



SPRING (SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER) ON KANGAROO ISLAND

Average spring temperatures are 19°C (66°F) maximum and 11°C (52°F) minimum.

The first taste of spring is really in August, when the warming days bring animals out and encourage plants to sprout fresh and bright new green growth. The season continues with picturesque morning mists as dewy native vegetation and excited birdsong herald days of calmer seas and burgeoning life everywhere.

Wildlife

In spring Kangaroo and Tammar Wallaby joeys are spending more time out of the pouch and exploring. Echidnas have young too and Pygmy Possums are coming out of winter torpor.

In September, hatchlings of Rosenberg's Goanna begin to excavate their escape tunnel from termite mounds where eggs were laid. In October and November, the orange and grey hatchlings emerge in warm sunny weather to bask and forage, returning to the safety of the nest at night.

Large and bright native Green Carpenter Bees measure in at two centimetres. In Spring they are busy storing pollen and nectar in brood cells to feed their young. If you do see this rare bee, more likely out west, please let the people at the Kangaroo Island Landscape Board in Kingscote know.

Flocks of non-breeding Glossy Black-cockatoos are feeding in sheoak (Casuarina) pockets scattered along the north coast near Penneshaw and American River and Stokes Bay. Their creaky, wheezy call might be heard on dusk as they return to roost in Sugar Gums nearby.

As the days start to lengthen and the temperature warms up you are more likely to find kangaroos and wallabies quietly grazing on grassy plateaus as dusk approaches. For those keen for a close-up wildlife encounter, find a grassy patch near by the safety of bushland, and as the sun sets watch the kangaroos and wallabies emerge to feed on juicy green tendrils of fresh grass.

Birds

In spring the birds are loud and proud on Kangaroo Island. Most species are nesting, and the air is filled with birdsong calling for mates and to establish territory. Food is abundant and supports birds into good breeding condition.

Migratory shorebirds such as the Common Greenshank, Eastern Curlew, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Red-necked Stints, and Ruddy Turnstone begin arriving in August from northern hemisphere breeding grounds, some still with breeding colours. Tidal flats, sheltered coves, freshwater lagoons and brackish wetlands fill up with birds in a feeding frenzy.

Hooded Plovers are found across sandy beaches right around the island and can be safely viewed with binoculars. Seeking refuge, nesting above the high-water mark from spring through summer, when they are very susceptible to disturbance. Please keep a respectful distance as people, vehicles and dogs can cause nesting failure. A bi-annual census in November welcomes visitors – please contact the Kangaroo Island Landscape Board in Kingscote for further information.

Wildflowers

By the time September arrives the Old Man's Beard covers bushes and trees and creamy riceflowers dot roadsides. Wattles flower cream, lemon, canary and apricot – each species to its own tone. But behind the predominant yellow – cream show, and more so as the season progresses, a rich palette of the visible spectrum awaits.

By late September, any trail – Ironstone Hike in Penneshaw, a trail at Murray Lagoon, Beyeria Conservation Park or Dudley Conservation Park – is a painter's paradise with rich palates of pastels to vivid hues. The pinks alone range from dusky tinges on Heath Myrtles and Velvet Bushes to 'shocking' on Tetrathecas. Scan the ground for the rich reward of the small, delicate, utterly gorgeous flowers too many to name.

Spring is prime orchid time, yet orchids can actually be found year round. Acustom your eyes to the tiny flowers – and once you see one in the leaf litter, you'll see dozens – pink fingers, daddy long-legs, helmet orchids, donkey orchids, greenhoods and sun orchids.

The pea flowers, mostly yellow and red, come into their own in October, and the showiest of all is the cockies tongue with its large orange-red flowers.

Bushwalking

Remote coastlines, vast national parks, seasonal waterfalls, and fresh, fresh air beckon the bushwalker to Kangaroo Island during spring. Wildflowers and orchids are blooming in a gorgeous display, fungi are popping through the leaf litter, birds and wildlife are active, the creeks are flowing, sometimes over waterfalls, and the temperature is kind.

For a huge diversity of flowers in 30 minutes, take the Beyeria Conservation Park walk. Learn about the interdependent lives of plants, ants and caterpillars, and other biodiversity stories.

The Bald Hill walk provides spectacular views overlooking Murray Lagoon and is an ideal spot to observe a variety of wetland birds as they feed from the lagoon below. In the distance the visitor can see the dense bush and impressive sand-dunes of the Cape Gantheaume Wilderness Protection Area to the south.

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.

Food and Wine

Visit a honey farm gate to try Kangaroo Island's distinctively complex flavour profile, sample honey with distinct flavours of coastal mallee or Sugar Gum and note the difference. Tuck into some plump new season oysters at American River, seafood outlets or restaurants. Enjoy new spring lamb at a gourmet gathering. Dollop wild fruit jam on a freshly baked scone.

Lavender flowers are beginning to bloom before their summer peak. Kangaroo Island spirits, ciders and ales continue to be crafted, with each cellar door offering a unique experience, and many offering regional food to complement.

Farmers markets are gearing up for spring harvests, and as the temperatures warm, locals gather on sunny days to enjoy fresh coffee, artisan produce - grown, baked and harvested, and the joy of social gathering.

Open for visiting year-round - some by appointment - are honey outlets, several fresh seafood outlets, winery cellar doors, microbreweries and the distillery. Look for a dining option thats your style - fine, casual or pop-up. Eateries dot the island and offer a range of produce and experiences sure to delight.

Agriculture

Spring provides a colourful showcase of the Island's farming enterprises. Canola's bright yellow blooms contrasting with verdant pastures beckon the photographer. Snowy white lambs grow and gambol in farm fields, venturing away from mum. Golden round hay bales dot fields as farmers harvest pasture to store for the leaner summer months. Paddocks of flowering broad beans grow tall and strong.

It's also a busy time as sheep move into shearing sheds and emerge trimmed and white. Trucks appear from country lanes, taking stock to prime lamb markets. Honey farmers collect fresh liquid gold from hives in flowering fields and native vegetation.

The island's farming history is showcased at the Parndana Museum, which features the Soldier Settler Scheme, and at the Hope Cottage National Trust (Kingscote) and Penneshaw Maritime and Folk museums.

In spring you will find plump new-season oysters are available – featuring on restaurant menus. In any season, farm gate outlets and cellar doors are ready to welcome you. Share in their stories and sample produce such as honey, marron, wine, beer, fresh seafood and poultry products.

The Coast

Slip into the aquamarine dream and swim at one of the many north coast beaches or coves in spring sun, Snellings Beach and Western River Cove are glorious. The south coast is more exposed and often rugged, great for experienced swimmers, but remember to always give the ocean a careful assessment before plunging in.

Kangaroo Island's beaches carry the remains of many sea creatures and plants – the lucky might find a Nautilus shell after a storm at D'Estrees Bay. Sheltered reefs, such as Brownlow, can be an educational treasure trove for children and adults at low tide, and intrepid little explorers will delight. Please leave living creatures undisturbed, especially within a marine park sanctuary zone. Each tide deposits a new suite of treasures, each with a story about something that has lived and is slowly being recycled by nature.

No matter which way the wind blows, there's a beach with surf, most likely accessible by car, and you're almost guaranteed to have the break to yourself. Pennington Bay works best on a small swell in a north-westerly, but this is one place you might have to share – it's a popular surfing beach for locals and visitors alike. Check-in with a friendly local to discover the best conditions for swell at the local haunts.

Fishing and boating

In the changeable spring weather, try fishing inshore at American River and Nepean Bay for Snook, King George Whiting, Trevally, Southern Calamari, Tommy Ruff and Salmon Trout.

Or cast a line from jetties at Kingscote, Penneshaw, Vivonne Bay for Southern Calamari, Snook, Australian Herring, Trevally and some King George Whiting.

If you're keen to go out in a boat you might expect Southern Bluefin Tuna, Bight Redfish, Snapper, Blue Morwong, Gummy Shark, Silver Trevally and King George Whiting.

Spring is the most productive time for Black Bream which is abundant in brackish estuaries of rivers such as Chapman, Cygnet, Middle, South West and Harriet.

Launch your boat from Kangaroo Island Council ramps at American River, Bay of Shoals (Kingscote), and Christmas Cove (Penneshaw) for a fee, or from Baudin Beach or Emu Bay for free. If you're looking for an alternative to jetty fishing, kayak fishing enables you to access places you cannot get to on foot or with a boat.

Remember to check limits on size, bag, boat and possession for all fish and shellfish, and season closures, for example for Rock Lobster and Snapper.

Photography

The island is a goldmine for nature photographers, and spring abounds in opportunity. By the time September arrives, wattle is making roadsides fluorescent in shades of yellow, along with creamy riceflowers and Old Man's Beard covering bushes and trees. The palette is not limited to hues of yellow, the bush is bursting with shades of white, pink, red, blue and purple. Safely park the car by any roadside and take a look, or for an even more immersive experience walk one of the many conservation park walking trails.

Scan low down for the many small flowers on spiky bushes and myriad tiny orchids in the leaf litter. Once you have spotted one, you will see them scattered everywhere, make your gear work for you in the low light.

Rise early and listen for bird song in the bush. In early spring, migratory waders arrive from their Northern hemisphere summer breeding to Murray Lagoon, and other lagoons and tidal flats at Reeves Point, Western Cove and American River.

White-bellied Sea-Eagles are nesting until November – give them a wide berth. The Osprey nest at Point Tinline, D'Estrees Bay is very visible from a safe distance.

Spring provides perfect weather to follow the trail down the Ravine des Casoars to a sandy beach wedged between towering hills and open to mesmerising swells.