



**AUSTRALIA PRE-TOUR: TASMANIA AND
THE ORANGE-BELLIED PARROT**

22 - 27 OCTOBER 2018



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Orange-bellied Parrot is one of our special targets on this trip.

Adjoined to the mainland until the end of the last glacial period about ten thousand years ago, Tasmania is both geographically and genetically isolated from Australia. Through the millennia this island has developed its own unique set of plants and animals, including twelve avian endemics that include **Forty-spotted Pardalote**, **Green Rosella**, and **Strong-billed Honeyeater**. Beyond the endemics it also harbors several species that winter on the mainland and breed mostly on Tasmania, such as **Swift Parrot** and **Orange-bellied Parrot**. Our search for these endemics and breeding specialties is set within a stunning backdrop of rugged coastlines, tall evergreen sclerophyll forests, alpine heathlands, and cool temperate rainforests, undoubtedly enriching our experience here. In addition, due to the lack of foxes many marsupials are notably more numerous in Tasmania than on the mainland, and we should be able to observe several of these unique animals during our stay.

For those wishing to explore more of Australia, this tour can be combined with our **Australia: from the Outback to the Wet Tropics 2018** itinerary, followed by our **Australia: Top End Birding Specialties 2018** tour, followed by our **Australia: the Southwest 2018** tour. We can also arrange other extensions (e.g., Uluru for sightseeing, or pelagics).

Please note that the detailed itinerary below cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors.

Itinerary (6 days/5 nights)

Day 1: Hobart

After arriving in Hobart we transfer to a nearby hotel near the city for the night. Depending on flight arrival times there may be the opportunity for some optional birding around Hobart city.

Overnight: Hobart

Day 2: Hobart environs

We spend the day birding at a couple of sites within close proximity of Hobart city, exploring the beautiful Fern Glade Track at Mt Wellington and the nearby Waterworks Reserve, where we can expect to get our list of Tasmanian endemic species up and running with **Tasmanian Scrubwren**, **Scrubtit**, **Tasmanian Thornbill**, **Black Currawong**, **Yellow Wattlebird**, **Dusky Robin**, and **Strong-billed Honeyeater**. The supporting cast may include **Pink Robin**, **Bassian Thrush**, **Olive Whistler**, and **Swift Parrot**.

Overnight: Hobart

Day 3: Melaleuca Orange-bellied Parrot Twitch!

An unforgettable day is in store for us today! We board a small plane early in the morning, flying over some incredible scenery over southwest Tasmania before descending onto the remote airstrip at Melaleuca. Originally a tin mine, Melaleuca is now the center of conservation efforts aimed at restoring the wild population of the Critically Endangered (IUCN) **Orange-bellied Parrot**. A Tasmanian breeding endemic, these beautiful little parrots are in a dire situation, with fewer than fifty individuals left in the wild.

The surrounding heath hosts a healthy population of **Southern Emu-wren**, **Striated Fieldwren**, **Olive Whistler**, **Pink Robin**, **Crescent Honeyeater**, **Beautiful Firetail**, and the

very secretive and subtly beautiful **Eastern Ground Parrot**. Over the course of the day we will be truly spoiled with a range of fantastic local Tasmanian food and drink. Our return flight to Hobart late in the afternoon will likely take us a different route from the way out, offering more views of stunning scenery.

Overnight: Hobart

Day 4: Hobart to Bruny Island

Located off the southeastern coast of Tasmania, Bruny Island supports at least twelve endemics, including the world's largest population of the Endangered (IUCN) **Forty-spotted Pardalote**. We will board a ferry to this rich site during the morning, watching for **Pacific Gull** and **Black-faced Cormorant** on our way out.

Once we arrive on the island we will spend the better part of the day looking for all the Tasmanian endemics, such as the demure **Dusky Robin**, the vociferous **Yellow Wattlebird**, and the comical **Tasmanian Nativehen**. By scanning sandy beaches we also hope to connect with the increasingly rare **Hooded Dotterel**.

We will take a drive and walk around at dusk to look for **Little Penguin** and **Short-tailed Shearwater**, as well as the recently split **Morepork** (a hawk-owl) – birds in Australia were formerly thought to be a subspecies of the **Southern Boobook** found on the Australian mainland, but recent DNA analysis has found them to be more closely related to birds on New Zealand!

Overnight: Bruny Island

Day 5: Bruny Island to Hobart

We spend a full day birding Bruny Island, focusing perhaps on the scarcer endemics such as **Scrubtit** and **Strong-billed Honeyeater**. Other specialties such as **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, **Beautiful Firetail**, **Olive Whistler**, **Eastern Ground Parrot**, and **Swift Parrot** will also be among our targets. We'll also keep an eye open over the water for **Black-browed** and **Shy Albatrosses**, **Australasian Gannet**, and **White-bellied Sea Eagle**. We'll catch a late boat off Bruny Island and head back to Hobart.

Overnight: Hobart

Day 6: Birding Southeast Tasmania and Pre-tour concludes

We will have a final morning session birding at Goulds Lagoon Wildlife Sanctuary, where we may find **Latham's Snipe**, **Baillon's**, **Australian Spotted**, and **Spotless Crakes**, **Little Grassbird**, and **Australian Reed Warbler**, as well as an assortment of waterbirds (depending on water levels).

In the afternoon we drive to Hobart International Airport, where the pre-tour ends. Those people taking part in the main tour fly to Melbourne in preparation for our Australia: from the Outback to the Wet Tropics tour commencing the next morning.

Overnight: Melbourne (main tour participants only)

Duration:	6 days/5 nights
Group size:	3 – 8
Date:	22 – 27 October 2018
Start:	Hobart
End:	Hobart

Price:	AU\$2,752 per person sharing (7-8 participants)
	AU\$2,995 per person sharing (5-6 participants)

Single supplement: AU\$3,458 per person sharing (3-4 participants)
AU\$927

Price includes:

Lodging in comfortable hotels/lodges
All meals
All transportation within Tasmania and Bruny Island
Entrance fees
Expert birding guide

Price excludes:

Flights
Alcoholic drinks
Travel insurance
Gratuities
Expenses of a personal nature (laundry, phone calls, extra drinks, internet access, and snacks, etc.)