

boating safety checklist

Everyone on the water has a duty of care to maintain a proper lookout at all times. This duty includes proper handling of a vessel and observing the rules, knowing the limitations of the boat, being aware of potential hazards and allowing for the actions of others, both reasonable and unreasonable. Using the following checklist will help you have the best possible boating experience on Western Port.

Be prepared before you leave:

- Carry safety equipment according to the regulations, including approved PFD-Is otherwise known as life jackets.
- All children under the age of 10 years must wear an approved PFD-1 while on a recreational boat that is under way, unless the child is within a deckhouse, cabin, half cabin or a secure enclosed space.
- Have a chart of where you are going and a radio.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Know the rules, local regulations and distress signals.
- Check out local conditions, weather and tides.
- Carry sufficient fuel, water and a first aid kit.
- Ensure engine reliability and adequate fuel system and always carry sufficient fuel.
- Don't overload your boat.

On the water

- Adhere to the prescribed speed limits.
- Ensure you always keep to the right of channels.
- Wear your life jackets.
- Keep a careful watch on the weather and watch out for other boats and hazards.
- Keep a safe distance between your boat and other boats, people, wildlife or structures.
- Keep a lookout at all times, especially rowers or non powered craft who are generally harder to see and hear.
- Ensure a low wake is maintained when passing rowers and other non powered vessels or floating infrastructure.
- Never mix alcohol and operating a vessel.
- Keep well clear of moving ships that they may alter course and without notice.
- Do not obstruct the movement of large vessels by drifting in shipping channels and across shipping tracks.
- Be aware that the bow wave or wake from large ships, including the large commercial ferries, can cause your boat to capsize or roll heavily as to cause serious injury to its occupants.
- Take care not to cross ahead of a large vessel as you may underestimate its speed and not be seen.
- If you hear a vessel sounding at least five short and rapid blasts on its horn, you must get out of its way.
- Navigation lights on your vessel must be shown at night

Regulations to be observed

- The following regulations must be observed to protect the bay environment and ensure a level of safety for all users of the waters:
- Immediately slow down to 5 knots around swimmers or divers.
 - Don't exceed the speed limit.
 - Observe boat zone boundaries and restrictions.
 - Know the boundaries and restrictions of Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries.
 - Take all rubbish home with you and dispose of it appropriately.
 - Remember all native plants and animals are protected by law.
 - Jumping or diving from piers, jetties or bridges is not permitted.
 - Vessel operators over 21 years of age must have a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of below 0.05. Vessel operators under 21 years of age or accompanying a restricted license holder must have a BAC of 0.
 - The discharge of sewage and other waste from boats is prohibited.

hoon boating laws

Laws empowering Police and authorised officers to order hoon and their vessels (including boats and personal watercraft) off the water were introduced in December 2009 to combat dangerous and anti-social behaviour on the water.

Hoon behaviour, for the purposes of the new laws, might include:

- Doing 'doughnuts' near swimmers or other water users
- Speeding near swimmers or other people close to shore
- Endangering water skiers by going too close to jump their wake.

New laws are also being introduced in 2011 empowering Victoria Police to impound, immobilise or seize a vessel or have a vessel forfeited. To report instances of hoon behaviour, contact Police on 000.

look after western port

Western Port is an important feeding site for migratory waterbirds and is acknowledged in several international protection agreements. Boat operators have a responsibility to protect the marine environment and ensure it can be enjoyed by future generations. You can protect Western Port and minimise your environmental impact by following these simple guidelines:

- Avoid anchoring over seagrass and reef areas and consider purchasing an anchor that does less damage to seabeds.
 - Keep your boat clean and protected from aquatic pests.
 - Reduce speed when operating powerboats in shallow water or when close to shore as propellers can cause considerable damage to sensitive seabeds and the wake can cause erosion.
 - Prevent pollutants such as petrol, oil, sewage and detergents from entering the water.
 - Store rubbish securely on your boat and always take all rubbish home with you.
 - Dispose of sewage waste properly and use pump out facilities where they are available.
 - Clean out bilges and sumps regularly.
 - Launch or retrieve your craft at designated launching ramps.
 - Observe recreational fishing regulations.
 - Avoid disturbing flocks of feeding, resting or breeding birds.
- Get involved with a Marine Friends group. Contact Parks Victoria for more information.



guide to western port

There are a number of rules and regulations that must be observed to protect the bay environment and ensure safety for all users of Western Port.

Anchoring

When anchoring ensure you always place anchors correctly and securely. Anchors damage reefs and seagrass beds when they are allowed to shift. Consider purchasing a new anchor that does less damage to seabeds. Where possible avoid anchoring over seagrass and reef areas. Anchoring is not permitted in shipping channels and fairways.

Aquaculture reserve

The Flinders Aquaculture Fisheries Reserve (440 ha) is located offshore between Flinders and Shoreham. The reserve is clearly identified by yellow 'special marks' (piles or buoys) with 'Aquaculture' inscribed in black lettering on the yellow 'X' top mark and yellow synchronised lights at the external boundaries. Within the Reserves are Crown lease areas designated for marine farming. Recreational users may enter the reserves at their own risk and proceed with caution but cannot enter the lease areas (within the marked boundaries) without permission of the leaseholder.

Recreational fishing can be undertaken throughout non-leased parts of the reserves in accordance with the conditions below:

- Keep to public areas of the Aquaculture Fisheries Reserves.
- Watch for divers and keep vessels and equipment a safe distance from aquaculture equipment.
- Always travel at a safe speed and keep boat wash to a minimum.
- Be aware of and comply with all boating and fisheries related regulations.
- Don't enter Crown leases without the express permission of the leaseholder.
- Don't encroach on Crown leases by keeping all equipment such as anchors, fishing lines and lures away from these areas.
- Don't tie up to navigation aids, aquaculture equipment or external Crown lease boundary buoys.
- Don't berley, clean fish or discharge human waste in or around the AFRs.

For more information contact Fisheries Victoria.

Aquatic pests

When you participate in recreational boating activities you may be unknowingly spreading marine pests. You can protect Western Port by keeping your boat and equipment clean and following these simple steps:

1. Dislodge all plants and animals and bin them.
 2. Drain water from boat and gear Try not to let it drain back into the water.
 3. Dispose of unwanted live bait in a bin.
 4. Douse your boat and gear with freshwater and try not to let it drain back into the water.
 5. Dry your boat and equipment.
- Don't forget to apply an authorised antifoulant where appropriate (within the antifoulant maximum in-service period and as directed on the can)

For more information contact the Department of Primary Industries.

Berthing facilities

Public berthing is available on piers and jetties all over Western Port for up to 48 hours at a time. Time limits and other restrictions are detailed on Parks Victoria signs at each location. Some areas have been leased or allocated for commercial boat operators only. These berths are not available for public use, including short term berthing. Please observe these restrictions to ensure fair access for everyone.

- Key
- Short Term – up to 4 hours (check signage)
 - Loading
 - Permit and commercial vessels only

BERTH LOCATION	Type	Map Ref.
Corinella Jetty	● ●	M25
Cowes Jetty	● ● ●	O14
Flinders Pier	● ● ●	Q1
Point Leuchnault Barge Landing	no public access	L23
Hastings Jetty	● ●	G11
Long Island Point Liquids Pier	no public access	G13
Newhaven Jetty	● ● ● ●	S21
Rhyll Jetty	● ● ●	P18
San Remo Pier	● ● ● ●	T21
Stony Point Jetty	● ● ● ●	K13
Tankerton Jetty	● ●	L16
Tooradin Jetty	● ● ●	A22
Warneet South Jetty	● ●	B18

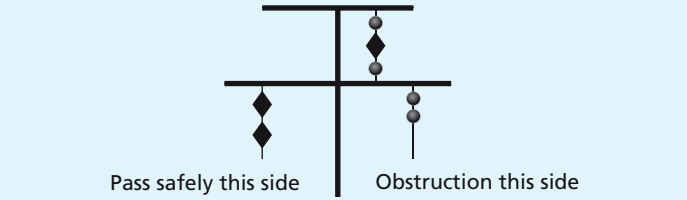
Berthing is also available in harbours, marinas and other sheltered waters in Western Port. Contact marina and harbour operators to book a berth prior to arrival.

Dredging

When encountering a dredge vessel recreational boat operators should always maintain a safe speed and pass on the non obstruction side of the dredge vessel.

The safe side of passage is indicated by a double black diamond signal on the vessel. A double black ball signal indicates the obstruction side to avoid. A third black ball, black diamond, black ball signal indicates the vessel is restricted in its manoeuvrability. Maintenance dredging is conducted by Parks Victoria to maintain safe access to boating facilities in key locations such as San Remo, Stony Point and Tankerton.

Dredging of shipping channels and fairways in Western Port is managed by the Port of Hastings Harbour Control.



Fishing

Fishing is permitted on Western Port and may be undertaken from either a vessel or on land excluding Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries. A Recreational Fishing Licence is required by anglers in Victoria for persons aged 18 – 70. Observe all fishing regulations and remember to check bag and size limits, fishing methods and closed seasons outlined in the Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide. For more information contact the Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries Victoria.

Boat ramps are managed by several different agencies and councils throughout Western Port. Launching fees and facilities vary at each site. If you're unfamiliar with a particular boat ramp contact the relevant boat ramp manager for more information.

Boat Ramp	Map ref.	Managed by	Contact no.
1 Blind Blight	C20	City of Casey	9705 5200
2 Corinella	M25	Corinella Foreshore Committee of Management	136 186
3 Cowes	O13	Bass Coast Shire Council	1300 226 278
4 Flinders	Q1	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	1300 850 600
5 Grantville	M31	Bass Coast Shire Council	1300 226 278
6 Hastings	G11	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	1300 850 600
7 Lang Lang	G31	Lang Lang Foreshore Committee of Management	136 185
8 Newhaven	S21	Bass Coast Shire Council	1300 226 278
9 Rhyll	P18	Bass Coast Shire Council	1300 226 278
10 Shoreham	O2	Shoreham Foreshore Committee of Management	136 186
11 Stony Point	K13	Stony Point Foreshore Committee of Management	136 186
12 Tooradin	B22	Tooradin Foreshore Committee of Management	136 186
13 Warneet	B18	Warneet Foreshore Committee of Management	136 186

Fuel

For your safety refuelling should always be carried out 'on-board' and not by leaning over the boat from a pier, jetty or landing. Care should always be taken to ensure fuel, oil and other potential pollutants are stored and transferred carefully and not spill – especially on banks, in the water or on piers and jetties. When in public areas all diesel or unleaded fuel must be transported in AS2906 containers with a volume no greater than 25 litres. Larger containers or smaller sub-standard containers should not be used. Multiple containers can be used or fuel can be purchased from boat fuel retailers including Western Port Marina (map ref G11).

Hazards and damaged aids to navigation

Should you encounter damaged aids to navigation, malfunctioning navigation lights, vessels adrift, submerged objects and other dangerous debris floating in the local port, please contact Parks Victoria to report them immediately on 13 1963.

Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries

Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries are magnificent places for exploring marine life, snorkelling, scuba diving, swimming, low speed recreational boating or sailing and photography. They protect a unique and diverse range of marine plants, animals and habitats for the benefit of current and future generations. Around 90 percent of the plants and animals are found nowhere else in the world.

Western Ports three Marine National Parks protect a diverse biological treasure trove. Largely concealed from view behind a shoreline veil of marshland and mangroves, they contain expansive intertidal mudflats, meadows of seagrass, deep channels, small rocky reefs and an abundance of marine life. When the tide rolls out the extensive mudflats provide a source of food for waterbirds.

The tides are the key to understanding Western Port's marine life. The waters' ebb and flow exposes shallow mudflats and creates deep channels that function as rich feeding grounds.

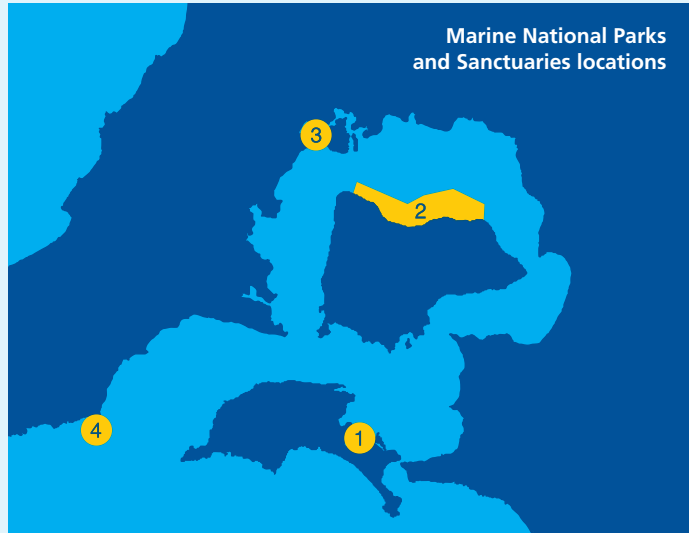
Three Marine National Parks and a nearby Marine Sanctuary contain internationally significant roosting sites and feeding areas for migratory waders and other waterbirds.

① **Churchill Island Marine National Park** (675 ha) is influenced in part by the nearby open coast, and hosts beds of the living fossils known as lamp shells or Brachiopods. This ancient group of animals once had thousands of species, but is now reduced to a few species worldwide. The intertidal mud flats extending from Rhyll to Newhaven also support seagrass and a vast number of bivalve molluscs, worms and creatures that provide a rich food source for birds and fish.

② **French Island Marine National Park** (2800 ha) is adjacent to the northern shoreline of French Island and protects extensive seagrass beds that have largely disappeared elsewhere in the bay since the 1950s. It's one of the most extensive areas of salt marsh and mangrove communities in Victoria. The seabeds act as a nursery for fish including species such as King George Whiting, Bream and Mullet. This area is especially significant as a feeding habitat for over 32 species of migratory wader birds.

③ **Yaringa Marine National Park** (980 ha) with its serene waters in the north of the bay preserves the connection between mangroves and mudflats that is so important for roosting waterbirds. The mangroves are a vital part of the bay ecosystem and provide an important habitat for a number of invertebrates, marine snails and bivalves and adult and juvenile fish.

④ **Mushroom Reef Marine Sanctuary** (80 ha) is just outside Western Port on the Western side of Flinders. At low tide, the sea withdraws to reveal a huge mushroom shaped reef. The reef is formed from basalt that has weathered extensively to form a multitude of micro habitats, allowing a diverse range of creatures to shelter in crevices or under loose rocks. The bottom of rock pools are covered in dense meadows of bright green seagrass and brown seaweed.



A number of activities are not permitted within the boundaries of Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries. It's your responsibility to know the boundaries.

- No fishing
- No spear fishing
- No taking or damaging of any animals, plants and objects (artefacts)
- Hovercraft are not permitted to operate within 150m of the French Island National Park shoreline.

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 you are travelling straight through the park by the shortest practicable route.

Know the boundaries – penalties apply

Offences by individuals may incur an infringement notice, or carry penalties of up to 12 months imprisonment and/or fines of up to \$20,000. Vessels, vehicles and equipment may also be seized.

To report fishing offences in Marine National Parks call the Fisheries Victoria offence reporting service on 13 FISh (13 3474).

For more information on Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries contact Parks Victoria.

Moorings

Parks Victoria directly manages approximately 1,950 of an estimated 2,900 swing moorings in 51 locations around Port Phillip and Western Port. The balance are managed by 11 yacht clubs, boat clubs and mooring associations acting as agents for Parks Victoria.

Casual moorings are available for short term use at Cleland Right (near San Remo) and west of the Yacht Club at Cowes. Casual moorings are clearly identifiable by large orange buoys. Casual moorings operate on a first come first serve basis for vessels up to 14m and boat operators should call the Parks Victoria Information Centre to confirm booking upon arrival. For more information contact Parks Victoria.

Narrows – between Newhaven and San Remo

Boat operators should be aware of an 18-metre high headway under overhead power cables, and 12-metre headway under the bridge between San Remo and Newhaven prevents the passage of boats unless masts can be unsteepped.

Because of the large rise and fall in tide on Western Port there are strong tidal flows reaching up to 6 knots in the narrows between Newhaven and San Remo. It is advised that boat operators remain in defined channels as boats have been stranded on mud flats for upwards of eight hours.

Notice to mariners

A Notice to Mariners is issued by a Harbour Master, Port Manager or Waterway Manager to advise commercial mariners, recreational boaters and waterway users of a significant change in a port or waterway which may affect the safe navigation of a vessel. Boat operators should always check the latest Notice to Mariners before operating a boat on Western Port. Notice to Mariners are available on the Parks Victoria and Victorian Regional Channels Authority websites.

Boat operators should carry accurate Australian navigation charts (Aus 150, Aus 151 and Aus 152) which can be purchased through mapping retailers and the Australian Hydrographic Service.

Port security

Water-side restricted zones are in place within 100 metres of the oil jetty structures at Long Island Point Jetty and Crab Point Jetties. Exclusion zone is in place within 400 metres ahead and 100 metres around a ship in transit. Access to the zone is controlled and unauthorised entry is an offence under the regulations.

Victorian Water Police manage port security in partnership with commercial port managers. If you see something suspicious on the water, contact the Water Police.

Pump out facilities

Poor water quality affects the health of the bay and in turn the enjoyment of recreational boating and fishing activities on Western Port. Discharge of sewage and other waste from boats adds pollutants to our valuable waterways and pose a risk to marine ecosystems and human health.

Use a holding tank for sewage and dispose of waste properly on land or use provided pump out facilities. Boat sewerage pump out systems are used designed for larger boats that have holding tanks. Sewerage hoppers are designed for boats that use a portable toilet.

Pump out facilities are available at Western Port Marina in Hastings (Map ref G11) and Yaringa Marina (Map ref 14D).

Radio channels

Marine radio is potentially a life line for vessels in an emergency. Avoid unnecessary communications on marine radio. Be aware of the following Marine Radio channels and frequencies when operating a motorised vessel in Western Port:

Recreational Vessels	VHF Channel 72, 73 and 77 27MHz Channel 96
Port Operations	VHF Channel 14 and 08
Emergency Calls and calling	VHF Channel 16 and 67 27MHz Channel 86 and 88

Rowing and non powered vessels

Western Port is often frequented by non-motorised vessels such as kite boards, kayaks and canoes. When passing non powered vessels, please ensure a low wake is maintained so as not to disturb or tip the vessels over as they are more susceptible to capsizing than larger motorised vessels.

Shipping channels – steer clear

Large ships travel Western Port shipping channels during all hours of the day and night and sometimes travel outside designated fairways. A ships blind spot can extend for many hundreds of metres and it is very difficult for ships to change course quickly.

It is the responsibility of recreational boat operators to:

- Keep clear of ships at all times.
- Never anchor in shipping channels.
- Never obstruct the path of ships or assume a ship can see you.
- Never tie up to navigation aids such as buoys or channel markers.

Penalties apply.

For more information contact Port of Hastings Harbour Control.



Speed restrictions

Speed can be dangerous on the water. Not only is there a risk of crashing into other vessels, land or navigation aids, there are many other obstacles such as swimmers and divers or obstructions hidden under the surface. Always maintain a good lookout and operate at a safe speed and check local speed restrictions before you leave.

A maximum speed of 5 knots applies on Western Port when operating a vessel:

- Within 50m of swimmers, other vessels and fixed or floating structures.
- Within 100m of divers flags.
- Within a designated 5 knot zone.

Tidal variations

Western Port has strong tidal variations which can fluctuate by up to 3m. At low tide much of Western Port becomes mud flats. Always check tide charts and seek quality local advice before departing on your boat to avoid being caught high and dry. Should you get stuck in a low tide or mud make an emergency call via either 000 or marine radio.

Tide charts are available from Port of Melbourne Corporation.



Wildlife watching

Western Port is an important feeding area for many species of waterbird and is recognised as a Wetland of International Significance particularly for migratory shorebirds which feed on the exposed mud at low tide and rest at high tide at specific roosting sites. It's also home to seals, dolphins and orca. When you see dolphins, seals, whales or feeding and resting birds make sure you give them plenty of space. Never approach closer than 100 metres and leave them alone if you they show signs of agitation such as diving or rapid changes in direction. For more information contact the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

explore western port

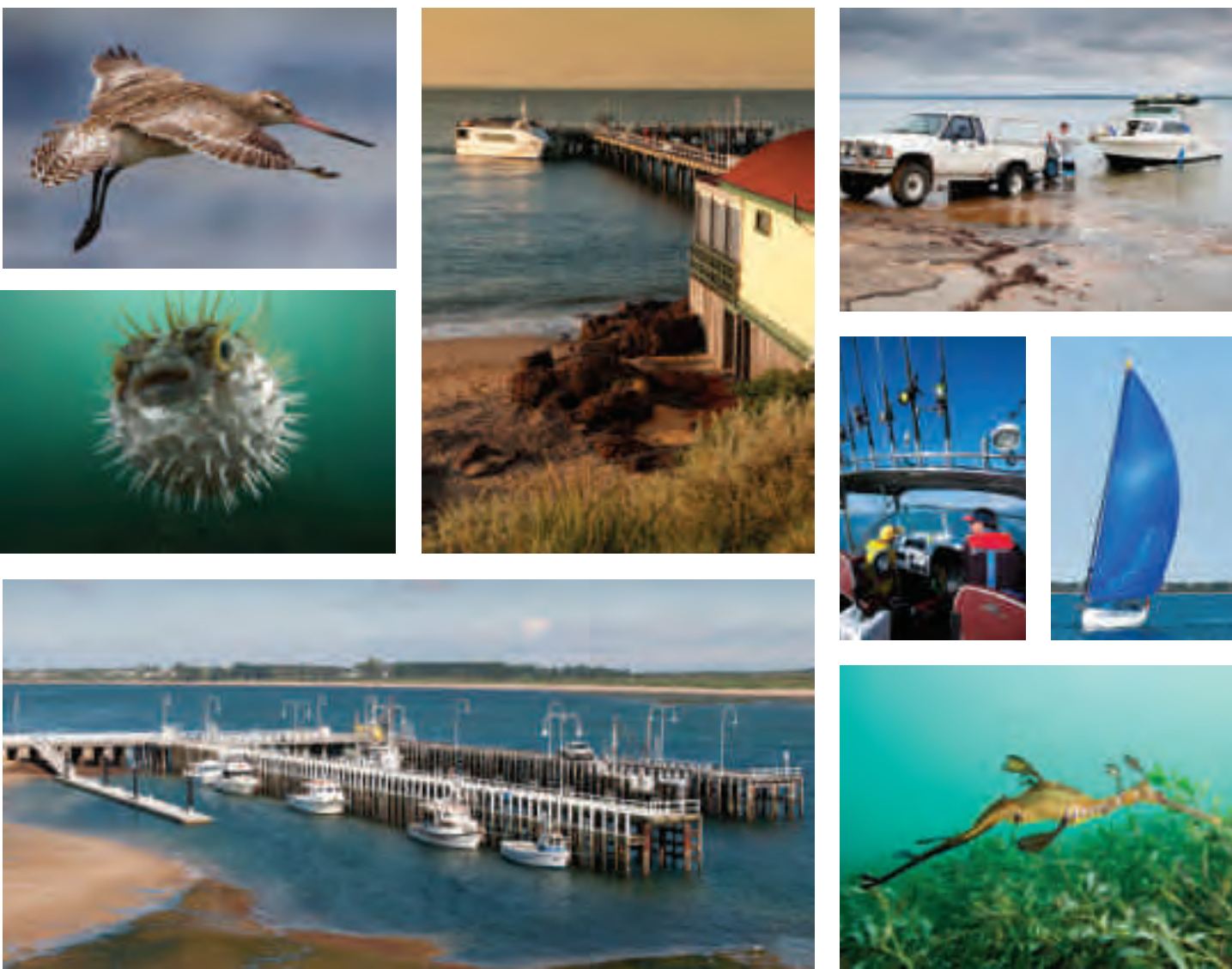
Western Port is a treasure trove full of wonderful marine life and plenty of opportunities to explore. There's a lot to see and do both on and under the water including watching wildlife, fishing, boating, kite boarding, diving, swimming or taking a stroll along a pier.

Encounter dolphins and seals in their natural habitat

As you travel across the bay, be on the lookout for dolphins or seals. Dolphins tend to be seen more often at the southern end of Western Port while seals can be seen soaking up the sun at Seal Rocks. Remember to keep a safe distance from wildlife at all times.

Explore amazing underwater marine life

Western Port is home to three Marine National Parks which host diverse marine life not seen anywhere else in the world and provide a variety of snorkelling and diving opportunities. See Marine National Parks section in alphabetical listing for further details.



other information

Western Port directory	
EMERGENCY	000 or 27MHz – Ch 88 or VHF – Ch 16
Australian Hydrographic Service	02 4223 6500 www.hydro.gov.au
Australian Volunteer Coast Guard	9598 9092 www.coastguard.com.au
Bureau of Meteorology	9669 4000 www.bom.gov.au
Dept. of Primary Industries	136 186 www.dpi.vic.gov.au
Dept. of Sustainability & Environment	136 186 www.dse.vic.gov.au
Environment Protection Authority	9695 2722 www.epa.vic.gov.au
Fisheries Victoria	136 186 Report Illegal Fishing 13 FISh (13 3474) www.dpi.vic.gov.au/fishing
Government Information Centre	1300 366 356 www.vic.gov.au
Heritage Victoria	8644 8800 www.heritage.vic.gov.au
Parks Victoria	13 1963 www.parks.vic.gov.au
Port of Hastings	www.portofhastings.vic.gov.au
Port of Melbourne Corporation	1300 857 662 www.portofmelbourne.com
Transport Safety Victoria	1800 223 022 www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au
Victorian Regional Channels Authority	5225 3500 www.regionalchannels.vic.gov.au
Victorian Water Police	9399 7500
Western Port Marina	5979 7400 www.westernportmarina.com.au
Yaringa Marina	5977 4154 www.yaringa.com.au

boating and swimming zone review

As the Port Manager for Port Phillip and Western Port, Parks Victoria has conducted a thorough review of all zones across the bays to ensure optimum safety and efficiency for all users of our bays. This review has been conducted with extensive consultation of community groups and individuals and relevant organisations who have an interest in recreational activity on the bays. Revisions to the zones will be phased in over several years using improved aids to navigation and clearer signage. For the latest information on the Recreational Boating and Swimming Zone Review visit www.parks.vic.gov.au

Hook a fishing adventure

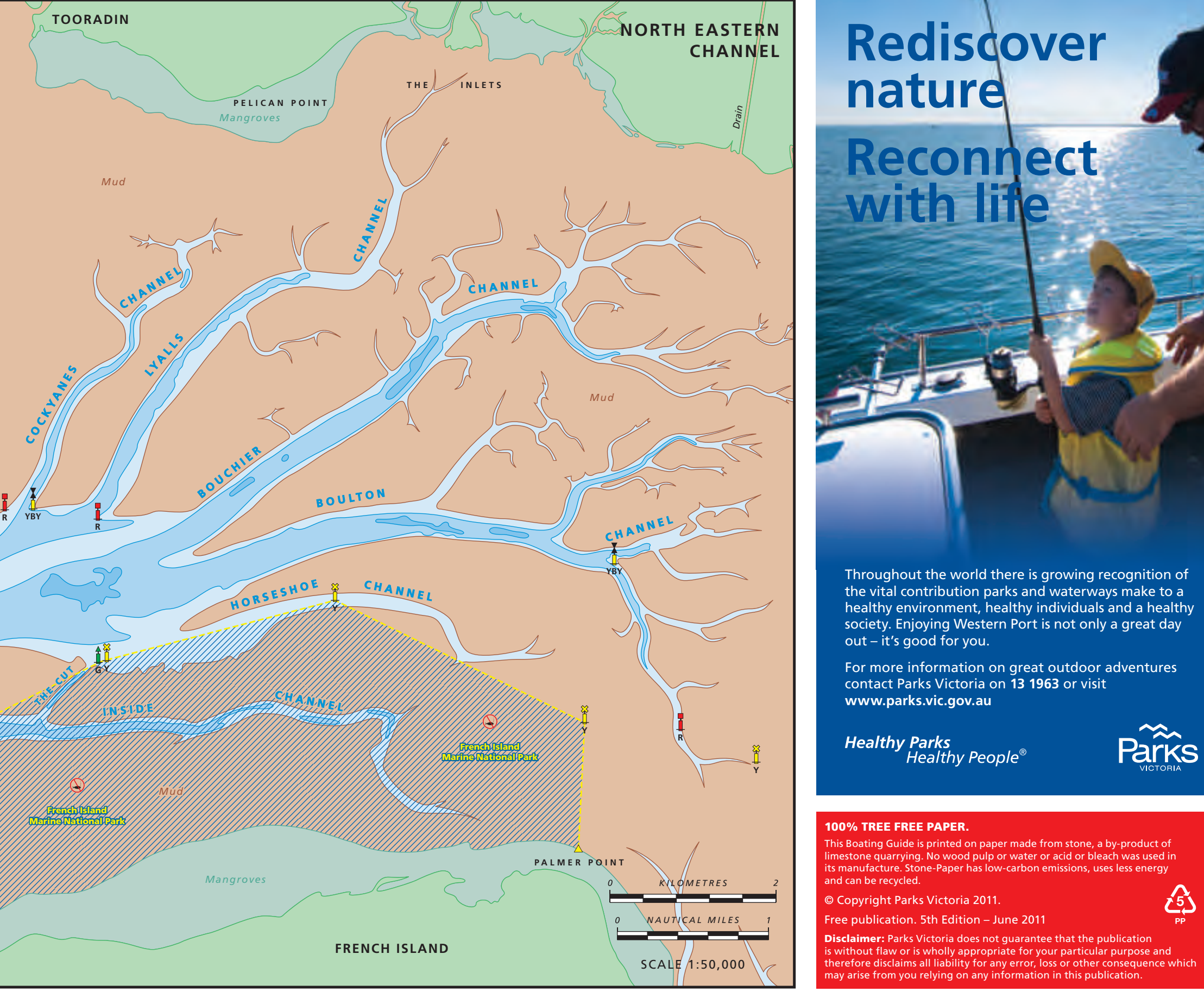
One of the most popular activities in Western Port is fishing. Anglers are lured by the thrill of the chase and catch a range of fish including flathead, snapper, squid, leatherjacket, gummy shark, salmon or King George whiting.

Watch Western Port's international visitors
Bird watching is a popular and rewarding pastime and Western Port provides excellent opportunities for observing a great variety of waterbirds. Of particular note are the flocks of migratory waders that use Western Port as a rich feeding area prior to their departure for breeding grounds within the Arctic Circle. Significant populations of species such as the Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel and Bar-tailed Godwit make their home in Western Port between September and April each year.

Licensed tour operators

Take the easy approach to organising your great bay adventures by booking a tour, dive or fishing trip with one of Parks Victoria's licensed tour operators. For more information contact Parks Victoria.

1. The majestic Australian Pelican is easy to spot in flight.
2. The Bar tailed Godwit is one of many bird species that migrate to Western Port.
3. Cowes Pier is a popular boating destination and departure point
4. Cowes boat ramp is one of many boat ramps around Western Port
5. Marine National Parks are home to many species including the Spiny Globe Fish
6. Western Port is great for family fishing adventures
7. Sailing is popular in southern Western Port
8. San Remo Pier is home to Western Port's fishing fleet
9. Weedy Sea Dragons are common around Flinders



Throughout the world there is growing recognition of the vital contribution parks and waterways make to a healthy environment, healthy individuals and a healthy society. Enjoying Western Port is not only a great day out – it's good for you.

For more information on great outdoor adventures contact Parks Victoria on 13 1963 or visit www.parks.vic.gov.au

Healthy Parks Healthy People®

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