

Little Mooi Expedition - Highmoor - 18 Sep

Our small Little Mooi Expedition pioneer group, shifted in size from day to day this last week, the weather forecast was showing a washout for Saturday, so it was with a nervous eye on the barometer, that the decision was made to go ahead. The group had dwindled to 6, how sad - after sharing the excitement of this new venture into the Highmoor bowl and the opportunity to watch the Bearded and Cape vultures feed, there was no interest?!

It was truly a new experience in every sense. We even had the landowner, Brandon and Claudia, leading us and sharing their knowledge of the area. The pride in their ownership of a slice of this beautiful valley, was tangible.



The Expedition started with a viewing of both Cape Vultures and the Bearded (Lammergeiers). We watched with fascination as these enormous birds came together, the Cape Vultures bigger and more aggressive in the front row with the smaller more shy Lammergeiers waiting. The young birds further away waiting their turn in the pecking order. A few jackals sidled up on the feast but were immediately chased off, with widespread wings these birds were not to be messed with. The Lammergeiers are now protected as their numbers have dwindled to alarming y low numbers. This is apparently for 2 reasons, the lack of food sources with wild game being wiped out and because the first hatched chick destroys any other eggs or chicks.



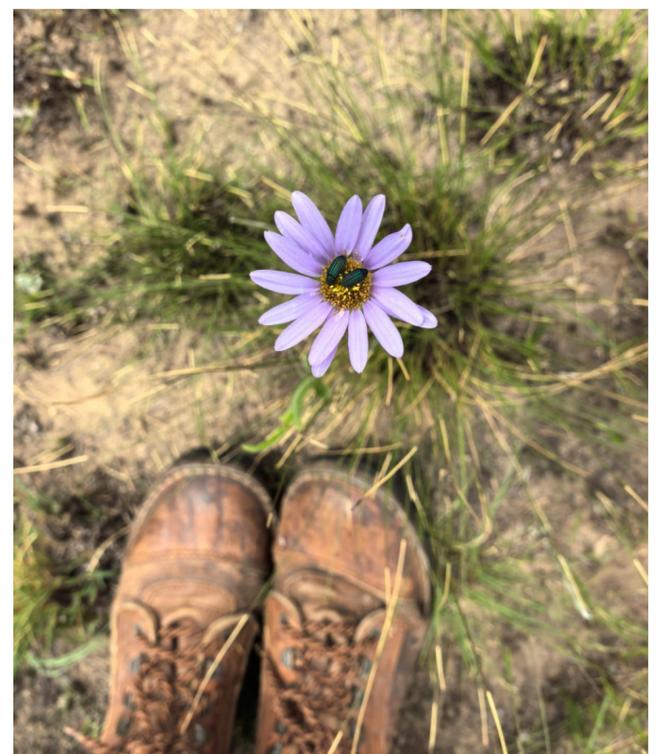


We were then driven to the start of the path in the farm bakkie, the fun had begun!

As the new growth of grasses from the firebreak burn, crunched underfoot, we walked up to the farm boundary just below the escarpment and traversed across the slopes, up hill and down dale, between beautifully sculptured rocks, the view of Cleopatra and Anthony flanking us on one side, the hard krantz faces in front and to our left, reminding us that we were intruders in this, the home of the vultures.



Two gurgling Little Mooi tributaries kept us company, the sun was shining and we were surrounded by a sprinkling of Spring flowers nodding their greeting, an array of colours and arrangements, a floral tribute to this amazing place.





We left with hugs and promises to return to this surreal place. What a magical day that very nearly, didn't happen! I thank the gallant few of hardy hikers who came to support me regardless of weather warnings, we found the end of the rainbow guys!

Hike Report By: Hettie Randall