

# SEALINK

## Kangaroo Island

This comprehensive guide to fishing on Kangaroo Island has been kindly supplied by Shane Mensforth, Editor of SA Angler Magazine [www.saangler.com.au](http://www.saangler.com.au)

### KINGSCOTE/BAY OF SHOALS

Kingscote, the Island's "capital", is situated between the Bay of Shoals and Nepean Bay and offers a good choice of boat, jetty and shore fishing. A long sand spit extends in an easterly direction some 5km from the western side of the Bay of Shoals.

The waters on the south side of the spit provide good fishing for whiting, gar, salmon trout and big sand crabs. A deep channel runs along the southern side and is easily accessed from the boat ramp.

Whiting hug the edges of the channel, along with good numbers of plump salmon trout which are great sport on trolled lures and light tackle. Tides run strongly through the channels, so sinker weight should be changed accordingly. Garfish are most common over the weed beds directly east of the boat ramp and these can be caught on light gear or dabbed at night with the aid of a spotlight and long handled net.

Large sand crabs — considered by most to be the equal of blue swimmers to eat — can be drop netted over the Bay of Shoals sand patches or near the channel markers east of the boat ramp.

At the eastern end of the spit are the north and south beacons that indicate the width of the spit at this point. Whiting can be caught in good numbers between the beacons in either the deeper areas or on the sandy patches in the shallows. Squid can be plentiful here at times, too, along with garfish, Tommies and red mullet.

The waters back towards Kingscote, especially the broken bottom within a kilometre either side of the jetty, are very productive for whiting, squid and gar.

Land-based anglers can try the boat ramp area around high tide for whiting, gar, tommies, mullet, flathead and squid. Nearby Salmon Point is best fished on the last two hours of the falling tide and the first hour of the run in. This narrow strip of sand is rapidly covered by the rising tide, but during the fishable period it regularly yields whiting, salmon trout and tommies, as well as a sprinkling of small trevally and flathead.

Due to different tide requirements, both the ramp area and Salmon Point can be fished in the one session if so desired. Light winds from the southerly quarter are ideal in these locations.

### KINGSCOTE JETTY

This long pier, which has seen dozens of uses over the decades, is recognised as one of the very best fishing jetties in South Australia. It regularly yields whiting, snook, tommies, squid, garfish, trevally, barracouta, salmon trout, leatherjackets and the occasional yellowtail kingfish. It is also one of the relatively few recognised shore-based locations in the state where King George whiting are regularly caught at night. Many locals often "bag out" on nice whiting from the jetty.

The best snook and squid fishing occurs after dark, too, with whole blue bait easily the best offering for snook. These can be simply drifted with little or no weight on calm nights, or jigged slowly near the jetty lights if the snook are actively feeding.

The smaller wooden jetty to the north often yields good catches of squid, whiting, tommies and snook, but can only cope with a handful of anglers at a time.

**CYGNET RIVER**

The Cygnet is open to the sea all year round, so tides play a major role in the feeding patterns of local bream. The last hour of the rising tide is particularly good, especially if it coincides with early morning or late afternoon.

Most of the Island's rivers are plagued with large numbers of undersized bream, but the Cygnet is a recognised producer of big fish to over two kilograms.

**NEPEAN BAY**

Although not as popular with local anglers as the Bay of Shoals, Nepean Bay can nevertheless provide excellent angling for most of the same species. On the southern side of the bay an area known as Red Banks is famous for whiting, as well as squid, tommies, gar, snook and the occasional snapper.

A long reef system, some 1.5-2 kilometres from shore, runs parallel to Red Banks. The general rule of thumb in this location is that if you are catching parrot fish and leatherjackets, you are too close to the reef. Shift a little further away and you are in whiting territory.

**POINT MORRISON TO BALLAST HEAD**

Whiting, squid, garfish and snook are common in the small bays between these two points, with sweep, trevally and occasional snapper caught over the more reefy areas. The old Ballast Head jetty no longer remains, but there are enough discarded sections on the bottom to attract and hold whiting, sweep, tommies, squid and some thumper snook.

During the warmer months yellowtail kingfish are still a possibility at Ballast Head, along with salmon to 2kg and, if you're lucky, a decent snapper or two. About 2.5km east of Ballast Head there is some rough bottom in 9-10m of water that is also worth a try for snapper and whiting.

**AMERICAN RIVER**

Very popular with visiting anglers, American River's sheltered waters are ideal for small boats. Whiting, salmon trout, garfish, snook, tommies, flathead and sand crabs are the most common species.

The period from January to May provides excellent fishing over the sections of broken bottom, from the outside beacons back towards the aquatic reserve. Inside the inlet the rising tide is best and the waters between American River township and Kangaroo Head fish well for whiting during the last two hours of the run in.

American River wharf can be a rewarding spot to dangle a line for whiting, salmon trout, tommies, garfish and big yellow eye mullet. This is a strong tide area and the best spot to fish is directly beneath the Game Fishing Club's weighing gantry with the tide running in.

The broken bottom along the stretch from Island Beach to Kangaroo Head produces good catches of large whiting, gar, snook, tommies, squid and flathead. Snapper are also caught in these waters from November to May, and many pockets of reef along this section are within a kilometre of the shore. Sand crabs are also common during the warmer months.

**ROCKY POINT**

Snapper and whiting can be found some 800 metres offshore in 5-6 metres of water. Look for small patches of broken reef and berley frequently to achieve best results. Occasionally a blue morwong is caught here on whiting tackle.

**AMERICAN BEACH**

The waters surrounding the boat ramp provide excellent whiting action at times, along with snook, tommies, squid and snapper. Anglers fishing from the shore often take nice flathead, squid and the occasional dusky morwong (strongfish).

**CHRISTMAS COVE**

This picturesque and protected little harbor offers shelter and safe launching facilities and is a good base for boats fishing anywhere between American Beach and Cape St Albans. From the rocky shore near the harbor entrance land-based anglers sometimes catch nice whiting, squid, flathead, mullet, trevally and tommies.

### **PENNESHAW**

The principal arrival and departure point for ferry passengers, Penneshaw is among Kangaroo Island's oldest settlements. SeaLink ferries come and go here 364 days a year, using the Hog Bay jetty for loading and unloading passengers, their vehicles and freight trucks.

Hog Bay produces reasonable catches of King George and silver whiting, snook, tommies, gar, sand crabs and squid. Salmon up to three kilograms can often be located by trolling lures not far from the shoreline.

Depending on the time of year, the jetty can offer whiting, flathead, snook, garfish, tommies, trevally, salmon, mullet and large silver drummer. The adjacent breakwater yields salmon, whiting, tommies, school sharks and occasional yellowtail kingfish, while beach casters in the bay can expect to find mullet, flathead and salmon of varying sizes.

Back in the boat again, the cliffs east of Hog Bay hold reef species like sweep, nannygai and snapper, while the small, sandy bays produce large whiting, snook, salmon, gar and squid.

### **SNAPPER POINT**

This is a reasonably productive boat fishing area for sweep, nannygai, snapper, school sharks and yellowtail kingfish. It's a deep water area with heavy tidal influence, so be prepared with plenty of weighty sinkers!

### **CAPE COUTTS**

This is another boat fishing location for nannygai, harlequin fish, sweep, yellowtail kingfish, trevally, salmon and snapper.

### **ANTECHAMBER BAY**

Antechamber is a large and relatively protected bay that is favoured by many who target large King George whiting. It's also a top spot for monster snook in the summer time, as well as gar, tommies, flathead, mullet and sand crabs.

Shore casters fishing the western end of the bay can tangle with salmon, squid, flathead (to 3kg at times), mullet, tommies and even school mulloway at times when the Chapman River is open. The river itself is good for mullet and bream of mixed sizes. At the other end of the beach Red House Bay is another good spot to try for whiting and flathead, again with the outside chance of a mulloway.

### **CAPE ST ALBANS TO CAPE WILLOUGHBY**

This is big boat territory, as it's open to summer south-easterly winds and big Backstairs Passage tides. Salmon are found along this stretch from the eastern end of Antechamber Bay to Windmill Bay and they can vary in size between 1-5 kilograms. Lures trolled in quite close to the rocks provide the best results on salmon.

Yellowtail kingfish are caught in this area as well and they can range from 3-25kg. Deep diving minnow lures and live baits are the best offerings for Cape Willoughby kings and the tackle needs to be very robust.

### **PENNINGTON BAY**

An ideal and readily accessible fishing location, Pennington Bay is only two kilometres off the main Penneshaw to Kingscote road. It's a picturesque spot, offering the bonus of whale, dolphin and seal sightings, as well as some first class fishing.

The beach sections are best known for salmon by day and sharks at night. Occasional mulloway and tailor are caught here, along with the more predictable mullet, tommies and nice flathead.

The rocky outcrops provide good sweep fishing, but as is always the sensible option, only tackle the rocks when seas are down and conditions predictable.

### **D'ESTREES BAY**

Approximately 43km from Kingscote, D'Estrees Bay is generally regarded as a shore fishing location, although boats can be launched by tractor or four wheel drive at two very basic ramp areas. Seaweed build up can be a problem at times and be sure to check the weather forecast to avoid difficulties in retrieving the boat if the wind picks up.

Areas of broken bottom close to shore are ideal to fish for whiting, trevally, tommies, flathead and salmon trout. Two to three kilometres out from a section of black boulders on the shore there are deep, reefy areas which hold good numbers of snapper, nannygai, swallowtail, big trevally, whiting and small sharks.

Large snook are plentiful in the bay from April to September, while garfish and squid can be expected year round.

At the southern end of D'Estrees Bay lies Point Tinline and just around the corner is Wreckers Beach. Surf fishing here can produce some excellent whiting, salmon, trevally, tommies and flathead, with vast mullet schools arriving during autumn. School and gummy sharks can be caught from the beach at night.

The best fishing in this stretch of beach occurs at the bottom of the tide, when sandy pockets and channels adjacent to numerous reef and weed areas can be accessed easily from shore. It's also an excellent beach for salt water fly fishing when the wind is suitable.

The second boat ramp area is also worth a try, particularly along the weed line for whiting, flathead and trevally.

Next is Wheaton's Beach, offering similar conditions and fish varieties to Wreckers.

Sower Bay, with its unappealing name, is as far as you can drive in a conventional vehicle. This small, well protected bay produces monster garfish, salmon, whiting, squid, tommies and flathead from the shore. Use a float for tommies, salmon, squid and gar and be prepared to lose some terminal tackle if fishing the reefy bottom for whiting.

A four wheel drive track past Sewer Bay leads to some great rock fishing for sweep, but the track is rough and big ocean swells can make the rocks dangerous at times.

#### **VIVONNE BAY**

Vivonne offers quite a variety of fishing, including beach, river, jetty and rock. There is no public launching ramp, but Southern Freedom Charters runs offshore trips from Vivonne Bay during April and May, fishing largely untouched reefs for nannygai, snapper, blue morwong, swallowtail, big sweep, blue proper and other deep water desirables.

The beach adjacent to the river mouth and to the east provides salmon, mullet, tommies, sharks, flathead and even some excellent bream to nearly a kilogram.

The Vivonne Bay jetty has long been famous for huge tommies at night, along with whiting, squid, gar and big trevally during winter.

The Harriet and Eleanor Rivers both hold good populations of bream. Undersize fish can be a problem on traditional baits, so many anglers now use lures to attract the larger specimens.

Nearby Point Ellen is popular for sweep, salmon, trevally and tommies from the rocks, but again extreme care must be taken when a big swell is running.

#### **HANSON BAY**

The first beach at Hanson Bay is a small, sheltered spot at the entrance to South West River that can be fished in most weather conditions. It's reliable for tommies, salmon trout and mullet and some exceptional whiting have been caught here at night. Bream can also be expected while the river mouth is open and flowing to sea.

A short distance eastwards is the surf beach, also an easy walk from the car parking area located on the western side of South West River. This is a popular spot for big salmon and school sharks, as well as some thumper tommies and mullet.

West of the river mouth the rock fishing potential is enormous. This area is lightly fished due to the long walk involved and is best visited when there is no wind or if the wind is from the northerly quarter. Caution must be taken due to large swells rolling in from the Southern Ocean, but the experienced rock angler could tangle with huge sweep, salmon, trevally and various reef species right up to blue proper.

**BREAKNECK RIVER**

This is about a half hour walk from the car park and is another worthwhile venue for salmon, salmon trout, tommyies, mullet and sharks. Rock fishing is similar to Sandy River.

**WEST BAY**

This is the last of the western beaches, again offering similar beach and rock species to Breakneck and Sandy Rivers. There's a basic camping area here just above the beach.

While some effort is required to get to these locations, the advantage lies in fishing virtually untouched water and you can sometimes fish all day without seeing another human being. All details regarding directions, track conditions and park regulations can be obtained from National Parks Rocky River headquarters, which is passed en route to all three locations mentioned.

**HARVEY'S RETURN**

From the car park a steep track leads down to a small, rocky beach. Salmon, whiting, tommyies and mullet are the main catch here, but venturing on to the rocks to the left or right hand side opens up a whole new range of target species. Harvey's is best fished when the wind is from the southerly quarter, as is most of the north coast.

**SNUG COVE**

The waters directly offshore from Snug are prime boat fishing territory and, as the nearest recognised launching facility is miles away at Emu Bay, recreational boat traffic is generally light. Big whiting (many over the magic one kilogram mark), snapper of mixed sizes, nannygai, blue morwong and trevally are common and monster samson fish have been caught on the reefy grounds within 2km of shore.

As this is such a remote area for trailer boat anglers, it is recommended that two boats fish together for security. There is a boat ramp of sorts at Stokes Bay, but accessing this requires negotiating a narrow reef entrance and isn't advisable for anyone unfamiliar with the area.

Snug Cove is a terrific anchorage for small boats in all weather except in strong winds from the north or north-west.

**WESTERN RIVER COVE**

This is one of the most reliable spots on the Island for serious snapper fishermen, particularly on the grounds between 4.5-8km offshore. Other catches from the deep water reefs include nannygai, big whiting, blue morwong, swallowtail and trevally. Samson fish are often hooked in this area as well, so tackle needs to be robust and well maintained.

This is another region which is miles from the nearest boat ramp and marine radio transmission is, at best, unreliable. Therefore it is wise to fish in company with another boat and to let someone ashore know your movements and estimated time of return.

From the small beach at Western River come mullet, tommyies, the odd big whiting and occasional runs of salmon to 2kg. The rocks on the western side of the beach provide sweep, tommyies, gar and the odd trevally and small snapper, while on the western side you can find big whiting, trevally and salmon of varying sizes.

The river itself yields nice bream of up to a kilogram and the most productive period is from August to November. Big mullet can also be found in the lower reaches below the footbridge. A camping ground with toilet and barbecue facilities is situated near the river at this picturesque location.

**SNELLINGS BEACH — MIDDLE RIVER**

Boats can be launched here by four wheel drive vehicle as long as the wind isn't blowing from the northerly quarter. Offshore fishing in this location is excellent for big whiting, snapper, nannygai, blue morwong and trevally, with big samsons and yellowtail kingfish always a possibility. The inshore reefs and ledges are easily located with the aid of an echo sounder and hold all the above species, along with squid and snook.

The beach at Snellings offers salmon, mullet, tommies and medium whiting, while school mulloway are sometimes encountered between July and September. The nearby rocks can provide action with trevally, whiting and the occasional medium snapper.

There are several cabins and cottages available for hire in this area.

### **KING GEORGE BEACH**

This is yet another recognised big whiting location, with snook, squid, ruggie snapper, morwong and nannygai all available throughout the year. The inshore ledges between King George and Snellings are particularly productive, despite consistent small boat pressure.

For shore anglers this is a very popular spot for big trevally and whiting, especially from the rocks. Certain sections also produce the occasional snapper. East of the shacks lies a sandy beach which can be reached by a 20 minute walk and this yields salmon, mullet, flathead, whiting and a few trevally.

### **STOKES BAY**

The Stokes Bay grounds are very popular with local anglers and can provide top notch fishing for whiting, nannygai, swallowtail, blue morwong, snook and squid. Small yellowtail kingfish are hooked here occasionally by anglers trolling for salmon and snook inshore between Stokes Bay and Knob Point.

To the east, towards the prominent Cape Cassini, there are many productive grounds for the above species within one kilometre of shore. Heading west, there are good snapper grounds up to three kilometres from shore between Cape Dutton and King Georges Beach. Cape Dutton holds some of the largest snook in SA, with 6-9 pounders taken regularly in the autumn and winter.

Shore anglers can try the Stokes Bay rocks west of the shacks for sweep, salmon, whiting, tommies, trevally and squid, with medium snapper and flathead also a possibility. The beach is reached via a pleasant walk through a rock chasm and at times can be good for mullet, tommies, salmon, whiting and occasional nice trevally.

A four wheel drive boat ramp is available at Stokes, but, as previously mentioned; negotiating the narrow reef entrance here isn't for the uninitiated. There is a camping ground here with toilets and barbecue.

### **CAPE CASSINI**

Cassini is the northern-most point of Kangaroo Island and can be seen easily for many miles along the north coast. It produces plenty of nice salmon at times for inshore trollers, but it's the offshore reefs which attract most attention. These produce excellent snapper catches at times, along with nannygai, blue morwong and most of the other deep water heavyweights. An area known as the Caves, just west of the Point at Cape Cassini, is a legendary snapper ground.

Rock anglers can enjoy good fishing for sweep, trevally, tommies, snapper, salmon and the odd small yellowtail kingfish from the Cassini ledges.

### **SMITH AND DASHWOOD BAYS**

With no launching facilities in either bay, boaties can use the Emu Bay facility before making the short run westward. Dashwood Bay produces big whiting at times, as well as snapper, snook and squid. Whiting are easiest to find on the broken bottom inshore, while snapper can be located on reefy ground close to shore and west of the beach. Trevally and nannygai can also be caught here and, if you're a lure troller, expect snook and medium salmon.

Smith Bay is one of KI's most famous boat fishing destinations. Because it's only just around the corner from the Emu Bay ramp, Smith does cop quite a bit of fishing pressure these days and isn't as reliable as it once was. Nevertheless, there are several reefy areas at the eastern end of the bay in around 18 metres of water which can yield big whiting and trevally.

Smith Bay whiting are at their best during the winter months, while snapper and trevally seem to fire up between spring and autumn.

Although it's only a short hop from the Emu Bay boat ramp around to Smith Bay, it's mandatory to take care when

negotiating the end of the reef at Cape D’Estaing. When the water is calm, submerged rocks at the tip of the reef can be difficult to see, so give the reef a wide berth. Negotiating the inshore “gap” in the reef isn’t recommended for larger boats.

### **EMU BAY**

This is easily the most popular north coast location for boaties, as it has quite a reasonable ramp and short jetty. The ramp has shortcomings, however, as it is open to winds from the north, which kick up an annoying swell and make boat handling difficult. At the time this publication was being prepared, a major upgrade had been proposed for Emu Bay to provide safe and convenient all weather launching and retrieving.

Emu Bay offers good fishing all year round for whiting, snapper, salmon, snook and squid. Whiting are most prolific from April to November, while big snapper are caught inshore between April and June. Mulloway and school sharks are also caught here by anglers targeting snapper.

Towering sand dunes protect the inshore waters in most conditions except when the wind is from the north. Whiting to over a kilogram can be caught in the sandy holes among the weed. Snook will take trolled lures close to shore, while salmon, snook and various rock species can be caught around the Cape D’Estaing reef. East of Emu Bay beach the reefy area towards Boxing Bay offers good prospects for whiting, snapper, nannygai and squid.

Land-based anglers can try the little jetty at Emu Bay for tommies, gar and squid, while the rocky ledges to the west sometimes offer squid, tommies, flathead and salmon trout.

Emu Bay’s long, sandy beach is one of KI’s most beautiful. It doesn’t have many deep gutters like the beaches on the south coast, but it still fishes well for whiting, flathead, mullet and the odd school mulloway. Even snapper are a possibility from the eastern end of the beach between April and June and big bronze whaler sharks are often seen cruising not far from shore.

The beach is quite firm and can be driven on for its entire length with a four wheel drive. A pleasant camping ground with powered sites and toilet block is located behind the beach some 400 metres from the boat ramp. Cabin accommodation is also available at this ideal family holiday venue.

### **BOXING BAY**

This area is easily accessed from the Emu Bay ramp and provides consistent fishing for whiting, snapper, snook and squid. April to October is prime whiting time on the broken bottom inside the bay and the reefs at either end offer snapper, whiting and the odd trevally. Squid are plentiful on the weed close to shore and you can expect a mixture of whiting, trevally, tommies and gar in the same vicinity.

For shore-based anglers the road to Boxing Bay runs through private land and it’s necessary to ask the owner for permission to enter. Shore fishing here can produce whiting, flathead, tommies, mullet and the occasional trevally from the beach and rocks.

*How to get there: SeaLink car and passenger ferries operate regular services every day (except Christmas Day).*

*How to book: visit [sealink.com.au](http://sealink.com.au) or call 13 13 01*

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