

Lord Howe Island

Dates:

Monday, 1st May to Tuesday, 9th May, 2006

(9 days)

Cost: \$2,500

Style: Accommodated

Start and Finish: Sydney

Lord Howe Island is one of the world's most beautiful islands located 782 kilometres offshore north-west of Sydney. It has the world's southern-most coral reefs. Safarists can explore the rich marine life in the attractive lagoon, or walk the tracks and climb the mountains to discover the many endemic plants and animals. To appreciate the rugged scenic grandeur of this subtropical World Heritage listed island paradise, more walking is involved than on any other GO BUSH safari, but safarists enjoy the most comfortable accommodation and dine out in various restaurants.

Leader: John Sinclair first visited Lord Howe Island in 1988. He has prepared two Management Strategies for the island. He has led annual safaris there since 1996 (always 1st to 9th May). Local guides will lead some excursions, including the boat trips and ascending the formidable Mt Gower.

Lord Howe Island, a virtual Eden, escaped human contact until February 1788. There are 241 species of native plants (105 are endemic) and 168 bird species, including the endemic, endangered woodhen. The 1596 hectare main island is 11 kilometres long and averages two to three kilometres in width. It rises to 866 metres at Mt. Gower. Two thirds of the island is protected. The island group is the remnant of a huge volcanic explosion millions of years ago. The whole island group was inscribed on the World Heritage list for its exceptional natural beauty and because it is a habitat for rare or endangered species of plants and animals.

The Season: Warmed by the South Equatorial Current, Lord Howe Island enjoys a pleasant sub-tropical climate with temperatures ranging between 20⁰C (min) and 23⁰C (max) in early May. Surface sea temperature ranges from 17⁰C in winter to 25⁰C in summer (21⁰C in early May). Annual rainfall is 1568 mm, lowest rainfall coinciding with the warmer months. Winds become stronger when temperatures fall. Early May normally has pleasant weather.

Style: This safari is fully accommodated at Ocean View Apartments, where self-contained studio units are set amongst the subtropical foliage at the foot of Malabar Hill. All accommodation is on a twin share basis. It is a few minutes easy stroll from the jetty, lagoon and old settlement beaches and close to shops, post office and visitor centre.

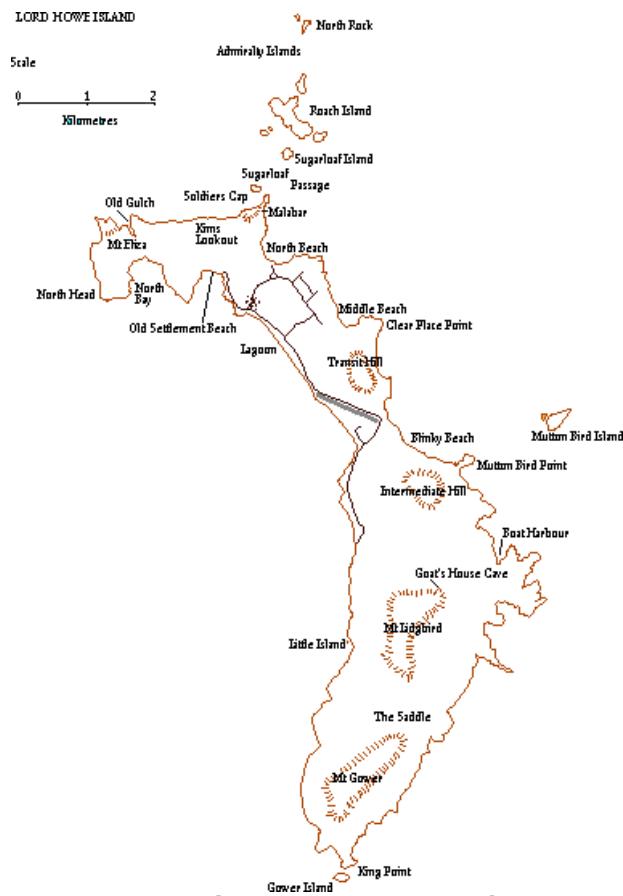
Price: Includes return air fare from Sydney, all meals, glass bottom boat and round island cruises. Use of bicycles and picnic walks are included. Safarists dine out at about four restaurants on an island noted for its hospitality.

Bookings and Payments: All payments must be sent to **GO BUSH Safaris**. A \$500 deposit must be lodged with the Application Form. The second installment of \$1100 should have the cheque made out to Oxley Travel who are handling out travel arrangements (air travel and accommodation) by 1st March to secure flights. The balance of \$900 needs to be paid by 14th April to **GO BUSH Safaris**.

Draft Itinerary

Most activities are dependent on weather and some are conditional on tides. Therefore the round island boat trip and the snorkelling – glass bottom boat tour will occur at the first appropriate opportunity. Both provide some breathtaking views of the island and its marine life. The order of the remaining program will be organized to suit the weather.

Day 1; Monday, 1st May: Assemble at Sydney Qantas Domestic terminal at 10.40 am. Depart Sydney QF2260 (Eastern Australia Airlines) at 11.35 am. Arrive Lord Howe Island at 1.55 pm. Get an overview of the island and transfer to Ocean View Apartments. Walk to Ned's Beach.



Tuesday, 2nd May to Monday, 8th May:

A glass bottom boat cruise enables safarists to snorkel and to view some of the rich marine life in the main lagoon as well as learn much about the island's unique marine environment. A round island boat cruise exposes some wondrous seascapes. Shorter and easier excursions include destinations such as Neds Beach, Valley of the Shadows and Clear Place, Transit Hill, and Little Island. A relatively short walk to Malabar and Kims Lookout (up to 208 m) has a greater degree of difficulty.

Two other, longer, more challenging, but very scenic walks require safarists to carry a cut lunch. These have the Boat Harbour and North Bay as destinations.

The two walks with the greatest degree of difficulty are to the Goat House (457 m) and Mount Gower (866 m). These are optional and are scheduled for Thursday. The 5 km Goat House walk flanks the sheer cliff faces of Mt Lidgbird. The 11 km walk to Gower is led by the island's most experienced mountain guide, but allows safarists to experience the unique endangered cloud forests. Providence petrels swirl around. Both walks offer stunning views and great satisfaction.

Other excursions explore the operations of the Met station, the waste management facility, and the palm seed industry.

Day 9; Tuesday, 9th May: Depart Lord Howe Island at 2.20 pm on Flight QF2261. Arrive Sydney Airport at 4.10 pm.