

**Eastward bound – Killer Whales - Nullarbor – South Australia – and no sharks...**

One last look at the Stirling Ranges from the north as we pass by 'Lily' the Dutch windmill. Next to it in plain sight, sits a retired MacDonalD-Douglas DC-3. Run out of passengers long ago, it now beckons passing tourists for a night's stay. The sweeping views from its porch are fab!



Reason for heading to **Bremer Bay** next are the Orca-Expeditions run from there... We'd never seen **killer whales (orcas)** in the wild and we grasp the opportunity to hopefully encounter some of these incredible apex predators. The **Bremer Marine Park**, a protected marine area of 4,470 square/km, is a biological hot-spot for orcas and sharks. It lies 70km off the coast of the small coastal town Bremer Bay. 24km from shore the continental shelf drops away vertically into the **Bremer Canyon**: Water depth plunges from 70m down to a staggering 3500m to the canyon floor.

The B. Canyon is an amazing deep-water ecosystem. It is believed, that during a six-week period in summer a cold nutrient-filled current flow fills the canyon which attracts **killer whales, beaked whales, dolphins, sperm whales** and **giant squid**.

These squid can grow up to 24m in length and are the primary food source for the abundant sperm whales in this area. They dive down to depths of 2000m to catch their prey. Orcas can't dive anywhere near this far but their appetite for giant squid has taught them to steal these from the mouths of the surfacing sperm whales as the latter rush their catch from the deep to the surface instantly killing the squids by inflicting decompression sickness on them (a result of rapid pressure change). While this allows easier devouring it also makes way for the opportunistic orcas.



***Hunting pod of Sperm Whales catching a breath***

We spot 60- 80 sperm whales traveling mostly in pairs or small pods. In between hunts they cruise along the surface for some time resting and enriching their blood with surplus oxygen in preparation for their next skirmish into the canyon depths.

In one last move before their next descent they arc their backs and perform a duck-dive:

Their flukes pop out just once and they're gone...

**Sperm whales can hold their breath up to two hours.**





We briefly spot our orcas when we arrive at the “hot-spot” above Bremer Canyon.

‘El Notcho’ and a couple of others make a pass in front of the bow just to let us know they’re there but, as can be the case with any eco-tour, nature is unpredictable and despite the skippers best efforts we do not encounter them again.

Nevertheless, our crew of highly knowledgeable marine biologists fill us in on every important detail concerning the killer whales. In fact they’re all still fired up from the previous day’s experience when a pack of Orcas took down two beaked whales, a mother and her calf. Orcas can switch from occasional cruising to all-out hunting mode in an instant. Some refer to them as “wolves of the sea”!

Pods exist under a matriachal hierarchy: The most experienced female will take charge and lead the pack into attack. A grown Orca must consume around 200kg of fresh meat a day – make that two tonnes for a group of ten individuals!



Photos of this amazing predation are gratefully used with permission from ‘**Naturaliste Charters**’. Should one ever visit Bremer Bay, make sure to book on one of their expeditions. Doing so, you are allowing scientists to continue documenting and researching this unique ecosystem!







Let alone the Orcas, we spot a huge pod of **common dolphins** and a massive **sun fish**



**Bremer Canyon bonus story:**

*A few years ago, in the depths of Australia's Southern Ocean a 5m great white shark ('white pointer') is savagely attacked by a far larger mystery predator. An electronic tracking device attached to its fin records a high-speed underwater chase before the shark and its tag are devoured. Two weeks later, after being carried in the belly of the unknown killer, the still functioning tag is excreted and washed ashore, though withholding clues that could reveal the identity of the white pointer's killer.*

*This story of a "super predator's" underwater attack leads investigators to a mysterious natural phenomenon... the ocean's ultimate apex predator roaming the Canyon. Their research culminates in the making of the documentary "**In Search For The Oceans Super Predator**".*

*The film maker is aboard our expedition... you guessed it, the mysterious 'super predator' is the Orca. He tells us, if and when a great white crosses paths with an Orca, its "curtains" for the shark. Orcas will kill white pointers at any opportunity given – there's no love lost between the species. We think that 's a pretty amazing finding!*

*The first and largest killer whale ever seen at the Bremer "hotspot" is '**A-380**' – named so for his enormous size of about 10m in length. The height of his dorsal fin measures a towering two metres!*

*If that five meter great white, mentioned above , had the misfortune to run into 'A-380' he would have surely met his match!*



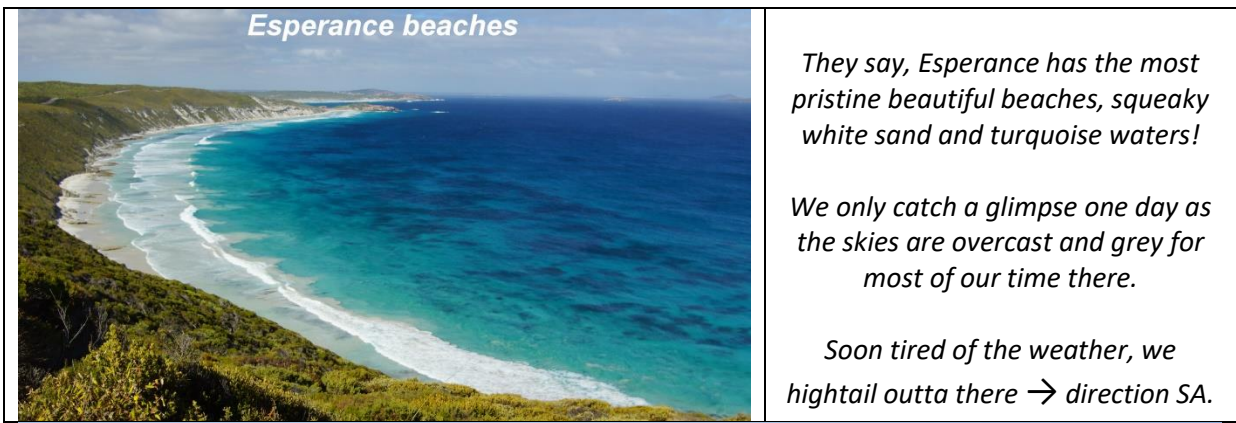
Bremer Bay Museum...











One one of the headlands we spot this plaque below commemorating **arrival of the French in 1792**.  
 Had they claimed the land for their rulers like Cook did for the Crown  
 we might as well all be speaking French today 😊



*We are looking forward to hit the much talked about iconic **Nullarbor** plain  
 where road melts into sky on some of Australia's longest stretches of bitumen.  
 To overcome boredom, some play golf along here on the world's longest course, the 'Nullarbor Links'.  
 This 18-hole par 72 golf course spans **from Kalgoorlie/WA** all the way **to Ceduna/SA** over **1,365km** of  
 the Eyre Highway along Australia's southern coast. Although the 'Links' have captured the  
 imagination of the world we prefer listening to a few ABC podcasts instead to pass time and (most  
 importantly!) – to stay awake! - This works splendidly, **crossing the Nullarbor seems a breeze...***





*Camp 5km east of Balladonia on the way to Nullarbor*



*Nullarbor, where road melts into sky*

*Some road stretches across this vast terrain double as emergency runways...*

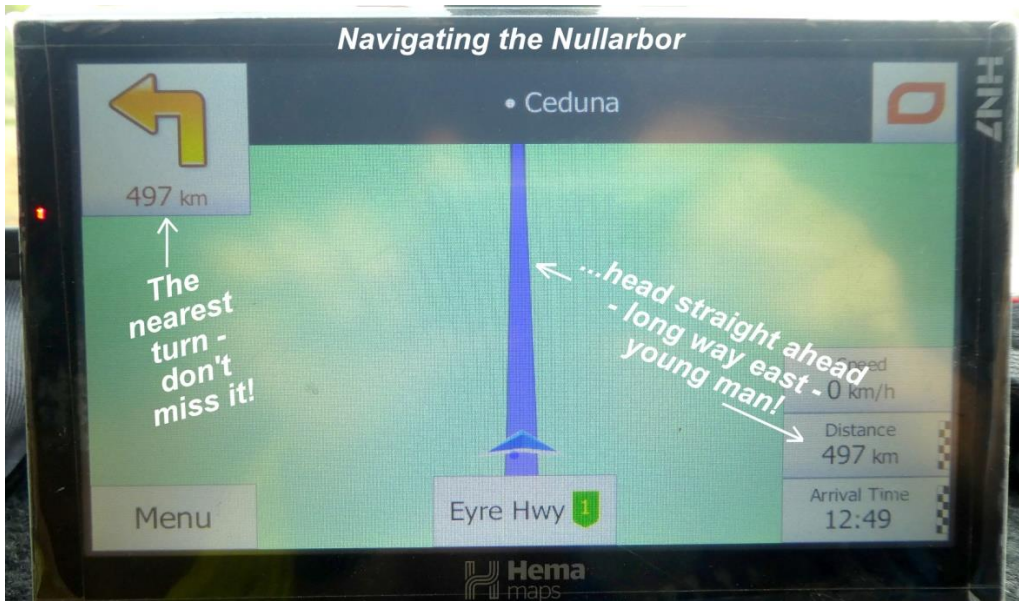




*No pedestrian crossing!*



*Gotta watch 'em camels!*



*Navigating the Nullarbor*



*Nullarbor fuel stop*



While some play golf along to kill time, others play silly-buggers making efforts to stop and decorate roadside trees with bras, undies, shoes and other paraphernalia:



*Nullarbored??  
Lightening up the miles!*

*The shoe tree...*



*The bra tree*



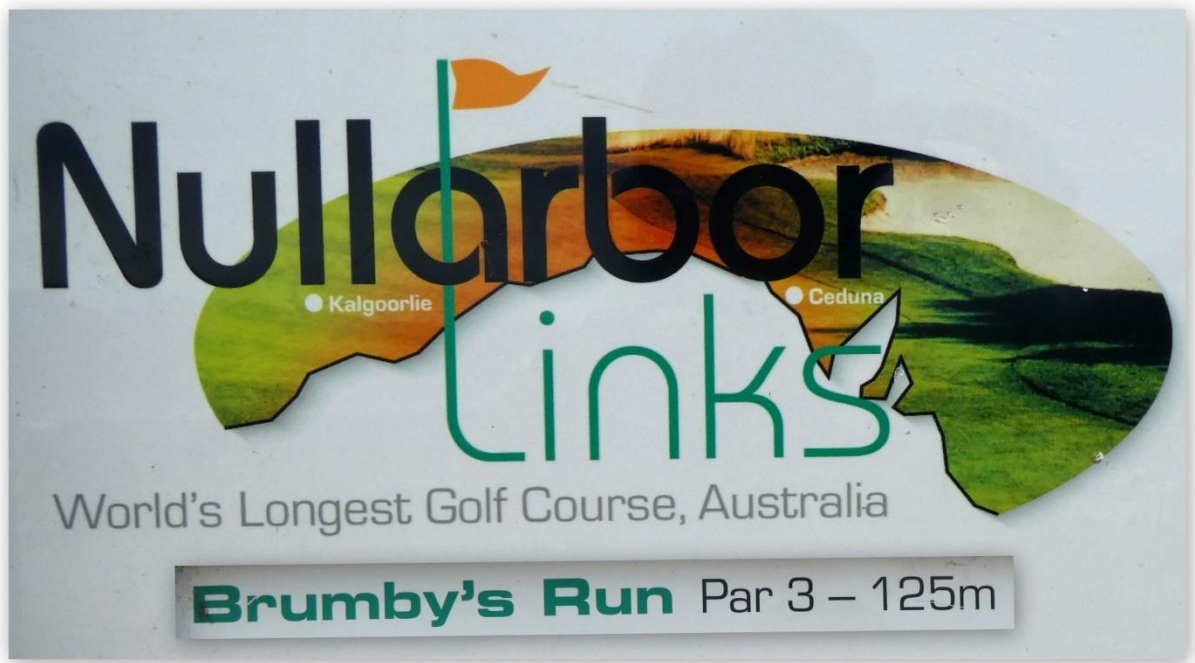
*The undie tree*



*Oh so charming, folks – no comment...*







Nevertheless, we are looking forward to **South Australia (SA)** with eager anticipation – will we finally escape the cold winds and chilly nights? After consuming our entire stock of vegies and fruit (*state quarantine regulations – don't dare bring it in!*) we cross the border into SA with excitement...









**Why not tow a 4WD behind your bus? – Covers all avenues!**



**Snap shot: "Willy-willy" dust devil crossing a roadhouse carpark**

**First impressions:** Seems, there's real summer to be had this side of the border...



**Promising outlook: It IS warmer in SA!**





*First night in SA:  
The clouds we leave behind grant us a nice sunset nevertheless*



**Yes, there's wind here, too, but it is WARM!  
We celebrate our SA arrival with a bunch of  
freshly shucked oysters 😊😊**





**Check these trees... blown flat into the ground over time and partly buried but still "kicking"!**







**Coastal cave wash out**

***Point Labatt is wild and untamed - there is a breeding colony of Australian sea lions on the rocks below our camp. The surrounding waters supply them with ample food resources like fish, squid, octopus, crabs and crayfish – they just need to keep a watchful eye, lest they become a food source themselves. Great white sharks would be patrolling the surrounds here, no doubt!***



**Sharky waters off Point Labatt**



**Point Labatt Australian sea lion colony**



*Leaving Point Labatt with stumble over 'Murphy's Haystacks' on route to our next destination...*





*Elliston coast line*



***Great Ocean Drive/Elliston - Not the Easter Islands!***

*Who's THIS dude?*







Thongs  
ain't  
thongs...



WhereDaFarqRwi?

Going... where?

NOWHERE ELSE RD





*Long way to the beach*



*Locks Well Beach*





*Rugged shores*



*Surf's up!*







*Drummond Point: Top of the world*



*View from camp*



*Drummond Point - Camp Matrix*

*Where man and serpent crossed paths...*



*Tracks in the sand...*





Crested Terns shooting the breeze



Crested Terns on the wing

Next thing we go for a **shark cage dive at Port Lincoln** in the hope to see some **great white sharks**. We know we take a risk with the 12hour roundtrip to the Neptune Islands as shark sightings have been decreasing in recent times. Despite a thick berley trail **no sharks** show!



The dive cage



We're in there!



Shark dive cage submerged



Plenty berley for the silver trevally but no sharks!



*Much to our utmost disappointment this is the closest we get to a great white's jaw!*



The mural reads "Can You Imagine An Ocean Without Them"  
"Yes, we can – we've witnessed it"



*Consolation prize up-close!*





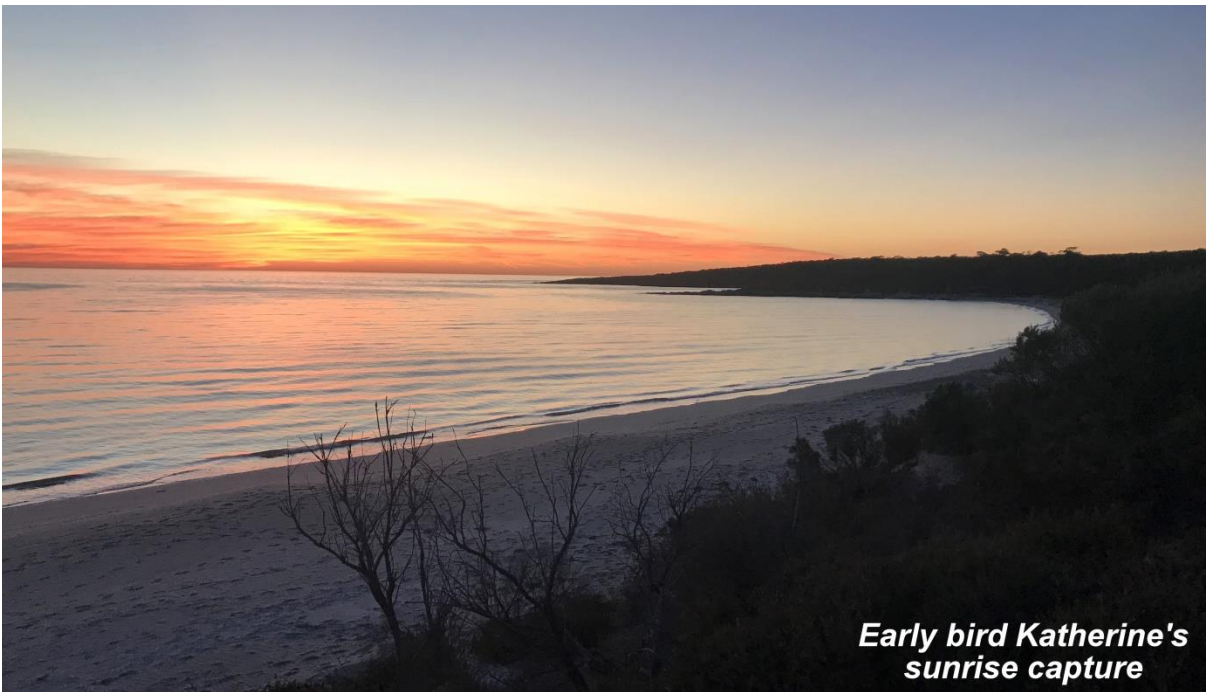
**Port Lincoln National Park:**

***This is where our real summer holiday 2018/19 finally begins – three days before the start of autumn! Daytime temps up to 33°C - water 24°C Warm NE winds...***

***We fish – we swim – We relish it!***



**September Beach - Port Lincoln National Park**

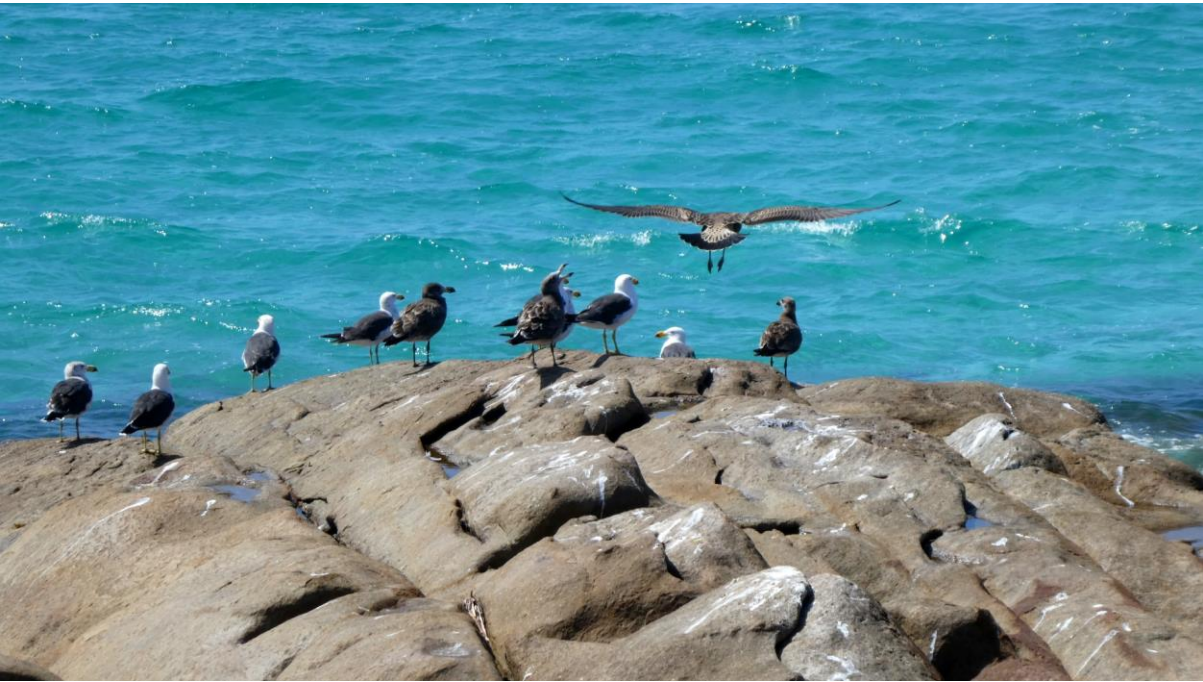


**Early bird Katherine's  
sunrise capture**



**Early morning  
guests at  
September Beach**







Just as I put the finishing touches to this report a little **'White-eye'** darts into camp...  
He's obviously searching for water though looking in some wrong places – like the dish bucket.  
I talk to the wee visitor, as you would, and he promptly lands on top of my laptop screen.  
As I reach for the camera, in an instant, **he perches himself on the rim of my glasses!**  
The little fella has been paying us several visits daily so, by this time, I am well prepared with a  
bottle top, filled with water which my tiny friend readily accepts...





***The gift of water: How to make special friends in arid places***



***The view from my angle – I feel deeply honoured this sweet little creature shows me such trust!  
For those who know me, I'm always up for an animal encounter and this is a very special one...😊***

**Next episode: Murals - Flinders Ranges (?) – York Peninsula (?) – to Sydney**

***Greetings  
from Chris  
and  
Katherine***



*not all who  
wander  
are lost*