

Wilson's Promontory Marine National Park

- Victoria's blue wilderness

The Prom's underwater wonders

A land of rugged granite ranges, sloping headlands, sandy coves and picturesque offshore islands, Wilson's Promontory is the northernmost exposed link in a chain of granite mountains that continues across Bass Strait and onto eastern Tasmania.

The Prom is one of Victoria's most popular national parks, but few people are aware of the magnificent underwater wilderness within its coastal waters.

Smooth-walled granite cliffs plunge abruptly to the sea floor and sandy beaches slope to depths of 30-50 metres within 3 km offshore. Huge granite boulders or pinnacles rise from the sparkling white or yellow sand, topped by luxuriant carpets of multi-coloured seaweed.

In deeper areas, under ledges or in caves, are colourful sponge 'gardens', dominated by huge sponges, sea-fans, sea-lace colonies, sea-tulips and beds of long, slender sea-whips. Kelp forest species such as wrasse give way to schools of pink Barber Perch and Butterfly Perch. Rays and harmless sharks cruise above the sandy seabed, and giant Maori Octopuses venture out from the rocks at night

Wilson's Promontory defines a boundary for many marine animals that prefer the warmer waters of eastern Victoria. The tail end of warm currents that flow from Queensland and New South Wales support populations of fish like Moray Eels and Blue Groper that are rarely seen further west.

The open coast in the park includes sandy beaches and rocky reefs, and a number of islands are used for breeding by Australian fur seals and many ocean birds, including little penguins, short-tailed shearwaters, fairy prions and silver and Pacific gulls.

Some of Victoria's most amazing underwater scenery is found in a number of superb diving sites, including several shipwrecks. Parts of the coastline adjacent to the National Park are popular for sightseeing, general beach activities and coastal bushwalking.



Scuba diving

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 help to protect these environments into the future. Victorians will also benefit from the positive effects that this protection will have on recreation, 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."

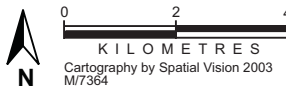
**For more information
call the Parks Victoria
Information Centre
on 13 1963 or
visit our website at
www.parkweb.vic.gov.au**

Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park

Area: 15,550 ha

- Sealed road
- Marine National Park
- National Park
- Marine Park
- Line Fishing Only
- Waterbody
- HWM High Water Mark

- Beach launch
- Lighthouse
- Information



Latitude and Longitude values are based on WGS84



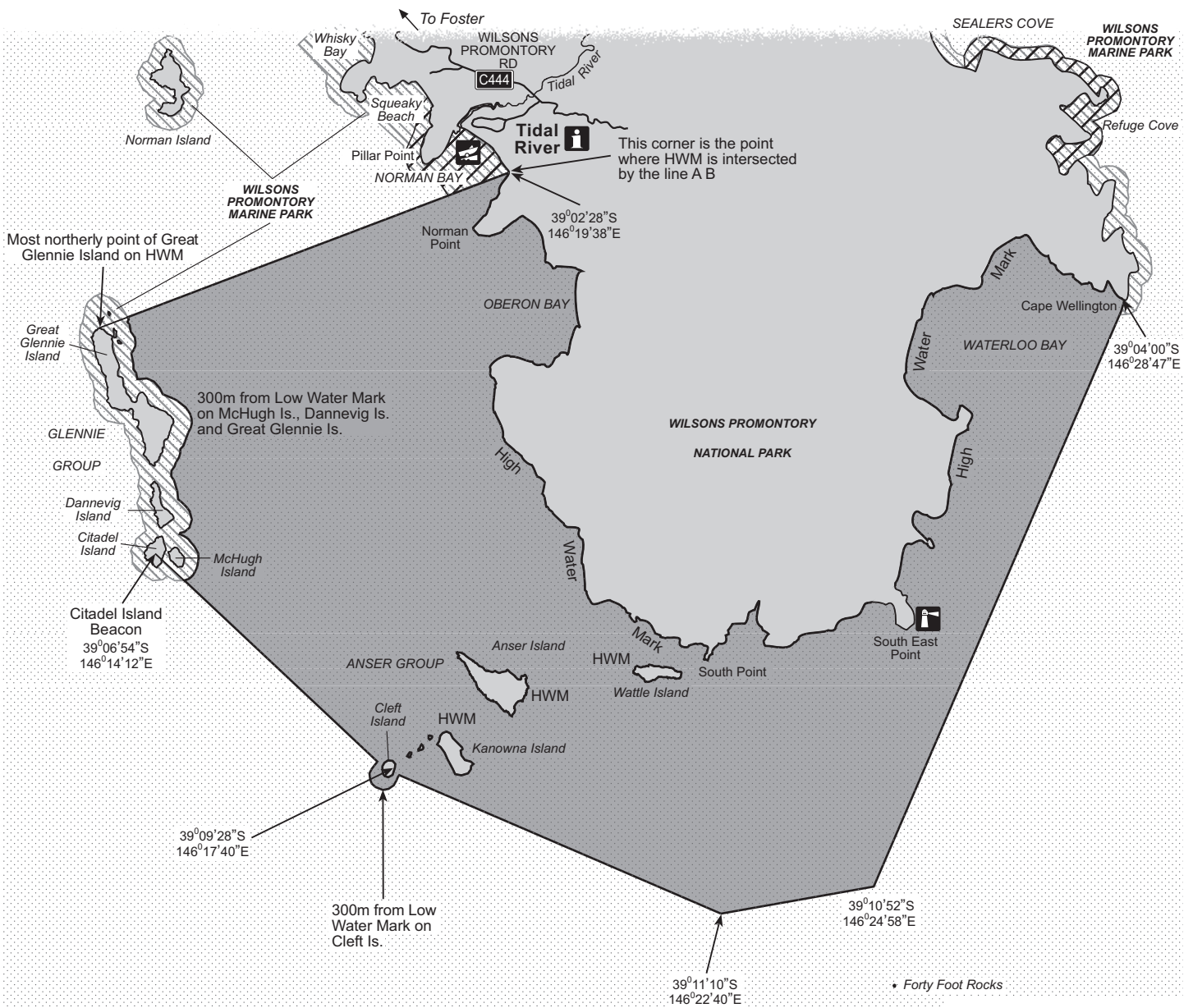
No fishing, netting, spearing, taking or killing of marine life. All methods of fishing, from the shore or at sea, are prohibited.



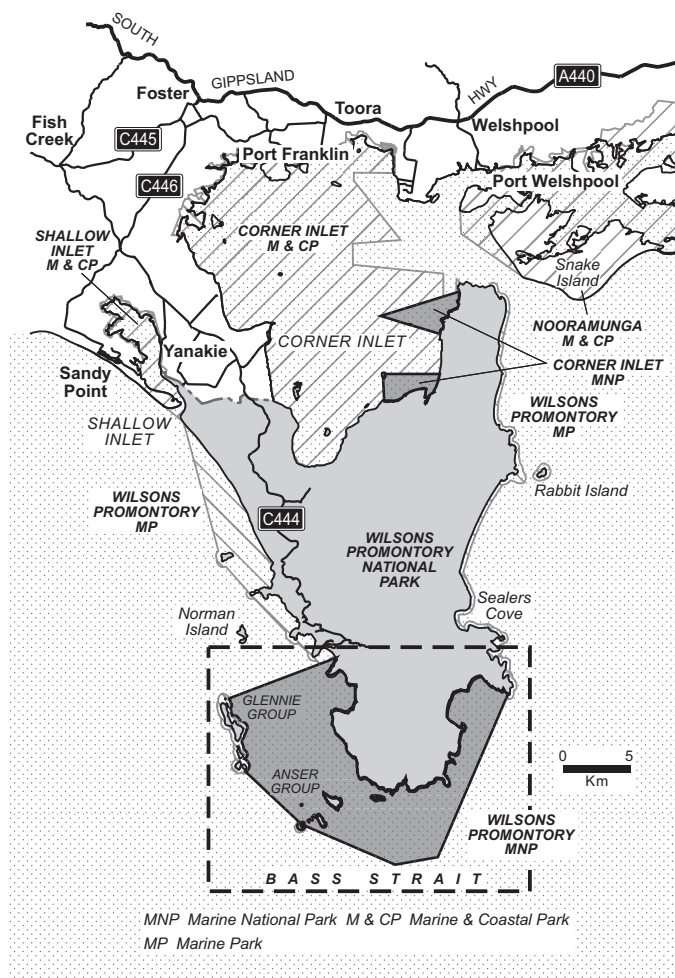
No taking or damaging of animals, plants and objects (artefacts)

Marine National Park boundaries

Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park (15, 550 ha) is located around the southern tip of Wilsons Promontory adjoining the national park. The park extends along the coastline from Norman Beach in the west to Cape Wellington in the east and offshore to Great Glennie Island, Citadel Island and Cleft Island. A line between Cape Wellington and Rodondo Island reference the eastern boundary of the park.



Gorgonian Coral



Nearby parks and reserves

One of Victoria's oldest and most-loved national parks, **Wilsons Promontory National Park** encompasses the entire triangle of land that forms the southernmost tip of mainland Australia.

It features diverse ecosystems of open forest, rainforest and fern gullies, sweeping beaches and rocky headlands, framed by a backdrop of huge granite mountains.

Great bushwalks extend from under an hour to a three-day circuit walk that includes the historic Wilsons Promontory Lighthouse. Camping and roofed accommodation is available at Tidal River.

Wilsons Promontory Marine Park

The coast and nearby waters on the east and west sides of the Prom are designated as Marine Park. Within the Marine Park fishing is permitted with the exception of the taking of abalone on SCUBA or hookah. Note that line fishing only is allowed around Tidal River and between Sealers Cove and Refuge Cove (see map).

Nooramunga & Corner Inlet Marine & Coastal Parks

Protected from the pounding surf of Bass Strait by barrier islands an intricate network of shallow marine waters, isolated granite islands, intertidal mudflats and a complex of over 40 sand barrier islands has formed.

There is excellent fishing from the surf beaches of the barrier islands or by boat within the sheltered waters of the inlet, and walking tracks ranging from short strolls to overnight hikes.

Corner Inlet Marine National Park

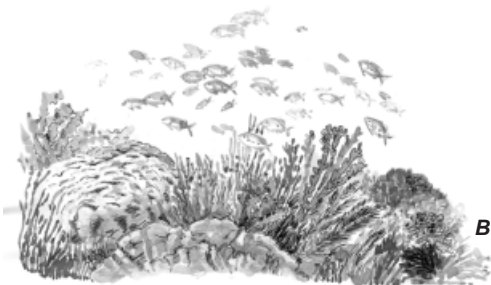
With the granite peaks of 'the Prom' as a dramatic backdrop, the park protects a variety of sheltered habitats. These include intertidal mudflats, channels and seagrass beds some of the only substantial beds of broad-leafed seagrass (*Posidonia australia*) in Victoria.

What you might see

Butterfly Perch *Caesioperca lepidoptera*

A plucky and social fish, Butterfly Perch form large, alluring schools over deepwater reefs and ledges at the Prom. They are opportunistic feeders that take advantage of eddies that swirl the microscopic animal life, the zooplankton, into dense shoals.

The areas of reef where this occurs are usually covered with colourful sponges and gorgonian corals, and, with the combination of pink fish, it makes a visual spectacle when diving. At night, Butterfly Perch retreat into rock crevices to sleep.



Butterfly Perch over Coral Garden

Gorgonian coral *Mopsella zimmeri*

Growing to nearly a metre in height in some areas, the crazed branches of the fan-shaped gorgonian corals are a distinctive feature of the deeper walls, caves and ledges of the Prom. Orange, red or yellow in colour, gorgonians are a colony of thousands of anemone-like polyps. These are retracted when not trying to capture planktonic animals. Gorgonian corals grow on an angle to the prevailing surge and currents to gain maximum exposure to passing food.

You might also see animals known as basket stars with their arms intertwined with the gorgonian's branches. At night basket stars use the gorgonian as a base for attachment while stretching their long multi-branched arms into the current to also catch plankton.

Activity

What can I do?

Recreational activities

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| • nature observation and sightseeing | yes |
| • snorkelling and scuba diving | yes |
| • swimming, surfing | yes |
| • windsurfing, sailing, boating | yes (1) |
| • 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 (commercial) | 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 qualified 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

Caring for the marine environment

Practise safe boating, and follow all signs and markers correctly

Keep boat noise and wake low in sensitive areas along the shore and near islands to avoid disturbing breeding and resting birds

Avoid spilling and never dump petrol, oil or other pollutants – on land or in the water

Discarded gear and rubbish can endanger birds and marine animals – please take your rubbish home

If boating, anchor away from fragile areas such as seagrass meadows and reefs

Take care when snorkelling or diving – look and don't touch so future generations can do the same.

Always replace any organisms or rocks you may have disturbed

Practise minimal impact diving and snorkelling techniques

Take the time to learn more about Victoria's marine animals and plants and the habitats they depend on

Practise safe boating, and follow all signs and markers correctly

Enjoying Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park

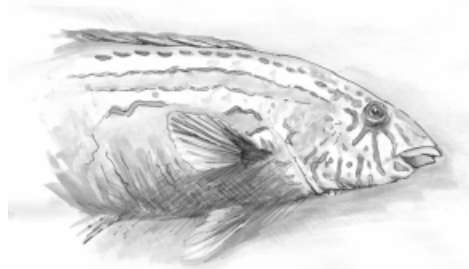
As well as protecting the marine environment, Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park offers an attractive range of recreation opportunities.

There are great beaches for swimming, with plenty of activity on the water, from scenic sailing and boating to sea kayaking tours provided by commercial operators.

Enjoy great surfing and sailboarding at Norman Bay, explore the islands and view seal colonies by boat, or try something different and snorkel in Tidal River itself with the incoming tide. Parts of the coastline adjacent to the park are popular for sightseeing, a wide range of beach activities and exhilarating coastal bushwalks.

The area features some of Victoria's most magnificent underwater seascapes in numerous diving sites, featuring near vertical granite 'dropoffs' and frequently clear water, particularly on the western coastline.

The granite boulders create spectacular wall and cave diving among a sea of colourful invertebrates. The solid rock provides suitable places for many sponges, ascidians, and bryozoans. In amongst the boulders divers can experience large schools of fish including Butterfly and Magpie perch, Morwong, colourful wrasse and the occasional inquisitive Blue Groper.



Senator Wrasse

There is also the chance to discover aspects of Victoria's maritime history on dives to a number of shipwrecks including the *Cheviot*, *Lady Mildred* (1909), and *SS Gulf of Carpentaria*.

Underwater photographers have an amazing choice of subjects, from magnificent benthic life to large marine animals like seals, sharks, and dolphins.

The Prom is one of the most diverse dive destinations in Victoria with different animals and plants on either side. Because of the protection from weather, conditions suitable for diving can be almost guaranteed on either side of the Prom. Some commercial operators provide access for divers to some of the more remote dive locations.

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 Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park from 16 November 2002.

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 the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Fisheries Victoria on (03) 9483 4283. Please ask for the Duty Officer and give a short message and leave a contact number.

Line fishing only is permitted in areas marked on the map as Wilsons Promontory Marine Park.

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.