

Raymond Island, Victoria



RAYMOND ISLAND, VICTORIA CONSERVATION TOUR

THIS SPECIAL TRIP to Raymond Island allows you to become involved and provide assistance in a region that suffered horrendous wildlife losses as a result of the 2019–20 bushfires. These fires destroyed nearly 2 million hectares of forest in the far southeastern corner of Australia and killed untold millions of wild animals.

Raymond Island itself was not burnt and has now become a significant island ark for many species of plants and animals including koalas, kangaroos, wallabies, echidnas and many bird species. Echidna Walkabout and their not-for-profit Koala Clancy Foundation, have teamed up with the local Landcare group and concerned residents to set up a wild koala research project on the

island. Data they collect will be collated by the new koala conservation group on the island – including tree species preference, behaviour, identification of individuals and evidence of koalas drinking stemflow (water moving down the stem). They take walks through the forest spotting koalas in the wild. They may also see echidnas, swamp wallabies and eastern grey kangaroos and many colourful parrots, honeyeaters and seabirds, which you can help record for conservation purposes.

Conservation Travel is all about making a difference by getting out into the bush and affecting real change. It's about working with locals who know the area and how they can fix the problems, but need help to do so.





ITINERARY

Day 1 Thursday
Arrival in Melbourne
 (domestic airfare not included)

Make your own way to your hotel (Holiday Inn Express Southbank). Meeting with the guide in the evening.

Day 2 Friday
Melbourne to Raymond Island, East Gippsland

Breakfast at hotel. Early pick up in the city by your wildlife guide to travel into East Gippsland. Travel past internationally acclaimed RAMSAR wetlands of the Lakes District before travelling by ferry to an island sanctuary in the wetlands with a thriving colony of wild koalas. We'll arrive late in the morning and go directly to our accommodation to settle in before having lunch. Your guide will describe the conservation program set up between the Raymond Island community, the Koala Clancy Foundation and Echidna Walkabout and how you, as a tourist, can fit into this project. We'll meet with the local Landcare group who will explain what they are doing

on the island to care for koalas and the wider biodiversity of this very important reserve. You'll also learn about what you will be doing on the next day to help conserve viable wildlife populations on the island including tree planting and caring for trees that have already been planted. For the rest of the day we'll take walks through the forest spotting and recording koalas in the wild. We may also see echidnas, swamp wallabies and eastern grey kangaroos and many colourful parrots, honeyeaters and seabirds, which you can help record for conservation purposes.

△ **Accommodation: The Abbey for 3 nights**
 ○ **Breakfast, lunch and dinner provided**

Day 3 Saturday
Down to business: tree planting, tree care, koala research

After an early breakfast we head out to start working on our tree project. Today you'll be working with the local Landcare group to help plant new trees and nurture trees that have already been planted. This second task is vitally important to the success of any tree planting and involves resetting tree protec-

tion (plastic guards on very young trees) if they have been damaged, mulching, watering and removing tree protection from older trees and ensuring they are in good health. You should wear clothes that you would use for gardening for this day as you will get dirty. Gloves will be supplied as will lots of water and some snacks. This work is lots of fun and very fulfilling!

△ **Accommodation: same as previous night.**
 ○ **Breakfast, lunch and dinner provided**



Tree planting helps provide food and shelter for wildlife and it's fun!

ITINERARY CONT. →

Raymond Island, Victoria



Broadwalk at Raymond Island.

"Fortunately, Raymond Island was not burnt in the 2020 fires. You can help protect its wildlife, while you enjoy the island."

ROGER SMITH, ECHIDNA WALKABOUT



Wildlife highlights

There are many wildlife highlights to be seen on this trip including:

- Koalas**
- Echidnas**
- Eastern-grey kangaroos**
- Black wallabies**
- Burrnan dolphins**

Day 4 Sunday Explore The Lakes National Park

The Lakes National Park protects the linear waterways and coast along Ninety Mile Beach in East Gippsland. The inland side of the lakes system is well populated, but the coastal section is remote and very beautiful with lots of wildlife. We'll take a boat from Raymond Island for a short cruise across Lake Victoria towards the coast. We'll visit Rotamah Island, a famous bird-watching location, and walk across that island to Ninety Mile Beach that curves in a huge, virtually untouched arc from horizon to horizon. There is a chance that we will see the newly described Burrnan dolphin that cruises these lakes in small pods. We'll see many species of birds of both the inland waterways and the ocean including possible migratory visitors from the northern hemisphere. We'll document all these sightings and help you to learn how to find and identify birds. N.B. Boat travel on this day

is weather dependent. If we cannot travel on the water we have other options on Raymond Island and in the surrounding region that are very similar to those described above but in land-based vehicles. Dinner tonight is at your own expense in one of the many restaurants or the pub in the coastal town of Paynesville. After dinner we'll catch the ferry across to Raymond Island.

- △ Accommodation: same as previous night**
- Breakfast and lunch provided**



White-bellied sea-eagle hunting for fish over The Lakes National Park.

ITINERARY CONT. →



Spotting a rare Burranan dolphin from the boardwalk may be a highlight of your day!

Day 5 Monday
Aboriginal Cultural experience before heading back to Melbourne

We'll take an early morning stroll along the foreshore near our accommodation looking out for wildlife, followed by breakfast, then check out and pack up before taking one last koala walk to see if we can rediscover some of the koalas we identified on day 2.

Depending on availability we may say goodbye to our Landcare support group before leaving Raymond Island. East Gippsland has a rich Aboriginal history that still flourishes through the Gunaikurnai people. Much of the land that we have travelled through is jointly managed by Indigenous people.

To understand more about them we will visit the Kroathunkooloong Keeping Place in Bairnsdale where we will be introduced to the history of the region and have the opportunity to walk through this incredible building learning about the Creator Ancestors of Gunaikurnai Country, Boran the Pelican and Tuk the Musk Duck. You will gain a new understanding of the lands you have been visiting. We then return to Melbourne arriving late afternoon

△ **Accommodation: not included.**

You can book additional nights in Melbourne through us.

○ **Breakfast and lunch provided**

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Conservation component on this tour

The Echidna Walkabout's tours include opportunities to help with the conservation of wildlife and in ensuring the natural environment that supports wildlife remains healthy. They also work tirelessly to improve human understanding of the impacts of climate change and other human induced changes to our environment. Leading by example they aim to ensure that wildlife continues to thrive in Australia and elsewhere in the world. Citizen science is playing a significant role in helping scientists and others to understand the major changes that are occurring in the world and that work such as theirs is bringing about changes that help wildlife. This tour offers significant opportunities to experience and document wildlife in a near-pristine environment doing the following:



● **Koala conservation & research**
 In collaboration with locals and the Koala Clancy Foundation we will identify and map the movements and health of wild koalas.



● **Tree planting & tree care**
 You will plant trees for koalas and other wildlife on the island and help with the maintenance of current plantations to ensure they grow to healthy mature trees.



● **Bird & wildlife surveys**
 For the whole trip, you are helping wildlife – your Wildlife Guide records all species seen and uploads this data to online atlases for conservation purposes.

Raymond Island, Victoria



Maintaining young trees is vital to their survival and very therapeutic.

COST

\$1848/PERSON TWIN SHARE. \$378 SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

Costs include the following services as per itinerary

- Four nights accommodation as per itinerary
- Local wildlife guides throughout days 2-5
- Sightseeing as per itinerary by private air-conditioned charter vehicle, boat cruise
- Meals as per itinerary

Costs do not include

- Domestic or international airfares
- Pre-registration, late check-out or day use at hotels other than specified above
- Guide services other than specified
- Meals/beverages other than specified, alcohol
- Tips and gratuities
- Optional tours/services

Packing list and other information

- We will supply you with a detailed packing list and other information when you make your booking.
- Minimum pax number: 8.
Maximum pax number: 20



COVID-19

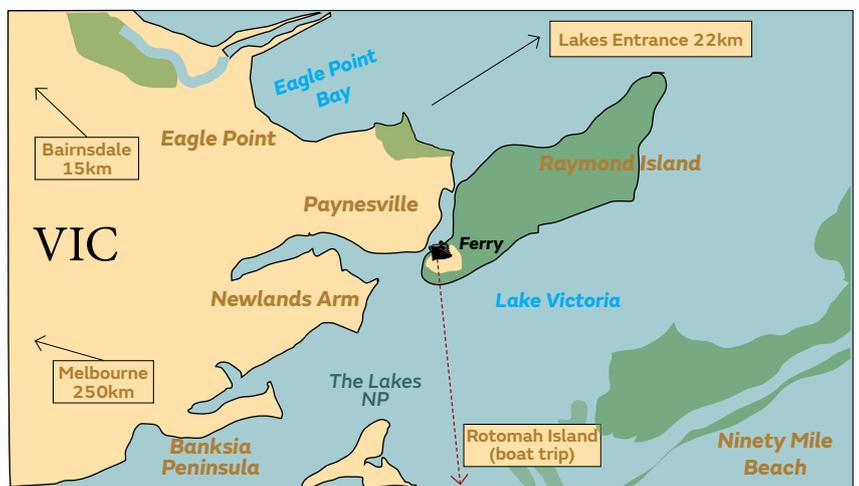
As this itinerary goes public there are still restrictions with borders, flights, accommodation, numbers of people allowed in a group, restaurants, pubs and social distancing rules in place. These restrictions can be local, regional, state wide and national.

We realise that with these rules in place it's difficult to plan ahead. Here are few things that we suggest you do to ensure that any bookings you make are refundable or can be used later:

- 1. Your booking with us:** We guarantee that if a trip cannot run as a result of government-imposed restrictions we will refund or credit all monies that you have paid us (we will NOT make any booking or payment on your behalf that have non-refundable components before getting your permission)
- 2. Accommodation and meals:** Strict hygiene conditions apply to the way accommodation is prepared for your stay and in the serving of meals.
- 3. Vehicles, hygiene & social distancing:** All activities will involve careful adherence to

cleanliness. Hand sanitiser will be available in many locations and in all land-based vehicles. Social distancing will always be an issue on board vehicles and boats; it would be sensible for you to bring your own face masks and hand sanitiser. We may not fill all seats in a vehicle to allow for social distancing.

This itinerary is subject to change without notice and is dependent on weather, road and sea conditions, fire and on the regulatory requirements of Government(s) and/or its Agencies, e.g. National Parks Service. Activities may also be modified or curtailed dependent on the health of participants and the ability or otherwise of sub-contractors to provide activities. We will not provide compensation to participants who are unable to undertake activities described in this itinerary or who become injured or sick during the journey. Nor will Echidna Walkabout reimburse monies for any activities that are modified or cancelled as a result of all or any of the above. The same proviso is in place if, due to vehicle or boat breakdown or for any other reason, we are unable to meet your scheduled flights or other ongoing activities. We highly recommend you have a total travel insurance package that covers any of these eventualities.



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