



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 Tammar 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.



www.kangarooislandescapes.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 Bronzews 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.

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.



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 **or contact Kangaroo Island Trails who offer Food & Wine Trail Tours.**

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 Kangaroo Island **Escapes** at www.kangarooislandescapes.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.

