

# Cape Howe Marine National Park



## Visitor Guide

At the far eastern tip of Victoria is a remote wilderness that few people have experienced. Adjacent to the Cape Howe Wilderness Area of Croajingolong National Park, Cape Howe Marine National Park is where Victoria touches the Pacific. Bathed in warm water from the tropical north and buffered from waves generated in the east, it is Victoria's Pacific gem.

## Location and access

Cape Howe Marine National Park is adjacent to the Croajingolong National Park and covers 4,050 hectares. Access is via boat or by walking along the Wilderness Coast Walk from Mallacoota, or the Nadgee Nature Reserve in New South Wales. The Park extends along the coastline (excluding the Iron Prince headland reef area) and offshore for approximately three nautical miles, to the limit of Victorian waters.

## What you might see

Much of the coastline is formed from mobile sand dunes that are gradually shifting over the border into New South Wales. Bordering these dunes is a mixture of ancient pink granite and purple sandstone formed over 350 million years ago. These rocks outcrop near the border at Cape Howe.

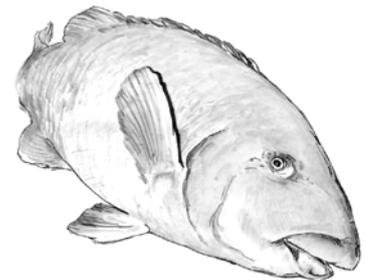
Low profile reefs are covered in a dense forest of the brown seaweed *Phyllospora* or Crayweed that reaches over two metres long. Beneath this thick, swirling canopy shelter many smaller seaweeds, red sea-tulips, sponges, sea-stars and many large shells. Tiny brittle-stars, pill-bugs and brightly coloured worms nestle around large sea squirts.

Off this section of the coast, the seafloor tilts steeply down into deeper water. Here, there is not enough light for the large brown seaweeds and the low sandstone reefs are covered with small patches of leafy red seaweeds and many attached animals. Sea-whips are common, arching gracefully up from the sea floor.

The whole region is alive with a variety of fish, with an assortment of warm and cool water species. Purple Wrasse, Blue-Throated Wrasse and Herring Gull dart amongst the kelp. Large, disk-like Sunfish are relatively frequent visitors, drifting in the surface waters and feeding on jellyfish.

Large, inquisitive and charismatic, the Eastern Blue Groper (*Achoerodus viridis*) is actually a

member of the wrasse family and is not a true Groper. These fish are local identities of the rocky ledges and gutters of the park. When scuba diving you may see and hear these fish crunching on Black Sea-urchins or molluscs with their plump, tough lips. Colour distinguishes male from female fish - males being blue or green and females usually brown or red. Reaching up to one metre in length, Eastern Blue Gropers inhabit reefs to a depth of 40 metres.



*Eastern Blue Groper*

Hundreds of humpback whales pass through on their annual migration between the tropics and Antarctic waters, sometimes followed by pods of Orcas. Little Penguins are common too, foraging from the large rookery at Gabo Island.

## Protected for the future

Cape Howe 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.



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)

For further information contact:

Parks Victoria  
Information Line  
13 1963

or visit our website at  
[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)

Mallacoota Office  
PO Box 179  
Cnr Allan & Buckland Drives  
Mallacoota Vic 3892

### Personal safety

SCUBA diving should only be undertaken by trained and experienced divers

Beware of strong currents and undertows

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

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

Wear solid shoes that grip well and beware of large waves when walking along the shore, especially on rock platforms

### Caring for the marine environment

Discarded gear and rubbish can endanger birds and marine animals - please take all rubbish home with you

Always replace any organisms or rocks you may have disturbed

Keep clear of bird nesting or roosting areas

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

### 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!*



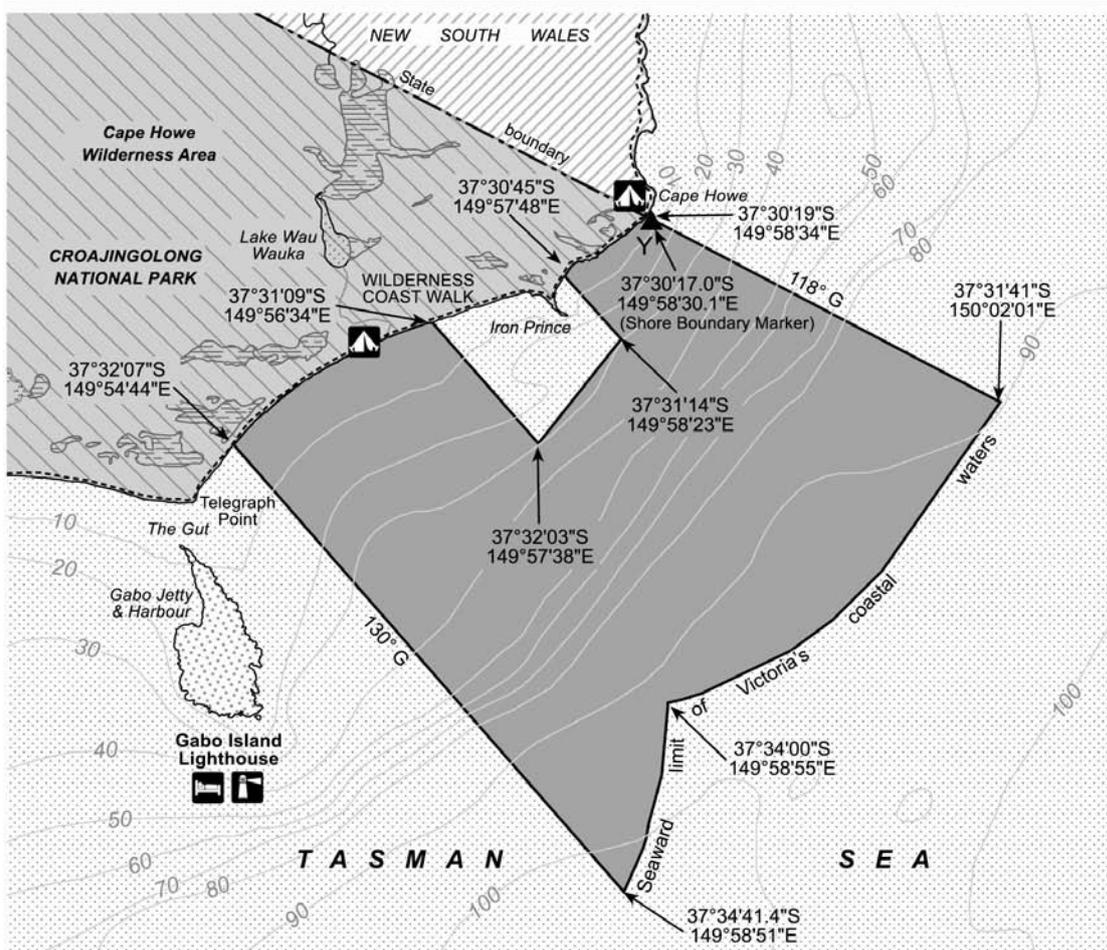
## Cape Howe Marine National Park

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▲ Y	Shore boundary marker (Colour indicated by letter)		National Park		Camping
-20-	Depth contour (metres)		Wilderness Area		Lighthouse
	Swamp		Gabo Island Lighthouse Reserve		
	Waterbody		Nadgee Nature Reserve		

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.

0 2 4  
KILOMETRES

Cartography by Spatial Vision 2008  
M/7364



### 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. To report a fishing offence call the Department of Primary Industries on 13 FISH (13 3474).

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

Park notes on Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries, including boundaries, permitted and prohibited activities, have been produced to assist visitors to these areas.

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