

Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary

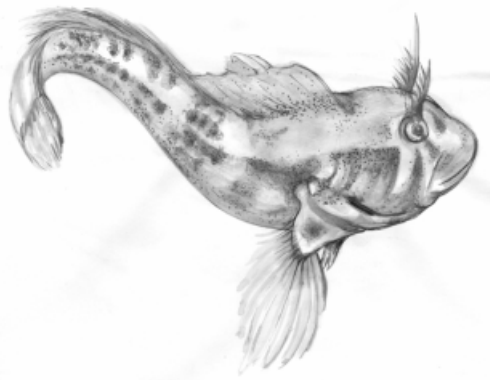
A protected refuge

Point Cooke is a quiet sanctuary for nature only fifteen kilometres from the centre of Melbourne. Situated on the sheltered sandy shores of north-western Port Phillip Bay, it is protected from the bustle of the suburbs by coastal dunes and adjacent wetlands.

A narrow sandy beach separates the land from the sea. Off the coast, a series of low basalt reefs rises from the muddy seafloor, the remains of a lava flow across the plains of thousands of years ago.

The combination of rock, sand and mud habitats supports a fascinating range of marine life. The principal plant on the reef is the bushy brown seaweed, *Sargassum*, which harbours innumerable tiny animals and plants between its leaf-like fronds.

Beneath the water prickly sea urchins are abundant near crevices, while the more exposed sections of rock support a range of life that includes masses of tubeworms, carpets of anemones and turfs of tufting coralline and filamentous algae. In darker corners, sponges grow plentifully.



Southern Blenny

Small sharks and skates patrol the surrounding eelgrass beds and muddy seafloor, feasting on the bivalves that lie deep in the sediment. In late summer, swarms of jellyfish can pulsate over the reefs, clearing the water of microscopic plants and animals that build up in the nutrient-rich environment.

Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary is part of a system of 13 Marine National Parks and 11 smaller Marine Sanctuaries created by the Victorian Government 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.

Enjoying Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary

The sanctuary is readily accessible to visitors, and is popular for an attractive range of recreation activities such as bird watching, sightseeing, diving and snorkelling.

Together with the saltmarsh habitats of the adjoining **Point Cook Coastal Park** and **Cheetham Wetlands**, the offshore sandbanks of the marine sanctuary provide support many bird species, including two migratory waders – the Double-banded Plover and the Lesser Golden Plover.

Diving and snorkelling sites at Point Cooke include two Heritage-listed shipwrecks - the *Henrietta* and the *Diana*. On the reefs you may also see the entertaining Southern Blenny poking its head and long fringed tentacles out of small crevices, sentinels on the lookout for food predators or rivals. As the name suggests, the Southern Blenny is found only in southern Australia.

Enjoy a wonderful 360 degree view of the coastal surroundings from *The Tower*, *A Monument to Migration and Aspirations*, at the southern boundary of Cheetham Wetlands.



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**

Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary

Area: 290 ha

0 250 500
M E T R E S
Cartography by Spatial Vision 2002
M17364

MELBOURNE
GEELONG

Latitude and Longitude values are based on WGS84

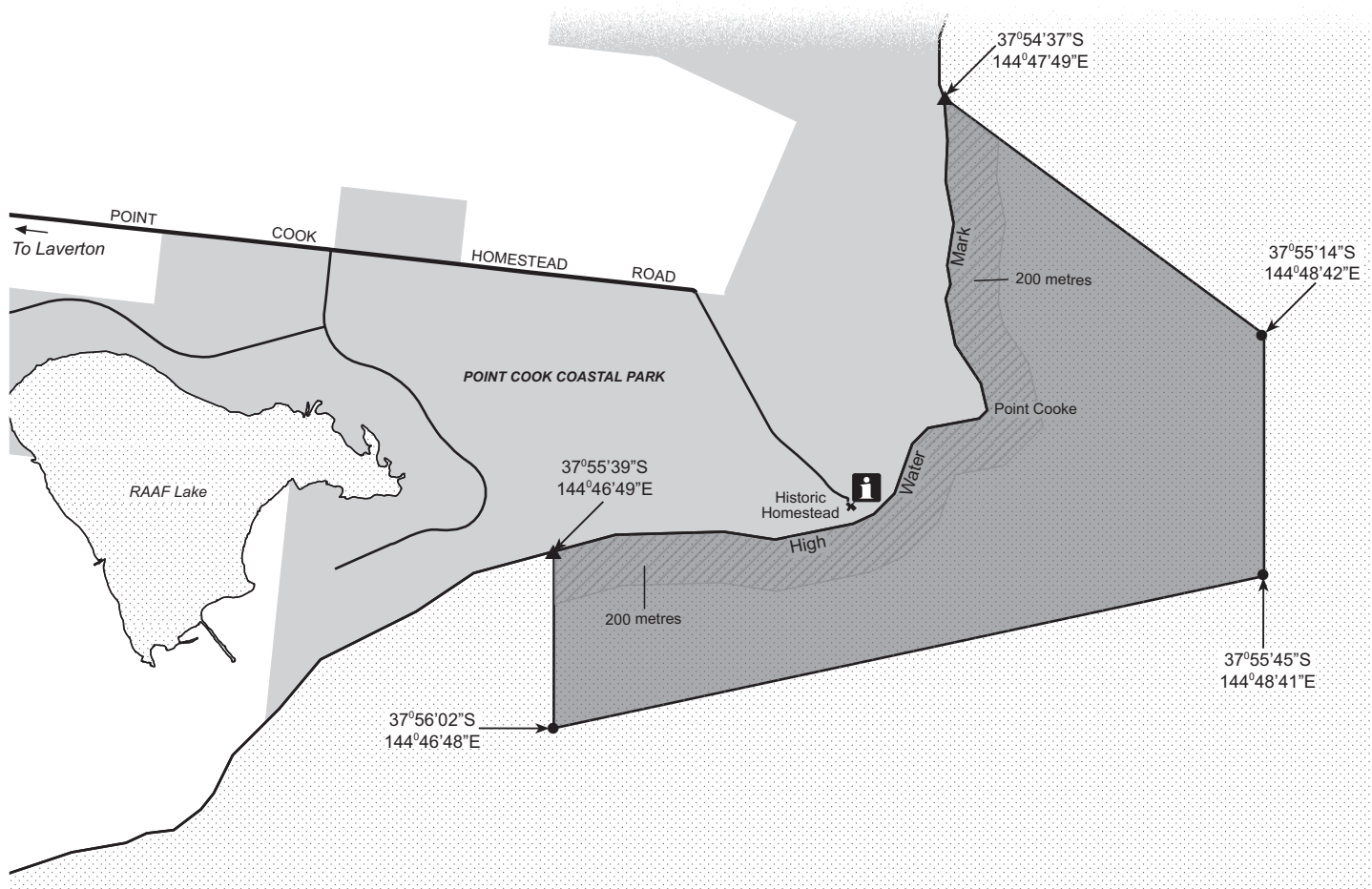
- Major sealed road
- Minor sealed road
- Marine National Park
- Coastal Park
- ▨ Point Cook Fisheries Reserve
- Waterbody
- ▲ Shore based boundary marker (Triangular Beacon)
- In-water boundary marker (Pile or Buoy)
- i Information



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)



P O R T P H I L L I P B A Y

Personal safety

Diving should only be undertaken by trained and experienced divers

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

Wear shoes that grip well when walking on rock platforms

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

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

Keep clear of bird nesting or roosting areas

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.

There are strong penalties under the National Parks Act for fishing in Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries. These restrictions and penalties apply in most Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries from 16 November 2002.

However, recreational and commercial fishing will be allowed to continue in much of Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary until 1 April 2004, at which time it will cease. This does not apply in the area of the former Point Cook Fisheries Reserve that lies between the high water mark and 200 metres seaward of the high water mark.

Marine Sanctuary boundaries

Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary (290 ha) is located along and offshore of Point Cook Coastal Park. The park boundary is identified by Shore markers at the northern and southern boundaries and In-water navigation marks for the off shore boundaries.

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.

Parks Victoria is responsible for the day-to-day management of Victoria's marine national parks and marine sanctuaries. For further information 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.