


Hooked On Salmon

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Another great catch of an Australian salmon



If your idea of a holiday well spent includes pitting your surf fishing skills against the natural elements with spectacular coastal scenery and a campsite behind the dunes, then set your sights on this fishing competition held annually in South Australia.

The competition runs from the 1st of June to the 31st of August at Elliston, a little over 640 kilometres North West of Adelaide on the West Coast of Eyre Peninsula. In 2023 it's the 30th year of the competition and it's open to anyone keen to give it a go.

From the competition's beginning, it has grown over the years to become a popular event which boosts visitor numbers to the area over the Winter months, and that has seen incentives for entering the competition increase, with more sponsors coming on board.

During the competition there are weekly prizes as well as the overall winner and runner up prize money, and to be in the running you simply purchase an entry into the competition and follow a few simple rules. The one-off entry fee of \$10 enables you to fish for any time during the three months of the championships and many local businesses including caravan parks in the region, have the permits available to purchase.

The competition boundary is the coastline of the District council of Elliston, which runs from Sheringa Beach in the south to Mount Camel Beach in the north, a distance of around 100 kilometres.

There are a number of renowned salmon fishing beaches along the stretch of coastline including Talia Beach and Locks Well which are both prolific salmon grounds. The rules of the competition

include a maximum of three salmon can be entered per day, fish must be caught on hook on line, be gutted but not gilled or scaled and they must be presented for official weigh in at the Elliston Caravan Park, on the day of capture.

As well as a cash prize for the heaviest overall fish caught, the second heaviest fish also earns the lucky angler a cash reward, and there are weekly prizes for a mystery weight fish, meaning that anyone could be in the running for some cash. If you don't catch the big one, there's always the chance of taking home another cash prize by entering the monthly photo competition.

At the 2022 championship, the winning weight salmon tipped the scales at 4.487 kg and the second heaviest at 4.450 kg, both of which were caught at Talia Beach. The weekly mystery weights ranged from 0.890 kg to 4.000 kg during the 14 weeks of the competition with winners chosen as closest to those weights.

For the past two years we've tried our luck at the championships and despite not walking away with any prizes, it's a whole lot of fun to try and frankly, with the scenery and caravanning options available, a win would just be a bonus.

If you're considering giving it a go, try these beaches.

Mount Camel Beach

A little over 55 kilometres north of Elliston, there's a car parking area above the beach and a sloping walking track leads down to the sand, which feels a bit steeper than it looks on the way back. This straight stretch of beach is just over a kilometre long, has high waves and strong rips along its length, and deep holes for catching salmon.

DESTINATION Spotlight



Mount Camel Beach



The long way down to Locks Well



Salmon fishing at Locks Well



Salmon success

Talia Beach

This is one of the more popular salmon fishing beaches and it's not hard to see why with a long white sandy beach that stretches for 20 kilometres. The northern most part of the beach is a little over 50 kilometres from Elliston, off the Flinders Highway.

Walkers Rock

At the southern end of Talia Beach, Walkers Rock has excellent sheltered camping sites which you can book online and stay just a short walk over the dunes from this fishing hotspot. This beach has been consistently successful for us and has excellent campgrounds, close to the beach.

Locks Well

This beach is one of the more reliable salmon fishing spots, that is if you can

manage the 283 steps down to the beach via the 120 metre wooden stairs, or more to the point, the lung busting hard climb back to the top. Not only is the panoramic view spectacular from the top, but the epic craggy coastline views from the base of the cliffs make it worth the effort to see.

Sheringa Beach

The southernmost beach to try, Sheringa Beach also has a fantastic camp ground with sites bookable online. The beach is 48 kilometres south of Elliston and is fringed with spectacular white sand dunes and rugged cliffs.

Elliston has two caravan parks to choose from, or you can stay at the bush campgrounds located at Walkers Rock and Sheringa Beach, which cost \$20 per night and are bookable online.

More information:

Remember to buy your entry to the Salmon Fishing Championship, available at many local businesses and accommodation, before you go fishing. Pack your favourite surf rod, strong surf anchor sinkers and pilchards or heavy lures.

Don't forget to take some snaps for entry in the monthly photo competition. Dress warmly, during Winter the winds can be strong and temperatures cold. Take a backpack to help carry gear when access is steep to some of the beaches.

Some of the beaches are accessible by 4WD but should only be attempted by experienced drivers.

Bush campground sites can be booked at <https://book.bookeasy.com/agent/eyre-peninsula/8432557/>

You can keep informed about the Australian Salmon Fishing Championship, via their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/asfc.elliston/>

