

Expedition Lord Howe



A journey of adventure
and discovery

September
2008/09



Growing up I was very lucky to have been taken to Lord Howe Island for many holidays with my parents Dick and Pip Smith. It was their favorite place and now holds a very special place in my mind as the perfect island.

The pristine natural beauty of the island and the adventures we shared stayed with me during the ten years that I traveled the world working for leading expedition companies such as Lindblad and Aurora Expeditions.

Lord Howe Island reminds me most of Bora Bora in French Polynesia with its crystal clear lagoon, towering mountains, stunning coral reef and swaying palm trees. This unspoilt paradise is right on our doorstep, just two hours flight from the east coast of Australia

When my husband James and I purchased Capella Lodge at the southern end of the Island, at the foot of Mts Gower and Lidgbird we considered Lord Howe the perfect destination for an expedition of our own.

I spoke to my good friends at Aurora, Greg and Margaret to see if they would consider joining us in designing our planned Expedition Lord Howe program. They were thrilled, having traveled to the great island many times themselves. Renowned Lord Howe naturalist Ian Hutton agreed to join us on excursions and to present unforgettable natural history lectures in the evenings.

Now, after three years of very successful week long programs we are again working together and invite you to be part of our annual journey of adventure and discovery. In true expedition style our days will be filled with various adventures, including National Parks walks and marine-based activities.

In 2008, we're introducing a new 10 day program which will allow for greater flexibility, added walks and the opportunity for some 'down time' in between!

September is ideal for the Expedition as it heralds the return of the spring seabirds for breeding and we experience the chaos of the island's seabird colonies during their courtship rituals. Temperatures in the low 20's are perfect for exploring the rainforest and palm groves on the excellent walking trails which criss-cross the island, leading to great vantage points.

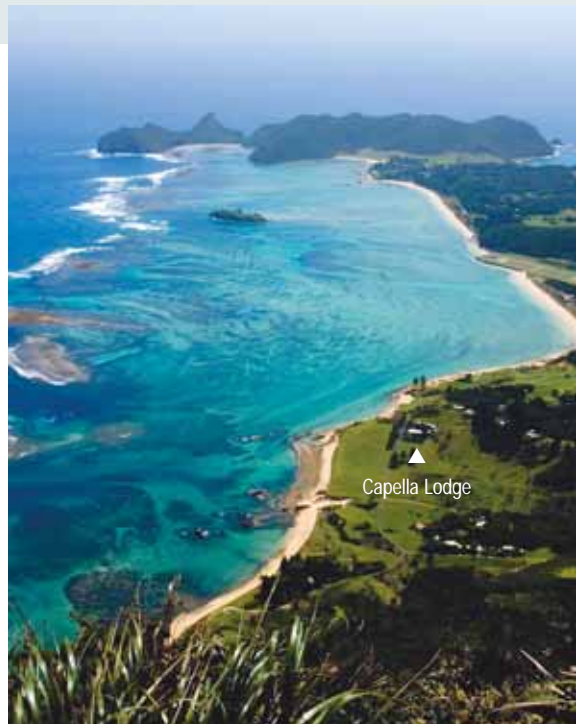
Breathtaking coastal scenery, a lagoon fringed by the world's southern most coral reef, unique plants and teeming seabird colonies make Lord Howe Island an inspirational place for a great expedition.

Hayley

Hayley Baillie



Lord Howe Island is located 700km northeast of Sydney on about the same latitude as Port Macquarie. The island is 11km long and 2.8km at its widest point.



Expedition Lord Howe

Departure Dates: 2008 – September 14-24
2009 – September 13-23

A flexible approach: Our expeditions offer wonderful possibilities. With this in mind, our itinerary is always dependent on a number of factors, weather certainly being one, and changes may be made to take advantage of opportunities nature may have in store for us.

10 Day Itinerary

Day 1 – Arrive Lord Howe Island via QantasLink where Capella Lodge Managers will meet the group. Settle in with a cool drink on the terrace overlooking the mountains and lagoon, enjoy the afternoon getting to know Capella Lodge and its environs. This evening whilst relaxing with drinks and canapés, Expedition Leader Ian Hutton will join us in the Kentia Lounge for an introductory talk on the island and the week of discovery ahead.



Ball's Pyramid

A highlight of a visit to Lord Howe Island is the boat cruise to see Ball's Pyramid – the world's tallest oceanic rock spire. Not only is it one of the most awe inspiring landscapes on the planet – it is one of the great seabird islands of the world.

Day 2 – This morning the Expedition starts in earnest as we set out with backpacks and binoculars to walk to the secluded pebbly beach of Boat Harbour. We encounter many unique plant species as we traverse tall rainforests and unusual prop-rooted groves of Pandanus. After billy tea with lunch we return to Capella via Mutton Bird Point, an excellent bird-watching vantage point. This sea-bird haven is home to a breeding colony of rare Masked Boobies, many of which will by now have new chicks. This evening's lecture before dinner will be on the formation and geology of Lord Howe Island.

Day 3 – Enjoy this morning at leisure. Following lunch at the Lodge we leave for an afternoon walk to Little Island. This easy flat stroll through the palm forest includes opportunities to see the endemic Lord Howe Island Woodhen and possibly a Providence Petrel chick at close-hand. We will also have the opportunity to explore South Reef. Reefwalking is a great way to explore areas of reef uncovered only at low tide allowing us to closely observe the unique creatures of this marine environment, each with their own lifestyle stories! This evening's lecture with Ian will cover the birds of Lord Howe Island.

Day 4 – The Kentia Palm is one of the most beautiful palms in the world and this morning we will visit the Palm Nursery to discover how the native palms are cultivated for commercial sale. As the Kentia remains a highly favoured indoor plant grown throughout the world, millions of palm seedlings are exported annually. We also visit the Lord Howe Island Historical Society Museum and view artefacts, photographs, documents and collections relating to the island's cultural heritage and natural history. Following lunch at the Lodge we take to the island's northern hills and climb Malabar Ridge. With stunning views over the island and out to the Admiralty Islets, the ridge has many fabulous vantage points. We return to Ned's Beach to enjoy drinks and canapés prepared by our chef on the BBQ. On dusk we experience the return of thousands of Shearwaters to the island after a day's fishing. En route to Capella for dinner, we have the chance to observe the Muttonbirds at their nesting burrows.



Masked Boobies

Lord Howe Island has the world's most southern colony of Masked Boobies. As the chicks hatch in July and August we will see them quite large and covered in soft white down. During evening lectures Ian will discuss recent scientific research on this bird.



Muttonbirds

September sees the Muttonbirds return to Lord Howe Island after a long four month migratory journey across the Equator and back. Two species breed on Lord Howe – the Flesh-footed Shearwater and the Wedge-tailed Shearwater.

We will have the chance to view their early courtship behaviour during an evening excursion. Ian will also provide an insight into recent research projects concerning the Muttonbirds.



Bush Orchid blooms

Lord Howe Island has ten native orchid species and September is the flowering season for the endemic subspecies *Dendrobium gracilicaule howeanum* which we will see in full bloom on our walks through the rainforest.

Day 5 – Following breakfast, Islander Cruises will transport us from the shores of Lovers Bay across the lagoon to North Bay. We spend the day at this quintessential tropical paradise complete with swaying palm trees, a perfect sandy beach and excellent snorkelling from the boat. The bay is home to colonies of Noddy and Sooty Terns. Also the holarctic waders such as the Whimbrel, Bar-tailed Godwit, Pacific Golden Plover and Ruddy Turnstone can be spotted on the beach at low tide. We can then climb Mt Eliza to take in the spectacular views of the island looking south. After a great Aussie beach BBQ, our afternoon will include time for beachcombing, snorkelling and hiking to explore the nearby rocky cove called Old Gulch. The reef is rich in stunning coral gardens and diverse fish life, and is home to stingrays and turtles. From the boat, our dive guide will take us to explore some of the lagoon's remote and pristine underwater worlds.



Lord Howe Island's flora and fauna is exceptionally rich and diverse and has been drawing botanists, zoologists and naturalists to its shores since the island's discovery in 1788.



Woodhen

Once one of the rarest birds in the world, a captive breeding program rescued this flightless bird from extinction in the 1980's. Today, we can take a short walk from Capella and quietly observe these birds feeding in the leaf litter, quite unafraid of humans.

23 kilometres south east of Lord Howe to Ball's Pyramid. A spectacular sight from the water, the near vertical rock walls of the Pyramid tower 550 metres upward to a summit a mere four metres in width. This evening's talk features the marine life of Lord Howe Island.

Day 8 – Today is an early start for those wanting to experience one of the best day walks in Australia; Mt Gower. At 875 metres, this compelling mountain has the highest summit on the Island, and is high on many people's lists of walks to complete. Much of the terrain is rugged and the ascent is strenuous, however this rewarding climb will be one of the highlights of our visit. The 8km return walk from the sea to the summit takes us through a stunning diversity of plant and animal life. If we're lucky, the views from our lunch spot will be spectacular as the island stretches out before us. Alternatively, for those not quite as keen to tackle 'the big one' there is the easier option to climb to the Goat House. This shorter, exhilarating walk will take us 400m, as high as it's possible to climb up Mt Lidgbird. Here the views are breathtaking and well worth the walk.



Wedding Lily in flower

During September one of Lord Howe Island's most beautiful and intriguing flowers is blooming. A member of the Iris family, this endemic species has its only close relatives found today in Southern Africa, an unusual disjunct distribution.

Day 6 – Today we explore a little-visited part of the island as we walk to the far side of Mt Lidgbird to a remote creek gully called Dinner Run. Here we follow the coastline and then climb 'the run' to the base of a waterfall, which can flow quite spectacularly especially after heavy rain. We enjoy a different perspective of the island along the way, including a view to the intriguing Ball's Pyramid. Relax at the Lodge this afternoon before the evening lecture with Ian featuring the plants native to Lord Howe Island.

Day 7 – This morning we take to the high seas and circumnavigate Lord Howe onboard the island's premier ocean vessels, MV Greenback and MV Noctiluca. As well as viewing the main island from the boat, given favourable weather conditions we will travel



Providence Petrel

Lord Howe Island has fourteen species of seabirds breeding, and one of these, the Providence Petrel breeds nowhere else in the world. Each winter they breed high on the mountain tops adjacent to Capella, but with recent conservation initiatives they are now breeding nearer sea level.

Day 9 – This morning we board the glass-bottom boat and travel to view a number of different reef environments within the sheltered lagoon. Warm currents from the Coral Sea to the north bring tropical fish species which mix with species from cooler southern waters, resulting in a very diverse range of marine life. There'll also be an opportunity to snorkel to really experience the submarine world. Following lunch at the Lodge, we spend the afternoon reef walking at Ned's Beach. This is another great way to explore marine life uncovered only at low tide, it also allows us to closely observe some of the island's unique shore line geology. We return to the lodge for farewell sunset drinks on Gower's Terrace, Ian's photo roundup of the days past and degustation dinner in the Restaurant.

Day 10 – Our final day on the island starts with a visit to the fascinating Meteorological Station. We then walk a short distance to view the island's ecologically sensitive Waste Management Facility and ground breaking efforts to deal with the island's waste. A light lunch is served at the Lodge before afternoon flights depart.



When I was 20 I sailed from Sydney to Lord Howe in an attempt to climb Ball's Pyramid. That adventure introduced me to one of my favourite places in the world, Lord Howe Island.

It has always amazed me how few Aussies have been to Lord Howe, or have even heard about it. Especially when I meet people all the time that have been to Antarctica or other great places in Australia like the Kimberley. If you're a modern adventurer I encourage you to experience one of our most amazing natural history destinations.

Ian Hutton is the leading authority on Lord Howe Island and will allow you to gain an amazing insight into one of the world's significant habitats of biological diversity. It's easy to see why the Island is on the prestigious World Heritage List as the bird and marine life is incredible. It also has some of the most fantastic bushwalks in Australia.

Dick Smith

Dick Smith



I am often asked, of all the hundreds of islands we have visited in the tropical regions of the world which is our favourite. The answer is always the same, Lord Howe Island. Nature has endowed this beautiful island with a little bit of everything that is wonderful. The combination is near perfect. It is a paradise close to home, tranquil, safe and very comfortable.

Lord Howe Island is a precious gift from nature, a peaceful speck rising from the Pacific Ocean in unparalleled splendour. It is a destination that offers something special to all Australians. Once you have savoured the delights of this special place you will surely return for it is without doubt the most wonderful little island in the world.

Valerie Taylor

Valerie Taylor

"The Expedition was a pleasure and a revelation. There could be no more authentic way to experience this incomparable place."

Martin Hadley and Jessica Singer – Expeditioners 2005

"Many thanks to Ian and the Capella staff that have created an expedition for 18 who will talk about it forever."

Henry Johnston – Expeditioner 2006

"Beyond expectations, food, company, organization and staff first class."

Rod and Susie Owens – Expeditioners 2007

Our Expedition Leader



Ian Hutton has been exploring Lord Howe Island, researching and recording its flora and fauna for the past 25 years. In that time his documentation and photography of the island's natural history has produced seven publications including the Australian Geographic Book of Lord Howe Island and a number of scientific papers.

Since 1986 he has been leading natural history journeys for various museum and society travel programs. With his wealth of experience on Lord Howe Island there is no better person who can ensure you make the most of your time on the island, whatever your interests.

In 2006 Ian received the OAM award for service to conservation and tourism on the island.



Capella Lodge

LUXE LORD HOWE

Nestled above Lovers Bay, on the southern tip of the island Capella is Lord Howe's premium boutique accommodation.

Hosting no more than 20 guests, the Lodge complements the serenity and pristine natural environment providing a luxurious refuge.

Spacious suites feature chic beach house interiors, some with mezzanine lofts and spectacular sea and reef-break views and others with oversized outdoor decks nestled amongst the endemic Kentias.

The Capella Restaurant has a reputation as Lord Howe's icon dining destination. Our inspired contemporary menus showcase freshly caught local fish, regional seafood, house made pasta, boutique farmed meats, organic island greens, lodge churned ice creams and daily baked breads. Wines will be expertly matched each evening to complement the inspired daily dinner menu.

Outdoor lounging areas and a wet edge plunge pool make Gower's Terrace THE place to watch the sun sink over the South Pacific. Our Kentia Lounge and Library indulges guests on wide comfy banquettes fireside and transforms each evening as the venue for our informative lecture program.

Relax with a massage in the Capella Spa or enjoy an invigorating heated plunge bath in our outdoor pavillion under the Kentias.





Suite Types

Lidgbird Suite – Our premium suite features a large wrap around veranda with private plunge spa and outdoor shower complementing the spacious king bedded open plan interior. For convenience an electric golf buggy is provided complimentary. Capacity: 2 adults.

Lagoon Loft – Features a bedroom mezzanine with king bed, deck and amazing views, lower level lounge with single bed and sumptuous outdoor daybed. Capacity: 3 adults.

Capella Family Suite – Spacious single level suite with separate king bedroom and day lounge with 2 single beds, expansive outdoor deck and dual entry ensuite. Capacity: 4 adults.

Capella Suite – Features spacious interiors, king or twin beds, and expansive outdoor deck areas with day bed. Capacity: 2 adults.

All suites feature ensuite with bath and dump shower, king beds, superior cotton linen and towels, daily housekeeping and evening turndown service, beach towels, bathrobes, pillow selection, premium toiletries, iron, hairdryer, CD player, TV, DVD, telephone, room bar and ceiling fan.

What's included

Expedition Lord Howe includes

- return airfare with QantasLink to Lord Howe Island from Sydney, including island airport transfers
- ten nights at Capella Lodge in your choice of suite
- all meals including daily gourmet breakfast, lunch (walkers picnic, BBQ or light buffet at the lodge), selected sunset drinks and canapés, three course dinner with inspired daily changing menu, selected dinner wines and most non alcoholic drinks
- use of mountain bikes
- all marine expeditions and land based excursions including MV Greenback & MV Noctiluca, Islander Cruises and LHI Environmental Tours with use of snorkelling equipment and wetsuits
- leadership of the expedition and program of lectures by noted naturalist Ian Hutton
- special Expedition Lord Howe kit including polo shirt, sun hat, rainjacket, fleece jacket and backpack
- comprehensive expedition information, including suggestions of what to bring and the Australian Geographic Guide to Lord Howe Island by Ian Hutton

At additional cost: Travel insurance, all items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone, spa treatments, boutique, room bar and extra alcoholic beverage charges.

Getting there

QantasLink operate a 32 seat Boeing Dash 8 aircraft and provide an excellent scheduled service to Lord Howe Island in around 2 hours directly from Sydney. A 14kg luggage limit per person applies.

*Expedition Lord Howe is an annual event.
Register your interest for September 2009.*

*We also run Expedition Kangaroo Island
from Southern Ocean Lodge
www.southernoceanlodge.com.au/expedition*

How to book

Contact Capella Lodge Reservations
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Aurora Expeditions is Australia's first polar charter operator, specialising in voyages to Antarctica, the High Arctic, Papua New Guinea and the Kimberley. Aurora was founded in 1990 by Everest mountaineer Greg Mortimer and wife Margaret.
For more information visit
www.auroraexpeditions.com.au

Expedition Lord Howe

2008 Departure Dates: September 14-24

2009 Departure Dates: September 13-23

Cost per person	Twin Share	Single	Additional person
Capella Suite	\$7500	\$10500	\$4900
Lagoon Loft	\$8500	\$11500	\$4900
Lidgbird Suite	\$9500	–	–

Note: If you are a solo traveller, subject to availability we can allocate you to share with another guest at the twin share rate.



Terms and Conditions

Reservations: To confirm your place, a non-refundable deposit of \$1000 per person is required at the time of reservation and is payable by Mastercard, Visa, Bankcard, direct deposit or cheque.

Final payment: Due no later than two months prior to departure.

Cancellation policy: If you cancel two months or more prior to departure, a full refund less your deposit will be made. Cancellations within 4-8 weeks of arrival 50% of total paid will be refunded. Within 4 Weeks prior to arrival all monies will be forfeited. No refund can be given in the event of a non-arrival or for any unused services. All cancellations must be received in writing. No refund can be given in the event of a non-arrival, any unused services or any activities unable to be completed due to weather conditions.

Insurance: We recommend that you protect yourself with travel insurance.

Lord Howe natural history images courtesy Ian Hutton