government Grants and
- sponsorship.

Please do not remove any material from this conservation reserve.

For more information on the Lenger Reserve or on becoming a volunteer contact the National Trust of South Australia

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NATIONAL TRUST  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

# Lenger Reserve

## MANNUM



photo R Sharrad

*'An oasis in the mallee'*

## Introduction

Welcome to Lenger Reserve; an oasis of diversity in the mallee landscape.

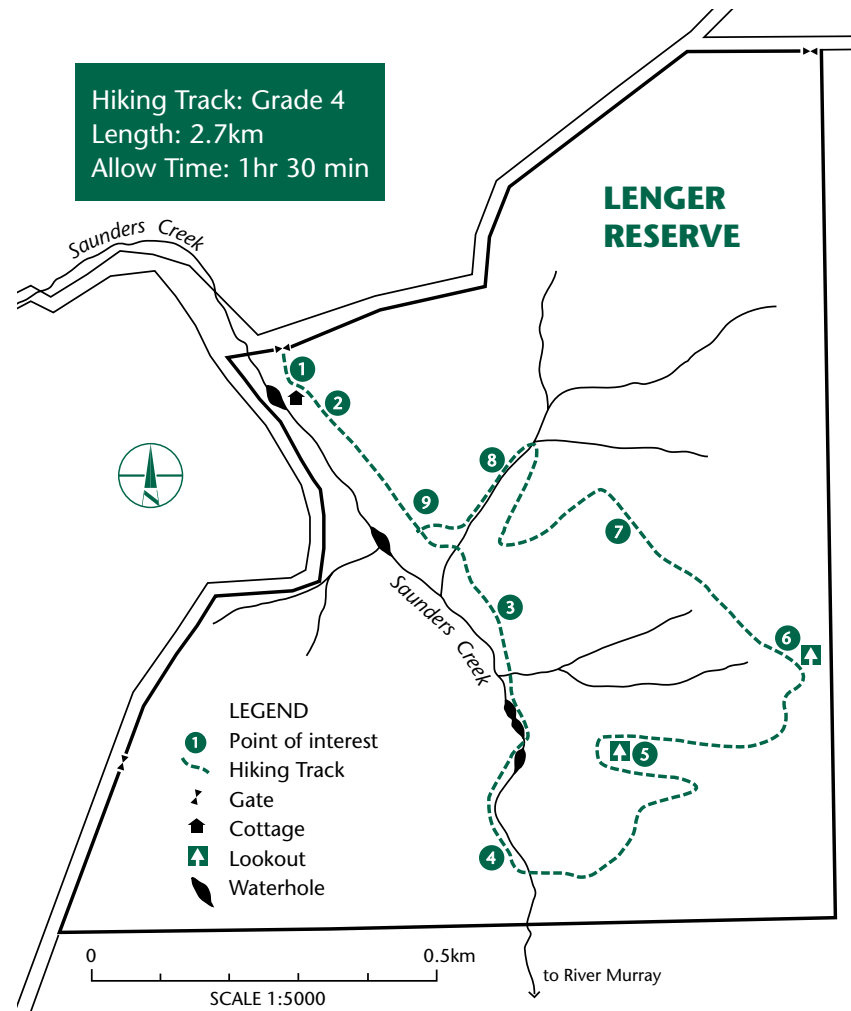
This 95 ha property was gifted to the National Trust of South Australia (NTSA) by Rudolph G. Lenger as a bird sanctuary in 1978. Paradoxically the flora attracted most attention from biologists. By 1992 an extensive plant list containing 208 indigenous species had been identified by skilled botanists; 26 of these species are of conservation significance.

It was not until 1999 that a thorough bird survey was undertaken. Now 89 species of birds have been sighted at some time on or flying over the Reserve. Surprisingly very few waterbirds have been seen in the waterholes or reed beds. The birds are mostly mallee woodland species. Dawn is the best time to see them but a keen observer armed with a pair of binoculars can see a good variety on most days. A bird list is available on request.

## Points of Interest

### 1 The picturesque farm cottage and corral.

Look at the construction. The early (probably circa 1900) pug and pine rooms are made of a mixture of clay, cut straw, fresh manure and water packed between the native cypress pine posts. When the original roof collapsed much of the pug washed out. The later stone section is a rubble limestone construction. The interior was plastered over and the ceilings made from whitewashed hessian wool bales. Friedrich Pese, who owned the land from 1912 and 1924, probably added this stone section. A local relative has described how wild horses were trapped when they came to drink at the waterhole and then kept in the corral before sale. Volunteers started work on stabilizing the cottage ruin in 2001.



### 2 Restoring the mallee

Hundreds of seedlings have been planted near the cottage to revegetate areas that were cleared for farming. As you walk through the reserve you will see patches where a grassy plant community has naturally regenerated on previously cropped and grazed land. Mannum Primary School assisted NTSA staff and volunteers to collect seed on the reserve, grow tubestock at the school and plant the mallee and shrubs you see growing in this area today.

### 3 Saunders Creek – an oasis of spring-fed waterholes and reed beds.

“The Springs” is the local name for this part of Saunders Creek. Heavy rains in the Mt Lofty Ranges flood the creek. Signs of high water mark and flood debris can be found on and around the large River red gums. Regular water testing has shown the water is moderately saline, 6,000 - 9,000 ECUs. Look in one of the waterholes and you will spot, regrettably, an introduced fish *Gambusia holbrooki* – the Plague minnow or Mosquito fish that dominates the aquatic environment. Another fish, the native Murray Darling carp gudgeon has also been found: probably living in the deeper and colder water. A local related to the NTSA how, as a boy, he helped to trap 400-500 yabbies overnight here for the Murray cod fishery in the 1930s and 1940s.

### 4 Ancient marine fossils in the Mannum limestone

Saunders Creek has cut into the sandy Mannum Limestone that was deposited into a shallow sea known as the Murray Basin between 10-20 million years ago. The Basin was open to the ocean to the south and with slight uplifting, these rocks became exposed. You can identify fossils such as sea urchins, scallops, worms etc in the cliff face or boulders at the base.

### 5 Lookouts

A climb to the top will reward you with a panorama from the Mt Lofty Ranges in the west to the River Murray valley in the east. A reedy reach of Saunders Creek stretches below you.

### 6 Emerging from the mallee you will encounter a view to the north. Watch out for kangaroos here. Three species have been sighted in the Reserve; the red, the western grey and the stocky wallaroo or euro.