

CRUISING KANGAROO ISLAND'S NORTH COAST

The north coast of Kangaroo Is offers some of the finest cruising waters in SA and scenery comparable with the best world-wide. Much has been written before, however the following is a short resumé to refresh perhaps fading memories.

First and foremost, the weather. It is something we can do nothing about and that is just as well, although I can think of a number of times when I wished that I could.

This area is definitely summer pattern. If you wish to cruise in winter and spring, a campervan with a good hand-brake is strongly recommended. SW winds easily become west and even in summer can get into the NW. If this becomes the case, enjoy your sail to Kingscote, or depending on the direction, Emu Bay. At least you'll be well off the wind and the anchorage at Kingscote is good for such winds.

Weather forecasts tend to be less accurate along this coast in both wind strength and direction. Hot summer northerlies are very unusual and the writer has on a number of occasions run before such a wind across the Straights ending up with a complete calm 5 or 6 miles from the island. You'll get the change but provided it doesn't do what we've already talked about, things will be fine.

We'll start your cruise at Emu Bay, and hopefully you have caught a few whiting in the white holes at the eastern end, or a snook or 2 as you motor across the bay. Anchorage may be taken anywhere within the bay depending on the fishing and wind strength and direction. A tolerable anchorage may be obtained from moderate NW winds out from the jetty towards D'Estang Reef. A public phone is situated by the caravan park. Holding ground is good with a carefully laid admiralty-pattern anchor.

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By road it is about 12 km to Kingscote and to avoid Kingscote in it's usual summer south easterlies is almost worth the walk. However, a phone call usually produces a taxi and there has been many a quick trip for a tin of beans, which in the morning would be gladly exchanged on an individual one aspirin - one bean basis!

The wind may be NE and light in the morning but this will become the SE or southerly wind later in the day. It might be a good time to try for a fish. D'Estang Reef is steep-to, providing you have seen the end of it! You will see by the chart that the light on the jetty is sectorred and this can be handy, particularly in that run down the coast. Apart from the occasional house, car, motor bike or other boat, that is all you are going to get along this coast for light until Cape Borda 45 miles to WSW.

The next notable anchorage is Knob Point with good holding for winds NE to south and then King George's from east to south. This anchorage is not named on the chart but is just west of Cape Dutton.

Another 5 miles along you come to Snellings Beach, Middle River. You've seen the little cross on the chart and find that the reef provides reasonable shelter from NE winds. Holding is good in clear sand. Rain water is available from a shed at a BBQ area at the western end of the beach. The river is brackish, however a dinghy can be carried over the sand bar and you may be able to frighten the big mullet and bream that at times become land locked.

One last thing about the weather. The more settled, the stronger the evening and night gully breezes. That old sleeping bag and socks that you hang out on the rail will offer no further source of discomfort for the crew, unless you later pick them up at Althorpes wrapped around the light.

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Along now to Western River, a lovely cove with good holding in sand, a river similar to Middle River but with a tolerable anchorage from winds as far round as NW, providing it is not really strong. To hang on here with a careful watch on the weather can save that run back and hopefully the weather will soon come off-shore.

From now on the scenery is magnificent and to get the best of your cruise, forget sailing and motor slowly close in along the coast fishing, sight-seeing and day anchoring wherever you please. A sortie in the dinghy can take you into caves and grottos, or you can match your climbing ability with the numerous flocks of wild goats. A lot of people miss the beauty of this coast by standing off too far.

The next anchorage for overnight is the beautiful Snug Cove, but it has fishing boat moorings and can be crowded, with little swinging room. However, take a look and if it is not suitable, proceed another mile to Kangaroo Beach. This cove is easily identified on the chart but is unnamed. Again good holding ground, easy access and plenty of room.

Proceeding along, your next anchorage is De Mole River. This offers good coverage from NE to south with good holding ground. However, make sure you anchor well out into the sand, not on the eastern edge where anchor losing crevices await the unwary.

All these anchorages are good and safe in the right weather and can provide good yachties' fishing. However, even in the quietest conditions the same unwary people might find themselves doing a close inspection of the bottom from an up-turned dinghy, particularly at De Mole River.

If the weather still holds, motor along to Cape Borda, again very close in. It is magnificent. Try fishing close in on the eastern side of Cape Torrens. The

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whiting:rock-cod ratio may be low but you don't need many of these big fellows!

You are now strategically placed to depart for Fremantle, but Pt Lincoln via Thistle Is may be more within your arrangements. You may decide to retrieve the sleeping bag from Althorpes but the main anchorage is not good for the settled summer weather we have been enjoying.

Good sailing!

CHARLES RIGG

"QUASAR"

