

# NATURE RESERVES



## of WARRNAMBOOL & DISTRICT



## ***Nature Reserves of Warrnambool & District***

John Hargreaves and Michael Wright  
revised edition 2019

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#### **Important note**

Australian native plants growing in the wild are protected by law. It is an offence to remove them or any plant material without a permit. The authors do not encourage or condone any unauthorised interference with native plants.

#### **Acknowledgements**

The authors acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands where the nature reserves of Warrnambool and District now stand, pay respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play in our community and culture.

This booklet is a reworking of the much-loved and well-thumbed guide first published three decades ago by the Warrnambool & District Society for Growing Australian Plants.

Many made valuable contributions: Ken Arthur, Vivian Bounds, Brett Clarke, Cherree Densley, Shirley Duffield, Jenny Emeny, Annie Fraser, Andrew Govanstone, Peter Grenfell, Richard Hodgins, Lou Hollis, Jodie Honan, Robert Lowe, Lisette Mill, Sue Mudford, Jane O'Beirne, Susan Rowbottom, John Sherwood, Kevin Sparrow, David Sproal, Matthew Talbot, Karen Wales and Laura Weedon.



## **Introduction**

The meaning of the word *reserve* suggests something held back. In fact, the history of the Warrnambool and District reserves shows clearly that these lands were not held back but taken back. At settlement, the port areas of Warrnambool and Port Fairy were squatted on without legal tenure, forcing the instigation of the Special Survey System to provide for the selection and purchase of land. At that time, the idea of reservation, with the exception of town commons, racecourses and botanical gardens, was not popular.

It is thought that this Special Survey System was introduced to allow only wealthy groups to purchase land, rendering them able to exercise law and order, and develop areas that the government was unable to administer. This wholesale cutting up of the land occurred from 1835, with the township of Warrnambool being surveyed in 1847 allowing for further establishment of smaller allotments, which often included coastline and river embankments to the high-water mark.

With the rapid increase in population, the impact on the coast in particular was to become obvious, resulting in the declaration of one of the area's first reserves, Thunder Point. Its title, *Permanently Reserved for the Prevention of the Irruption of Sand*, gives us an indication of the concerns of the time. Tower Hill was to follow, with the distinction of being the world's third declared national park, a title which failed to protect it. Without doubt, what our local reserves lack in area is adequately compensated for by their diversity. From fern gullies to coastal cliffs, there is a heritage which was taken back for all to enjoy.

John Amor 1949-2010 (from the original edition)

## **Dedication**

Farmers and others who donate land; Friends Groups; Landcare and Coastcare Groups; Schools; Clubs and Societies; other Community Groups; Local, State and Federal Government Officers and Employees; Non-government Organizations; Scientists; Legislators; Conservation Activists. . . Thank you one-and-all for your vision, hard work, generosity and persistence. Without you, there would be few if any nature reserves left for us to visit and experience.



## Notes about using the guide

This booklet is a guide to places where the last remnants of the once diverse and prolific native flora of Warrnambool and District can still be found. Although large, high-profile reserves are included, most are small and many are obscure.

The reserves are listed in alphabetical order, except where grouped under a precinct heading, for example *Bay of Islands Coastal Park*. The map in the centre pages (pp12-13) shows where the reserves are located and is a great place to start.









Each entry is in two parts. First, there is a brief description of the reserve's flora and some notes on native animals, geology, local history and cultural heritage. Second, details about its location, how to get there and basic site facilities are given.

The flora in each reserve is characterised using simplified Ecological Vegetation Groups, which summarise some 300 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) across Victoria. For more information, access DELWP's *Victorian bioregions and EVC benchmarks* listed on the resources page (p23).

Common names for plants are used in the entries. Detailed species lists are available by accessing the *Indigenous Plants* webpages on the Warrnambool City Council and Moyne Shire websites, or in the reference books (p23).

Locations are given in Latitude and Longitude using the decimal degree format.

Symbols summarise hazards and on-site facilities:

Key to symbols			
	bit tricky to find		picnic facilities
	rough or informal tracks		shelter
	information boards		toilets
	bird hide		camping nearby

When visiting reserves, please tread lightly and respect the plants and animals. Remember that it is illegal to remove indigenous artefacts and native plants or plant materials without a permit. Leave gates as you find them. To ensure safe and enjoyable visits, wear appropriate clothing, carry water, a first aid kit, and tell someone where you are going. Avoid visiting reserves on days of Total Fire Ban. Unless otherwise indicated, camping is prohibited in these reserves.

## Badhams Road railway reserve

This remnant Herb-rich Woodland has native grasses and wildflowers, Manna Gums and Blackwoods growing both sides of the old track bed. Now a section of the Port Fairy-Warrnambool Rail Trail, the line operated from 1890 to 1977.

**38.31625°S 142.26778°E**

20 minutes west of Warrnambool; take Princes Hwy through Killarney, turn right into Penshurst-Port Fairy Rd, left into Badhams Rd; look for rail trail crossing.

## Bay of Islands Coastal Park

Exposed constantly to salt and high winds, flora is characterised by prostrate and dwarf forms in these lesser-known sites among the 950 hectare remnant Coastal Scrub, Grassland, and Woodland that stretches along 35 km of coast.

## Backyards

Flora seen from the spectacular cliff-top path includes Common and White Correa, Prickly Currant Bush, Coast Beard-heath, Coast Everlasting and Running Postman. It was named by surfers who access a favourite break here.

**38.43590°S 142.58833°E**

20 minutes south-east of Warrnambool; as for Lake Gilleear, but continue along Buckley Rd to car park at end.

## Childers Cove

This picturesque site features vibrant flora including Correa Western Pink Star. Distinctive 40 m high red limestone bluffs can be seen from across the district. Its name derives from the 1839 wreck of the barque *Children*.

**38.48993°S 142.67723°E**   

25 minutes south-east of Warrnambool; as for Mepunga Water Reserve, but continue along Childers Cove Rd, turn right into the access road and follow signs to end.

## Crofts Bay

Spectacular wildflower displays are seen in spring and the rare Drooping Velvet-bush grows here. Forming the western-most


cove within the larger Bay of Martyrs, the windjammer *Falls of Halladale* was wrecked nearby in 1908.

**38.58761°S 142.83366°E** 

40 minutes south-east of Warrnambool; take The Great Ocean Road towards Peterborough and look for car park on right 1 km past Bay of Islands turnoff.

## Flaxmans Hill

Never cleared for farming and only lightly grazed, the flora on the inaccessible steep slopes of the rolling hills and cliffs is of great botanical significance and contains rare plants such as the striking Metallic Sun-orchid.

**38.53248°S 142.73718°E** 


40 minutes south-east of Warrnambool; take The Great Ocean Road through Nullawarre, go straight on at intersection with Childers Cove Rd into Mathiesons Rd; follow to end.

## Belfast Coastal Reserve

Extending from Belfast Lough near Port Fairy to Spookys Beach near Warrnambool, low basalt reefs, protected lagoons and exposed sweeping beaches backed by dunes and wetlands. Pockets of remnant Wetland, Coastal Scrub, Grassland and Woodland flora survive, though exotic weeds dominate much of the landscape. Ongoing revegetation projects by community and school groups are improving biodiversity.

## Kellys Swamp

This section of the nationally significant Lower Merri River Wetlands floods regularly. Remnant aquatic and riparian flora provides vibrant shorebird, wader and waterfowl habitat. The threatened Magpie Goose is regularly seen here.






**38.36386°S 142.41817°E** 

10 minutes west of Warrnambool; take Merri St through into Wellington St-Merrivale Dve-McMeekin Rd, left into Gay St-Swinton St and follow to end; access on foot via the gate.

## Killarney dunes & wetlands

Poa, Club Rush, Coast Beard-heath and Woolly Tea-tree are fairly common through the dunes. Traditionally *women's*



*country*, coastal clans of the Peek Whuurong people gathered here for the abundant food sources. Shelter offered by inshore reefs makes this ideal habitat for migratory shorebirds and the resident, endangered Hooded Plover, though aggressive erosion is reducing areas of permanently dry sand needed for nesting.

**38.35558°S 142.33455°E**     

20 minutes west of Warrnambool; take Princes Hwy to Killarney, turn left into Mahoneys Rd and follow to camping and sports reserve at end.

## Rutledges Cutting & Saltwater Swamp


Remnant saltmarsh sedges and Beaded Glasswort provide food for Neophema parrots during the crucial mid-winter period. Many beach-nesting birds find shelter here during the cold and stormy winters and it is a hot spot for waders over summer. The Cutting is the western-most outlet of the Merri River and the remains of the mythical *Mahogany Ship* are reputed to be hereabouts.

**38.34788°S 142.36831°E**  

15 minutes west of Warrnambool; take Princes Hwy past Tower Hill, turn left into Gormans Rd and follow to end.

## Broadwater Flora Reserve

A 6 hectare remnant Plains Swampy Woodland and Herb-rich Woodland featuring Small Grasstree, Sweet Bursaria and Hop Goodenia. The damp sandy soil is typical of this low-lying plain, once a mosaic of wetlands, now largely drained.

**338.18406°S 142.01178°E** 

50 minutes west of Warrnambool; as for Orford Sports Ground but continue along High St, left into Masons Rd, right into Pallisters Rd; look for gate on left after 1.5 km.

## Budj Bim National Park

The extensive 8,375 hectare Hills Woodland, Plains Forest and Wetland contains a volcanic complex of caves, tunnels, scoria mounds and flooded craters. Diverse flora includes Victoria's largest stand of Manna Gum, prolific Blackwoods, four threatened plant species and seven of regional significance. Unusual bioluminescent fungi are found here. Home to one of Australia's largest Koala populations.

Formerly called *Mt Eccles*, it was declared a National Park in 1960 and now forms part of a National Heritage Landscape that encompasses the Tyrendarra lava flow and Lake Condah. *Budj Bim* means *high head*. Gunditjmara Traditional Owners and Parks Victoria manage Victoria's first co-managed national park.

**38.05781°S 141.92338°E** 

55 minutes northwest of Warrnambool; as for Orford Sports Ground, but continue along Hamilton-Port Fairy Rd to Macarthur, turn left at Mt Eccles Rd and follow the signs.

## Cobra Killuc Wildlife Reserve

Together with adjoining **Ridge Paddock**, these form the largest nature reserve in the Dundas Tablelands. They comprise 662 hectares of Plains Grassland and Grassy Woodland, significant remnants of some of Victoria's most threatened ecosystems, and one of the largest and most species-rich reserves in the state.

**37.93558°S 142.74054°E** 

55 minutes north of Warrnambool; take Hopkins Hwy to Mortlake, turn left into Hamilton Hwy, turn right onto Woodcutters Ln 4 km before Hexham and follow for 7.5 km until the woodland; enter gate next to reserve sign for woodland walk; enter gate opposite for grassland walk.

## The Craggs Coastal Reserve

A remnant strip of Coastal Scrub, Grassland and Woodland, its flora includes Blue Tussock-grass, Bower Spinach, Coast Saltbush and Hairy Spinifex. With its sweeping ocean views, this is an important cultural site of the Maar nation.

**38.37120°S 142.11095°E** 

35 minutes west of Warrnambool; take the Princes Hwy 10 km past Port Fairy, turn left into The Craggs Rd.

**Note:** The habitat is very fragile, so visitors are requested to keep to the path and viewing platform.

## Curdies Siding railway reserve

This lush Riparian Forest has mature Manna Gum and Messmate Stringybark stands on the slopes, with Blackwoods and fern-rich


understory in the valley of the tannin coloured Limestone Creek. The endangered Lime Fern survives here. Operating from 1892 to 1987, this section of the line with its historic wooden trestle bridges is now part of the Camperdown-Timboon Rail Trail.

**38.44491°S 142.95966°E** 

45 minutes east of Warrnambool; take Great Ocean Road to Nullawarre, turn left into Timboon-Nullawarre Rd, follow to outskirts of Timboon, left into Curdies River Rd, right into Limeworks Rd and follow to car park under trestle bridge; scale embankment and walk along trail into valley.

## Doug Fenwick Reserve

This 40 hectare remnant Herb-rich Woodland was purchased with funds raised by public appeal and named for a local veterinarian and past President of the Warrnambool Nature Reserves Society. Rosy Hyacinth-orchid and Mitchells Wattle grow here, and the vulnerable Long-nosed Potoroo may be present.

**38.52656°S 142.77551°E** 

40 minutes south-east of Warrnambool; take The Great Ocean Road through Nirranda, turn right into Baileys Rd; after 2 km look on right at far end (south) of the reserve for a management track with gate; walk the track around the perimeter.

## Ellerslie bridge & cemetery

Stranded Manna Gums and River Red-gums upstream and down are last remnants of Riparian Woodland. Swamp Weed and other aquatics thrive under the heritage listed bridge built in 1867. Plains Grassland is found in the cemetery.

**38.15095°S 142.68255°E** 


35 minutes north of Warrnambool; take Hopkins Hwy to Ellerslie and turn right into the reserve by the bridge. The cemetery is along Ellerslie-Panmure Rd.

## Framlingham Forest

This 1130 hectare Riparian and Dry Forest is the largest remnant woodland in the Hopkins River catchment, noteworthy for its Swamp Gums and River Red-gums along the riverbank. *Palart*, or Cherry Ballart, is one of several timbers collected to make



traditional tools and weapons. Declared Aboriginal Land in 1987, it is managed by the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust.

**38.29240°S 142.6699°E** ? 

25 minutes north-east of Warrnambool; take Hopkins Hwy to Purnim, turn right into Blacks La, left at the water tank into Wangoom-Warrumyea Rd; after 2 km take unsealed road on right, pass cemetery and look for track on right to cascades.


## Francis Tozer Memorial Reserve

Over 100 species of native flora have regenerated in this 20 hectare Plains Grassy Woodland and Swampy Scrub. Donated by the landowner to local schools in 1926, indigenous flora regenerated naturally after pines were cleared in the 1990s. Students continue with revegetation projects in this environmental education and conservation reserve.

**Note:** Access is only by prior arrangement with the management committee (contact Warrnambool City Council).

## F R Wilton Reserve


Dense stands of Messmate and Prickly Tea-tree feature in this 3 hectare remnant Lowland Forest and Wetland. A pond once provided a permanent water supply for bullock teams until an earthquake drained it in 1903.

**38.41690°S 142.70343°E** ? 

20 minutes east of Warrnambool; take Princes Hwy to Allansford, turn right into The Great Ocean Road, left into Cobden-Warrnambool Rd and follow 1 km past Naringal, right into Membreys Rd; after 2 km look for small sign on right at gate, cross 75 m unmarked road easement to second gate.

## Grass Tree Plains Reserve

Long-purple Flag, transplanted Grass trees and ongoing planting projects characterise this 6 hectare remnant Herb-rich Woodland. It is one of several small reserves in the area that form an important roadside corridor for wildlife.



**38.40518°S 142.76781°E** ? 

30 minutes east of Warrnambool; as for F R Wilton Reserve but continue along Cobden-Warrnambool Rd, turn right into Bartons

Rd and left into Dingey Rd; look on right after 400 m for gate with *Management Vehicles* sign.

## Hawkesdale Common


Revegetation work complements Swampy Scrub and Woodland that regenerated naturally after pines were felled.

**38.10405°S 142.32353°E**  

30 minutes north of Warrnambool; as for Hawkesdale Racecourse Reserve, but continue along Penshurst-Warrnambool Rd and turn right into Boyd St.

## Hawkesdale Racecourse Reserve


Majestic Manna Gums feature in this important 62 hectare remnant Plains Woody Grassland. Among the prolific wildflowers and threatened Clover Glycine, recorded fauna includes Fat-tailed Dunnart, Tawny Frogmouth and Flame Robin. Aboriginal scarred trees have been identified.

**38.11015°S 142.33293°E** 

30 minutes north of Warrnambool; take the Penshurst-Warrnambool Rd to Hawkesdale, turn right into Church St, left into Baird St, right into Racecourse St and enter under arch.

## Johnson Reserve

Manna Gum and Swamp Gum dominate the upper storey in this 32 hectare remnant Herb-rich Woodland. Named for the local farmer who donated it to the community.

**38.19073°S 142.38412°E** ? 

20 minutes north of Warrnambool; take the Warrnambool-Caramut Rd, turn left into Wickham Rd 1 km before Woolsthorpe and follow to end; a sign next to the range gate directs you left.

**Note:** Access not recommended when shooting range is active.

## Lake Gillear

Replanted Riparian Scrub grows around lakes in a valley cut by the ancient course of the Hopkins River. Set in a badly degraded landscape once considered wasteland, some remnant vegetation survives in nearby gullies. Many species of waterbirds frequent





the lake in large numbers. Partially fenced since 1979, the lake is still accessed for watering stock.

**38.42756°S 142.59243°E** 

15 minutes east of Warrnambool; take Hopkins Point Rd towards Allansford, turn right into Tooram Rd-Burkes Rd, right into Buckleys Rd then left into Dallimores Rd.

## Maam Wetland Reserve



In this remnant Wetland and Swampy Scrub, water spreads from the permanent spring-fed pond in wet seasons and retreats during dry seasons. These ephemeral conditions result in ever-changing vegetation. A 2012 survey identified 111 indigenous flora species. Once a watering hole for cattle and shooting range, a recovery program has helped save this unique habitat.

**38.37671°S 142.55640°E**  

10 minutes east of Warrnambool; take Princes Hwy past Deakin University, turn left into Staffords Rd, right into Dry Lakes Rd; the site is on the left just around the corner.

## Mepunga Water Reserve



Extensively revegetated since 1977, this 10 hectare Swampy Scrub and Woodland is a vibrant bird habitat in wet years, with Wedge-tailed Eagles sometimes resident. It was an old watering and grazing stop for bullock trains and cattle droves on their way to the yards at Koroit.

**38.37671°S 142.55640°E**  

25 minutes south-east of Warrnambool; take Great Ocean Road 2 km past Mepunga West, turn right into Childers Cove Rd and look for sign board on left after 2 km; walk in along the road easement to the gate.

## Mortlake Common Flora Reserve






This 304 hectare critically endangered Western Plains Grassland was originally set aside to rest and feed cattle on droves holding for the local stockyards. Matted Flax-lily, Gaping Leek-orchid and other wildflowers grow in grassland managed by limited grazing and ecological burning.

**38.07266°S 142.76856°E**  

40 minutes north of Warrnambool; take Hopkins Hwy to Mortlake, turn left into Hamilton Hwy, left into Connewarren La, right into Thornburns La past racetrack; entry via gate on left between stockyard and tip.

## Mount Rouse Crater Reserve



Remnant flora in this 63 hectare Dry Forest and Heathland includes Magenta Storks Bill, Feather-heads and Scented Sun-orchid. Traditionally called *Collorerr*, the volcano is the source of the longest lava flow in the Western District. Gazetted as a reserve in 1870, replanting with native vegetation began in the mid 1960s to counter severe erosion. Community groups and schools continue revegetation programs.

**37.88226°S 142.30293°E**     

50 minutes north of Warrnambool; take Warrnambool-Penshurst Rd, turn right into Mount Rouse Tourist Rd 2 km before Penshurst; follow to the summit.

## Naringal East Picnic Reserve

One hectare remnant Herb-rich Woodland that has regenerated after the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires. Site of the old Naringal East school, many wildflowers survive and the threatened Rufous Bristlebird has been recorded here.

**38.40833°S 142.79951°E**   

35 minutes east of Warrnambool; as for Grass Tree Plains Reserve, but continue along Dingey Rd; the reserve is on the left immediately past the intersection with Baileys Rd.

## Nirranda Cemetery

A small, secluded clearing amongst remnant Herb Rich Woodland, unusual dwarf Silver Banksia and large Cherry Ballarts grow around the margins. Established in 1888, the cemetery contains many unmarked graves.


**38.51471°S 142.75655°E** 

35 minutes south-east of Warrnambool; take The Great Ocean Road to Nirranda, turn right into Blakes Rd; after 1.5 km right at the cemetery signpost into Callaghans Rd.



## Orford Sports Ground reserve

This regenerated Riverine Grassy Woodland on the banks of Shaw River is complemented by revegetation. Site of an athletics track until 1954, it was presented to the Orford community and is managed by the Orford Sports Committee.


**38.20535°S 142.09701°E** 

40 minutes west of Warrnambool; as for Pretty Hill Flora Reserve, but continue along Hamilton-Port Fairy Rd to Orford, turn left into High St, left into Dicks Rd; look for a sign on the tree next to the gate on left.

**Note:** camping by arrangement with management committee.

## Penshurst-Koroit railway reserve

Impressive stands of Silver Banksia and beds of Kangaroo and Wallaby Grass grow in this remnant Plains Grassy Woodland. Opened in 1880, the line was closed in 1977.

**38.01696°S 142.34851°E** 

35 minutes north of Warrnambool; as for Hawkesdale, but turn right 1km past town into Minjah Rd, left into Koorinal Rd, right into Coltons Rd after 3 km; parallel the railway north to Minhamite and observe road verges.

**Note:** A VicTrack permit is required to access the reserve.


## Port Fairy environs

Remnant native flora is scarce but can still be found along the banks of the **Moyne River**, where estuarine saltmarsh species such as Beaded Glasswort and Seablite still thrive. **South Beach** and **Pea Soup** have scant remnant plants in the dunes, complemented by revegetation along the landscaped foreshore and in **Russell Clark Reserve**.

## Griffiths Island

A fragile and degraded habitat comprising 31 hectares of remnant Wetland, Coastal Scrub and Grassland on dunes over underlying basalt, where Bower Spinach, Seaberry Saltbush, Rounded Noon-flower and the rare Coast Fescue survive. Australian Hollyhock has been recorded but its current status is unknown. The island is

a busy Short-tailed Shearwater rookery from September to April and is riddled with tens of thousands of nesting burrows. Named for the mariner who established a whaling station here in 1835.

**38.39200°S 142.24305°E** 

25 minutes west of Warrnambool; take Princes Hwy to Port Fairy, turn left into Bank St, right into Gipps St-Ocean Dve, follow past the port and look for the car park with rotunda on left; access on foot across causeway.

**Note:** please stay on well-worn paths and beaches as Shearwater burrows and fragile flora are easily trampled.

## Powling Street Wetland


Twenty-eight species of remnant riparian flora are found in this freshwater Wetland. Significant numbers of Latham's Snipe are among several threatened bird species recorded here. Although partially drained, it forms an important link in a habitat corridor of wetlands and reserves and contributes to stormwater management for the town.

**38.38758°S 142.22453°E** 

25 minutes west of Warrnambool; take Princes Hwy to Port Fairy west, turn left at St Patricks bluestone church into College St-Powling St; look for stone marker with sign on left.

## Sandy Cove Wetland

This replanted and remnant Wetland and Coastal Scrub and Grassland is a survivor of the once extensive saltmarshes at the mouth of the Moyne River that were drained and filled. The bird hide and convenient access from town make this a great place for casual bird watching.

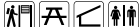
**38.39180°S 142.24111°E** 

25 minutes west of Warrnambool; as for Griffiths Island, but access the wetland across Ocean Dve.

## Power Creek Reserve

Ongoing revegetation programs complement the remnant Riparian Forest that features many towering Manna Gums and Messmate Stringybarks. Running through the heart of Timboon, the creek banks were badly infested with ivy and other noxious weeds until local residents began removing them in 2001. Now


it forms an important recreational and environmental asset featuring a guided nature walk.

**38.48435°S 142.97978°E** 

40 minutes east of Warrnambool; as for Curdies Siding railway reserve but continue into Timboon; the reserve starts opposite the old railway reserve in the centre of town.

## Pretty Hill Flora Reserve


This remnant Grassland and Swampy Scrub is a wet site resulting from surface moisture trapped in a perched water table among the stony rises of a lava flow. Wildflowers and grasses feature in the ephemeral conditions at this unusual and fragile site.

**38.24858°S 142.13305°E** 

40 minutes west of Warrnambool; take Princes Hwy to Port Fairy, turn right into Hamilton-Port Fairy Rd and follow for about 20 km; look for the green sign and gate on the right 250 m after the Gapes Rd intersection.

## R A Crothers Reserve

Also known as the *Hopkins Falls Scenic Reserve*, replanted Riparian Scrub is helping restore the banks of this culturally significant but degraded site. Traditionally called *Thangang poonart*, meaning *eels bite stones*, Short-finned Eels migrate upstream over the falls in early summer. Large Southern Water Skinks and smaller Whites Skinks can be seen sunning themselves on the rocks when it is quiet.

**38.33301°S 142.61920°E** 

20 minutes north-east of Warrnambool; take Princes Hwy past Allansford, left into Dwarroon Rd, through Cudgee and left into Hopkins Falls Rd; car park and facilities are over bridge on left.

## Ralph Illidge Sanctuary

The diverse flora in this 91 hectare remnant Riparian and Lowland Forest includes Love Creeper, Twining Glycine, Maidenhair Fern and tall stands of mature Eucalypts. Riparian species line the banks of Brucknell Creek. The dense cover provides ideal habitat for the 46 bird species recorded here, including the threatened Powerful Owl and Rufous Bristlebird.

The reserve is well known for its wild population of vulnerable Long-nosed Potoroos, which continue to survive in small numbers.

The reserve is named for the original owner and conservationist who donated this land to Trust for Nature in 1975 to ensure its natural state was retained. The main site is called *Bimbimbi*, meaning *place of many birds*. Decimated in the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires, it has recovered well. The information centre is comprehensive and guided walks are available by arrangement.

Visitors are requested to make a donation on arrival to help maintain and improve the sanctuary.

**38.39218°S 142.83563°E** 

35 minutes east of Warrnambool; as for F R Wilton Reserve but continue along Cobden-Warrnambool Rd, turn right into Halfords Rd and look for signed access track on right.

**Note:** Closed on days of Total Fire Ban.

## St Helens Flora Reserve

Small Grasstrees and wildflowers proliferate in the damp sandy soil of this 32 hectare remnant Plains Swampy and Herb-rich Woodland. This precious habitat is ideal for woodland birds like the Purple Crowned Lorikeet, and rare marsupials Southern Brown Bandicoot and Antechinus. Once a recreational reserve known as *Pleasant Park*, the Yambuk races were held on the racecourse here until the 1940s.


**38.23825°S 142.06885°E** 

45 minutes west of Warrnambool; as for Orford Sports Ground, but continue along High St, turn left into Masons Rd, left into Barkers Rd, then after 4.5 km look for woodland on the left just before Humphrys Rd; access on foot via gate on southwest corner.

## Tower Hill State Game Reserve

The largest example of nested maar volcanic formation in Victoria, the 614 hectare Hills Woodland and Wetland has large stands of Manna Gum, Swamp Gum, Blackwood, Black Wattle and Drooping She-oak. It is known for abundant wildlife that includes Sugar Glider, Emu, Koala, Echidna, threatened Warty Bell Frog and 63 species of waterbirds.

Declared in 1892, it was the first national park in Victoria. Despite this, extensive clearing and grazing continued until little original cover remained. Replanting with native flora commenced in the 1960s. The Friends Group was the first of its kind in Victoria and provided a model for the Landcare movement. The Worn Gundidj Natural History Centre, located in architect Robin Boyd's unique and stylish stone shelter, offers guided bush tucker and wildlife walks (p23).

**38.31873°S 142.36238°E** 


15 minutes west of Warrnambool; take Princes Hwy to Tower Hill, turn right into access road after cutting.

## Warrnambool environs

Dunes in the west give way to limestone cliffs and headlands, a sheltered bay with sweeping beaches, river estuaries and wetlands. Council, community and school groups have combined to conserve remnant flora and improve natural heritage values. The **Botanic Gardens** and **Swan Reserve's** *water-wise garden* feature indigenous and rare native plants.

## Blue Hole

Predominantly replanted Coastal Scrub, Grassland and Woodland covers the headland. The *Blue Hole* is the stranded river bed leading to the earlier mouth on the estuary's east side.

**38.39938°S 142.51225°E** 

10 minutes east of the CBD; take Raglan Pde, turn right into Flaxman St, right into Hopkins Rd after the railway, left into Marfell Rd, right into Bluehole Rd after the bridge.

## Lady Bay reserves

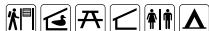
**The Flume, Granny's Grave** and **Point Ritchie** feature Coastal Scrub, Grassland and Woodland. Some remnant flora survives, including Small-leafed Clematis, Coast Bitter-bush, Pale Turpentine and Coast Flax Lily. Drooping She-oak grows along the railway cutting. This is complemented by extensive replanting, landscaping and a network of trails and lookouts.

**38.39716°S 142.50221°E** 

5 minutes south of the CBD; down Liebig St, left into Merri St and follow past Cannon Hill; look for Flume car park on right.

## Lake Pertobe

The 25 hectare artificial lake and islands were created from original Wetland and Swampy Scrub. Remnant Woolly Tea-tree, Monkey Flower and Creeping Brookweed survive. The lake teems with water birds and pond life.

**38.38920°S 142.47781°E** 

5 minutes south of the CBD; down Liebig St, turn left into Merri St, right into Pertobe Rd and follow through the cutting.

## Levys Point Coastal Reserve

A wonderful range of native flora characterised as fragile and mobile features in this Wetland, Coastal Scrub, Grassland and Woodland. Native Pepper-cress, Coast Ballart and Hill Sword Sedge are among many species found here.

**38.37505°S 142.43356°E** 

10 minutes west of the CBD; take Merri St past the railway station, veer left into Wellington St-Merrivale Dve-McMeekin Rd, left into Gay St-Swinton St, then left into the car park just before *The Knackery*.

## Logans Beach

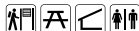
This remnant and replanted Coastal Scrub and Grassland is adjacent to the famous Southern Right Whale nursery. A viewing platform offers sweeping views of the rugged coast.

**38.40395°S 142.52101°E** 

10 minutes east of the CBD; as for Blue Hole, but turn left into Logans Beach Rd and follow up the hill to car park at end.

## Merri Marine Sanctuary

Remnant Coastal Scrub, Grassland and Woodland survives on 25 hectares of rugged ancient sand dunes from **Thunder Point** to the breakwater, incorporating Merri Marine Park, Merri Island and the Little Penguin colony on Middle Island.

**38.39983°S 142.47188°E** 


5 minutes south of the CBD; down Liebig St, turn left into Merri St, right into Pertobe Rd, left into Viaduct Rd and park near foot-bridge across to Pickering Point.

**Note:** Middle Island is closed to public access.



## Thunder Point Coastal Reserve

Remnant Coastal Scrub, Grassland and Woodland containing eight species of moss and flora of regional significance, including Pink Fairies, Shield Pennywort, Smooth Rice-flower, Coast Candles and Slender Speedwell. The approach road crosses the Merri River where abundant saltmarsh flora grows along the tidal flats. This early reserve was declared to offset aggressive erosion following the growth of Warrnambool in the 1850s.

**38.39840°S 142.46478°E** 

5 minutes south-west of the CBD; take Merri St past the railway station, veer left into Wellington St, left into Harris St-Macdonald St and follow to car park at end.

## Yambuk Lakes & wetlands


This remnant Wetland habitat is fringed by Coastal Scrub, Grassland and Woodland. Lake Yambuk is a barrier estuary system periodically closed to the sea by a sand bar. The extensive wetlands formed by the confluence of the Shaw and Eumeralla Rivers are nationally significant. Freshwater meadows and semi-permanent saline marshes provide ideal habitat for threatened Dwarf Galaxias, Lewin's Rail and Orange-bellied Parrots. Flora has regenerated on dunes that built up after the 1946 floods washed them away.

**38.34031°S 142.05265°E** 

40 minutes west of Warrnambool; take Princes Hwy to Yambuk, turn left into Carrolls Rd 2 km before town; follow to camping ground and boat ramp at end.

## Yatmerone Wildlife Reserve

A 13 hectare deep freshwater spring-fed marsh where over 30 species of remnant Wetland flora survive. After a small dam wall was built in 1880 to ensure permanent water, it was used for grazing and shooting until restoration began in 2010.

**37.87958°S 142.27140°E** 

50 minutes north of Warrnambool; as for Mount Rouse, but enter Penshurst, turn left into Cobb St, left into Hutton St, right into Ritchie St; go to end and enter through gate on left.

## Websites

Australian Plants Society Victoria Inc.  
(formerly Society for Growing Australian Plants)  
[apsvic.org.au](http://apsvic.org.au)

Australian Plants Society – Warrnambool & District Inc.  
(formerly Society for Growing Australian Plants)  
[www.apswarrnambool.org.au](http://www.apswarrnambool.org.au)

Corangamite Shire – environment pages  
[www.corangamite.vic.gov.au/Property/Environment](http://www.corangamite.vic.gov.au/Property/Environment)

DELWP – Victorian bioregions and EVC benchmarks  
[www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/bioregions-and-evc-benchmarks](http://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/bioregions-and-evc-benchmarks)

Moyne Shire – environment pages  
[www.moyne.vic.gov.au/Our-Community/Environment](http://www.moyne.vic.gov.au/Our-Community/Environment)

National Public Toilet Map  
[www.toilemap.gov.au](http://www.toilemap.gov.au)

Ralph Illidge Sanctuary  
[www.apswarrnambool.org.au/ralphillidge](http://www.apswarrnambool.org.au/ralphillidge)

Tower Hill  
[www.towerhill.org.au](http://www.towerhill.org.au)

Warrnambool City Council  
[www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/environment](http://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/environment)

## Books

*Indigenous Plants and Environmental Weeds of Moyne Shire*, Moyne Shire, Port Fairy 2014; available online at: [www.moyne.vic.gov.au/Our-Community/Environment/Indigenous-Plants-of-Moyne-Shire](http://www.moyne.vic.gov.au/Our-Community/Environment/Indigenous-Plants-of-Moyne-Shire)

*Plants of the Great Southwest*, K. Sparrow, Society for Growing Australian Plants – Warrnambool & District, Warrnambool, revised and expanded edition 2013.

*The Nature of Warrnambool*, J.G. Douglas editor, Warrnambool Field Naturalists Club, Warrnambool, second edition 2007

## Photographs

**front cover:** Flaxmans Hill, Nirranda South; Milkmaids *Burchardia umbellata*; Running Postman *Kennedia prostrata*; Coast Daisy *Brachyscome parvula*; *Correa reflexa* 'Grannys Grave'

**inside covers:** Coastal Scrub and Grassland flora featuring Cushion Bush *Leucophyta brownii*, Coast Daisy-bush *Olearia axillaris*, Honey Pots *Acrotriche serrulata* and Coast Beard-heath *Leucopogon parviflorus*

**back cover:** Saltwater Swamp, Tower Hill; Karkalla or Native Pig Face *Carpobrotus rossii*; Silver Banksia *Banksia marginata*; Hop Goodenia *Goodenia ovata*; Ivy-leaf Violet *Viola hederacea*

Experience these precious nature reserves, last remnants of a once wild landscape. From spectacular coastal cliff tops and vibrant wetlands, to secluded lowland forests and sublime grasslands, the diversity of habitats and beauty of native wildflowers will enchant you. This guide takes you to secret places where only those with local knowledge may otherwise tread.



revised edition

