

Discovery Bay Marine National Park

Gateway to the Southern Ocean

Discovery Bay is Victoria's marine gateway to the Great Australian Bight and the immense expanse of the Southern Ocean.

The cliffs of Cape Bridgewater to the east and the white sand dunes of Discovery Bay to the north frame the Discovery Bay Marine National Park. The coastline is formed from the remains of a massive volcano that has spewed forth lava over the last million years, cooling into hard basalt rock.

The seafloor of the area reflects this dynamic history. Intertidal and near-shore reefs formed from basalt border the park. In deep water (30-60 metres) within the park, there are low reefs formed from ancient shorelines or dunes when the sea levels were much lower than today.

These reefs are covered in rich sponge 'gardens', composed of numerous types of sponges, filmy sea-mosses, and erect sea-fans. Between the reefs, plains of sand are winnowed into symmetrical ridges by the endless movement of the water.

The rich sea-life is derived in part from cold nutrient-rich water, which is sucked up to the surface by offshore winds and currents during summer. This water encourages the growth of microscopic plants and animals, providing a feast for fish and seafloor life such as sea-fans, sea-mosses and hydroids, sponges and sea-squirts.



Red Velvetfish

The connection to the Great Australian Bight and the Southern Ocean is highlighted by the regular visits of Southern Right Whales that migrate up from Antarctic waters in summer to breed, and sea-lions foraging from colonies in South Australia. Australian fur seals are common, attracting the attention of Great White Sharks. Blue whales, the largest of all creatures to have ever lived, also visit these waters on occasions.

Discovery Bay 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.

What you might see

Red Velvetfish *Gnathanacanthus goetzei*

While nestled deep amongst kelp fronds, the Red Velvetfish is not easily seen by divers. They are most active at night, and if you are lucky enough to come across one hunting for crabs and octopus on the seafloor, its red colouration is brilliant in the torchlight. Without a torch or direct sunlight the fish is relatively dull in colour as red light is rapidly absorbed in seawater. The red colouration makes it appear dark and assists camouflage on deeper reefs.



Red Velvetfish have a soft velvety skin and scaleless bodies. This docile fish protects itself with its venomous spines. Growing to 46 centimetres, the Red Velvetfish is only found in southern Australian waters.

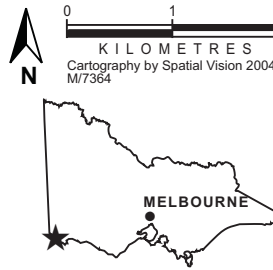


Discovery Bay Marine National Park

Area: 2,770 ha

-  Sealed road
-  Unsealed road
-  Marine National Park
-  National Park
-  Waterbody

-  Boat access point
-  Yellow Triangular boundary marker

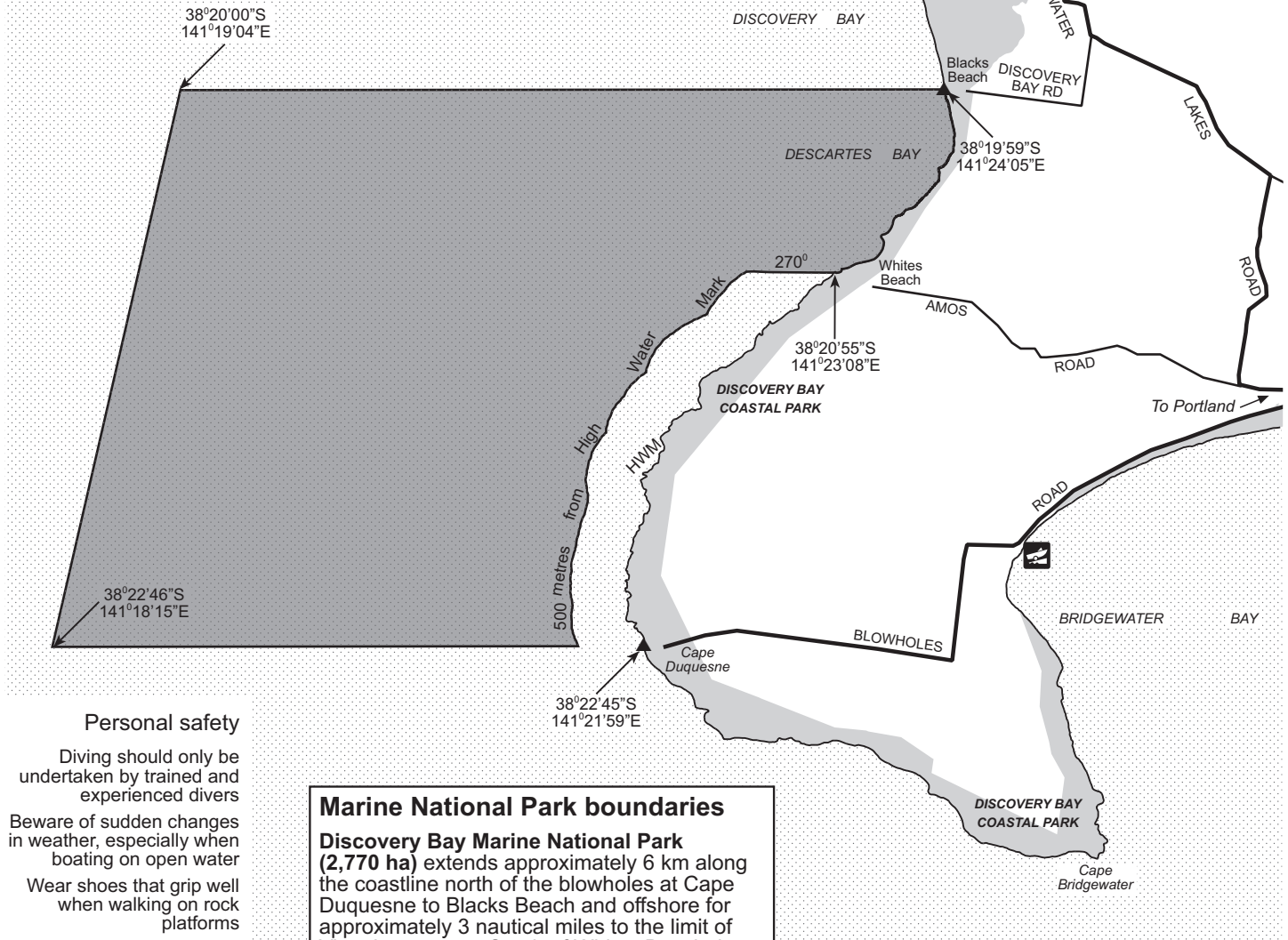


No fishing, netting, spearing, taking or killing of marine life. All methods of fishing, from the shore or at sea, are prohibited.



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 true position.



Personal safety

- Diving should only be undertaken by trained and experienced divers
- Beware of sudden changes in weather, especially when boating on open water
- Wear shoes that grip well when walking on rock platforms
- Be aware of large unexpected waves when walking on shore, especially on rock platforms
- Stay away from cliff edges and bases

Marine National Park boundaries

Discovery Bay Marine National Park (2,770 ha) extends approximately 6 km along the coastline north of the blowholes at Cape Duquesne to Blacks Beach and offshore for approximately 3 nautical miles to the limit of Victorian waters. South of Whites Beach the park boundary is 500 metres seaward of the high water mark.

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 all Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries from 16 November 2002.

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 contact the Parks Victoria Information Centre on **13 1963** or visit the Parks Victoria website at: **www.parkweb.vic.gov.au**

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

Caring for the marine environment

- Discarded gear and rubbish can endanger birds and marine animals – please take your rubbish home
- Always replace any organisms or rocks you may have disturbed
- Keep clear of bird nesting or roosting areas
- Avoid seal haul out areas