

# Protected Species Identification Guide for Victoria's Commercial Fishers



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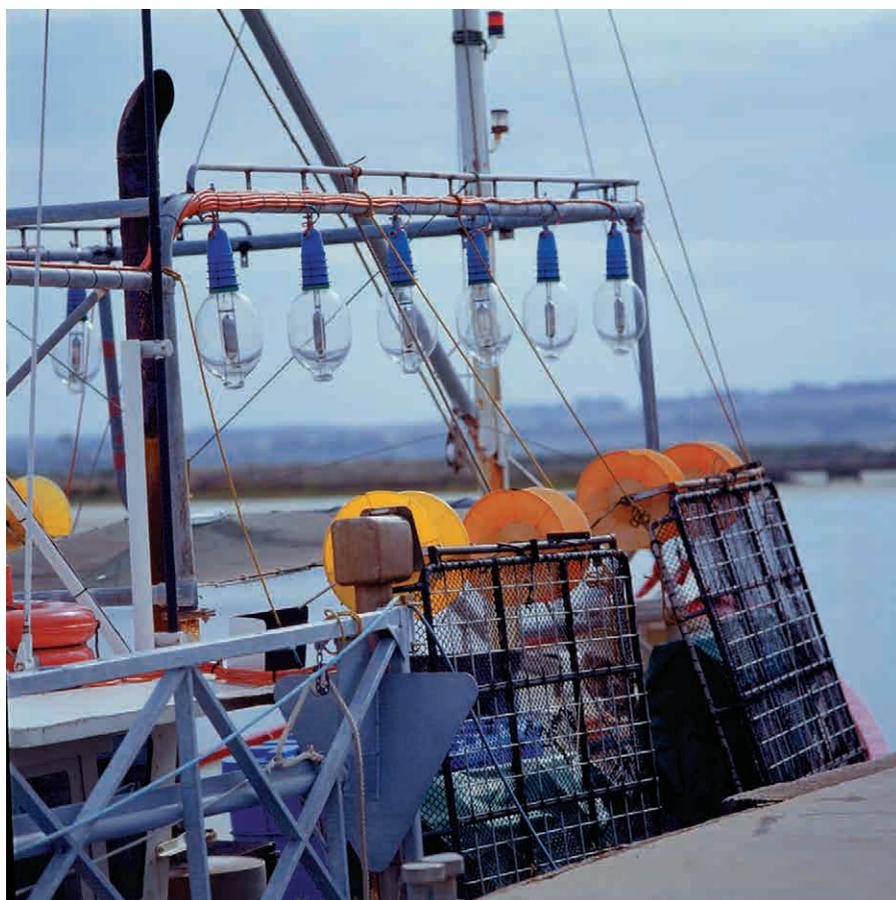
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# Introduction

## What is this guide for?

This species identification guide has been developed for Victorian commercial fishers who are required to report on interactions with protected species. Accurate identification of species is critical in ensuring that any commercial fishing impacts on protected species are properly reported and understood.

## What it is/isn't

This guide has been compiled based on protected species that commercial fishers are likely to come into contact with while fishing, and species currently listed as threatened under Victoria's *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act). For example, birds that feed by diving and occur in areas where fishing activity takes place have been included, but wading birds, which are unlikely to be impacted by commercial fishing operations, have not.

This guide is not an exhaustive list of species covered by the reporting requirements. Common species that are readily identifiable such as silver gulls (seagulls) or pelicans also have not been included. More comprehensive guides and smart phone apps should be consulted for further information.

In Victoria, all native mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, fish listed under the FFG Act and syngnathids (sea horses, sea dragons etc) are protected species. Interactions with any of these species should be reported, regardless of whether they appear in this identification guide.

## How this guide works

The species in this guide are organised according to class of animal (eg bird, mammal) and are coloured to indicate whether they are found in inland or coastal areas.





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# Albatrosses

## Coastal



Photo: JJ Harrison

## Grey-headed Albatross

*Thalassarche chrysostoma*

- Length: 70 - 85 cm
- Wingspan: 1.8 - 2.05 m
- Grey head, neck and mantle
- Black bill with yellow stripes on top and bottom
- White body

## Coastal



Photo: Natalie Tapson

## Light-mantled Sooty Albatross

*Phoebastria palpebrata*

- Length: 78 - 90 cm
- Wingspan: 1.8 - 2.2 m
- Sooty brown plumage with grey mantle, back and rump
- White crescent around each eye

## Coastal



Photo: JJ Harrison

## Southern Royal Albatross

*Diomedea epomophora*

- Length: 112 - 123 cm
- Wingspan: 2.9 - 3.3 m
- Pure white head and body
- Pink bill with black line on cutting edge
- Dark brown or black wings with white upper wing

# Albatrosses

## Shy Albatross

*Thalassarche cauta*

- Length: 90 - 99 cm
- Wingspan: 2.1 - 2.6 m
- White head and neck, pale grey cheeks
- Grey bill with yellow tip
- Grey-black mantle, tail and upper wing



Photo: JJ Harrison

## Sooty Albatross

*Phoebastria fusca*

- Length: 85 cm
- Sooty brown plumage with head darker than body
- Fine white crescent above eye
- Black bill with pale yellow/orange stripe
- Slender, pointed wings, wedge shaped tail



Photo: JJ Harrison

## Wandering Albatross

*Diomedea exulans*

- Largest of the albatross family
- Wingspan: 2.5 - 3.5 m
- White head and back with fine grey wavy lines on feathers
- Pale pink bill
- White tail, tipped with black



Photo: JJ Harrison

# Albatrosses and Gulls

## Coastal



Photo: Liam Quinn

## Black-browed Albatross

*Thalassarche melanophris*

- Length: 80—95 cm
- Most common member of albatross family
- White with black brow, back, upper wing and tail
- Black edges to underwing
- Orange-yellow bill
- Bluish-grey legs and feet

## Coastal



Photo: JJ Harrison

## Pacific Gull

*Stercorarius antarcticus*

- Length: 58 - 66 cm
- Wingspan: 137 - 157 cm
- Mostly white with dark wings and back, black band on tail
- Thick, powerful, red-tipped yellow bill
- Yellow legs and feet

## Coastal



Photo: Jason Quinn

## Kelp Gull

*Larus dominicanus*

- Length: 54 - 65 cm
- Wingspan: 128 - 142 cm
- Black upperparts and wing
- White head, underparts, tail and wing tips
- Yellow bill with red spot
- Greenish-yellow legs

# Gannet, Penguin and Prion

## Australasian Gannet

*Morus serrator*

- Length: 84—95 cm
- Mostly white, black flight feathers at the wingtips
- Yellow head
- Pale, blue-grey bill edged with black
- Bill has backward pointing serrations
- Spectacular plunge divers



Photo: JJ Harrison

## Little Penguin

*Eudyptula minor*

- Length: 30 - 33 cm
- Blue head, upperparts and flippers
- White underneath
- Pink feet above with black soles and webbing



Photo: M Kuhn

## Fairy Prion

*Pachyptila turtur*

- Length: 23 - 28 cm
- Wingspan: 56 cm
- Short, narrow bill with strong hook
- Grey-blue above, darker grey crown, grey eye stripe
- Triangular tail with dark tip



Photo: JJ Harrison

# Petrels and Sea-Eagle

## Coastal



Photo: Liam Quinn

## Northern Giant Petrel

*Macronectes halli*

- Wingspan: 1.5 - 2.1 m
- Large straw-coloured bill, tipped with pinkish-red or orange
- Pale grey eye
- Dark crown with a whitish face and throat

## Coastal



Photo: Natalie Tapson

## Southern Giant Petrel

*Macronectes giganteus*

- Length: 87 cm
- Wingspan: 1.8 - 2.05 m
- Greenish-tipped, straw coloured bill
- Pale underwing leading edge near body

## Coastal



Photo: MagicFlute1983

## White-bellied Sea-Eagle

*Haliaeetus leucogaster*

- Length: 75 - 85 cm
- Wingspan: 180 - 220 cm
- White head, breast, belly and legs
- Grey back and wings with black tips
- Grey tail with white tip
- Bluish-grey bill with black tip

# Shearwaters (Muttonbirds)

## Flesh-footed Shearwater

*Ardenna carneipes/Puffinus carneipes*

- Length: 40 - 47 cm
- Wingspan: 99 - 107 cm
- Blackish-brown plumage
- Flesh coloured bill with black tip
- Flesh-pink legs and feet



Photo: Teddymacollege

## Fluttering Shearwater

*Puffinus gavia*

- Length: 37 cm
- Dark grey-brown upper parts, white under parts
- Long, thin, dark bill
- Rapid bursts of fluttering, interspersed with short glides
- Seen in Aust from Feb - Aug



Photo: JJ Harrison

## Short-tailed Shearwater

*Puffinus tenuirostris*

- Length: 40 - 45 cm
- Wingspan: 1m
- Dark brown plumage
- Short, blackish-brownish tail
- Slender bill with hooked end



Photo: JJ Harrison

# Terns

## Coastal



Photo: Hans Hillewaert

## Common Tern

*Sterna hirundo*

- Length: 31 - 35 cm
- Wingspan: 77 - 98 cm
- 6 - 9 cm fork in tail
- Grey upperparts, very pale grey underparts
- Black cap
- Orange-red legs
- Common in eastern Victoria

## Coastal



Photo: DELWP

## Crested Tern

*Thalasseus bergii*

- Length: 46 - 49 cm
- Wingspan: 125 - 130 cm
- Grey upperparts, white underparts, shaggy black crest
- Long, yellow bill

## Coastal and Inland



Photo: Dick Daniels

## Caspian Tern

*Hydroprogne caspia*,  
formerly *Sterna caspia*

- Largest tern, length: 53 - 60 cm
- Wingspan: 127 - 145 cm
- Long, thick, red-orange bill with small black tip
- White head with a black cap and white neck, belly and tail
- Pale grey upper wings and back
- Known breeding colonies in Corner Inlet, Mud Island and Mallacoota

# Terns

## Gull-billed Tern

*Gelochelidon nilotica*,  
formerly *Sterna nilotica*

- Length: 33 - 42 cm
- Wingspan: 76 - 91 cm
- Thick, black, gull-like bill
- White plumage with black crown, grey back and upper wings



Photo: Frankzed

## Little Tern

*Sternula albifrons*

- Length: 20 - 28 cm
- Wingspan: 41 - 47 cm
- Breeding birds have black cap, with band extending beyond eye to the bill
- Otherwise white and pale grey plumage
- Slender with narrow wings and long, deeply forked tail



Photo: JJ Harrison

## Fairy Tern

*Sterna nereis*

- Length: 22 - 27 cm
- Wingspan: 44 - 53 cm
- Bulky, round bodied
- Pale grey-white plumage, with a black crown, nape, ear coverts and patch in front of the eyes
- White forehead, yellow-orange bill



Photo: JJ Harrison

# Cormorants (Shags)

## Coastal and Inland



Photo: Heather

## Great (Black) Cormorant

*Phalacrocorax carbo*

- Length: 70 - 102 cm
- Wingspan: 121 - 160 cm
- Black plumage with white and yellow chin
- Grey bill, black feet and legs

## Coastal and Inland



Photo: Heather

## Little Black Cormorant

*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

- Length: 60 - 65 cm
- Wingspan: up to 105 cm
- Black plumage
- Long, slender grey bill
- Found in large flocks, sometimes fly in V formation

## Coastal



Photo: JJ Harrison

## Black-faced Cormorant

*Phalacrocorax fuscescens*

- Length: 60 - 70 cm
- Black upperparts, face and bill
- White underparts
- Dark grey bill, blue-green eyes
- Only found in coastal and marine areas

# Cormorants and Coot

## Pied Cormorant

*Phalacrocorax varius*

- Length: 65 - 85 cm
- Black, glossed-green back with white underparts
- Black stripes on thighs
- Long, grey, hooked bill
- Orange eye patch
- Flies in V formation

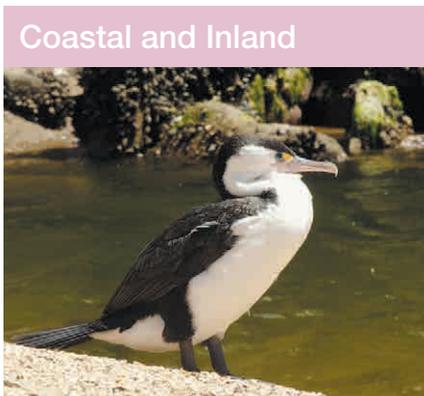


Photo: Jorg Hempel

## Little Pied Cormorant

*Microcarbo melanoleucos*

- Length: 56 - 58 cm
- Black above and white below
- Short, yellow bill
- Small crest
- Solitary benthic feeder



Photo: SeanMack

## Eurasian Coot

*Fulica atra*

- Length: 32 - 42 cm
- Black plumage with white frontal shield and bill



Photo: Theleastweasel

# Waterfowl

## Coastal and Inland



Photo: Dale Gillard

## Blue-billed Duck

*Oxyura australis*

- Length: 40 cm
- Adult breeding male has black head, chestnut to brown body and wings, blue bill
- Adult female and non-breeding male has medium grey plumage with light barring to head and body, dark bill

## Coastal and Inland



Photo: PsJeremy

## Chestnut Teal

*Anas castanea*

- Male has glossy green head and white flank patch
- Female and juvenile male similar to Grey Teal but darker
- Common in brackish coastal lagoons, saltwater estuaries and lower reaches of creeks

## Coastal and Inland



Photo: JJ Harrison

## Grey Teal

*Anas gracilis*

- Mottled brown with white and green flashes on wings
- Males and females share same colouration
- Lighter coloured neck and paler face than female chestnut teal

# Waterfowl

## Hardhead

*Arthya australis*

- Medium size, dark brown with white feathers under tail
- Male has white eyes
- Generally found on large lakes, swamps and rivers with deep, still water



Photo: Quoll2

## Freckled Duck

*Stictonetta naevosa*

- Heavily bodied, dark grey, brown
- Off-white speckles all over
- Underwings pale
- Distinctive shaped bill, adult breeding male has bright red base of bill



Photo: Frankzed

## Musk Duck

*Biziura lobata*

- Dark grey-brown, slightly pin-striped plumage
- Male has pendulous lobe of skin beneath the bill
- Stiff tail
- Prefers deep, still lakes and wetlands



Photo: MdeKool

# Waterfowl

## Inland



Photo: Quartl

## Dusky Moorhen

*Gallinula tenebrosa*

- Length: 34 - 38 cm
- Dark grey-black with brown tinge to upperparts
- Orange-yellow legs
- Red bill with yellow tip

## Inland



Photo: Quartl

## Purple (Eastern) Swamphen

*Porphyrio porphyrio*

- Length: 44—48 cm
- Purple-blue neck, breast and belly
- Red bill and face shield

# Grebes

## Australasian Grebe

*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*

- Length: 25 - 27 cm
- Breeding plumage dark brown above, glossy-black head and neck
- Non breeding plumage dark grey-brown above, silver-grey below
- Chestnut facial stripe from behind the eye to base of neck
- Common on freshwater lakes and rivers

## Great Crested Grebe

*Podiceps cristatus*

- Length: 46 - 51 cm
- Wingspan: 59 - 73 cm
- Long neck and head with distinctive black crest
- Dark brown wings, white underparts
- Long, pointed, straight bill
- Juveniles have striped black and white heads

## Hoary-headed Grebe

*Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*

- Length: 25—30 cm
- Small, dark grey and white bird
- Black head with silvery-white streaking
- Narrow black streak down back of neck

### Inland



Photo: JJ Harrison

### Inland



Photo: Tony Hisgett

### Inland



Photo: JJ Harrison

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# Seals

## Coastal



Photo: Chris Phutully

## Australian Fur Seal

*Arctocephalus pusillus*

- Length: 1.5 - 2.5 m
- Adult male: greyish brown with paler chest and dark brown belly
- Adult female: pale fawn to greyish brown with pale chest and brown belly
- Larger than other fur seals, males are heavy chested with thick, dark mane

## Coastal



Photo: Alexandre Roux

## New Zealand Fur Seal

*Arctocephalus forsteri*

- Length: 1.5 - 2 m
- Smaller than Australian fur seal and darker in colour
- Sharply pointed snout
- Grey to brown, female lighter underneath

## Coastal



Photo: Brian Gratwicke

## Sub-Antarctic Fur Seal

*Arctocephalus tropicalis*

- Length: 1.5 - 2 m
- Dark grey with contrasting whitish-yellow face and chest
- Males have prominent black crest and thick mane
- Seen occasionally in Victoria

# Seals and Sea Lion

## Leopard Seal

*Hydrurga leptonyx*

- Length: 4 - 4.5 m
- Silver to dark blue-grey with pale silver underneath.
- Dark areas spotted darker grey and black
- Long neck, large, flat, reptilian head
- Seen occasionally in Victoria



Photo: DELWP

## Southern Elephant Seal

*Mirounga leonina*

- Length: 4 - 6.5 m
- Dark brown with lighter brown underneath
- Adult male noticeably larger than female with trunk-like nose
- Cumbersome on land



Photo: Natalie Tapson

## Australian Sea Lion

*Neophoca cinerea*

- Length: 1.8 - 2.5 m
- Adult male: chocolate brown, yellow crown with dark muzzle, greyer back, dusky abdomen and flippers
- Adult female: Dark back and top of head, creamy-yellow underbody and sides of head
- Seen occasionally in Victoria



Photo: Diver Dave

# Whales

## Coastal



Photo: Jerry Kirkhart

## Blue Whale

*Balaenoptera musculus*

- Length: 31 - 33.5 m
- Silver-grey to grey-black
- Slender, streamlined body
- Tall, straight, powerful blow
- Occur along Continental shelf from Nov - May, especially west of Cape Otway

## Coastal



Photo: DELWP

## Humpback Whale

*Megaptera novaeangliae*

- Black or bluish-grey upper body, white underside
- Throat pleats
- Long pectoral fins (1/3 body length)
- Prominent double blow holes
- Usually seen autumn - spring

## Coastal



Photo: Kat Kellner

## Killer Whale (Orca)

*Orcinus orca*

- Length: 8.5 - 10 m
- Mainly black with white throat to abdomen and rear flanks
- Grey-white patch behind dorsal fin
- Round body with huge head and blunt nose
- Tall dorsal fin in males

# Whales

## Pilot Whale

*Globicephala melas*

- Length: 5.5 - 7 m
- Black body with white diagonal strip towards the eyes, white saddle behind dorsal fin and anchor shaped pattern underneath
- Beakless with round, bulbous head
- Dorsal fin is broad at the base and curved back towards tail
- Very long pectoral flippers



Photo: Alexander Baxevanis

## Southern Right Whale

*Eubalaena australis*

- Length: 16 - 18 m
- Black body, may have irregular white blotches underneath
- Callosities (growths) form rough white markings on head
- V-shaped blow
- Seen during winter, especially around Warrnambool



Photo: Willem

# Dolphins

## Coastal



Photo: Juanma Carrillo

## Bottlenose Dolphin

*Tursiops truncatus*

- Length: 3 m
- Dark bluish-grey, which shades gradually to off-white or pinkish underneath
- Prominent curved-back dorsal fin
- Stubby beak set off from robust head

## Coastal



Photo: Charlton-Robb K, Gershwin LA, Thompson R, Austin J, Owen K, McKechnie S

## Burrunan Dolphin

*Tursiops australis*

- Length: to 2.6 m
- Dark grey upper side of the body, a paler grey midline, and a cream underside
- Described as distinct species in 2011
- Found in Port Phillip Bay and Gippsland Lakes

## Coastal



Photo: Bertrand

## Common Dolphin

*Delphinus delphis*

- Length: 2 m
- Dark colouring on top, large yellowish panel on chest bordered by white flanks
- Small, round head with short and stocky beak

# Native Rats

## Swamp Rat

*Rattus lutreolus*

- Body length: up to 20 cm
- Tail length: up to 14 cm
- Dark grey to dark brown body fur
- Brown feet



Photo: Doug Beckers

## Water Rat (Rakali)

*Hydromys chrysogaster*

- Body length: 23 - 37 cm
- Tail length: 24 - 25 cm
- Webbed hind legs
- Black to brown fur with orange to white belly
- Dark tail with white tip



Photo: ZooPro

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# Turtles

## Coastal



Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Region

## Leatherback Turtle

*Dermochelys coriacea*

- Shell length: nearly 2 m
- Largest of sea turtle species
- Mainly blackish above with grey-white speckles on head
- Streamlined, ridged shell
- Limbs modified as flippers, with front flippers especially large
- Upper beak notched in middle to form two prongs

## Inland



Photo: Sam Fraser Smith

## Broad-shelled Turtle

*Chelodina expansa*

- Length of carapace: up to 45 cm
- Broad, flat upper shell, narrower lower shell
- Very long neck, long, relatively flat head, neck and head dark grey

## Inland



Photo: Alexandre Roux

## Eastern Snake-necked Turtle

(Long-necked Turtle)

*Chelodina longicollis*

- Shell length: up to 20 cm
- Flat circular shell, black to brown with yellow patches
- Long neck, webbed feet with claws

# Snakes

## Highland Copperhead Snake

*Austrelaps ramsayi*

- Length: up to 1.2 m
- Body light grey to red-brown, pale white-yellow to pink-orange underneath
- Lips with dark vertical stripes and white edges around scales

## Lowland Copperhead Snake

*Austrelaps superbus*

- Length: up to 1.7 m
- Grey to red-brown
- Pale white-yellow to pink-orange underneath
- Lips with faint vertical stripes

## Tiger Snake

*Notechis scutatus*

- Length: to 2 m
- Colour varies from uniform light brown to black
- Broad, flattened head
- Striped markings not always present

Inland



Photo: Nathan Johnson

Inland



Photo: Peter Shanks

Inland



Photo: DELWP

# Lizard and Frog

## Inland



Photo: Vasco Pyjama

## Swamp Skink

*Lissolepis coventryi*  
formerly *Egernia coventryi*

- Length: to 25 cm
- Greenish back with prominent black shoulder stripe on each side from nape to base of tail

## Inland



Photo: Tharg 12345

## Growling Grass Frog

*Litoria raniformis*

- Length: up to 104 mm
- Olive to bright emerald green with irregular gold, black or bronze spotting, white belly
- Warty back with pale green mid-dorsal stripe
- Cream or yellow stripe underlined by a dark brown stripe runs from the nostril, through the eye, above the inner ear and down the sides of the body
- No webbing on fingers but toes almost entirely webbed



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# Sharks

## Coastal



Photo: Ken Bondy

## (Great) White Shark

*Charcarius Taurus*

- Length: up to 6.4 m
- Blue-grey to greyish-brown above, abruptly changing to a white underside
- Pointed snout
- Very high first dorsal fin, very small anal and second dorsal fins
- Crescent-shaped tail
- Large triangular serrated teeth

## Coastal



Photo: Klaus Stiefel

## Grey Nurse Shark

*Charcarius carcharias*

- Length: up to 3.6 m
- Greyish-brown above, paler below
- Flattened, bluntly pointed snout
- Dagger-like teeth
- Dorsal, pelvic and anal fins of similar size
- Slow moving
- Rare in Victorian waters

## Coastal



Photo: Patrick Doll

## Short Finned Mako Shark

*Isurus oxyrinchus*

- Length: up to 4 m
- Brilliant metallic blue above, white below
- Cylindrical in shape with vertically elongated tail
- Fastest species of shark, can jump up to 9 m in air
- Found in offshore Bass Strait in warmer waters

# Marine, Estuarine and Freshwater

## Australian Mudfish

*Neochanna cleaveri*

- Length: up to 14 cm
- Scaleless, tubular body
- Rounded fins with fleshy bases
- Small pelvic fins, very small eyes, large tubular nostrils
- Found in coastal wetlands, estuarine and marine waters to 5 m

Coastal



Photo: Tarmo A. Raadik

## Cox's Gudgeon

*Gobiomorphus coxii*

- Length: to 19 cm
- Dark brown to greenish brown, fading to pale brown or cream below
- Blue, gold and yellow flecks on lower lateral scales
- Dark midlateral stripe or series of midlateral blotches
- Single black spot above pectoral fin base

Inland



Photo: © Gunther Schmida/Lochman LT

## Empire Gudgeon

*Hypseleotris compressa*

- Length: to 12 cm
- Females brown to golden, whitish below
- Males in breeding season become bright orange-red on head and belly
- Rare in Victoria

Inland



Photo: © Gunther Schmida/Lochman LT

# Freshwater

## Inland



Photo: © Gunther Schmida/Lochman LT

## Freshwater Herring

*Poamalosa richmondia*

- Length: 32 cm
- Usually silvery overall with greenish tinge
- 2 indistinct stripes below midline
- Fins colourless to yellowish
- Slender compressed body, single triangular pointed dorsal fin
- Found around Mallacoota in Victoria

## Inland



Photo: Jarod Lyon

## Murray Cod

*Maccullochella peelii*

- Length: up to 1.8 m
- Round, depressed head with rounded snout and concave forehead
- Large mouth and jaws
- Olive green with small brown spots, creamy white undersides

## Inland



Photo: Tarmo A. Raadik

## Australian Grayling

*Prototroctes maraena*

- Length: 17 - 33 cm
- Silvery with olive-grey back and whitish belly to olive green or brownish back with dark mid-lateral streak and greyish fins
- Large, bright yellow eyes, rounded snout and small head
- Strong cucumber smell when caught

# Freshwater

## Silver Perch

*Bidyanus bidyanus*

- Length: 40 - 60 cm
- Dark grey to grey-brown above, fading to silver and white, fins whitish to grey
- Compressed elongate-oval body covered in small thin scales
- Small head, small eyes positioned high on head
- Single long-based dorsal fin divided into 2 sections



Photo: MDBA Gunther Schmida

## Trout Cod

*Macullochella macquariensis*

- Length: 40 - 85 cm
- Bluish grey or dark to light brown
- Small dark irregular spots extending to lower sides and base of fins
- Dusky grey to brownish fins with white or creamy margins



Photo: Jarod Lyon

## Yarra Pygmy Perch

*Edelia obscura* or *Nannoperca obscura*

- Length: up to 7.5 cm
- Dusky, pale brownish-grey, sometimes greenish with a pale belly
- Spots along midline and clear, faint yellow to black fins
- Found from Bunyip River basin in West Gippsland through southern Victoria



Photo: MDBA Gunther Schmida

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# Pipefish

## Coastal



Photo: Saspotato

## Spotted Pipefish

*Stigmatopora argus*

- Length: to 25 cm
- Very long body and snout
- No tail fin
- Usually greenish-brown with dark or pale spots

## Coastal



Photo: Saspotato

## Widebody Pipefish

*Stigmatopora nigra*

- Similar to spotted pipefish
- Variable colour, from greenish to brownish depending on habitat, females often with orange line along side
- During breeding season, females have swollen trunk, males have small pouch on underside of tail

## Coastal



Photo: Saspotato

## Port Phillip Pipefish

*Vanacampus phillip*

- Moderately long snout
- Brownish with blue bars on sides and indistinct bars and spots
- Common in bays and estuaries

# Pipefish and Sea Horses

## Ringback Pipefish

*Stipecampus cristatus*

- Length: up to 25 cm
- Brown to yellowish brown
- 9–11 narrow, irregular pale bars or blotches along the back
- Elevated snout ridge
- Found on reefs to 15 m
- Seasonally migrates into Port Phillip Bay, often in large numbers

Coastal



Photo: Saspotato

## Big-bellied Sea Horse

*Hippocampus abdominalis*

- Length: up to 35 cm
- Compressed body
- Large abdomen, completely encased in bony rings,
- Prehensile tail
- Found in depths to 100 m

Coastal



Photo: Mark6Mauro

## Potbelly Sea Horse

*Hippocampus bleekeri*

- Length: up to 30 cm
- Very similar to the Big Belly Seahorse, dispute about whether a separate species
- Longer snout and commonly has head filaments

Coastal



Photo: Saspotato

# Sea Horses and Sea Dragons

## Coastal



Photo: Saspotato

## Shorthead Sea Horse

*Hippocampus breviceps*

- Length: up to 10 cm
- Smallest sea horse found in southern waters
- Short snout, fleshy tendrils on head and body
- Found on reefs to 15 m
- common in Port Phillip Bay, Victoria, especially in patches of Sargassum seaweed

## Coastal



Photo: Saspotato

## Weedy Sea Dragon

*Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*

- Length: up to 45 cm
- Usually silvery overall with greenish tinge
- 2 indistinct stripes below midline
- Fins colourless to yellowish
- Slender compressed body, single triangular pointed dorsal fin
- Usually found in kelp-covered rocky reefs from 3 to 50 m

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