

# Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary

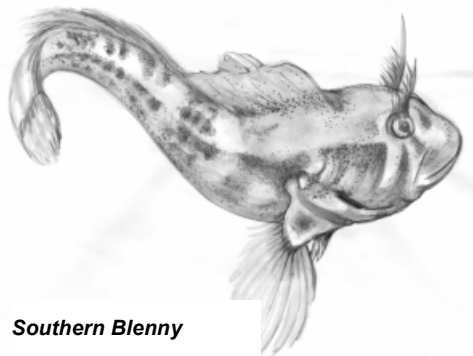
## A protected refuge

Point Cooke is a quiet sanctuary for nature only fifteen kilometres from the centre of Melbourne. Situated on the sheltered rocky shores of north-western Port Phillip Bay, the Marine Sanctuary is protected from the bustle of the suburbs by coastal dunes and adjacent wetlands that form a part of the Point Cook Coastal Park.

A narrow sandy beach separates the land from the sea. Off the coast, a series of low basalt reefs rises from the seafloor, the remains of a volcanic activity and a lava flow across the western plains thousands of years ago.

The combination of rock, sand and mud habitats supports a fascinating range of marine life. The principal plant on the reef is the bushy brown seaweed, *Sargassum*, which harbours innumerable tiny animals and plants between its leaf-like fronds.

Beneath the water prickly sea urchins are abundant near crevices, while the more exposed sections of rock support a range of life that includes masses of tubeworms, carpets of anemones and turfs of tufting coralline and filamentous algae. In darker corners, sponges grow plentifully while Southern Blennies hide in the crevices.



*Southern Blenny*

Small sharks and skates patrol the surrounding eelgrass beds and muddy seafloor, feasting on the bivalves that lie deep in the sediment. In late summer, swarms of jellyfish can pulsate over the reefs, clearing the water of microscopic plants and animals that build up in the nutrient-rich environment.

Point Cook 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 to enjoy.

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 and balanced state, free of damaging human activities, we will protect these environments into the future.

## Enjoying Point Cook Marine Sanctuary

The Marine Sanctuary is readily accessible to visitors, and is popular for a range of recreational activities such as beach walking, bird watching, sightseeing, diving and snorkelling.

Together with the important saltmarsh habitats of the adjoining **Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands**, the offshore sandbanks of the Marine Sanctuary provide feeding areas for many bird species. These include many migratory waders such as the Double-banded Plover and the Lesser Golden Plover - both of these species being listed on the Ramsar Convention for the Protection of International Migratory Wader Birds.

Diving and snorkelling sites at Point Cooke include two Heritage-listed shipwrecks - the *Henrietta* and the *Diana*. Many small fish and invertebrates can be seen on the rocky reef.

**The Point Cook Coastal Park** provides a relaxing respite from suburbia with picnic facilities, as well as bird hides, walking trails, and interpretation signs to help understand the parks wetlands. Enjoy a wonderful 360-degree view of the coastal surroundings from *The Tower - A Monument to Migration and Aspirations*, at the southern boundary of Cheetham Wetlands.



**Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary** Area: 290 ha

	Major sealed road		Yellow Triangular boundary marker
	Minor sealed road		In-water boundary marker (Pile or Buoy)
	Marine National Park		Information
	Coastal Park		Bird hide
	Point Cook Fisheries Reserve		Cafe
	Waterbody		Carpark
			Picnic table
			Toilets

MELBOURNE  
GEELONG

0 250 500 METRES  
Cartography by Spatial Vision 2004 M17364

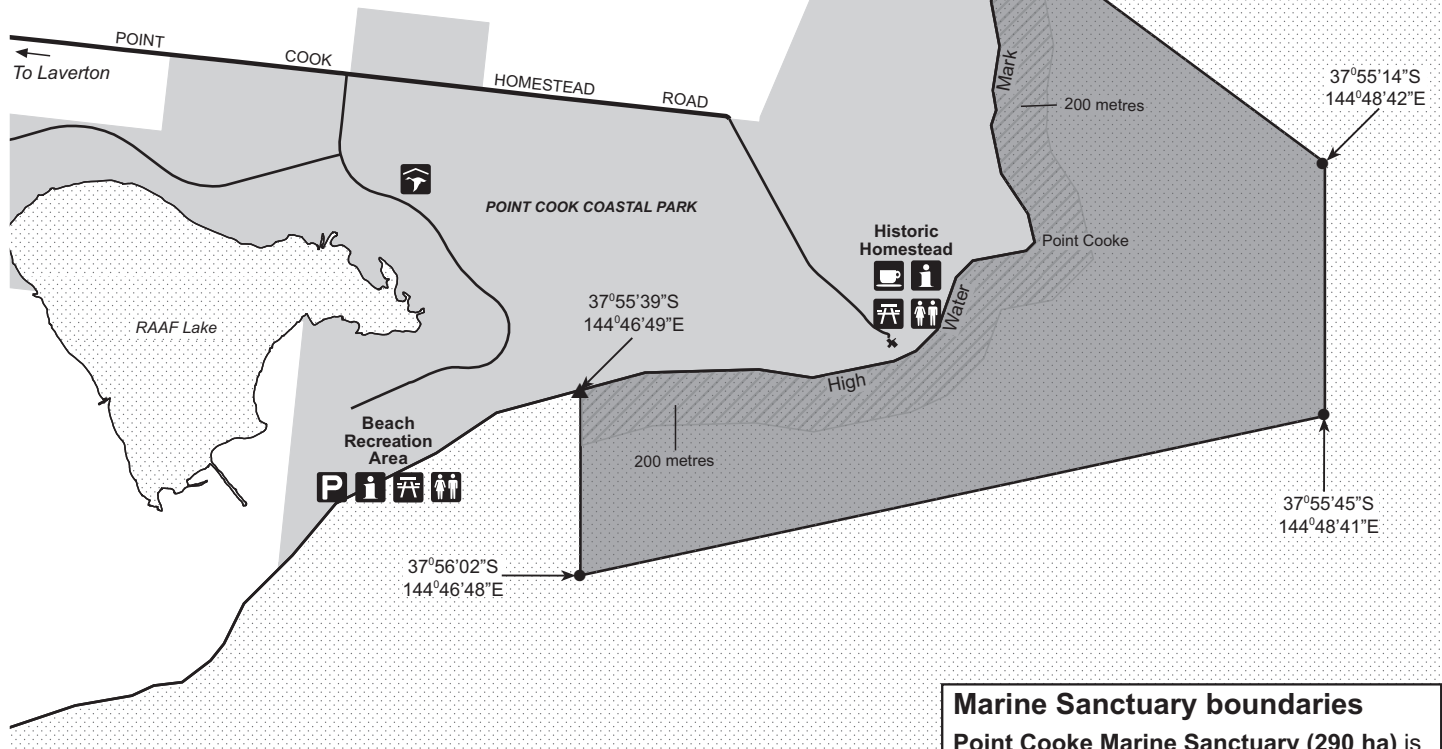


No fishing, netting, spearing, taking or killing of marine life. All methods of fishing, from the shore or at sea, are prohibited.

No spear fishing.

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

Latitude and Longitude values are based on WGS84. GPS users note that co-ordinates for boundaries are given in the format degrees:minutes:seconds. Alternate formats are available on Parkweb, by calling 13 1963, or from Parks Victoria offices. Location of reefs are for illustrative purposes only and may not indicate true position.



**Marine Sanctuary boundaries**  
Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary (290 ha) is located along and offshore of Point Cook Coastal Park. The park boundary is identified by Shore markers at the northern and southern boundaries and In-water navigation marks for the off shore boundaries.

**Personal safety**

Diving should only be undertaken by trained and experienced divers

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

Wear shoes that grip well when walking on rocks

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

**Caring for the marine environment**

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

Always replace any organisms or rocks you may have disturbed

Keep out of bird nesting or roosting areas

**P O R T P H I L L I P B A Y**

**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.

Dogs are not permitted in the Marine Sanctuary or in the adjacent Point Cook Coastal Park.

There are strong penalties under the National Parks Act for fishing or interfering with marine life in Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries. These restrictions and penalties apply in all Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries from 16 November 2002.

Fishing is not allowed in the area of the former Point Cook Fisheries Reserve that lies between the high water mark and 200 metres seaward of the high water mark.

Parks Victoria is responsible for the day-to-day 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 at: [www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://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.

To report a fishing offence call the Department of Primary Industries on 13 FISH (133 474).