

# Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary



## Visitor Guide

Beware Reef is a diver's paradise. An isolated rock covered in life of every conceivable shape and colour, it rises abruptly out of the sandy Gippsland seafloor. The tip of the reef rises above the surface, a favourite resting place for passing Australian Fur Seals.

### Location and access

Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary is located five kilometres south east of Cape Conran, just over three kilometres offshore from Yeerung River. The sanctuary covers 220 hectares and comprises a 1.5 km square around the reef. The exposed section of rock sits two metres above the water at low tide and is seventy metres long. Under the surface the reef continues for one kilometre to the south east.

The access to Beware Reef is by boat; the ocean ramp at Cape Conran is the closest launching facility, 18 km east of the Marlo township. The ramp is exposed to south westerly winds and Beware Reef itself is exposed to all wind directions. Safe access is only possible in calm weather by experienced boat operators.

### A diver's paradise

Around the edge of Beware Reef is a thick rim of Bull Kelp fronds, guarding the treasures below. Where there is enough light, the upper reef is covered in a dense canopy of brown seaweeds, interspersed with bright green meadows of green and red seaweeds.

On one side of the reef lie the remains of old shipwrecks, including the Ridge Park (1878), the Albert San (1915) and the SS Auckland, a steamship wrecked on the reef in 1871. On another side is a pink garden of encrusting coralline algae, kept free of large kelps by the voracious appetite of the Black Sea-urchin, hiding during the day under ledges. At night large Maori Octopuses lurk amongst the kelp stalks.

Lower down the reef steep walls plunge to the bottom almost thirty metres below. These are covered with filter-feeding animals, such as large finger sponges, brilliant red sea-fans, sea tulips, long sinuous sea-whips and carpets of orange anemones. Pink and blue brittle stars stick their spiny arms out of crevices. Green, orange and white feather stars are abundant between the rocks with their tentacles extended into the water to capture passing plankton.

Fish are abundant. Trumpeters appear suddenly from the deep, while Long-snouted Boarfish, Wrasses, Morwongs and Sea Sweep patrol the rocks. Port Jackson Sharks and Wobbegongs can be seen resting in sandy hollows.



### Preserving the sanctuary

Beware Reef 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. Parks Victoria encourages environmentally responsible diving practices including anchoring in an appropriate manner. Landing on Beware Reef is not permitted.

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. Historic artefacts are protected by law and must not be disturbed or collected.

For more information call the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963 or visit our website at

[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)



No fishing, netting, spearing, taking or killing of marine life. All methods of fishing are prohibited.



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

### For further information

Parks Victoria  
Information Line  
**13 1963**  
or visit our website at  
[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)

Orbost Office  
PO Box 270  
171 Nicholson Street  
Orbost Vic 3888

### Personal safety

SCUBA diving should only be undertaken by trained and experienced divers. Beware of strong currents and undertows.

Beware of sudden changes in weather, especially when boating on open water.

Watch where your hands are going at all times to avoid potentially dangerous creatures.

Ensure adequate protection from the sun and wind.

### Caring for the marine environment

Discarded gear and rubbish can endanger birds and marine animals. Please take all rubbish home with you for recycling and disposal.

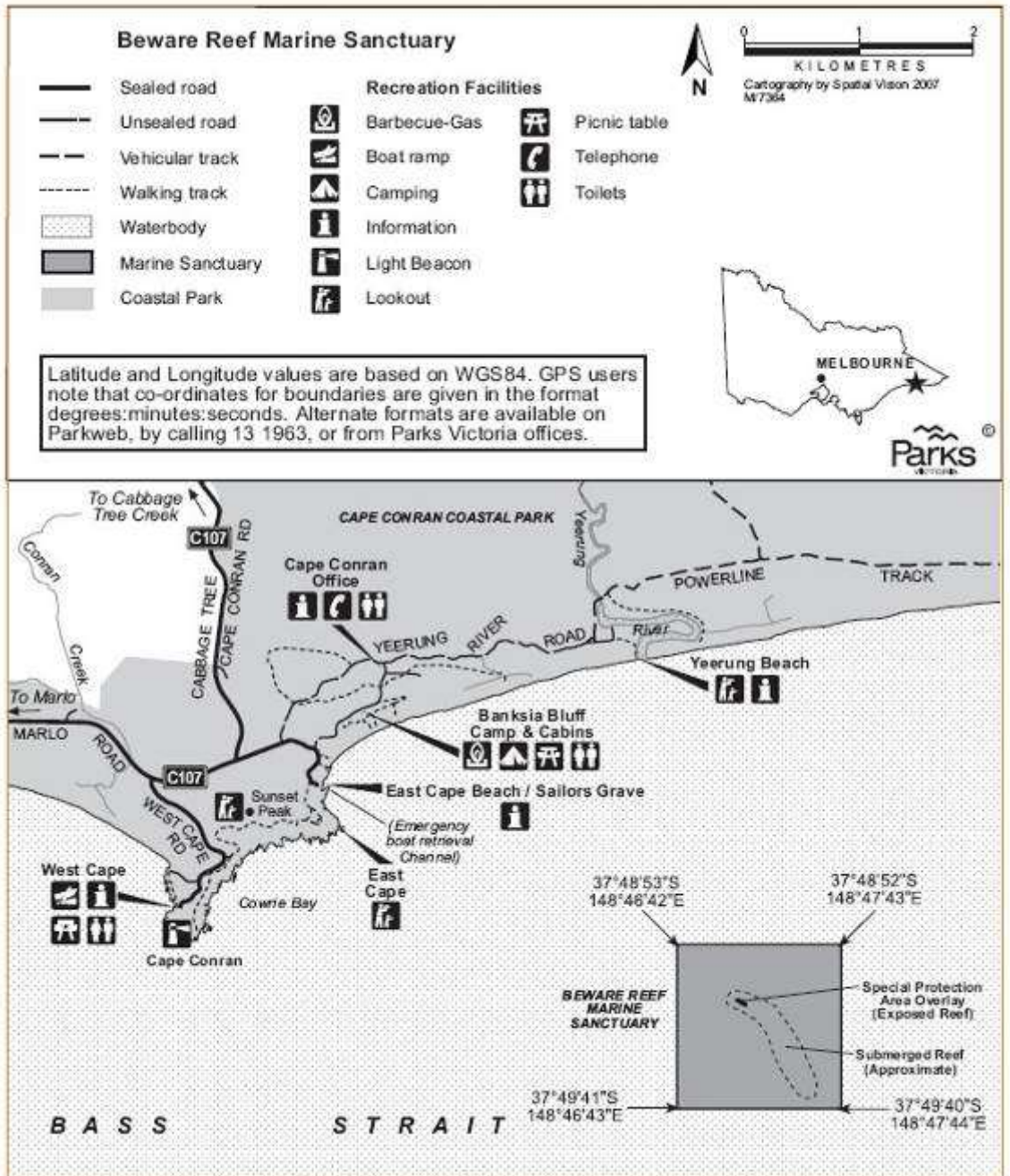
Always replace any organisms or rocks you may have disturbed.

The removal or disturbance of historic artefacts is prohibited.

*This reserve is located within the East Gippsland Total Fire Ban District.*

### Healthy Parks Healthy People

*Visiting a park can improve your health, mind, body and soul. So, with over four million hectares of parkland available to Victorians, why not escape to a park today!*



### 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. There are strong penalties under the National Parks Act for fishing in these areas. Restrictions and penalties apply in the Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary.

To report a fishing offence call the Department of Primary Industries on 13 FISH (13 3474).

Parks Victoria is responsible for the management of Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries. For further information contact the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963 or visit the Parks Victoria website [www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au).

Park notes on Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries, including boundaries and permitted and prohibited activities, have been produced to assist visitors to these areas.

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