

# Bald Hills Wetland Reserve



## Visitor Guide

The Bald Hills Wetland Reserve is a special place, alive with an array of birds and other wildlife. A meandering walking track leads you through a series of sand ridges and thickets of Paperbark, that flood during wet periods, to the sheltered bird hide where you can sit quietly and observe birds feeding within the wetland.

### Location and access

Bald Hills Wetland Reserve is situated 5km east of Tarwin Lower, towards Walkerville. It can be reached by turning left into the Bald Hills Road from the main road between Tarwin Lower and Walkerville, then left into the reserve car park, 4km from the turnoff.

The original inhabitants of the region were the Boonwurrung and Gunai / Kurnai indigenous people. They roamed as hunter gatherers up to at least 6000 years ago, living in small family groups and existing on a varied menu of birds, animals, fish, plants and fruits.

From the 1850's European settlement and agricultural development saw extensive clearing of vegetation and drainage works such as diversion channels, levee banks and drains, turning the original wetlands along the Tarwin estuary and river into productive grazing country. Only 10% of the original Tullaree Swamp, as it was called, survives today.

Some twenty years ago extensive lobbying by the South Gippsland Conservation Society, Shire Councillors and local residents culminated in the purchase of adjoining farm land to create the wetland area of the reserve. This major addition has enabled the re-establishment of this important wetland habitat. The 135 hectare Bald Hills Wetland Reserve was declared in 1987.

### Things to see and do

#### Wetland walk

Length 750 m, walking time 15 minutes one way

The meandering walking track from the car park takes you through open woodlands and Paperbark thickets to a large shallow wetland. The wetland floods back up to the surrounding paperbark thickets during wet periods and may dry out over summer. From the bird hide you will be rewarded with the sight of a variety of birdlife. The trail is suitable for wheelchairs and prams.

### Flora and fauna

The reserve consists of a series of sand ridges supporting open woodlands of Bog Gum, Messmate and Narrow Leaf Peppermint with a heath understorey. Blackwoods, Swamp and Scented Paperbark thickets populate the creeks.

Enjoy a different experience with each changing season. Spring bursts into colour with bush peas, purple flags and heath plants in bloom. Paperbark blossom perfumes the air in summer, combined with the spicy smells of bark and dry leaves. Colourful fungi emerge in autumn after rain, heralded by the frog choir as the sun glints across dragonfly wings or jewelled beetle backs.

Keep your eyes open for Blue Tongue Lizards slithering in the undergrowth, or echidna's digging for ants. Look for wallabies and wombat tracks and scats. Honeyeaters, wrens and other small birds may be seen flitting through the bush.

Sit quietly and watch a clutch of cygnets with protective parents, Australian shell ducks patiently sitting out plumage moult, spoonbills sifting the rich silt, ibis probing deep in the mud, or cormorants spreading their wings to dry. Raptors often soar overhead, ever alert for likely prey.

### Just up the road...

Stretching along the coast from the sand barrier of Point Smythe to the sheltered waters of Waratah Bay, Cape Liptrap Coastal Park consists of strikingly beautiful scenery that is well worth exploring. Activities here include swimming, camping, fishing and boating.

Extending around the coast from Harmers Haven to Inverloch, the Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park offers boating, swimming and snorkelling, or a quiet walk along the secluded sandy beach. The rugged sandstone cliffs, broad rock platforms and underwater reefs represent some of Victoria's most spectacular coastal scenery.

**For further information**

Parks Victoria  
 Information Centre  
**Call 13 1963**  
 or visit the  
 Parks Victoria website  
[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)

Parks Victoria Office  
 Cnr. Victory Avenue and  
 McDonald Street  
 Foster VIC 3960

Bunurong Environment  
 Centre  
 Ramsey Boulevard  
 Inverloch VIC 3996

**Caring for the environment**

Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

All native plants and animals in the reserve are protected

Please do not disturb or remove any plants or animals

Please keep to designated walking tracks

Bins are not provided in the reserve. Please take your rubbish home with you

As this is a wildlife reserve dogs are not encouraged to ensure a safe environment for wildlife

No fires including barbecues may be lit on days of Total Fire Ban

This park is located in the West & South Gippsland Total Fire Ban District

Please leave the reserve as you found it

*Please don't throw this park note away. Keep it, return it for others to use, or recycle it*

