

Twelve Apostles Marine National Park & The Arches Marine Sanctuary

An icon above, a paradise below

It's a famous image - surging waves, golden cliffs and the crumbling pillars of the Twelve Apostles on their seaward march. But the wild and powerful Southern Ocean that sculpts this limestone landscape also shrouds a stunning seascape beneath the waves. A labyrinth of canyons with towering walls, arches and caves is festooned with colourful seaweed and sponge 'gardens', as resident schools of reef fish such as sweep glide above, and Australian fur seals tumble in play.



Australian fur seals

This spectacular and unique marine environment is now protected for the future in the Twelve Apostles Marine National Park. In addition, a small offshore site just east of Port Campbell, containing some of Victoria's most spectacular underwater limestone formations, is also protected as The Arches Marine Sanctuary (see back page for further details).

Twelve Apostles Marine National Park represents habitats of the cooler waters of western Victoria, but the most obvious environmental factor is the energy of the waves. The sea is seldom calm, with waves pounding in every 10 to 16 seconds from the Southern Ocean. From the cliffs you can see thick brown fronds of Bull Kelp, attached to the rocks near the low tide mark, swirling in the ocean swell. Underwater, extensive beds of kelp sway as far as the eye can see.

Lobster, abalone and sea-urchins are common underneath the thick kelp canopy. Giant Kelp forms forests at some locations, reaching the surface from 10 metres in depth. Away from the coast, the seafloor is mainly low rocky reef, with extensive areas of sand and shell rubble.

Offshore reefs extending from 30 to 60 metres in depth support sponge 'gardens', where colourful and varied sponges, sea-squirts and sea-moss shelter many smaller animals including sea-spiders, beautiful sea-slugs, marine molluscs and seastars.

Recreation opportunities in the area range from diving, snorkelling and swimming to cliff top sightseeing and nature study in the rockpools along the shore.

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**

Twelve Apostles Marine National Park & The Arches Marine Sanctuary

-  Sealed road
-  Marine National Park/
Marine Sanctuary
-  National Park
-  Waterbody
-  Boat access point
-  Shore based
boundary marker
(Triangular Beacon)
-  Information



Cartography by Spatial Vision 2002
M/7364



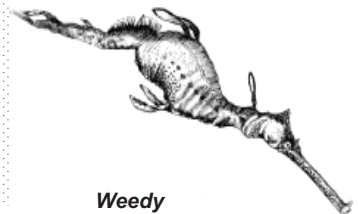
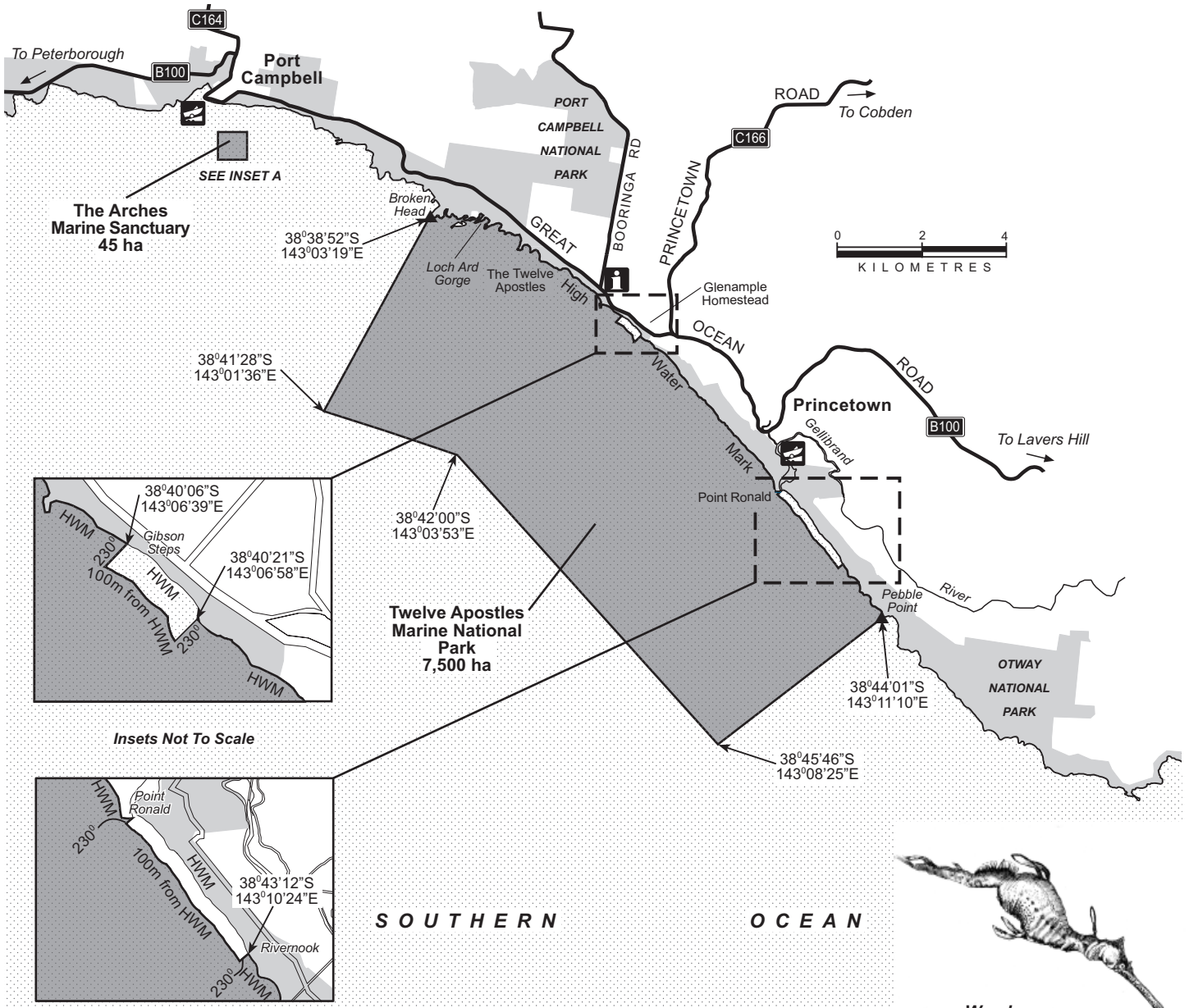
Latitude and Longitude values are based on WGS84



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)



Weedy Seadragon

What you might see

Weedy Seadragon *Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*

Despite its fierce name, the Weedy Seadragon is a dainty, timid animal that hovers slowly and gracefully over the kelp forests where it shelters. It grows up to 46 centimetres, with long leaf-shaped flaps of skin that project out at intervals along the top and bottom of the fish enabling it to camouflage easily amongst seaweed.

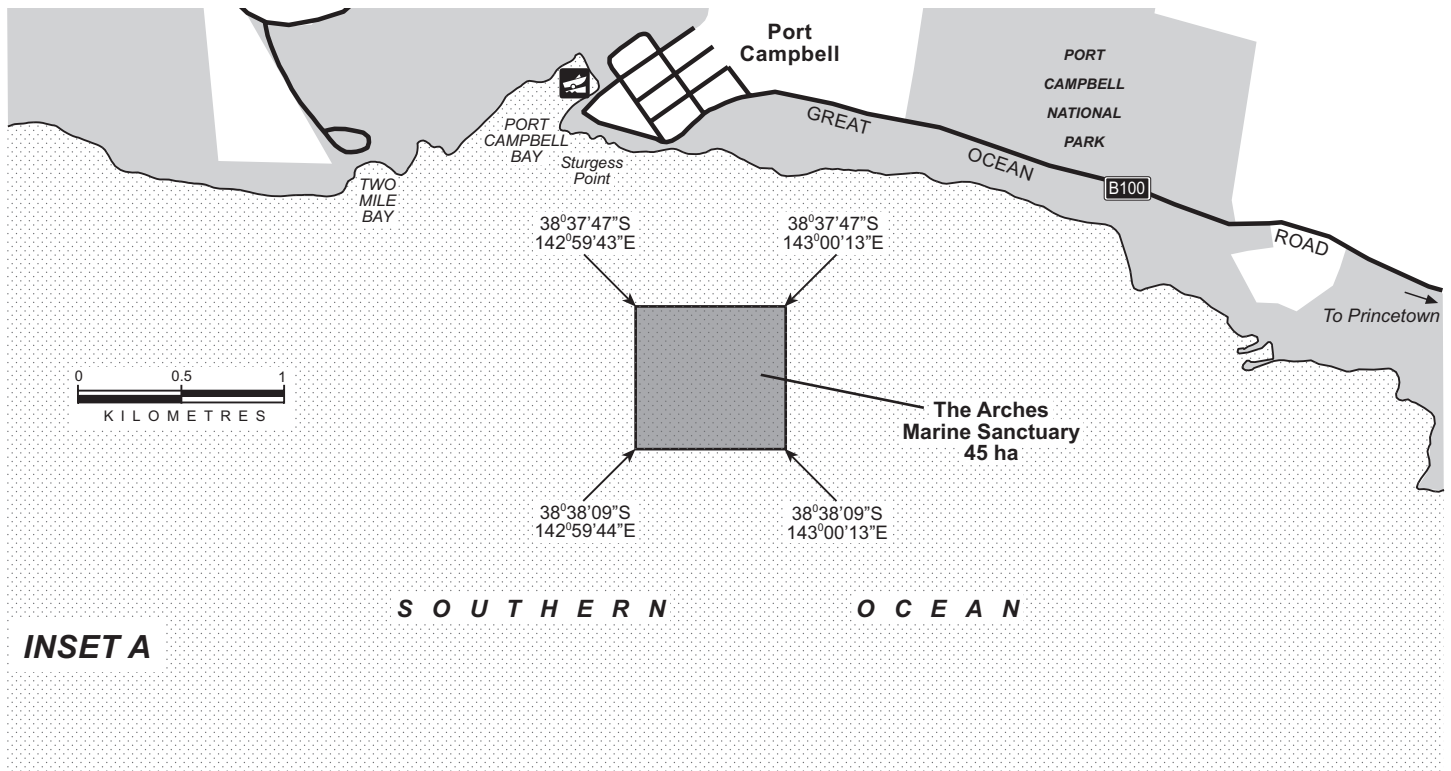
Seadragons are related to pipefishes and seahorses, and, like them, it is the male that holds the eggs. With Weedy Seadragons, the tiny pink eggs can be seen stuck to the tail where they are brooded for two months. They hatch as miniature versions of the adults, but grow to 7 centimetres in three weeks. Weedy Seadragons are only found in southern Australian waters.

The Weedy Seadragon is the marine state emblem for Victoria.

Marine National Park boundaries

Twelve Apostles Marine National Park (7,500 ha) is located southeast of Port Campbell between Sherbrook and Pebble Point, and offshore for approximately three nautical miles to the limit of Victorian waters. Two areas have been excluded from the park for 100 metres seaward of the high water mark at Gibson Steps and between Point Ronald and Rivernook.

Located offshore at Port Campbell, The Arches Marine Sanctuary is approximately 45 ha in size.



INSET A

**Leather Kelp
*Ecklonia radiata***

Dense forests of Leather Kelp or *Ecklonia radiata*, the deepest growing of the large, brown seaweeds, blanket the reefs around the Twelve Apostles at depths between 5 and 25 metres. Beneath its fronds the surge of the waves and current is dampened, and the forest provides shelter for numerous fish species.

Ecklonia forests are home to a myriad of tiny species just as terrestrial forests are home to an abundance of insects. The dominant animals are tiny grazing bug-like creatures known as amphipods or sandhoppers, and over 50,000 can be found in a square metre. Of the 50 or so species that can be found on a single *Ecklonia* plant, most feed on a film of microscopic plants that grow on the frond surface. Amphipods are eaten by fishes such as wrasse.

Nearby parks and reserves

Port Campbell National Park

Port Campbell is world famous for its extraordinary collection of wave-sculpted rock formations, especially the Twelve Apostles, a group of dramatic rock stacks that stand like sentinels defying the surging seas. Other highlights include Loch Ard Gorge - site of a 19th century shipwreck, as well as the Grotto, the Arch and London Bridge (which became an island when its landward arch collapsed in 1990).

Discover natural history and the Aboriginal and European heritage of the Shipwreck Coast on a number of short walks, including the Port Campbell Discovery Walk. Visit historic Glenample Homestead, just 1 km from the Twelve Apostles, where survivors Tom Pearce and Eva Carmichael were taken after the 1878 wreck of the *Loch Ard*.

Bay of Islands Coastal Park

Stretching 32 kms from near Warrnambool to Peterborough, this coastal reserve has outstanding ocean views and extraordinary geological features. Sheer cliffs and rock stacks dominate the bays, and heathlands display colourful spring wildflowers. Beaches are accessible at some points.

Otway National Park

Otway National Park follows the spectacular coastline between Apollo Bay and Princetown. It contains luxuriant forest, fern gullies and some of the most rugged and inaccessible coastline in Victoria. Enjoy the short Maits Rest Rainforest Walk and take a guided tour or stay overnight at the nearby **Cape Otway Lightstation**, the oldest surviving lighthouse on the Australian mainland.

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 sudden changes in weather, especially when boating on open water
- Beware of strong currents and undertows on beaches
- 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
- When boating, always let someone know before you go, including an estimated time of arrival
- Always consult tide charts before going boating

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

Enjoying Twelve Apostles Marine National Park

As well as protecting the marine environment, the Twelve Apostles Marine National Park offers an attractive range of recreation opportunities. The area is growing in popularity for a wide range of recreation activities, from diving, snorkelling and swimming to cliff top sightseeing and nature study in rockpools along the shore.

Spectacular above and breathtakingly beautiful below, the park has some of the most unique underwater scenery in the world. The powerful swell of the Southern Ocean has created awesome sub-tidal canyons, arches, cliffs and walls lined with an amazing diversity of invertebrates and sponge gardens in which colourful seastars can be found. There are also a number of highly significant and historic shipwrecks, including Victoria's worst shipping disaster – the loss of the *Loch Ard* in 1878.

Bird watching from the land points jutting out into the park is a great way to see some of the large seabirds such as gulls and albatross that use this part of the coast. There are also superb views of the Marine National Park from Loch Ard Gorge and the Twelve Apostles Viewing Area.

Conditions for SCUBA diving vary enormously and depend very much on swell and weather conditions being suitable for the planned activity. Diving in these areas should only be attempted by qualified divers with extensive local knowledge, or with a suitably experienced guide. Local dive shops and operators can provide opportunities to dive on the best sites and wrecks.

The Arches Marine Sanctuary

To the east of Port Campbell, far offshore in 20 metres of water, the flat limestone seafloor breaks up into a series of amazing canyons, arches and tunnels that are locally known as 'The Arches'. Diving in this area is a thrilling experience. As you drift down, the canyons gradually appear amongst the fields of swaying brown kelp and smaller red seaweeds. Entering these canyons reveals a different world.

The canyons are cut deeply into the seafloor and they wind and branch in various directions. Some of the shorter branches are little more than caves, while others are topped by elevated arches. Fur seals can sometimes be seen enjoying this playground, torpedoing through the tunnels, and in and out of the arches.

The walls are covered with a spectacular arrangement of colourful creatures. Large red and orange sea-fans emerge vertically from the rock. Stinging hydroids form feather-like colonies, and delicate sea-mosses and lace corals of a variety of shapes and colours cover many surfaces. Various sponges and gelatinous tunicates complete the scene.

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 most Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries, including The Arches Marine Sanctuary, from 16 November 2002.

However, recreational and commercial fishing will be allowed to continue in Twelve Apostles Marine National Park until 1 April 2004, at which time it will cease.

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.

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.