

GIPPSLAND HIGH COUNTRY TOURS

Newsletter no. 44

P.O. Box 69, Bruthen Vic. 3885

Australia

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The Imparting of Knowledge

"It's impossible to thank you enough for such a wonderful trip to Croajingolong. I loved the variation in the landscape that we either walked or travelled through and it was a joy to walk in forested areas after some time spent in the arid areas.

However, Jenny and Wayne, it was also your ability to impart your knowledge and insight into the area that took the trip to a higher level.



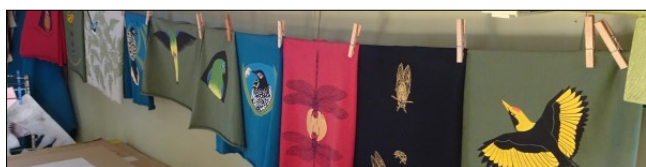
No doubt it helped at Point Hicks that the whales turned on a pretty good show, but just sitting on the porch was OK too.

I also loved the time to myself on the two mornings at Gipsy Point that I went down early to just sit in that beautiful spot listening to the chatter of birds while soaking up the atmosphere.

Of course, the trip to see Alison Green's studio added another dimension, thanks to Lesley.

And, what a great group!"

Jenny (Melbourne) September 2018



Ecotourism Hall of Fame

At the end of last year Gippsland High Country Tours, was honoured to be recognised as one of only 14 tourism operators in Australia who have held continuous Ecotourism Certification for over 20 years.



We received this lovely award as part of being inducted into the **Ecotourism Australia Hall of Fame** and are thrilled to have it up on our wall. The Hall of Fame recognises our long-term commitment to ecological and sustainable tourism which fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.

Once ecotourism was seen as a niche market, now it is becoming the way of the future. Around the world, increasing numbers of travellers are seeking out sustainable travel experiences which allow them to experience a deep connection with nature. And we are proud to be one of those!

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Editorial

Well, its been a long time since you've heard from me, so this is an out-of-season catch-up Newsletter arriving in Autumn rather than Spring. Summer this year was about coping with the ongoing dry spell resulting in many parts of Central and East Gippsland being in drought and then experiencing large fires late in the season. All Summer and Autumn tours were postponed till next Spring/Summer when we hope the weather will be kinder to the country.

Instead we've put a lot of time into the development of a new-look website which is exciting news. It has more photos, a concise and current program of tours and a new blog page that will be used to post interesting articles from time to time. A new destination option on the menu will help you choose from the great landscapes we visit and find relevant tours to get you there. www.gippslandhighcountrytours.com.au

I encourage you to take a look at the new website and I'd be pleased to hear feedback either positive or negative on how you find it. After all, if it does not work for you, I need to know. Its not much good having a fancy website if people like you can't find what you are looking for, or find the site annoying to use.

The upcoming spring program is a busy and full one with some tours booking up already, so it pays to get in quickly. Don't forget that some tours only take a maximum of 4 people, so they fill quickly.

What Does the Tick Mean?

Australia's Ecotourism Certification Program is an innovative "world first" program. It is a national scheme with hundreds of products across every state and territory of Australia.

www.ecotourism.org.au

Choosing a product that displays an **Eco Certification** logo means you will enjoy an experience with a quality operator, leaving minimal impact on the environment.

Advanced Ecotourism Certification recognises Australia's leading and most innovative ecotourism products, providing an opportunity to learn about the environment with an operator who is committed to achieving best practice when using resources wisely, contributing to the conservation of the environment and helping local communities.

Gippsland High Country Tours is proud that all ecotour and walk products in the regular program have received Advanced Eco Certification.



I hope you enjoy this newsletter and the stories and program updates inside. If you are still receiving a paper copy in the mail, please consider whether receiving the newsletter by email would suit you in the future.

We use a fantastic environmentally friendly printing company (100% post consumer recycled paper and plant-based inks) to reduce the impacts of printing. However email newsletters are in full colour and always get to you quicker than "snail mail" does. Just let me know if you want to change.

Jenny Lawrence

Established in 1987, Gippsland High Country Tours is an Accredited Tourism Business and a member of Victorian Tourism Industry Council. All product have Advanced Ecotourism Certification under Ecotourism Australia's Eco-Certification Program.

This Newsletter is typeset and published by Gippsland High Country Tours. Printed on 100% post consumer waste recycled paper.

Illustrations by Catherine Turnbull (All illustrations and photographs are subject to Copyright and must not be reproduced without permission) Photographs by J. Lawrence, R Akie and P Macdonald

Spring Discount

Select your ecotour or walking experience and book **during May, 2019**

Attach this coupon and receive

5% Discount

in addition to the regular discounts off the advertised fare for any departure of 1-8 days duration

REGULAR DISCOUNTS

Available on all 1-8 day departures

Book in May 2019 add 5% to these discounts

- Past Passengers 10% Discount.
- Pensioners 10% Discount.
- Early Booking (90+ days in advance) 10% Discount.
- Locals (East Gippsland or Wellington) 15% Discount
- Group Bookings, generous discounts apply

NOTE: Only one discount can be used on any one booking.

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

Alpine Discovery Tour

Thinking back to our wonderful visit to the high country in January, some experiences have emerged as highlights: The Room with a View walk, especially the viewing of the White-necked Heron and the encounter with the Flame Robin family; the walk up to the summit of Mt Hotham and the sunset and vistas from Danny's Lookout.

Thank you for organising and leading the tour Jenny and for your interpretation of so many aspects of the Alps. It has been a wonderful start to 2018 and I look forward to my next trip with you.

Joan (Melbourne) Alpine Discovery Tour Jan 2018



Special memories from Walking Croajingolong in spring

"Sitting on the sea-facing verandah of the Point Hicks lighthouse was very special - watching the whales swim by with all their antics, as well as the seals on the rocks and the variety of birds, both over the sea and in the bushes nearby.



One activity full of impact was spending some time on the remote beach near Point Hicks collecting plastic rubbish that had washed on to the beach. We only spent half an hour doing it, but the picture of it all laid out on the ground made a powerful impression of how much plastic we have added to the ocean and how far it spreads"
Terry & Christina (Melbourne)

More memories

"Thanks, again Jenny, for a marvellous Walking Croajingolong tour and for the photos which provided some lovely memories. We appreciate your skills, guiding and outstanding people skills, plus your choice of including Wayne as your assistant. You were both terrific!"

I had thought on the return from Oz that it would be my last overseas trip. After receiving your photos and remembering what a splendid trip it was, I'm reconsidering."

Leslie & Charlie (Oregon, USA)

More highlights on page 6>

Calendar of Ecotours and Walks 2019-2020

August 18	Birds of Hattah Kulkyne & Murray Sunset Graded: EASY/MODERATE Fully accommodated. Easy-moderate walks with a focus on birdwatching. 8 Days ex. Melbourne \$4980
September 9	Nature Sounds and Birdsong - Mitchell River Graded: EASY/MODERATE Fully accommodated and includes specialist guide. Easy/Moderate walking 5 Days ex. Bairnsdale \$3060
September 23	Pt Hicks Lighthouse Nature Tour Graded: EASY Fully accommodated. Lots of Easy Nature Walks. 4 Days ex. Bairnsdale \$2040
October 14	Croajingolong Coastal Ecotour Graded: EASY Fully accommodated. Lots of Easy Nature Walks. 7 Days ex. Bairnsdale \$4000
October 14	Walking Croajingolong Graded: MODERATE Fully accommodated. Lots of moderate walks surrounded by nature experiences. 7 Days ex. Bairnsdale \$4000
October 21 Bird Week	Birds of the Snowy River Graded: EASY Fully accommodated, easy walks with a focus on birdwatching 5 Days ex. Bairnsdale \$2600
November 13	Errinundra Nature Tour Graded: EASY Fully accommodated. Easy walks 4 Days ex. Bairnsdale \$2120
November 29	High Country Huts North of Licola Graded: EASY/MODERATE Fully accommodated. Easy/moderate walks with a focus on history 3 Days ex. Traralgon \$1780
January 6 2020	Alpine Discovery Tour Graded: EASY Fully accommodated, lots of short easy nature walks . 5 Days ex. Bairnsdale \$2900
March 2 2020	Mt Feathertop Adventure Graded: 2 options: MODERATE or CHALLENGING Fully accommodated. Lots of walking with a choice of moderate walks or more challenging walks. 5 Days ex. Bairnsdale \$2940
March 2020	Snowy River Nature Tour Graded: EASY Fully accommodated. Easy walking with a range of nature experiences. 4 Days ex. Bairnsdale \$2100
April -May 2020	Flinders Ranges Natural History Tour Graded: EASY/MODERATE Fully accommodated. Easy/moderate walks with a focus on history 10 Days ex. Melbourne \$POA
April 2020	Bindi Station in Autumn Graded: VERY EASY Single day tour with a focus on history. Really easy strolls around historic buildings & garden. 1 Days ex. Bairnsdale \$POA

More than just a holiday, these are rewarding experiences featuring expert guidance and lots of interaction with nature. These small group tours promote an appreciation and understanding of varied environments, rich history and diverse flora and fauna. **Fares are per person and all inclusive of accommodation, meals and travel from departure point as per itinerary. Full itinerary for each trip available on request. Discounts detailed on page 2.**

More details also available on website– www.gippslandhighcountrytours.com.au

Errinundra Nature Tour

Do you feel a bit frazzled and tired? What about a short easy tour in spring to let the forests of Errinundra Plateau work their magic on you.

Remote from tourist routes, high in the mountains of East Gippsland, Errinundra is a place of hidden secrets. What we can tell you is that you will find amazing forests of enormous eucalypts including the very special Errinundra Shining Gum. In the deep gullies cool temperate rainforest has an understorey of dense shrubs and magnificent treeferns.

With a high rainfall, the Errinundra Plateau is the starting point for a number of rivers. But its not just the rain, mountain mist is common here, creating a very special atmosphere amongst the forest. There are lovely leafy tracks to wander along, as you listen to the bird calls all around. Keep an eye out for Black Wallabies, that love to disappear quickly into the dense undergrowth.

Spring is Waratah time in Errinundra and we will be there at the right time to find the brilliant crimson blooms of the Gippsland Waratah.



Add to this visits to some interesting historical sites, plus stories of the fight to protect the amazing forests of Errinundra in a National Park and you will find it's a very interesting few days.

We stay in cosy accommodation nearby every night and there will be a variety of easy walks to explore different parts of Errinundra and enjoy lots of nature experiences.

You'll find yourself gazing skyward as you are dwarfed by enormous trees, the filtered light of the forest lighting up tree-ferns with their new spring growth. As well as the waratahs there will be other shrubs in their spring colours and sometimes in sunny patches even orchids.

There is no rush, take your time and soak up the peace and quiet.

Errinundra Nature Tour, November 13, 2019

Only 4 places available, so be quick for this one!

Exploring the Mallee environment & Murray River in 2020

For quite a few years we've offered a birdwatching tour to Hattah Kulkyne & Murray Sunset National Parks in north-west Victoria. During that time some of you have mentioned that you would like to explore the Mallee and Murray River in that part of the Victoria, but on a more general interest tour.

So a plan is forming for a 6 day fully accommodated tour in Spring 2020 to take in a lovely cross section of sites in Hattah Kulkyne & Murray Sunset National Parks and enjoy learning about the wildlife, plants and historic sites. *Contact us and register your interest to receive more information.*

MORE TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

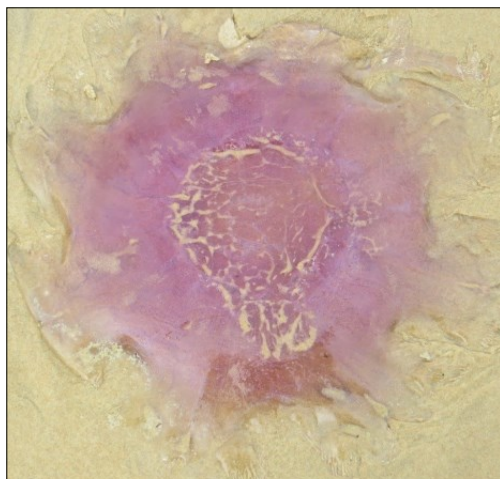
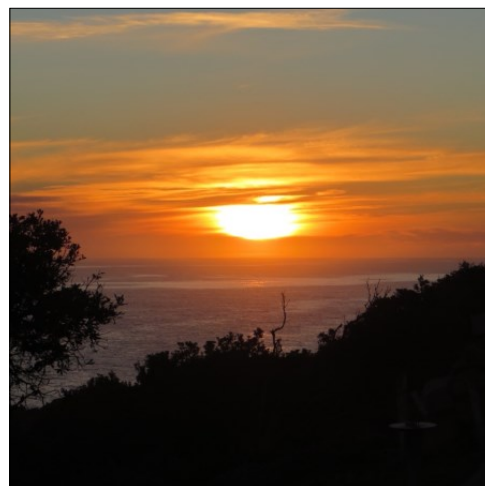
THE COLOURS OF POINT HICKS

We arrived to view the deep blue sea off the coast and the first night produced a magnificent sunset



The sea mist of the following morning produced muted colours but nothing could dull the brilliance of the Superb Blue Wren

Walking along the foreshore, the red rocks, some fringed in green lichen, were embedded in the yellow sands and lapped by the white crests of the waves



Discovery on the beach produced a variety of coloured sea shells, sea weed and even a pink jelly fish

Many Spring flowers were very delicate shades of pink and red

Brilliant orange of the fungi clustered on fallen brown trees

Returning from a drive, we encountered the after effects of a bush fire earlier in the year - vivid green Grass-trees sprouting from the black soil

A great time of delight to all our senses but especially our eyes.

Ruth Akie (Melbourne)

Pt Hicks Lighthouse Nature Tour: Next departure September 23, 2019



Bird week in Snowy River Country

This holiday came at the right time in my life and was perfect for me.

I enjoyed the relaxed style because we had birds all around us. Just sitting on the verandah, was a bird-watcher's delight.

Birds! Birds! Birds!

The time of the year meant many birds were on their nests

In contrast, on the first night was a wonderful discovery of about 20 koalas

My three highlights (apart from birds) were the history of the area, magnificent scenery, and the afternoon with our hosts who shared their interests with us.

This included leaning about aboriginal artefacts found on their property and Kevin's amazing artistic talent.

I found it hard to believe that I have not travelled to this magnificent area, it is so secluded and beautiful.

Thanks Jenny for giving us this opportunity and for sharing your love of the Snowy River area with us.

Ruth Akie



Birds of the Snowy River, October 21-25, 2019

High Country memories

It was late April when I toured the wonderful remote Victorian high country for 3 days with Gippsland High Country tours. This was a small group with three guests and our guide with a number of walks. Weather was good - cool and partly cloudy but the scenery was spectacular.

Our explorations took us from low elevation river valleys to elevations of about 1600 metres, predominantly featuring sub-alpine Snow gum woodlands, wetlands, rocky escarpments and expansive snow-grass plains. Snow lies on the ground for up to 4 months of the year – no snow yet, but very soon!

Bushfires have left a number of scars on the landscape however there is wonderful regeneration happening. We visited a number of high country huts built by the early settlers for shelter. One feature of all the huts was enormous fireplaces - see photo of Guys Hut below.

By Peter Macdonald (Melbourne)



Sometimes the best things in life are hard to find, but when you do, you share these things with others.

At Gippsland High Country Tours we are proud of our return client base and our recommendation rate. On any tour you are likely to find at least half the other participants are repeat clients. Some have travelled with us more than a dozen times.

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Flinders Ranges Natural History Tour 2020

Are you up for an adventure? Be part of a small group of less than 10 participants who will journey to South Australia's Flinders Ranges in late Autumn 2020 to discover some new nature experiences, history and classic landscapes that the Flinders Ranges is famous for.

How adventurous do you need to be? We've got accommodation every night, so its soft adventure really. There will be lots of short walks, but at nature-exploration-pace so we can stop and enjoy wildflowers, be observant enough to see the local wildlife and take in the stories of the local traditional owners.

So much variety to see and do, our days are full, but still you will feel it's a relaxing escape.

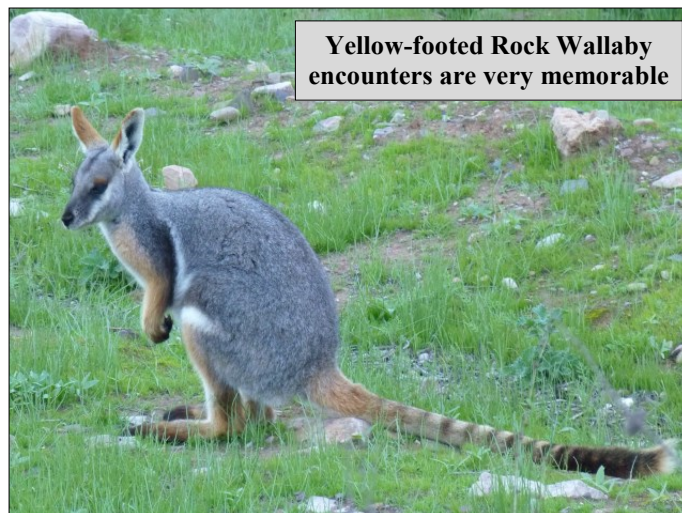
Sometimes its nice to just sit quietly... and let the rugged landscape work its magic on you...

Contact us now to express your interest and receive full details.

"It was just what I wanted. A long leisurely stay in the Flinders Ranges "

"The emphasis was on natural history with, as expected, time to "get up close" to the environment"

"We were quite sad to get home! We hadn't expected such expert knowledge of all areas and such a variety of experiences"



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or email to: **info@gippslandhighcountrytours.com.au**

Please send me more information about the following trip/s - _____

Name: _____ **Address:** _____

_____ **Postcode:** _____ **Phone:** _____

Email: _____