

# WILD FAMILIES



Enjoying, learning and looking after nature with the family

## WHAT'S UNDER THE SEA?

Did you know 80% of the marine species in South Eastern Australia live nowhere else in the world? Snorkelling in Victoria gives you the chance to experience unique marine life in seagrass beds, kelp forests, rocky reefs and sponge gardens.

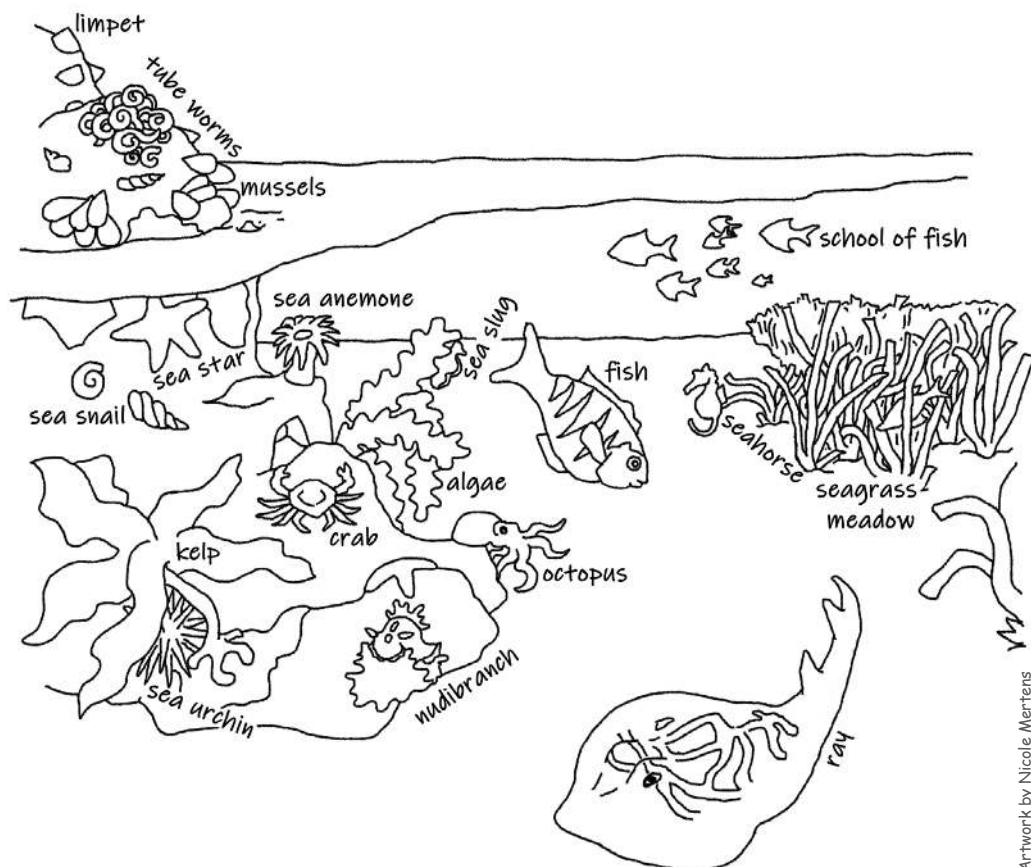
There are many amazing places to snorkel and experience marine life in Victoria.

## Book an adventure with a snorkel tour guide

If snorkelling is new to your family, going with one of the many snorkel tour operators in Victoria is a wonderful option. They provide you with gear, expertise and training and often share amazing stories and facts about the local marine life. Parks Victoria has a list of registered snorkel tour operators at <https://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/guided-tours/operators-by-activity>

## Under the Sea

How many colours are in this under the sea habitat?



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Artwork by Nicole Mertens



# WILD PLACE

Male weedy seadragons carry the eggs and can be seen at Portsea Pier.

Photo by Kade Mills

## PORT PHILLIP BAY

Port Phillip Bay is an extraordinary place to enjoy nature based adventures. There are many different habitats to explore including colourful sponge gardens, rocky reefs teeming with fish, seagrass meadows, kelp forests, open water and the sandy plains.

There are many wildlife species that call Port Phillip Bay home including burrunan dolphins, bottlenose dolphins, a resident Australian fur seal population, weedy seadragons, zebra fish, seastars, decorator crabs and even southern right whales have been known to visit.

Check out our map for some of the wonderful places your family could visit to experience marine life and some of the fascinating creatures you can experience there.

## Wildlife at snorkelling sites in Port Phillip Bay (see map):

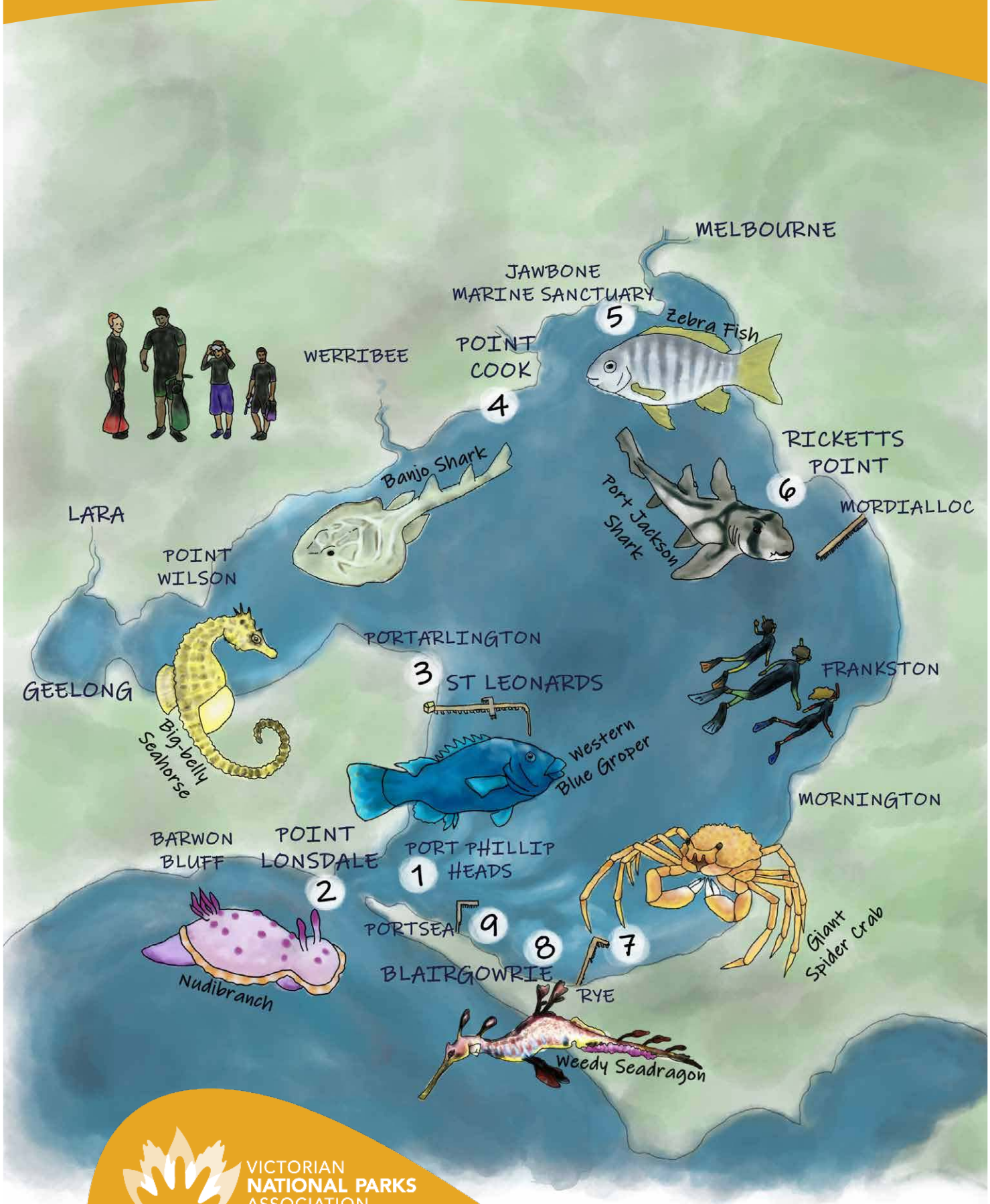
1. A boat and snorkel tour to Pope's Eye in Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park is a chance to make friends with a western blue groper. The blue groper changes colour through its lifetime and can even change from female to male.
2. Spot a nudibranch in the rockpools at Point Lonsdale. Nudibranchs are a type of marine snail which can be very brightly coloured. They are called nudibranchs because they are nude. This means that they don't have a shell.
3. Glide along under St Leonard's Pier and keep an eye out for the Big-belly seahorse. Seahorses aren't horses at all- they're fish! They have long, curly tails that they use to hold on tight to seaweed.
4. Meet a banjo shark at Point Cook. Banjo sharks belong to a group of rays and sharks.
5. Experience schools of zebra fish at Jawbone Marine Sanctuary. Zebra fish are stripey, just like real zebras.
6. Keep an eye out for the friendly port jackson shark on the rocky reef and seagrass beds at Ricketts Point. They have both tiny sharp teeth for grabbing food and large, flat teeth for crushing shells like crabs and snails.
7. Learn about the marine life at Rye Pier from interpretive signs on the Octopus Garden Trail.
8. Spot all of the colours of the rainbow in the sponge gardens under Blairgowrie Pier.
9. Search for Victoria's marine emblem, the weedy seadragon at Portsea Pier. The male seadragon carries the eggs on his tail until the babies are ready to hatch.



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# DISCOVERING PORT PHILLIP BAY



VICTORIAN  
NATIONAL PARKS  
ASSOCIATION  
Be part of nature

[www.vnpa.org.au](http://www.vnpa.org.au)

Artwork by Nicole Mertens



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## Your own snorkelling adventure

Here are some tips for families who are competent and keen try their own snorkelling adventure:

1. Do some research on the best and safest snorkelling spots in Victoria. Some of the great places to try snorkelling in Port Phillip Bay are included in this activity sheet.
2. Learn about and practice safe snorkelling techniques.
3. Hire some equipment from a reputable supplier if you don't have your own.
4. Choose calm conditions with flat water (no waves) as you will be safer and the water will be clearer.
5. Choose days where there is minimal wind so that everyone feels comfortable above the water.
6. Practice using the mask and snorkel in a pool or bath before getting going.
7. Use fins to propel yourself through the water and for easy return to shore.
8. Keep your mask tightly fitted to your face to stop it from leaking.
9. Defog it by rubbing toothpaste in the mask and washing it out before you leave home AND, don't forget to spit in it and rinse it out before putting it on.
10. Look at but don't touch or handle wildlife as it is stressful for the animals and they can be harmful.

*\*\*Always remember to consider safety on family adventures. Make sure the activities are suitable to your family's abilities, ensure competent supervision at all times, use a tour operator if you are not comfortable taking your tribe for a dip in the deep blue and don't forget to check local conditions.*



# WILD FAMILIES

## GREAT VICTORIAN FISH COUNT

Families with older children can be real marine biologists for the day by taking part in Victoria's largest marine citizen science event, the Great Victorian Fish Count.

See <https://vnpa.org.au/programs/great-victorian-fish-count/> for your chance to get involved.



Grandma and grandson join a Wild Families Great Victorian Fish Count activity.

Photo by Caitlin Griffith



How many zebra fish can you see?

Photo by Kade Mills