



## Croajingolong Journey 4 Day Private and Group Touring Module

Echidna Walkabout fact sheet

### **Croajingolong NP and Gipsy Point Lakeside attainable wilderness half way between Sydney and Melbourne**

#### **CROAJINGOLONG JOURNEY**

Quote tour code: CJP

Four Day Ecotour from Merimbula (joins Rex flights from Melbourne or Sydney daily – flights arranged by agent)

Departs on request all year (Note: no tours run on or through Christmas Day)

Returns to Merimbula (joins Rex flights to Melbourne or Sydney daily)

**Overview:** [see page 6 for suggested brochure/website text]

Relax in the wilderness surrounded by wildlife! See wild koalas, watch wild kangaroos and enjoy the chorus of parrots, cockatoos, swans and honeyeaters – all within a short distance of your luxury apartment. This 4 day private tour gives you a taste of laid-back “Aussie Time” – there is so much to see and do, but it’s all close by. So there’s no rush. Your experienced Nature Guide will get you into the secret spots in this magnificent wilderness, in comfort and safety. And as a private tour you can cater the journey to your wishes while still seeing the highlights of this special place.

#### **Introduction:**

Australia’s Croajingolong National Park is considered one of the finest natural regions on earth – it has been classified by the United Nations as a World Biosphere Reserve and contains one of the most complex forest ecosystems in Australia. The park spans the south-east corner of Australia - a pristine wilderness of eucalyptus forests, coastal heathlands, ocean beaches, deep secret rivers and secluded estuaries.

The jewel of Croajingolong is the Mallacoota region (in the eastern section of the National Park), where the Genoa River enters a large wilderness lake system called Mallacoota Inlet at the crossover of 3 major ecosystems – forest, estuary and ocean. Wildlife abounds in the sea, the bush and the lakes.

In this magnificent wilderness you will stay for 3 nights in luxury accommodation at Gipsy Point Lakeside overlooking the Genoa River. Lakeside is surrounded by Croajingolong and is a haven for wildlife – it is the perfect base to explore this beautiful, untouched region on foot, by vehicle and by boat, escorted by your personal Nature Guide. Delicious meals are served at Lakeside and are included in the tour price.

Note: The following itinerary is our suggested format for private small parties, and will be followed for the first day at least. Arrangements can be modified to suit travellers and weather conditions in consultation with the Guide during the tour.

For Groups the itinerary will be followed unless modified in consultation with us prior to the tour.



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**Day by Day Description** (Note meal inclusions shown thus: B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner )

### **Day 1 EAST GIPPSLAND - CROAJINGOLONG NATIONAL PARK**

Depart Melbourne or Sydney airport for a short flight to Merimbula on the south-east corner of Australia. Upon arrival you will meet your Nature Guide and begin your wildlife sojourn in Croajingolong National Park. Your luxury accommodation for the next 3 nights will be at Gipsy Point Lakeside overlooking the Genoa River.

After settling in at Lakeside your Nature Guide will take you on an orientation walk into the forest surrounding Lakeside. On this evening walk we may see kangaroos, wallabies, rare pigeons, kingfishers, the Superb Lyrebird, parrots and honeyeaters amongst other sightings. Dinner tonight will be at Lakeside.

*O/n Gipsy Point Lakeside (D) (you will stay at the same accommodation for tonight and the following 2 nights)*

*Note: transfer to Melbourne or Sydney airport to board Rex flight is not included*

### **Day 2 CROAJINGOLONG – THE FORESTS**

This morning you awake to the calls of dozens of birds – Lakeside is famous for its myriad “fly pasts” of colourful parrots and lorikeets. If you rise early you can watch them as the sun rises over the Genoa River. If you are quiet you may see kangaroos grazing near your apartment.

Today your Nature Guide will explain Australia’s wildlife heritage as you walk and drive through this forest wilderness. One of the highlights may be sightings of wild koalas living on the edge of the rainforest – these delightful living fossils evolved in the rainforest before the Eucalypts but, as the rainforests disappeared, they have adapted to eat only eucalyptus leaves. We will discover the Casuarina tree that has a separate male and female plant. They produce cones with little seeds that the large Glossy-black Cockatoo feeds upon - we also search for this red and black cockatoo by listening for its tiny voice! We’ll walk in samphire flats beside giant stands of Melaleuca (paper-bark trees) and search for the rare Southern Emu-wren, a profoundly shy yet sedentary bird. In corridor rainforests we’ll discover the gene pool that created the genus Eucalyptus. We’ll even see the crossover genus - Angophora - one of the world’s most profusely flowering trees and their first eucalyptus “children” the mighty Bloodwoods towering on gnarled trunks over everything. Depending on the time of year and recent rainfall we may even see the famous the orchids of Mallacoota - both terrestrial (ground) and epiphytic (in trees).

If you are a birdwatcher your bird list should expand dramatically today as we move through the forest. Your Nature Guide will help you identify as many birds as possible.

Dinner precedes an evening of spotlighting in the eucalypt forest for the flying possums of this area. These unique marsupials are more often heard than seen but if we are lucky we may see any of the 3 species as they fly courageously from tree to tree. Regardless of what we see, these very safe spotlight walks are a wonderfully rewarding experience – all your senses are heightened as your Nature Guide interprets the sounds of the night. We often see possums and if we are very lucky - and quiet - we may spot a Wombat. These large marsupials (about the size of a small pig), although common, are very shy and retiring and require care and patience to find. Sightings are often brief but well worth the effort.

*O/n Gipsy Point Lakeside (B,L,D)*

*This tour itinerary is the property of - **Echidna Walkabout** PO Box 370 Port Melbourne 3207 AUSTRALIA  
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### **Day 3 CROAJINGOLONG – THE ESTUARY AND THE OCEAN**

NB. As we will be travelling by boat today's activities will be governed by weather conditions and water levels. The day's activities are planned as follows:

Today is dedicated to the magnificent estuary and the ocean systems of Mallacoota.

Mallacoota Inlet was formed after the last ice age when a coastal river system was drowned by the sea. This lake system is comprised of a smaller, inland, "top" lake connected by a narrow section of inundated river valley to a larger "bottom" lake that finally overflows into the Southern Ocean (Gipsy Point Lakeview is on the upstream side of the Top Lake). Many smaller "arms" of water branch off the main lakes. A large semi-submerged sand bank called the Goodwin Sands sits in the middle of the Bottom Lake and is home to both migratory and local birds. The shoreline of the lake system and the outlet to the sea are home to many bird species.

We'll visit the Southern Ocean on Croajingolong's coast. With a great curving beach stretching to the east and colourful rocky headlands to the west this is the place to bring your camera for dramatic photos. The beaches are mostly untrodden and are home to the rare Hooded Plover, oystercatchers, gannets and other seashore and ocean-going birds.

To explore Mallacoota Inlet we board the Porkie Bess, a delightful timber cruising launch, to search the coves and sand flats for sea eagles (and other raptors), swans, migrant waders and shorebirds, egrets, herons, spoonbills, cormorants, terns, dotterels, plovers, ibis and ducks not to mention the land birds that we will also see. The Porkie Bess will be at our full disposal for 4 hours. If we tire of the water the boat will drop us at remote jetties to walk along the shoreline before picking us up again for further adventures up some of the secret wilderness arms of the lake system. We may even see Australian Fur Seals that are occasional visitors to the bottom lake.

During today your Nature Guide will relate stories of Mallacoota's past - for this is the place that some of Australia's most famous poets came to pen rhymes about the unparalleled beauty of the place. E.J. Brady, one of the poets, described Mallacoota as having "loveliness amongst the rarest in Australia." You may also be enchanted by Mallacoota Inlet.

*O/n Gipsy Point Lakeside (B,L,D)*

### **Day 4 DEPART CROAJINGOLONG**

We depart Lakeview this morning en route to Merimbula airport. Before departing the morning is yours to have a relaxing breakfast and a quiet stroll in this idyllic location. Depending in flight timings we may have a chance to drop in at a Genoa River Falls where we can search for the famous Water Dragons, a big green lizard that lives in and near running water. The falls are a wonderful place to reflect on the beauty of Croajingolong before driving to Merimbula to fly out to Melbourne or Sydney.

*(B,L)*

*Note: transfer from Melbourne or Sydney airport after arrival is not included*

### **INCLUDES:**

Full interpretation by experienced Nature Guides, meals and accommodation as described below, entry fees and transport



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**Expert Nature Guides:** You will be guided on this journey by our friendly, experienced and knowledgeable Nature Guide. Many hours of research work precede the tour to ensure that you see and learn about native wildlife in its natural environment.

First class standards in guidance are the hallmark of Echidna Walkabout. Our in-house Nature Guide training program ensures that all guides have an in-depth working knowledge of the wildlife and environments you will see.

**Accommodation:** Accommodation is at Gipsy Point Lakeside overlooking the Genoa River. For couples and small parties breakfasts are supplied to your room to be prepared by yourself in the fully self contained kitchen. For groups breakfasts are provided in the dining room. All dinners are supplied by Lakeside in their dining room.

**Meals on tour:** Meals are provided as detailed in the itinerary above. Dinners are 2 courses  
Note: Alcoholic beverages are not included in the price but are available at Lakeside.  
NB Vegetarian or other food preferences should be noted at the time of booking.

**Transport:** In our comfortable air conditioned vehicle

**What to bring:** Strong walking shoes or boots, clothing to suit variable weather conditions (please check weather forecasts for expected temperatures or call us), sun hat, rain proof coat, small torch, insect repellent, sunscreen, day pack and 1 litre water bottle. You can also bring swimming gear.

Wildlife notes will be provided to people who travel on this tour. Please note that whilst every attempt will be made to follow our planned route National Park Service requirements and weather conditions may cause amendments which will be clearly outlined to you by your Nature Guide.

### **Not Included**

- Airport transfers to and from Melbourne/Sydney Airports
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Flights to and from Sydney/Melbourne

**About Us:** Janine Duffy and Roger Smith are the founders of Echidna Walkabout, based in Melbourne, Australia. Our business is based upon a deep respect of nature, indigenous cultures and environmentally sustainable living. Our fantastic team of Nature Guides – Tim, Bill, Paul, Joanne, Martin and Janine & Roger – and Koala Researchers – Mary, Melinda and Alison – ensure that every tour is a special, once only experience. No two tours are ever the same with wild animals!

For the past 10 years, Echidna Walkabout has tracked and monitored the movements and lives of hundreds of wild koalas. The proceeds of each tour contribute to this important study and our guests are involved while on tour. We are also regenerating an old farming property west of Melbourne as a Wildlife Habitat – for the benefit of native wild birds, Kangaroos, Koalas and Wallabies, plus reptiles, frogs and yabbies - to restore some lost habitat to these wild creatures that have given us so much. We have, and have always had, a serious commitment to running sustainable tours. Our comprehensive environmental code is available for viewing on our website.

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### **BOOKINGS/INFORMATION**

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### **SUGGESTED BROCHURE/WEBSITE TEXT:**

Croajingolong Journey Private 4 day tour *[6 words, 40 characters incl. spaces]*

Relax in the wilderness surrounded by wildlife! See wild koalas, watch wild kangaroos and enjoy the chorus of parrots, cockatoos, swans and honeyeaters – all within a short distance of your luxury apartment. This 4 day private journey gives you a taste of laid-back “Aussie Time” – there is so much to see and do, but it’s all close by. So there’s no rush. Your experienced Nature Guide will get you into the secret spots in this magnificent wilderness, in comfort and safety. Wander through gum-tree forests full of birds, cruise a quiet coastal lake, stroll along a remote beach gazing at the wild Southern Ocean. And as a private tour you can cater the journey to your wishes while still seeing the highlights of this special place. Includes 3 nights accommodation at Gipsy Point Lakeside 5 star apartments, 3 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners. *[143 words, 853 characters incl. spaces]*

### **Why is Croajingolong so important?**

Croajingolong National Park spans the intersection of two very different oceans: from the south the Southern Ocean carries cool dry air from Antarctica northwards into the warm, moist, tropical air of the Pacific Ocean. These unique climatic conditions nurture a phenomenally diverse variety of plants and wildlife. Here we see modern, complex eucalyptus forests pushing deep into ancient rainforests. We also see wildlife that represent the transition from the Gondwana rainforests to the modern eucalypt and throughout all this a myriad of other plants and animals have evolved and are hidden in the forests of Croajingolong. Some new discoveries have been made only in the last decade!! One of Australia’s earliest & best known botanists - Ferdinand von Mueller (he created the famous Melbourne Botanic Gardens) - described this region as one of the most profoundly complex ecosystems he had ever seen. If you really want to know what Australia is all about, this is the place to be!

***Birdwatchers:*** Croajingolong is famous for its birds – it has one of the highest bird counts in Australia.

Croajingolong is an anglicised version of the Aboriginal name for the south-eastern corner of Australia – Krowathunkalooong. The region is now called East Gippsland but the national park retains the original Aboriginal name.

Updated: July 2009 For more details about this tour contact: [roger@echidnawalkabout.com.au](mailto:roger@echidnawalkabout.com.au)

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