

Tour Report

Australian Wildlife Photo Safari

26 February – 13 March 2023

Koala



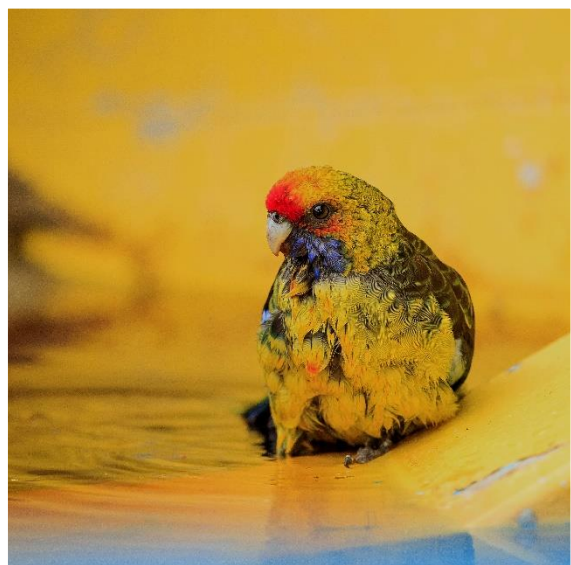
Platypus



Forrester's kangaroo



Green rosella



Compiled by Bret Charman

Day 1: London Heathrow to Singapore**Sunday 26 February 2023**

Around half of the group were already travelling in Australia. The rest of us travelled from Heathrow to Singapore with Qantas.

Day 2: Singapore to Melbourne**Monday 27 February 2023**

We arrived in Singapore and transferred across the terminal for our onward flight to Melbourne. Two members of the group met us there and we boarded the flight to Australia.

Day 3: Melbourne**Tuesday 28 February 2023**

After a long, but smooth journey with Qantas, we arrived in Melbourne and were picked up for the short journey to our accommodation. Upon our arrival at the Victoria hotel, we made plans to meet up for our first lunch. The group headed to a local Italian restaurant, before splitting up and exploring different parts of the bustling city.

The now complete group reconvened in the evening for dinner. Over our meal, we discussed plans and start times for the following morning, such as when we would head out of the city in search of our first wildlife.

Day 4: Serendip Sanctuary**Wednesday 1 March 2023**

Our first day searching for wildlife was in the Serendip Sanctuary – an important refuge for a wealth of birds and mammals. We met local naturalist and all-round expert, Roger, who would be our guide for the next few days. As we greeted Roger, an emu wandered by, right in the middle of the reserve's car park. What a great start!

Everyone had gathered what they needed and we headed out into the reserve. Our first focus was the population of eastern grey kangaroos. These are the tallest of all the kangaroos (even taller than the red kangaroos of Australia's Red Centre) and can be difficult to approach in this part of the country. With Roger's



expert guidance, we tried our best to make our approach and photograph this iconic species. As with any wildlife photography patience is key, and after some perseverance we were able to capture stunning images of the macropods (the family name for kangaroos and wallabies).

The kangaroos then decided that they had co-operated enough for one day, but as they left a group of emus made their approach and everyone was rewarded with excellent photography opportunities.

We continued our walk towards the reserve's network of lakes and ponds, where we were treated to views of hundreds of magpie geese, as well as countless other wildfowl and wetland birds. There was also a brown

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falcon flying around, occasionally disturbing the peace and serenity of the land around us. The surrounding trees were full of musk lorikeets and white-winged choughs.

After a busy morning enjoying all the delights Serendip has to offer, we headed back to the picnic area, where a fantastic spread had been laid out for us to enjoy.

With full stomachs and a desire to discover more of Australia, we headed the short distance to the coastal city of Geelong. This city is home to a fantastic Botanical Gardens, which is host to a thriving colony of grey-headed flying foxes. We enjoyed fabulous views of these fruit bats as they flew from tree to tree, squabbling over roosting sites and sunbathing in the warm afternoon sun. We were able to capture full-frame portraits of these handsome flying foxes and listen to their charismatic chatter.

We spent round 45 minutes with the flying foxes before it was time to head back to Serendip to try to photograph the kangaroos once again. We were also hoping to make the most of the warm evening light. Despite our best efforts, we were unable to approach particularly close, so we made do photographing individuals as they hopped across the large open meadow, as well as individuals posing with the hills of the You Yang Ranges behind them.



After a fabulous first day of wildlife watching, with an excellent introduction from Roger, we headed for a very well-deserved dinner at a nearby sports club (a pub, for those of us reading this in the UK). Huge portions and tasty meals were soon with us, and we chatted about the day's highlights. Then we returned to our

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accommodation for a good night's sleep before another busy day – this time in the You Yang Ranges, where we hoped to encounter a fascinating range of new species.

Day 5: You Yang Ranges

Thursday 2 March 2023

Our second full day in Australia was sure to be another cracker, as our primary focus was to photograph koala.

We met bright and early, heading out on the road and making a couple of important stops before beginning our search for koalas in earnest. Arguably, the most important of these stops was breakfast! We headed to the small town of Lara, where we settled into a local café for a delicious meal, excellent coffee and freshly squeezed juice. With energy to burn, we set off once more, only stopping to use the facilities and enjoy some excellent views of long-billed corellas – a very handsome species of cockatoo.



To start with, photographing these intelligent birds proved difficult, as they were positioned high above us, and seemed to be investigating the floodlights for the local sports pitch. Just as we were about to head off to the You Yang ranges, a small group flew down into one of the eucalypts and posed perfectly. Everyone snapped away as these social corellas chattered, groomed one another, and rested in the shade of the tree.

After a lovely start to the day, we continued on towards the You Yangs, enjoying views of a mob of eastern grey kangaroos in the fields as we approached the protected area. The You Yangs Regional Park is an important area for wildlife conservation, but it is also a sacred aboriginal site. Roger was on hand to impart his expertise about the meaning of the hills to thousands of aboriginal people from across southern Australia. After this, our focus returned to finding a koala. Roger already had one of his researchers out in the forest searching for our tree-loving quarry, so we had an idea of where to look.

Luckily for us, the first koala we found was an absolute ripper. This large male was sitting in a gum tree, just 10 feet off the ground - the perfect position for our group of keen photographers. He was quite relaxed while the group were taking pictures, though always keeping a beady eye on us just in case we approached too

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closely. With Roger's expert advice, we were able to enjoy wonderful views and capture some lovely full-frame portraits of this handsome individual.



With one koala in the bag, we went in search of another. We did indeed find another koala, this time high in a gum tree, so she was comparatively tricky to photograph. She was quite alert and we were able to watch as she surveyed the surrounding canopy before going back to doing what koalas do best, digesting her unpalatable food.

In between the two koalas, the group were also treated to wonderful views of a very old swamp wallaby, which was quenching its thirst from a billabong. This war-torn wallaby had obviously lived a long and hard life, but it was in good condition despite its apparent age. With so much water around this year, it definitely made it much easier for a large mammal such as this to survive. Long may the rains continue and keep the region's plentiful wildlife on a stable footing.

After a fabulous time with the koalas, we headed to the nearby picnic spot for another scrumptious lunch, before heading to an ancient aboriginal site high up on a hillside. Roger's passion and expert knowledge about aboriginal culture was enlightening for the group, who were able to learn

about ancient aboriginal practises and beliefs. It was a perfect couple of days and before we knew it, it was time to head back to Melbourne for our last night on the Australian mainland.

Some of the group headed out for a meal together, while a few decided to remain close to the hotel for ease.

Day 6: Melbourne to Launceston; on to Mountain Valley

Friday 3 March 2023

In the morning, we met in the hotel lobby for our transfer to Melbourne airport. From here we would fly to Launceston – the major city in Tasmania's north. We had a smooth flight.

Upon arrival, we collected our luggage and hopped aboard the minibus which would be our mode of transport for our time in Tasmania. We had around an hour's drive to our first photographic stops, but made a brief foray into the town of Latrobe for a spot of lunch. This warm, sunny day was the perfect start to our stay in this beautiful part of Australia.

After a welcome stop in town, we travelled the short distance to Tasmania arboretum. This beautiful botanical garden is arguably the best place in Australia to see and photograph platypus. The platypus is one of two monotremes (egg-laying mammals) in Australia and is usually crepuscular (active at twilight), making it a particularly challenging species to photograph. By contrast, the platypus found in the arboretum are

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active throughout the day and well accustomed to seeing people by the water's edge. Therefore, it is a place where it is possible to capture hundreds of images in a single day.

Within seconds of arriving at one of the arboretum's ponds, we saw a platypus floating on the surface. We really could not ask for more from such an elusive species. We spent a couple of hours trying to position ourselves around the ponds, capturing an array of excellent imagery in good light.



With memory cards filling up and batteries draining, it was time to head to Mountain Valley. This remote property is nestled in a steep-sided valley in the community of Loongana. The land has been set aside to conserve habitats and protect species that are rapidly disappearing from this wild and rugged island. We got the group settled into their cosy cabins before reconvening for a delicious dinner, where we discussed the itinerary for the next couple of days.

This little slice of paradise was the only realistic location for photographing the endangered Tasmanian devil and spotted-tailed quoll (otherwise known as the tiger quoll). The clients had a long night ahead of them, sitting in wait for these iconic species.

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Image courtesy of Helen Pinchin

Day 7: Mountain Valley & Leven Canyon

Saturday 4 March 2023

After a long night watching out for some of Australia's last large marsupial predators, we decided to meet slightly later than normal. Saturday was a relaxing day, which allowed the group to enjoy their surroundings and visit the spectacular Leven Canyon.

Some of the group had been lucky enough to see Tasmania devil, others saw spotted-tailed quoll and even a long-tailed mouse (an endemic mouse species). In the surrounding forests, we could hear the calls of black currawong resonating throughout the valley. Then some yellow-tailed black cockatoos flew across the forest slopes of Winterbrook Falls Forest Reserve. Scarlet robins were calling from the scrub around the cabins, while superb fairy-wrens hopped around in search of a meal. We had a delightful lunch on the marsupial lawn of the lodge's grounds before heading off for a short walk at Leven Canyon.

The group decided to enjoy a circular walk to two different viewpoints high above the gorge. Splitting up, we walked the route in both directions and arrived at the viewpoints, where we could marvel at this special place. The area is the edge of a vast wilderness zone that plays an important role in protecting a large number of endemic and rare species.

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After a lovely afternoon enjoying the magnificent views and the rich forest of the gorge's edge, we headed back towards the lodge, where we would enjoy another excellent evening meal. That night we would have a second chance to see one of the island's rare carnivorous marsupials.

Day 8: Mountain Valley, Burnie & Cradle Mountain

Sunday 5 March 2023

We reconvened in the morning, discovering that once again some of the group had been lucky and seen both Tasmanian devil and spotted-tailed quoll. On Sunday, we were planning to head north to the coastal town of Burnie, where we would enjoy a gentle stroll through a reserve. On the way, as we crossed the bridge out of Loongana, we had glimpses of a platypus down on the river, but it was shy and very difficult to photograph. Nonetheless, an excellent sighting.

As we headed further north, the sun was shining and we were able to stroll around Fern Glade Nature Reserve. This pocket of riverine forest is often a good place to enjoy views of platypus, but on this occasion our monotreme quarry eluded us. We did, however, enjoy wonderful views of some incredibly tame superb fairy-wrens and were able to marvel at the stunning flora surrounding us.

After another excellent lunch, it was time to head back inland, this time to the World Heritage Site of Cradle Mountain. It took us an hour to drive from Burnie to Cradle Mountain, but we enjoyed excellent views of the mountain as we approached the high point on the road into the national park. We knew that the weather forecast for the next few days was likely to be a little wet, so we planned to make the most of the afternoon.

We checked in, then spent our afternoon searching for the area's famed wildlife. Driving a little further up the valley, there is a short loop called the 'Enchanted Forest walk' – this was the perfect place to start our exploration of Cradle. We had a right ripper of a time, as within only a few moments of starting the walk, we bumped into our first wombat of the trip. These large marsupials are famously obliging on the moors and

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button grass meadows of this high-altitude habitat. After some extremely close encounters with this particular individual, we moved on to searching for other species. We wandered along the river, hoping that we may see an upland platypus, but to no avail. Instead, as we worked our way back towards the road, we were joined by some curious black currawong (another Tasmanian endemic), before spotting a gorgeous black tiger snake which was resting only a few yards away.



These snakes are the same species of tiger snake found on the mainland, but due to the colder climate they are often very dark in colouration. Their dark colouration helps them to absorb heat, allows these beautiful snakes to flourish in a pretty unforgiving habitat.

We continued to the main road and started to walk back to the vehicle. Then we had our first rewarding opportunities to photograph a wombat. We saw a few individuals and the group were able to capture a wonderful range of shots from the boardwalk. There were also several Tasmanian native hen running around the area. These flightless birds are yet another endemic and often overlooked. They are, however, quite a characterful bird and a rewarding subject when you take the time to photograph them. We had had a great first afternoon in this magical part of Tasmania, and had maximised our time before the inclement weather, which was due to arrive in earnest the following day. Our first meal in the hotel was lovely, and after dinner we all retired for a very well-earned rest.

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Day 9: Cradle Mountain

Monday 6 March 2023

We awoke to a much wetter day, but headed off for a leisurely breakfast hopeful that the rain and winds may ease. Arriving at the visitor centre, we picked up some lunch from the café and headed to the bus stop. During the day, the park employs a very strict access policy with a hop-on, hop-off bus service. This allowed us to head to Dove Lake, the famed body of water beneath Cradle Mountain itself, where a new information centre had recently been completed.

The rain was lashing down and the wind was blowing sheets of rain across the landscape, so we decided to visit the centre to learn about the area's history, flora and fauna. However, it seemed unfinished, so we sheltered in the building and enjoyed our lunch.

After a while, the rain eased and the winds died down. We took our chances and headed off on walks of varying difficulties, hoping to see and photograph some of the area's wonderful wildlife. Half of the group followed me down towards Ronny Creek, where we enjoyed large flocks of crescent honeyeaters which were feeding on banksia right by the path. Our party also noted a family of black currawongs, who were busy feeding by the path and posed perfectly for our cameras. High above in the trees, there was also a small flock of yellow wattlebirds making their distinctive noise. These wattlebirds are yet another Tasmania endemic and, although they are widespread, they are particularly challenging to photography as they rarely descend from the canopy.

As the weather closed in around us once more, we decided to head towards the car park at Ronny Creek. Along the boardwalk, we saw another group of black currawong, which posed for some intimate portraits, then we noticed several wombats on the grassy slopes – unfortunately these were not close enough to photograph.

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After returning to our accommodation to dry off and warm up, we decided to meet a couple of hours before dinner for a drive up to Ronny Creek. The park's shuttle bus service stops at the end of the day and you can drive up the narrow road to the car parks at Ronny Creek, Waldheim Chalet or Dove Lake. We drove up to the area around Waldheim Chalet, where we enjoyed excellent views of wombat, Bennett's wallaby and Tasmanian pademelon. With the light starting to fade it was time to head back for dinner, before retiring to our rooms.

Day 10: Cradle Mountain

Tuesday 7 March 2023

After another hearty breakfast, we headed to Devils at Cradle, a breeding and education centre for Tasmania's predatory marsupials. Due to Devil Facial Tumour disease, the Tasmanian devil is facing the threat of extinction and these populations play a vital role in the long-term survival of the species. In addition to devils, the centre is home to spotted-tailed eastern quolls.

With the weather taking a turn for the worse, we decided to head back to the hotel for a hearty lunch. We spent the afternoon having a photo-editing session in the hotel and making the most of the warmth. After an afternoon inside, we decided to drive up the road once more and see if we could find any wildlife. Despite the weather, we saw a number of wombats, wallabies and pademelons.

Calling it a day, we drove back to the hotel for our last dinner in the stunning surrounds of Cradle Mountain. On Wednesday we would be heading down from the island's interior towards the coast for the next part of our Tasmanian adventure.

Day 11: Cradle Mountain to Devonport

Wednesday 8 March 2023

After breakfast, we took the scenic road from Cradle Mountain to the coastal down of Devonport where we would spend the night.

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As we descended down the mountain, the weather improved drastically. The sun started to shine and the temperature rose as we headed back towards the Tasmania arboretum. We arrived just before lunchtime and made our way to the ponds to see if our aquatic quarry would put on another show.



We had an incredible session with many platypus. Both before and after lunch, we were able to photograph several individuals, but towards the end of our time there we saw something very special indeed.

At one of the small wooden bridges, some of the group noticed two platypuses entwined together. The incredible mammals continued with this rarely-seen mating behaviour for at least ten minutes, then the romance turned to violence. The ferocity of their movements in the water was exceptional and despite the changing light, the group were blessed with exceptional photography opportunities.

Seeing something like this was a real treat, and to be able to watch at such close quarters in broad daylight made it even more special. With our adrenaline levels soaring, it was time to head back to the minibus for the short drive to Devonport where the group were able to buy a few bits and pieces before dinner. We had a fabulous meal at a restaurant in the town centre before heading back to our hotel for the night.

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Day 12: Narawntapu National Park

Thursday 9 March 2023

We headed to a local café for a delicious breakfast before driving east along the north coast, around the inlet of Port Sorell and up to Narawntapu National Park. This coastal park is arguably the best place in Tasmania to photograph Forrester's kangaroo (a subspecies of eastern grey kangaroo) and we had plenty of time to capture some stunning imagery.

The national park consists of diverse habitats - sand dunes, scrub forest, a coastal plain with large lagoon, and rich forest climbing up into the surrounding hills. Upon arrival, we had our first views of a mob of kangaroos as they rested on the grasslands that flank the lagoon. A lone wedge-tailed eagle flew away from the trees as we made our approach to the kangaroos. The mob was lounging in the short drying grass, seemingly enjoying the warm sunshine. Mothers and their joeys were sat together in small clusters and it was these individuals that we slowly approached. The kangaroos were relaxed, and as long as we gave them plenty of space, they stayed put. These close encounters allowed for some fantastic photography with intimate portraits all but guaranteed.

Although there wasn't much more action before lunch, the group were able to take plenty of shots before heading to the bird hide on the lake in search of avian activity. As the sun loomed directly overhead, we headed back to the picnic area for another delicious packed lunch. There would be plenty of opportunities for further photography after lunch.

Narawntapu is a unique habitat in Tasmania and has a very different feel from other parts of this wonderful region of Australia. Feeling full after lunch, we embarked on a slightly longer walk, exploring the area around the southern side of the lagoon. We kept bumping into small groups of kangaroos, and regularly heard the calls of yellow-tailed black cockatoos, while on the water black swans were a common sight and as were white-fronted chats feeding on the ground.

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As we reached the far end of the lake, we saw a large mob of kangaroos feeding in the dry grass. After taking sufficient photos, some of the group decided to walk back along the route had just come from, while others decided to continue on around the lake.



It was on this northern side, walking along the edge of the dunes, that we found hundreds of pademelons - some of which were particularly obliging. There was also a small group of yellow-tailed black cockatoos feeding in a low branch, which erupted from the plant as we turned a bend in the path.

We completed the loop around the lagoon and returned to the minibus to begin our drive onwards towards the largest city in Tasmania's north, Launceston. The hotel, located right in the city centre, was very comfortable and we were able to refuel with an excellent meal after a busy day with the kangaroos.

Day 13: Ben Lomond National Park & Hobart

Friday 10 March 2023

We awoke to another lovely day, our last in Tasmania's north, which started with breakfast at the hotel before making our way to Ben Lomond National Park. This rugged national park sits in Tasmania's north-east and is famed for its dolerite bluffs and spectacular views. Only a few days before, the area had been covered by snow, but now we were treated to a cool, yet sunny day in this high-altitude wilderness.

As we neared the rocky bluff of Ben Lomond, we started to climb the winding road through thick eucalypt forest. We stopped on the road directly beneath the dolerite 'organ pipes' where we enjoyed magnificent views of this natural wonder.

Thus far, one of Tasmania's most beautiful endemic birds had eluded us – the green rosella. This parrot is widespread and common, but other than a few glimpses, we had not encountered it. However, as we sat marvelling at our surroundings, a green rosella landed on the road right next to the vehicle. The light was not favourable, but the bird was incredibly obliging and perched only a few yards away from us (incredibly rare). Many members of the group were able to capture images of this beautiful bird before it eventually flew away.

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After this fabulous and rather unexpected moment, we continued up the mountain to the fabulous lookout perched on the edge of the plateau, high above the forested landscape below. It was a glorious day to enjoy this unique landscape.



Ben Lomond is home to a ski area with a bizarre ski village. The area is a reliable spot for Bennett's wallaby, but other than a few individuals in the heart of the village, the surrounding habitat seemed almost devoid of life. Perhaps the recent cold spell had pushed the summer inhabitants down the mountain, leaving only the wallabies behind. We headed back down the mountain, stopping for lunch at a picnic area on the forested slopes, before starting the journey south.

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Our destination was Hobart, Tasmania's capital. Hobart is approximately a four-hour drive from Ben Lomond, so we set off with haste. Though we stopped half way into the journey at Campbell Town for a comfort break and some refreshments. We arrived in Hobart in the early evening and checked into our hotel. We were right in the city centre, and there was a fabulous restaurant on site. The group enjoyed another excellent meal before retiring for an early night.

Day 14: Hobart to Inala, Bruny Island

Saturday 11 March 2023

With a leisurely start to the morning, some of the group headed off to nearby Salamanca Market, which is one of Hobart's top attractions. It was a gorgeous morning, as the sun was shining but it wasn't too warm. It wasn't long before we were checking out of the hotel and heading towards the town of Kettering. This small town is the embarkation point for the small ferry to Bruny Island.

Only a short while after arriving, we were aboard the ferry and making our way across the water towards the northern part of the island. The crossing only takes around 15 minutes, and with the fair weather we were quickly driving towards our first port of call.

Adventure Bay sits on the southern half of the island and is well-known for its breeding population of hooded plover. We arrived in good time and started to work our way along the road which runs parallel to the beach. There we enjoyed great views of New Holland honeyeater, scarlet robin and dusky woodswallow - with particularly good photography opportunities of an individual robin.

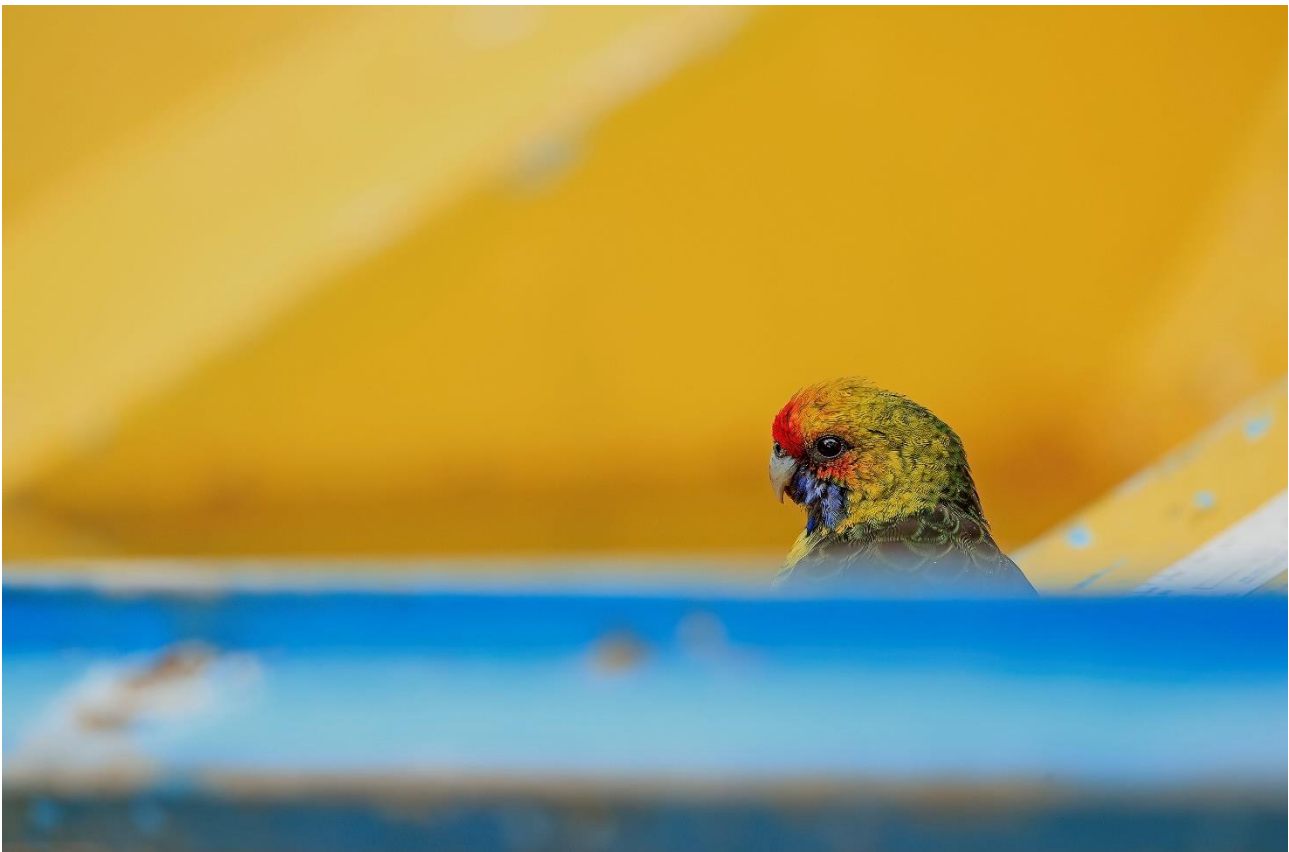


Nearby, an old boat lay on the edge of the scrub adjoining the beach. Suddenly, a green rosella hopped down from a tree and sat right by the group, perching on the boat's side. This was unusual behaviour for a rosella, as they are notoriously flighty. However, it sat there watching us for a while, before hopping down into the boat itself. The inside of the boat was painted a vivid yellow, while the outside was a faded blue, and we worked our way into a position where we could see what the rosella was doing. It turned out that the rosella was drinking the rainwater that had accumulated at the bottom of the boat. The vivid colours made for a

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very unusual and striking image of this beautiful bird and the group managed to capture some stunning imagery as it drank and bathed in the water.



After a spot of lunch, we headed further along the beach, across a small river outlet, finding a couple of birds in an area where hooded plovers are known to breed. We made sure not to disturb them as they darted about their sandy realm; instead, we headed off towards our next destination.

The Inala property sits within the southern half of Bruny Island and has been set aside for conservation by its owners. It has a particular focus on conserving two of the island's most threatened species – the endemic forty-spotted pardalote and the swift parrot. On our way there, we found our first white wallaby, a leucistic white Bennett's wallaby, a variant only really found on Bruny. The group managed to capture some great shots of this beautiful animal in the thick and rather gloomy forest.

The group was scattered in small cottages, but we decided to explore the area around the property (an old farm) to see if we could observe any notable species. The gardens are an important refuge for small native mammals, including dusky antechinus and swamp rat (think of a water vole). Some of the group were treated to views of antechinus darting from cover to cover, while others captured beautiful imagery of New Holland honeyeaters feeding on banksia flowers.

After a lovely afternoon enjoying the surrounds of Inala, we made sure everyone had a little time in their accommodation to freshen up for dinner. There is only really one place to eat on Bruny Island, and that is at Hotel Bruny in the township of Alonnah. We headed out in the minibus and enjoyed a huge meal at the hotel before returning to our accommodation for the night.

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Day 15: Inala, Bruny Island

Sunday 12 March 2023

Sunday would be our last full day in Tasmania, and in Australia for that matter. We had a relatively early start, meeting for breakfast in Inala's multipurpose covered area (rather hard to describe other than it appears to be barn-like in structure). We met the property's owner, Tonia, who bought the 1,500-acre property many years ago and has since dedicated her life to protecting the flora and fauna in the wildlife reserve.

After introductions, we set off for a walk through Inala's Jurassic Garden. This wonderful, tended garden has been a real passion project for Tonia. She talked about growing, and even conserving, some of the world's rarest plants. Plants which are historically derived from Gondwana (an ancient continent) and are now scattered throughout the southern hemisphere.

The garden also plays host to the small mammals I mentioned previously, which in turn have attracted tiger snakes. As we walked through with Tonia, we had some good views of New Holland honeyeater and superb fairy-wrens hopping about.

We continued through the garden on to larger, wilder parts of the property. One of the biggest success stories at Inala is the critical role they have played in understanding and conserving the forty-spotted pardalote. These diminutive birds are endemic to Tasmania and they came very close to extinction. Fortunately, just in time, Tonia and her team took decisive steps to ensure a long-term future for this incredibly rare bird and to encourage others across Bruny Island to help. We were lucky to enjoy views of these tiny birds as they fed on their only food source, the manna of white gum, which has become increasingly rare.

At Inala, there is also the chance to make the most of a dedicated raptor hide, where on a good day it is possible to photograph wedge-tailed eagle, grey goshawk and even white-bellied sea eagle. On this occasion, there were only limited views of the white morph grey goshawk (though this is an absolutely stunning bird) and the group took it in turns trying their luck. The only birds that decided to cooperate were the white morph of the grey goshawk and a brown goshawk. However, the property plays host to a wealth of other

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bird and mammals which we *were* lucky enough to see, such as green rosella, flame robin, black-headed honeyeater, thick-billed honeyeater and the ever-present pademelons.

After a full morning with Tonia, we were treated to views of forty-spotted pardalote, which came down nice and low to the observation tower. Photographing such a small bird in the wind-blown canopy was definitely on the tricky side, but we did our best and got some excellent record shots. It was a fantastic day for learning about and sighting new species.



We headed off to the Bruny Hotel a little earlier on Sunday night, enjoying yet another fantastic meal (the portion sizes there were beyond generous). We spent our last night on the island at the long isthmus that joins the north and south. It was there that we had a chance to see fairy penguins and ‘muttonbirds’ (short-tailed shearwaters) coming ashore. Unfortunately, the penguins didn’t show, but we were able to watch the shearwaters as they flew through the air and stumbled on the ground.

As the darkness enveloped us, we climbed aboard the minibus and slowly made our way back to the accommodation. On our way we had a brief glimpse of an eastern quoll (Bruny Island is one of the last strongholds for this endangered species) as well as several possums which decided to stand on the road.

Soon we were all tucked up in bed, ready for an early start. The next day we would drive back to Hobart, where the group would be splitting up for our varying journeys back home.

Day 16: Bruny Island to Hobart, Melbourne to Perth

Monday 13 March 2023

We awoke very early and headed out on the road to catch the first ferry, and soon we were on our way. With many animals on the road, it was extremely slow going, but we did manage to see a couple more eastern quolls which was a lovely surprise. Unfortunately we had just missed the first ferry (by less than a minute) and so we had to wait another 20 minutes for the next one.

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Having successfully made it back to the small town of Kettering, we headed north up the coastal road towards Hobart, stopping at a bakery on the way for breakfast. It wasn't long before we arrived at the airport. The majority of the group's flights were back to the UK via Melbourne with a fuel stop at Perth.

The long journey home went smoothly, and we landed at Heathrow ahead of our scheduled arrival time. It had been an incredible couple of weeks with a multitude of memorable encounters and some truly stunning photography opportunities. It was an absolute corker of an Australia Wildlife Photo Safari.

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Checklist



	Common Name	Scientific Name	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14	Day 15	Day 16
	BIRDS	<i>AVES</i>														
1	Magpie goose	<i>Anseranas semipalmata</i>		✓												
2	Cape Barren goose	<i>Cereopsis novaehollandiae</i>		✓												
3	Black swan	<i>Cygnus atratus</i>		✓		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Australia shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadornoides</i>				✓					✓					
5	Maned (wood) duck	<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>		✓												
6	Pacific black duck	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>		✓		✓					✓	✓				
7	Chestnut teal	<i>Anas castanea</i>		✓		✓					✓	✓				
8	Hardhead	<i>Aythya australis</i>				✓					✓		✓			
9	Musk duck	<i>Biziura lobata</i>										✓				
10	Pied cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>		✓												
11	Australasian grebe	<i>Tachybaptus novaehollandiae</i>		✓		✓					✓					
12	Short-tailed shearwater	<i>Ardenna tenuirostris</i>													✓	
13	Australian pelican	<i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i>										✓				

31	Common bronzewing	<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>			✓												
32	Little eagle	<i>Hieraetus morphnoides</i>		✓													
33	Wedge-tailed eagle	<i>Aquila audax</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		
34	Swamp harrier	<i>Circus approximans</i>				✓											
35	Grey goshawk	<i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>														✓	
36	Brown goshawk	<i>Accipiter fasciatus</i>			✓										✓	✓	
37	Collared sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter cirrocephalus</i>		✓													
38	Brown falcon	<i>Falco berigora</i>		✓													
39	Pacific swift	<i>Apus pacificus</i>										✓					
40	Welcome swallow	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
41	Tree martin	<i>Petrochelidon nigricans</i>													✓	✓	
42	Dusky woodswallow	<i>Artamus cyanopterus</i>													✓	✓	
43	Yellow-tailed black cockatoo	<i>Zanda funerea</i>					✓	✓									
44	Galah	<i>Eolophus roseicapilla</i>		✓								✓	✓				
45	Long-billed corella	<i>Cacatua tenuirostris</i>			✓									✓			
46	Sulphur-crested cockatoo	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>		✓	✓									✓			
47	Red-rumped parrot	<i>Psephotus haematonotus</i>		✓													
48	Green rosella	<i>Platycercus caledonicus</i>						✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		

