



Kangaroo Island

Access, immerse and experience Australia's coast, wildlife and landscapes within and around the island

Just 14 kilometres from the mainland, Australia's third-largest island teems with life. At around 150 kilometres long and 57 kilometres wide and with more than one-third of the area protected through an extensive network of parks and reserves, Kangaroo Island provides a truly unique experience within a concentrated natural environment.

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF LIFE

Wildlife has thrived in this isolated and largely untouched environment. Protected from invasive species such as foxes and rabbits, Kangaroo Island provides refuge for 58 threatened plant and animal, many of which have become extinct on the mainland.

Kangaroo Island is home to more than 260 species of birds and over 1000 species of native plants. Many plants flower year round, with spectacular spring wildflower displays creating golden carpets of wattle interlaced with scarlet bottlebrushes, pink grevilleas and purple fringe lilies. Sixty species of orchids flower almost year-round.

The clear waters around Kangaroo Island reveal a marine paradise. Seals, sea lions, sea dragons, dolphins, whales and over 270 different species of fish all inhabit the rocks, bays and inlets of the Island.

A MYSTERIOUS HISTORY

Evidence from campsites shows that Indigenous people once inhabited the island, from about 16,000 years ago (when the island was still connected to mainland Australia) until about 2,000 years ago. Why they left remains a mystery, and interestingly a number of mainland Indigenous groups call the island 'Karta' meaning Land of the Dead.

NATURE'S OWN MODERN ART SCULPTURES — THERE'S NOTHING ELSE LIKE IT

Kangaroo Island's Remarkable Rocks have been sculpted and carved for the past 500 million years by the strong southern winds, sea and rain. Covered by bright orange lichen the smooth, rounded hollows and natural beauty of the rocks contrast starkly against the backdrop of the deep blue southern ocean.

WALK AMONGST THE SEA LIONS

Seal Bay is home to a colony of around 1,000 endangered Australian sea lions — the most endangered species of sea lion in the world.

The Australian sea lion can grow up to two and half metres long and weigh up to 300 kilograms. Its streamlined body is designed for swimming the ocean currents and it can dive to depths of 300 metres in search of food. Females give birth to a single pup every 18 months and will nurse them for up to a year — defending them aggressively against predators.

Seal Bay provides an important refuge for the sea lions after being hunted to near extinction during the last century. Guided tours provide visitors with a unique opportunity to walk among the seals and sea lions on the beach. Remember that it is important to respect these wild creatures and their environment — listen to your guide and make sure you stay a safe distance from them at all times.

GLOSSY BLACK COCKATOO

An endangered subspecies of the glossy black cockatoo - *Calyptorhynchus lathami halmaturinus* - is found only on Kangaroo Island in an area of just 100 square kilometres. Dependent on the drooping sheoak tree as its sole food source, this medium size bird was once on the brink of extinction, with past clearing of its habitat seeing a drastic decline in numbers. Around 300 individual birds remain in the wild.

The cockatoo is now making a comeback thanks to local conservation efforts. An active program is underway on Kangaroo Island involving government and the local community to replant habitat, protect existing food trees and build nest boxes, helping to increase the chance of long-term survival for the species.

THE TAMMAR WALLABY — A SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY HELPING LIVES

Driven to extinction on mainland South Australia through land clearing and predation by cats and foxes, the tamar wallaby thrives on the island. The size of a house cat, this amazing wallaby can survive by drinking sea water if freshwater is unavailable. A team of Australian scientists studying how these wallabies protect their new-born infants from disease has found a unique compound in their milk. Shown to be 100 times more effective than drugs such as penicillin, the compound has great potential for future use as an antibiotic.



THE RECLUSIVE WORLD OF THE ECHIDNA

Despite being one of the most widely-spread animals across Australia, very little is known about the life of this shy creature. One of just two mammals in the world that lays eggs — the other being the iconic Australian platypus — the echidna uses its 17 centimetre long tongue to trap ants and other insects, and protects itself from danger through a covering of sharp spines.

Kangaroo Island has been the epicentre of echidna research for more than 20 years, and has contributed substantially to increasing our knowledge of the species including information about diet, habitats, home ranges and breeding behaviours.



HELP PROTECT THIS WILD ENVIRONMENT

You can make your own contribution to conserving our natural world when you visit Kangaroo Island. Low-impact activities such as bushwalking, cycling and canoeing all provide fantastic opportunities to get off the beaten track and discover new worlds that are like nothing else on earth.

Remember, stay on track when walking, cycling or driving to minimise disturbance of plant and animal populations. Prevent the spread of the deadly cinnamon fungus by following the walking trail instructions.

- Help scientists learn more about the reclusive echidna — Take part in a research program tracking echidnas as well as Rosenberg's goannas and little penguins. Survey and monitor their habitats, count individuals and analyse food sources. For more information go to www.conservationvolunteers.com.au
- For an experience that will last a life time, take part in the Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary Volunteer program. This hands-on program presents an opportunity to work with experts on a range of conservation programs as well as explore this spectacular natural environment. For more information go to www.hansonbay.com.au

For more information on this landscape or to learn about other naturally beautiful places which offer a different but uniquely Australian experience. Visit www.australia.com/nl