



## AMERICAN RIVER AND DISTRICTS

**The ultimate seaside fishing village, American River features spectacular coastal views extending to the mainland, whilst the surrounding native vegetation provides a haven for wildlife. 'The River' as it is known to locals has around 240 permanent residents, including those on farming properties that surround the town. With a mild climate, averaging around 20 degrees over summer and 12 in the coldest winter month of July.**

Stretching alongside the tranquil waters of Pelican Lagoon, American River is a coastal playground. With access to the open sea from the harbour, or into the tranquil waters of Pelican Lagoon, it is a water lover's paradise. As a marine sanctuary, fishing and motorboats are prohibited in Pelican Lagoon, so access via kayak or non-motorised vessel guarantees tranquillity. Pelican Lagoon Conservation Park, which comprises five of the islands in the lagoon and much of the land on the peninsula to the north of the lagoon. The islands within the lagoon were mined for guano under licence from the South Australian Government prior to 1919.

Only a few kilometres from American River, at the isthmus connecting Dudley Peninsula to the rest of the island, Prospect Hill delights those adventurous enough to take the stair climb with astonishing 360-degree views. Matthew Flinders climbed Prospect Hill when navigating the north coast of Kangaroo Island to determine his bearings in 1802. Look out across to Pennington Bay, the Dudley Peninsula, Pelican Lagoon and beyond towards Kingscote.

Long ago the wharf of American River was home to some of the first industries on Kangaroo Island with salt, gypsum (mined nearby) and mallee wood being shipped from here to the Port of Adelaide. American River has an important shipping history, including the old site at Ballast Head, providing deep water access for loading vessels for many many years.

American River was also the place of the first ever ship built in South Australia, a schooner vessel called the 'Independence', was built by American sailors who

arrived upon a vessel named the 'Union'. Today you can explore the wharf, and call into the big green shed for a firsthand look at the dying art of ship building from era's gone by. Here a group of dedicated volunteers are re-building the original schooner vessel the 'Independence'.

Overlooking the mouth of Pelican Lagoon and you'll see it's namesake and other seabirds feeding, frolicking or floating along the calm waters of this sheltered haven. All sorts of birds including a variety of oyster catchers and terns as well as migratory birds from China and Japan in different seasons. An important fish hatchery the Lagoon can have quite strong tidal flows through the inlet near the town.

A bushwalkers paradise, American River has a range of trails, all provide the opportunity to see native wildlife as you quietly meander along coastal or inland trails. Take the interpretive trail around the motels and lodge precinct, telling you more about the local flock of the endangered Glossy-black Cockatoos and if you're lucky they might even join you to feed on nearby sheoak trees – keep an eye out for 'chewings', the left-over seed pods freshly chewed and left scattered on the forest floor below.

Occasionally cast your eyes to the sea for glimpses of a dolphin pod and abundant water birds. And do not forget the smaller bush locals with timid wallabies hiding in the bush fringes, or kangaroos sheltering in the shadows.

Home to thriving aquaculture industries, the neighbouring wharf area remains a working wharf with local fishers coming and going. Surrounded by prosperous farming country the area is also home to some of the islands producers, including lamb, honey, eucalyptus oil, artisan produce and a range of grains.

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