

Kangaroo Island

National parks visitation snapshot

The region

With its unspoiled wilderness and stunning beauty, it is no surprise that Kangaroo Island is consistently in South Australia's top 10 tourist destinations as voted on Trip Advisor.

Kangaroo Island is Australia's third largest island and is home to unique natural beauty, an abundance of wildlife and plenty to keep visitors busy.

From getting up-close to the magnificent sea lion population on the southern side of the island, to exploring the lighthouses in the east and west, and the fabulous hidden beach at Stokes Bay in the north, Kangaroo Island is nothing short of spectacular.

Tourism

In 2018, Kangaroo Island contributed \$126 million to SA's \$6.8 billion tourism expenditure.

The region attracts approximately 200,000 visitors per year with 154,000 staying overnight (2016-18).

It has a higher proportion of international visitors than anywhere else in South Australia. Of its international visitors, 60 per cent are from Europe. Of its Australian visitors, most are from Victoria and New South Wales.

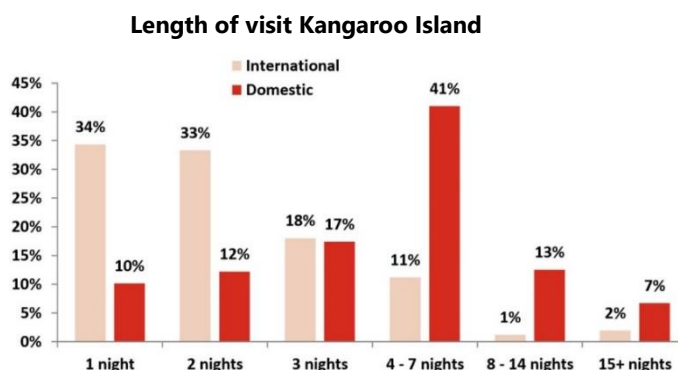
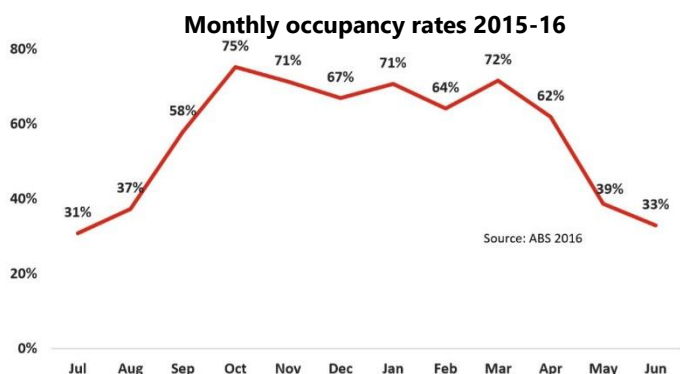
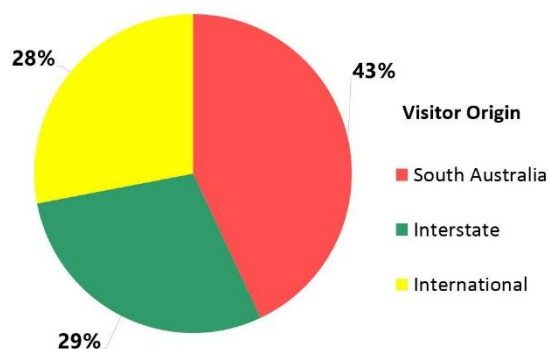
Kangaroo Island has eight visitor accommodation options*, totalling 261 available rooms. Over the course of a year, occupancy rates average at 57 per cent. Peak months are January, March, October and November, which all have occupancy rates above 70 per cent. The low point in the year is during winter when occupancy rates drop to on average 33 per cent.

For more in-depth analysis, visit the [SA Tourism Commission regional profiles](#).

*Hotels, motels and serviced apartments with 15+ rooms

The opportunity

Kangaroo Island's tourism strategy aims to deliver on the Island's brand proposition, grow visitor yield and dispersal, and manage the sustainable development of tourism. With highly seasonal visitation, growing visits during the quieter months of May to August continues to be important.



National parks

Kangaroo Island has a total of 26 national parks, conservation parks and wilderness protection areas covering 126,743 hectares. Devastating bushfires swept across the island in December 2019 through to January 2020, burning as much as 68 per cent of the reserve land (approximately 86,699 hectares) on the western side of the island.

Work is underway to improve and expand visitor services on the unaffected eastern side of the island while recovery continues in the west.

In the meantime, there's still so much to see and explore. Kangaroo Island's national parks offer breathtaking scenery, with some of the most rugged coastline the state has to offer, and provide habitat for an abundant range of wildlife.

A trip to Kangaroo Island isn't complete without a visit to [Flinders Chase National Park](#) – the most popular park on the island – with its rugged cliffs and iconic landmarks, or a tour at [Seal Bay Conservation Park](#), with its lovable population of sea lions.

It's not just tourists that like to explore Kangaroo Island's parks. People who live on the island appreciate them too – 89 per cent of those surveyed had visited at least one park in the 2018-19 financial year.

Read on to learn more about some of the national parks in the region that have nature-based tourism interest and potential, or visit the [National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia](#) website to learn more about other Kangaroo Island parks of tourism interest.



Seal Bay Conservation Park

About the park

Seal Bay Conservation Park has been home to an Australian sea lion population for thousands of years, and offers one of the most exceptional nature-based experiences in the world.

It's the only place in the world where you can see Australian sea lions at close quarters and watch pups play, bulls fight for supremacy and resting mothers suckle their young.

Visitation data

Seal Bay Visitor Centre bookings show 121,819 people visited Seal Bay Conservation Park in the 2018-19 financial year.

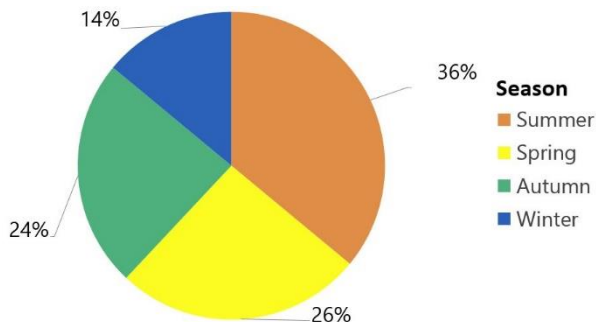
Peak and off-peak season

Peak season for visitation generally aligns with the school holiday periods in summer, autumn and spring, with the highest number of visits in January and April. Visitation is lowest from May to August.

Visitors per month



Bookings by season



Accommodation usage

There is no camping or accommodation available within this park.

Assets and services report

Co-management	—
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	☆☆☆ Nil
Access roads – bitumen	★★★ Good
Internet connectivity	★★☆ Limited
Camping opportunities	☆☆☆ Nil
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	☆☆☆ Nil
Power and water	★★☆ Limited

Assets of interest and facilities:

Seal Bay Visitor Centre.

Flinders Chase National Park

About the park

Flinders Chase National Park is famous for iconic landmarks such as Admirals Arch, a beautiful natural rock arch shaped by the powerful Southern Ocean, and the sculptured granite boulders known as Remarkable Rocks.

Other attractions include wild beaches, the unspoilt Rocky River, vast wilderness areas and cultural heritage sites – including two lighthouses. It now offers an incredible opportunity to witness a landscape regenerating after fire.

Visitation data

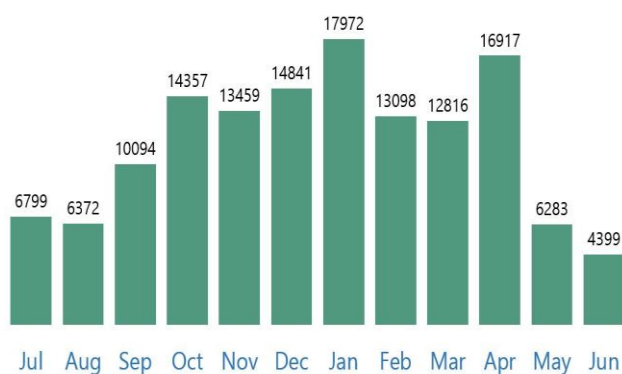
Flinders Chase Information Centre records show approximately 137,407 people visited the park in the 2018-19 financial year.

Of the total number of visitors, 7736 people booked their park entry fee online. Of those that booked online, 4167 stayed in the parks campgrounds for an average of 1.7 nights.

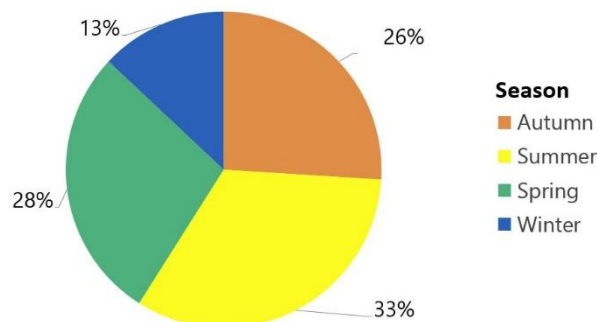
Peak and off-peak season

Peak season for visitation is from October to April and lowest in the cooler months from May to August.

Visitors per month



Bookings by season



Accommodation usage

The park's campgrounds include:

- Rocky River Campground: 2,263 people per year (38 per cent of visitors are from SA)
- Snake Lagoon Campground: 877 (39 per cent)
- West Bay Campground: 659 (38 per cent)
- Harveys Return Campground: 368 (34 per cent)

Note: Flinders Chase National Park's Heritage accommodation is featured in the Heritage Accommodation section on Page 6 and 7.

Assets and services report

Co-management	—
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	✓
Access roads – bitumen	★★★ Good
Internet connectivity	★★☆ Limited
Camping opportunities	Affected by fire
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	Affected by fire
Power and water	★★☆ Limited

Assets of interest and facilities:

Most of the park's campgrounds and facilities were destroyed by the recent bushfires but will be reinstated.

Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail

About the trail

The 61-kilometre [Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail](#) opened in 2016 but was severely impacted by the 2019/20 summer bushfires and is currently not accessible.

Ordinarily, it's a five-day walk that traverses the most botanically unique area in all of SA.

Venturing through dense bushland, soaring cliffs, untouched white sandy beaches and pristine rivers and lagoons, the trail provides walkers with a front-row seat to some of the island's most iconic natural and historical attractions.

Visitation data

Booking information shows 2112 people walked the trail in the 2018-19 financial year.

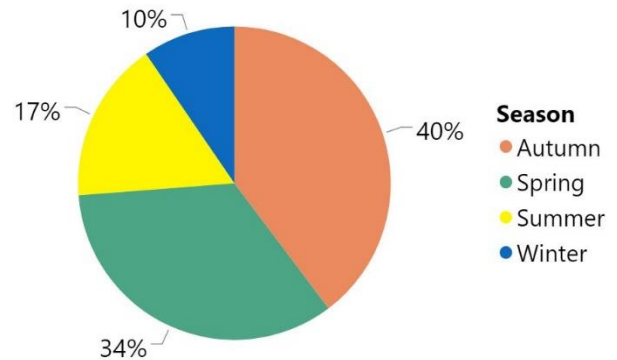
Surveys undertaken from 2016-19 show 50 per cent of walkers were from SA, 16 per cent from Victoria, 15 per cent from NSW, 9 per cent from Queensland, 2 per cent from Western Australia and 2 per cent from the Australian Capital Territory.

Peak and off-peak season

The highest busiest seasons for walking the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail were spring and autumn.



Bookings by season



Accommodation usage

The KI Wilderness Trail has four campgrounds (Cup Gum, Hakea, Banksia and Teatree) that are available exclusively for people who sign up to walk the trail.

These campgrounds were severely impacted by the recent bushfires and are currently not accessible.

Assets and services report

Co-management	—
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	—
Access roads – bitumen	★★☆ Limited
Internet connectivity	☆☆☆ Nil
Camping opportunities	★★☆☆ Basic
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	★★☆☆ Basic
Power and water	★★☆☆ Basic

Kangaroo Island heritage accommodation

About the accommodation

Some of Kangaroo Island's heritage buildings are not only interesting places to visit, but also offer unique accommodation experiences.

The island's lighthouses are popular attractions and have an interesting past, having been built after a spate of more than 50 shipwrecks occurred around the island in the 1830s.

This led to the establishment of three lighthouses – one at Cape Willoughby in 1852, one at Cape Borda in 1858 and another at Cape du Couedic in 1909.

The lighthouses themselves and the heritage cottages and buildings located alongside are now set up as tourist accommodation.

Rocky River in Flinders Chase National Park offers the choice of two charming self-contained stone cottages as a popular, secluded accommodation option.

Detailed information about each of these heritage accommodation options is provided

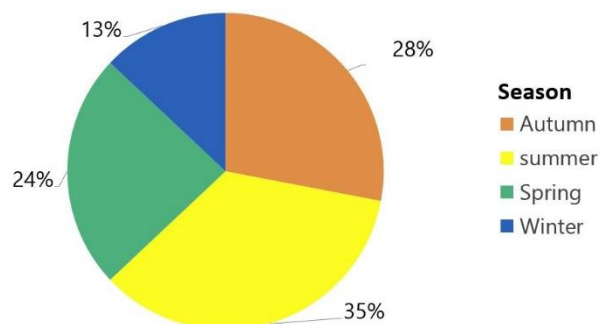
Visitation data

Online booking information shows 1795 people stayed at a heritage accommodation site on Kangaroo Island in the 2018-19 financial year.

Peak and off-peak season

Peak season for occupancy at Kangaroo Island's heritage accommodation is during summer, with December being the most booked month. Shoulder seasons of autumn and spring are also popular for occupancy.

All accommodation bookings by season



Detailed information about each of these heritage accommodation options is as follows:

Cape Willoughby Lighthouse Keepers Heritage Accommodation

[Cape Willoughby Conservation Park](#) has two historic weatherboard cottages located alongside its iconic lighthouse.

They were built for the lighthouse keepers in the 1920s and overlook the Southern Ocean and Backstairs Passage.

These cottages accommodate up to nine adults in five bedrooms.

In the 2018-19 financial year, there were 86 bookings, with visitors staying an average of 2.2 nights per booking.

Nights booked per month – Cape Willoughby cottages



Assets and services report

Co-management	—
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	✓
Access roads – bitumen	★☆☆ Basic
Internet connectivity	★☆☆ Basic
Camping opportunities	NA
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	NA

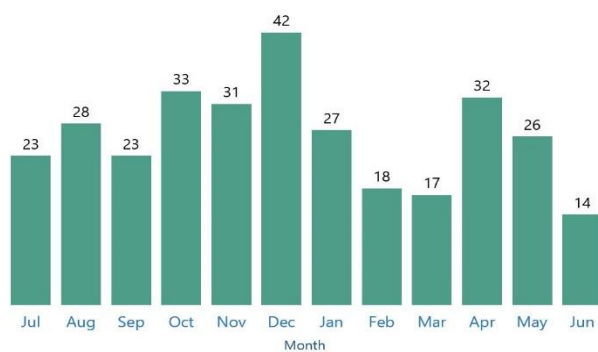
Rocky River Heritage Accommodation

Located within [Flinders Chase National Park](#) and adjacent to the park's Rocky River are two early pastoralist cottages, Mays and Postmans.

They are situated within walking distance of the former Flinders Chase Visitor Centre and have been severely impacted by the in the recent bushfires. The cottage are being restored as part of the early works to restore some of the island assets affected by the fire.

In the 2018-19 financial year, there were 170 bookings, with visitors staying an average of 1.8 nights per booking.

Nights booked per month – Rocky River Heritage Accommodation



Assets and services report

Co-management	—
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	✓
Access roads – bitumen	★★★ Good
Internet connectivity	★☆☆ Basic
Camping opportunities	NA
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	NA

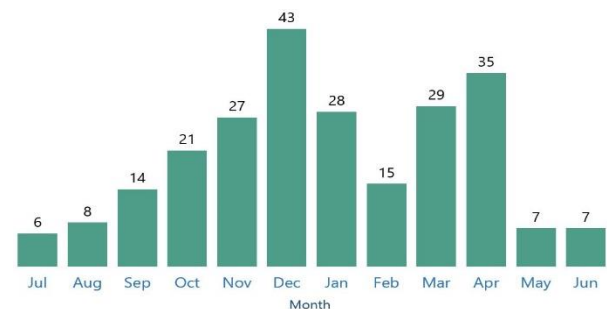
Cape Borda Lighthouse Keepers Heritage Accommodation

Located in the northern part of [Flinders Chase National Park](#), the Cape Borda Light House Keepers Heritage Accommodation has three self-contained cottages – the beautifully restored Flinders Light Lodge, the quaint Woodward Hut and Baudin Lodge, a lighthouse residence.

Flinders Light Lodge is an ideal romantic getaway for couples or a retreat for families. This gracious stone homestead comfortably sleeps up to six guests in three bedrooms. The snug Woodward Hut is a bunkhouse for two, with a small stove, while the Baudin Lodge lighthouse residence is a bedroom 4 stone house.

The total number of bookings for 2018-19 was 136 and the average nights stayed per booking was 1.8.

Nights booked per month - Cape Borda



These graphs include data from the former Hartleys Hut, which was burnt down in the recent bushfires and is no longer available. Baudin Lodge which was staff housing has recently become available as replacement heritage accommodation.

Assets and services report

Co-management	—
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	✓
Access roads – bitumen	★★☆☆ Basic
Internet connectivity	★★☆☆ Basic
Camping opportunities	NA

Disclaimer

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