



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 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.

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 **or contact Kangaroo Island Trails who offer Food & Wine Trail Tours at www.kangarooislandtrails.com.au**





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 (*Euc. cneorifolia*) 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.



www.kangarooislandescapes.com.au



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

