



Tasmania Trip Report (Nov 30 - Dec 4, 2022)

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After meeting for lunch in Hobart, we drove up Mt Wellington to see what conditions were like on top. The summit was in sunshine initially, but strong winds and threatening rain meant a quick look at the views then turnaround and descend to the Springs, where birding actually began with views of the endemics; Strong-billed Honeyeater, Tasmanian Scrubwren and Black Currawong with others such as Crescent Honeyeater, Tawny Frogmouth, Fantailed Cuckoo, Forest Raven and the ever present Superb Fairywrens. An Olive Whistler called persistently but barely showed. Day 2 began with some good roadside birding on the way to Mt Field National Park. Black Swans were very common along the Derwent Estuary and Tasmanian Native Hens, some with chicks, were common in the wet fields and roadsides.



Tasmanian Native hen with chicks

At the National Park birding along the walks produced some spectacular views of Pink Robin, Scarlet Robin and Superb Fairywren, and more endemics; Yellow Wattlebird, Black-headed Honeyeater and Tasmanian Thornbill.



Russell Falls Mt Field National Park

After lunch we drove back through Hobart to catch the Bruny Island ferry. On Bruny we added Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers and Hooded Plover, one of the islands specialities. Bruny Island is a stronghold for this endangered plover which is threatened by disturbance and predation when

nesting on the beach. Birding on Bruny Island really began early the next morning with a tour of Inala Nature Reserve. Here we had excellent views of the endangered endemic Forty-spotted Pardalote, and watched the first entry by the birds into a new, smaller entrance nest box. It is hoped this will exclude the competing but slightly larger Striated Pardalotes.



Forty-spotted Pardalote at nest box

Other great birds seen here included Green Rosella, Black-headed and Strong-billed Honeyeaters, Tasmanian Scrubwren, Tasmanian Thornbill and a range of Robins (Scarlet, Flame, Pink, Dusky). The afternoon at Adventure Bay gave us extended views of Swift Parrots feeding in Eucalypt blossom and more Hooded Plovers.



Birding in churchyard



Swift Parrot in Eucalypt

Today some of us also got views of one of Bruny Island's famous white wallabies, an albino form of Red-necked Wallaby. In the evening after an early dinner, we went to a penguin and shearwater breeding colony to watch for the birds to return after dusk. As the light decreased we started to see the wheeling forms of Short-tailed Shearwaters flying over the nesting colony and coming into land and entering their burrows. This was followed by the sound of chicks begging and parents giving their eerie wailing calls. A little later the first Little Penguin of the evening emerged from the sea and made its way up into the nesting colony in the sand dunes. The next morning we returned to Adventure Bay to fit in some early birding before our Bruny Island cruise. The cruise features spectacular coastal scenery of cliffs, rock stacks and sea caves; Australian and New Zealand Fur Seals, Dolphins and on the journey we had some close views of Australasian Gannets and Black-faced Cormorants.



seals on rocks



Cormorants on rocky island



Bruny Island cruise coastal scenery. Rob Elvish

In the afternoon we returned to a treefern walk in the forest where we found the last Tasmanian endemic bird, the Scrubtit.



Our group amongst the treeferns

We also spotted the Australian endemic Pacific Gulls resting on the beach. We departed Bruny Island early the next day on the way back to Hobart and tours end.