

Bunurong Marine National Park

- South Gippsland's underwater 'garden'

A remarkable coast

The Bunurong coast is special - a coast full of striking rock formations, attractive sandy coves, rugged sandstone cliffs and prominent headlands. The coastal waters also contain a remarkable range of habitats that support abundant marine life, nurtured by an unusual set of environmental conditions. The name Bunurong refers to the local Aboriginal group that lived in this area and used the coast extensively for food gathering.

These coastal waters share the cool waters of Victoria's central and western coasts but, unlike those shores, are relatively protected from the oceanic south-westerly swell by the position of far away King Island. The gently sloping rocky seafloor is also uncommon in Victoria.

This rich and distinctive marine environment is now protected for the future in Bunurong Marine National Park.

The underwater reefs of Bunurong look different to those in other parts of Victoria. Crayweed, the large brown seaweed that covers many Victorian reefs, is mostly absent. Instead a multitude of more unusual plants and animals flourish in a rich underwater 'garden' of seaweeds, with an abundance of brightly coloured sea-stars, feather stars, crabs, large marine snails, and many smaller animals.

Around the rocks at Eagles Nest and Twin Reefs, small groups of Port Jackson Sharks rest under the ledges, rock lobsters can be seen in the crevices, while Zebra Fish, Sweep and wrasse dart about the seaweed.

The varied marine habitats at Bunurong include extensive intertidal rock platforms which are covered in pink coralline algae, barnacles and shells, as well as fields of Neptune's Necklace, a green algae that looks like strings of beads.



Neptune's Necklace

Beds of Sea-nymph seagrass grow in the bays, with tough wiry stem and roots that can withstand the waves. Many smaller seaweeds and encrusting animals live on the stems and leaves. The sandy bays also host a specialised community of minute animals that feed on debris from broken pieces of seaweeds and seagrasses, and become an important food source for larger animals such as fish.

Several animal and plant species found here have been recorded nowhere else in Victoria, and many others are at their most easterly location, preferring the cool waters of Victoria's west coast. This coastline is well known amongst marine naturalists for its diversity of flat plated grazing molluscs known as chitons.

Bunurong is one of Victoria's more accessible Marine National Parks, with excellent opportunities for recreation, including diving, cliff-top sightseeing and beach activities such as exploring the rockpools at low tide.

Protecting our marine environment

The waters off Australia's southern coast are very special and unique. Over 90% of the plants and animals living here are found nowhere else on earth.

The Victorian Government has created a system of 13 Marine National Parks and 11 smaller Marine Sanctuaries to ensure that representative samples of Victoria's diverse, distinctive and amazing marine environment are conserved for future generations.

These parks and sanctuaries now protect 5.3% of Victoria's coastal waters, safeguarding important marine habitats and species, and complementing our world-class national parks system on land.

By keeping some of these marine areas in a natural state, free from potentially damaging human activities, we will protect these environments into the future. Victorians will also benefit from the positive effects that this protection will have on recreation and tourism, community education and scientific research.

People are encouraged to visit Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries, but extractive or potentially damaging activities (e.g. fishing and mining) are prohibited within their boundaries in order to preserve marine biodiversity and maintain or enhance the condition of these areas.










Parks Victoria Ranger



"Victoria's system of Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries provides total protection for their unique inhabitants, offering unlimited opportunities for us all to learn more about this stunning underwater world."

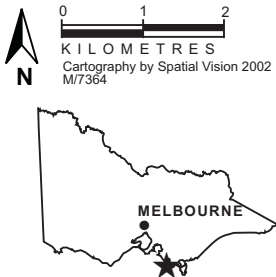
**For more information
call the Parks Victoria
Information Centre
on 13 1963 or
visit our website at
www.parkweb.vic.gov.au**

Bunurong Marine National Park

Area: 2,100 ha

-  Highway
-  Sealed road
-  Marine National Park
-  Coastal Park
-  Marine & Coastal Park
-  Coastal Reserve
-  Waterbody

-  Boat access point
-  Shore based boundary marker (Triangular Beacon)



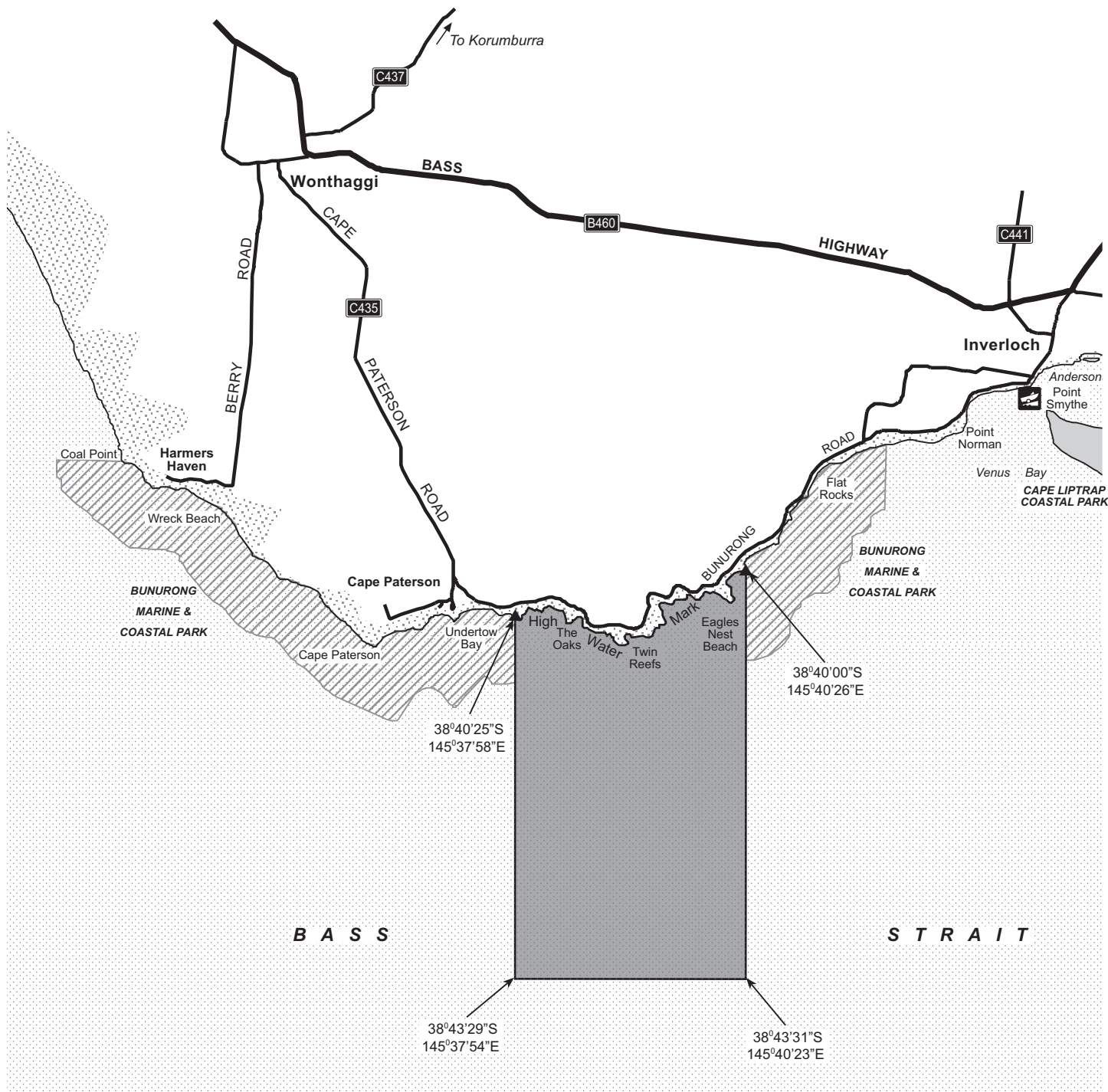
Latitude and Longitude values are based on WGS84



No fishing, netting, spearing, taking or killing of marine life. All methods of fishing, from the shore or at sea, are prohibited.



No taking or damaging of animals, plants and objects (artefacts)



What you might see

Port Jackson Shark *Heterodontus portusjacksoni*

Harmless, docile and gregarious in nature, this seafloor-dwelling shark is commonly seen nestled in groups under rocky ledges in Bunurong. At night Port Jackson sharks venture out and explore the reef, their flattened rows of pointed teeth and their strong jaws enabling them to crush reef animals such as marine snails, urchins, and crabs. Often these sharks will regroup in the same crevice as daylight approaches.

Each October the females lay between 10 and 16 dark, corkscrew-shaped egg-cases that they wedge into ledges with their mouths. You might be lucky enough to find one of these hatched egg-cases on the beach.



Port Jackson Shark

Pheasant Snail *Phasianotrochus eximius*

(also known as Painted Lady)

With its large, elongated conical shell and pretty colouration, the Pheasant Snail is one of Australia's most beautiful marine molluscs. Growing to a length of 4 centimetres, it can be found grazing in the dense algal growths at Bunurong, and is most conspicuous on brown seaweeds.

Like all small snails, the Pheasant Snail uses its tiny, file-like 'tongue' to rasp tiny algal plants from the surface of the reef and from seaweed fronds. Pheasant Snails are only found in southern Australian waters.



Pheasant Snail

Nearby parks and reserves

Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park

Situated either side of the Bunurong Marine National Park, the Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park features a dramatic coastline of rugged sandstone cliffs, rocky headlands, caves and rock pinnacles, with broad rock platforms, sandy coves and offshore reefs offering very different ways to explore the area's natural attractions.

Many areas in the park are excellent for snorkelling, such as the rock pools of Harmers Haven and the Caves, with a number of great diving spots including Cape Paterson and Flat Rocks. Enjoy rockpooling at low tide on the intertidal rock platforms such those as at Flat Rocks.

Fishing is permitted in Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park.

Cape Liptrap Coastal Park

Stretching along the coast from the sand barrier of Point Smythe to the sheltered waters of Waratah Bay, the park is a narrow peninsula featuring steep cliffs of folded marine sediments flanked by rock pinnacles and wave-cut platforms.

The broad sandy open beaches of Venus Bay are popular for swimming and surfing, and recreational fishing is popular from the beaches and rocks at Walkerville, and on the sheltered waters of Anderson Inlet. Camp at Bear Gully where shady campsites are set amongst tall banksias, and take a walk past inter-tidal mudflats and mangroves rich in bird life or to the lime kiln ruins of historic Walkerville.

Churchill Marine National Park

This new park protects seagrass beds, mangroves, sheltered intertidal mudflats and sandy beaches, with areas of State geological and geomorphological significance along the coastline. The intertidal mudflats extending from Rhyll to Newhaven are also significant, supporting seagrasses and vast numbers of bivalve molluscs, worms and creatures that provide a rich food source for birds and fish.

The area around Rhyll, the nearest town, is popular for boat-based activities, shore-based sightseeing, birdwatching and other natural history activities.

Marine National Park boundaries

Bunurong Marine National Park (2,100 ha) adjoins the Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park. The park extends along 5km of coastline between the most southern headland west of The Oaks Beach and the headland at the eastern end of Eagles Nest Beach, and offshore for approximately three nautical miles to the limit of the Victorian waters.

Activity	What can I do?
Recreational activities	
• nature observation and sightseeing	yes
• snorkelling and scuba diving	yes
• swimming, surfing	yes
• windsurfing, sailing, boating	yes
• filming and photography	yes
Recreational fishing and harvesting	
• all forms of fishing - line, spear, netting, traps	no
• shellfish collection, including abalone and rock lobster collection	no
• bait collection	no
• catch and release fishing	no
Commercial fishing and marine aquaculture	
• abalone fishing	no
• rock lobster fishing	no
• netting, line fishing and trapping	no
• marine aquaculture	no
Education and research	
• educational excursions	yes
• scientific research	yes (2)
Other uses	
• licensed tour operators	yes (2)
• filming and photography	yes (2)
• removal or disturbance of plants or animals	no
• dredging and spoil dispersal	no
• activities that disturb the seafloor	no
• waste and ballast discharge	no
1 Restrictions may apply to high-speed boating or the use of personal watercraft where there is a conflict with natural values or other users	
2 Subject to permit	

Personal safety

Diving should only be undertaken by trained and experienced divers

Beware of strong currents and undertows when snorkelling or at the beach

Beware of sudden changes in weather, especially when boating on open water

When boating, always let someone know before you go, including an estimated time of arrival

Always consult tide charts before going boating

Wear shoes that grip well when walking on rock platforms

Watch where your hands are going at all times to avoid potentially dangerous creatures

Be aware of large unexpected waves when walking on shore, especially on rock platforms

Stay away from cliff edges and bases

Always remember to wear a hat, shirt and sunscreen

Caring for the marine environment

Discarded gear and rubbish can endanger birds and marine animals – please take your rubbish home

Always replace any organisms or rocks you may have disturbed

Please take care when boating and observe speed restrictions. Power boats can cause serious damage to fragile intertidal areas

Enjoying Bunurong Marine National Park

As well as protecting the marine environment, the park offers an exciting range of recreation opportunities.

The Bunurong coast is ideal for all sorts of activities, from swimming, boating and diving to beach walks, exploring rockpools to discover Bunurong's fascinating marine creatures or simply enjoying the spectacular coastal scenery.

The Bunurong Marine National Park is readily accessible with carparks and beach access tracks or staircases provided at all the popular visitor sites. Many of the coves are great for swimming, but some beaches are dangerous under certain conditions, so observe warning signs and seek local advice if in doubt.

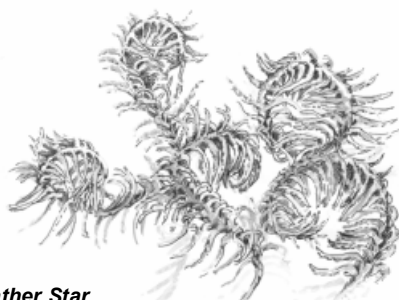
Many areas within the marine national park are suitable for snorkelling and diving. Popular areas for snorkelling include Eagles Nest, Shack Bay and Twin Reefs. Qualified SCUBA divers can easily enter the sea by walking to the edge of the rock platform.



Rockpool Rambling

Rockpooling along the intertidal rock platforms is a rewarding way to understand and appreciate the diversity and beauty of Bunurong's marine life. The best time to visit rock platforms is within an hour or so of low tide to see the greatest range of marine animals and plants.

Bunurong is also used extensively for marine education, due to its easy access and remarkably diverse marine environment.



Feather Star

Restrictions

For the protection of the marine environment, a number of activities are prohibited within the boundaries of Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries.



No fishing, netting, spearing, taking or killing of marine life. All methods of fishing, from the shore or at sea, are prohibited



No taking or damaging of animals, plants and objects (artefacts)

There are strong penalties under the National Parks Act for fishing in Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries.

These restrictions and penalties apply in Bunurong Marine National Park from 16 November 2002.

You may carry fin-fish on board your boat within park boundaries if you caught the fish outside the parks, and you may also carry (but not use) a fishing rod or a spear gun.

You may also have abalone or rock lobster and associated equipment (securely stowed) on board the boat provided that you are travelling straight through the park by the shortest practicable route.

To report a fishing offence contact NRE Fisheries on (03) 9483 4283. Please ask for the Duty Officer and give a short message and leave a contact number.

Fishing within the surrounding Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park is permitted in accordance with Fisheries Regulations. For further information contact Parks Victoria on **13 1963**.

Parks Victoria is responsible for the day-to-day management of Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries.

If you would like further information about Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries, contact the Parks Victoria Information Centre on **13 1963** or visit the Parks Victoria website at: www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Parknotes on each of Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries, including boundaries and permitted and prohibited activities, have been produced to assist visitors to these areas.