

Wild Families Activity Sheet



Summer snorkelling

Sneak a peek at life below the surface

Did you know 70 to 90 per cent of marine life in south-eastern Australia are found nowhere else in the world? Snorkelling in Victoria gives you the chance to see unique marine animals in seagrass beds, kelp forests, rocky reefs and sponge gardens.

Nerm is the Bunurong name for Port Phillip Bay. Along with the Wurundjeri and Wauthurong, the Bunurong are the Traditional Owners of the waters of the bay.



1 Do some research on the best and safest snorkelling spots near you. There's plenty of great places to try snorkelling across the Victorian coast.



2 Learn about and practice safe snorkelling techniques. Practice using your mask and snorkel in a pool or your bath before you head to the ocean.



3 If you don't have your own gear (fins and a mask), you might be able to hire some from your local dive store.



4 Choose calm conditions with little wind and waves. Slack tides will make you feel more comfortable and safe plus the water will be clearer!



5 Defog your mask by rubbing toothpaste in it and washing it out before you leave home. And don't forget to spit in it and rinse it out before putting it on.



6 Use fins to propel yourself through the water and for easy return to shore. Try to move your legs from the hips (not your knees), keep your toes pointed, and use gentle, long kicks.



7 Keep your mask tightly fitted to your face to stop it from leaking. Get someone to check that your hair isn't caught between your mask and face when you put it on.



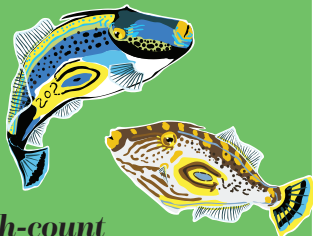
8 Look at but don't touch wildlife. It's stressful for the animals, and some might protect themselves with a painful bite or sting.

Great Victorian Fish Count

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

To get involved, visit

vnpa.org.au/fish-count



Safety first when snorkelling!

Always remember to consider safety on family adventures. Make sure the activities are suitable for your family's abilities, you have competent supervision at all times, and don't forget to check local weather conditions.

If snorkelling is new to your family, we suggest going with a snorkel tour operator. They'll provide the gear, expertise and training you need for a great adventure. Plus they'll share amazing stories and facts about local marine life. You can find a list of snorkel tour operators registered with Parks Victoria at parks.vic.gov.au/lto



Wildlife at snorkelling sites in Port Phillip Bay/Nerm

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. This fish 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 without a shell, and have feathery, 'nude' gills on their backs.
3. Glide along under St Leonard's Pier and keep an eye out for the Big-belly Seahorse. These fish 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 fish including rays and sharks.
5. Swim with schools of black-and-white striped Zebra Fish at Jawbone Marine Sanctuary.
6. Keep an eye out for the friendly Port Jackson Shark hiding under rocky reefs and searching for food in seagrass beds at Ricketts Point.
7. Learn about the marine life at Rye Pier from interpretive signs on the Octopus Garden Trail.
8. Spot all the colours of the rainbow in the sponge gardens under Blairgowrie Pier.
9. Search for Victoria's marine animal emblem, the Weedy Seadragon, at Portsea Pier. The male seadragon carries the eggs on his long tail until the babies are ready to hatch.

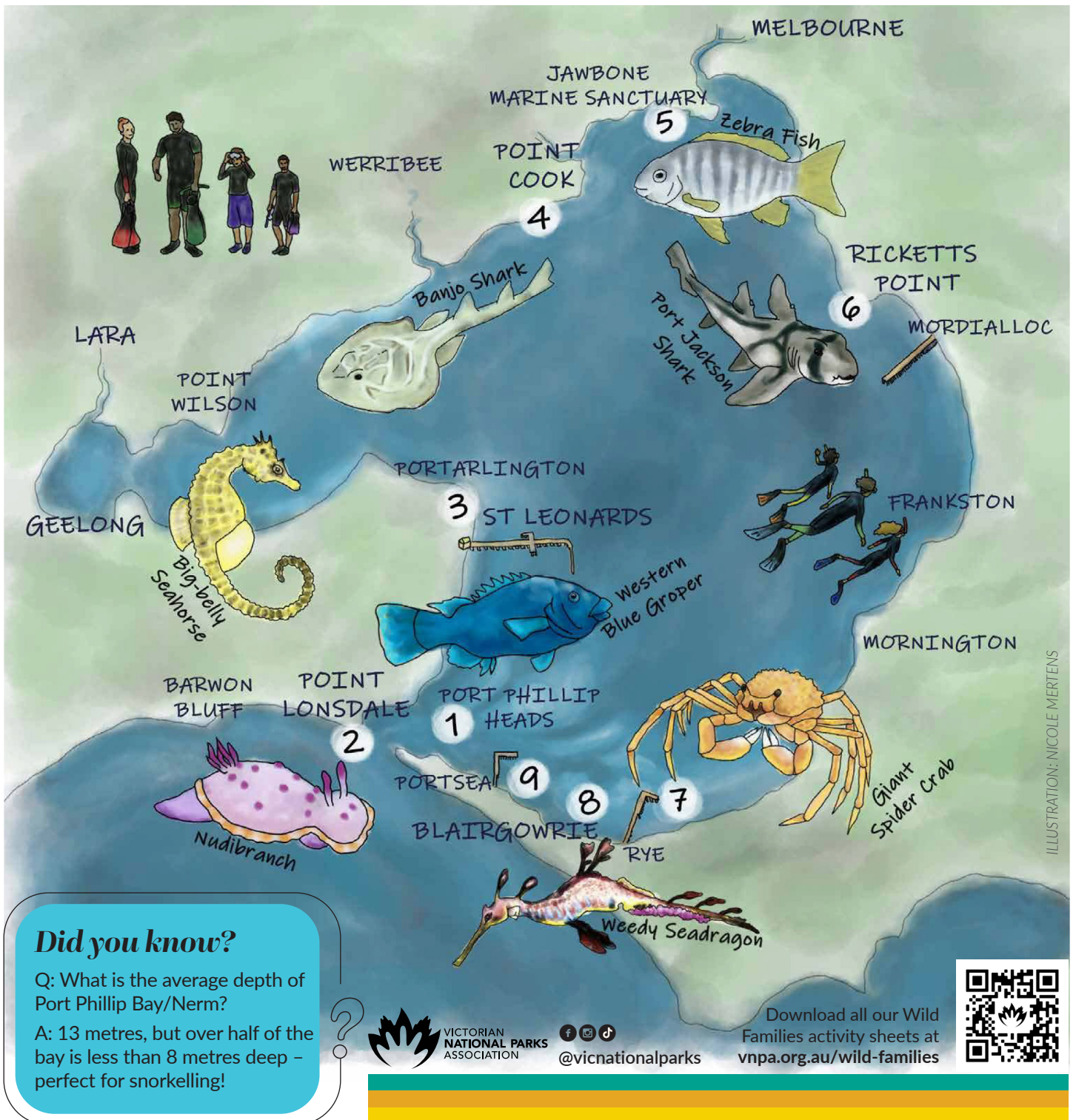


ILLUSTRATION: NICOLE MERTENS

Did you know?

Q: What is the average depth of Port Phillip Bay/Nerm?

A: 13 metres, but over half of the bay is less than 8 metres deep – perfect for snorkelling!



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