

GEELONG'S WETLANDS ARE VERY SPECIAL.

In fact they are so valuable that many have been listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. This international treaty was signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. The treaty aims to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and to conserve, through wise use and management, those that remain. By signing the treaty, the Australian Government has agreed to conserve its Ramsar wetlands forever.

WHY ARE GEELONG'S RAMSAR WETLANDS SO IMPORTANT?

Geelong's Ramsar wetlands contain many species and wetland habitats although they historically were more extensive within the region. Our wetlands are important breeding and feeding grounds for tens of thousands of waterbirds – seabirds, Gulls, Ibis, Herons, Spoonbills, Egrets, Waders, ducks, swans, grebes, Coots, Crakes and Rails! Some birds use our wetlands all year round, others are summer migrants from places as far away as Siberia and Japan.

A number of threatened species rely on our Ramsar wetlands. The Orange-bellied Parrot is one of the world's most endangered animals. These parrots migrate from their breeding grounds in Tasmania to spend winter feeding on the seeds of our saltmarsh plants. Other threatened birds you may see in our wetlands are: Little and Fairy Terns, Freckled and Blue-billed Ducks, Eastern Curlews, Pacific Gulls, Lewin's Rails, Australasian Bitterns and Baillon's Crakes. A number of threatened plants are also found in our Ramsar wetlands. The Rare Bitter-bush, Tiny Arrowgrass, Devious Sea-wrack and Sea Water-mat are now only found in a few locations.



OUR WETLANDS NEED YOUR HELP!

Since European settlement 30% of Victoria's wetlands have been destroyed and many are threatened. In Geelong, our wetlands are under pressure from changes to water flows, dredging, draining and filling, mining, pollution, weed invasion, pest animals (eg. European carp), grazing and certain recreational activities. Some pressures occur in the wetlands, others are caused by activities on surrounding land and upstream in wetland catchments.

CARING FOR OUR WETLANDS

If you live or work in a wetland catchment . . .

- Dispose of chemicals safely. Pouring them down the drain is the same as pouring them straight into your local creek, wetland or the ocean and its illegal !
- Use environmentally-safe detergents. Check the labels of what you buy, choose products with no phosphorus (and preferably in recycled or recyclable packages).
- Use weed and insect control chemicals sparingly and safely. Use the right product for the job.
- Protect creek and watercourse plants. These trap soil, excess nutrients and pollutants, preventing them from reaching wetlands, where they may smother sea-grass, cause algal blooms or poison fish.

WWW.GEELONGAUSTRALIA.COM.AU



For further information, contact:

CITY OF GREATER GEELONG
03 5227 0270

**CORANGAMITE CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY**
03 5232 9100
www.ccma.vic.gov.au

PARKS VICTORIA INFO LINE (24HRS)
131 963

**DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY
AND ENVIRONMENT**
136 186

GEELONG FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC
http://home.vicnet.au/~gfnrc

**INJURED BIRDS AND ANIMALS
JIRRAHLINGA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**
03 52542484



A project sponsored by the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality program a joint Initiative of the Victorian and Australian Governments.

When visiting wetlands . . .

- Keep 200m away from roosting, breeding or feeding waterbirds. Many have travelled vast distances and need to conserve energy to fly home to breed.
- Keep dogs on a lead and away from bird areas.
- Clean up after your dog!
- Don't trample plants. Coastal and wetland plants are easily damaged and can take many years to recover. Short-cuts and new paths encourage weeds, cause erosion and destroy plant and animal homes.
- Don't leave any rubbish behind. What you leave pollutes wetlands and can directly kill or injure wildlife (particularly fishing line, plastic bags and cigarette butts), as well as spoiling it for other visitors.

GEELONG'S WETLANDS ARE WONDERFUL look after them!

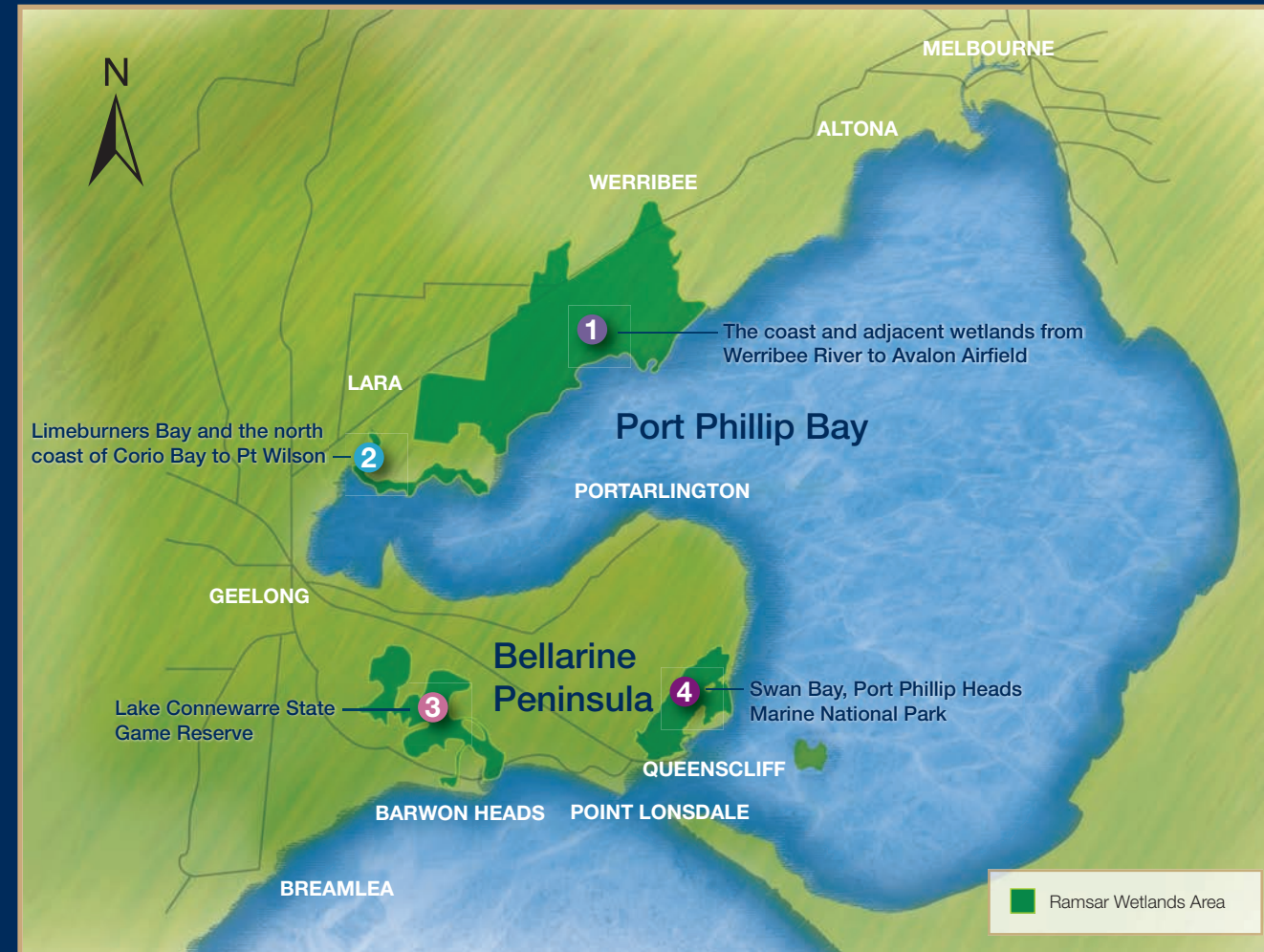
Photography by T. Pescott and G. McCarthy.

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GEELONG'S RAMSAR WETLANDS

(boundaries are approximate)



1 The coast and adjacent wetlands from Werribee River to Pt Wilson

(including Melbourne Water -Western Treatment Plant and The Spit Nature Conservation Reserve)

- Internationally-renowned for bird-watching and considered one of the top ten bird watching areas in Australia.
- Critically important for the endangered Orange-bellied Parrots.
- Several of the migratory waterbird species that visit are listed under international treaties.
- Largest breeding colony of Pied Cormorants in Victoria.

Access: **Permit holders ONLY**, contact Melbourne Water -Western Treatment Plant Ph: 131 722

2 Limeburners Bay and the north coast of Corio Bay to Pt Wilson

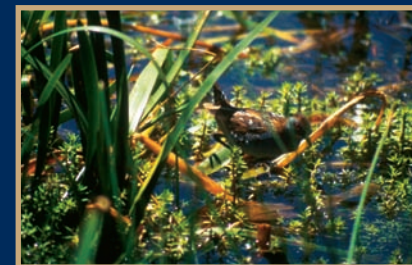
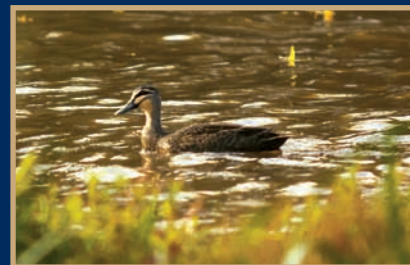
- Significant international, national, state and regional waterbirds habitat.
- Limeburners Bay supports the largest remaining area of white mangroves in Port Phillip Bay.
- Roost site for gulls, terns and cormorants.
- Significant Chaffy Saw Sedge vegetation community.
- One of the most intact saltmarsh complex communities.
- Large tracts of Shrubby Glasswort and Beaded Glasswort communities.

3 Lake Connewarre State Game Reserve

- Largest area of native vegetation left on Bellarine Peninsula.
- Very high diversity of saltmarsh plants.
- 3 plant species are at the limit of their distribution here.
- 1000s of resident waterbirds.
- Nesting site for over 10,000 Ibis.
- Important fish breeding grounds.

4 Swan Bay, Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park

- Extensive and diverse seagrass community.
- Important feeding and nursery area for fish including King George Whiting, Flounder and Leather Jacket.
- Saltmarsh fringes important for Orange-bellied Parrots.
- Extensive mudflats provide for the highest diversity of waders in Port Phillip Bay.
- Seagrass meadows provide important feeding grounds for Black Swans.



Over 65,000 migratory birds visit Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula in spring, summer and early autumn. This makes it the most important area for waders in Victoria. Most breed in Siberia, Central Asia and Japan and travel over 11,000km to escape the icy northern hemisphere winter.

One of these migrants, the tiny Red-necked Stint, weighs only 30g, nests north of the Arctic Circle and in its lifetime will fly as far as FROM EARTH TO THE MOON.