

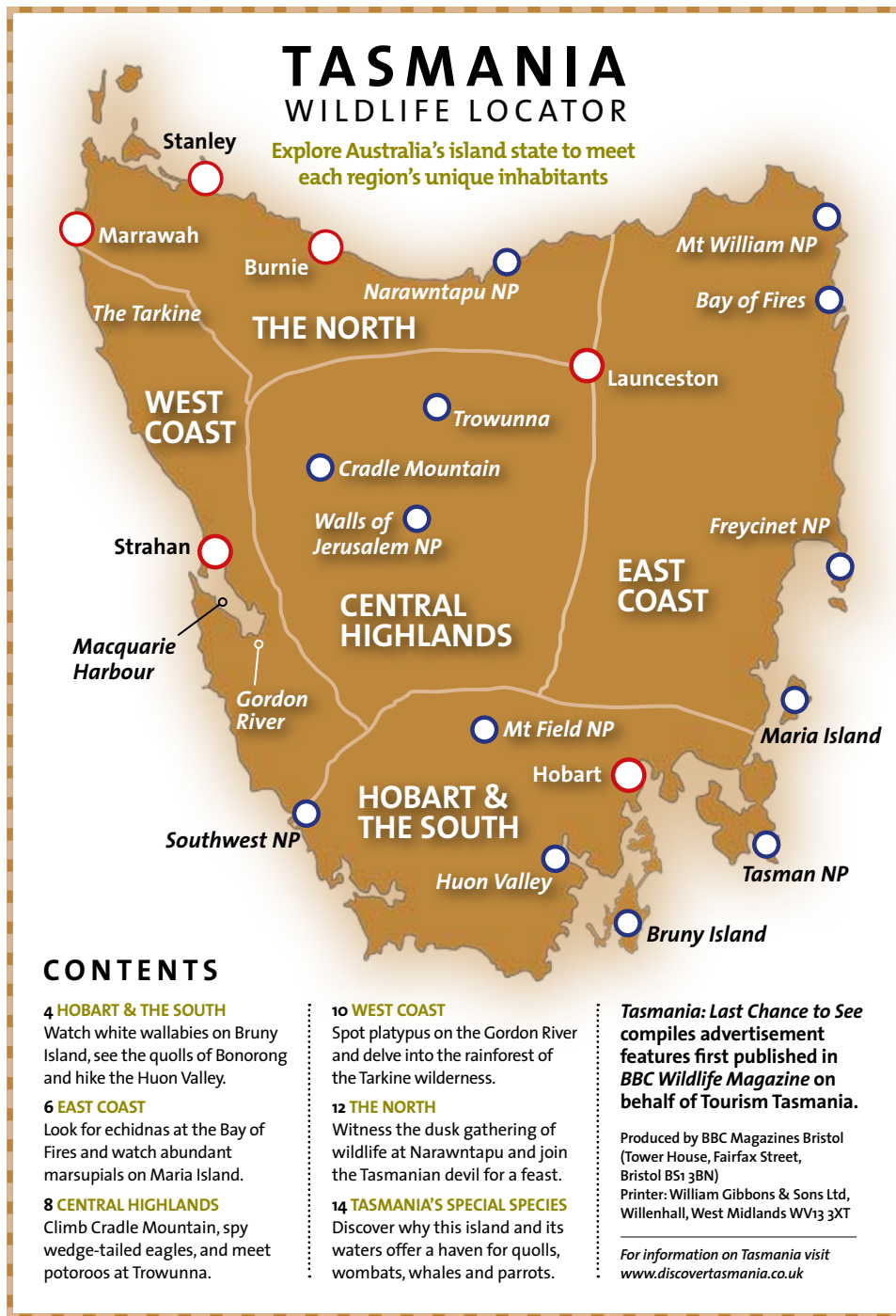


TASMANIA

LAST CHANCE TO SEE...



WILDLIFE GUIDE



Cover: Tasmanian devil & wallaby: Tourism Tasmania (Robert Jones/Darren Dickson); quoll: Dave Watkins/NHPA; wombat: Anson Smart/Tourism Australia

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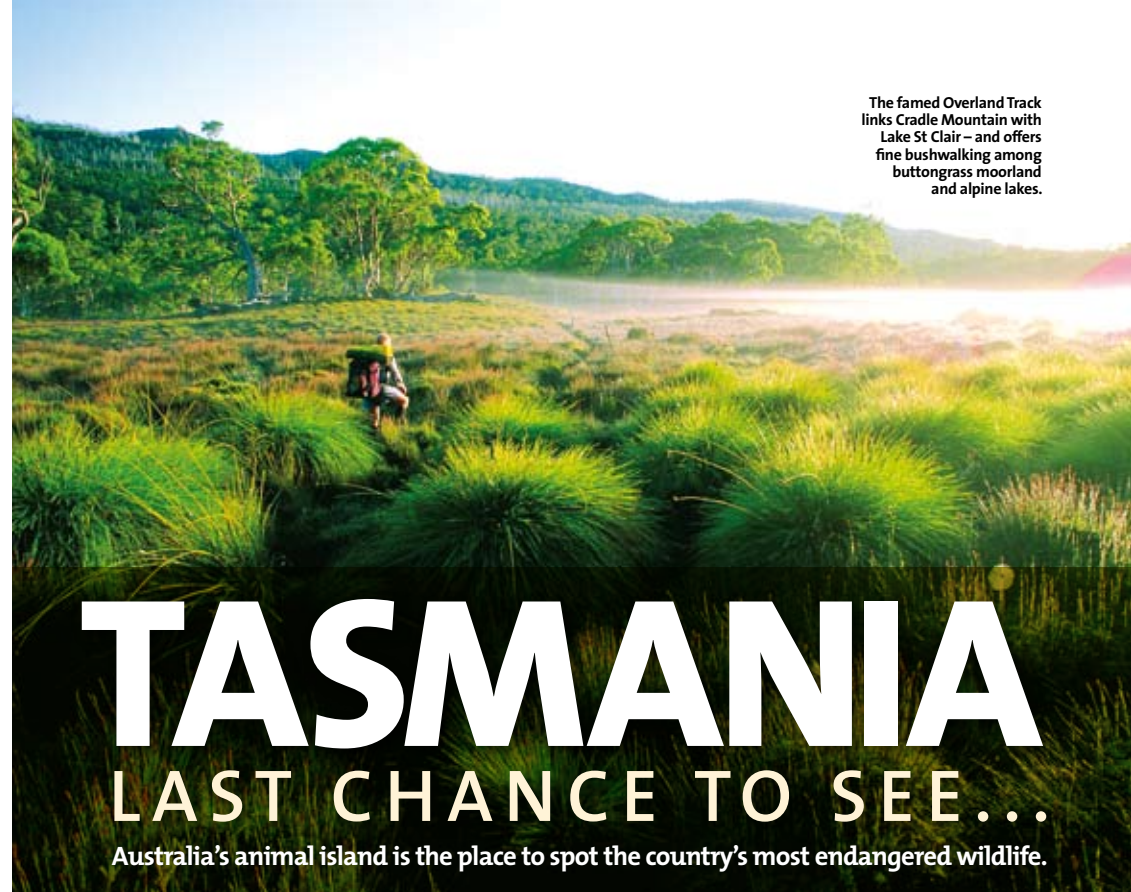
Discover why this island and its waters offer a haven for quolls, wombats, whales and parrots.

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For information on Tasmania visit www.discovertasmania.co.uk

The famed Overland Track links Cradle Mountain with Lake St Clair – and offers fine bushwalking among buttongrass moorland and alpine lakes.



TASMANIA

LAST CHANCE TO SEE...

Australia's animal island is the place to spot the country's most endangered wildlife.

Tasmania is Australia's biggest nature reserve – an island sanctuary for many iconic species that are rare, lost or even unknown on the mainland.

The most famous example is the Tasmanian devil. If you jot only one thing on your to-do list for a visit, it should be to watch wild devils devouring their dinner – an experience you cannot repeat anywhere else.

Then there are delightful species such as quolls – smaller cousins of the devil – and those strange egg-laying mammals, platypuses and echidnas, which are particularly easy to spot in Tasmania.

You'll also find that other mammals – wallabies (including the Tasmanian pademelon which, like the devil, is endemic to the state), wombats and forester kangaroos – are absurdly unafraid of people in many places.

Who needs binoculars when the animals sit just a few feet away?

Many here will tell you that the Tassie tiger still roams the remotest quarters of this sparsely populated island; after a few tinnies with the locals, you'll probably believe it, too.

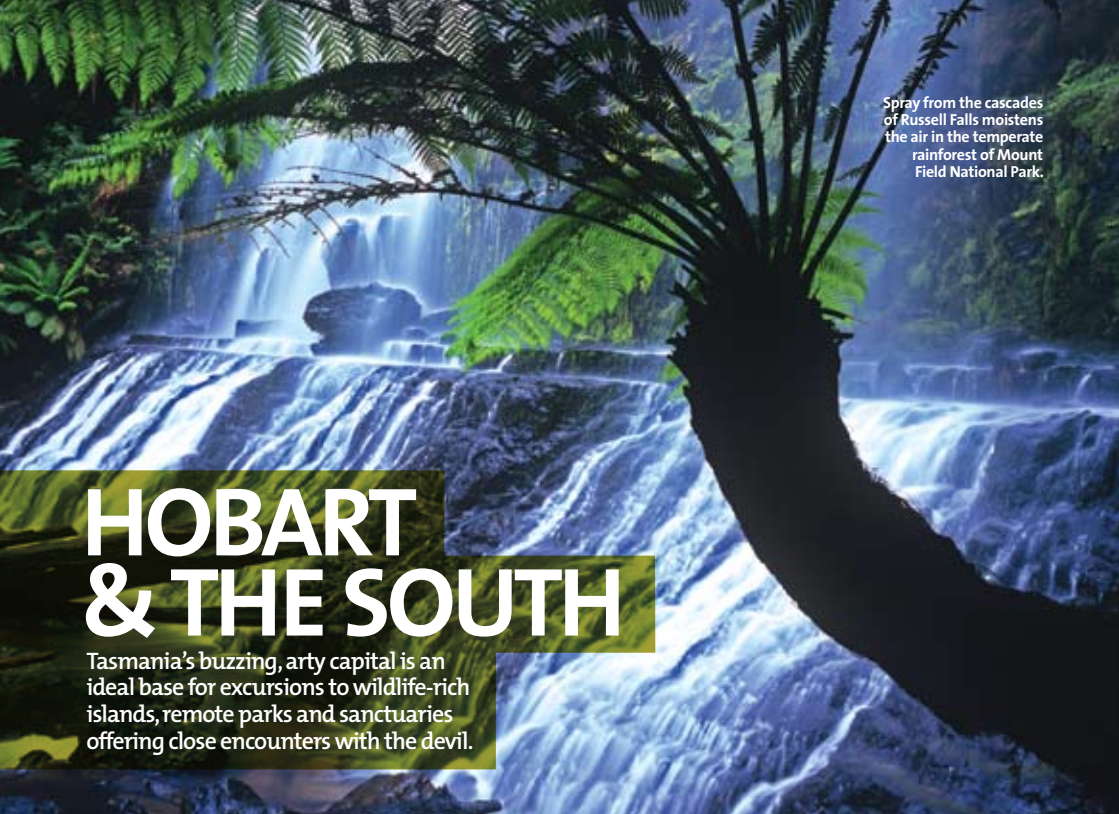
Tasmanians love their great outdoors, and they've developed a network of boutique accommodation, eco-lodges and walking trails, along with other ways for you to share their passion. The island boasts a great diversity of scenery and habitats, from the alpine meadows and moorlands of Cradle Mountain to the

temperate rainforest of the west coast and the sun-drenched beaches of the east.

Tasmania has no fewer than 19 national parks and seven marine reserves; some 45 per cent of the land area is protected. Where, then, to start? This six-part regional guide will lead you around the state's top wildlife-watching hotspots and introduce the species to look out for.



The Tasmanian devil is one of many mammal species unique to the island – along with 12 endemic birds.



Spray from the cascades of Russell Falls moistens the air in the temperate rainforest of Mount Field National Park.

HOBART & THE SOUTH

Tasmania's buzzing, arty capital is an ideal base for excursions to wildlife-rich islands, remote parks and sanctuaries offering close encounters with the devil.



Speed among the soaring dolerite rock formations looming above the waters off Bruny Island.



The white wallabies of Bruny Island are rare colour morphs of Bennett's wallaby.

Hobart is the perfect place to start your Tasmanian adventure, and not just because it is a vibrant city in its own right. There's so much to see within range of the state capital.

Take Bruny Island. Less than an hour from Hobart by road and sea, it's a very different world. While a glistening blue ocean, deserted sandy beaches and cliffs rising to 272m are part of the appeal, Bruny has other attractions. At Adventure Bay, seek out the world's biggest colony of white wallabies – a form of the common Bennett's wallaby, but unlike anything you've seen before.

SEALS, SHEARWATERS AND SEA EAGLES

Then get out on the water with the effervescent Rob Pennicott, who runs Bruny Island Cruises. On a three-hour wildlife trip, Rob will take you right up to those vertiginous cliffs and then out to the Australian fur seal haul-outs. You've got a very good chance of seeing birds such as short-tailed shearwaters, and you should keep your eyes peeled for raptors such as white-bellied sea eagles, as well as cetaceans: humpback and southern right whales are sighted offshore between April and November, and orcas have been seen on these trips. On The Neck, the narrow isthmus linking North and South Bruny, colonies of little penguins cluster.

“Tasmanian devils are probably the most misunderstood animals in Australia – if not the world”

Head to Southwest National Park for the chance of spotting the orange-bellied parrot, one of the world's rarest birds.



rainforest is like; the dripping myrtle and sassafras trees will give you a taste of what's to come if you head further west into more-remote areas. At higher elevations, you'll find beautiful mountain lakes, and during a daytime walk you should see the Tasmanian pademelon, a small endemic wallaby. This is one of the places where it is said that the Tasmanian tiger still roams free, and indeed the last one ever captured came from this area.

SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL

To familiarise yourself with the island's more unusual species, make for Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary to experience close-up, personal encounters with the Tasmanian devil, the remarkable echidna – a spiny, egg-laying mammal related to the platypus – and the beautiful spotted-tailed quoll or 'tiger cat', a smaller cousin of the devil.

Finally, join Tonia Cochran's Inala Nature Tours; you could catch a glimpse of one of the state's rarest birds, the forty-spotted pardalote.

Now that you've finished on Bruny, head off to a completely contrasting location: Mount Field National Park. Here you'll get a feel for what a Tasmanian temperate

Bonorong is run by a passionate young Tasmanian called Greg Irons, who has made it his mission to save the state's wildlife – and to torpedo a few myths, too. In particular, come and see the devils as they cuddle up to Greg like overgrown tabbies. "They are probably the most misunderstood animal in Australia, if not the world," he says.

The Huon Valley is another distinct region of Tasmania's south that should not be missed. Pristine rivers and unspoilt countryside offer fantastic walking, while the area is also renowned for its produce, notably wine, fruit and mushrooms. Further south, thermal pools steam at Hastings, and the largest accessible cave in the whole of Australia, Newdegate Cave, glitters with spectacular stalactites, stalagmites and even helictites.

Finally, to stretch your wings, take a flight to Melaleuca in the rugged and remote Southwest National Park. Here, you can go in search of one of the world's rarest birds, the orange-bellied parrot – you can get there and back in a day or, if you prefer, explore the maze of waterways on a multi-day kayaking trip.

HOBART & THE SOUTH

6 OF THE BEST...



BEST FOR BIRDS

INALA NATURE TOURS
Conservationist Tonia Cochran is your go-to expert for wildlife watching anywhere on Bruny Island or southern Tasmania. You could happily spend several days on a tour at Tonia's reserve, attempting to tick off its 94 different bird species.



Streamside Cabin at Huon Bush Retreats is set amid lush forest.

BEST FOR MARINE WILDLIFE

BRUNY ISLAND CRUISES
On a cruise around Bruny Island, Rob Pennicott will take you on one of the most enjoyable days out you've ever had. And that's without mentioning the wildlife, which includes colonies of Australian fur seals, solitary shy albatross, whales and the chance of sailing among a super-pod of bottlenose dolphins.

BEST FOR GOING GREEN

HUON BUSH RETREATS
Set in a private reserve of eucalyptus trees and acacia groves, this eco-accommodation ranges from two-bedroom cabins to camping and teepees. Spot abundant wildlife such as pademelons and brushtail possums from your front door.

BEST FOR LUXURY

STEWARTS BAY LODGE
With its range of deluxe cabins this is the perfect base for exploring the Tasman Peninsula. From here, you can take a cruise along this area's spectacular coastline, where you'll be gazing up at 200m-high cliffs, or indulge in one of Tasmania's favourite pastimes – bushwalking.

BEST FOR CITY LIFE

HENRY JONES ART HOTEL
Housed in a former jam factory in a scenic harbourside setting, this is an ideal choice for starting or ending your trip to Tasmania. With views over Hobart's picturesque waterfront, the five-star accommodation is also Australia's first dedicated art hotel, endowed with more than 300 artworks.

TOP SPECIES TO SPOT

HUMPBACK WHALE
Tasmania is gaining a reputation as a whale-watching hotspot, with both humpbacks and southern rights seen regularly off the east coast during their biannual migrations. November is the peak time for humpbacks – one tourist boat notched 44 sightings during a two-week period in 2010.



Humpback whales cruise past Tasmania May–July and September–November.

★ BOOK YOUR TASMANIAN ADVENTURE

Create your ideal itinerary through southern Tasmania, including many of the experiences and accommodation described here. A six-night trip costs from £565 per person including three days' car hire and stays at the Henry Jones Art Hotel and Stewarts Bay Lodge. For more information and fares to Tasmania, please call Tailor Made Travel on 0800 988 5912 or visit www.tailor-made.co.uk/tasmania



For more information about Tasmania and its wildlife visit www.discovertasmania.co.uk

Tasmania's east coast is where the state's antipodean ruggedness meets a more European sense of romanticism, best encapsulated in the pristine white beaches of the mysteriously named Bay of Fires. You have French-sounding names – Freycinet National Park, for example – and a Mediterranean climate, but still that distinctive Tasmanian sense of wilderness and adventure.

As a result, you've got national parks and conservation areas bursting with typical Tasmanian marsupials, but also plenty of places where the temptation is to merely sit down and immerse yourself in their peace and serenity.

SEEKING SANCTUARY

But where to start? The former penal colony of Maria Island is one of Tasmania's most important wildlife sanctuaries. Many once-rare species, including the forester kangaroo and Cape Barren goose, were introduced to the island between 1969 and 1971, and it's still as good a place as any to see them. All but one of Tasmania's endemic bird species are found here, including the beautiful green rosella parrot and the forty-spotted pardalote.

“The east coast has a Mediterranean climate but still that distinctive Tasmanian sense of wilderness.”

EAST COAST

Renowned for its beautiful beaches and superb walking, the east coast is also a must for anyone with a passion for endemic wildlife.



Meet Tasmania's wombats on the sands of the Bay of Fires.

The four-day Bay of Fires hike traverses some of Tasmania's most beautiful scenery.



Bicheno is renowned for its colonies of little penguins.

Next stop could be Freycinet National Park, famous for its granite mountains (known as The Hazards) and Wineglass Bay, a – you've guessed it – wineglass-shaped inlet that has to be seen to be believed. You can stretch your legs on lodge-based guided walks here, through forests bustling with the state's signature fauna, including the Tasmanian devil's miniature cousin, the eastern quoll.

Just to the north of Freycinet lies Bicheno, renowned for its colonies of little penguins, while Tasmania's largest raptor, the wedge-tailed eagle – an endemic subspecies – breeds in nearby Douglas-Apsley National Park.

THE HEAT IS ON...

Next has to be the Bay of Fires, where another luxurious, lodge-based guided walk awaits. This four-day hike – though the word 'hike' makes it sound more strenuous than it really is – begins in the northern section of Mt William National Park.

Here, you'll find coastal heathlands of low-growing eucalyptus trees and the unmistakable Banksia shrubs with their characteristic cylindrical flowers. While a sighting is never guaranteed, this is a good place to see an echidna, the spiny relative of the platypus. Tasmania's echidnas are furrer and less spiky than their mainland counterparts (the further south you go, the colder it gets).

But just wait until you reach the Bay of Fires itself on the third day. Here you will get your first sight of the sweep of the vast bay, which extends 30km from north to south. Not for nothing was it voted the best place in the world to visit by travel experts Lonely Planet in 2009.

From here, you could find yourself kayaking up Anson's River to watch Australian pelicans, though don't forget to look up in case there's a white-bellied sea eagle flying overhead. Cycling and expedition-style kayaking trips are also available to satisfy adventurous spirits.

Forester or eastern grey kangaroos are readily found on the east coast.



EAST COAST

6 OF THE BEST...



BEST FOR WALKING

BAY OF FIRES
An outstanding four-day hike through some of the most beautiful scenery in Tasmania. Add in a top-notch eco-lodge and outstanding food – with luck, your guides will catch fresh seafood for that evening's meal – and you've got an experience you'll never forget.



Saffire Freycinet has spectacular views over Great Oyster Bay.

for wildlife. A four-day walk will reveal this legacy.

BEST FOR WILDLIFE

FREYCINET ECO RETREAT AT MT PAUL
Species you will be able to see in and around the grounds include the Tasmanian pademelton, echidna and the endemic eastern quoll. Minimising energy use and being water-efficient are key considerations here.

BEST FOR ADVENTURE

FREYCINET ADVENTURES
Take to the water with Freycinet Adventures, which offers three-hour kayaking sessions, as well as longer, expedition-style trips. There are few better ways of watching the marine wildlife that inhabits these waters, including bottlenose dolphins and little penguins.

BEST FOR VISTAS

SAFFIRE FREYCINET
Set on the shores of a whale nursery, this new boutique retreat is the perfect place to stay for getting to know the national park. Activities range from walking and kayaking to cruises and even whisky-tasting.

TOP SPECIES TO SPOT

ECHIDNA
Freycinet and Mt William National Parks are both good places to look for this egg-laying mammal. During the breeding season, males form 'trains' in which they follow the females, nose to tail, sometimes for weeks on end.

BEST FOR HISTORY

MARIA ISLAND
Though now uninhabited, Maria Island has a rich cultural history that makes its status today as a vital nature reserve even more remarkable. Aborigines lived here before the arrival of Europeans, and the island subsequently became a penal colony, then a Noah's Ark

A Tasmanian echidna: furrer than its mainland cousins.



★ BOOK YOUR TASMANIAN ADVENTURE

Create your ideal itinerary in the region, including many of the experiences described here. An eight-day tour, with three nights on the Freycinet Peninsula, the four-day Bay of Fires guided walk and four days' car hire, costs from £1,899 per person, excluding international flights. For more information and fares to Tasmania, call Tailor Made Travel on 0800 988 5912 or visit www.tailor-made.co.uk/tasmania



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The distinctive ridge of Cradle Mountain is one of the most recognisable natural features in Tasmania.



CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Head for the hills to find wombats hiding in the buttongrass moorlands, eagles soaring overhead and a 'kangaroo' no bigger than a rabbit.

Once you've seen the jagged dolerite cliffs of Cradle Mountain – looming over Dove Lake like a sleeping stegosaur – with your own eyes, you'll never be able to look at a photo of it again and feel the same. You'll hear the wind whistling through the alpine air and see the ripples on the water, and you'll yearn to return.

If areas such as Bruny Island and the Bay of Fires are the soul of the state's wilderness, then this, surely, is the heart. Starting here is Tasmania's most famous outdoor experience: the Overland Track, 60km of undulating boardwalk that takes you over the buttongrass roof of this island world. The start of the route is known as 'Wombat Way' – for reasons that quickly become obvious.

GOLDEN WONDER

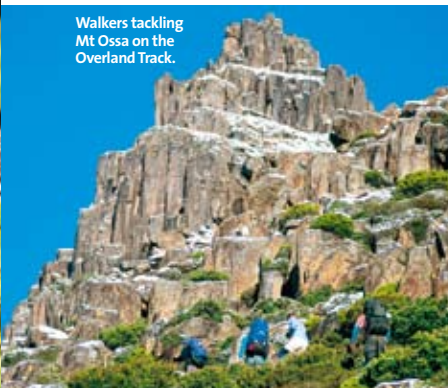
Those with more modest ambitions, however, do not need to feel cheated. A circumnavigation of Dove Lake only takes a few hours, but here you'll find great swathes of fagus or tanglefoot, Tasmania's only native deciduous tree, that turns the lower slopes of Cradle Mountain red and gold in the autumn.

Fagus has another claim to fame, too: its existence first prompted

"The Overland Track is 60km of boardwalk that takes you over the buttongrass roof of this island world."



Look for wedge-tailed eagles in Walls of Jerusalem National Park.



Walkers tackling Mt Ossa on the Overland Track.

speculation that Tasmania was once joined to New Zealand and South America as part of Gondwanaland, because other plants to which it is closely related are found in those regions.



Head for Cradle Mountain for a sighting of a pademelon.

PROMISED LAND

Visible from the higher reaches of Cradle Mountain is an even wilder spot: Walls of Jerusalem National Park, an area of conifer forests and bleak moorlands. Only accessible on foot, you're best off venturing into this remote wilderness with experienced guides.

Much of the park lies above 1,200m: snowfalls are possible even in summer. Wedge-tailed eagles nest here, and in the pencil-pine forest – later named Dixon's Kingdom – a trapper called Reg Dixon allegedly saw a Tasmanian tiger in the 1960s, long after the last known individual died in captivity.

Less remote are the Alum Cliffs or Tulampanga, near Mole Creek, said to be of spiritual significance to Tasmania's Aboriginal people. A short walk from the carpark will take you to a viewpoint with spectacular vistas over the Mersey gorge.

For closer wildlife encounters, Trowunna Wildlife Park provides a sanctuary for many of the state's threatened mammals, including the Tasmanian devil, which has suffered so much from facial tumour disease. Park owner Androo Kelly remains optimistic about the devil's future. "I am confident that with our breeding programme, and through our links with many other institutions, the Tasmanian devil won't become extinct," he says.

But Trowunna is not all about devils. "The secret of this park is that it's a sanctuary for the potaroo," he says, referring to one of Tasmania's smallest macropods – a relative of the kangaroo to you and me. And as with the island's other secrets, it's one well worth seeking out.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

6 OF THE BEST...



BEST FOR ADVENTURE

CRADLE MOUNTAIN HUTS
To get a feel for Tasmanian wilderness, stretch your legs on the six-day hike along the Overland Track. Cradle Mountain Huts has perfected a trek that combines walking, wildlife and a bit of comfort.



Lemonthyme Lodge: log cabins in temperate rainforest.

BEST FOR ESCAPE

TARRALEAH COTTAGES
The Art Deco-style Tarraleah Cottages are set amid stunning mountains and highland lakes. A pair of wedge-tailed eagles and numerous superb fairy wrens are the little and large species of this award-winning resort.

BEST FOR PANORAMAS

EAGLES NEST RETREAT
Spectacular, luxury accommodation with fantastic views of the Cradle Mountain range, these two lodges (Eagles Nest I and II) offer a touch of romance amid the Tasmanian outback. There are ringtail possums to feed at night, a platypus on the farm reservoir and wedge-tailed eagles breeding nearby.

BEST FOR LUXURY

LEMONTHYME LODGE
With its log cabins scattered amid temperate rainforest, Lemonthyme Lodge is the wilderness resort of the central highlands. If you don't find a possum or pademelon outside your balcony, you're not looking hard enough.

BEST FOR BUDGET

CRADLE MOUNTAIN HIGHLANDERS COTTAGES
Set in four hectares of woodland and bush, these self-catering cottages are on Cradle Mountain's doorstep and provide a great base for exploring the area. All the usual species, from Bennett's wallabies to spotted-tailed quolls, are here.

TOP SPECIES TO SPOT

WOMBAT
Famed for leaving tell-tale, cube-shaped dung as territory markers on rocks and logs (the square shape ensures they don't roll off), the common wombat is antipodean robustness personified. Harmless herbivores, these marsupials are as cute as a button but tougher than rawhide.



Buttongrass burrower: the rough, tough Tasmanian wombat.

★ BOOK YOUR TASMANIAN ADVENTURE

Create your ideal itinerary through the region. A 10-day package, including two nights at Tarraleah, the six-day Cradle Mountain Huts Walk and two days at Lemonthyme Lodge, costs from around £2,500 per person including car hire but excluding international flights. For more information and fares to Tasmania, call Tailor Made Travel on 0800 988 5912 or visit www.tailor-made.co.uk/tasmania



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As you head west across northern Tasmania, there's a change in the air. The dry-loving eucalypts disappear, and by the time you reach Strahan, great swathes of mighty Huon pines and myrtles create a dark, brooding forest festooned with water-loving mosses, lichens and ferns.

This is Tasmania's temperate rainforest, its Heart of Darkness, an area as synonymous with 'wilderness' as anywhere in Australia. Much of it could have been lost in the 1980s, when the state government planned to build an upstream dam on the Franklin River, but protests and a court battle ensured that it never happened. The controversy effectively launched Australia's green movement.

GOING TO GONDWANALAND

Starting in Strahan, on the shore of Macquarie Harbour, get an introduction to the area by attending a performance of *The Ship That Never Was*, a play that is acted out every day without fail.

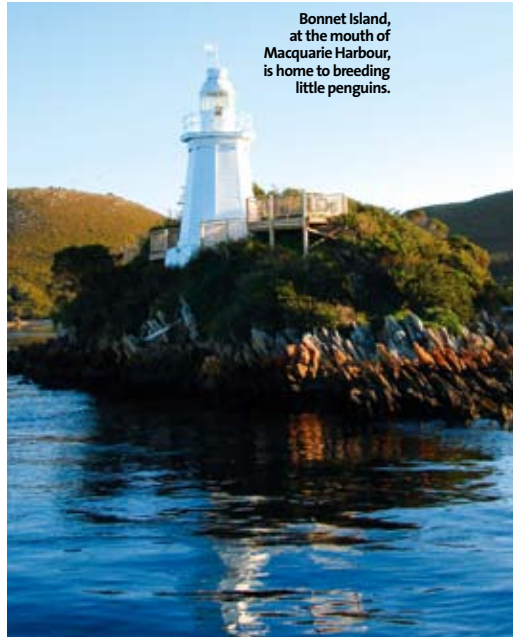
Then take a cruise up the Gordon River to appreciate this prehistoric landscape – the ancient supercontinent of Gondwanaland looked like this – to look for platypus and azure kingfishers.

|||||||
"Mighty Huon pines create a dark, brooding forest festooned with water-loving mosses, lichens and ferns."

WEST COAST

Venture into the wild rainforests of the west and find new species – from ground-living parrots to burrowing crayfish – to delight you.

A cruise up the Gordon River will take you into a landscape that still resembles the supercontinent of Gondwanaland as it was 200 million years ago.



Bonnet Island, at the mouth of Macquarie Harbour, is home to breeding little penguins.



Pretty as they are, you're more likely to hear a ground parrot than see one.



Distinctive beak and paddle-like tail: it could only be a platypus.

Going on a quest for Tasmania's rarest bird, the orange-bellied parrot, is another option, as is walking up to the base of a Huon pine – a tree that lives for thousands of years and is renowned as the finest boat-building timber in the world.

Watching little penguins come ashore on Bonnet Island, the small, rocky outcrop in the entrance to Macquarie Harbour, is an absolute must. You'll also see short-tailed shearwaters, or muttonbirds, here, as you can on Ocean Beach just to the north. Alternatively, drive out to the buttongrass moorlands behind the beach in the early evening, and you should hear and could catch a glimpse of a ground parrot, a rare bird with a highly distinctive call – a series of ascending, bell-like notes.

FRESHWATER GIANTS

North of Strahan is the Tarkine wilderness, the largest unbroken stretch of rainforest in Australia. The Tarkine has some unusual residents, including burrowing crayfish and the endemic tayatea lobster, the largest freshwater invertebrate on Earth, weighing up to 4kg.

Finally, the Tarkine is important for a more celebrated inhabitant: the Tasmanian devil. The north-west is one of the only areas that has remained free of devil facial tumour disease, the affliction that has killed off over half of the population in just 15 years. Should this remain true, then the Tarkine will be a vital refuge for the largest carnivorous marsupial. It is, perhaps, appropriate that Tasmania's wildest region is a sanctuary for its wildest resident: long may be this be the case.

WEST COAST

6 OF THE BEST...



BEST FOR VIEWS

WHEELHOUSE APARTMENTS
 Overlooking – quite literally, thanks to the clever, cantilevered design – Macquarie Harbour, Wheelhouse Apartments offer some of the most extraordinary vistas in the whole of Tasmania. And despite looking a world away from anything you've stayed in before, the centre of Strahan is just 10 minutes down the road.



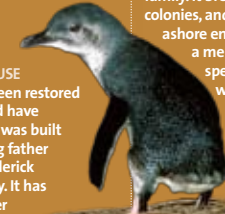
Don't forget to enjoy the great views over Macquarie Harbour...

BEST FOR WILDLIFE

MOUNTAIN VALLEY
 A private nature reserve for wild and rehabilitated animals, Mountain Valley retreat is a treat for anyone who wants close-up views of Tasmania's native fauna. Watch endemic native hens from your cabin or go on a guided platypus walk as evening falls.

BEST FOR COMFORT

ORMISTON HOUSE
 This B&B has been restored to how it would have looked when it was built by the founding father of Strahan, Frederick Ormiston Henry. It has great views over



Little penguins come ashore at night to avoid predators, not humans.

Macquarie Harbour and beautiful, landscaped gardens.

BEST FOR WILDERNESS

TARKINE GETAWAY
 The clue's in the name: this standing camp is a 30-minute walk away from any road, offering a real close-to-nature experience. Here you'll be immersed in the unique Tarkine wilderness, though you won't be without the odd creature comfort (and fine food and wine).

BEST FOR BUDGET

STRAHAN VILLAGE
 Strahan Village offers luxury waterfront rooms as well as more modest accommodation on the hilltop. Simple but spacious, these rooms are just a five-minute stroll from the town centre.

TOP SPECIES TO SPOT

LITTLE PENGUIN
 Just 30cm high and weighing 1.5kg, the little penguin is well named: it is the smallest member of the Spheniscidae family. It breeds in large colonies, and always come ashore en masse at night – a memorable natural spectacle for anybody watching.

★ BOOK YOUR TASMANIAN ADVENTURE

Create your ideal itinerary through the region. A three-night stay at Ormiston House, Strahan, costs from £495 per person, including the 'Piners and Miners' tour and a Gordon River cruise to Sarah Island to explore the ruins of the infamously brutal penal colony. For more information and fares to Tasmania, please call Tailor Made Travel on 0800 988 5912 or visit www.tailor-made.co.uk/tasmania



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Narawntapu has been described as the 'Serengeti of Tasmania': come nightfall, as the wallabies, pademelons and wombats emerge to feed, you may see why.

THE NORTH

Dine with the devil in the restaurant at the end of the world and spot wombats and wallabies galore on safari, Tasmania-style.

Tasmania's ultimate wildlife experience requires a dead wallaby, some stakes and a baby monitor. Well, that's what devil restaurateur-in-chief Geoff King uses. The wallabies are easy to come by as

road-kill – an indication of how numerous they are.

King then drags the carcass behind his pick-up, creating a scent-trail leading to a beautiful, lonely spot by the coast near Marrawah, where he stakes it out just a few feet from a small, unassuming hut. And here he and his guests wait.

CRUNCH TIME

It doesn't take long for the first diner to arrive. About the size of a bulldog, with black fur and a large, muscle-bound head, the Tasmanian devil is not beautiful, but you can't help admiring its gusto as it tucks into the wallaby feast.

With luck, you might see several feeding at a time; this creates palpable tension as they snarl at each other over the carcass. And the baby monitor? It relays the sounds of crunching bones and tendons to the listeners inside the hut.

From the devil restaurant, head north-east to Stanley, where the rocky outcrop of The Nut rises 152m above the wind-lashed waters of

"The Tasmanian devil is not beautiful but you can't help admiring its gusto as it tucks into the wallaby feast."

Peregrine falcons nest on The Nut, the rocky outcrop that stands sentinel over the choppy waters of the Bass Strait.



Dinner is served at the devil restaurant.

Bass Strait. This is a great spot for watching the short-tailed shearwaters, or muttonbirds, that nest here between November and April. There are Nankeen kestrels, too, and the world's fastest bird, the peregrine falcon, nests on The Nut.

From Stanley, pass through Burnie – famous for its little penguins – and onto Narawntapu National Park, dubbed the 'Serengeti of Tasmania'.

OUT ON PATROL

If you think this claim sounds over the top, time your visit for an hour or two before nightfall: see swans and ducks on the wetland looking out for a patrolling white-bellied sea-eagle, and watch the forester kangaroos and wombats grazing on the marsupial lawns. Then, just before dark, Bennett's wallabies and Tasmanian pademelons emerge from the bush to feed. As dusk turns to darkness, many more animals emerge onto the grassy lawns; once farmland, these are highly fertile feeding grounds. Tasmanian photographer Dave Watts once saw 93 wombats here in one afternoon.

From Narawntapu, head south to Launceston to meet Tasmania's top bushman, Pepper Bush Adventures' Craig Williams. Craig's wildlife tours into the Tasmanian wilderness are legendary throughout Australia, the highlight being his unique and totally captivating 'Quoll Patrol'.

Like Geoff King's 'devil restaurant', the Quoll Patrol lures usually elusive meat-eating marsupials out into the open. In this case they're eastern quolls, with beautifully spotted fawn or chocolate-brown coats. Craig lays on a bushstucker barbecue and a nice glass of Tasmanian pinot noir to enjoy as you wait for the creatures to be roused by the fine, meaty smells.

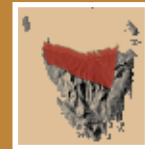
Possums and other nocturnal creatures arrive, and you have an excellent chance of seeing platypus. Not a bad way to call time on your Tasmania adventure.

The 'Quoll Patrol' – led by Craig Williams (here with an echidna) – is unique and captivating.



THE NORTH

6 OF THE BEST...



BEST FOR WATERFRONT

PEPPERS SEAPORT HOTEL
This luxurious hotel, built in the shape of a ship, is located at the confluence of the North and South Esk Rivers, where they become the Tamar River, just to the south of Launceston. It has stunning views over the historic town and to the mountains in the distance to the north and east.



The Winged House is set on the spectacular north coast.

BEST FOR PICNICS

THE RED FEATHER INN
This inn is a recently refurbished collection of historic sandstone buildings in Hadspen, about 14km south-west of Launceston. Pack a Red Feather picnic and take a bike ride along the beautiful South Esk River, or try a spot of trout-fishing.

BEST FOR CLEAN AIR

STANLEY SEAVIEW INN
Just outside Stanley, with fine views of The Nut – a state reserve – the Stanley Seaview Inn serves locally fished lobster, abalone, scallops and oysters, as well as being a beautiful place to stay. The air in the north-west is said to be some of the least polluted anywhere in the world.



The Nut is a good place to see short-tailed shearwaters.

BEST FOR VIEWS

THE WINGED HOUSE
With stunning views of the coast, the Winged House offers luxurious accommodation in a unique building on Table Cape. Narawntapu, Trowunna and the 'devil restaurant' at Marrawah are within easy reach.

BEST FOR 'OUT THERE' FEEL

TALL TIMBERS
"The edge of the world is at your doorstep," proclaims the Tall Timbers' website, and it's true: the north-west of Tasmania, with the terrific winds that blow all the way from South America, can feel like the gateway to another planet. Here, you truly take a walk on the wild side.

TOP SPECIES TO SPOT

TASMANIAN DEVIL
The iconic mammal of Tasmania, the devil is possibly the key reason why the red fox has so far not established itself here, as it has on mainland Australia. So, not only is it a remarkable beast, but by keeping the fox at bay, it has kept the state special for other native species, too.

★ BOOK YOUR TASMANIAN ADVENTURE

Create your ideal itinerary through the region. A seven-day, six-night trip including twin-share accommodation, car hire and the Quoll Patrol and bushstucker safari with Craig Williams of Pepper Bush Adventures costs from £875 per person excluding international flights. For more information contact Tailor Made Travel on 0800 988 5912 or visit www.tailor-made.co.uk/tasmania



For more information about Tasmania and its wildlife visit www.discovertasmania.co.uk

A 'rogue's gallery' of Tasmania's most charismatic species should be enough to convince any sceptic that this island's wildlife is special: the eponymous devil with its squat, muscle-bound body, the eastern quoll with its spotty coat and big bushy tail, and the tiny rufus wallaby or pademelon – all three are today found nowhere else in the world.

All islands tend towards endemism because species evolve in isolation. But the reason that Tasmania hosts these unique creatures is different: all three were once found throughout mainland Australia but died out there due to competition with introduced species.

GREEN AND WILD LAND

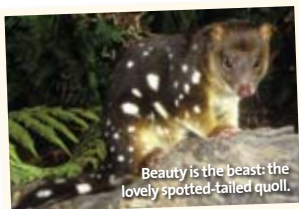
So, today, Tasmania is like a fertile ark, providing a refuge for animals that would otherwise have gone extinct. In addition, the island's more southerly latitude has given rise to vast temperate rainforests where some of the oldest trees on the planet grow, while ancient geological forces have created spectacular rock formations, not least the dolerite cliffs of the south-east and Cradle Mountain.

“Tasmania is like a fertile ark, providing a refuge for animals that would otherwise have gone extinct.”

TASMANIA WHY SO WILD?

The wild habitats and isolated ecosystems of the island state offer refuge to a feast of unique mammals and rare birds.

Wombats on the beach: one of the great pleasures of Tasmania is watching wildlife (here at the Bay of Fires) in remote yet easily accessible locations.



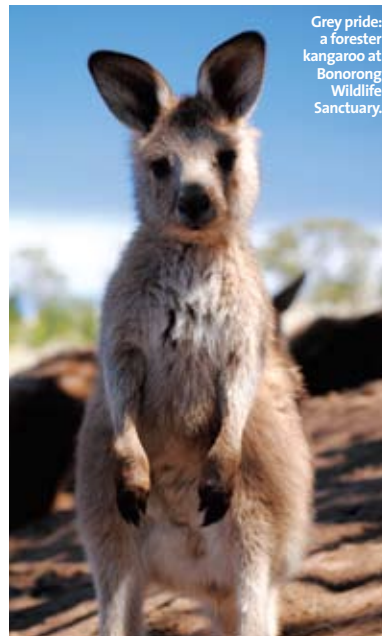
Beauty is the beast: the lovely spotted-tailed quoll.



The egg-laying, spine-covered echidna: a mammal, yes, but not quite as we know it.



Right on cue: southern right whales can be seen off Tasmania between June and October.



Grey pride: a forest kangaroo at Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary.

Indeed, there is an astonishing range of habitats packed into an area the size of Scotland, including magnificent eucalyptus forests, bleak buttongrass moorlands and dry 'sclerophyll' woodlands. You can go from deserted, white sandy beaches on the east coast to the wet, windy and wild west – from one world to another – in less than six hours.

A WAKING DREAM

Everywhere you go, you'll be amazed by Tasmania's outrageous fecundity, with wombats and wallabies nearly as common in some areas as pigeons in Trafalgar Square. Bird life, too, is a treat, and you may find the distinctive call of the yellow wattlebird (a large honeyeater and another endemic) comes to haunt your dreams as well as your waking hours.

Out at sea, Tasmania has five species of albatross and two of the mightiest leviathans on the planet: humpback and southern right whales. The waters are home to rich and sustainably exploited populations of delicious shellfish and crustaceans such as oysters, abalone and lobsters.

Like most wildlife-rich areas on the planet, there are huge pressures on Tasmania's natural riches. Great swathes of the state are protected, however, and state scientists have responded to the crisis afflicting the devil – the so-called devil facial tumour disease – with concerted action that, it's hoped, will save it from going the same way as the Tasmanian tiger or thylacine.

Less than an hour from Melbourne, Tasmania is a prime destination for wildlife lovers. The world's a shrinking oyster: savour it while you can.

TASMANIA'S KEY SPECIES

6 OF THE BEST...



The Tasmanian devil: more famous than Errol Flynn and twice as handsome.

BEST IN THE BUSH

TASMANIAN DEVIL
If you go to Tasmania and see only one species of wild animal – virtually impossible though that would be – then it has to be the Tassie devil. Arguably better known even than the island's famous son Errol Flynn, this devil may not have the best tunes but it certainly has the most ferocious ones. Reliable sightings at Geoff King's world-famous 'Devil Restaurant'.

BEST FOR BIRDERS

ORANGE-BELLIED PARROT
One of Australia's rarest birds, the orange-bellied parrot breeds only in south-west Tasmania, though it migrates to the mainland for the winter. Easy to see at Melaleuca between November and March.

BEST FOR BEAUTY

SPOTTED-TAILED QUOLL
The hardest to see of Tasmania's carnivorous marsupials is also the loveliest, with a splendid spotty coat



Fewer than 150 orange-bellied parrots live in the wild, and they breed only in Tasmania.

that extends down the length of a tail measuring 0.4m in a male. Spotted-tailed quolls are usually only spied after dark in areas such as Mt William and Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Parks.

BEST FOR BIZARRE

ECHIDNA
In a land of strange creatures, top prize goes to the echidna: an egg-laying mammal with a long snout and a 'coat' of spines, it resembles a rockbilly ant eater. It's named after a character in Greek mythology who was half-woman, half-snake.

BEST FOR BOTANISTS

SWAMP GUM
This is one of many common names applied to *Eucalyptus regnans*, the tallest flowering plant in the world. In 2008, staff working for Forestry Tasmania measured at 101m high a gum tree located close to its Tahune AirWalk attraction.

BEST FOR WHALE-WATCHERS

SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE
Migrating between Antarctica and southern Australia, southern right whales pass Tasmania between June and September, and again in September and October. Scientists recently found that they use Great Oyster Bay, off the east coast, as a calving ground.

★ PLAN YOUR TASMANIAN ADVENTURE

This wildlife guide was produced in association with Tailor Made Travel and Tourism Tasmania.

To create a bespoke itinerary around the wildlife wonderland of Tasmania, including animal encounters, accommodation, activities and flights, call Tailor Made Travel on 0800 988 5912 or visit www.tailor-made.co.uk/tasmania

For detailed information on the attractions of Australia's island state, visit the Tourism Tasmania website at www.discovertasmania.co.uk

