The waterways and bushland surrounding Hobart offer a rich variety of habitat for visiting birders to explore. Excellent shorebird sites, some of the best pelagic birding in the world and all of Tasmania’s endemic birds are within easy reach of our most southerly state’s capital.

BirdLife Tasmania member and regular contributor to Twitchers’ Corner, Els Wakefield, gives us the benefit of her local birding experience, including the tip that as the weather can change very quickly on land or at sea, one should always take warm and waterproof clothing as well as a hat and sunscreen—all are often needed on the same day!

Mount Wellington
Just a ten minute drive from Davey Street in central Hobart and 100 metres beyond the turnoff to the summit of Mount Wellington is the beautiful Fern Glade Track. Along the way, look for the secretive Tasmanian Scrubwren and Scrubtit foraging in the scrub layer and along tree trunks, as well as both Tasmanian and Brown Thornbills. It also pays to keep an ear out for the *tick* of Pink Robins. Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos nest in the hollows of taller eucalypts as Grey Currawongs *clink* away in the canopy. Black Currawongs also trumpet here, and can often be easily seen around the summit of the mountain.

Peter Murrell Conservation Area
This small bushland reserve, about 15 minutes’ drive from downtown Hobart, harbours one of the last remaining Forty-spotted Pardalote colonies. The *tank-tank* of Yellow-throated Honeyeaters is heard throughout the Reserve while Strong-billed and Black-headed Honeyeaters call in the canopy along with Green and Eastern Rosellas. Dusky, Scarlet and Flame Robins can all be found here, especially in the more open and heathy areas. Dusky Woodswallows, Satin Flycatchers and Tree Martins nest in the taller trees while Fan-tailed, Pallid and both bronze-cuckoos breed in the drier forest to the east.

Orielton Lagoon
The combined areas of Pittwater, Orielton Lagoon, Lauderdale and Pipeclay Lagoon form a Ramsar site where migratory waders feed and roost. The area is accessed via Sorell, about 25 km from Hobart. Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel, Bar-tailed Godwit, Greenshank, Red-necked Stint, Pacific Golden Plover, Sanderling and Double-banded Plover have all roosted here. Good numbers of Great-crested Grebes and Musk Ducks feed on the water. Check Suzie Isle for cormorants and Royal Spoonbills.

Goulds Lagoon Sanctuary
Less than 20 km north of Hobart along Main Road, Gould’s Lagoon is a haven for waterfowl including Australasian Shoveler, Hardhead, Chestnut and Grey Teal as well as some vagrant Freckled and Pink-eared Ducks. Despite suburbia, the lagoon boasts regular Latham’s Snipe, and Spotted, Spotless and Baillon’s Crakes in summer. Look for Tasmanian Native-hen, Eurasian Coot, Purple Swamp hen, egrets, cormorants and the uncommon Dusky Moorhen. Raptors hunt overhead and Masked Lapwings call the alarm.

Eaglehawk Neck Pelagic Trips
The waters off south-eastern Tasmania provide some of the best pelagic birding in the world and seabird trips regularly leave from Pirates Bay jetty at Eaglehawk Neck on Tasman Peninsula. The continental shelf is less than two hours away by boat across waters mostly sheltered from the infamous sou’westerlies so trip cancellations are rare. However, do take seasickness tablets before departure, as conditions can still be rough. Many Antarctic, Sub-Antarctic and New Zealand species have been sighted, including almost every taxon of albatross recorded in Australia from the Northern and Southern Royal Albatross to Buller’s, Grey-headed and Light-mantled Albatrosses as well as other highlights such as Mottled, Grey and Soft-plumaged Petrels. Grey-backed Storm-Petrel and Slender-billed and Antarctic Prions. Recent rarities include Chatham Albatross, Westland Petrel and Blue Petrel.

For more information and to find out more about the wide range of activities that BirdLife Tasmania is involved in, go to http://www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-tasmania.

BirdLife Australia organises regular pelagic outings from Eaglehawk Neck. For more information contact Paul Brooks theleadboots@gmail.com or Rohan Clarke rohan@wildlifeimages.com.au.

Above: A Southern Royal Albatross glides past the spectacular Cape Hauy during an Eaglehawk Neck Pelagic. Photo by Els Wakefield.