

DIVE INFORMATION SHEET

FIJI (1875-1891)

A three masted iron barque built in Belfast, Ireland for a Liverpool based shipping company.

Diving on the Wreck of the *Fiji*

The wreck of the *Fiji* is some 50 to 70 metres from Wreck Beach at Moonlight Head. It lies in six to seven metres of water in a sandy gully of sandstone boulders. The wreckage extends for a distance of 71 metres. The bow is orientated towards the shore and is flanked on one side by a large boulder which is visible from the surface. Waves often break over the boulder.

The wreck has been broken up over the years but there is still a large amount of wreckage which can be seen by divers visiting the site. Remains of the hull include the ships bow, flooring, bilge frames, hull plating and rudder plating.

At the bow, a large mound of chains is clearly visible along with two anchors, two winches, hawsepipes and rigging.

Divers can see remnants of the ship's cargo in two main mounds. One mound near midships comprises pig iron and wire coil. The other mound in the bow includes bricks and wire coils. Broken gin bottles, ceramic toys and porcelain doll parts have been found on the wreck site over the years.

Dive Standard: Experienced

Dive Conditions

This site is in a very dangerous and exposed position. It is subject to heavy swells and surge conditions and is best visited by divers during moderate northerlies when the swell is minimal. Divers planning to visit the *Fiji* should register with the Port Campbell office of the Department of Conservation and Environment, or Schomberg Diving Services, also at Port Campbell.

Locating the Wreck of the *Fiji*

Launch Site: Launch at Port Campbell and head east. In good conditions this is a half hour trip. Sea conditions can change dramatically after Cat Reef and in a south-westerly change, the trip by boat can be extremely rough and hazardous and there is no shelter between Port Campbell and the *Fiji*. The trip is 40 nautical miles return, so make sure your boat has plenty of fuel.

Chart No: AUS 349

Area: Wreck beach, west of Moonlight Head.

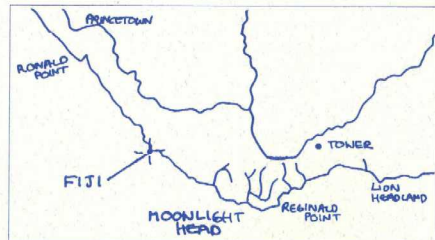
Latitude: 38° 45'45" S

Longitude: 143° 13'30" E

Compass Bearings:

1. East, headland - 128° 20' (T)
2. Cat Reef headland - 322° 20' (T)
3. Fiji anchors on beach beneath cliffs - 29° 20' (T)

Locality



Similar Wrecks in Victoria

Other wrecks of iron sailing ships included in the Underwater Shipwreck Discovery Trail are the *Eliza Ramsden* (Port Phillip Bay), *Falls of Halladale* (Curdies Point), *George Roper* (Point Lonsdale), *Holyhead* (Point Lonsdale), *Hurricane* (Port Phillip Bay), *La Bella* (Warnambool), *Loch Ard* (Port Campbell) and *Sierra Nevada* (Portsea Ocean Beach).

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Help Protect Our Maritime Heritage

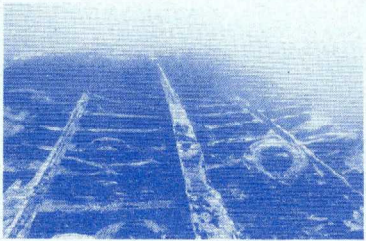
The *Fiji* was declared an Historic Shipwreck on 17th January, 1989 under the Commonwealth Historic Shipwreck's Act (1976). Any damage or interference to the *Fiji* is an offence under the Act and penalties are severe.

Many wrecks are fragile and require constant monitoring. Divers visiting wreck sites can help the Maritime Archaeology Unit protect and manage Victoria's Historic Shipwrecks by:

- Reporting any damage to wreck sites caused by natural erosion or the activities of divers.
- Reporting artefacts which have become exposed through erosion and are at risk from being washed away or looting.
- Reporting any diver seen actively looting a wreck.
- Informing the Unit of a new wreck site. Divers who find and report a new wreck may be entitled to a reward.

Please contact the Maritime Archaeology Unit at:

Victoria Archaeological Survey
29-31 Victoria Avenue
Albert Park VIC 3206
Telephone: (03) 690 5322



View along the ship's floors to the pig iron cargo. Wire coils are visible in the foreground.

