

WHAT IS AN ESTUARY?



Question

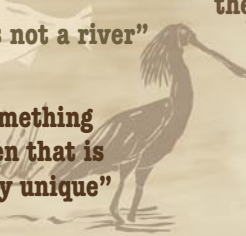
What do you get when you
mix freshwater and saltwater?

Answer: **An estuary!**

"It is not
the ocean"

"It is not a river"

"It is something
in-between that is
completely unique"





Wild Dog Creek Estuary where it meets the Southern Ocean

Nick fishing in the Barwon River Estuary

Estuary Perch



*Fish for today
and fish for tomorrow*



An estuary is the place where freshwater from a river mixes with saltwater from the sea

Estuaries are a great spot to spend time swimming, walking, canoeing or having a picnic. Importantly they also act as buffers to protect shorelines from erosion and flooding and provide essential food and habitat for birds, fish and other wildlife.

Estuaries are unique environments that include some of the most complex ecosystems on earth – how amazing that we are so lucky to live right next door to these ecosystems in the Corangamite region.

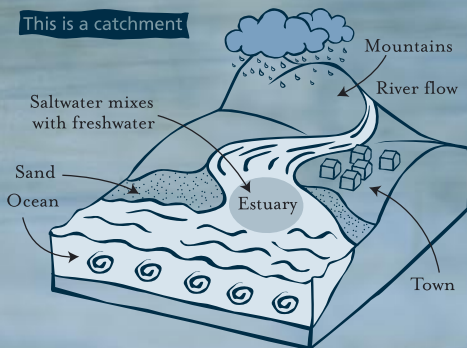
Within the Corangamite region, which covers Victoria's central west coast from just east of Avalon on Port Phillip Bay to Peterborough along the Great Ocean Road, there are 40 estuaries (see map overleaf). These estuaries come in a wide variety of shapes, varying from long narrow river-like estuaries such as Wild Dog Creek at Apollo Bay and Spring Creek, Torquay to broad open water estuaries such as the Barwon River at Barwon Heads and Painkalac Creek, Aireys Inlet. Whatever the type of estuary, its health is dependent on being linked to both the land and the sea.

The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority

The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is currently undertaking the Great Ocean Road Estuary Restoration project funded by the Victorian Government's *Our Water Our Future Action Plan* which is working to improve the condition of key estuaries in the Corangamite region through such works as rehabilitation of floodplain wetlands, provision of fish passage, fencing and revegetation of streams in estuary catchments and the new EstuaryWatch Program.

A catchment is the area of land from which rainwater drains into a reservoir, river, lake, estuary or ocean. All the towns along the coast in the Corangamite Region we live and holiday in are within catchments which drain into an estuary.

This is a catchment





Ros and Tim Monitoring the water quality in Parunkalac Creek Estuary



School Kids learning about their local estuary



Apollo Bay Landcare Group rehabilitating Wild Dog Creek Estuary

What is EstuaryWatch?

We know that estuaries here in the Corangamite Region are interesting and unique, but there is also a lot we don't know about them. EstuaryWatch is an initiative of the Corangamite CMA and the Western Coastal Board aiming to help local communities learn more about their estuary - how it functions and how healthy it is and use this information to help conserve their estuaries into the future! EstuaryWatch will do this by:

Step One - EstuaryWatch Monitoring

Helping you and other locals gather information about your estuaries through an EstuaryWatch Monitoring Program. EstuaryWatch monitoring will be a means of scientifically measuring the condition or 'health' of your estuary and to understand changes that occur. Getting involved in EstuaryWatch monitoring can be as simple as taking a photo when you see something unusual in the estuary and sending it to the Corangamite CMA; or as fun as getting involved in monitoring bird life, the vegetation surrounding your estuary or the physical and chemical properties of the water within your estuary.



Become involved in EstuaryWatch today. Contact the Corangamite CMA's EstuaryWatch Coordinator at estuarywatch@ccma.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5232-9100 or see the EstuaryWatch section of the Corangamite CMA website www.ccma.vic.gov.au/programs/EstuaryWatchOne.htm

Step Two - EstuaryWatch Education

Providing fun opportunities to learn amazing information about your local estuary. EstuaryWatch Education activities will be run in estuaries right along the coast on all sorts of interesting topics such as the plants and animals you find living there, how you can help conserve your local estuary and how an estuary changes throughout the seasons of the year. Anyone and everyone is most welcome to join in and activities will be run for school groups, local community members and visitors to the region

Step Three - Decision Making

Using the information collected through the EstuaryWatch Monitoring Program and valuable community knowledge and skills developed through EstuaryWatch Education in decision making on estuary management.



Plant indigenous plants

ESTUARIES OF THE CORANGAMITE REGION

*David sharing his knowledge
of the cultural values of estuaries*



Royal Spoonbill



Little Pied Cormorant



Shirley Clayton

Barham River Estuary

2km

Approximate
estuary length

79.5km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

A meandering tidal waterway
of State significance due
to its geology.



*Jessie and his kids bird watching
at Barham River Estuary*

Peterborough

Port Campbell

Curdies Inlet Estuary

16km

Approximate
estuary length

1124km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

The saltmarsh and grasslands
surrounding the estuary provide
habitat for one of Australia's rarest
birds, the Orange-Bellied Parrot.

Gellibrand River Estuary

8km

Approximate
estuary length

1184km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

Flows directly into the Twelve
Apostles Marine National Park.

Aire River Estuary

8km

Approximate
estuary length

280km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

The shallow salty wetlands of the
estuary are very rare in Victoria.



Wild Dog Creek Estuary

1km

Approximate
estuary length

19.9km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

Breeding site for the small and shy Hooded Plover which is a vulnerable species in Victoria.



Apollo Bay Landscape Group



Kennet River Estuary

1km

Approximate
estuary length

20km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

Home to the Australian Grayling which is the fish species of the greatest conservation need in the Otway region.

Wye River Estuary

1km

Approximate
estuary length

24.6km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

The estuary is home to the vulnerable Tasmanian Mudfish which bury themselves beneath logs or stones during dry summers.



Anglesea River Estuary

4km

Approximate
estuary length

125km²

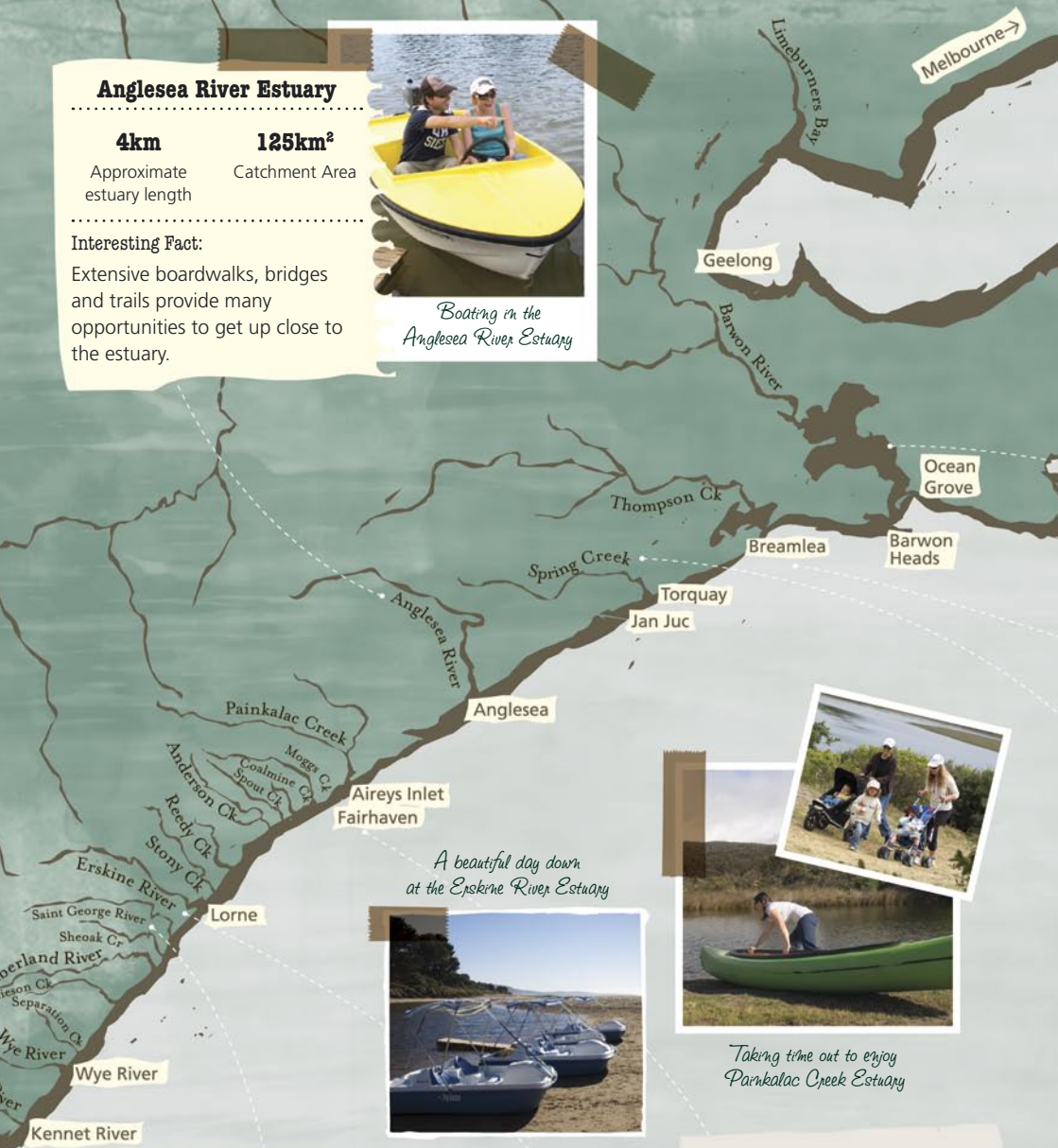
Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

Extensive boardwalks, bridges and trails provide many opportunities to get up close to the estuary.



*Boating in the
Anglesea River Estuary*



*A beautiful day down
at the Erskine River Estuary*



*Taking time out to enjoy
Painkalac Creek Estuary*

St George River Estuary

2km

Approximate
estuary length

33.9km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

The only estuary in the Corangamite Region to be listed as being in a 'near-pristine condition'.

Erskine River Estuary

1km

Approximate
estuary length

30.4km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

Around 80% of the estuary's catchment area is in the Great Otway National Park.

Painkalac Creek Estuary

3km

Approximate
estuary length

61km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

A beautiful coastal lagoon system which attracts the spotted green frog and eastern banjo frog (Pobblebonk).



Mia and Felix playing down at the Barwon River Estuary

Spring Creek Estuary

4km

Approximate
estuary length

57km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

The estuary is bordered by the Spring Creek Reserve which contains unique and rare Moonah Woodlands and Bellarine Yellowgums.

Thompsons Creek Estuary

6km

Approximate
estuary length

305km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

Part of the important Karaaf Wetlands which are rich in local cultural history.

Barwon River Estuary

19km

Approximate
estuary length

8590km²

Catchment Area

Interesting Fact:

From the internationally significant wetland at Lake Connewarre to the sea, the Barwon estuary supports the westernmost occurrence of the White Mangrove in Victoria.



Scale of Map

0 3.75km 7.5km 15km 22.5km 30km

For more information on any of the estuaries in the Corangamite Region contact the EstuaryWatch Coordinator at estuarywatch@ccma.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5232-9100 for an Estuary Information Sheet.





*Get involved! We are all estuary managers!
Keep abreast of anything happening in and around your estuary.*

Estuarywatch is funded by



action
Salinity & Water
AUSTRALIA



Organisations involved in Estuarywatch



Department of
Sustainability
and Environment



Further Information

The more people that get involved in EstuaryWatch the better informed we will be and the better chance we have of keeping our estuaries looking and feeling healthy into the future. For further information contact the Corangamite CMA's EstuaryWatch Coordinator at estuarywatch@ccma.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5232-9100 or see the EstuaryWatch section of the Corangamite CMA website www.ccma.vic.gov.au/programs/EstuaryWatchOne.htm

