

Jawbone Flora and Fauna Reserve

Visitor Guide

The Jawbone Flora and Fauna Reserve is a stunning example of the transformation of a highly degraded site into an ecological haven and a place of peace and beauty for the whole community. Jawbone Flora and Fauna Reserve is one of a string of conservation sites stretching from the Westgate Bridge to Williamstown, Altona and down to Cheethams Wetlands and Point Cook, and consists of open grasslands for passive recreation, two wetland lakes, the saltmarsh and mangrove conservation area, Wader Beach and the Kororoit Creek.

Location and Access

Jawbone Flora and Fauna Reserve is situated eight kilometres from the heart of Melbourne, adjacent to Williamstown. The 50 hectare reserve stretches from Bayview Street to Maddox Road, south of Kororoit Creek Road in Williamstown. Melways ref. Map 55 K10 – F8

Limited carparking facilities exist at Rifle Drive and Crofton Drive, Williamstown, although access via bicycles and walking is available via various streets and 'The Bay Trail'.

History

A significant area of the reserve was previously a rifle range. The rifle range was established in 1877 and later named after Major C.E. Merrett who was a member of the Australian shooting team that won the Bisley Rifle Shooting trophy in 1912. Major Merrett was also a Councillor of the Victorian Rifle Association who gave 58 years of service to rifle shooting.

Originally a training ground for soldiers, it was later used by the police and civilian rifle clubs and school cadets. The range was the rifle shooting venue for the 1956 Olympic Games and in 1990 was closed due to the sale of the land for the Rifle Range housing estate.

The development of the estate was accompanied by extensive public consultation, which emphasised creation of open space for passive recreation and

preservation of the coastal strip. The coastal area had been virtually untouched by European settlement due to the "protection" by the active rifle range.

A dedicated local residents group, called 'Friends of Williamstown Wetlands', has contributed extensively to the nurturing and protection of the flora and fauna reserve.

Recreational Parkland

The open area to the north of the lakes includes The Bay Trail for cyclists and walkers, as well as seating, playgrounds and native plantings. Panoramic views of Port Phillip Bay, Point Cook, the You Yangs, Altona and the Bellarine Peninsula can be seen (on clear days) from the reserve. The open grassland areas of the reserve connect with the Rifle Range housing estate via its paths, playgrounds and open grassland areas.

The Lakes

Water for the lakes comes from roof and street run-off in the adjacent housing estates. Before it enters the lakes, water passes through reed beds or 'swales' situated at the foot of Rifle Range Drive. Extensive planting on the islands and the southern shore of the lake provides cover for native birds, and the lake is stocked with two types of native fish.

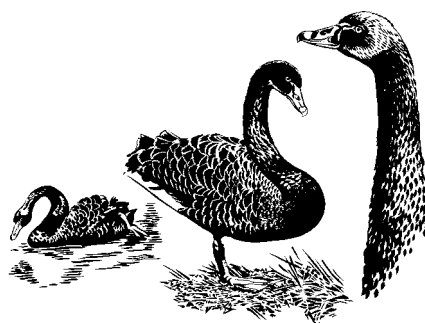


Water passes to the lower or western lake through drains and a causeway. The lakes form a buffer between the housing and the sensitive coastal foreshore area. Public access is prohibited to the coastal foreshore section as it contains remnant vegetation that is sensitive to any disturbances.

A number of bird hides are located on the main lake. You can see water birds such as Ducks, Coots and Moorhens, several species of Cormorant and Grebe, Swans, Herons, Stilts, Spoonbills and Pelicans.

Altogether 120 species of birds have been identified at the reserve with a number of them breeding and nesting at the site as well.

Access to the site can be achieved via the Bay Trail, which has a number of access areas leading visitors to viewing points at several places in the reserve. The trail crosses the lower lake in a boardwalk, it rises over a mound and skirts the replanted wetlands near Maddox Road, on its way to Altona.



Black Swans © VIT

Conservation Area

The Jawbone

This area consists of a sandy beach flanked by basalt rock outcrops which represent the seaward end of the flows of basalt lava that characterise Melbourne's western plains.

The wooden boardwalk enables visitors to approach the water and the unique saltmarsh-mangrove community.

Vegetation in the area includes, Pink Bindweed, Kangaroo Grass, Spear Grass, Wallaby Grass, Orchids, Casuarinas and Coastal Salt Bush.

To protect unique and in some cases endangered species no dogs are permitted in this area and access to people is restricted to the boardwalk only.

Wader Beach

Wader Beach is the eastern limit of a chain of habitats along the western shores of Port Phillip Bay where migratory birds arrive each spring from the Northern Hemisphere. Large flocks of waders, including the Red-Neck Stint may be seen in summer, while Swans, Cormorants, Ibis and Oyster Catchers feed there all year round. To protect these species no dogs or people are permitted on to this beach.

Enjoying the Reserve

Jawbone Flora and Fauna Reserve offers a host of recreational opportunities. Bird watching is enhanced by using the bird hides provided and The Bay Trail and boardwalk is an excellent way to enjoy the reserve either by foot or bicycle, while minimising your impact on this unique site.

The reserve is for passive recreation and protection of the sensitive coastal strip with its vulnerable plants and animals. Please keep your dog on a leash and take your rubbish home with you.

If you wish to partake in the preservation and conservation of the reserve, please contact the "Friends of the Williamstown Wetlands" (Phone: 9397 3794) as they meet regularly and hold conservation activities at the reserve.

Other Nearby Parks

Gem Pier – Victoria's first pier. Melway map 56 E9

Point Gellibrand Coastal Heritage Park- Point Gellibrand Coastal Heritage Park is a key heritage area exhibiting many aspects of Victoria's colonial past, such as Timeball Tower and Fort Gellibrand.

Melway map 56 F11

Westgate Park-

Westgate Park has been transformed from an industrial landscape to a bird sanctuary and open space for all. Attractions include the Earth Series sculptures and spectacular views of the city and Westgate Bridge.

Melway map 56 E1.

Further Information

For information please call the Parks Victoria Information Centre on

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Williamstown

9393 9222

Visit our website at www.parks.vic.gov.au