



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. **Contact Kangaroo Island Escapes** at www.kangarooislandescapes.com.au 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 **Kangaroo Island Escapes** 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.

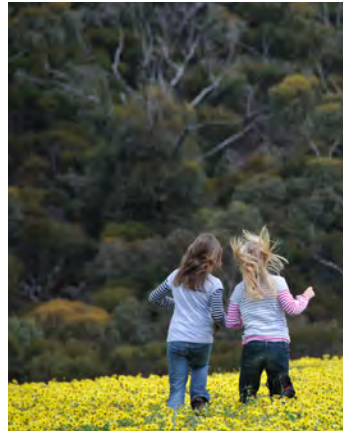
Each cellar door and farm-gate is a 'one-off' and many offer regional food to complement wine tastings and sales. Restaurants and cafés proudly list Kangaroo Island wine. The island is home to one of the first boutique distilleries in South Australia where fresh botanicals (many locally foraged) enhance 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 or **contact Kangaroo Island Trails who offer Food & Wine Trail Tours** at www.kangarooislandtrails.com.au





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.

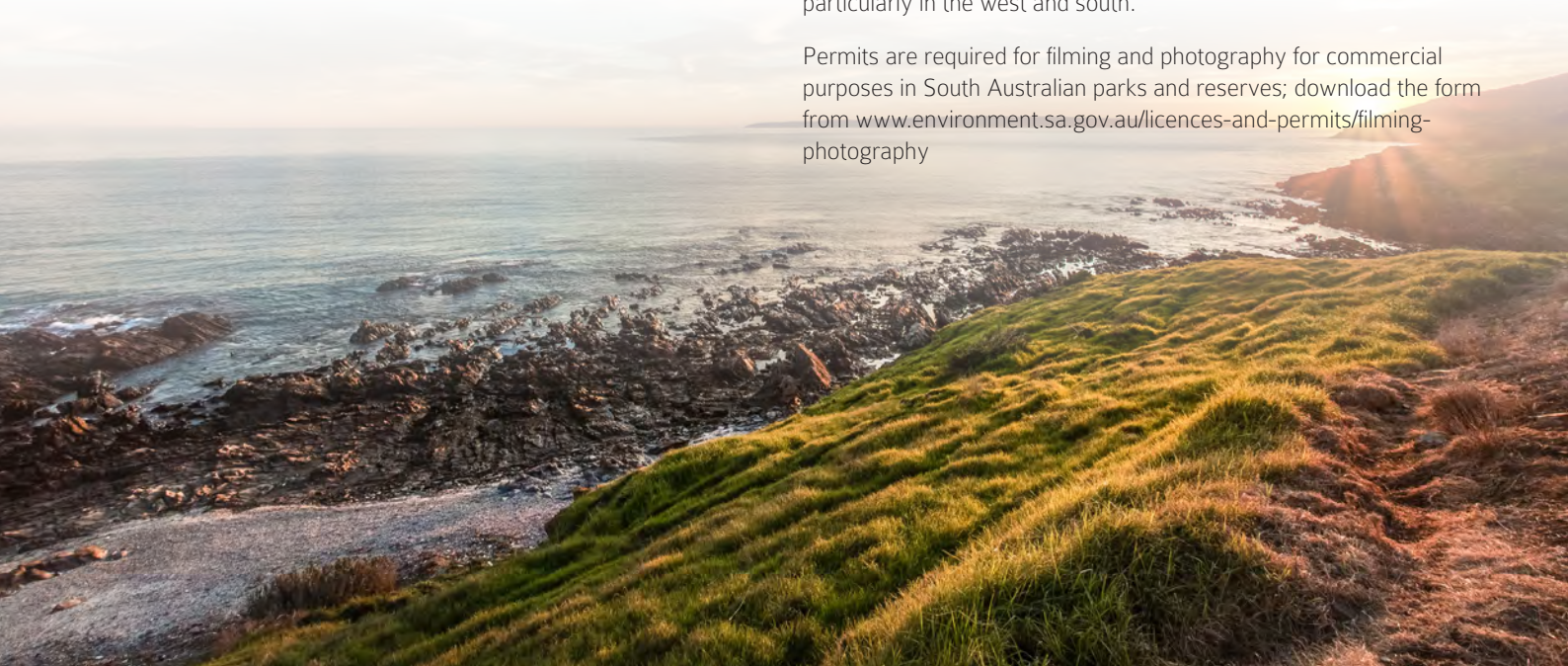
The samphire meadows glow red and set off the grey trunks of the paperbarks.

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.

