

# Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries

## fact file

### Who's heard of Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries?

In June 2002, The Victorian Government made a decision to protect Victoria's coastline by setting up a system of 13 Marine National Parks and 11 Marine Sanctuaries across the state of Victoria. The setting aside of these parks means that over five percent of the state's coastline is now fully protected.

### What are marine national parks and marine sanctuaries?

Marine national parks and sanctuaries are much like our land based parks and reserves. They are extensive areas that have been given national status because of their individual geographic features and diverse range of plants and animals. All of these marine national parks and marine sanctuaries are on public land, so they are there for everyone to enjoy. Like our land based national parks, marine national parks and sanctuaries are listed under the National Parks Act 1975.

The important thing to remember is when visiting our marine national parks and sanctuaries is their 'no take' rule. This means that you cannot take anything out of it. The removal of animals, plants, shells, sand or any other objects is not allowed.

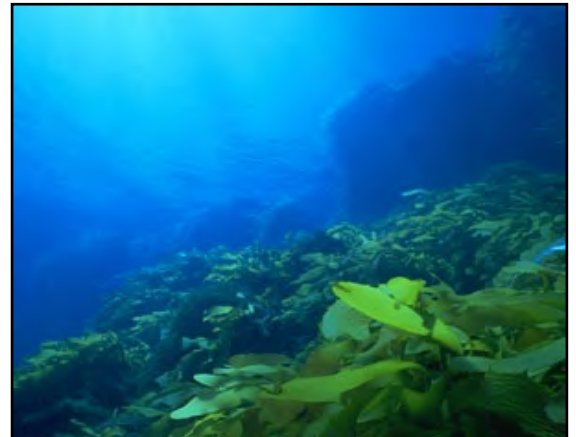


Photo © William Boyle  
Leather Kelp, Wilsons Promontory  
Marine National Park

### How can I tell the difference between a marine national park and marine sanctuary?

There are very few differences between a marine national park and a marine sanctuary. They have both been set aside for their natural features and habitat variety, although our marine national parks are much larger in size than our marine sanctuaries.

### Why do we have marine national parks?

These parks and sanctuaries protect our marine habitats and species, significant natural features, seascapes and cultural and aesthetic values.

Marine plants and animals in Australia's southern oceans and bays are found nowhere else, with around 90% of the plants and animals found only in these areas. Victoria's marine national parks and sanctuaries include habitats such as kelp forests, rocky reefs, mangroves, salt marsh and seagrass meadows and an

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amazing variety of fish, sponges and other animals, from tiny organisms to large sea mammals.

### Did you know? Victoria's marine waters are home to:

- 700 species of fish
- 1000 species of seaweeds and seagrasses
- 2000 species of molluscs (snails, shellfish and squid)
- 3000 species of crustaceans (crabs, lobster, prawns, etc)
- 1000 species of sponges
- 1000 species of polychaetes (bristle worms)
- 1000 species of cnidarians (jelly fish, corals, etc)

Our marine national parks and sanctuaries are not only for the plants and animals but provide very important environments for people as well. People use our marine national parks and sanctuaries for many types of recreational activities such as diving, swimming and snorkelling. Marine national parks and sanctuaries are also important places for people to learn. These areas are used by students like you on excursions and fieldtrips and also by marine scientists who carry out regular monitoring and research.

They are also important for their intrinsic values and for future generations to enjoy and learn from. Even if some people don't visit our marine national parks and sanctuaries, many people want to know that they will still be there in the future for their children and grandchildren to enjoy.

### **Where are marine parks and sanctuaries located?**

Victorias Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries are located across the coast of Victoria from East Gippsland to west of Portland. The sites of the

marine parks and sanctuaries have been chosen so that representatives of all types of habitat found along the coast have been protected.

It took time to select these areas. More than one example of each marine habitat has been chosen because there can be differences in even the same types of habitat. It took over nine years of research and investigation into the types of habitat that exist along our coastline and much time talking to the community before the marine national parks and sanctuaries were put in place.

### **Want more information?**

Visit <http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au>