

Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park



Visitor Guide

Offshore, alongside the slender strip of sand dunes that protect the Gippsland Lakes lies Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park. Beneath the water, vast plains of sand stretch in every direction, forming the 2,750 hectare Marine National Park. The fine sands harbour more animals per square metre than most other marine habitats in the world.

Location and access

Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park is situated on an untamed stretch of coast in South-east Gippsland, approximately 260 kilometres from Melbourne, near the town of Seaspray.

Things to see

The sand particles are sorted into different groups and layers according to the waves and currents, while there are different surface features such as mounds and ripples as a result of animal and wave action.

Although the sandy seafloor may appear to be lacking in life, in a scientific survey of 10 square metres, some 803 species were discovered. This great diversity is derived from the myriad of small creatures that call this area home - creatures that live between sand grains, burrow into the sand, build tiny tubes or exist by eating scraps of food that drift by.

Larger animals are far fewer in number. To conserve their energy and retain access to oxygenated water, animals like crabs, octopus, brittle stars and shrimp do not burrow very deep.

Beyond the Ninety Mile Beach the offshore sandy plains are only occasionally broken by low ribbons of reef, which formed as shorelines or sand dunes during ice-ages when the sea-level was lower than today.

Even these reefs are periodically covered by sand, shifted around by the strong tidal currents. These reefs do not support the large brown seaweeds characteristic of many Victorian reefs, but instead are covered by resilient red seaweeds and encrusting animals that can survive the sandy environment.

Fish too are here in abundance, many feeding on the seafloor smorgasbord of tiny animals.

Schools of free swimming ocean fish, known as '*pelagic*' fish, like Pike, school Whiting and Snapper are common.

Protecting our marine environment

Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park 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.

Personal safety

- Beware of sudden changes in weather, especially when boating in open water.
- Beware of strong currents and undertows when snorkelling or at the beach.
- When boating, always let someone know before you go, including an estimated time of arrival.
- Always consult tide charts before going boating.

What you might see

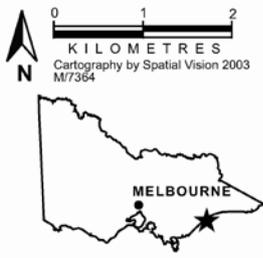
Lying almost buried, motionless, with only its eyes and mouth peering out of the sand, the Common Stargazer is one of the largest fish found near reefs on the underwater sandy plains. Its cavernous mouth consumes unsuspecting fish and crustaceans in one gulp.



Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park Area: 2,750 ha

	Major sealed road		Boat access point
	Minor sealed road		Yellow Triangular Bounday Marker
	Marine National Park		Information
	Waterbody		
	Land subject to inundation		

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K I L O M E T R E S
Cartography by Spatial Vision 2003 M7364



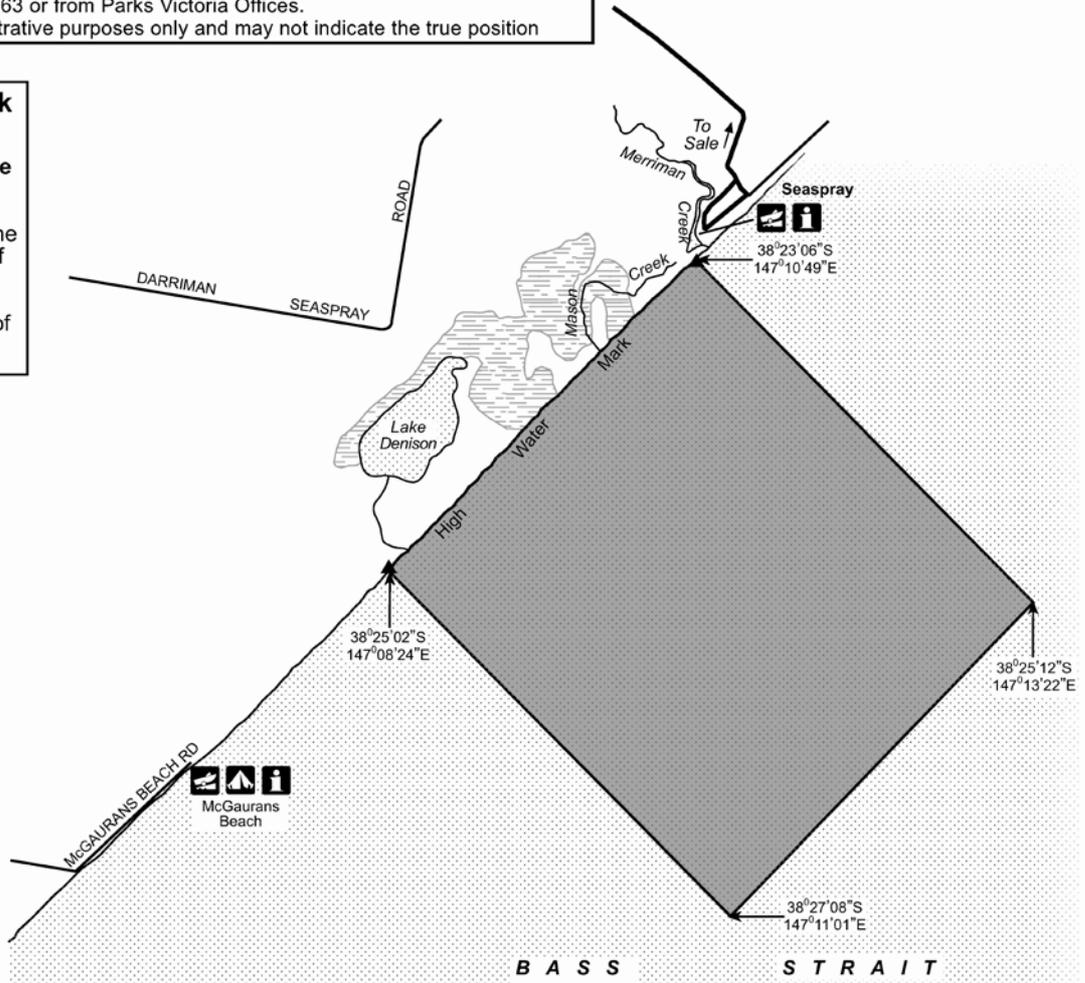

No fishing, netting, spearing, taking or killing of marine life. All methods of fishing, from the shore or at sea, are prohibited.



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 the true position

Marine National Park boundaries
Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park (2,750 ha) is located southwest of Seaspray. The park extends along 5km of coastline, and offshore approximately for three nautical miles to the limit of Victorian waters.



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Personal Safety

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

Caring for the environment

- Discarded gear and rubbish can endanger birds and marine animals- please take your rubbish home
- All plants and animals in the park are protected
- Please stay on tracks when going to and from the beach
- Dogs on leads are permitted in a 2km section of the coastal park from Seaspray

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 Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries. These restrictions and penalties apply in Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park.

You may carry fin-fish on board your boat within park boundaries if you caught the fish outside the parks, and you may also carry (but not use) a fishing rod or a spear gun. Spear guns are not permitted within any of Victoria's marine protected areas, either in a boat or elsewhere.

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

Parks Victoria is responsible for the day-to-day management of Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries.

For further information

Parks Victoria Information Centre **Call 13 1963** or visit our website at www.parks.vic.gov.au.

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!