



In developing our logo, we wanted to highlight some of the wildlife that led us to creating our business. On multiple private trips along the North Coast Hope Spot of Kangaroo Island we regularly encountered, amongst many others, White Bellied Sea Eagles, Australian Sea lions and Western Blue Groper. These 3 strikingly beautiful creatures represent to us the life in the air on the land and in the sea along this rugged coastline.

Our three stars are also on the endangered species lists, so to see them all so regularly on tour gives us Hope that at least the environment here is allowing them to keep their heads above water!

We Hope that our continued research with our partners and passing on our love and respect for these creatures and their environment to our clients, that their numbers can grow and future generations too will enjoy and witness in real life and not just pictorial memories.

First up, (as up is where they spend much of their lives) is the strikingly beautiful **White Bellied Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*)**. Australia's second largest bird of prey, (who we often see on tour in arial fights with our largest bird of prey the Wedge Tailed Eagle).

Females are the largest with a wingspan of 2.2m and a weight of up to 4.7kgs. They are known to live up to 30 years. Pairs in general mate for life.

Their large nests up to 2m high are built from sticks on cliff faces of large trees and are used by many generations of eagles. Usually laying 2 eggs.

The White-bellied Sea Eagle as a key indicator species by which to measure the health and stability of coastal biodiversity in South Australia. The total breeding population in South Australia is predicted at 70 -80 pairs, with around 25% of them on Kangaroo Island. The South Australian population is classified as 'Endangered'

## RESEARCH & DISCOVERY KANGROO ISLAND

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The **Australian sea lion (*Neophoca cinerea*)** is the only pinniped (seals, sea lions and walrus) endemic to Australia with a population of around 12,000 it is also the rarest of the world's pinnipeds.

The waters of South Australia are home to around 85% of the population with Western Australia being home to the remaining population. In 2021 the species was re-assessed from vulnerable to now 'Endangered'.

Males reach an impressive size of over 300Kg while the females reach around 110kg. They live to around 16years and have an impressive speed in the water of up to 29kl/h. The females have a gestation period of around 17.6 months and have a single pup. Females may not pup again for another 2 or 3 years.

They are great divers down to 200m for up to 40 mins to search of prey with squid, fish, octopus, cuttlefish and at times penguins making up their main diet.

On tour we at times see individuals out at sea hunting, however most our sightings are on or close to the rocky shoreline singularly or in small colonies of around 5-10 individuals.

The **Western Blue Groper (*Achoerodus gouldii*)** is the largest of the bony fishes found on the rocky reefs of South Australia, in fact not a groper but a large wrasse. They can live up to 70 years and grow to 1.7m. Females do not reach maturity until around 15 years, with males taking even longer.

They are hermaphrodites and may change sex from female to male during their life cycle, if the dominant male dies then the largest female can change sex and colour in a matter of days.. Juveniles are greenish with scattered pale spots. Adult females are mostly greyish-green to reddish in colour, while the males are greyish to bright blue.

Groper feed on invertebrates such as crabs, sea urchins and molluscs, including abalone. They use their strong peg-like teeth to prise urchins and molluscs off rocks, and will also bite off pieces of algal mat, consuming small crustaceans and other invertebrates that live amongst the algae.

Western blue groper are listed as Vulnerable and are totally Protected on Kangaroo Island's North coast.

On calm days when we are able to manoeuvre Radikal into the shallow reef areas we may see the standout blue male groper just under the surface. With luck, if snorkeling an inquisitive groper may give you some up close and personal time.