



East Gippsland Victoria After the fires nature tour *3-10 October 2022*

Gippsland High Country Tours



Nature tours and walks

Stretching from the mountains to the ocean, Victoria's East Gippsland region provides a wide range of habitats for a wonderful array of flora and fauna. During the summer of 2019-20, bushfires tore through large swathes of East Gippsland under extreme weather conditions. Almost 3 years later, we are teaming up with local ecotourism operator Gippsland High Country Tours to offer a week of nature experiences, exploring both burnt and unburnt areas of East Gippsland from the Snowy River National Park in the mountains to the Gippsland Lakes and Croajingolong on the coast. Learn about threatened species recovery programs, discover birdlife and the amazing regeneration of ecosystems as well as meeting local wildlife and gaining an insight into how both nature and local communities recover from fire. Add a generous sprinkling of history, a waterfall or two and plenty of time to pause and soak up breathtaking landscapes for a very rewarding and enlightening week.



White-bellied Sea-eagle. J Lawrence

On this tour, Tonia is teaming up with long term friend and East Gippsland local resident Jenny Lawrence, who owns Gippsland High Country Tours which has been operating for about the same duration as Inala Nature tours (almost 30 years). This tour provides a great chance to visit a spectacular area with a knowledgeable and passionate ambassador, help the locals re-establish their livelihoods and contribute to local wildlife projects.

ITINERARY OUTLINE:

- Day 1. Mon 3 Oct 2022 . Arrive in Melbourne. Transfer to Bairnsdale.
- Day 2. Tue 4 Oct 2022. Bairnsdale to Raymond Island: Aboriginal Culture and Flying Foxes.
- Day 3. Wed 5 Oct 2022. Raymond Island to Gelantipy: sub-alpine flora and vistas.
- Day 4. Thu 6 Oct 2022. Gelantipy to Marlo/Orbost: Karst systems, Snowy River and Koalas.
- Day 5. Fri 7 Oct 2022. Marlo/Orbost to far East Gippsland: estuary birding and post-fire bush regeneration.
- Day 6. Sat 8 Oct 2022. Gipsy Point & Mallacoota areas.
- Day 7. Sun 9 Oct 2022. Mallacoota and Croajingolong National Park: Lake cruise to Howe Wilderness.
- Day 8. Mon 10 Oct 2022. Gipsy Point to Traralgon, transfers to Melbourne and depart.

Inala Nature Tours

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DETAILED ITINERARY:

B- breakfast, L- lunch, D-dinner

Day 1. Monday 3 October 2022. Arrive in Melbourne. Transfer to Bairnsdale.

This morning has been set aside for arrival into Melbourne. Please aim to arrive by around midday. We will then transfer to a meeting place in nearby Burnley where we will meet our local Victorian guide Jenny at 12:30. We will then transfer to our accommodation in Bairnsdale (around 3-3.5 hours' drive), stopping at a few places en route and aiming to be at our accommodation at around 5:00pm, where we will settle in and regroup for a welcome dinner. **Accommodation:** Bairnsdale (en suite rooms). **Meals included: D**

Day 2. Tuesday 4 October 2022. Bairnsdale to Raymond Island: Aboriginal Culture and Flying Foxes.



Grey-headed Flying Fox. R. Lewis

This morning after breakfast, we will start exploring. Our first stop is Krowathunkooloong (The Keeping Place) aboriginal cultural museum where we will take a tour to gain an insight into Gunaikurnai country and the Aboriginal history here. Then we will take a short walk beside the Mitchell River for an opportunity to meet the local Grey-headed Flying Fox colony before lunch beside the river. Following the Mitchell River to the Gippsland Lakes, we will discover amazing landforms and should enjoy some nice waterbird sightings. At Paynesville we

cross on a ferry to Raymond Island to settle into our accommodation and enjoy some walking to look for local birds and wildlife. **Accommodation:** Raymond Island (en suite rooms). **Meals included: B, L, D.**

Day 3. Wednesday 5 October 2022. Raymond Island to Gelantipy: sub-alpine flora and vistas. Today we

rise early to enjoy the joys of birds and morning light on the lake. Today we have a bit of driving to take us from the coast to the mountains and along the way you will see many areas affected by the summer 2019-20 bushfires. Communities like Sarsfield and Buchan are re-building and nature is regenerating but the impacts are still clear. By lunchtime we will be at sub-alpine elevations in the Snowy River National Park and amongst the Snow Gums we should find some spring wildflowers. Here was not burnt in the recent fires, but we are on the edge of a dry rainshadow area, with rugged rocky geology a feature of our walks to Little River Falls and nearby, to a lookout over Little River Gorge. As well as any wildlife we may see today, there will be interesting stories of the conservation efforts for the Critically Endangered Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby. Return to Gelantipy for our accommodation on a High Country property. **Accommodation:** Gelantipy (farm-stay accommodation in a lodge with shared bathroom facilities). **Meals included: B, L, D.**



Everlasting Daisy, Snowy River NP. J. Lawrence



Koala. R. Lewis

Day 4. Thursday 6 October 2022. Gelantipy to Marlo/Orbost: Karst systems, Snowy River and Koalas. Again, we will have an early start to enjoy a leisurely walk before breakfast; as well as birdlife, we will also be looking for the local Koalas that survived the fires. Leaving the mountains, we return to Buchan where we will have the option to join a guided tour of these renowned limestone caves. . Late afternoon we drive to a town on the banks of the Snowy River which is slow and sluggish as it nears the sea. **Accommodation:** Marlo/Orbost (en suite rooms). **Meals included: B, L, D.**

Day 5. Friday 7 October 2022. Marlo/Orbost to far East Gippsland: estuary birding and post-fire bush regeneration.



Royal Spoonbill. J. Lawrence

Orbost and Marlo were spared the direct impact of bushfires, but it was very close. The Snowy River flows out to sea at Marlo where we will start today and there are some nice walking tracks along estuary. Estuary birding varies depending on whether entrance is open or closed, but there will always be something of interest. Further along and we will enjoy a walk in regenerating coastal heathland at Cape Conran. Post fire there have been some profuse flowerings, so we might find some nice surprises. In the afternoon, we will take a short walk at the Cabbage Tree Palms Reserve (created to protect *Livistonia australis* palms)

before we re-join the highway and head to our accommodation at Gipsy Point. **Accommodation:** Gipsy Point (en suite rooms). **Meals included: B, L, D.**



Early (year1) post-fire regeneration J. Lawrence



Day 6. Saturday 8 October 2022. Gipsy Point & Mallacoota areas. There is no rush this morning, so we will use this to relax and enjoy the lovely setting and explore Gipsy Point. After lunch we will travel to Mallacoota, a town badly impacted by the 2019-20 bushfire and slowly getting back on its feet. Mallacoota Inlet is a large lake, and part of an estuary system that opens and closes to the ocean. From the headland at Bastion Point we can see Gabo Island at the eastern tip of Victoria. The birdlife here is interesting with such a wide range of habitats, and species often associated with further up the east coast tend to appear here. We are visiting during the peak spring wildflower season and areas that have been burnt are still experiencing a post fire flush of wildflowers while the canopy is recovering, and more light reaches the forest (or heathland) floor, so we will be keenly for wildflowers as well as watching and listening for birds. We return to Gipsy Point Lodge tonight, with an opportunity for some night spotlighting for mammals and owls. **Accommodation:** Gipsy Point (en suite rooms) as for last night. **Meals included: B, L, D.**

Day 7. Sunday 9 October 2022. Mallacoota and Croajingolong National Park: Lake cruise to Howe Wilderness. Today we will spend a full day exploring around Mallacoota and surrounding Croajingolong National Park with no shortage of beautiful coastal landscapes to admire and photograph. We will support the local businesses in Mallacoota by purchasing lunches and goods and visit a great range of habitats for birding and wildlife including ocean, sandy beaches, rocky headlands, estuary, tall coastal forests and coastal heathlands. Some of the post fire regrowth is amazing and your guides will share knowledge on how this is often different to the pre-fire environment. This afternoon we will also take a boat trip from Mallacoota to the Howe Wilderness area. This area remained partially unburnt and is home to the Eastern Bristlebird so we will try for that in suitable habitat in this area. Species such as Southern Emu-wren are also thankfully recovering well here post-fire. There will be a chance for another night excursion tonight, searching for Sugar and yellow-bellied Gliders and Southern Boobook. **Accommodation:** Gipsy Point (en suite rooms) as for last night. **Meals included: B, L, D.**



Day 8. Monday 10 October 2022. Gipsy Point to Melbourne and depart. We leave Gipsy Point this morning and travel to Bruthen for lunch and Traralgon Railway station around 3pm where a commuter train service takes you back to Melbourne (Tonia will join you). **Accommodation:** none. **Meals included: B.**

PRICING AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Group size: 10 participants + 2 guides (Tonia and Jenny).

Tour Price: AU\$4,750 per person twin share.

Single supplement: AU\$640

Price includes: Accommodation as per the itinerary, specialist guide and transport, meals, entrance fees and activities as mentioned in the itinerary.

Price does not include: Airfares, alcoholic beverages, snacks, internet, laundry or other items of a personal nature.

Please note:

- **Meals and drinks:** Breakfast generally consists of a continental style breakfast with cereal, fruit and yoghurt and tea/coffee. Full cooked breakfast is not generally offered at most locations. Lunch will generally consist of a packed lunch style meal eaten in the field, with sandwich/filled roll, fruit, and a drink. Dinner usually consists of several options for main with the choice of either an appetiser or dessert. Drinks (soft and alcoholic) are generally not included but at lunches and breakfasts juice may be made available.
- **The itinerary:** Whilst we aim to follow the itinerary as planned, please note that the itinerary provided should only be used as a guideline. Depending on individual trip circumstances, weather, and local information, the exact itinerary may not be strictly adhered to. The guides reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary as they see fit.

Itinerary: Jenny Lawrence (Gippsland High Country Tours) and Dr Tonia Cochran (Inala Nature Tours) 11 June 2022

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