



Wildlife Watching on Kangaroo Island

Watching native animals is an inspiring experience. People are excited by seeing sea lions, kangaroos, spectacular bird life, echidnas and goannas. Observing these and many other species in the wild is not just a memorable experience, but also can be a very strong personal motivation for conservation.

As an industry it is important to ensure that visitation to natural areas does not have a negative impact. We need to maintain the natural assets that have historically attracted visitors to the Island, for years to come. To do this we must ensure that visitors can enjoy high-quality wildlife watching without adversely affecting the survival or the habitat of the animals they watch. The following wildlife watching guidelines have been developed to achieve those aims.

Observation not interaction

Always remember:

- Stay on the trail
- Put the animal's welfare first
- Move slowly and quietly
- Observe from a distance
- Use binoculars for the close-up look

For your safety:

All native animals in national and conservation parks, reserves and roadsides are protected and should be observed and photographed from a distance. This minimises disturbance to the animal and allows you to observe many of the natural behaviours exhibited by animals in the wild.

Keep our wildlife healthy

Please don't feed the wildlife – let them feed for themselves, because:

- Human food is poisonous to wildlife. It seriously disrupts their natural digestive systems.
- Feeding changes natural behaviour patterns which are essential for survival in the bush.
- Feeding can cause dangerous situations - animals may become aggressive and cause injury.

Slow down for wildlife

Kangaroo Island is refuge to an abundant array of wildlife, unfortunately too many are killed on the roads. Roads on Kangaroo Island are also a wildlife zone.

Please reduce your speed because:

- Nocturnal animals are active at night
- Wallabies & kangaroos can move unpredictably
- Your headlights can dazzle nocturnal animals
- Echidnas are slow moving animals
- Goannas need to bask in the sun before becoming active

What to Take

Binoculars - To see the animals clearly, and observe their behaviour (both day and night) take binoculars.

Torch or Spotlight - To find wildlife at night use a strong torch or 30 watt spotlight, with a filter made of red cellophane to minimize disturbance to the animal.

Field Guide - To identify species take a field guide of Australian mammals and / or birds.

Camera - To make your wildlife viewing experience memorable please take along a camera. Using a strong zoom or telephoto lens will allow you to take better photos, as well minimising disturbance to the animals.

Where to Look

- If you want to be confident of seeing native animals in the wild go on a guided tour, visit one of DEH Visitor Centres, stay at accommodation that features wildlife, or go to a natural wildlife attraction.
- If you want to see native animals on your own, go to a protected area such as a national park or nature reserve.
- If you want to see wildlife living in captivity visit a wildlife park, or if you want to see underwater animals go to an aquarium.

What to Do

Try to Keep Noise Down - Approach animals very slowly and quietly. If they begin to show obvious signs of alarm, stop moving. Always speak quietly and keep very still. Loud noises and sudden movements frighten them and they will move away.

Stay a safe distance - Keep a reasonable distance (as a guideline approximately ten metres) away from the animal. You can tell if you are the right distance away because they will stay where they are and will resume normal behaviour after a short period of time. If they move away do not pursue them, as this will only cause them to flee.

Let them feed themselves – Do not feed animals living in natural areas as unnatural food may harm them. For example, feeding bread to kangaroos can cause their gums to become infected; a condition known as lumpy jaw.

Please Do Not Touch Them - touching the animals causes them to become 'stressed' and they may flee. You may also pass on infections to them.

Drive Carefully - Drive carefully through protected areas such as National Parks and on our roads - keep your eyes open for wildlife. This is particularly important at dusk, when kangaroos and wallabies are likely to be feeding on the roadside and may dash in front of your car. It is not uncommon to see injured or dead animals on the roads.

These guidelines were produced with information from the Department For Environment and Heritage, Kangaroo Island (visit www.environment.sa.gov.au or phone: (08) 8553 2381), Wildlife Tourism Australia (www.wildlifetourism.org.au) and Kangaroo Island Tourism Operators.

For more information relating to the TOMM process and other publications relating to TOMM research please visit www.tomm.info. As part of the ongoing commitment to improving data collection and reporting techniques your feedback is appreciated. If you have any suggestions on other information that would be useful in this format, please email us at tobias.mendelovici@kicouncil.sa.gov.au
