



AUSTRALIAN COASTAL safaris

BY: TATYANA LEONOV

Making Citizen Science Count with David Doudle

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

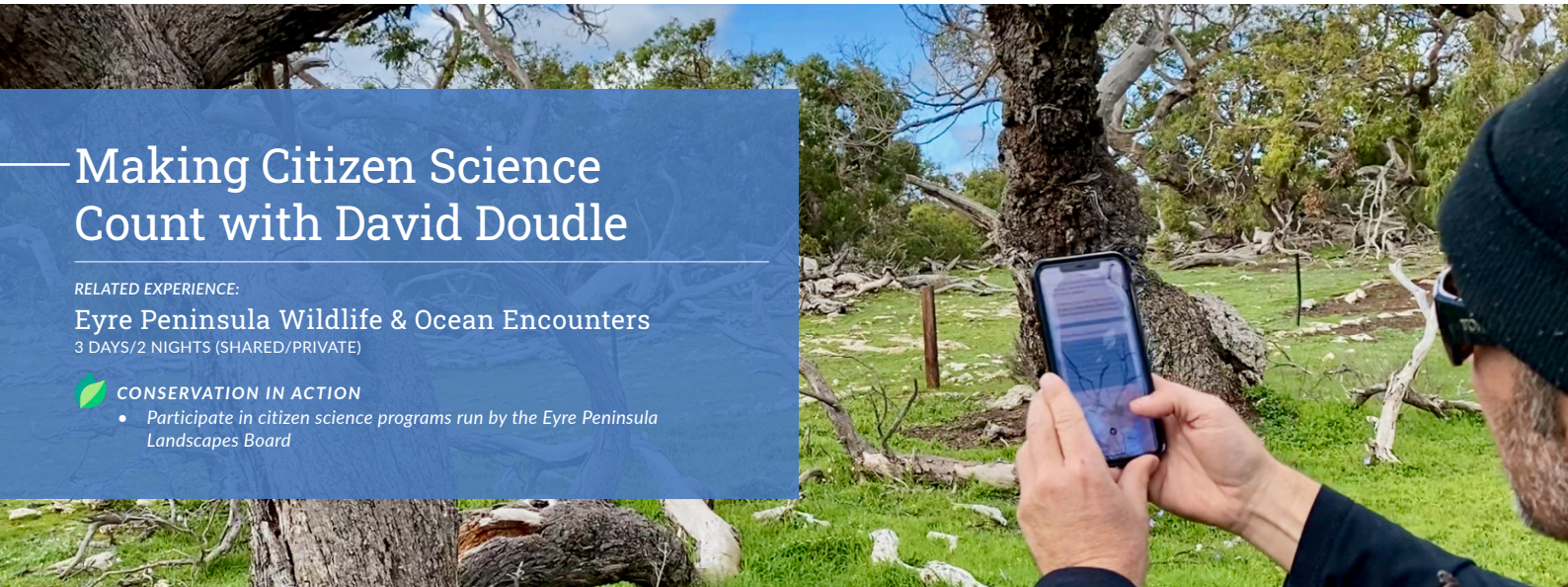
Eyre Peninsula Wildlife & Ocean Encounters

3 DAYS/2 NIGHTS (SHARED/PRIVATE)



CONSERVATION IN ACTION

- Participate in citizen science programs run by the Eyre Peninsula Landscapes Board



When Australian Coastal Safaris' guests are out on the road, they are usually seeing an abundance of wildlife, so founder David Doudle approached the Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board in 2019 and suggested that both guests and guides could help out with the cataloguing.

"It's not physically possible for the Landscape Board to be out all the time to view and count animal numbers, so this is a fantastic way to grow community involvement," David explains. The local Citizen Science initiative has seen a number of programs come to fruition, that have involved Rosenberg's Goannas, echidnas, Koalas and several rare bird species.

"The Koala tracking has been the biggest project so far, and through tracing and monitoring we have found Koalas 60 kilometres away from their original location," David says. "Originally there were just two pairs of Koalas introduced to a private property in 1969, and now the area we explore on this property is full of Koalas."

David encourages guests to photograph native animals while out and about. "The project scope includes identifying certain species, taking

a picture, and then recording the sighting onto an online website and map. "We can certainly assist with that," he says. "And our guides are a wealth of knowledge, so they talk about the animals and their habitat."

Kids, too, are often very interested in participating, although David jokes that half the time they're keeping their eyes out for animal scat as much as they are the animals. "Kids seem to enjoy finding and identifying droppings," he laughs. "So we talk about that, too."

"The project scope includes identifying certain species, taking a picture, and then recording the sighting onto an online website and map."

"Wombats, kangaroos, koalas, emus... they all have different scat. Wombat scat is often shaped like a cube; kangaroo scat is large and pellet-like; koalas produce elongated scat... and emus, well theirs is just a long mess."

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Wetlands and Wine Tour with Peter Clutterbuck

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

Port Lincoln Wildlife Encounters

2 DAYS / 2 NIGHTS (SHARED/PRIVATE)

CONSERVATION IN ACTION

- Contribute to water monitoring and maintenance of the Big Swamp Wetland
- Participate in citizen science programs run by the Eyre Peninsula Landscapes Board

Big Swamp has a diverse range of bird life and native vegetation. A species list of birds is located inside of the bird hide. Rare flora that has been recorded at the swamp is Swamp Lobelia, Selliera and Echinna Sedge.

Along with the bird life there are other animals that are not often seen e.g. frogs, tortoises, carpet pythons and small lizards - all relying on the preservation of the swamp for their home. There are also many native grasses and sedges that assist the ecology of Big Swamp and provide habitat and food for the birds and smaller native animals.

Big Swamp is visited by overseas bird life and a number of migratory waders, such as the Red Necked Stint that fly from Russia to enjoy the summer months in these beautiful wetlands.

The Big Swamp Landcare Group would like to thank you for visiting this very special site and ask that you respect the native flora and fauna and leave the area in a clean and tidy manner.

Welcome to Big Swamp



When looking for a rural holding more than 30 years ago, Peter Clutterbuck, a long-standing guide with Australian Coastal Safaris, stumbled upon a property on the eastern tributary of the Big Swamp. "I wanted to get out of town and buy a few acres to pursue a more rounded lifestyle," he says. "And for the kids to know what it's like to look after horses, sheep, chooks and ducks."

Peter and his family immediately fell in love with their new home, and Peter quickly realised that it was his duty to take care of the area. "We have three main ponds that flow into each other and then into Uley Basin, which is where Port Lincoln gets its water from," he explains.

"The Big Swamp wetlands area is important because of the birdlife it attracts and the various plants that grow here, and together with our community I am able to access grants that can help with upkeep. One of the first things we did in 1998 with our initial grant was to obtain an environmental audit, and we are using our most recent grant to monitor the water quality."

Peter is keen to educate Australian Coastal Safaris' guests about what is involved in the conservation process. He does this through talking about the work he does, and demonstrating where possible. "We want guests to walk away with a deeper understanding of the intricacies of the wetland system," Peter explains.

A tour of the wetlands also entails wildlife spotting, and Peter says that guests rarely ever want to leave the private bird hide he takes them to. "We built a little island and a huge number of birds nest and rest here. We see ducks, swans, stints, waders, plovers, geese, wrens, falcons, eagles and harriers... to name just some of the species," Peter says. "We've had bird experts from all over the world visit."

"We want guests to walk away with a deeper understanding of the intricacies of the wetland system."

To top the experience off, Peter invites guests to his own boutique vineyard for a tasting, which sits on the eastern tributary of the wetland. "I have about four acres of vines and produce about 4.5 tonnes of grapes per year," Peter says. "My winery is called Coomunga Wines, which is an Indigenous name meaning wetland. This area was previously inhabited by the Barngarla people, and if guests are interested, we can explore that cultural link, too."

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Photographing Birds of the Eyre Peninsula with Fran Solly

RELATED EXPERIENCES:

Port Lincoln & Coffin Bay Photography Workshop

3 DAYS / 2 NIGHTS (SHARED/PRIVATE)

Southern Eyre Peninsula Birdwatching

3 DAYS / 2 NIGHTS (SHARED/PRIVATE)

CONSERVATION IN ACTION

- Contribute to the iconic birds of Eyre Peninsula citizen science programs run by the Eyre Peninsula Landscapes Board including Osprey, Bush Stone-curlew and Australian Bustard



A group of keen birdwatchers recently named a bird after Fran Solly. The award-winning photographer – who escorts Australian Coastal Safaris' guests on photography tours – explains that the Western Osprey chick was tagged in November 2020 as part of the South Australian Government's Osprey and White-bellied Sea-Eagle Recovery Program. The Port Lincoln Osprey team decided to name the bird Solly because of Fran's longstanding interest in local birds.

"This was the first time in Australia we have been involved in putting a satellite tracker on an Osprey chick," Fran says. "The data we have since collected has been astounding. We expected the bird to fly 20 to 40 kilometres after leaving its nest. It flew 400 kilometres within its first week."

Fran has been watching birds for over 35 years and shares the many observations

in April and leave again in October, as well as the resident Eyre Peninsula birds like the Hooded Plover and many more of the 270 species recorded in the area.

Photographing the birds adds another element that Fran is passionate about. "I started keeping lists of birds I saw about 35 years ago, and the more I saw, the more I trained my eye," she says. "Then, about 12 years ago, I began photographing birds, basically teaching myself as I went along. It's great to be able to share my knowledge with other bird enthusiasts."

Fran encourages guests to become involved in bird spotting, noting their behaviours, and of course photographing the birds. "If we see a bird that is of particular interest, I report that through to the local national parks team and I encourage guests to help me with the reporting," she says. "I talk about

"If we see a bird that is of particular interest, I report that through to the local national parks team and I encourage guests to help me with the reporting."

and interesting facts she has gained in that time with participants of any Australian Coastal Safaris photography tour she leads. She educates guests about local birds, such as the migratory Red-necked Stints, Ruddy Turnstones and others that arrive in the area

photographing birds, and of course I enjoy getting hands-on with guests who bring their own cameras along."



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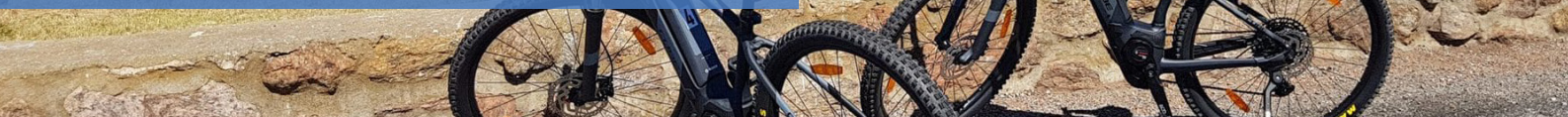
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Exploring the Lower Eyre Peninsula on e-mountain bikes with David Doudle

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

Guided Coast & Nature E-Bike Adventure

FULL DAY (SHARED / PRIVATE)



Bicycle tourism is fast gaining popularity, as being in the saddle is a great way to see the sights. For David Doudle, founder of Australian Coastal Safaris, launching electric mountain bicycle tours in December 2020 was a logical next step for the business.

"It's an affordable option for adventurous travellers," David says. "And it is a great way to explore the sights, whether that be at your own pace or with one of our knowledgeable guides."

Guests can book a variety of options to suit their needs, spanning everything from self-hiring the e-mountain bikes for personal use, to booking one of the Lincoln National Park tours or heading further up the west coast to explore various private properties. "It's a great add-on to the already available portfolio of activities we have here," David explains.

"There are people who may not want to go boating, shark cage diving or swimming with sea lions, and one of our e-mountain bike tours could suit their needs. Or perhaps they've already toured extensively and just want to rent a bike and explore on their own."

Being a passionate biker himself, David ensured that the bikes being made available to the public were of a high quality. "Our bikes are German-manufactured Cube Reaction Hybrid Pro 500 Electric Mountain Bikes, and they're multi-use and designed to work well both on paved roads and on rough terrain," David explains. "The idea is that

guests can rent them to get around when visiting the various wineries and eateries we have here, or they can use them for serious off-road exploring on our tours."

The e-mountain bike tours Australian Coastal Safaris offer are varied, with highlights including cycling along the stunning coastline and beaches, soaking up the diverse landscape, and spotting wildlife at almost every turn. "We see kangaroos, emus, goannas, and many species of birds including the rare White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Bush Stone-curlew," David says.

"Biking is not only a sustainable way of getting around, it also offers ample opportunity to immerse oneself in nature, fresh air and movement."

He goes on to explain that biking is not only a sustainable way of getting around, it also offers ample opportunity to immerse oneself in nature, fresh air and movement. "My favourite part of the day is seeing the satisfaction on people's faces after having a ride on these bikes for the first time," David says.

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Take a Private Seafood Masterclass with Kris Bunder

RELATED EXPERIENCE:
Tailor Made Adventure



For seafood lovers visiting the Eyre Peninsula, the Australian Coastal Safaris Private Seafood Masterclass can't be missed. The exclusive experience starts with seafood chef, Kris Bunder, opening up oysters as guests arrive, greeting the diners with the fresh seafood delicacy alongside sashimi and prawns.

"We source all of our seafood from local suppliers," Kris explains. "Everything we serve and cook is essentially a taste of the Eyre Peninsula."

Kris, a born-and-bred Eyre Peninsula local, has being passionate about his home turf and local produce for as long as he remembers. "I was born in Streaky Bay and I started working in the food industry as an apprentice chef aged 15," he says. "I've never looked back."

When Kris became the manager of Del Giorno's in 2002, he discovered that the bulk of the seafood served was arriving both frozen and imported, so he restructured the supplier list to include only local fishermen. "I'd been cooking in the town for a long time and knew most of the local fishermen, so it was a no-brainer to establish relationships with local suppliers that would see us serving the freshest seafood," Kris says.

Kris and his wife and business partner Brenda bought Del Giorno's in 2004, but the Masterclass experience did not evolve until later. "We launched the Masterclass about four years ago. Brenda and I really enjoy hosting Australian Coastal Safaris' guests," Kris says.

The Masterclass takes place at the couple's beautiful waterfront home in the Port Lincoln Marina, with the emphasis being on quality local food, great company, and a top location. "After guests finish their canapés we move to the deck at the front of the house – with views over the marina and beach – where I have a mobile workbench," Kris says. "Brenda and I demonstrate how we cook five or six dishes, then we all sit down and enjoy a big seafood banquet. We often talk for hours about where we've been and how the fish has arrived at the table."

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Oyster Shucking and Private Coffin Bay Marine Adventure with Thommo

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

Eyre Peninsula Wildlife & Ocean Encounters
3 DAYS/2 NIGHTS (PRIVATE)

Steven Thomson – or Thommo to his mates – knows a thing or two about oysters. He’s also the only oyster farmer in the Eyre Peninsula who takes guests to his oyster lease as a side gig. “I don’t run a full-time tourism operation,” he says. “What I offer Australian Coastal Safaris’ guests is a front row seat to the business of oyster farming.”

The way Thommo operates is a big plus for those hopping on board, as they get to discover how the oyster farming industry works with a big dose of wildlife thrown in. “We visit my oyster lease, but the tour is also as much about the surroundings,” Thommo says.

“On the way to the lease we pass through local farm districts and see kangaroos, other native wildlife, and a huge amount of birds. The pods of dolphins that we see are a huge highlight, too. We have more dolphins in Coffin Bay per square metre than anywhere else in Australia.”

Thommo goes on to explain that the tour also provides an ideal opportunity to educate guests about various conservation efforts. “I fostered a close connection with the wildlife when I moved to the area in 1995 and I’m

passionate about advocating care for both the environment and wildlife,” Thommo says. “Awareness is the first step, and we try to keep our impact and direct contact with nature as minimalistic as possible.”

Everyone on board can become involved in oyster collecting and shucking, and Thommo loves seeing guests’ expressions when he pulls out an oyster to sample. Coffin Bay is renowned for its quality oysters, and Thommo explains that a superior oyster will feature a hard-edged smooth shell and plenty of meat inside. “The oysters here have a high meat-to-shell ratio and taste like the sea,” he says. “When pulled straight out of the water you get a big salt kick first, then comes the oyster complexity.”

Wine tastings can be a part of the experience, too, with three different wineries in the area that can be weaved into the itinerary. Thommo says: “It’s about tailoring the experience to guests’ interests. Some guests might be drawn only to the oysters and want to spend all their time on the water, while others might want a 10-minute tour of the leases and then spend their time enjoying wine tastings and a long lunch.”



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