



EXCEPTIONAL KANGAROO ISLAND

BY: TATYANA LEONOV

Take a Bushwalk with World Expert Echidna Researcher Dr. Peggy Rismiller

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

Conservation Connection

3 DAYS/2 NIGHTS (PRIVATE)



CONSERVATION IN ACTION

- Participate in echidna research and citizen science programs
- Includes financial contribution to Pelican Lagoon Research Station



When you join world expert echidna researcher Dr Peggy Rismiller (OAM) for a bushwalk, it's no ordinary stroll. "I've been working with short-beaked echidnas since 1988, so I know a thing or two about them," she laughs. "But there is still so much I'd like to find out."

The egg-laying echidna represents the world's longest surviving mammals (their ancestors roamed the planet with the dinosaurs), yet there is still a lot to learn. "Back in 1834 Sir Richard Owen, founder of the British Museum, posted seven basic questions about their biology, and when I started my research work in 1988 only one of those seven questions had been answered," Peggy says, adding that although she has found answers to his other six questions, she has also come up with many more. "Echidnas are very solitary and elusive creatures," she says. "And it has taken years to unravel key facts about these mysterious animals."

When Exceptional Kangaroo Island guests tag along with Peggy, she chats about living and working in the wild with echidnas and shares many fascinating facts she has learnt over the years, spanning everything from their mating and breeding habits to their love of travelling great distances and their unexpectedly diverse diet.

"They are often on the move and are consequently very challenging to track," Peggy says. "The peninsula area at Pelican Lagoon Research Station where we work in is 15 km², and it took us 10 years to work out there are 40 to 45 resident individuals. You need patience when working with wild echidnas."

"I've been working with short-beaked echidnas since 1988, so I know a thing or two about them," she laughs. "But there is still so much I'd like to find out."

Peggy stresses, too, that a bushwalk with her doesn't necessarily equate to always seeing an echidna. "I take Exceptional Kangaroo Island guests to the habitat where you would normally find them," she says. "We often discover echidna digs – and these are distinctly different from goanna and kangaroo digs. We might find an echidna scat. And there are times we have one-on-one prime time with the elusive echidna."

CONTACT INFORMATION:

info@exceptionalkangarooisland.com
www.exceptionalkangarooisland.com
+61 8 8553 9119

Assist Ecologist Heidi Groffen from KI Land for Wildlife Dunnart Conservation

RELATED EXPERIENCES:

Conservation Connection

3 DAYS / 2 NIGHTS (PRIVATE)

Flinders Chase Focus

FULL DAY (PRIVATE)



CONSERVATION IN ACTION

- Maintain shelter tunnels, survey lines and review camera data
- Includes financial contribution to KI Land for Wildlife



The 2019/2020 bushfires had a devastating effect on Kangaroo Island and its wildlife, with just over 40% of the island burnt. As a result, a large number of animal and plant species were identified as priority species for recovery efforts, and programs were quickly implemented to support the recovery.

The Kangaroo Island dunnart – a grey mouse-sized, carnivorous marsupial – was one of the animal species devastatingly affected, with an estimated 90 percent of their habitat burnt. “They were already listed as Endangered before the fires, so now more than ever they need support. We do this by reducing threats to their habitat and populations,”

cloth. “These were crucial in providing protection for small mammals and birds. There are 18 tunnels set across burnt landscapes to provide extra shelter for the Kangaroo Island dunnart and other priority species post fire,” she says. “The 25m-long tunnels have been positioned between small unburnt vegetation patches to provide a corridor for wildlife to safely move through while the burnt areas are regenerating.”

The cameras inside the tunnels capture real-time footage, and Heidi is happy to report that the dunnarts are using the shelter tunnels on a semi-regular basis to shelter and forage safely. “Exceptional Kangaroo Island



“Guests are taken into bushland survey sites, where we can show them the shelter tunnels and the wildlife cameras and they can view the footage captured to see some of the threatened species we are working hard to protect.”



says ecologist Heidi Groffen. “As part of my role, I focus on threat reduction, long-term monitoring, and supporting private land holders and volunteers to take care of the bushland and the threatened species taking refuge within these recovering critical habitats.”

After the fires, Heidi and her team, along with dedicated volunteers from Exceptional Kangaroo Island, helped to build shelter tunnels out of chicken wire and shade

guests are taken into bushland survey sites, where we can show them the shelter tunnels and the wildlife cameras and they can view the footage captured to see some of the threatened species we are working hard to protect,” she says. “Guests can also help the Kangaroo Island Land for Wildlife team check the 30m survey fence lines – which are made out of flywire – and download the camera data.”

CONTACT INFORMATION:

info@exceptionalkangarooisland.com
www.exceptionalkangarooisland.com
+61 8 8553 9119

E-biking Adventure with Craig Wickham

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

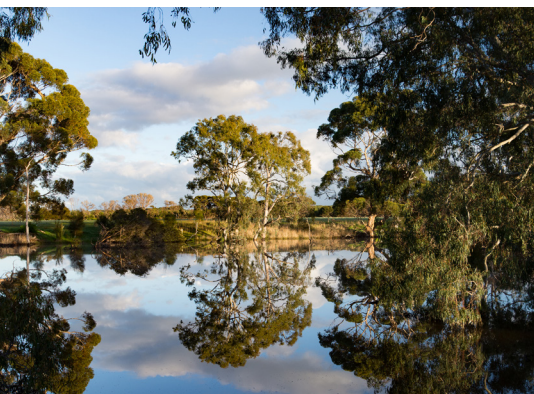
E-Bike Tour Cygnet River Circuit

5.5 HOURS (SHARED/PRIVATE)



CONSERVATION IN ACTION

- Participate in citizen science to document vegetation and wildlife
- Includes financial contribution to BioR's Cygnet Park Sanctuary



It's hard to pinpoint the best part of the day of the Exceptional Kangaroo Island e-biking adventure, although the cycle along the meandering Cygnet River, with massive sugar and red gums shading the bike path, is one of Exceptional Kangaroo Island Managing Director Craig Wickham's highlights. "The riverside cycle is a great part of the day, but the open pasture rides are very pleasant too, as are the rides through the bushland terrain. We pass through habitat for kangaroos, Tamar Wallabies, a few species of possums, as well as Glossy Black-Cockatoos," he says.

The newly launched e-bike tour is something different for the island, with rides taking place on a piece of property within Cygnet Park accessible only to guests of Exceptional Kangaroo Island (and those involved in habitat restoration work).

The former pristine farmland dates back to 1819, and is special

"Nature is complex – it is dense, messy, colourful and diverse. By using solid science and planning based on soil type and topography, they have given nature a restorative boost."

because there is nowhere else on the island that reflects what the country looked like back then. "Kangaroo Island has huge swathes of conservation land, but the tall forest we explore here only ever covered about one percent of the island and none of this is included in the reserve system. It really is a special treat to explore," Craig says.

A group of passionate individuals wanted to leave a positive legacy by conserving this special habitat, and began a complex revegetation across the property in 2007. "They used 135 species of plants – including a variety of herbs, ground cover plants and mid-storey vegetation – to showcase that it was possible to do more than simply plant trees," Craig explains. "Nature is complex – it is dense, messy, colourful and diverse. By using solid science and planning based on soil type and topography, they have given nature a restorative boost."

The e-bikes used for the journey are top-of-the-range belt-drive style, with enough grunt to help with hills and challenging terrain, as well as sufficient resistance for guests to still be able to work up a sweat, if they so wish.

En route, there are plenty of stops to chat about bush conservation, spot wildlife, and enjoy the fine food and wine that Kangaroo Island is renowned for. An elaborate al fresco lunch is served under a canopy in the forest, and wine and gin tastings towards the end of the tour seal the deal.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

info@exceptionalkangarooisland.com
www.exceptionalkangarooisland.com
+61 8 8553 9119

Kangaroo Island Birdwatching Expedition with Tim Williams

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

Kangaroo Island Birding (Wild About Birds)

3 DAYS/2 NIGHTS (PRIVATE)



Kangaroo Island is home to over 260 species of birds and, according to long-standing birding and tour guide with Exceptional Kangaroo Island, Tim Williams, it's easy enough to find 40+ species in the first few hours while exploring within a 10km2 radius. "We have so much habitat in a very confined area on Kangaroo Island, that birds are easy to find without much travelling," he says. "We're spoilt when it comes to birds."

Separated from the mainland by a mere 15km of ocean, Kangaroo Island is a wildlife haven. Visitors are blown away by how much there is to see, and passionate guides are the best point of contact when it comes to leading the explorations. "I spent most of my childhood years here and know the island intimately," Tim says. "I'm thrilled to use my knowledge and show visitors what the island is all about."

The three-day private birding adventure spans a variety of experiences and bird sighting opportunities, with coastal, oceanic and land-based adventures all part of the itinerary. "We have a lot of intact habitat with a great deal of understorey, so birds are fairly easy to find here. The bird species most people hear about is the Glossy Black-Cockatoo. They can be elusive until you understand their habitat and behavioural patterns, but since we live in their habitat we know where to find

them," Tim says. "The Glossies are one of the 17 island sub-species which have developed in isolation and guests are often keen to learn about the subtle differences of the island populations."

"The Glossies are one of the 17 island sub-species which have developed in isolation and guests are often keen to learn about the subtle differences of the island populations."

Tim explains that over three days guests will see hundreds of birds from a huge range of bird species, and for serious birders, Tim always carries a bird list. "But the tour is also great for anyone, and although we are accustomed to having guests who are keen on birds, we also see people who are generally into wildlife and nature," he says. "There are always opportunities to see echidnas, sea lions, kangaroos, koalas, and Tammar Wallabies as well as flowering eucalyptus, wildflowers and, of course, magnificent coastal scenery."

CONTACT INFORMATION:

info@exceptionalkangarooisland.com
www.exceptionalkangarooisland.com
+61 8 8553 9119

Take a Private Masterclass with Yale Norris from The Islander Estate Vineyards

RELATED EXPERIENCES:

Fine Flavours

FULL DAY (SHARED/PRIVATE)

Fished, Farmed & Fermented

3 DAYS / 2 NIGHTS (PRIVATE)

Yale Norris and Jacques Lurton look upon winemaking as an art form, with Kangaroo Island as the main source of inspiration and drive. "We are both deeply connected to the land," Yale says. "Making wine is our passion."

The birth of The Islander Estate Vineyards came about as a result of Jacques' – a world-renowned fifth generation French winemaker – dreams, who fell in love with the island and at the same time saw its potential as a wine-making location. Yale, a Colorado-born

a tasting, yes," Yale says. "But I also go through the wines one by one and delve into the stories behind them."

The Islander Estate Vineyards is one of three wineries (and one of 30 vineyards) on the island, but it's the only winery focusing on Australian temperate climate wine with a French twist. "We use a number of innovative wine-making techniques not commonly used in Australia," Yale explains. "For example, we make a lot of our ferments in concrete tanks

"When we make a wine, we look at what nature gives us on Kangaroo Island, and then we work out how we can best express that. We want our guests to take Kangaroo Island home with them."

family man, fell in love with the island, too, and consequently decided to move his whole family here. "Jacques and I are from two totally different worlds, but this has been a big plus," Yale says. "I traded my commercial skills for him teaching me how to make wine. And now we make wines that are inspired by what nature gives us on Kangaroo Island."

Exceptional Kangaroo Island guests visiting The Islander Estate Vineyards are introduced to the various wines that the duo make as part of the Cygnet River Tasting Room experience, and are offered guided tastings of the flagship wines as part of the exclusive encounter. "It's

because it suits the climate zone on Kangaroo Island. And we leave our reds for a long maceration period – anywhere from six to eight weeks – which is unusual in Australian wine culture."

Guests walk away from the experience with a newfound appreciation for the unique wine style Jacques and Yale make... and often a few bottles of wine for a later date. "When we make a wine, we look at what nature gives us on Kangaroo Island, and then we work out how we can best express that. We want our guests to take Kangaroo Island home with them."



CONTACT INFORMATION:

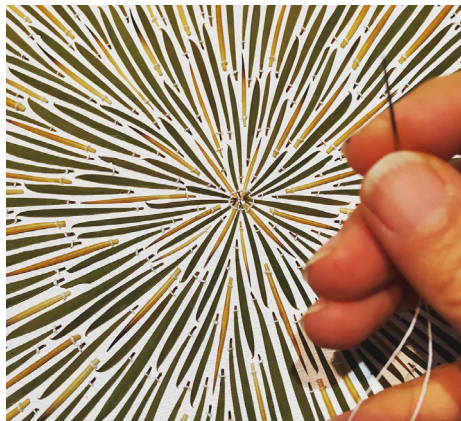
info@exceptionalkangarooisland.com
www.exceptionalkangarooisland.com
+61 8 8553 9119

Explore the World of Assemblage Art with Janine Mackintosh

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

Art Immersion

3 DAYS / 2 NIGHTS (PRIVATE)



Janine Mackintosh spent a great deal of time on Kangaroo Island throughout the years before finally deciding to call the paradise home in 2012. "My partner Richard and I purchased a large heritage bush property in 2000 and we both wanted to learn all we could about it," she says. "Richard is an entomologist, so he was busy studying the insects, while I added to the list of birds we observed and made a reference collection of the plants. My assemblage art evolved from that."

The move into assemblage art was a somewhat logical step, given Janine's background in design work and her personal interests. "My partner and I are both passionate about conservation," she says. "He pursues it through science, and I through art."

Janine's artworks are made from a breadth of materials, ranging from gum leaves patterned by insect bites to seashells and pumice. "I'm not just making pretty decorations," Janine explains. "Prior to moving to Kangaroo Island, I worked with clients as a designer. Now I consider the bush to be my client. I am speaking for the bush."

The message Janine wants to articulate to Exceptional Kangaroo Island guests is how incredibly complex the bush is. No object Janine gathers is simply a piece of material. "Every item I collect is a fragment of a

story about something bigger," Janine says. "For example, I might pick leaves that have been chewed by beetles to show how everything is interconnected."

"Prior to moving to Kangaroo Island, I worked with clients as a designer. Now I consider the bush to be my client. I am speaking for the bush."

Sometimes guests are keen to get hands-on with Janine, and in such cases, Janine will sit down and demonstrate how she might position patterns. At other times visitors may want to see and learn about her works. "I enjoy showing visitors my studio. To get here they pass through our precious swathe of bushland, which to me is ecological antiquity, where thousands of species have co-evolved for millennia," Janine says. "I like to explain the ideas, techniques and motivation behind my art practice and I hope that guests leave with a sense of awe and reverence for Kangaroo Island's wilderness, where so often the beauty is in its intricate details."

CONTACT INFORMATION:

info@exceptionalkangarooisland.com
www.exceptionalkangarooisland.com
+61 8 8553 9119