

# Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary

## A coastal haven in the suburbs

Just off Beaumaris in Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs, sloping cliffs of sandstone jut out into the lapping waters of Port Phillip Bay. At the waters edge the rock has been worn down into a series of platforms and offshore reefs, creating a delightful and varied marine environment that is easily accessible to many Melbournians, and which is also popular for its educational value.

It is the variety of habitats that makes Ricketts Point so interesting. Near the shore the rocks are covered in red and green algae that shelter a myriad of small creatures, including tiny brittle stars, bristle worms, and crustaceans with large eyes and many legs.

Waves refract between the rocks, creating small sandy coves. The soft seafloor is covered in patches of green seagrass or bunches of seaweed attached to small rocks.

Further offshore rock bommies are carpeted in green Caulerpa, or tall brown Sargassum seaweed, which hides numerous animals amongst its stiff dissected leaves. The offshore rocks and ledges attract fish too, including schools of Southern Hulafish, and occasional wrasse and Victorian Scalyfin. Cryptic weedfish and shrimp can be found amongst the algae.

Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary is part of a system of 13 Marine National Parks and 11 smaller Marine Sanctuaries created by the Victorian Government 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 protect these environments into the future.

## Enjoying Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary

The area is deservedly popular for snorkelling and diving, especially exploring the walls along the shoreline and the rubble at the edge of the reef for a wide variety of invertebrate life.

Bird watching at Ricketts Point is also a rewarding pastime, as many seabirds gather to roost on the rocks at low tide or to scavenge along the shoreline. Please keep dogs under control at all times to avoid disturbing roosting seabirds.

With great opportunities for safe swimming and delightful rock pool rambles along the shore, Ricketts Point is an ideal place for families to enjoy and learn more about our fascinating and diverse marine environment.



### Rockpool rambling

If you look very closely you may see a Blue-ringed Octopus hiding under stones. But remember, do not touch. The normally shy creature will flash tiny rings in electric-blue if disturbed too much. This is a warning to take seriously, as its poisonous bite is very dangerous.

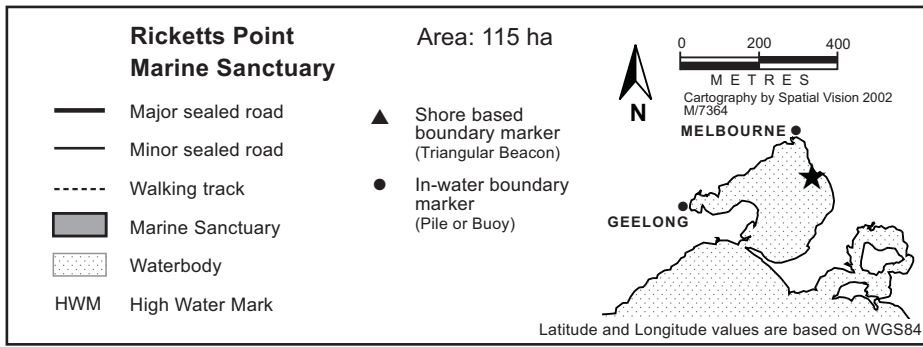
Ricketts Point also features in paintings by a number of Australia's famous early artists such as Tom Roberts and Fred McCubbin. Information on the paintings is available at sites adjacent to the sanctuary (the Tom Roberts painting *The Sunny South* was actually painted at Ricketts Point.



**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](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au)**



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)

