

Murray River, Lakes and Coorong

National parks visitation snapshot

The region

South Australia's Murray River, Lakes and Coorong region is about 142,500 hectares in size, stretching from Murray Bridge on the west to the Victorian border in the east.

At its centre is the Murray River, the lifeblood of SA – rich in Aboriginal history, critical to the state's productivity, and a place of connection and leisure.

'Going up the river' is about as South Australian as you can get, and it's the region's water sports, houseboating and fishing that draw the crowds.

But then there are the historic river towns, the mythical Bunyip, the gourmet food and wine, and the accredited International Dark Sky Reserve where visitors can see some of the darkest skies and the brightest stars in the world. And that's where the value and breadth of this region come to life.

The region also has a diverse range of freshwater, estuarine and marine habitats with native plants and animals that are unique not just within the Murray-Darling Basin, but worldwide.

Tourism

In 2018, the Murray River, Lakes and Coorong region contributed \$148 million to SA's \$6.8 billion tourism expenditure.

It attracts approximately 327,000 overnight visitors per year (data from 2016-18), with 75 per cent of visitors from intrastate – two thirds of these from Adelaide and one third from regional SA. Along with SA visitors, 12 per cent of visitors come from Victoria.

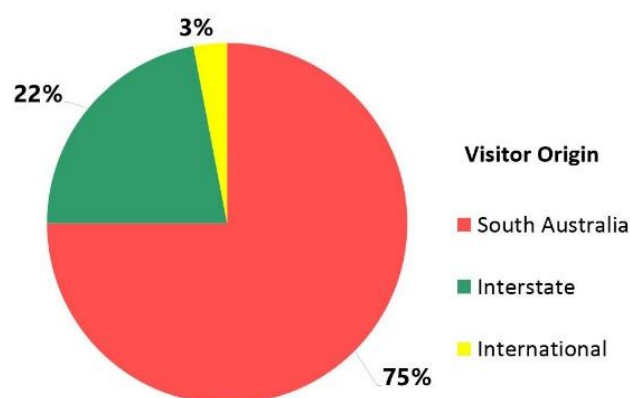
The Murray River, Lakes and Coorong region has 7 visitor accommodation options*, totalling 164 available rooms. Over the course of a year, occupancy rates average at 54 per cent, peaking in April and October at 64 per cent and 61 per cent respectively. The lowest point of the year is the winter months when occupancy drops to an average of 45 per cent.

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

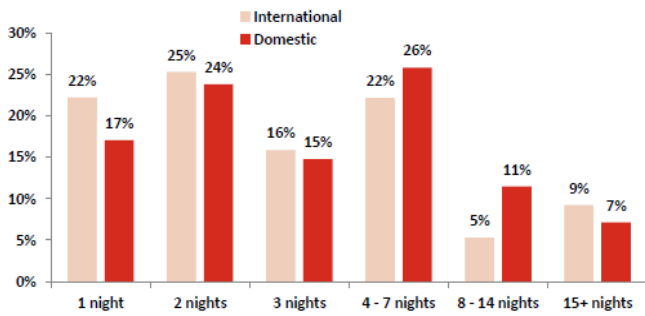
*Hotels, motels and serviced apartments with 15+ rooms.

The opportunity

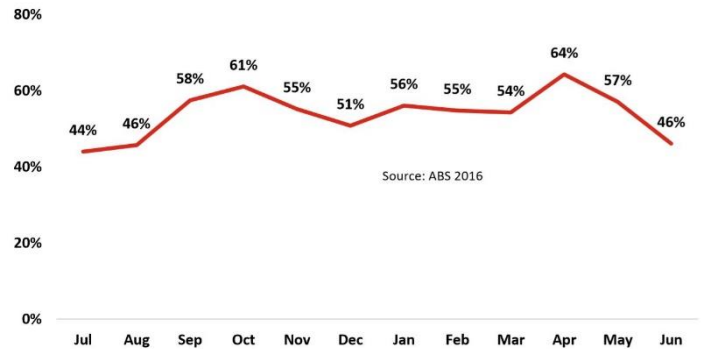
As the Murray River, Lakes and Coorong region is predominantly a self-drive visitor market, the opportunity is to leverage existing touring routes and promote and develop events and hero tourism experiences that reflect the region's uniqueness, with an aim to increase overnight visits from international and domestic visitors.



Length of visit to Murray River, Lakes and Coorong



Monthly occupancy rates 2015-16



National parks

The Murray River, Lakes and Coorong region contains a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance and is used for several purposes, including conservation, recreation, water storage, urban and residential development and extraction, grazing and cropping.

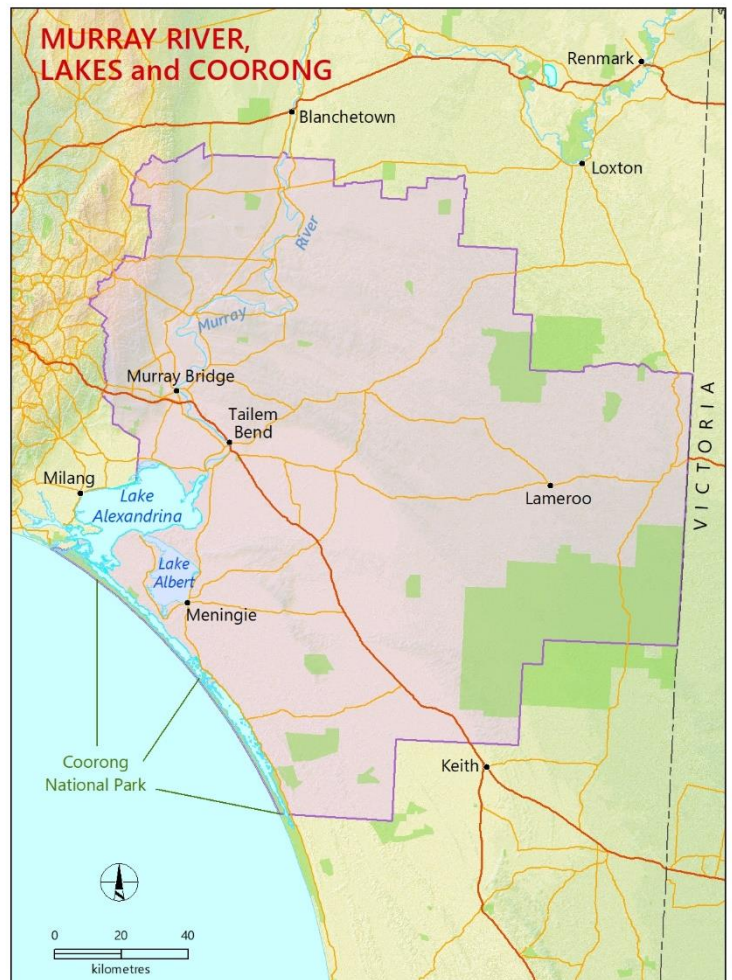
The area is also a popular tourist destination and includes the beautiful [Coorong National Park](#), where visitors can stay at scenic campgrounds and enjoy kayaking, birdwatching and four-wheel driving.

On average 8 per cent of South Australians surveyed said they visited a park in the Murray River, Lakes and Coorong region or the Riverland region*.

For South Australians living within this region, 85 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 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 parks in the region of tourism interest.

*Note: Murray River National Park is featured in the Riverland summary report.



Coorong National Park

About the park

[Coorong National Park](#) is the most popular park in this region, with its diversity and proximity to Adelaide the main drawcards.

Visitors come for the serenity, bird watching, boating, kayaking, fishing, camping, walking, four-wheel driving and European and Aboriginal cultural history.

They also come to experience the wonders of the Coorong itself – as a wetland of international importance it supports many significant and endangered flora and fauna.

Both [Encounter Marine Park](#) and [Upper South East Marine Park](#) border Coorong National Park, so visitors have the best of both worlds where the river meets the sea.

Visitation data

Online booking information showed 9,393 people visited the park in the 2018 – 19 financial year, with 60 per cent of those from SA.

The average length of stay booked was 1.7 nights, with an average of 2.7 people per booking.

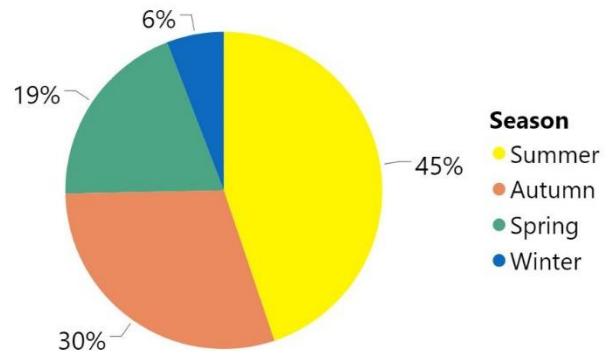
Peak and off-peak season

Peak visitation is from November to April, with the highest occupancy during the Christmas holiday period from December to January. Occupancy is lowest from May to September.

Visitors per month



Bookings by season



Accommodation usage

The park's most used campgrounds include:

- 42 Mile Crossing Campground: 2,639 people per year (51 per cent of visitors are from SA)
- Beach camping at Ocean Beach: 1862 (80 per cent)
- Parnika Point Pelican Campground: 1,174 (42 per cent)
- 28 Mile Crossing Campground: 824 (37 per cent)
- Long Point Campground: 538 (58 per cent)
- Barker Knoll Boat-in Campground: 400 (95 per cent)
- Parnika Point Avocet Campground: 334 (43 per cent)
- Tea Tree Crossing Campground: 316 (81 per cent)

Assets and services report

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

Assets of interest and facilities: Good walking network. Cantara Homestead. Six designated campgrounds in the park, most can only be accessed by 4WD.

Disclaimer

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