

8. The Sometimes Seat

Look down through the trees and beyond to the jetty on the right and the sandy spit on the left. This spit is known as Strawbridge Point and Matthew Flinders camped on it in 1802. Later the mail was delivered to this point before being rowed across to the town.

In the early 1800's American sealers came into the bay and were the reason the area became known as American River. Why River? No-one knows.

Ketches, yachts, tall ships and boats of all description have come and gone from this sheltered anchorage since the early 1800's and with a bay abounding with fish and shellfish it would be unthinkable that aboriginals would not have visited this area thousands of years ago.

This seat reflects what Kangaroo Island Lodge is all about, a peaceful refuge in a small piece of paradise. We hope you'll be inspired to add a thought, a poem or a sketch to our book in the box beside this seat.

From here walk down the hill and then the driveway. Walk out of the property through the terracotta pillars. Across the road and to the left you will see a small post with a yellow marker. Follow the track to its right which leads to the foreshore and our last numbered marker. (9)

9. Migratory Waders

Our trails ends at the foreshore where pelicans will often fly in to see if you've been fishing and have some scraps for them. Shorebirds of all kinds can be easily observed feeding and roosting on the tidal flats. Some are resident all year round, others are migratory.

If you are lucky enough to see an Eastern Curlew, (rarely seen these days because of rapidly declining numbers) this migratory shorebird will have flown here from its breeding grounds in Siberia. It will spend the summer here feeding frantically to fatten itself up for the long flight back to the northern hemisphere.



Habitat Protection

Since the first guesthouse was built here in 1894, owners of this property have always made a strong commitment to protecting the natural environment that surrounds their property. Extensive gardens have been developed to attract bird and animal life and the gully through which this trail winds, remains largely intact and continues to provide refuge for the Glossy-black Cockatoo and the Tammar Wallaby, both of which have disappeared from mainland South Australia.

By funding this trail, the Australian Government and the present owners of Kangaroo Island Lodge; the Hogan, Cook and Brock families have ensured that this properties proud record of habitat protection will continue.

ASK AT RECEPTION FOR A LOAN OF OUR BIRD AND PLANT BOOKS.

NATURE TRAIL to be accessed during DAYLIGHT HOURS only and used at OWN RISK.



Text and photos: Jane Renwick

Australian Government
Tourism 2020

Tourism industry regional development grants
Supporting tourism industry development projects in regional Australia

The KI Lodge Nature Trail

Walking Trail

Casuarina and Sugar Gum Woodland grows around the Lodge's back gully and is home to a range of wildlife. It is one of the islands most renowned spots to encounter the critically endangered Glossy-black Cockatoo.

Follow the yellow markers along our trail as it meanders around our dam and gully. There are great little bush seats to rest upon along the way and near the top of the hill our 'Sometimes Seat,' is a great spot to relax and enjoy the scenery.



1. Trail Start

Yellow markers will guide you along this trail. Nine are numbered and they correspond to those in this brochure. You will also find that there are 8 signs along the route.

Number 1 marker is on the verandah opposite 'Poolside Room 18.' (Look for the sign just outside reception which indicates the way to this room.)

The first sign is right next to a bird bath, the one the noisy boisterous New Holland Honeyeaters particularly like to bathe and splash about in. A few metres to the left is a spindly tree called a Casuarina and you will see amongst its needle like leaves, knobby brown cones. The critically endangered Glossy-black Cockatoo feeds on these and during the day a pair can often be seen in this tree and as they move about their glorious red tail feathers are clearly visible.

Researchers have discovered that almost all of KI's three hundred plus Glossies use their left claw to feed. When banding a bird, the band is put on upside down and on the left leg. This allows scientists and volunteers to read it more easily when observing birds that are feeding.

When ready walk back along the verandah, turn right and walk across the paved area and the driveway to the two wallaby silhouettes and marker number 2.

2. The Haven

The simple wooden seat in front of the 'rusty' wallaby silhouettes was placed on the foundations of an original guesthouse that was once part of this complex. This is an excellent spot for a photo shoot, even if the silhouettes are a little larger than real wallabies.

In the early days wallabies were trapped for their skins, the leather being softer and stronger than most.

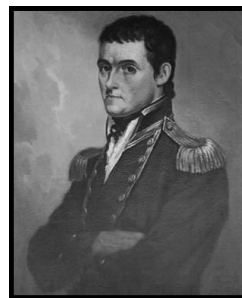
From here follow the trail up to the dam. (man made water hole.) Whilst enjoying this walk remember that you are walking in a natural environment and that the track may be uneven in places. Don't stand anywhere for too long without checking for ants and although it would be quite unlikely to encounter a snake, keep an eye out just in case.



3. Historical Foundations

As you look down upon the buildings of 'The Lodge' you will see evidence of recent major works; re-roofing, new rainwater tanks, vegetable and herb garden, parking areas and fencing. An Australian Government TIRF grant and an injection of funds by the owners has made these improvements possible and guests now enjoy upgraded facilities in an eco friendly property. Some historical aspects have been retained and indeed you are standing on a piece of history. This dam was built in the 1950's and continues to provide valuable water for the property, however these days it's used on the garden and not by guests.

If you'd been standing here on April the 4th 1802 you may well have seen Captain Matthew Flinders sailing up into Pelican Lagoon in a small cutter. A distinguished navigator and cartographer he was the first person to circumnavigate Australia and identify it as a continent.



Try to find the time to climb nearby Prospect Hill just as Flinders did and don't miss nearby beautiful Pennington Bay.

4. Currawong Corner

This area is a favoured Glossy-black feeding area but even experienced birders often find it difficult to locate them in these trees. As they feed they make a very loud and distinctive 'nut crunching' noise, making it easier to locate them by sound rather than by sight.

5. Dam Bench Seat

Break your walk here and relax on the bench seat, taking in the pretty view across the dam. At dusk you can watch Australian White Ibis fly in to roost and perch on the low branches close to this seat.

Wondering about the rusty old piece of equipment behind this seat? It was deliberately left there for posterity as it once housed the dam pump that sat on a floating platform in the water. Made from various pieces of surplus equipment it was a good example of Aussie 'making do.'

6. Bush Birds Seat

Having meandered through and over our little creek crossing, its time to pause again and sit on another of our seats. Many species of birds inhabit this patch of bush and you will need to linger and wait awhile to see them. Some nest in the Prickly Acacia which is found in this gully, its prickly leaves giving them protection from large predator birds such as the currawong.

The Superb Fairy-wren can usually be seen in this gully. If you find a small group foraging together you'll probably find it hard to believe that their seemingly harmonious family life is founded on universal adultery. Studies have discovered that 76% of all offspring are sired by males other than the females social mates, leading them to be named the least faithful bird in the world.

7. Sugar Gum Apartments

The tall gum tree in front of the 'Bush Bird's Seat' is a Sugar Gum, a South Australian eucalypt. It is older than a hundred years because it has nesting hollows which take at least that long to develop. These beautiful trees could be considered nature's apartment block because many species nest in its hollows and branches. Brushtail and Pygmy Possums use the larger hollows. Wild bees can be seen buzzing around their nest which is in a branch on the left side of the tree. Many insects find refuge and food under the bark and in summer this tree produces a wonderful nectar which you will find on 'The Lodge's breakfast buffet and in the gift shop. (Sugar Gum Honey)

Sugar Gums are also known as widow makers, as they can randomly drop huge branches.

From here the trail winds up the north facing side of the gully to the 'Sometimes Seat.'

Kookaburras have returned to the American River area in the last few years and are now often seen and heard in the trees on this side of the gully.

