

Melbourne Sea Slug Census XI 28 - 31 January 2022

Thanks to everyone who submitted photos to the 2022 January Melbourne Sea Slug Census (28-31 January).

The wonderful folks from Otway Ocean Care hosted ReefWatch and some long-term Census contributors for a weekend of searching reef and rockpools with their community. Victorian National Parks Association's Wild Families, Parks Victoria's South Port Phillip team, Diveline Scuba Centre, and the Marine Research Group of the Field Naturalist's Club of Victoria also found slugs at events held over the Census weekend, along with many other individuals and buddy pairs across the state.

In all, we received photos from 17 individuals or teams at Apollo Bay, Berry's Beach Phillip Island, Beware Reef, Blairgowrie, Boarfish Reef, Coral Cove Mornington, Marengo Reef, Mushroom Reef, Point Franklin Portsea, Point Lonsdale, and Point Roadknight Anglesea. Together, we found a total of **70 species** of sea slug.

And now to the results you've all been waiting for...

BEST NUDI SPOTTER (with the highest count of the Census) – Nick Shaw, taking back the crown here with his 34 species. Nick's closest competition was Steven Kuitert with 27 species. Well done!



BEST PHOTO (Awarded by Bob Burn) – Holly Baird, *Aphelodoris* sp.

Holly has captured almost all of the slug and its major features in focus in this vibrant shot - it would be the perfect photo for identification, if we weren't dealing with a particularly tricky subset of dorids! Many of Victoria's *Aphelodoris* species have very similar, overlapping external features such as the mottled pattern on the mantle, broken outline on the mantle edge, and dark gills and rhinophores.



HONOURABLE MENTION (Chosen by Bob Burn) – Nick Shaw, *Phyllodesmium serratum*

This striking shot of one of our more commonly spotted slugs does well to frame the subject against a simple background of sponge and shows superb detail in the cerata and facial markings.

The awards for most interesting photos are on the following page.

MOST INTERESTING PHOTO (Awarded by Bob Burn) – Jeremy Bishop, *Eubranchus* sp.

Bob was impressed with the detail captured in this tiny, unusual *Eubranchus*. While it bears similar features to several known but undescribed species, it isn't an exact match to any he's seen before. This isn't the first time an odd *Eubranchus* has featured in our Census - it seems we have quite a few here in Victoria! Well done to Jeremy.



HONOURABLE MENTION (Chosen by Bob Burn)-
John Olden, *Doriopsilla* sp.

John's photo at first appears to be one of the darker colour forms of *Doriopsilla carneola*, but Bob remarks that the mantle tubercles are quite pronounced, and look to be raised and hardened. *Doriopsilla peculiaris* has raised tubercles, but is described as being much softer in appearance (and feel) than *D. carneola*. It's a bit of a headscratcher, but again, a very nice shot of the animal that captures most of the usual identifying features in focus!

With more and more photographers submitting wonderful images it is getting harder to narrow down just a handful of winners each time! Visit www.vnpa.org.au/sea-slugs to see a showcase of more fascinating and fabulous entries.



To help hone those identification skills, and to alert you all to some of the species you may have overlooked in the past, we have selected an image of each species found and provided the number of teams that found it (out of a total of 17).

The initials of the photographers that took the image are shown in brackets (key to all photographers who submitted images below).

Photographers:

Emjax- iNaturalist (EiN), Glenys Greenwood (GG), Holly Baird (HB), Jeremy Aarons (JA), Jeremy Bishop (JB), John Olden (JO), Julie Wrigton (JW), Kade Mills (KM), Monique Bregman (PV), Nicole Mertens (NM), Paul Sorenson (PS), Peter Crockett (PC), Steven Kuitert (SK), Trevor Graham (TG)



Ceratosoma brevicaudatum (GG)
(10 sightings)



Madrella sanguinea (JO)
(8 sightings)



Verconia haliclona (SK)
(8 sightings)



Phyllodesmium serratum (NS)
(7 sightings)



Carminodoris nodulosa (JO)
(6 sightings)



Tambja dracomus (SK)
(5 sightings)



Tambja verconis (SK)
(5 sightings)



Aplysia sydneyensis (JO)
(4 sightings)



Doriopsilla peculiaris (SK)
(4 sightings)



Doto ostenta (NS)
(4 sightings)



Ercolania boodleeae (NM)
(4 sightings)



Facelina sp. RB3 (NS)
(4 sightings)



Kaloplocamus ramosus (SK)
(4 sightings)



Lamellaria ophione (SK)
(4 sightings)



Polybranchia pallens (PS)
(4 sightings)



Tritonia sp. RB2 (SK)
(4 sightings)



Aplysia concava (NM)
(4 sightings)



Aplysia juliana (NM)
(3 sightings)



Aplysia sowerbyi (PS)
(3 sightings)



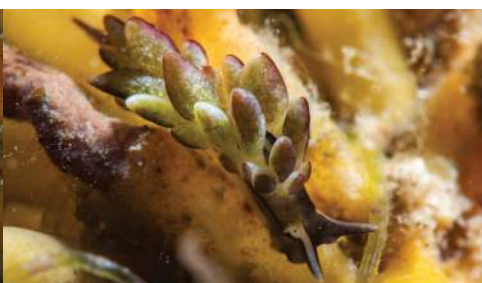
Austreaolis ornata (SK)
(3 sightings)



Baeolidia macleayi (JB)
(3 sightings)



Doriopsilla carneola (NS)
(3 sightings)



Ercolania margaritae (JB)
(3 sightings)



Goniobranchus epicurius. (SK)
(3 sightings)



Philinopsis taronga (PS)
(3 sightings)



Polycera hedgpethi (PS)
(3 sightings)



Trapania brunnea (SK)
(3 sightings)



Chromodoris alternata (SK)
(2 sightings)



Doto pita (JB)
(2 sightings)



Eubranchus sp. (JB)
(2 sightings)



Goniobranchus sp. (JA)
(2 sightings)



Goniodoris meracula (PS)
(2 sightings)



Hermaea sp. RB1 (SK)
(2 sightings)



Okenia sp. RB1 (JB)
(2 sightings)



Oxynoe viridis (SK)
(2 sightings)



Paradoris dubia (GG)
(2 sightings)



Pleurobranchus hilli (NS)
(2 sightings)



Sclerodoris sp. (NS)
(2 sightings)



Tergipes sp. (JB)
(2 sightings)



Trinchesia catachroma (MB)
(2 sightings)



Tritonia sp. RB3 (SK)
(2 sightings)



Aphelodoris sp. (HB)
(1 sighting)



Aphelodoris sp. RB1 (HB)
(1 sighting)



Aplysiopsis formosa (NM)
(1 sighting)



Berthelinia babai (NS)
(1 sighting)



Berthella medietas (TG)
(1 sighting)



Caldukia affinis (NS)
(1 sighting)



Ceratosoma amoenum (HB)
(1 sighting)



Cerberilla sp. RB1 (SK)
(1 sighting)



Dendrodoris arborescens (NS)
(1 sighting)



Dermatobranchus rubidus (SK)
(1 sighting)



Discodoris paroa (SK)
(1 sighting)



Doriopsilla sp. (JO)
(1 sighting)



Elysia coodgeensis (NS)
(1 sighting)



Favorinus sp. RB1 (NS)
(1 sighting)



Flabellina sp. RB2 (JB)
(1 sighting)



Hermaea sp. RB2 (SK)
(1 sighting)



Hypselodoris bennetti (HB)
(1 sighting)



Lamellaria australis (NM)
(1 sighting)



Melanochlamys queritor (NM)
(1 sighting)



Melibe sp. RB1 (SK)
(1 sighting)



Onchidella nigricans (NM)
(1 sighting)



Philine sp. (NS)
(1 sighting)



Rostanga sp. (JO)
(1 sighting)



Runcina sp. RB1 (JB)
(1 sighting)



Sclerodoris sp. RB1 (NS)
(1 sighting)



Sclerodoris tarka (SK)
(1 sighting)



Tambja sp. RB2 (SK)
(1 sighting)



Vayssiorea caledonica (SK)
(1 sighting)



Unknown dorid sp. (NS)
(1 sighting)

Finally, a very big THANKYOU to:



All of you for your enthusiastic participation!



Bob Burn for his invaluable assistance with identification and for imparting his knowledge and insights to help improve everyone's identification skills.

Happy slug hunting and hope to see you all again for the next Melbourne Sea Slug Census!

Remember, there are also events in other parts of the country – notification of these will be made through the network of Facebook and web sites.

Sea Slug Census Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/seaslugcensus/>

Nicole Mertens (local organiser)

Victorian National Parks Association

Steve Smith & Matt Nimbs

Sea Slug Census program