

# YOUR CLASS & THE GREAT VICTORIAN FISH COUNT

The Great Victorian Fish Count is welcoming schools from across the state



Photo: Nick Shaw

VICTORIAN SCHOOLS  
ARE SWIMMING TOGETHER!





# Join the largest marine citizen science event in Victoria!

## Where the students are marine scientists

**The Great Victorian Fish Count provides opportunities for passionate people to learn about and get involved in helping their local marine environment.**

It takes place throughout November and December, with hundreds of divers, snorkellers, school groups and marine care groups jumping into the water and collecting records of 35 different fish species found in Victoria's marine environment. Records collected then contribute to an annual snapshot of these species along the Victorian coastline.

The fish count is part of the ReefWatch program, which is led by the Victorian National Parks Association, a prime supporter of nature conservation in Victoria.

Take this opportunity to get your class into our ocean backyard to become marine scientists for the day, collecting real and valuable data on Victoria's wonderful marine species.



Smooth ray.

Photo: Saspotato - [www.flickr.com.au/photos/saspotato](http://www.flickr.com.au/photos/saspotato)





Students ready to see how many fish are in the sea.

Photo: Nick Shaw

## Try an underwater classroom for the day!

The Great Victorian Fish Count is a valuable opportunity for students to:

- Gain first-hand experience connecting with their local marine environment.
- Observe changes taking place and understanding how fish species are adapting to survive.
- Collect important data on local biodiversity, climate change and marine conservation.

### Students back on shore

Records from the Great Victorian Fish Count are publicly accessible on the Atlas of Living Australia. Back in the classroom students can use the atlas database to:

- Upload their own Great Victorian Fish Count records, which will be accessed by scientists, divers and people from around the world.

- Collate their own records and compare them with previous years.
- Compare their results with other sites across the state.
- Choose a species of fish and compare records of this fish at sites across Victoria.

Great Victorian Fish Count data on the Atlas of Living Australia can be found at <http://bit.ly/biocollect>.

Other fun classroom projects could include:

- Prepare a report, poster or other artwork about their experience or findings on the Great Victorian Fish Count.
- Imagine and discuss what we can do as a community for our marine environment.

**The kids loved the snorkeling experience. It really surprised me how many hadn't been before.**

– Salesian College, 2016



## How do I get my class involved?

**To get your class involved in the Great Victorian Fish Count you will need to:**

1. Find a qualified snorkel leader to supervise your activity (required). You can contact your local dive store or one of the dive stores listed on page seven that has previously participated in the Great Victorian Fish Count. You can discuss fees with the dive store or qualified snorkel leader.
2. Select a site and location during the Great Victorian Fish Count (mid-November to mid-December each year). You can contact the Victorian National Parks Association or your qualified snorkel leader for advice.
3. Register your activity with the Victorian National Parks Association (required) to receive a Great Victorian Fish Count kit, including identification slates, instruction booklet, registration forms, data sheets and t-shirts for all your students.
4. Run your activity and enjoy being marine biologists.
5. Submit the data collected by your class to the Victorian National Parks Association using the instructions provided on registration.
6. Try your own classroom activities using Great Victorian Fish Count data from the Atlas of Living Australia.





Participants at the 2017 Great Victorian Fish Count 'jump for joy' after a successful dive.

## Connecting with your curriculum

The Great Victorian Fish Count is a valuable program that can be incorporated into any year level as part of Sustainability, a cross-curriculum priority in the Victorian Curriculum. It relates to the three key concepts of:

- **Systems:** Highlighting how lifeforms (including humans) are connected through ecosystems.
- **World views:** Experiences at personal, local and wider levels are linked to individual and community action for sustainability.
- **Futures:** Exploring how understanding our environment will lead to action for a more sustainable future

The Great Victorian Fish Count relates to:

### Outdoor and Environmental Studies

- Develop skills, knowledge and behaviours that promote safe and sustainable interaction with outdoor environments.
- Identify and analyse the strategies used to protect, conserve and manage outdoor environments in

a sustainable manner.

- Understand the implications of trends towards sustainable environmental relationships (VCE Units 1 to 4).

### Science

- The growth and survival of living things are affected by the physical conditions of their environment (Years 5 and 6).
- Interactions between organisms can be described in terms of food chains and food webs and can be affected by human activity (Years 7 and 8).
- Ecosystems consist of communities of interdependent organisms and abiotic components of the environment; matter and energy flow through these systems (Years 9 and 10).

### Health and Physical Education

- Participate in outdoor games and activities to examine how participation promotes a connection between the community, natural and built environments, health and wellbeing (Years 3 and 4).





## It's time to make it count!

The Great Victorian Fish Count sees participants head out for an enjoyable scuba dive or snorkel with their group. They take a waterproof slate displaying illustrations of the marine species being counted and a waterproof pencil.

Once back on shore, participants bring their results together as a group. The collated data is added to the online database the Atlas of Living Australia, which is accessible to marine scientists, managers and the public.

Schools can participate in the Great Victorian Fish Count with resources provided by the Victorian National Parks Association's ReefWatch program. School teachers are provided with registration information,

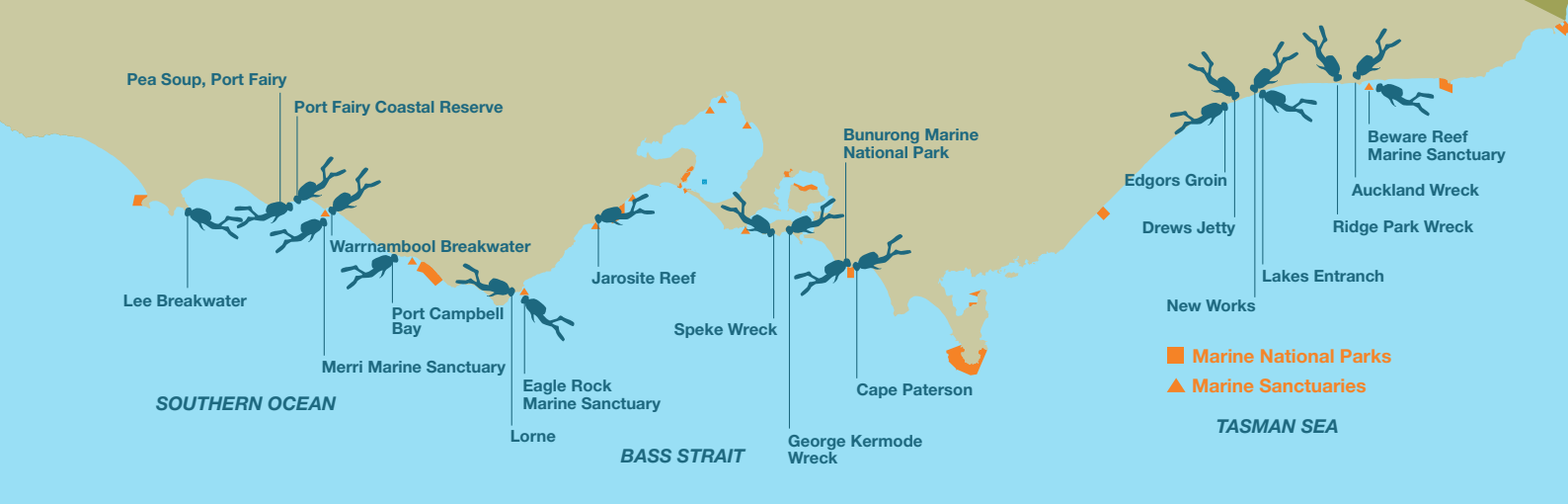
identification slates and T-shirts for all your students!

School groups will need a qualified snorkel leader to guide their group. You can contact a local dive store or one of the dive stores listed here that has previously participated in the fish count if your school is in need of a qualified snorkel leader.

**Please contact with us if you have any further questions:**

- Kade Mills: ReefWatch  
Coordinator  
Email: [kade@vnpa.org.au](mailto:kade@vnpa.org.au)  
Phone: (03) 9341 6519

For further information check out the Great Victorian Fish Count on the Victorian National Parks Association website: [vnpa.org.au/programs/great-victorian-fish-count](http://vnpa.org.au/programs/great-victorian-fish-count)



Groups have participated in the Great Victorian Fish Count at sites all along the coast.

## Dive store contacts for school groups

Name	Location	Contact details
Aquability	Mordialloc 3195	Phone: 03 9587 1811 Email: <a href="mailto:info@aquability.com.au">info@aquability.com.au</a>
Australian Diving Instruction	31 Melbourne Road, Geelong North VIC 3125	Phone: (03) 5272 2181 Email: <a href="mailto:adigeelong@iinet.net.au">adigeelong@iinet.net.au</a>
BayPlay	Portsea 3944	Phone: 03 5984 0888
Bellarine Snorkel Tours and Marine Education	Bellarine 3223	Phone: 0423 258 510
Daktari Surf and Dive	Warrnambool	Phone: (03) 5562 4006
Dive2U	Carrum Downs 3201	Phone: 0409 411 299 Email: <a href="mailto:dive@dive2u.com">dive@dive2u.com</a>
Ecologic Education and Environment Services	Anglesea 3230	Phone: 03 5263 1133 Email: <a href="mailto:tours@ecologic.net.au">tours@ecologic.net.au</a>
Scuba Culture	117 Highbury Road Burwood VIC 3125	Phone: 03 98080033 Email: <a href="mailto:info@scubaculture.com.au">info@scubaculture.com.au</a>
Sea All Dolphin Swims	Queenscliff 3225	Phone: 03 5258 3889 Email: <a href="mailto:crew@dolphinswims.com.au">crew@dolphinswims.com.au</a>
South Gippsland Conservation Society/Bunurong Coast Education	Inverloch	Email: <a href="mailto:webster.rodney@gmail.com">webster.rodney@gmail.com</a> Phone: 0434145816



