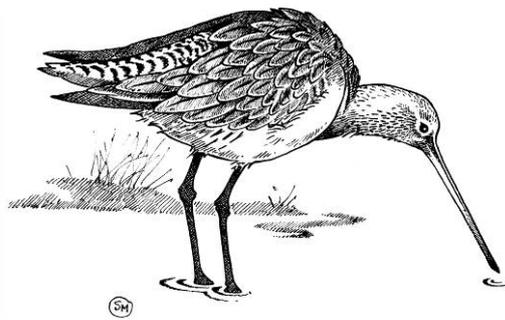


Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site

Protecting Wetlands for Wildlife



Bar Tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

A wildlife haven on Melbourne's doorstep

The Port Phillip (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site is one of eleven wetlands of international significance in Victoria listed under the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran 1971). In recent years the site has been recognised as one of the highest value coastal and marine environments within the Port Phillip and Western Port region.

The Port Phillip (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site sits along the western shoreline of Port Phillip, through the City of Greater Geelong, onto the Bellarine Peninsula. The site is adjacent to some of the fastest growing urban areas of Melbourne and Geelong which presents some challenges for management.

This Ramsar site consists of a number of component areas including:

- parts of the shoreline, intertidal zone and adjacent wetlands of western Port Phillip Bay, extending from Altona south to Limeburners Bay near Geelong. Specific parts of the site in this area include Skeleton Creek to Point Cook including Cheetham Wetlands, the Western Treatment Plant; the Spit Nature Conservation Reserve; Avalon Airfield; and Point Wilson to Limeburners Bay
- parts of the shoreline, intertidal zone and adjacent wetlands of the Bellarine Peninsula, extending from Edwards Point to Barwon Heads and including Swan Bay; Mud Islands; and Lake Connearre and Reedy Lake.

The site consists of both extensive areas of public land and areas of private land. Public land is managed by Parks Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), Melbourne Water, Department of Defence, City of Greater Geelong, Wyndham City Council, Hobsons Bay City Council with support from the Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority and Corangamite Catchment Management Authority. Public land is leased to private interests at Avalon airport. Private landholders adjoining the Ramsar site include both urban and rural properties.

A Strategic Management Plan developed in 2003 identifies a range of site management strategies to protect wetland values from a broad range of threatening processes including pest plants and animals, poor water quality, and a range of human activities. This plan can be found at www.dse.vic.gov.au.

World Class Wetlands

This Ramsar site meets a number of criteria for listing as a wetland of international importance including:

- has 6 threatened species that are supported by the wetlands
- supports a number of critical life stages including large numbers of migratory shorebirds, moulting of large numbers of waterfowl, breeding of 49 species of waterbird; and a drought refuge for waterbird and fish species
- annually supports more than 40,000 waterbirds
- regularly supports more than one percent of the relevant populations of 15 species of waterbirds
- important feeding and nursery areas for a number of fish species

Within the Port Phillip Ramsar there are six types of marine and coastal wetlands including shallow marine waters, rocky marine shores, sand shingle or pebble shores, estuarine waters, intertidal mud and sand flats, and intertidal marshes including saltmarsh; two types of inland wetlands (permanent river/streams/creeks, and permanent freshwater marshes/pools); and two types of artificial wetlands (irrigated land and sewage treatment ponds).



For further information

Call Parks Victoria on 13 1963 or visit www.parks.vic.gov.au

Caring for our wetlands

Help us look after our wetlands by following these guidelines:

Ensure that cats and dogs are always kept under control and not allowed to wander into wetlands

Keep dogs on a lead and away from important roosting and feeding areas for wader and wetland bird species

Support the activities of land managers in dealing with pest animals such as the Red Fox

Dispose of unwanted chemicals and oils appropriately without letting them into drains that lead to our wetlands

Use environmentally friendly low phosphorus household detergents and washing powders to help prevent algal growth in waterways

Find out about the many species that use the Ramsar wetlands in your area and share your knowledge with friends and family

Discarded gear and rubbish can endanger birds and marine animals – please take your rubbish with you for recycling and disposal

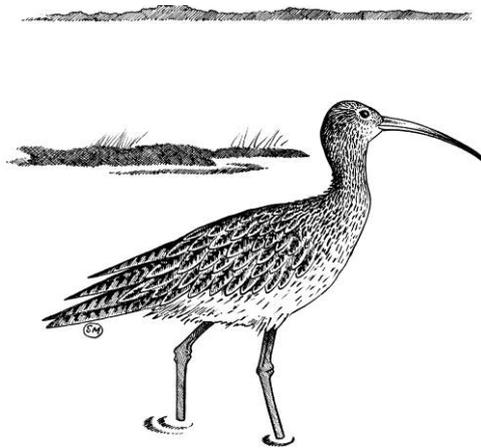
Vehicles, including motor bikes, may only be used on formed open roads. Drivers must be licensed and vehicles registered and roadworthy

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!



What Might You See



The Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*)

The Eastern Curlew is the largest wader that visits Australia. It has a very long down-curved bill with a long neck and legs. It is a dark-streaked brown wader and is often seen feeding on the deeper edges of sand and mudflats.

Eastern Curlews are widespread in coastal regions in the north-east and south of Australia, but are rarely seen inland. They breed in Russia and north-eastern China.

Eastern Curlews feed on small crabs and molluscs both by day and night. Their long beaks can reach deep into the sediment to find buried animals or can also be used to pick food from the surface.

Visiting the Site

There are a number of parks and reserves across Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and the Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site where you can visit and, at certain times of the year, see many of the bird species that make these wetlands so important.

These include:

- Tower to Migration at Cheatham Wetlands
- Point Cook Coastal Park
- Western Treatment Plant (by appointment)
- The Spit Wildlife Reserve
- Hovells Creek and Limeburners Lagoon
- Lake Connewarre
- Reedy Lake
- Swan Bay
- Mud Islands

If you would like further information about the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site, contact Parks Victoria on **13 1963** or visit www.parks.vic.gov.au.

For Information on Melbourne Water's Western Treatment Plant call **131 722** or visit www.melbournewater.com.au.

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