

Tasmania and the Great Ocean Road with Western Field Ornithologists

January 4-18, 2020

On January 4, 2020 a group of Western Field Ornithologists (15 of us) arrived in Hobart, Tasmania, to begin a two week journey in search of endemic birds and other wildlife. Tasmania is an island state in Australia, separated from the mainland of Australia by the 150 mile wide Bass Strait. To get to Tasmania one usually flies through Melbourne.

There are 12 bird species endemic to Tasmania, and one species (the Orange-bellied Parrot) is referred to as a “breeding endemic” as it does migrate back to the mainland after breeding each year. Led by Mark Ayre of Nature Quest and Kurt Leuschner (WFO President), the group traveled around by small bus to various national parks and other protected areas in search of these endemics. In the end we were able to find (and photograph) all 13, plus some other surprises. The Scrubtit turned out to be the most challenging endemic to find, but eventually we did see more than one including a nest.

Tasmania Endemic Birds

Tasmania Nativehen	<i>Tribonyx mortierii</i>
Green Rosella	<i>Platycercus caledonicus</i>
Yellow Wattlebird	<i>Anthochaera paradoxa</i>
Yellow-throated Honeyeater	<i>Nesoptilotis flavicollis</i>
Black-headed Honeyeater	<i>Melithreptus affinis</i>
Strong-billed Honeyeater	<i>Melithreptus validirostris</i>
Forty-spotted Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus quadragintus</i>
Tasmania Scrubwren	<i>Sericornis humilis</i>
Scrubtit	<i>Acanthornis magna</i>
Tasmanian Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza ewingii</i>
Black Currawong	<i>Strepera fuliginosa</i>
Dusky Robin	<i>Melanodryas vittata</i>
Orange-bellied Parrot	<i>Neophema chrysogaster</i>

Places we visited in Tasmania included: Mt. Wellington, Gould’s Lagoon (Freckled Ducks) and various wetlands near Hobart, Bruny Island (for 3 nights) including Inala Preserve (home of the Forty-spotted Pardalote) and Adventure Bay, Southwest National Park (by charter airplane – for Orange-bellied Parrot), Lake St. Clair National Park, Cradle Mountain National Park, Queenstown, Wyndham, Stanley (including night hikes to the top of “the Nut” where Short-tailed Shearwaters and Little Penguins nest), Strahan (where we observed the elusive Ground Parrot), Ferndale (more views of the rare all-white Grey

Goshawk), Kaydale, Mountain Valley (one of the only places to see Tasmanian Devils in the wild), and Narawntapu National Park.

Marsupials and other interesting animals encountered in Tasmania included: Tasmanian Devil, Wombat, Wallaby (including the all white ones on Bruny Island), Kangaroo, Pademelons, Bandicoot, Bettong, Possums, Quolls, Echidna, Platypus, Skinks, Tiger Snake (all black), and Copperhead Snake.

The last five days of the trip were spent outside of Melbourne Australia along the Great Ocean Road. The Western Treatment Plant just outside Melbourne was most productive: Musk Duck, Pink-eared Duck, Brolga, Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Banded Lapwing, Red-necked Avocet, Royal Spoonbill and more were seen. Further down the Great Ocean Road we found Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Spotted Harrier (rare), Tawny Frogmouth, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Straw-necked Ibis, Nankeen Kestrel, Nankeen Night-Heron, Black-tailed Native-Hen, Restless Flycatcher, Southern Emu Wren, Baillon's Crake, Crimson Rosella, Australian King Parrot, and Gang-gang Cockatoo, just to name a few. Along with the birds we saw 13 koala in scattered locations including the You-Yang mountains. There was some smoke in the Melbourne area from the wildfires, but this did not slow us down along the Great Ocean Road as we were travelling in the opposite direction from the fires. A complete list of all the birds and other wildlife we encountered is attached along with some photos in the Tasmania photo gallery. Western Field Ornithologists' *Michael R. San Miguel Student Scholarship Fund* also benefitted from this WFO-sponsored trip.