



# Bass Coast Parks and Reserves

## Visitor Guide

From the majestic cliffs of the Anderson Peninsula near San Remo to Inverloch's sandy beaches this coastal area offers a wealth of activities. Visitors frequently come to this area to enjoy surf and rock fishing, surfing, significant cultural sites and many kilometres of scenic walking tracks. Come and explore the diverse cultural and natural attractions of the Bass Coast.

### Location and access

The Bass Coast is situated 130 kilometres south east of Melbourne via the South Gippsland and Bass Highways. Driving east from Anderson on the Bass Highway provides access to all the parks and reserves of the Bass Coast.

### Remnants of history

The Bunurong aboriginal people were custodians of this stretch of coast for thousands of years prior to white settlement. The Boakoolawal clan lived in the Kilcunda area south of the Bass River, and the Yowenjerre were west of the Tarwin River along what is now the Bunurong Marine & Coastal Park. Middens containing charcoal and shellfish mark the location of their campsites along the coast.

In 1797 George Bass set sail from Sydney in an 8.7 metre whale boat to explore the southern mainland coast. He discovered the first natural harbour and the strait that bears his name. The Anderson Peninsula was named after Samuel Anderson who migrated to Australia in 1830. After working with the Van Diemens Land Company in Tasmania, Samuel moved to the area establishing a wheat/grazing farm on the Bass River.

### A haven for plants and wildlife

Although much of the Bass Coast has been cleared for agriculture, the area's many conservation reserves provide a haven for plants and wildlife. Tussock grass and low growing shrubs including White Correa and Coastal Beard-heath cling stubbornly to the wind swept clifftops, while the sheltered creek gullies and the dune swales support Coastal Banksia, Coastal Tea-tree and Boobiolla.

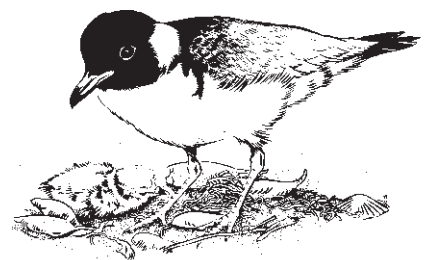
Native animals (though often difficult to find) include the Swamp Wallaby, Common Brushtail Possum, Ringtail Possum and Echidna. The area is also home to the rare Swamp Antechinus (a small marsupial mouse).



**Parks Victoria Ranger**

*"Victoria has all the outdoors you could wish for – mountains, forests, beaches and bushland, all preserved in our parks. Our natural landscapes have been here longer than anyone knows, and together we can make sure they're here forever."*

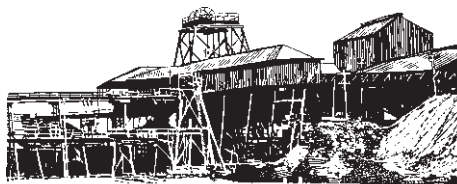
**For more information call the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963 or visit our website at [www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au)**



Hooded Plover

The heathlands that occur along the coast are ideal for birdwatching. Warblers, honeyeaters, flycatchers and many others are readily observed. Along the coast you may see Common Terns feeding on the beach or Cormorants and Australian Gannets diving for fish. Pacific Gulls constantly patrol the coast exploiting the updraft created by the cliffs. Between August and March, Hooded Plovers nest on the beaches above the high tide mark. Please keep your dog under control and watch for eggs when walking along the beach during nesting season.

Through winter, the many lookouts along the coast provide a vantage point to view Southern Right Whales on their annual migration to the warmer waters along the southern coastline of Australia.



No 5 Brace, State Coal Mine, Wonthaggi

Industry and transport relied heavily on coal from New South Wales. When miners went on strike in 1909, the Victorian government commenced mining the Powlett River (later Wonthaggi) coalfields. A tent city sprang up in the bush and a railway line was quickly constructed from Nyora to transport the coal. Wonthaggi soon became the largest town in South Gippsland. Today it is the commerce centre of the district.

## For further information contact

Parks Victoria Information Centre  
13 1963  
or visit the website  
www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Bunurong Environment Centre  
Ramsey Blvd  
Inverloch 3996  
Tel (03) 5674 3738

Anderson-Wonthaggi Rail Trail  
Bass Coast Shire,  
PO Box 118,  
Wonthaggi, Vic 3995  
ph (03) 5671 2211.

## Caring for the environment

Please help us look after the environment by remembering these guidelines.

All plants and animals on public land are protected.

Please keep to designated walking tracks.

When walking remember to wear a hat, use sunscreen and carry plenty of drinking water.

Bins are not provided in parks and reserves, please take your rubbish home.

Please observe all regulations and signs relating to dogs and horses.

No fires, including BBQs, may be lit on a day of Total Fire Ban (Central District)

## Enjoying the coast

### Swimming and surfing

There are many popular beaches along this coast. However, visitors must be aware that strong currents, rips and steep sloping bottoms occur, making many of the beaches unsuitable for swimming.

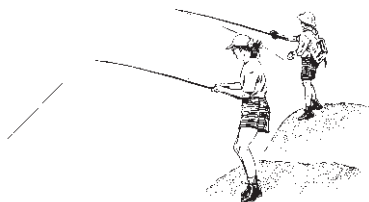
The Inverloch surf beach and two Cape Paterson beaches are patrolled by lifesavers during the summer months.

### Accommodation

Caravan Parks are located at San Remo, Cape Paterson, Wonthaggi, Inverloch, Kilcunda and Powlett River. Advance bookings are required during the summer school holidays and Easter. Camping is not permitted within any of the parks or reserves. A range of other accommodation including cabins, motels, B&B's and farm stays are available throughout the region.

### Fishing and boating

Recreational line fishing is popular along the Bass Coast, both from the shore or by boat. The surf beaches at Kilcunda Cemetery, Tea Tree Carpark and Williamsons Beach offer catches of whiting, pike, flathead, salmon, snapper and trevally. Rock fishing at Inverloch, Flat Rocks, Cape Paterson and Kilcunda offers Snapper, Salmon, Ruff and Leatherjacket. Rock fishing can be extremely dangerous, beware of big seas and the incoming tide.



Anderson Inlet is popular for boat fishing with anglers seeking Black Bream, Yellow-eye Mullet, Salmon, Estuary Perch and Silver Trevally.

Boats allow the angler to explore offshore. Launching facilities are located at Inverloch, Cape Paterson and Newhaven (near San Remo).

A recreational fishing licence is required to take fish (including bait and shellfish) in all Victorian marine, estuary and freshwaters. Licences are available from the Department of Primary Industries offices and most fishing stores, as is the Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide which specifies size and bag limits, and seasons for different fish.

### Walking

This coast features a diverse range of walking opportunities from short strolls within the coastal townships to walks along the windswept cliffs. Try some of these suggestions.

### 1. George Bass Coastal Walk - 7kms, 2 hrs one way

This walk follows the route of George Bass' epic voyage of discovery along the southern edge of the Anderson Peninsula. The walk offers panoramic ocean views from a narrow winding path along cliffs that rise high above the pounding surf of Bass Strait.

The walk starts from the southern end of Punchbowl Road, off the Phillip Island Tourist Road or alternatively off the Bass Highway at Kilcunda.

### 2. Screw Creek Nature Walk - 1.5kms, 40 min. one way

This track starts at the eastern end of the Inverloch Foreshore Camping Ground. It leads through stands of coast tea-tree, mangroves and climbs to a lookout on Townsend Bluff.



### 3. Baxters Wetland Birdhide - 500 metres.

Start at the corner of Campbell Street and Chisholms Road, Wonthaggi. For a longer walk continue west to Baxters Beach.

### 4. Wonthaggi Heathlands Length 1 km, 30 minutes return

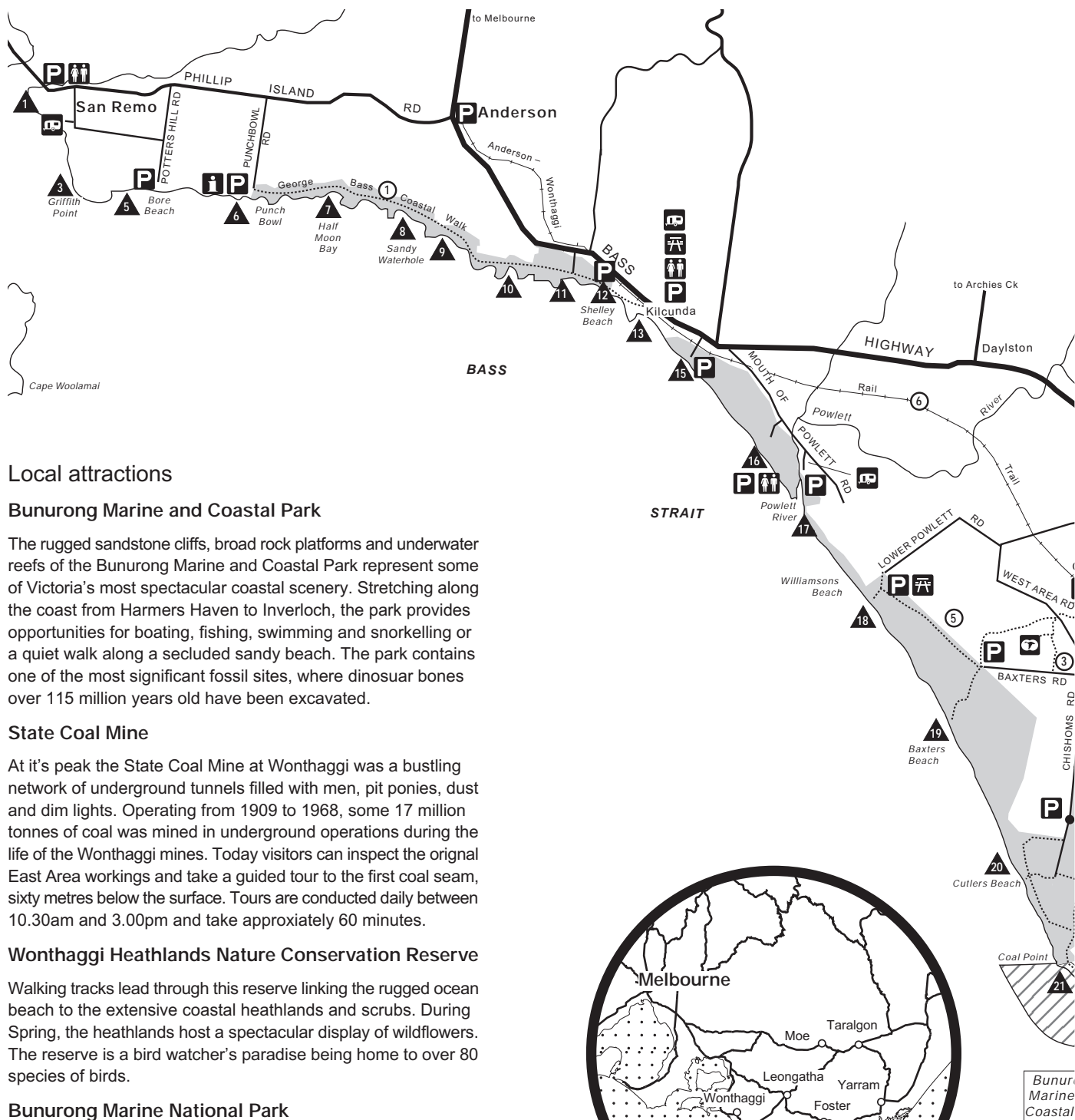
These walks explore the low heathlands and coastal scrubs of the reserve. The walks commence at the carpark on Chisholms Road off Campbell Street in Wonthaggi.

### 5. Williamsons Beach to Baxters Beach - 5km, 2 hours return

Start at Williamsons Beach carpark, take inland track to Baxters Beach and return via beach to Williamsons Beach.

### 6. Anderson to Wonthaggi Rail Trail - 15 kms one way

Constructed by the Victorian Railways in 1910 to access the local coalfields. The disused railway line from Anderson to Wonthaggi is being gradually developed as a walking, cycling and horse trail. This trail links to the George Bass Coastal Walk at Kilcunda. The trail offers a diverse range of landscapes, from the rugged coastline at Kilcunda, through farmland, coastal bushland and historic mine areas. A major attraction along the trail is the old trestle bridge at Kilcunda offering a unique photographic opportunity of the coastline.



## Local attractions

### Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park

The rugged sandstone cliffs, broad rock platforms and underwater reefs of the Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park represent some of Victoria's most spectacular coastal scenery. Stretching along the coast from Harmers Haven to Inverloch, the park provides opportunities for boating, fishing, swimming and snorkelling or a quiet walk along a secluded sandy beach. The park contains one of the most significant fossil sites, where dinosaur bones over 115 million years old have been excavated.

### State Coal Mine

At its peak the State Coal Mine at Wonthaggi was a bustling network of underground tunnels filled with men, pit ponies, dust and dim lights. Operating from 1909 to 1968, some 17 million tonnes of coal was mined in underground operations during the life of the Wonthaggi mines. Today visitors can inspect the original East Area workings and take a guided tour to the first coal seam, sixty metres below the surface. Tours are conducted daily between 10.30am and 3.00pm and take approximately 60 minutes.

### Wonthaggi Heathlands Nature Conservation Reserve

Walking tracks lead through this reserve linking the rugged ocean beach to the extensive coastal heathlands and scrubs. During Spring, the heathlands host a spectacular display of wildflowers. The reserve is a bird watcher's paradise being home to over 80 species of birds.

### Bunurong Marine National Park

The Bunurong Marine National Park's underwater reefs are home to a multitude of plants and animals that flourish in a rich underwater 'garden' of seaweeds. Found amongst the seaweeds are an abundance of brightly coloured sea-stars, feather stars, crabs, large marine snails and many smaller animals. The Park provides opportunities for snorkelling and diving or exploring the marine life of the intertidal rock platforms.

Marine National Parks are fully protected areas of the sea, like National Parks on land. These no take areas safeguard a unique and diverse range of marine plants, animals and habitats for the benefit of current and future generations.

# The Bass Coast

- |  |                                  |  |                 |  |   |
|--|----------------------------------|--|-----------------|--|---|
|  | Sealed road                      |  | Car parking     |  | Lookout point                                   |
|  | Minor/unsealed road              |  | Toilets         |  | Information shelter                             |
|  | Walking track                    |  | Picnic area     |  | Surfing beach                                   |
|  | Coastal reserve                  |  | Playground      |  | Patrolled swimming beach                        |
|  | Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park |  | Boat ramp       |  | Emergency beach no.                             |
|  | Bunurong Marine National Park ** |  | Caravan park    |  | Shore based boundary marker (Triangular beacon) |
|  |                                  |  | Diving location |  | Walk (see description)                          |
|  |                                  |  | Bird hide       |  |   |

\*\* For details on regulations in Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park and Bunurong Marine National Park see specific parknotes.

