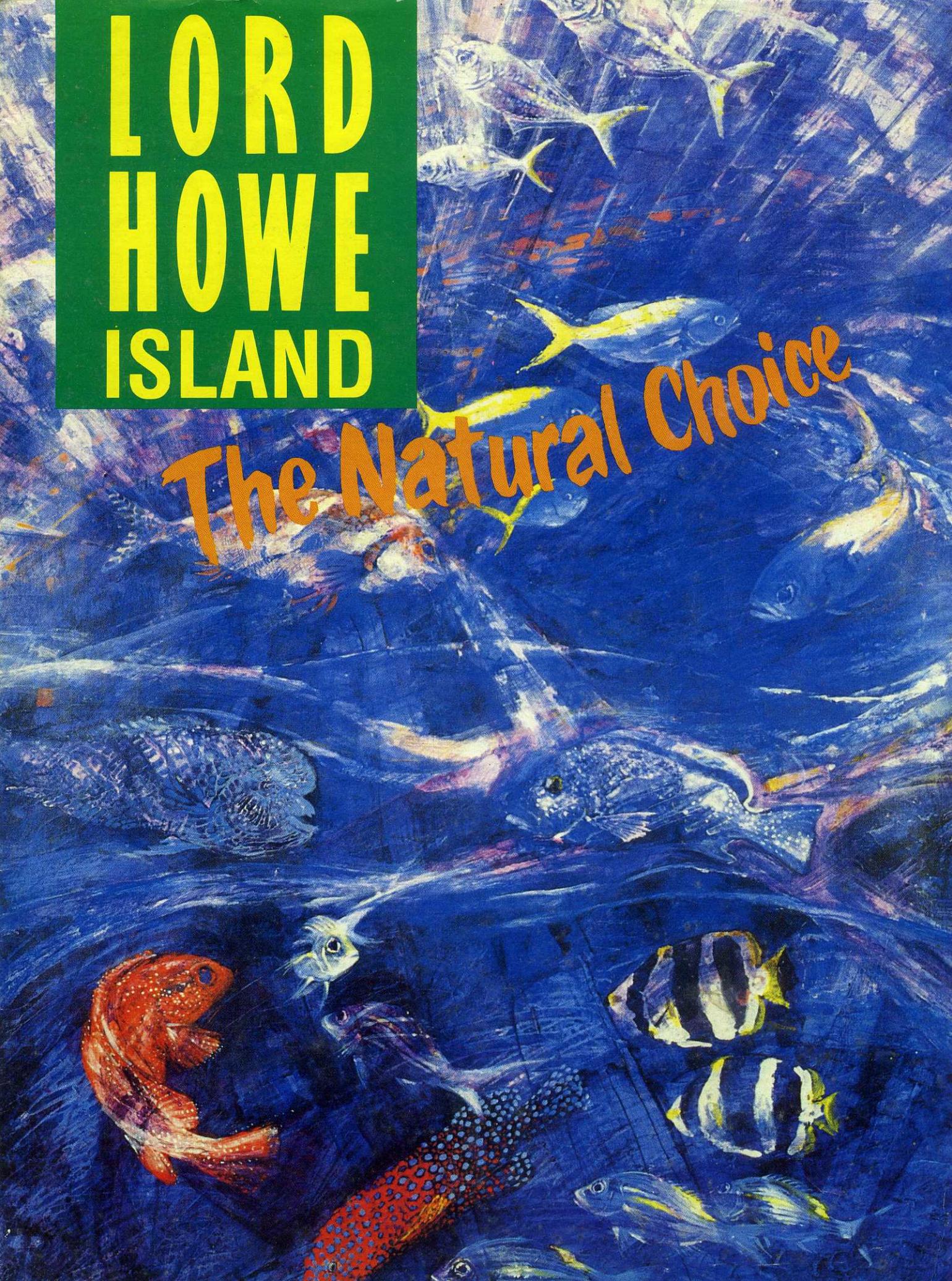


# LORD HOWE ISLAND

*The Natural Choice*



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## Nature lovers unite!

Where in the world can you feed teeming schools of coral fish by hand from the edge of a beach, or call down seabirds in the wild so that they land at your very feet; or be startled by one of the world's rarest landbirds, as it emerges from the lush rainforest to inspect you with a volley of chirps and whistles?

Lord Howe Island has long been a Mecca for those who love nature, being the site of more environmental research than any other single location in Australia.

Indeed, one of the very earliest visitors to the Island, Arthur Bowes Smythe, set the tone when he wrote in his journal of May, 1788: "When I was in the woods amongst the birds I could not help picturing to myself the golden age as described by Ovid". Describing the multitudes of tame land and sea birds, and abundant marine life in the Island's lagoon, he wrote: "The water in many parts is not more than 4 or 5ft deep with a fine white sandy bottom with coral, brain stones and many other marine plants growing at the bottom, and the innumerable quantities and varieties of fish swimming amongst this Coral Grove . . . exhibited such a novel and beautiful scene as but few places in the World I believe will afford".

Smythe was the first of many visitors who came to admire the natural beauty and unusual flora and fauna of an island, which has now been placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List — a privilege it shares with such places as the Grand Canyon, the Serengeti Wildlife Park in Tanzania and the Pyramids of Egypt, and the rainforests of NSW.

With its untouched environment, the first thoughts of any prospective visitor to the Island are likely to turn to the inevitability of "roughing it". Far from it! The Island's tourist industry has achieved a level of sophistication based on almost 100 years of experience catering for tourists. (See story, page 5B.)

The Island's tourist industry began to boom in the late 1940s when steamships had been superseded by Catalina and converted Sunderland flying-boats, which made the 700km flight from Sydney in about four hours.

This is a far cry from Eastern's fully pressurised Dash 8 — introduced on the Sydney to Lord Howe run this year — which does the journey in under two hours!

Lord Howe's accommodation and other facilities have kept pace with the improvements in transportation. Visitors can choose from 16 separate lodges, some of which offer a "full tariff", which includes all meals; while others comprise fully self-contained units where families can prepare their own meals.

Some lodges offer both.

A very high standard of comfort is provided in both full tariff and self-contained accommodation. There are three restaurants on the Island, along with six guesthouse dining rooms all of which put the welcome mat out to ALL visitors.

Good food is standard, with freshly caught kingfish being an Island speciality. Each lodge or restaurant has its own special night in which gourmet meals or buffets are served. The most regularly heard complaint from visitors is being exposed to so much fine food!

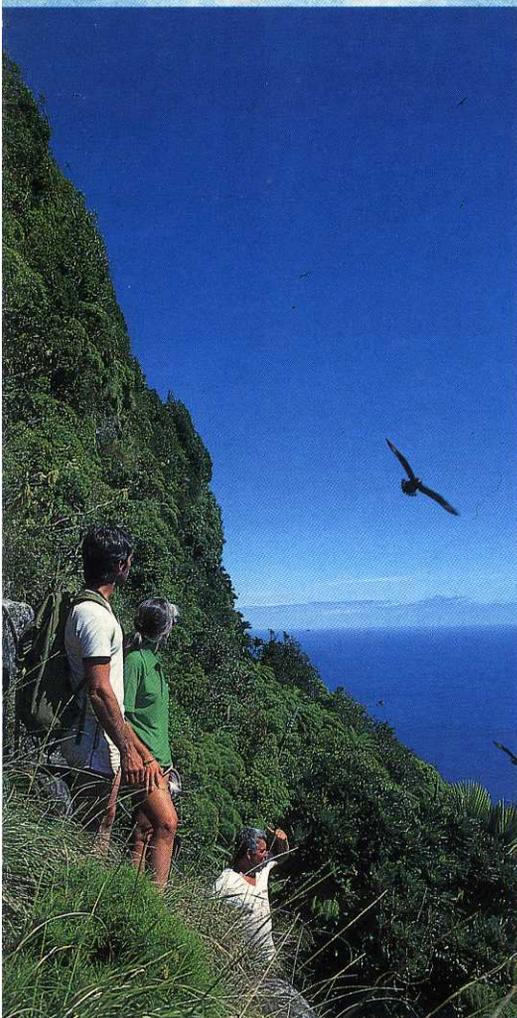
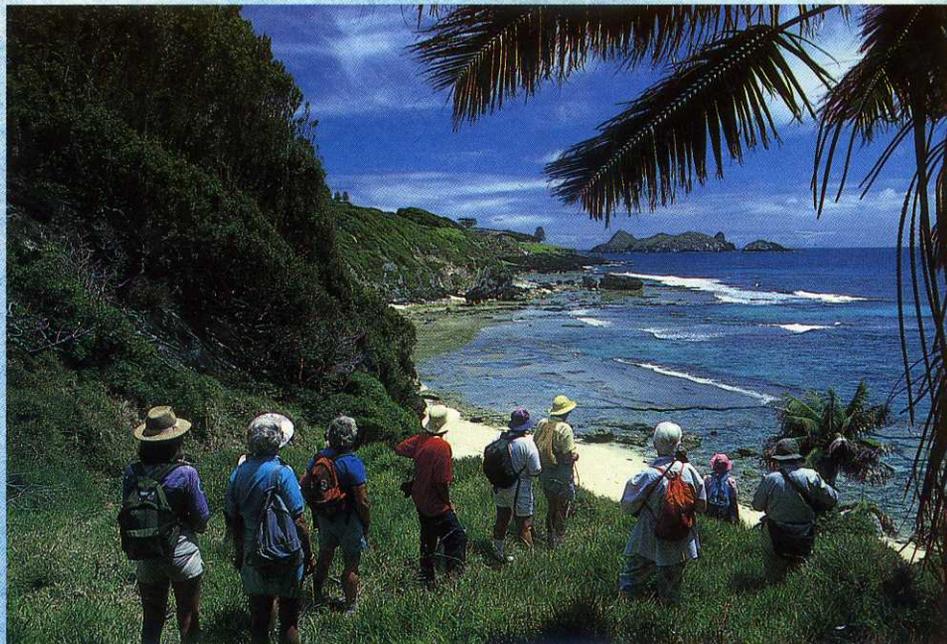
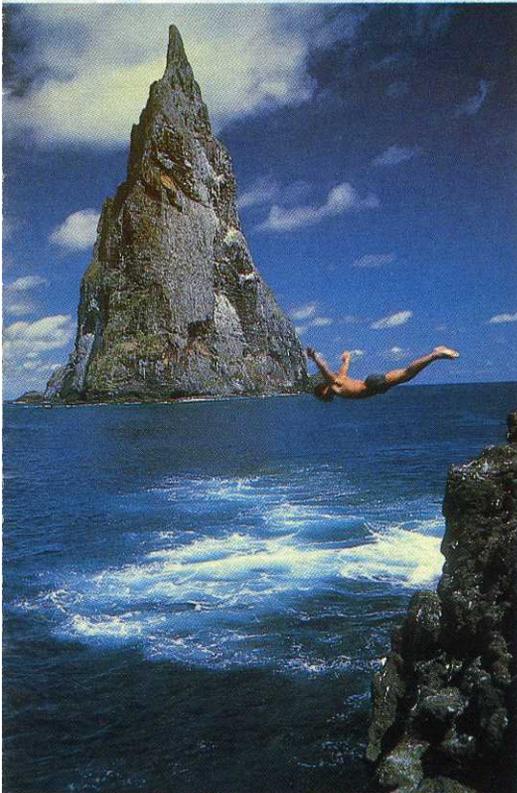
Sporting facilities are excellent. The Island boasts three tennis courts, a bowling green and a nine-hole golf course which nestles in exquisite surroundings beneath Mount Lidgbird, and would probably win a place in the "Most Scenic Golf Course in the World" competition.

There are four shops on the Island with a wide range of provisions, most of which



Seabird breeding colony. Admiralty Islets, offshore from Lord Howe

## 'Even hardened land-lubbers can enjoy the underwater without getting their feet wet'



sell clothing and souvenirs. There are also two boutiques.

Lord Howe has some magnificent beaches, including a sheltered 6km lagoon, a surfing beach, and a marine reserve at Ned's Beach where brightly coloured corals and coral fish abound. Here, just a few feet from the shore, it is possible to stand in knee-deep water and hand-feed coloured wrasse and parrot fish, mullet, trevally, silver drummer, and the strange "double-header" wrasse which sports a huge bump on its forehead.

Venture out a few more metres into waist-deep water, don a mask and snorkel, and an underwater wonderland of corals, coloured seaweeds and fish is instantly revealed. Indeed, the Island has the most southerly coral reef in the world, nurtured by a warm current that flows south from the Queensland Coast.

Many tropical marine species flourish in Island waters, but there is also an interesting family of marine creatures originating in cooler waters from the south. But what of those dreaded denizens of tropical seas, the stone fish and sea wasp? They have never caused trouble in Island waters, and even shark attack is entirely unknown in

200 years of recorded Island history.

Deep sea SCUBA diving around Lord Howe is equal to some of the best in the world, owing to the unusual underwater geology of basalt caves and fissures, prolific growth of colourful soft corals, and the clarity of the water. Snorkelling and SCUBA gear can be hired on the Island, and local tour operators organise special diving parties.

Even hardened "land-lubbers" can enjoy the underwater sights without getting their feet wet by taking a trip in one of the Island's two glass-bottomed boats.

Finally, what does Lord Howe Island offer to those who are not interested in history, fossils, rare plants and exotic marine life, and just want a simple relaxed holiday?

Nearly all find the Island to be a place where they can really relax and enjoy themselves. The quiet, low-key atmosphere, the mild sub-tropical climate, the superb beaches and scenery, comfortable accommodation and good food all combine to make it the holiday of a lifetime.

My advice to all of you who have not yet visited this extraordinary Island is . . . COME ON OVER!

**Clockwise from top left: Ball's Pyramid, a spectacular spire of crumbling rock; exploring the rock platform, Middle Beach; a Providence Petrel soars over Mt Gower.**

Photos: Ian Hutton