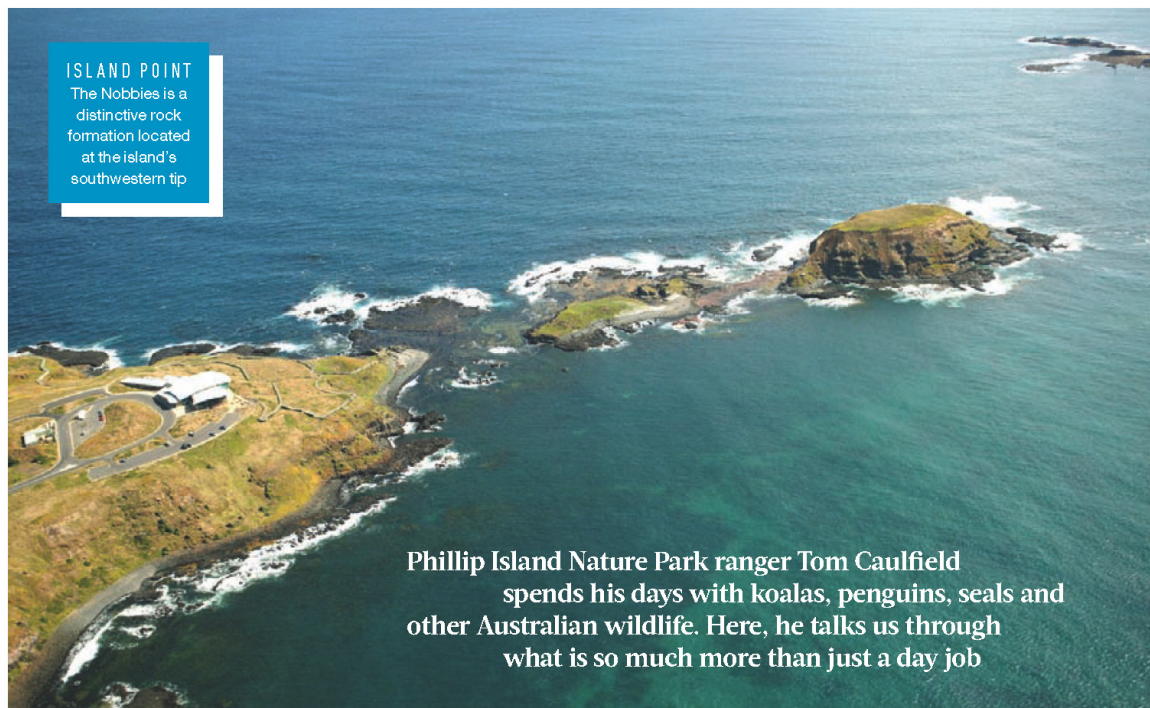


ISLAND POINT

The Nobbies is a distinctive rock formation located at the island's southwestern tip



Phillip Island Nature Park ranger Tom Caulfield spends his days with koalas, penguins, seals and other Australian wildlife. Here, he talks us through what is so much more than just a day job

ISLAND LIFE



TOM CAULFIELD
NATURE PARK RANGER ON PHILLIP
ISLAND, VICTORIA, FOR 7 YEARS

TO CLEAR THE head and get the blood pumping in the morning, most days I go for a beach or road jog – a very pleasant activity on beautiful Phillip Island – then have a healthy breakfast. There are about 10,000 permanent residents on the island but on weekends there could be over 100,000 people. We say the island sinks a few centimetres, then rises again when everyone leaves!

What I love about my role on Phillip Island is the variety. Each day involves talking about different topics at different sites in the nature park and engaging with people of different ages, nationalities and cultures.

For example, in a single day I might give talks on short-tailed shearwaters

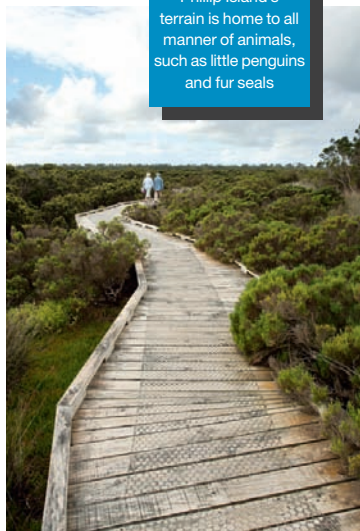
at Cape Woolamai, seal talks at the Nobbies rock formations, Koala Conservation Centre talks and tours and talks at the Penguin Parade. In recent years, I've also helped out at Churchill Island – including conducting cow-milking demonstrations and feeding and helping out with the farm animals.

I've been working as a Penguin Parade ranger for nearly seven years and as a support education ranger for most of that time, giving talks across the nature park.

The park has more than 200 staff and we have a variety of rangers; some are full-time and some are part-time. We have environment rangers, involved in habitat and land management; education rangers, who give talks ➔

NATURE'S WAY

Phillip Island's terrain is home to all manner of animals, such as little penguins and fur seals



"I love the work I do and the environment I live and work in"

and interpretation around the park; researchers and scientists; wildlife rehabilitation rangers; Penguin Parade rangers; Koala Conservation Centre rangers; and Churchill Island rangers.

Whether it's on a beautiful beach, at the Nobbies with its spectacular scenery, in the bush after a warm, rainy day with its the eucalyptus-tree aroma or on Churchill Island with its views over the bay, Phillip Island is such a beautiful environment in which to work. I also really enjoy the personal interaction with the visitors.

I see or hear wildlife every night when I arrive home from work: animals such as swamp wallabies and ringtail and brush-tail possums. I've had an echidna living under my house which I've



seen at least six times in the past 12 months. There's a lot of birdlife during the day, too, including honeyeaters, seabirds and kookaburras.

Most of my career was spent in offices in advertising and sales roles, so this is the first outdoor job I've ever had. You learn a hell of a lot pretty quickly, and as with all the rangers, we're learning and seeing new things all the time. Nature is pretty amazing and every day, week and year is different, especially if you keep your eyes and ears open. After seven years, I couldn't imagine myself doing anything else. I love the work I do and the environment I live and work in. We often have visitors saying how envious they are and that we have the best job in the world. ★

SEE THE ANIMALS

LITTLE PENGUINS

Penguin Parade

1019 Ventnor Rd, Summerlands.

Tel: +61 (3) 5951 2830.

KOALAS

Koala Conservation Centre

1810 Phillip Island Tourist Rd, Cowes.

Tel: +61 (3) 5952 1610.

FUR SEALS

The Nobbies Centre

1320 Ventnor Rd, Summerlands.

Tel: +61 (3) 5951 2816.

FARM ANIMALS

Churchill Island Heritage Farm

246 Samuel Amess Dr, Churchill Island, Newhaven.

Tel: +61 (3) 5951 2802.

For more information on Phillip Island attractions, go to penguins.org.au