Australia

Victoria & Tasmania: Birds & Wildlife (Relaxed)



Red-capped Robin by Glen Valentine

Australia is a vast continent harbouring many remarkable endemic birds and bizarre wildlife found nowhere else on Earth. This relaxed-paced journey focuses on two of the most rewarding and varied corners of south-eastern Australia: the sandstone ranges, mallee woodlands, riverine plains and box-ironbark forests of Victoria, followed by the cool forests, alpine country and wild coastlines of Tasmania. It has been designed for travellers who want a rewarding Australian bird and wildlife experience without the intensity or long target-list pressure of a more conventional birding tour.

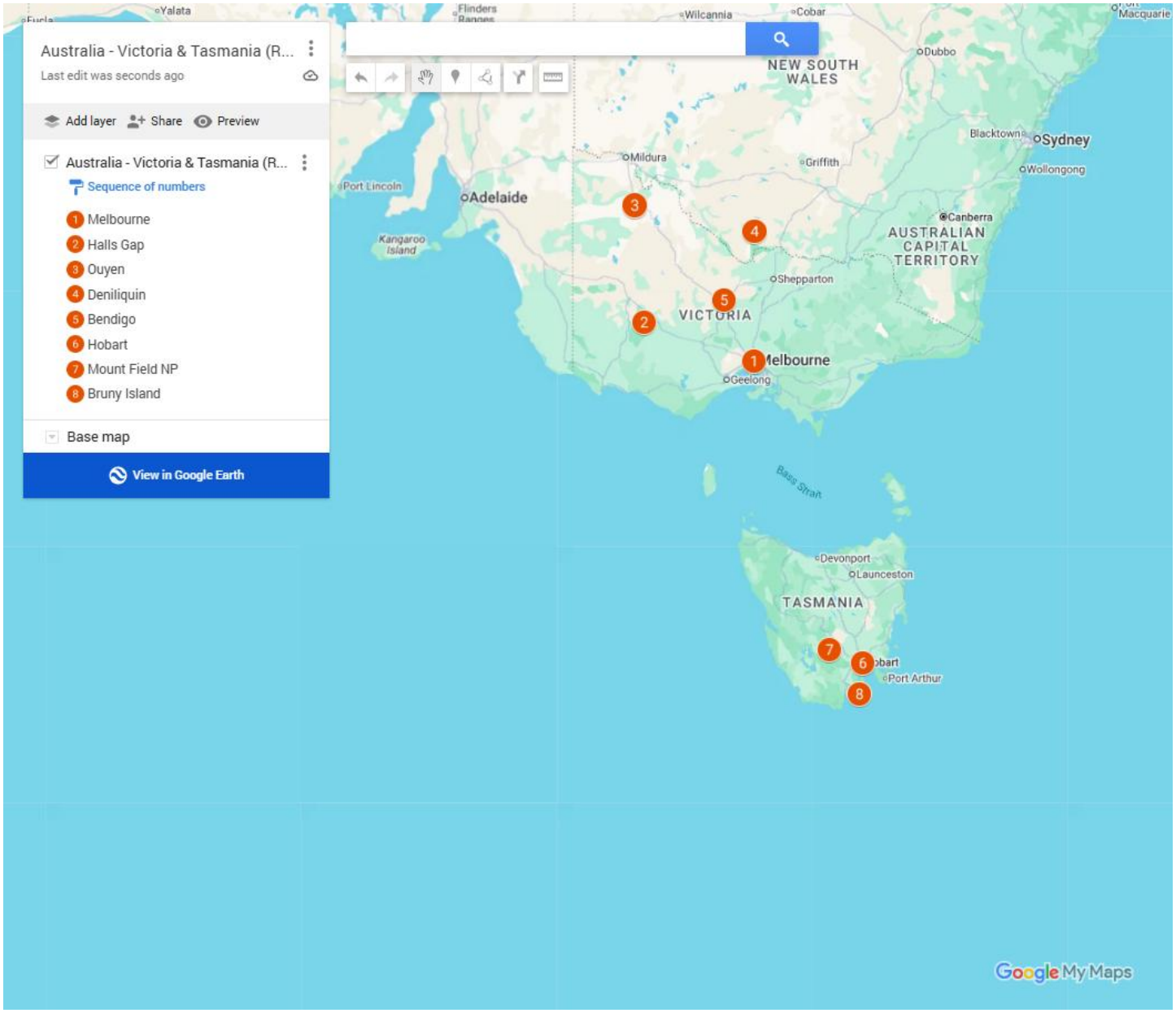
Beginning in Melbourne, we travel west to the dramatic landscapes of Grampians National Park (part of the Gariwerd Aboriginal cultural landscape), before continuing through the Wimmera wheatbelt to Ouyen and the superb mallee habitats of Hattah-Kulkyne National Park. We then cross the Murray River to Deniliquin and the Hay Plain for one of Australia's most extraordinary birds, the critically endangered Plains-wanderer. Returning through Bendigo's historic goldfields and box-ironbark country, we'll search for a multitude of distinctive dry-country wildlife such as Emu, Gang-gang and Pink Cockatoos, Regent Parrot, Australian Ringneck, Bluebonnet,

Splendid and White-winged Fairywrens, Southern Whiteface, Chestnut-rumped and Inland Thornbills, Red-capped Robin, Gilbert's Whistler, Shy Heathwren, Painted Honeyeater, Musk and Purple-crowned Lorikeets, Red and Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Koala and Short-beaked Echidna. This first section also offers a fine sense of rural Australia, from small wheatbelt towns and river red gum country to gold-rush architecture, country roads and wide inland skies.

The tour then continues to Tasmania, where Mount Field National Park, Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary and Bruny Island provide a gentle but rich introduction to the island's endemic birds and mammals. Highlights include Forty-spotted Pardalote, Scrubtit, Tasmanian Nativehen, Green Rosella, Yellow Wattlebird, Pink Robin, Platypus, Common Wombat, Eastern Quoll, Tasmanian Pademelon and Bennett's Wallaby. Bruny Island is especially important, offering excellent chances for Tasmania's special birds in a setting of coastal scenery, forest, gardens and private conservation land.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Melbourne**
Day 2	**Melbourne to Halls Gap**
Day 3	**Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park**
Day 4	**Halls Gap to Ouyen**
Day 5	**Hattah–Kulkyne National Park**
Day 6	**Ouyen to Deniliquin (Plains-wanderer quest)**
Day 7	**Deniliquin & surrounds**
Day 8	**Deniliquin to Bendigo**
Day 9	**Bendigo to Melbourne**
Day 10	**Melbourne; flight to Hobart & transfer to Mount Field**
Day 11	**Mount Field**
Day 12	**Mount Field; ferry to Bruny Island**
Day 13	**Bruny Island**
Day 14	**Bruny Island; ferry to Hobart & final departure**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Sequence of numbers
1 Melbourne
2 Halls Gap
3 Ouyen
4 Deniliquin
5 Bendigo
6 Hobart
7 Mount Field NP
8 Bruny Island
Base map
View in Google Earth
NEW SOUTH WALES
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
VICTORIA
TASMANIA
Adelaide
Melbourne
Sydney
Canberra
Mildura
Griffith
Shepparton
Geelong
Devonport
Launceston
Port Arthur
Bass Strait
Kangaroo Island
Port Lincoln
Wollongong
Dubbo
Wilcannia
Cobar
Blacktown
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Birding sites in detail



Splendid Fairywren by Glen Valentine

Melbourne to Halls Gap. Melbourne provides a comfortable start before we head west across central Victoria towards Halls Gap. The journey passes through farmland, open woodland and historic gold-rush country around Ballarat, with early possibilities including Australian Magpie, Laughing Kookaburra, Galah, Eastern Rosella, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Australian Raven and a selection of raptors.

Around Halls Gap, Eastern Grey Kangaroos are often conspicuous in open areas, and the surrounding woodland introduces us to the sandstone ranges and dry eucalypts that will characterise this part of the tour.

Grampians National Park (Gariwerd). Grampians National Park, traditionally known as Gariwerd, is one of Victoria's most scenic protected areas, combining rugged sandstone escarpments, flowering heath, dry woodland, waterfalls and expansive lookouts. This ancient mountain landscape holds deep cultural significance for Traditional Owners and protects an exceptional concentration of Aboriginal rock art sites. Easy walks on well-made tracks should give us time to enjoy both birds and scenery at an unhurried pace. Species we may encounter include Gang-gang Cockatoo, Crimson Rosella, White-throated Treecreeper, Eastern Spinebill, Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, Yellow-faced and White-eared Honeyeaters, Superb Fairywren, Eastern Yellow Robin and, with luck, Emu or Koala. A short optional night walk may produce various species of possum, owl or Tawny Frogmouth.



Koalas by Greg de Klerk

Wimmera and Halls Gap to Ouyen. The drive north from Halls Gap to Ouyen takes us through the Wimmera, a broad wheat-growing district of silos, small towns, roadside woodland and open plains. Stops will be selected according to local conditions, with wetlands, farm dams or roadside vegetation potentially producing Australian Shelduck, Black Swan, Pink-eared Duck, Whistling Kite, Nankeen Kestrel, Red-rumped Parrot, Eastern Bluebonnet, White-winged Chough, Apostlebird, songlarks and a selection of honeyeaters. It is chiefly a travel section, but it marks the shift from the sandstone ranges into drier mallee country. The open agricultural landscapes also give context to many



Western Grey Kangaroo in Hattah Kulkyne NP by Glen Valentine

of the birds we hope to see later, as species move between remnant woodland, roadside vegetation, paddocks and seasonal wetlands.

Hattah-Kulkyne National Park. Hattah-Kulkyne is one of Australia's classic mallee reserves, protecting stunted eucalypt woodland, Callitris pine, red gum-lined lakes and open glades beside the Murray River.

The extensive mallee supports a suite of sought-after dry-country birds, including Regent Parrot, Australian Ringneck, Pink Cockatoo, Splendid and White-winged Fairywrens, Southern Whiteface, Chestnut-rumped and Inland Thornbills, Red-capped Robin, Gilbert's Whistler, Shy Heathwren, Southern Scrub Robin, Crested Bellbird and Chestnut-crowned Babbler.

The lakes may hold ducks, grebes, herons and other waterbirds, while Red Kangaroo, Western Grey Kangaroo, Lace Monitor and other reptiles are possible in warm weather.

Ouyen to Deniliquin and Plains-wanderer excursion. Travelling east from Ouyen, we cross the Murray River into the Riverina of New South Wales and continue to Deniliquin, gateway to open native grasslands near Hay Plain. The special focus here is the remarkable Plains-wanderer, a monotypic and critically endangered species that represents one of the most distinctive bird families in the world. This is a late-night excursion that may also produce Stubble Quail, Inland Dotterel, Australian Pipit, Brown Songlark, Fat-tailed Dunnart and large numbers of kangaroos, although sightings depend on seasonal conditions and weather. The excursion is conducted carefully and at low speed, with the emphasis on responsible viewing of this fragile grassland ecosystem as much as on the excitement of finding the bird itself. We have two nights in area to accommodate any disruption due to inclement weather.



Pink Cockatoos by Glen Valentine

Deniliquin & Hay Plain area. The Deniliquin area gives us a relaxed base for exploring the edge of the Hay Plain, red gum river country, wetlands, saltbush and roadside



Plains-wanderer by Adam Riley

woodland. This variety of habitats support Emu, Black Falcon, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Falcon, Australian Pratincole in suitable seasons, White-fronted Chat, White-winged Fairywren, Peaceful and Diamond Doves, Superb Parrot, Eastern Bluebonnet, White-plumed Honeyeater, Grey-crowned Babbler and restless flocks of cockatoos, woodswallows and lorikeets. The wide horizons and working rural landscapes also give a pleasing taste of Australia's inland plains. Wetland conditions can vary considerably from year to year, so this flexible section allows us to respond to local water levels, flowering events and recent bird movements.

Bendigo. This is one of Victoria's great goldfields cities, and its nineteenth-century architecture adds a cultural element to the tour.

The surrounding box-ironbark woodlands are among south-eastern Australia's most important habitats for nomadic nectar-feeding birds, especially when the eucalypts are in flower. Depending on conditions, we may find Musk and Purple-crowned Lorikeets, Fuscous, White-naped, Yellow-tufted and Black-chinned Honeyeaters, scarce Painted Honeyeater, Varied Sittella, Brown Treecreeper, Hooded Robin, Diamond Firetail and other woodland species before returning to Melbourne. These woodlands can be quiet at times, but flowering trees may suddenly attract excellent mixed flocks, so patient scanning and short roadside walks can be very productive.



Apostlebird by Greg de Klerk

Hobart to Mount Field National Park. After a flight from Melbourne to Hobart, we visit Mount Wellington (Kunanyi) for sweeping views across Hobart, the River Derwent and the surrounding ranges. We then continue to Mount Field National Park, part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. This section introduces the cool forests and endemic wildlife of Tasmania, with possibilities including Tasmanian Nativehen, Green Rosella, Yellow



Platypus by Greg de Klerk

Wattlebird, Black Currawong, Forest Raven, Strong-billed, Black-headed and Yellow-throated Honeyeaters, and the endemic Tasmanian forms of several familiar Australian species. The contrast with the mainland is immediate, with cooler air, wetter forests and a noticeably different suite of birds and mammals.

Mount Field National Park. Mount Field offers a beautiful combination of tall eucalypt forest, fern gullies, waterfalls, alpine moorland and tarns.

Birding may produce Scrubtit, Tasmanian Scrubwren, Tasmanian Thornbill, Pink Robin, Olive Whistler, Crescent and Yellow-throated Honeyeaters, Black Currawong and Yellow Wattlebird. The park is also a good place to look for Platypus, Short-beaked Echidna, Common Wombat and Tasmanian Pademelon, while its waterfalls and enormous trees provide some of the finest scenery of the tour. The diversity of habitats within a compact area makes Mount Field particularly well suited to a relaxed itinerary, as we can enjoy several very different landscapes without committing to long transfers or demanding hikes.

Bonorong to Bruny Island. The journey from Mount Field to Bruny Island includes a short visit to Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary, where native Tasmanian wildlife is rescued and rehabilitated. Depending on the animals in care, this may offer particularly good opportunities for Tasmanian Devil, wombats, quolls, echidnas, pademelons and other marsupials. We then continue to the Bruny Island ferry and cross to an island of coastal scenery, forest, farmland and private conservation land.

A brief optional night outing may be offered for nocturnal mammals, subject to conditions. The sanctuary visit also complements the wilder sections of the tour by allowing close, educational encounters with species that can otherwise be difficult to observe well in the field.



Wombat by Glen Valentine

Bruny Island. Bruny Island is one of the best places in Tasmania for a relaxed search for the island's endemic birds. At Inala Conservation Reserve and the Jurassic Garden we will look in particular for the critically endangered Forty-spotted Pardalote, as well as Strong-billed and Black-headed Honeyeaters, Green Rosella, Dusky Robin, Tasmanian



Forty-spotted Pardalote on Bruny Island by Glen Valentine

Scrubwren, Tasmanian Thornbill, Yellow Wattlebird and the distinctive local forms of several widespread species. Elsewhere on the island, beaches, headlands and bays may hold Hooded Plover, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers, Pacific Gull, Black-faced Cormorant and Australasian Gannet. Scenic areas such as Adventure Bay, Cloudy Bay and Cape Bruny add variety, while Red-necked Wallaby, Tasmanian Pademelon and Bennett's Wallaby are all possible. The combination of Inala's managed habitat, quiet island roads and open coastal sites gives us repeated chances for good views and photography.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease	☐ ■ ■	Easy to Moderate. Comfortable multi-night stays, some moderate travel days, and one late-night Plains-wanderer excursion.
Birding Ease	☐ ■ ■	Easy to Moderate. Most birding is in open woodland, mallee, wetlands, roadsides, reserves & lodge-style grounds. Some mallee and Tasmanian species require patience, and Plains-wanderer can be tricky.
Accommodation	☐ ☐ ■	Comfortable city hotels, regional motels and lodge/cottage-style accommodation. Bruny Island accommodation may have limited rooming arrangements.
Walking / Trails	☐ ☐ ■	Generally easy walks on well-made tracks, roadsides, boardwalks and reserve trails. Some ground may be uneven, sandy, stony, wet or gently sloping, but strenuous hikes are not planned.
Vehicles / Roads	☐ ☐ ■	Generally comfortable travel on sealed roads, with some unsealed roads. Several drives are in the 155 - 280km (100 – 180 miles) range, there is a short Bruny Island ferry crossing.
Photography	☐ ☐ ■	Good to very good for landscapes, kangaroos, parrots, waterbirds, Tasmanian endemics and larger mammals.
Annoyances	☐ ■ ■	Weather can range from warm, dry mainland conditions to cool, wet or windy Tasmanian weather. Early starts, insects, variable bird activity, are to be expected.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 14;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- Fees for included sanctuary, reserve and Plains-wanderer activities;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

Our Relaxed series of tours are designed to focus on having an enjoyable holiday with a bird and wildlife focus. Where possible; we have reduced or removed long drives, single night stays and poor/rustic accommodation. We have also sought to reduce or remove difficult hikes, narrow/muddy trails and otherwise oppressive environmental conditions. Early starts and night birding are mostly optional, and we will not spend much time searching for difficult and/or skulking species. These tours are not suitable for hardcore birders and listers, or dedicated photographers.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short notice due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check-in luggage and 5kg (+-18lb) for hand luggage.

- Weather on this tour can be variable. Inland Victoria may be warm, dry and exposed, while Tasmania can be cool, wet and windy, even during otherwise settled periods. Layered clothing, sun protection and a light waterproof jacket are recommended.
- The Plains-wanderer excursion near Deniliquin is a key feature of the tour and involves a late-night outing on private grassland. This excursion is weather and access dependent, and exact timing may be adjusted locally to maximise our chances while ensuring responsible viewing.
- Bruny Island - Please be aware that for two nights on Bruny Island there may be limited rooming. We will make every effort to ensure that everyone has their own room, but some guests may have to share a bathroom if using two-bedroom cottage-style accommodation.
- Several bird and wildlife sightings on this itinerary are seasonal or dependent on flowering, water levels and local conditions. The itinerary may therefore be adjusted slightly by the leader to make best use of current birding and wildlife opportunities.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour begins on day 1 with an arrival day in Melbourne. The tour will conclude at Hobart Airport (IATA: HBA) at around mid-morning of day 14.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Melbourne Airport, Melbourne (IATA: MEL) is the main arrival airport and port of entry for this tour, while Hobart Airport, Hobart (IATA: HBA) is the main point of departure. Sydney International Airport, Sydney (IATA: SYD) remains one of Australia's main international gateways and is well serviced by all of the world's major airlines. Regular domestic flights link Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart and Australia's other major cities, including the required Melbourne to Hobart sector during the tour.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.