



## CYGNET RIVER AND EMU BAY

**A 15 minute drive from the main town of Kingscote, is the holiday settlement of Emu Bay and nearby the unassuming Cygnet River. Around 120 people permanently call Emu Bay home, with popular holiday times seeing the population swell to full capacity, creating a bustling coastal holiday vibe. Summers are warm and mild on the coast, and even when winter hits, the north coast is often more sheltered than the rugged south.**

Emu Bay is a stunning nearly 4-kilometre stretch of white sand, where vegetated dunes stand tall behind, enveloping the bay. The small town, boat ramp and 100 year old jetty are nestled at the western end, from here the beach stretches east along crystal clear turquoise waters, it is a paradise for walkers, swimmers and beachcombers.

With direct vehicle access to the beach, you can load the family into the car with all the swimming toys, some shade and a picnic, and head around to find your own piece of sand to base yourselves for the day. With safe swimming conditions to suit a variety of levels, shallow waters at the jetty end through to the eastern reaches where water can be deeper and in winter you might even find a wave worth throwing the boogie board in for.

A great place to launch for fishing adventures, with a protected boat ramp, or hop on board a fishing charter for expert local advice and knowledge, let your local skipper do all the planning and hard work while you sit back and reel in the fish for dinner. There are more adventures to be had on the water with local marine tours departing from Emu Bay where you can ride waves along the coast in search of dolphins and other marine life and sea birds. If you're up for an extra dose of adventure on tour jump in for a swim with the dolphins, a once in a lifetime experience with these incredible marine mammals.

Not so well known are the trilobites of Emu Bay! The dark grey shale holds some of history's most precious records. More than 50 species of trilobites

have been identified in the Emu Bay area, dating back a mind-blowing 525 million years, when these prehistoric creatures were teaming on the seafloor. Along with a giant ancestral crayfish (*Anomalocaris*) and a range of other interesting creatures, the best place to see these specimens is at the SA Museum. It is great knowing that the area has such rich treasures telling us more about our incredible history.

The Wisanger Hills to the south of Emu Bay, sit some 35 metres high above the surrounding plateau. Known as table-top hills, due to their flat top that almost looks like it has been cut off! Actually a result of lava flows some 150 million years ago. The 'Gap Road' actually meanders south through the only gap in the hills providing a scenic drive and views of the northern and southern sides of the Winsager Hills.

As you head further south, through agricultural land consisting of sheep farming, crops, cattle grazing and small holdings of grape vines and vineyards, you will find the Cygnet River and the surrounding valley, more a series of plains and lagoons. A signature landscape of the Island with River Red Gums standing tall along the river flats and plains. These are the most majestic of the Eucalypt species, sometimes reaching up to 35 metres tall and towering over the floodplains they inhabit. A favourite food of the Koala, a wander at Cygnet River may delight you with these marsupials resting in a secure tree fork, or out on the ends of branches reaching for the juiciest tips of new growth.

At Duck Lagoon you will immediately hear the locals, with a myriad of bird calls coming from the towering River Red Gums and bush land surrounding the seasonal river and floodplain. A simply stunning setting for a walk in any season, but especially in winter and spring when water levels are up, and a range of water fowl and local birds abound. There is a fantastic opportunity to delve further into an area rich in history, where you might also stumble across the old eucalyptus oil distillery ruins, or an old apple orchard maybe grown by local family the Boettchers, whom after the Cygnet River Bridge is named.

The Narrow-leaved Mallee is also a common sight right across the Cygnet River and Emu Bay area, with it's signature multi stemmed trunks emerging from the red soil of the plains and branching into a dense dark green canopy. These trees provided for a bustling industry in early settlement, with one of Australia's first true overseas exports, eucalyptus oil. Many local farmers supplemented their income off-farm, or while clearing land by collecting Narrow-leaved Mallee for distilling, up until the 1950's, remnants of many of these stills still exist on private land today.

While you are in the area pop into the little known Old Wisanger School, set amongst the mallee woodland, preserving old books and classrooms in their near original state. Opened in 1884, you can step back in time and wander freely around the site imagining what school was like so long ago.

With a long history of farming, the area also now boasts many tourism ventures, being close to the main town of Kingscote and the glorious white sands of Emu Bay. This district plays host to several local cafes and micro-industries, including lavender farming, aquaculture, vineyards and local cellar doors, distillers and brewers.

To find out more about Kangaroo Island's region visit [www.tourkangarooisland.com.au](http://www.tourkangarooisland.com.au).