

# Coastline

Issue 64 Summer 2013–14



# A message from the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, the Hon. Ryan Smith, MP

Summer by the Sea is here, a festival of hundreds of public events along our coast.

This program has been offering Victorians a chance to participate for nearly 20 years. Locals and holiday-makers have the chance to be inspired about our coastal environments and how we can best share them. Summer by the Sea is for everyone, running from 2–26 January 2014, and most of the activities are free.



This program is supported and delivered by Coastcare (Department of Environment and Primary Industries) and Parks Victoria, working together to encourage Victorians to discover what is important about our state's unique and diverse marine and coastal environments, and what we can do to help care for our coasts.

This program wouldn't be possible without the many coastal volunteers and

community groups that work year round to assist with the protection of our coastal landscapes.

In recognition of this work, the Victorian Government has opened the 2013–14 Coastcare Victoria Community Grants program. Community grants of up to \$20,000 are available and are a way of supporting grass-roots local action to protect and strengthen our coastal and near-shore marine environments.

Applications for the 2013–14 Coastcare Victoria Community Grants are open now until 4pm on Friday 21 February 2014.

To check whether your community group is eligible and to make an application and read the guidelines, visit [www.depi.vic.gov.au/coastcare](http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/coastcare)

This is an exciting time for coastal communities and people that care for our coast. The public consultation phase of the 2013 Victorian Coastal Strategy concluded in early December and the strategy is due for release 2014.

The strategy will highlight the shared responsibility for looking after the coast, provide high-level guidance and ensure integrated and robust decision making at the local level. It will acknowledge the efforts of the approximately 9000 people who are members of coastal groups.

While the strategy provides guidance for decision making, the Coastcare grants provide much needed funds for on-ground works, Summer by the Sea helps get community members in contact with their coasts, so they will be encouraged and inspired to care for the coast in the future.

Have a great summer.

**The Hon. Ryan Smith MP**  
Minister for Environment and Climate Change



## Contents

Coastcare Victoria coordinator's update	3
Friends of the Bluff recognised with Coastcare award	4
Marine Invasive Species Workshop	5
Reefwatch off to a great start in South Gippsland	6
Sicilian Sea Lavender: an emerging coastal weed	7
Friends of Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary Photography Competition, Exhibition & Intertidal Field Guide	8
Regional updates	9
Port Phillip and Westernport	9
Far Southwest	10
Gippsland	11
South West	11
Coastcare Contacts	12

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# Coastcare Victoria coordinator's update

As part of the Victorian government's priority to improve service delivery, the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) is conducting an 18-month pilot to strengthen some of its key community engagement programs.

For some time, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) has coordinated Waterwatch and EstuaryWatch and partly as a result of the success of that arrangement, the new pilot involves CCMA coordinating Coastcare Victoria as well.

This change means CCMA will now be the hub for community engagement for the three programs, which is expected to bring stronger coordination and efficiency so more funding gets to where it's needed most.

We can leverage expertise and resources across coasts, estuaries and rivers programs and make sure there is strong regional ownership close to the point of delivery.

Program brands will continue to be separate, reflecting strong community recognition and maximising community participation in each of the programs.

I'm excited to be on board as the new statewide coordinator for Coastcare Victoria. I'm looking forward to working closely with DEPI's regional Coastcare facilitators and coastal community groups to deliver the Coastcare Victoria program.

As you'll see in this issue, summer is a busy time for Coastcare: among other things, we have invited applications for a new round of Coastcare Victoria community grants and we're in the throes of the ever-popular Summer by the Sea.

Coastline newsletter is back after a break while new arrangements were being put in place for the coordination. I'd welcome your ideas and feedback on the newsletter and on all things Coastcare.

Enjoy the summer.

**Andrew Gray**  
**Coastcare Victoria, Statewide Coordinator**  
**Corangamite Catchment Management Authority**  
Tel. 03 5232 9100 or email: [info@ccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@ccma.vic.gov.au)



## Friends of the Bluff recognised with Coastcare award

Victorian environmental volunteers and community groups were recognised for their tireless efforts at the 2013 Victorian Landcare Awards in August.

The ceremony at Government House on 28 August was attended by over 300 people with 20 winners honoured.

Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith and Minister for Agriculture and Water Peter Walsh presented the awards.

Minister Smith praised the significant contributions of volunteers and groups.

"I am continually inspired by Victoria's community groups and networks who dedicate their time and energy into giving back to our environment," Minister Smith said.

The Coastcare Award went to Friends of the Bluff, a volunteer group which has been raising community awareness to regenerate and protect the Barwon Bluff area since 1994.

Known for developing innovative technologies to engage the community, the latest project for the group was a marine conservation app for smartphones and tablets.

With the help of a Coastcare Victoria grant the app was developed to allow users to access flora and fauna field guides, visitor information, cultural information and an interactive walking map when visiting the Barwon Bluff Marine Sanctuary.

The app aims to instil positive conservation aspirations by giving users an insight into the beauty and diversity of the bluff and reaching out to a wide-ranging audience.

Project coordinator Rhonda Coffey said, "We believe that the use of modern technology and social media will appeal to a younger audience. It will allow us to get important conservation messages to the next generation – our future custodians of the bluff."

The app has already been embraced by Parks Victoria, Barwon Coast Committee of Management and primary schools across the state. Friends of the Bluff offer support to agencies through engaging the community in an innovative way and the group is looking into helping other community organisations develop similar technologies in their areas.

Other winners of the Landcare awards included Ken Stewart for his work in Indigenous Land Management, Peter Forster for his efforts in encouraging sustainable farming practices and Junior Landcare team Nagle College who have been working hard on projects from seed propagation to monitoring pest animals.

Congratulations to Friends of the Bluff and all of the winners of the 2013 Victorian Landcare Awards.

**Rebecca Cross**  
Department of Environment  
and Primary Industries



Friends of the Bluff with Minister Smith at the Landcare Awards



# Marine Invasive Species Workshop

Making A Difference (MAD) for the Merri recently partnered with Friends of the Merri Marine Sanctuary (FoMMS) in December for a presentation by Dr Alecia Bellgrove, Marine Biologist, Deakin University to 36 people on potential invasive species that could become established in our local waters.

Dr Bellgrove covered the main vectors of possible transport into our waters; ship ballast, ship hulls and recreational and professional fishing and water sports.

Dr Bellgrove spoke about half a dozen species that reside in our regional harbors, Portland, Apollo Bay and Port Phillip Bay, that could potentially infest our local area. These include several seaweeds, a seastar, a worm and sea urchin.

A difficulty is that many of these look similar to local endemic species so “weeding them out” could result in spreading them further. Experts must check any suspicious sightings and discuss with authorities on the best management if invasive species are found.

The Federal Department of Agriculture has good references on these pests including identifying details and an interactive map showing known distribution of established marine pests.

The threat of these species is that they could alter the ecosystem interrupting feeding, reproduction and species mix which could affect local fishing, abalone and crayfish industries.

If you see anything unusual when fishing, snorkelling or diving that may match the species identified as invasive, the best idea is to take a photo if possible, identify the GPS point and advise DEPI, the local government, Port Harbor Master or Deakin University know. Don't undertake any action on your own.

Warrnambool City Council, FoMMS, MAD and DEPI are now thinking about how to spread the word about these threats, prevention and reporting to a wider audience in partnership with other groups and organisations.

A survey in 2010 detected no invasive species in the Warrnambool Harbor. Wouldn't it be good to keep it that way!

For more information visit:

<http://www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/pests-diseases-weeds/marine-pests>



# Reefwatch off to a great start in South Gippsland

Coastcare recently assisted Reefwatch to facilitate commencement of Reefwatch activities in South Gippsland.

Coastcare provided funding to assist Reefwatch Coordinator Wendy Roberts in running an initial information session and trial snorkel activity in November.

As a direct consequence of this, a group of 13 snorkelers took part in the Great Victorian Fish Count on 1 December at Shack Bay in the Bunurong Marine Park.

Snorkelers enjoyed perfect conditions, observing 17 of the 25 monitored species.

Included in the sightings was the fully protected Blue Groper, three Ray species, Port Jackson Sharks and many others. Unsurprisingly there was an abundance of Blue Throat Wrasse while the second most abundant species was the Zebra Fish, in a single large school.

Other species observed in some abundance were the Horseshoe Leatherjacket, Sea Sweep, Shaws Cowfish and the Victorian Scaleyfin.

Rod Webster, an Education Officer with Inverloch's Bunurong Coast Education acknowledged the support of Chris Hayward, senior dive coordinator with Parks Victoria, Darren Hill, the Parks Victoria Ranger-in-Charge and Ash Belsar of Outthere outdoor activities.

The youngest participant was nine year-old Kody from Cape Paterson and his older sisters, all competent snorkelers and fish identifiers. Senior card carriers, an assortment of locals and those from distant parts also joined in.

Rod believes the skills that allow you to comfortably see the wealth of diversity in our southern seas are easily learnt. He was thrilled with the outcome and is looking forward to facilitating more "citizen science" events which contribute to scientific knowledge of our coast.

Reefwatch can use more support in South Gippsland. Contact Rod Webster at Bunurong Environment Centre on 56 743 738 or 0434 145 816 for more information on how you can contribute.



Blue Groper (top), Port Jackson Shark (bottom left), Magpie Perch (bottom right)



# Sicilian Sea Lavender: an emerging coastal weed

Last year, Coastline reported on an emerging coastal weed threat, Sicilian Sea Lavender, *Limonium hyblaenum* that poses a significant threat to saltmarsh areas.

In 2012 Dr Robin Adair from Australis Biology warned that Sicilian Sea Lavender has the potential to spread rapidly along the Victorian coastline. At that stage it had been found at eight locations west of Melbourne. Unfortunately, Sicilian Sea Lavender was found earlier this year in the Phillip Island Nature Reserve, the first recording east of Melbourne. This highlights the importance of remaining vigilant.

Sicilian Sea Lavender can decimate saltmarsh vegetation by excluding native species and preventing regeneration. It poses a major threat to the endangered Orange-Bellied Parrot.

Early detection is crucial as hand removal is the most effective means of eradicating the weed.

Sicilian Sea Lavender is a cushion-forming perennial with a dense canopy, broad fleshy leaves and woody rootstock. Purple and white flowers appear from November.

If you find it:

- Correctly identify it by checking [www.australisbiological.com.au](http://www.australisbiological.com.au)
- Record the location and size of the infestation
- Report it immediately to your local Coastcare facilitator and Penny Gillespie, Weed and Pest Program Coordinator. Email: [penny.a.gillespie@depi.vic.gov.au](mailto:penny.a.gillespie@depi.vic.gov.au)

Dr Adair's presentation can be viewed at

<http://www.australisbiological.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Limonium-presentation-Phillip-Island-12-September-2012.pdf>

**Bruce Atkin, Department of Environment and Primary Industries and Kate Williams, South Gippsland Landcare Network**



*Sicilian Sea Lavender, courtesy Dr Robin Adair*

# Friends of Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary Photography Competition, Exhibition & Intertidal Field Guide

Friends of Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary (FERMS) have announced a photographic competition to produce photographs for use in a Field Guide to the a Intertidal Plants & Animals of Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary.

The winning photo will grace the cover of the Field Guide, which will be launched along with a display of selected photographs at Eagles Nest Gallery, Aireys Inlet on Saturday 31 May 2014.

FERMS will be running free guided rock pool rambles to assist photography enthusiasts on Wednesday 8 January, 11–12.30pm and Saturday 8 February, 12–1.30pm.

Photos should be algae, sea grasses and animals of the rock pool area, between the low and high tide lines and:

- should be taken with the highest resolution/quality possible, for a final printable resolution of 300dpi.
- should not be cropped too closely, to allow for final framing in the booklet, if selected (see examples on the FERMS web site at [www.ferms.org.au](http://www.ferms.org.au))
- must be submitted by not later than 28 February 2014.
- entrants must be members of FERMS. There are also a prize for the best junior entry.
- should be submitted digitally to [info@ferms.org.au](mailto:info@ferms.org.au)
- will be judged by a panel of local amateur and professional photographers

Information on memberships and how to tread lightly in the sanctuary can be found at [www.ferms.org.au](http://www.ferms.org.au)

FERMS is all about protecting and preserving the natural environment of Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary. It aims to increase understanding about the role and values of the Sanctuary, fostering community involvement and enjoyment through in-field experiences and knowledge sharing.

For further information please contact:

Sharon Blum-Caon on 0412 257 802 or Nicole Maher on 0419 110 097.



Friends of  
Eagle Rock  
Marine Sanctuary





# Regional updates

## Port Phillip and Westernport

### Phillip Wierzbowski Coastcare Facilitator, DEPI

The annual Great Victorian Fish Count has now kicked off. The project was developed by Reef Watch and provides a snapshot of fish species living in the temperate coastal waters of Victoria.

Fish count data collected during this period provides an estimation of the structure of fish communities around the coast which can then be compared to future fish counts at the same time each year.

Parks Victoria rangers hosted an event at Jawbone Marine Sanctuary at Williamstown on Saturday 14 December 2013 where around 20 people participated. It is hoped that the fish count will be conducted monthly.

Contact Jawbone Marine Sanctuary at [jawbonemarinesanctuary@gmail.com](mailto:jawbonemarinesanctuary@gmail.com) or phone the Parks Victoria Williamstown Ranger on 9393 9255 to get involved.

The Victorian Coastal Strategy is the Victorian Government's policy commitment for the coast and marine environment and sets the framework for how to plan and manage the coast.



Under the *Victorian Coastal Management Act 1995* the Strategy is reviewed every five years, and the Victorian Coastal Council released the fourth iteration of the Strategy for public comment which has now closed. A copy of the Draft Strategy is available at [www.vic.gov.au](http://www.vic.gov.au). This paper highlights key aspects of the Draft Victorian Coastal Strategy 2013 and how it has evolved from the 2008 Strategy.

The Draft Proposals Paper by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's Marine Investigation was released for public comment on 27 November 2013.

Copies of the report may be obtained by contacting VEAC on phone 9637 9902 or 1800 134 803 (freecall outside Melbourne).

Submissions close on 3 February 2014.

Further information and the report are available from online at [www.veac.vic.gov.au/investigation/marine-investigation](http://www.veac.vic.gov.au/investigation/marine-investigation).



## Far Southwest

**Emma Hill**  
**Environmental Planner, DEPI**

### Happy Summer Coastcarers!

It's been a great year for our groups in the Far South West.

Friends of the Merri Marine Sanctuary have found their feet in 2013. They have put on snorkelling and clean-up days, a marine pest information evening and held a photo competition after receiving Coastcare and other grants.

The group are gearing up to do it all again in 2014 and have created a calendar to fill with Coastcare events.

Princetown Landcare have done some amazing work through their Wetland/Swamp Scrub protection and Regeneration Program. After receiving a 2013 Coastcare Community Grant, the group got to work fencing, spraying and planting seedlings at a wetland area in Princetown. They have also held workshops including a successful Water Bugs day.

Warrnambool's Middle Island penguin population is looking far healthier thanks to two marenma dogs who have protected them from foxes over the last eight years.

Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Group have been monitoring the population over this period since it was at

its lowest with less than ten penguins in 2005. The group are now thrilled to receive financial support from Deakin University, Warrnambool City Council and Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority for 2014.

The project is also receiving much media attention with an Italian documentary being produced as well as a Screen Australia feature film 'Oddball' to be filmed in 2014.

2014 Summer by the Sea is all go in the Far South West from 2–26 January. Check out activities happening near you by joining our email list [sw.coastcare@depi.vic.gov.au](mailto:sw.coastcare@depi.vic.gov.au), picking up our brochure at a DEPI office or tourist information centre or online at [www.depi.vic.gov.au](http://www.depi.vic.gov.au).

### *Coastcare Community Grants*

We're currently accepting applications until 21 February 2014. See our website for all the details.

### *Green Drinks*

This is a great networking opportunity for like-minded environment enthusiasts and it happens on the first Thursday of every month (except January) at 5.30pm, at the Last Coach, Warrnambool.

### *Get involved*

Coastcare groups are always looking for new members. If you are keen to hear more or get involved, contact us at email: [sw.coastcare@depi.vic.gov.au](mailto:sw.coastcare@depi.vic.gov.au).



Merri Marine Sanctuary, Warrnambool Emma Hill



## Gippsland

### **Bruce Atkin** **Coastcare Facilitator, DEPI**

Many Gippsland coastal community groups have been busy over the past few months. At the risk of offending those that I haven't mentioned here, I have appreciated working with groups on the following projects:

- Wildlife and cultural heritage survey being undertaken by the Lake Tyers Coast Action Group in preparation for establishment of a walking track;
- Weed control, fencing off of livestock and revegetation of a section of the north end of Newlands Arm, near Paynesville, by the Gippsland Plains Conservation Management Network partly funded through a Coastcare grant;
- Erection of bollards by the Port Franklin Foreshore Committee of Management to keep vehicles off an area of saltmarsh;
- Erection of a fence around the perimeter of a carpark at Venus Bay, to define the limits of foreshore vegetation, prevent pedestrian traffic and discourage the dumping of green waste.
- Weed control by the Friends of Tambo Bluff and Cape Paterson Residents and Ratepayers Association

...and lots more!

## South West

### **Alex Sedger** **Environmental Planner, DEPI**

What a year! The past twelve months have whirled by and given me much to brag about in the South West.

Coastcarers have achieved so many wonderful things in my patch, including a Coastcare Landcare Award won by Friends of the Bluff for their incredible Smartphone App, completion of grants projects by Southern Otways Landcare Network, Torquay Coast Action, ANGAIR, Barwon Heads Golf Club and Jan Juc Coast Action, another stellar ANGAIR Flower Show in September, Ocean Grove Coastcarers getting out and about at every opportunity to promote a plastic bag free Ocean Grove; Friends of Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary launching a photography competition to create an Intertidal Field Guide, the lift-off of a cross-landscape group – Friends of the South Coast Walk...the list goes on.

As well as these major achievements, many people continue to quietly go about making our coast a better place. Many of these actions go unsung but are most certainly appreciated and noticed.

Thank you to everyone who has made my role as Coastcare Facilitator so thoroughly rewarding – I think you're all fantastic.

I'd also like to welcome Andrew Gray as the newly appointed Coastcare Statewide Coordinator. Andy is innovative, motivated and passionate, and will do an excellent role getting the Coastcare program in tip-top shape. Great to have you at the helm, Andy.



## Coastcare Contacts

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