



Jack Shick traverses the "lower road" on the Mount Gower walk

## “ RUB NOSES WITH THE MOST SLOTHFUL FISH YOU HAVE EVER SEEN

one minute, raining from the sky and tripping over walkers' feet the next. On a fine day the summit views are expansive, whereas a misty day delivers an intimate forest of mosses, ferns and orchids. Play spot-the-flightless-bird – perhaps you'll spot a woodhen, once one of the world's rarest birds.

Birdwatchers develop a twitch just thinking of the avian possibilities on Lord Howe. Who can blame them? With 170 recorded species to search for it is likely you will return home with binocular tan lines. The southern cliffs and high peaks stand out for in-your-face encounters of the feathered kind, while Mutton Bird Point is the best place to see masked boobies, an attraction as much for their name as their cheeky good looks.

WHEN YOUR LEGS NEED A BREAK, swap hiking boots for a kayak and ride the glassy tide to North Bay – shrewdly avoiding the 1100 knee-shattering steps that await walkers on Dawsons Ridge – to snorkel the wreck of the *Favourite*, a fishing boat that was stranded on the reef in the 1960s. Drift above a huge variety of coral, leave footprints on the sweeping beach, then enjoy a barbecue feast beneath shady



### WHAT TO TAKE

Most sports equipment can be hired locally. Bring comfortable walking shoes, a backpack, small water bottle and rain jacket. A pair of compact binoculars is a worthwhile inclusion. Bicycles are invaluable for A-to-B transport and many accommodation providers can supply them.

thatch palms. After lunch climb Mount Eliza for a view unchanged since settlement, or explore Old Gulch and discover the Herring Pools, miniature seascapes left isolated at low tide. North Bay is worth a full day and kayaks can be hired from Busty's Boatshed.

Lord Howe's location makes it temperate, yet its marine life tells a different story. Beneath the waves the warm East Australian Current sweeps through to create a melting pot of aquatic life – which spans tropical, subtropical and temperate species, including over 500 types of fish – and the world's most southerly barrier reef. Get amongst it on a guided "discover scuba" experience with local operator >