

**KANGAROO ISLAND IS AUSTRALIA'S GALAPAGOS -
A "MUST SEE" DESTINATION FOR ALL FIRST TIME VISITORS**

Teeming with kangaroos, koalas, wallabies, seals, sea lions, penguins and goannas, this is the best place in Australia to see the widest range of free roaming native animals in their natural habitat.

At 155 kms long, 55 kms wide and with 450 kms of coastline, Kangaroo Island is the third largest island off Australia with almost a third of its area covered in pristine wilderness and conservation parks, 21 in total. It is not surprising then that the island has retained its rich diversity of flora and fauna, much of which is not found on the mainland.

SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE

March 2008 will see the much anticipated opening of the A\$15 million (£6.1million) Southern Ocean Lodge (www.southernoceanlodge.com.au), the property destined to become a world class wilderness lodge providing visitors with yet another reason to include Kangaroo Island in their Australian itinerary.

Southern Ocean Lodge, which sits on the south west coast at Hanson Bay and adjoins two national parks, offers stunning ocean views and will feature 21 luxurious suites, a modern spa, customised tours and activities and locally sourced gourmet food and wine.

Commenting on this new development, James Baillie of Baillie Lodges said *"With Southern Ocean Lodge we aim to exceed the traditional five-star expectations of our guests by fusing design and nature, glamour and wilderness, and by offering impeccable service, sophisticated dining and exceptional touring. The end result will be both luxurious in style as well as uncompromisingly sensitive to the environment."*

Activities will include coastal trekking expeditions, food and wine experiences, beach fishing, aerial and nocturnal tours, kayaking, mountain biking, surfing, wildlife and marine viewing and star gazing.

KANGAROO ISLAND BEST IN ASIA PACIFIC REGION

National Geographic Traveler magazine recently ranked Kangaroo Island the best island in the Asia Pacific region and equal 5th in a survey of 111 islands around the world. A judging panel of 522 experts ranked the islands by comparing their commitment to sustainable tourism and preserving the environment for future generations of tourists.

FOOD AND WINE

Kangaroo Island, home to 30 vineyards and 18 labels, already has a reputation for its dynamic food and wine culture - pure Ligurian honey, exceptional seafood, cheese, olive oil - the list goes on. And, to cap it all, last year Kangaroo Island was named Australia's best regional food destination at the "*Vogue Entertaining and Travel Audi Produce Awards*".

2 Birds And A Squid and *Fish* were both set up and are run by renowned British born chef Sue Pearson.

Kangaroo Island's *Food & Wine Trail* highlights food producers and the growing wine industry, and gives Internet users the chance to view video and audio interviews, together with still images and 360-degree virtual reality scenes designed to showcase the best the island has to offer. www.goodfoodkangarooisland.com

NATURAL HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

Flinders Chase National Park is set in 74,000 hectares and is home to both *Remarkable Rocks*, the huge, weather-shaped granite boulders perched on a dome standing 75 metres out of the sea, and *Admiral's Arch*, an impressive landmark home to 6,000 native New Zealand fur seals. *Seal Bay*, one of only two places in the world that visitors can walk, with a National Park Ranger, amongst a breeding colony of rare Australian sea lions.

WILDLIFE CALENDAR

December-February

- Kangaroos and tammar wallabies are seen predominantly at dawn and dusk.
- Little penguins moult all their feathers and can lose up to half their body weight.
- New Zealand fur seals give birth to chocolate-brown pups.
- The Australian sea-lion breeding season begins with pups born from January to June.

- Heath goannas lay 10-17 eggs in termite mounds which act as the perfect incubator.
- Koalas, wallabies and kangaroos give birth to tiny young, which are naked and blind.

March-May

- Glossy black cockatoos and little penguins begin nesting.
- Black swans begin their courtships with wing-raising, neck-stretching and loud trumpeting.
- Fungi start to appear on damp ground and rotting wood.

June-August (best time to visit)

- Land mammals, predominantly night/dawn/dusk feeders, frequently come out by day.
- Koalas emerge from the mother's pouch and begin to ride on her back.
- Kangaroo and wallaby joeys start to emerge from the mother's pouch to feed.
- Echidnas form 'mating trains', up to eight males will follow a female for up to four weeks.
- Waders, on their migration from Siberia, begin to arrive.
- Ospreys show off to their mates in spectacular courtship fights.
- Southern right whales pass from Antarctic waters to the Great Australian Bight to calve.

September-November

- Wildflowers are in abundance with around 40 endemic floral species to be found.
- Eucalyptus oil is in peak production. One tonne of leaf can produce up to 30 litres of oil.
- Cape Barren geese nest on top of the native iris grasses to incubate their eggs.
- Platypuses lay two eggs in a burrow up to 20 metres long.

ACTIVITIES

Over and above wildlife spotting, which includes nocturnal wildlife tours, activities include fishing, sailing, surfing, hiking, trekking, camping and scuba diving - of interest both to wildlife enthusiasts as well as wreck divers.

TOUR OPERATORS

Kangaroo Island is best explored as part of an escorted, guided tour, some of which depart from Adelaide, whilst others can be joined on the island. A number of companies offer short and extended tours of Kangaroo Island – for a list of suggestions:

www.tourkangarooisland.com.au

ACCESSIBILITY

Regional Express and *Air South* both fly daily from Adelaide; *SeaLink* operates up to 10 daily 45-minute passenger and vehicle ferry crossings from Cape Jervis, 90-minutes drive south of Adelaide.

There is also a new *KI Ferries'* service from mainland Wirina, a 60-90 minute drive from Adelaide, which two hours and 15 minutes to get Kingscote. Car hire is available on island (some mainland hire car companies allow their vehicles onto the island). Operators include Budget Rent A Car and Hertz.

ACCOMMODATION

The extensive range of accommodation options ensures there is something to appeal to all tastes and budgets: caravan parks, camping grounds, backpacker hostels and b&bs, farmstays, hotels, self-contained houses, lighthouse keepers' cottages and health retreats including *Lifetime Private Retreats*. This property consists of three individual upmarket retreats with beach access - *Cliff House*, *Sky House* and *Stone House*. A chef is on hand to serve meals on request at a choice of locations, whilst accommodation packages can include daily yoga and meditation, snorkelling, massage, mud treatments, diving, cooking lessons, tours and fishing expeditions. www.life-time.com.au

DID YOU KNOW?

- Kangaroo Island is large enough for everybody in the world to lie down on at once. SA resident Dr Roger Murphy has mathematically demonstrated that all six billion of the earth's people could lie down on the island at the same time
- Kangaroo Island is seven times the size of Singapore.
- 300kg of salt falls across Kangaroo Island per hectare per year.

- In July 1836, Kingscote was the site of Australia's first free European settlement. Six months later the settlement was moved to Adelaide. A lack of fresh water was the main reason for the changing the location of the State capital.
- Before official settlement, escaped convicts, sealers and whalers made Kangaroo Island their home. Many descendants still live on the island.
- The island was separated from the mainland over 10,000 years ago. Animals and plants have evolved differently over this time creating species found nowhere else in the world. Kangaroo Island even has its own sub species of kangaroo.

IN SUMMARY

Easily accessible by air and ferry, Kangaroo Island is ideal for walking, wildlife and nature, history, photography, outdoor pursuits, food and wine, fresh air and relaxation and as such is a not to be missed Australian destination. www.tourkangarooisland.com.au or www.southaustralia.com