



AUSTRALIA: TASMANIA AND THE ORANGE-BELLIED PARROT

23 – 28 NOVEMBER 2019

24 – 29 OCTOBER 2020

24 – 29 OCTOBER 2021



© Andy Walker/Birding Ecotours 2016

Beautiful Firetail 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 Tasmania also harbors several species which winter on the mainland and breed on Tasmania, such as **Swift Parrot** and **Orange-bellied Parrot**. These two breeding endemics are globally Critically Endangered (IUCN) and major targets on this tour.

Our search for the endemics and breeding specialties of Tasmania 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, and we should be able to observe several of these unique animals during our stay.

For those wishing to continue exploring Australia, this tour can be combined with our set of Australia tours: **Australia: from the Outback to the Wet Tropics**, **Australia: Top End Birding**, and **Australia: Southwest Specialties**. All four Australia tours could be combined. We can also arrange other extensions (e.g., sightseeing trips to Sydney, Uluru, etc., and pelagic trips).

Itinerary (6 days/5 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Hobart

Afternoon arrival at Hobart International Airport and transfer to your hotel in the city, our base for the next few nights, with the rest of the day at your leisure.

Overnight: Hobart

Day 2. Hobart environs

We spend the day birding at a couple of sites within close proximity to Hobart city, exploring the beautiful Fern Glade 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**, and **Olive Whistler**.

Overnight: Hobart

Day 3. Melaleuca Orange-bellied Parrot twitch

An unforgettable day is in store for us today! Weather-permitting we will board a small plane early in the morning, flying over some incredible scenery over southwestern 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 forty individuals left in the wild. Time, unfortunately seems to be running out for them.

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**, which we will also try to find. 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 on a different route back to Hobart, offering more views of stunning mountain scenery.

Overnight: Hobart

Day 4. Hobart to Bruny Island

Located off the southeastern coast of Tasmania, Bruny Island supports all twelve currently recognized Tasmanian 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 **White-bellied Sea Eagle**, **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**. While here we will also look for the Critically Endangered (IUCN) breeding-endemic **Swift Parrot**, another species in a state of unfortunate rapid decline.

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 of the latter species in Tasmania were formerly thought to be a subspecies of Southern Boobook, which is found widely on the Australian mainland, but recent DNA analysis has found them to be more closely related to birds on New Zealand and actually a subspecies of the species found in that country!

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 be among our targets too. We will also keep an eye open over the water for **Black-browed** and **Shy Albatrosses**, **Australasian Gannet**, and **White-bellied Sea Eagle**. In the late afternoon we will catch the ferry off Bruny Island and head back to our hotel in the city of Hobart.

Overnight: Hobart

Day 6. Birding Southeast Tasmania and tour concludes

We will have a final morning session birding at some sites in the southeast of the island, where we may find **Latham's Snipe**, **Baillon's**, **Australian**, and **Spotless Crakes**, **Little Grassbird**, and **Australian Reed Warbler**, as well as, hopefully, an assortment of waterbirds (depending on water levels).

In the mid-afternoon we drive back to Hobart International Airport, where the tour ends.

Please note that the itinerary 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.

Duration: 6 days

Group size: 4 – 8

Dates: 23 – 28 November 2019
24 – 29 October 2020
24 – 29 October 2021

Start: Hobart, Tasmania

End: Hobart, Tasmania

Prices: AU\$3,790 per person sharing (4-8 people) 2019
AU\$4,170 per person sharing (4-8 people) 2020
AU\$4,587 per person sharing (4-8 people) 2021

Single Supplements: AU\$440 2019
AU\$485 2020
AU\$534 2021

Price includes:

All reserve entry fees shown in the itinerary
Accommodation (from day 1 through day 5, may include shared bathroom facilities on Bruny Island)
Meals (from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 6)
Expert bird guide during the entire trip
Private transportation during the tour and transfers (possibly shared) to and from the airports
Day trip return flight to Melaleuca for Orange-bellied Parrot

Price excludes:

International and domestic airfare
Accommodation and meals before/after tour
Gratuities
Soft/Alcoholic drinks
Items of a personal nature (e.g. drinks, snacks, alcoholic beverages, laundry, souvenirs, phone-calls, internet access, travel insurance, etc.)