



Autumn (March to May) on Kangaroo Island

Average autumn temperatures are 20°C (68°F) maximum and 13°C (55°F) minimum

The soft light and warm days of autumn are among the best to experience the real essence of Kangaroo Island. For photographers and walkers, March to May are the ideal months.

Warm days suffused with sunlight set the backdrop for a relaxing post-summer getaway.

It's warm enough to enjoy a day outdoors then cool enough at night to open a bottle of Kangaroo Island's finest red wine over dinner.

Birds

Looking for a place with abundant birdlife and a good chance of seeing it in the wild? Kangaroo Island is the ideal location.

Along any walking trail, by any lagoon or coastal flat, on any beach or headland, keep your eyes and ears open and your binoculars handy – the birds are all around.

Of the 266 bird species known from Kangaroo Island, several are secure on Kangaroo Island but no longer the mainland: Southern

Emu-wren, Shy Heathwren, Beautiful Firetail and Western Whipbird. The Glossy Black-cockatoo is still endangered on the island but is recovering with the help of an island management program.

Just as Double-banded Plovers arrive from New Zealand to settle in the tidal flats and brackish lagoon waters, Cape Barren Geese, Glossy Black-cockatoos and Little Penguins settle into nesting.

Hooded Dotterels scamper to and fro across island beaches. Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoos form into feeding flocks of up to 200 feed on Hakea and Banksia, and on introduced Pinus trees.

Immature Rock Parrots occupy verges and roadside strips, and feed on coastal plants like samphire and sea rocket, until July.

The handful of sightings of the Rufous Whistler in late summer and early autumn could be repeated with luck and searching in the Rocky Point area of Dudley Peninsula. Please report sightings to the Natural Resources Centre in Kingscote.

Australian Pelicans abound, Wedge-tailed Eagles soar, the Eastern Osprey nest at D'Estrees Bay is in full view, and Black Swans, and Freckled, Blue-billed and Musk ducks, are just a few of the resident waterfowl found on lagoons, sheltered bays and tidal flats.





Wildlife

Autumn invites nature lovers to Kangaroo Island and asks them to explore. The wind is low, the days are bright and clear, and winter rain has not yet kicked in.

The mighty Rosenberg's Goanna takes in the last rays before winter. Kangaroo and Tamar wallaby young bulge in their mother's pouches. Seals rest on rocks and sea lions on beaches.

Animals can be found all year round but most come out to feed and play at night. All native animals are genuinely wild, and protected. Please keep your distance and use binoculars or a telephoto lens to view them; and park in safe areas, well off the road.

Cape Barren Geese prepare to nest in Native Iris tussocks or build a stick saucer nest on the ground in open areas at Flinders Chase and nearby.

Take a wildlife tour with experts who know where and when to find wildlife. Visit Tourism Kangaroo Island at www.tourkangarooisland.com.au or the Gateway Visitor Information Centre, or National Parks at www.parks.sa.gov.au or at the Flinders Chase or Kingscote offices.

Agriculture

Farmers are working late these months and rely on tractor lights to guide them through the night to seed canola and cereal crops. They rejoice in early rains which fill dams and renew pastures and begin their seed potato harvests

Grape harvest is in full swing and wineries crush grapes to begin wine-making.

Cheesemakers press ewe's milk into new season sheep cheeses.

The island's farming history is showcased at the Parndana Museum, which features the Soldier Settler Scheme, and at the Hope Cottage National Trust museum in Kingscote and Penneshaw Maritime and Folk museums.

For more information about any autumn activities, visit Tourism Kangaroo Island at www.tourkangarooisland.com.au or the Gateway Visitor Information Centre for advice on tours and locations, dining options and much more.

Food and Wine

This is the time of year to pick up some freshly-bottled jams, chutneys and sauces at the Farmers' Markets; try your hand at 'squidding' (fishing for Southern Calamari) from a local jetty; celebrate the cool nights with a leisurely feast and a bottle of Kangaroo Island's finest wine; call at a pop-up food van for island-style 'fast food'; book in for a cooking lesson with locally sourced produce.

Honey outlets, the sheep dairy, several seafood outlets, winery cellar doors, microbreweries and the distillery, are open for visitors.

Each cellar door and farm-gate is a 'one-off' and many offer regional food to complement wine tastings and sales. Restaurants and cafés proudly list Kangaroo Island wine. The island is home to one of the first boutique distilleries in South Australia where fresh botanicals (many locally foraged) enhance handcrafted gin, vodka and liqueurs.

Dining is fine, casual or pop-up. Eateries dot the island from Cape Willoughby to Rocky River, Kingscote to Snellings Beach. If you plan to eat in a remote location, best to call ahead first.

Keep your eye out for Farmers' Markets in Penneshaw and Kingscote and enjoy tastings of many Kangaroo Island products in a festive atmosphere. It's Kangaroo Island - the pace is languid and the atmosphere social.

Visit the Kangaroo Island Food and Wine Association at www.eatdrinkki.com.au to see what events and seasonal offerings are available during your visit.





Bushwalking

The mild temperatures and dry conditions of autumn are made for bushwalking. There are many walks – short, long, easy or hard.

If you have a few hours try the walk from Harvey's Return to Cape Borda or venture down the steep path to the Harvey's Return cove – a careful scramble around the rocks to the right rewards you with extraordinarily contorted schists. From Penneshaw, the Ironstone Hike is soaked in local history and commands an eye-catching mainland view.

Take a short stroll to the delightful Tadpole Cove walk at D'Estrees Bay to see an historic threshing floor, weird geology and possibly an osprey soaring along the shoreline.

Flinders Chase Coastal Trek, a 3-day hike from Cape Borda to West Bay along the west coast, is not a clearly designated route so best suited to experienced hikers. The trek takes in some of the island's most remote coastline, and coastal heath, mallee and forest vegetation. The ocean is very high energy on the west coast and swimming is not recommended.

KI Wilderness Trail, from the Flinders Chase Visitor Centre to Kelly Hill Visitor Centre, is a 5-day, 63-kilometre trail that connects existing paths with 40 km of new trail.

Kangaroo Island Walking Club takes a walk each month to places you might not otherwise be able to access and grades its walks A (hard) to C (easy). The club welcomes visitors to its walks and shows off the island through local eyes. The club's monthly schedule is printed in The Islander newspaper's 'What's On' column.

Photography and wildflowers

Kangaroo Island's abundant native vegetation frames its sense of place. Late summer into autumn, the bush takes on tones that are distinctly Australian: the woody nuts of hakea, cones of banksias, pea pods and gum nuts.

Some of the gum trees and mallees are flowering in cream and pink, and the flame heath begins its bright red flower display on small bushes.

Mallee expanses sparkling in the sun, narrow-leaf avenues glowing in morning and evening light, groves of tall sugar gums or ancient cypress pines, low heath on the exposed limestone coast, tea-tree coastal shrubland, drooping sheoak woodlands feeding Glossy Black-cockatoos – that's Kangaroo Island.

The autumn tones of the mallee trunks and many-shaped woody fruits are pictures waiting to be taken. The weather is also picture perfect: the wind is low; days are bright, clear and still warm.

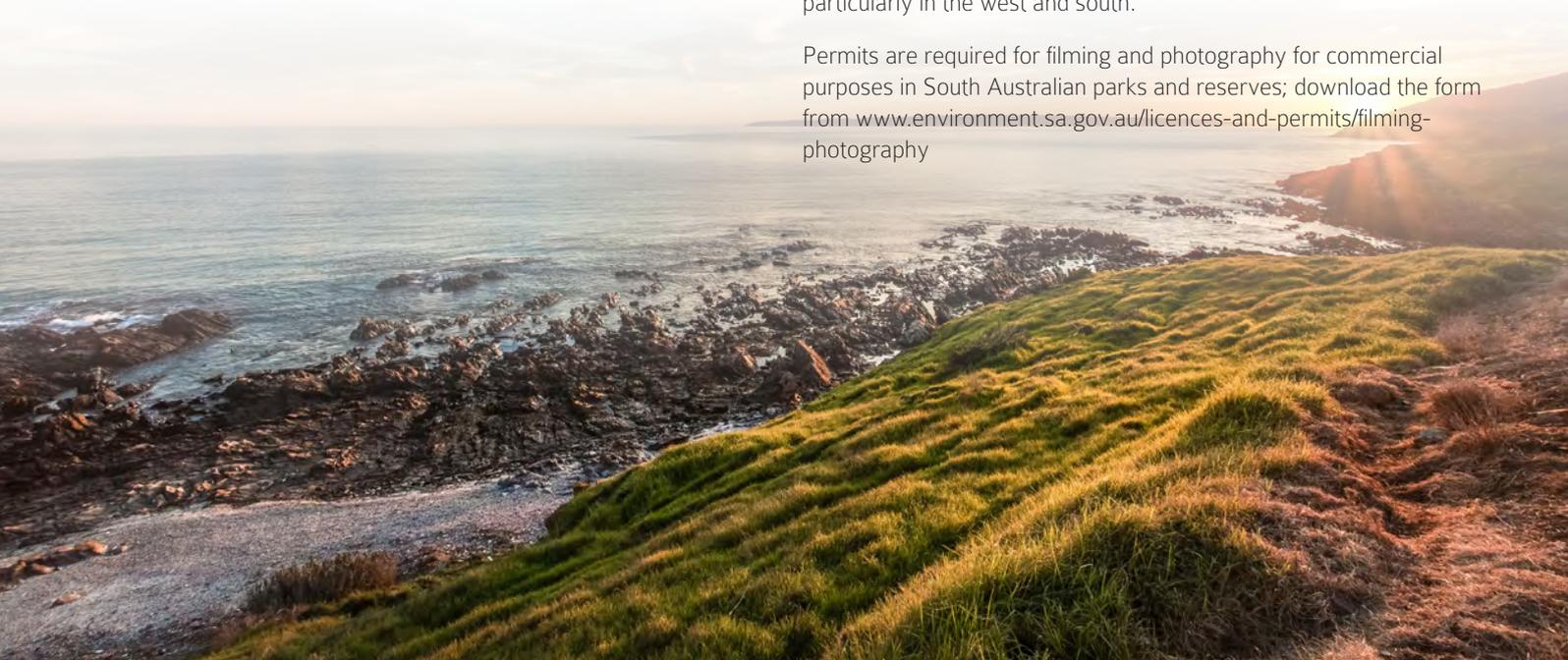
The sapphire meadows glow red and set off the grey trunks of the paperbarks.

The resident Freckled Ducks and Black Swans glide on calm coastal waters. Some of the larger birds take to nesting and should not be disturbed but Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoos form into feeding flocks that are probably heard before they are seen.

Hooded Dotterels scamper up and down empty beaches in pursuit of food.

About half of Kangaroo Island's 4500 square kilometres is native vegetation – along roadsides and creeks, and in enormous blocks, particularly in the west and south.

Permits are required for filming and photography for commercial purposes in South Australian parks and reserves; download the form from www.environment.sa.gov.au/licences-and-permits/filming-photography





Fishing and boating

The mild, calm weather of autumn makes fishing all the more relaxed and comfortable. King George Whiting are biting, Southern Calamari are widespread, particularly over seagrass meadows, Tommy Ruff and Snapper are waiting in sheltered waters of the North Coast and Flathead lie mainly in sheltered shallow sandy beaches. Gummy Shark can be found off sandy beaches around the island, and in sheltered north coast bays.

Trevally are also widespread along the north coast and on the south coast Red Mullet schools arrive at Wreckers Beach. Yellowtail Kingfish can be found at few locations – try Cape Willoughby and around artificial structures in Nepean Bay.

Southern Bluefin Tuna are active off the north coast, west of Snellings Beach, off the south coast, and around the Pages Islands.

Take your family along to the annual American River Fishing Spectacular competition on the Easter weekend, and compare your fishing prowess with the locals.

Kangaroo Island fish, and their habitat and breeding grounds, are protected by Marine Parks and Marine Park Sanctuary Zones. See www.marineparks.sa.gov.au and download the app with offline maps, or check the signs at launch points across the island.

Recreational fishing is allowed everywhere except Sanctuary Zones and Restricted Access Areas. That leaves most bays, beaches, rocks and waters around Kangaroo Island free for your fishing pleasure.

Launch your boat from pay-as-you-go ramps at American River, Bay of Shoals (Kingscote) and Christmas Cove (Penneshaw), or for free from Baudin Beach or Emu Bay. Kangaroo Island's mostly moderate weather allows recreational fishing all year round.

Check limits on size, bag, boat and possession for all fish and shellfish, and season closures, for example for Rock Lobster and Snapper, on the fishing regulations app (www.pir.sa.gov.au).

The many rocky coves along the KI coast and the calm weather make autumn a good snorkelling time.

On the ocean, a river or a lagoon, kayaking is the ultimate cruise to see what's happening on and around the water – quietly spot dolphins, sea eagles, pelicans, fish, swans, and explore historical settlements from the sea. Hire or book a kayak tour at various spots around the island.

Marine Parks and Marine Park Sanctuary Zones protect many creatures and their habitat but you are still welcome to surf, swim, snorkel and scuba dive, sail and kayak.

Explore rockpools and shorelines for a remarkable variety of animals. Please be sure to leave things as you find them for the next explorer to enjoy.





KANGAROO ISLAND

OPEN ALL YEAR

Spring (September to November) **on** **Kangaroo Island**

Average spring temperatures are 19°C (66°F) maximum and 11°C (52°F) minimum

The first taste of spring is really in August, when the warming days bring animals out and encourage plants to sprout fresh and bright new green growth. The season continues with picturesque morning mists as dewy native vegetation and excited birdsong herald days of calmer seas and burgeoning life everywhere.

Wildlife

To experience Kangaroo Island's renowned wildlife at its best might take a little patience, planning and some local knowledge.

Animals can be found all year round but most come out to feed and play at night.

In spring, Kangaroo and Tamar Wallaby joeys (young) are exploring the world outside their mother's pouch, only returning to feed.

Echidnas also have young and Pygmy Possums are waking up from their winter torpor. The smallest is the Little Pygmy Possum at just 10 grams.



Hatchlings of Rosenberg's Goanna begin to excavate their escape tunnel from termite mounds where they laid their eggs. In October and November, the orange and grey hatchlings emerge in warm sunny weather to bask and forage but return to the nest at night.

The 2cm long, bright Green Carpenter Bees are storing pollen and nectar in brood cells to feed their young. If you do see this rare bee, more likely out west, please let the people at Natural Resources Kangaroo Island know at kinrc@sa.gov.au or 8553 4444.

Flocks of non-breeding Glossy Black-cockatoos are feeding in the she-oak groves along the coast at Penneshaw and further along the north coast to Stokes Bay.

There are also 15 small lizards. Keep an eye out for Tiger snakes and, more rarely, Pygmy Copperhead snakes as both are venomous.

Australian Sea Lions' 18-month breeding cycle means small pups may be present at different times each year but females suckle young for 16 months, until just before the next pup is born, basking on sand between fishing trips to the continental shelf. Two species of fur seal are also common around the island.



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www.tourkangarooisland.com.au



Out in the water, Bottle-nosed Dolphins are common all year. A pod cruises back and forth around Penneshaw and others patrol waters around the island.

All native animals are genuinely wild, and protected. Please keep your distance and use binoculars or a telephoto lens to view them; and park in safe areas, well off the road.

Birds

At this joyous time of renewal, birds are singing to find a mate and to establish their territory. There's plenty of food to bring the birds into breeding condition.

KI coastal raptors – White-bellied Sea-eagles, Eastern Ospreys and Peregrine Falcons – are positive indicators of our unspoiled environment and wilderness values. They are sensitive to disturbance, particularly during egg incubation and hatching, until fledging in late November.

Migratory shorebirds such as the Common Greenshank, Eastern Curlew, Sharp Tailed Sandpipers, Red Necked Stints and Ruddy Turnstone, begin arriving in August from northern hemisphere breeding grounds, some still boasting their breeding colours. Tidal flats, sheltered coves, freshwater lagoons and brackish wetlands fill up with birds indulging in a feeding frenzy.

Another spectacular natural migration event brings hundreds of thousands of migrating Short-tailed Shearwaters (Muttonbirds) interspersed with white Australasian Gannets, all moving in a continuous stream, rising and falling on the air currents above the ocean swell on the south coast. The lighthouse at Cape Willoughby and Cape du Couedic lookouts are excellent migration observation points.

Hooded Dotterels are found across many of the sandy beaches and can be safely viewed from a distance with binoculars. They nest above the high-water mark from spring through summer, when they are very susceptible to disturbance. People, vehicles and dogs can cause nesting failure, so please keep your distance and your dog on a lead.

Little Penguin fledglings are leaving nests. At the end of the breeding season (mid to late November), these birds go to sea to build body fat before moulting.

The island's bi-annual bird census in November welcomes visitors and an annual Glossy Black-cockatoo census runs in September when non-breeding flocks mobilise from three distinct populations: Stokes Bay, American River and Western River. Contact KI Natural Resources Centre in Kingscote if you'd like to participate.

All year, Australian Pelicans abound, Wedge-tailed Eagles soar, the Eastern Osprey nest at D'Estrees Bay is in full view, and Black Swans, and Freckled, Blue-billed and Musk ducks, are just a few of the resident waterfowl found on lagoons, sheltered bays and tidal flats.

Across the island, 15 species of honeyeater – Purple-gaped, Tawny-crowned and Crescent – crowd the bush in conservation areas and along vegetated roadsides, where you can also view wrens, firetails, pardalotes and thornbills.

At night listen for the mopoke call of the widespread Southern Boobook Owl, yapping Little Penguins in coastal areas, and wailing Bush Stone-Curlews in areas of bush and open pasture. Nankeen Night Herons emerge from roosts along the American River foreshore.

Cape Barren Geese graze cleared areas, particularly visible near Flinders Chase Visitor Centre; Brush Bronzewing occupy wattle bushland along the south coast.

The endemic Kangaroo Island Crimson Rosella is readily seen along roadsides and in forested areas across the island – the picnic area near Kelly Hill Caves is particularly rewarding.

Black-faced, and other, Cormorants gather on coastal roosts, marked by copious guano, particularly in sheltered areas.

Photography and wildflowers

By the time September arrives Old Man's Beard (*Clematis decipiens*) drapes its flowers across bushes and trees and perfumes the air; creamy rice flowers (*Pimelea macrostegia*) dot the roadsides, and wattle yellows dominate.

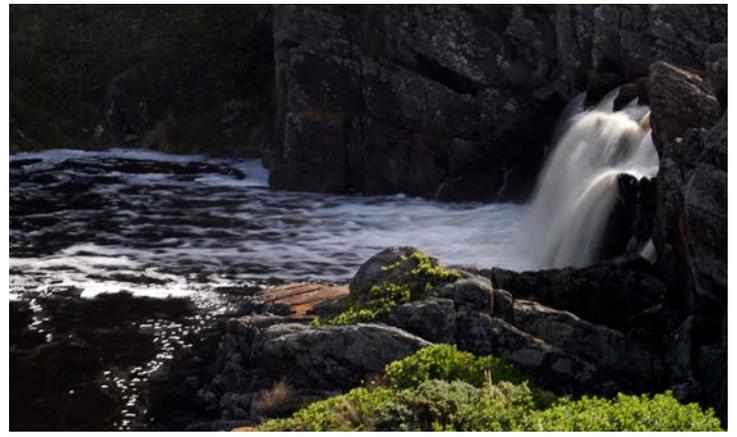
But behind the predominant yellow/cream showing, the bush is an extravaganza of white, pink, red, blue and purple. Park the car safely by any roadside and take a look.

Scan low down for the many small flowers on spiky bushes and myriad tiny orchids in the leaf litter. Accustom your eyes to these small gems and make your gear work for you in the low light.

Rise early and listen for bird song in the bush. The migratory shorebirds return to Murray, and other, lagoons, and tidal flats at Reeves Point, Western Cove and American River. White-bellied Sea-eagles are nesting until November, so give them a wide berth. The Osprey nest at Point Tinline at D'Estrees Bay is visible from a safe distance.

Give yourself enough time on Kangaroo Island to capture the images you want. It's a big island – 4500 square kilometres – and about half of it is native vegetation. You'll need time to get around, become familiar with places and aspects, and wait for the best light or most dramatic sky, and for the birds and animals not to notice you.

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Agriculture

Island farmers, some of whom are the fourth generation on their land, understand the increasing global demand for pure, clean, traceable goods. Kangaroo Island's 'stress-free' produce, in tune with nature, is here to deliver.

The island's Mediterranean climate is ideal for crops and livestock. Canola, the third largest source of the world's vegetable oil, sets the island's paddocks ablaze with cheerful sunny yellow blooms in contrast to the verdant pastures.

Lambs are fattening on the lush grasses and venture away from mum to gambol in farm fields; farmers harvest pasture as stock feed for the leaner summer months and these round hay bales create a stunning symmetry; sheep are herded into shearing sheds and emerge trimmed and white; trucks appear from country lanes taking stock to prime lamb markets.

Honey farmers collect fresh liquid amber from hives in flowering fields and native vegetation; acres of protein-rich broad beans are flowering and growing tall and strong; cheese making continues with highly nutritious milk from the ewes; plump new-season oysters are available and feature on restaurant menus; marron, our prized freshwater crayfish, begin to grow fatter and more flavoursome.

In any season, cellar doors and a small number of farmgate outlets are ready to welcome you. Share in their stories and sample honey, marron, lavender, wine, beer, fresh seafood and sheep milk products.

Food and Wine

Kangaroo Island offers food as it was meant to taste. And it is at its freshest and most authentic at source, where producers grow, forage, make and package – with an eye for quality and sustainability.

Island settlers learnt about the seasons, making the most of each one, surviving year round. This legacy of ingenuity and seclusion has influenced island food producers to deliver quality and flavour – whether they are fourth generation islanders or newly arrived and inspired.

Visit a honey outlet to try Kangaroo Island's distinctively complex flavour profiles; tuck into some plump new season oysters at American River, seafood outlets or restaurants; take home cheeses pressed fresh from ewe's milk; chat to producers at the Farmers' Markets and sample your heart out; enjoy new spring lamb at a gourmet gathering; dollop wild fruit jam on a freshly baked scone.

Kangaroo Island wines, spirits, ciders and beers have a purity and restraint that perfectly matches the region's artisan food. Each cellar door is a 'one-off' and many offer regional food to complement wine tastings and sales.

Restaurant and cafés proudly list Kangaroo Island wine. The island is home to one of the first boutique distilleries in South Australia where fresh botanicals (many locally foraged) enhance handcrafted gin, vodka and liqueurs.

Dining is fine, casual or pop-up. Eateries dot the island from Cape Willoughby to Rocky River, Kingscote to Snellings Beach. If dining remotely, best to book ahead.

Visit the Kangaroo Island Food and Wine Association at www.eatdrinkki.com.au to see what events and seasonal offerings are available during your visit.

Bushwalking

Wildflowers and orchids are blooming in a gorgeous display, fungi are popping through the leaf litter, birds and wildlife are active, the creeks are flowing, sometimes over waterfalls, and the temperature is kind.

The full-day, moderate-rated Rocky River Hike takes in the Platypus Holes Walk and Rocky River Cascades. The vegetation is ever-changing from tall sugar gums and grass trees to mallee and coastal heath sporting orchids and other wildflowers.

Try one of the many half-day walks in Flinders Chase to see the riot of flower colour and birds such as Yellow-rumped Pardalotes foraging in the gum leaves.

For a huge diversity of flowers in 30 minutes, take the Beyeria Conservation Park walk. Learn about the interdependent lives of plants, ants and caterpillars.

Kangaroo Island Walking Club takes a walk each month to places you might not otherwise be able to access and grades its walks A (hard) to C (easy). The club welcomes visitors to its walks and shows off the island through local eyes. The club's monthly schedule is printed in The Islander newspaper's 'What's On' column.

For more information about any spring activities, visit Tourism Kangaroo Island at www.tourkangarooisland.com.au or the Gateway Visitor Information Centre for advice on tours and locations, dining options and much more.



The Coast

The Island's 540 kilometres of coastline takes in surf-battered shores on the south and west, calm coves among towering cliffs on the north, serene marine bays and lagoons in the north-east, and sweeps of white, empty beaches and rocky shores on all sides.

Take a leisurely swim or stroll on any beach; let the kids explore rocky beaches for all sorts of creatures; paddle a kayak in a calm bay or river estuary.

Slip into the aquamarine dream and swim one of the many safe north coast beaches or coves. The south coast is more exposed and rugged, and most sites need a careful assessment before plunging in.

Kangaroo Island's beaches carry the remains of many sea creatures and plants – even Nautilus shells – especially after a storm. Sheltered reefs, such as Brownlow, can be an educational treasure for children and adults at low tide.

Please leave living creatures within a Marine Park Sanctuary Zone. Each tide deposits a new suite of treasures, each with a story about something that has lived and is slowly being recycled by nature.

Recreational boats can travel through Marine Park Sanctuary Zones, even with fishing gear and fish caught in other places, but cannot fish in Sanctuary Zones. The marine parks app at www.marineparks.sa.gov.au will let you know when you are in a Sanctuary Zone and any restrictions that apply.

Kangaroo Island Council maintains boat launching facilities (www.kangarooisland.sa.gov.au/boating) at American River, Bay of Shoals (Kingscote) and Christmas Cove (Penneshaw) where fees apply, and Baudin Beach and Emu Bay which do not have fees.

Take a tour to discover places only the experts can reveal, and encounters with dolphins, coastal raptors and seals.

Cast a line from jetties at Kingscote, Penneshaw, Vivonne Bay for Southern Calamari, Snook, Australian Herring, Trevally and some King George Whiting. As spring weather can be changeable, try fishing inshore at American River and Nepean Bay.

If you're keen to go out in a boat you might expect Southern Bluefin Tuna, Bight Redfish, Snapper, Blue Morwong, Gummy Shark, Silver Trevally and King George Whiting.

Spring is the most productive time for Black Bream which is abundant in brackish estuaries of rivers such as Chapman, Cygnet, Middle, South West and Harriet.

The Snapper season is closed midday 1 November to midday 15 December.

In the clean, clear surrounding seas, commercial fishers find King George Whiting, crayfish, abalone, prawns and oysters as fresh and clean as the waters they come from.

Kangaroo Island fish, and their habitat and breeding grounds, are protected by Marine Parks and Marine Park Sanctuary Zones. See www.marineparks.sa.gov.au and download the app with offline maps, or check the signs at launch points across the island.

Recreational fishing is allowed everywhere except Sanctuary Zones and Restricted Access Areas. That leaves most bays, beaches, rocks and waters around Kangaroo Island free for your fishing pleasure.

The most popular fish by far is King George Whiting, sought by three-quarters of all recreational fishers. And the good news is it's available year round, and right round the island.





Summer (Dec to Feb) on Kangaroo Island

Average summer temperatures are 24°C (75°F) maximum and 14°C (57°F) minimum

Summer is the time to explore an astonishing variety of beaches on Kangaroo Island. From wild, crashing waves and beach fishing on the south and west coasts to tranquil bays in the east, like Antechamber Bay, and perfect family swimming spots in the north, there's a beach for everyone's tastes and every occasion. There are even beaches with dual personalities, like Stokes Bay, where moderate waves welcome boogie-boarders next to a sheltered rock pool teeming with marine life, to wade and explore.

Wildlife

During the island's warmest months, nature is an agreeable companion to a relaxing Kangaroo Island holiday.

Summer is Koala mating time and the young is born five weeks later but it's not for another seven months that it is safely perched on its mother's back, with full fur. Look for young Koalas striking out for independence.

Echidna young are being weaned at seven months when they are already covered in spines and half-size miniatures of their mother.

You'll have more chance of seeing Platypus now when water levels

are low and they are confined to the pools on the Platypus Walk in Flinders Chase National Park.

The hatchlings of Rosenberg's Goanna are venturing forth and leaving the nest. By February, adults are courting and egg-laying in termite mounds. Summer is breeding time for both Australian and Long-nosed Fur Seals. At the season peak in January, fierce territorial battles are common.

The endemic Kangaroo Island Kangaroo is the largest and most visible of the 18 species of native land mammals on the island – males can be 2 metres tall.

The animals out in the sun are the reptiles and the most spectacular is the Heath (or Rosenberg's) Goanna which can grow to 1.5 metres long. There are also 15 small lizards. Keep an eye out for Tiger Snakes and, more rarely, Pygmy Copperheads on sunny days; both are venomous.

Australian Sea Lions' 18-month breeding cycle means small pups may be present at different times each year but females suckle young for 16 months, until just before the next pup is born, basking on sand between fishing trips to the continental shelf.

Out in the water, Bottle-nosed Dolphins are common all year. A pod cruises back and forth around Penneshaw and others patrol waters around the island.





Photography and wildflowers

Coppery to purple fruits on hop bushes, pea pods on wattles, and woody nuts on gums, hakeas and banksias make a uniquely Australian display. Parrots and honeyeaters devour flowering mallees.

Try the public bird hides at American River, Reeves Point and Duck Lagoon for capturing waders.

Year round, the island offers a smorgasbord to the serious photographer who wants to display their Kangaroo Island experience in pixels or in print.

Learn something of the island's natural history and climate and visit at the most rewarding time of year for you. Summer, for instance, is the most challenging photography season with harsh light during the middle of the day.

The transitional light of early morning and the evening is best for landscape photography. Wildlife too, is often most active around dawn and dusk.

For more information about any summer activities, visit Tourism Kangaroo Island at www.tourkangarooisland.com.au or the Gateway Visitor Information Centre for advice on tours and locations, dining options and much more.

Food & Wine

This is the season for the sun-ripening of many varieties of delicious fruit transformed by islanders into utterly unique products, such as native fruit jams, spirits and liqueurs.

The island's Stringy Bark (*Euc. baxteri*) and Sugar Gum (*Euc. cladocalyx*) trees are blossoming in the wild and act as magnets to the world's only remaining pure strain of Ligurian bees, busy converting flowers into sweet, golden honey nectar.

This is the time to feast on Southern Rock Lobster or Southern Garfish, with a bottle of crisp cool-climate Kangaroo Island white wine; to savour Marron plucked from dams at their plumpest and sweetest, which are perfect fare for a hot summer's day.

Enjoy fresh oysters with a local gin and tonic; relish fresh fragrant figs with sheep's yoghurt for your KI breakfast; carry home a flagon bottle of new-season olive oil from a Farmers' Market; stock up on distinctive KI flavour with bottles of chutneys and jams.

Honey outlets, the sheep dairy, several seafood outlets, winery cellar doors, microbreweries and the distillery are open for visiting.

Each cellar door is a 'one-off' and many offer regional food to complement wine tastings and sales. Restaurants and cafés proudly lists Kangaroo Island wine.

Dining is fine, casual or pop-up. Eateries dot the island from Cape Willoughby to Rocky River, Kingscote to Snellings Beach, with special events a highlight in summer. Check local media.

Watch for Farmers' Markets in Kingscote and Penneshaw. Visit the Kangaroo Island Food and Wine Association at www.eatdrinkki.com.au for dates and times and to see what other events and seasonal offerings are available during your visit.





Bushwalking

Summer temperatures are usually milder than the nearby mainland but they can occasionally be extreme and it is bushfire season.

There are short strolls aplenty around Flinders Chase Visitor Centre and Kelly Hill Visitor Centre.

The 9km Hanson Bay Hike can be completed in a few hours as an active workout or extended by careful observation of nature along the way.

For waterbird lovers, there is an 11km Curley Creek Hike in Cape Gantheaume Conservation Park where the island's largest inland water body Murray Lagoon is filled with migratory waders, and can be viewed from Bald Hill.

KI Wilderness Trail, from the Flinders Chase Visitor Centre to Kelly Hill Visitor Centre, is a 5-day, 63km trail that connects existing paths with 40km of new trail.

In warmer weather in particular, take plenty of water. Kangaroo Island in general has a low rainfall and most falls in the cooler months. Creeks dry up in summer and autumn; some trails do not have rainwater tanks or tanks on site may not hold supplies. Don't forget sun protection too.

Kangaroo Island Walking Club takes a walk each month to places you might not otherwise be able to access and grades its walks A (hard) to C (easy). The club welcomes visitors to its walks and shows off the island through local eyes. The club's monthly schedule is printed in The Islander newspaper's 'What's On' column

Agriculture

This is a busy season for the island's farmers. Harvesters ply the fields reaping cereals and canola; huge centre-pivots water seedling potatoes in the warm ground; lines of sheep follow feed carts through the paddocks; the Narrow-leaf Mallee (*Eucneorifolia*) trees are dripping with a compound which is distilled into high quality eucalyptus oil.

The next cycle of life begins with rams joining flocks in paddocks.

More than 23,000 hectares of island land are devoted to cropping of GM-free canola, cereals and pulses, and specialist crops.

Three egg producers are the real, free-range deal. Cattle, pigs and a smattering of specialist livestock add to the diversity.

Kangaroo Island's weather is moderate year round by any standards, and typically much cooler in summer than nearby Adelaide.

Fishing

It's hard not to boast about the fishing around Kangaroo Island. Some say it has the finest eating and game fishing in southern waters.

In the clean, clear surrounding seas, commercial fishers find King George Whiting, crayfish, abalone, prawns and oysters as fresh and clean as the waters from which they come.

Summer is only complete once you've feasted on Southern Rock Lobster, King Crab, King George Whiting, Snapper and Nannygai. KI oysters are also deliciously fresh and plump.

With warm waters during summer, the Garfish come alive in sheltered bays. Try your hand at dab-net fishing for these tasty streaks.

Southern Calamari (squid), Snook, Red Mullet and crabs are also more abundant and widespread in the warmth. And Tommy Ruff numbers expand in the sheltered parts of the north coast.

Trevally and Snapper (after December 15th) are plentiful on the north coast. Silver Drummer is also widespread in rocky inshore coasts but is difficult to catch. Sand crabs are common in warmer months around American River.

The most popular fish by far is King George Whiting, sought by three-quarters of all recreational fishers. And the good news is that it's available year round, and right round the island.

Kangaroo Island fish, and their habitat and breeding grounds, are protected by Marine Parks and Marine Park Sanctuary Zones. See www.marineparks.sa.gov.au and download the app with offline maps, or check the signs at launch points across the island. Recreational fishing is allowed everywhere except Sanctuary Zones and Restricted Access Areas.

That leaves jetties plus most bays, beaches, rocks and waters around Kangaroo Island free for your fishing pleasure.



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Birds

Bird life remains plentiful in the bush during Kangaroo Island's mild summers. Migratory birds continue to fuel up at rich feeding grounds for the return to northern hemisphere breeding grounds.

Summer is prime nesting time for Hooded Dotterels whose populations have declined because of human disturbance. Please look out for these small grey, black and white birds on any beach. If you see them settling high on the beach above the tide line keep your distance.

When it's hot and unsettled, the Swifts arrive on northerly air streams in flocks of hundreds, feeding on flying insects.

Immature Elegant Parrots arrive in January and occupy inland bush land and farm pasture, often feeding on Cape Weed, until July.

The endemic Kangaroo Island race of Crimson Rosella is readily seen along roadsides and in forested areas across the island – the picnic area near Kelly Hill Caves is particularly rewarding.

Large numbers of Black Swans congregate in Shoal Bay, Pelican Lagoon and along the American River shore as the winter and spring habitats of freshwater wetlands, begin to dry up.

Pelicans glide into the Bay of Shoals or American River and have their feed on tap at 5pm each evening at Kingscote jetty.

And in the air, Wedge-tailed Eagles are a common sight across the island scanning the ground for a feed. Not nearly so often – but you can be lucky – a White-bellied Sea-eagle glides past near the coast.

All year, Australian Pelicans abound, Wedge-tailed Eagles soar, the Eastern Osprey nest at D'Estrees Bay is in full view, and Black Swans, and Freckled, Blue-billed and Musk ducks, are just a few of the resident waterfowl found on lagoons, sheltered bays and tidal flats.

At night listen for the mopoke call of the widespread Southern Boobook Owl, yapping Little Penguins in coastal areas, and wailing Bush Stone-curlews in areas of bush and open pasture. Nankeen Night Herons emerge from roosts along the American River foreshore.

Cape Barren Geese graze cleared areas, particularly visible near Flinders Chase Visitor Centre; Brush Bronzewing occupy wattle bushland along the south coast.

The Coast

If sailing is your way to escape from life's responsibilities and demands, then Kangaroo Island is a dream destination. The coastline changes from cove to beach to cliff. Nepean Bay has sheltered year-round cruising for day sailing and along the north coast many spectacular anchorages are hard to resist for a longer stay.

Surfing beginners and boogie boarders can try Stokes Bay and Vivonne Bay. Swimming, snorkelling and kayaking suit the summer mood but summer is the one season you might have to share the water.

Bring your snorkelling gear or grab some when you arrive (and best to pack a wetsuit, the water can be cool), check the weather for the best side of the island, and dive in.

A rich underwater world has gorgonian corals, sponge gardens and more than 200 species of fish – Leafy Seadragons and Harlequin Fish swim with rays and over sea-stars. And there's more blue than the sea itself – Blue Throat Wrasse, Blue Devils, Blue Groper and even the occasional Blue Whale.

Marine Parks and Marine Park Sanctuary Zones protect many creatures and their habitat. But you are still welcome to surf, swim, snorkel and scuba dive, sail and kayak. Explore rockpools and shorelines for a remarkable variety of animals. Please be sure to leave things as you find them for the next explorer to enjoy.

Recreational boats can travel through Marine Park Sanctuary Zones, even with fishing gear and fish caught in other places, but cannot fish in Sanctuary Zones. The marine parks app at www.marineparks.sa.gov.au will let you know when you are in a Sanctuary Zone and any restrictions that apply.

Kangaroo Island Council maintains boat launching facilities (www.kangarooisland.sa.gov.au/boating) at American River, Bay of Shoals (Kingscote) and Christmas Cove (Penneshaw) where fees apply, and Baudin Beach and Emu Bay which at the time of publication do not have fees.

Take a tour to discover places only the experts can reveal, and encounters with dolphins, coastal raptors and seals. Visit Tourism Kangaroo Island at www.tourkangarooisland.com.au or the Gateway Visitor Information Centre for advice on tours and locations, where to buy or hire gear, boats and boards, and much much more.





Winter (June to August) on Kangaroo Island

Average winter temperatures are 15°C (59°F) maximum and 8°C (47°F) minimum

Waterfalls, lush pastures and bushland, teeming birdlife out in full dams and creeks, dramatic seascapes; winter is a special treat on Kangaroo Island. As someone once said: "There's no such thing as bad weather, just inappropriate clothing". Winter is the best time for seeking out wildlife encounters, the best time for bushwalking and, of course, a welcoming open fire or bonfire on a beach.

Wildlife

Winter is the season for a rare and memorable adventure within the island's natural environment.

Southern Right Whales visit each year between May and September before returning to Antarctic waters in October. Look for them close to the shore along the north and south coasts. Mothers may rest with young in more sheltered bays. And you might see other whale species, such as Blue Whales and Humpbacks cruising past. Orcas, or Killer Whales, can occasionally be spotted looking for a seal meal.

Land-based animals can be seen all year round but most are nocturnal so they come out to feed and play at night. Animals are easiest to find in Winter, as they seek the sun's rays and enjoy the bounty of a green island.

Koala young perch on their mother's back as she feeds in Eucalyptus trees. Koalas live in trees along river systems. They are active mostly at night but the sharp-eyed can spot them sleeping during the day. Some good viewing spots are near the Flinders Chase National Park Visitor Centre and at Duck Lagoon on Cygnet River.

Kangaroo joeys (young) are emerging from their mother's pouches and starting to explore. Tamar wallabies, with joeys peeping out from pouches, move to the edge of scrub around dusk to feed in open areas.

Adult Rosenberg's Goannas may bask near burrows on warm winter days. Winter is Echidna mating season, with animals more active during the day. Echidna trains can form with one female followed by up to 10 males. When it's cold and wet they hunker down and hide away. All native animals are genuinely wild, and protected. Please keep your distance and use binoculars or a telephoto lens to view them; and park in safe areas, well off the road.

Australian Sea Lions' 18-month breeding cycle means small pups may be present at different times each year but females suckle young for 16 months, until just before the next pup is born, basking on sand between fishing trips to the continental shelf. Two species of fur seal are also common around the island.

Out in the water, Bottle-nosed Dolphins are common all year. A pod cruises back and forth around Penneshaw and others patrol waters around the island.





Birds

There is abundant birdlife on Kangaroo Island, so along any walking trail, by any lagoon or coastal flat, on any beach or headland, keep your eyes and ears open and your binoculars handy – the birds are all around.

Resident bush birds, raptors, parrots, waterfowl and shorebirds go about their business in conservation parks, and lagoon and coastal inlets. Strong southerlies driven by low pressure systems in the Southern Ocean often bring Albatross and other pelagic species within sight from land. Cape du Couedic is a favourite location for local birders.

The endangered Glossy Black-cockatoo appears to be recovering with help from a local management program and is often encountered in feeding areas near Penneshaw, American River and Stokes Bay. Please avoid nesting areas in sugar gum forests as human presence often disturbs nesting pairs. You might also spot the Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoos which are less rare.

Cuckoos can start calling late July or early August in low open scrub and mallee, and from the occasional fencepost, and continue through to summer.

Of the 266 bird species known from Kangaroo Island, several are secure on Kangaroo Island but are no longer on the mainland; Southern Emu-wren, Shy Heathwren, Beautiful Firetail and Western Whipbird. Golden Whistlers call in mallee/broombush in Lashmar, Beyeria and Latham conservation parks; and Scarlet Robin song fills open woodland and mallee parks on the Dudley Peninsula, and at Duck Lagoon, Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary and Flinders Chase National Park.

All year Australian Pelicans abound, Wedge-tailed Eagles soar, the Eastern Osprey nest at D'Estrees Bay is in full view, and Black Swans, and Freckled, Blue-billed and Musk ducks, are just a few of the resident waterfowl found on lagoons, sheltered bays and tidal flats.

Pelicans glide into the Bay of Shoals or American River and have their feed on tap at 5pm each evening at Kingscote jetty. And in the air, Wedge-tailed Eagles are a common sight across the island scanning the ground for a feed. Not nearly so often – but you can be lucky – a White-bellied Sea-eagle glides past near the coast.

Across the island, 15 species of honeyeater – Purple-gaped, Tawny-crowned and Crescent - crowd the bush in conservation areas and along vegetated roadsides, where you can also view wrens, firetails, pardalotes and thornbills.

At night listen for the mopoke call of the widespread Southern Boobook Owl, yapping Little Penguins in coastal areas, and wailing Bush Stone-curlews in areas of bush and open pasture. Nankeen Night Herons emerge from roosts along the American River foreshore.



Cape Barren Geese graze cleared areas, particularly visible near Flinders Chase Visitor Centre; Brush Bronzewing occupy wattle bushland along the south coast.

The endemic Kangaroo Island Crimson Rosella is readily seen along roadsides and in forested areas across the island – the picnic area near Kelly Hill Caves is particularly rewarding. Black-faced, and other, Cormorants gather on coastal roosts, marked by copious guano, particularly in sheltered areas.

Bushwalking

Remote coastlines, vast national parks, seasonal waterfalls, and fresh, fresh air beckon the bushwalker to Kangaroo Island during winter months. The fit and adventurous or a young family out for a short stroll can all discover the natural world.

Imagine a train of echidnas passing by, a whale sheltering with its calf below a cliff, a sea-eagle catching a fish. Imagine not seeing another person for the whole day, the reward of an azure sea view, a picnic on an empty beach.

A trek along exposed locations such as Cape Willoughby or Cape du Couedic where bracing winds drive in from the Southern Ocean is an elemental immersion you'll never forget. The very next day walkers might enjoy a serene cliff-top or beach walk in sunny, calm conditions. Even the strongest wind drops to a breeze once you enter the dense coastal mallee trees or forested valleys along most trails.

Most of the 32 walking trails are in conservation parks where habitat is set aside for nature and the trails allow you to share space with wildlife.

The 2-day, Cape Gantheaume Coastal Trek contrasts a thumping Southern Ocean with delicate, flowering, low-growing coastal heath; bird song from resident Western Whipbirds and the plaintive call of Southern Emu-wrens. The trek has no facilities and is recommended only for fit and experienced hikers.

Western River's Waterfall Creek hike packs a lot into 5km, passing through sugar gum forest and she-oak woodlands to a spectacular waterfall view framed by tall grass-trees. Look for orchids, early boronias, fungi varieties and rare Glossy Black-cockatoos.

The brand new KI Wilderness Trail (from the Flinders Chase Visitor Centre to Kelly Hill Visitor Centre) is a 5-day, 63km trail which connects existing paths with 40km of new trail.

Kangaroo Island Walking Club takes a walk each month to places you might not otherwise be able to access and grades its walks A (hard) to C (easy). The club welcomes visitors to its walks and as an opportunity to showcase the island. You'll find the club's schedule in The Islander newspaper's 'What's On' column.



Food and Wine

Winter is the season for staying cosy by an indoor fire safe from the storm, with an island speciality to drink – how about a nocino walnut liqueur; try your hand at reeling in some of the island’s most prized fish - King George Whiting - for a family feast; visit a cellar door for a leisurely tasting of local wines; enjoy a special celebration catered for by a local chef.

The island’s remoteness and untamed natural world has always demanded a self-sufficient lifestyle. The early mixed farms of cattle, sheep and grain, plus kitchen garden, have diversified into succulent offerings of marron, free-range eggs, heritage free-range pork, figs, lentils, sheep’s milk yoghurt and cheese, freshwater barramundi, olive oil, condiments, and much more.

Each cellar door is a ‘one-off’ and many offer regional food to complement wine tastings and sales. Restaurants and cafés proudly list Kangaroo Island wine.

The island is home to one of the first boutique distilleries in South Australia where fresh botanicals (many locally foraged) enhance handcrafted gin, vodka and liqueurs. Check opening hours for cellar door and farmgate experiences.

Eateries dot the island from Cape Willoughby to Rocky River, Kingscote to Snellings Beach. Call ahead if you’re planning to eat out of town.

Visit the Kangaroo Island Food and Wine Association at www.eatdrinkki.com.au to see what events and seasonal offerings are available during your visit, including Farmers’ Markets at Penneshaw and Kingscote.

Agriculture

The family farm is the heart and strength of Kangaroo Island agriculture.

Cool wet winters are ideal for crops and livestock and the island’s southern latitude and moderating ocean currents create a temperate, frost-free climate where flavour and character can develop in their own good time.

At this time of year, crops break the top-soil reaching towards the sun. Rains transform dry paddocks into lush, green blankets of crops and pastures; farm dams fill and overflow; olive pickers strip the black fruit from trees in orchards as well as from wild olive trees; new-born lambs stay close to their mothers.

Protected wilderness stands side by side with productive farms. Farmers manage and protect creek-line vegetation to keep the water clean and the paddocks sheltered.

Patches of bush mingle with fields of grain; fenced paddocks hold sheep and cattle while they graze on grassy shoots; free-range chooks are protected by Maremma dogs from aerial predators or stray dogs (the island has no feral foxes or rabbits).

The mainstay of island agriculture is sheep and in winter they fatten in lush, green pastures. Two-thirds of island farmers produce wool in a clean environment made for fine wool production. More than half a million sheep are bred on the island for their wool or as tender lamb for the table. A sheep dairy makes sheep’s milk yoghurt and cheese.

The island’s farming history is showcased at the Parndana Museum, which features the Soldier Settler Scheme, and at the Hope Cottage National Trust and Penneshaw Maritime and Folk museums.





Photography and wildflowers

The island is a goldmine for the nature photographer: the glassy surface of Pelican Lagoon on a still winter's morning; a Scarlet Robin flitting in a tree; the tiny flowers of low coastal heath in spring; a glossy yellow fungus in a damp dark forest; a narrow leaf arbour glowing in the autumn sunset; a lichen-covered rock formation beside a pounding sea.

In every patch of scrub and expanse of national park, along roadsides and tracks, colour starts to peek through in winter months.

The orchid show begins and once you've discovered one, you'll see them everywhere.

In the park areas of the west, up to 450 species of fungi, many rare, make themselves visible when it's wet – classic mushrooms, bracket fungi, ground cups, puff balls, and glow in the dark fungi.

Black Swans are nesting in wetlands and along rivers, cuckoos are calling and bush birds wake up early and let you know they are there.

Joeys venture from kangaroo and wallaby pouches to explore a new world.

This season offers a rare chance to maybe capture Remarkable Rocks free of people and with storm clouds and stormy seas as a backdrop. Spray can drift inland for hundreds of metres from hammering seas on the south and west coasts.



Fishing

While wintry seas are pounding the open shoreline, sheltered spots such as Eastern Cove, Smith Bay and Boxing Bay are brimming with King George Whiting. School Mulloway are pouring into Snellings Beach. It's Snapper time at Smith Bay and other north coast locations.

The broken bottom areas near American River in particular make for good Snapper yields.

The prospects are good for large Salmon Trout off exposed south coast beaches like Hanson Bay. In D'Estrees Bay, large Snook are plentiful.

Sweep are widespread around rocky reefs and other artificial structures, and Nannygai are offshore of north and south coast rocky reefs.

Try D'Estrees Bay, Cape Dutton and Stokes Bay for large Snook.

And there's always Southern Calamari (squid) over seagrass meadows, Tommy Ruff in sheltered parts of the north coast and Flathead at sheltered shallow sandy beaches.

If storm watching is your thing, take a trip to the top of Cape Willoughby or Cape Borda lighthouse, or hold on to any vantage point in between.

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That leaves jetties plus most bays, beaches, rocks and waters around Kangaroo Island free for your fishing pleasure.

Launch your boat from Kangaroo Island Council ramps at American River, Bay of Shoals (Kingscote), Christmas Cove (Penneshaw) for a fee, or from Baudin Beach or Emu Bay for free.

See www.kangarooisland.sa.gov.au/boating for more information and beach launching locations. Kangaroo Island's mostly moderate weather allows recreational fishing all-year round.

Check limits on size, bag, boat and possession for all fish and shellfish, and season closures, for example for Rock Lobster and Snapper, on the fishing regulations app (www.pir.sa.gov.au).

