



# 5-YEAR CONSERVATION PLAN 2019-2023

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*We acknowledge the  
Traditional Custodians  
of the land on which we  
live, work and learn, the  
Bunurong people. We pay our  
respects to their Elders past  
and present.*





*Our environment and wildlife populations are beautiful and fragile. We have a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in the minds of our visitors so that they too can protect our Island home.*





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## *Our Conservation Plan*

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# Welcome (Womin jeka)

Phillip Island Nature Parks (the Nature Parks) is a unique conservation organisation that was established in 1996 under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* “for the conservation of areas of natural interest or beauty or of scientific, historic or archaeological interest”.

We acknowledge that the Crown Land we are privileged to manage forms part of the traditional lands of the Bunurong Peoples who call Phillip Island *Millowl*, and that the Land, Waters and Sea are of spiritual, cultural and economic importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. This plan refers to this traditional name throughout. Phillip Island (Millowl) is also referred to as ‘the Island’ which it is commonly regarded within the local, Phillip Island community.

Our community is diverse and we acknowledge it is made up of permanent and part time residents, artists, historians, landholders, farming, business and tourism communities, students, volunteers, conservation and friend’s groups, surfers and more. This diversity makes the Island a special and unique place.

Since the Nature Parks was created, Phillip Island’s (Millowl’s) wildlife and environment have flourished. The Summerland Peninsula is restored, securing habitat for Little penguins and creating a majestic canvas for a truly world class visitor experience. Our quality ecotourism, volunteer and education experiences are growing and have enabled us to invest in conservation programs to ensure the Island’s landscape, habitats and wildlife are protected for future generations.

Achievements over the past 20 years demonstrate the power of a shared conservation vision. Triumphs such as the restoration of the Summerland Peninsula and the protection of Little penguins have set the foundation for ambitious wildlife management programs.

*We acknowledge the legacy of the conservation vision of many. This spans the thousands of years of care of Phillip Island (Millowl) by Traditional Custodians through to the families who donated land for conservation, Nature Parks staff and the groups and individuals who have given their precious time over decades. We are standing on the shoulders of giants and acknowledge the great responsibility of continuing to honour their work.*

We will all share in our 30-year conservation vision. This ‘we’ refers to Traditional Custodians, the Island community, adjoining neighbours, residents, visitors, the local farming and business communities, Nature Parks staff, volunteers, schools and partner organisations.

We all have a deep affection for the many values of the Nature Parks and the issues impacting them. We all have our own stories to tell. As the Nature Parks develops and manages areas for flora and fauna, we will work together to ensure that the diverse range of experiences are also upheld and reflected in our work and we will continue to build and strengthen initiatives collaboratively, as partners of a dedicated community.



Honouring the land and sea of Phillip Island (Millowl) with a Smoking Ceremony at Cape Woolamai with Bunurong Elder and staff.

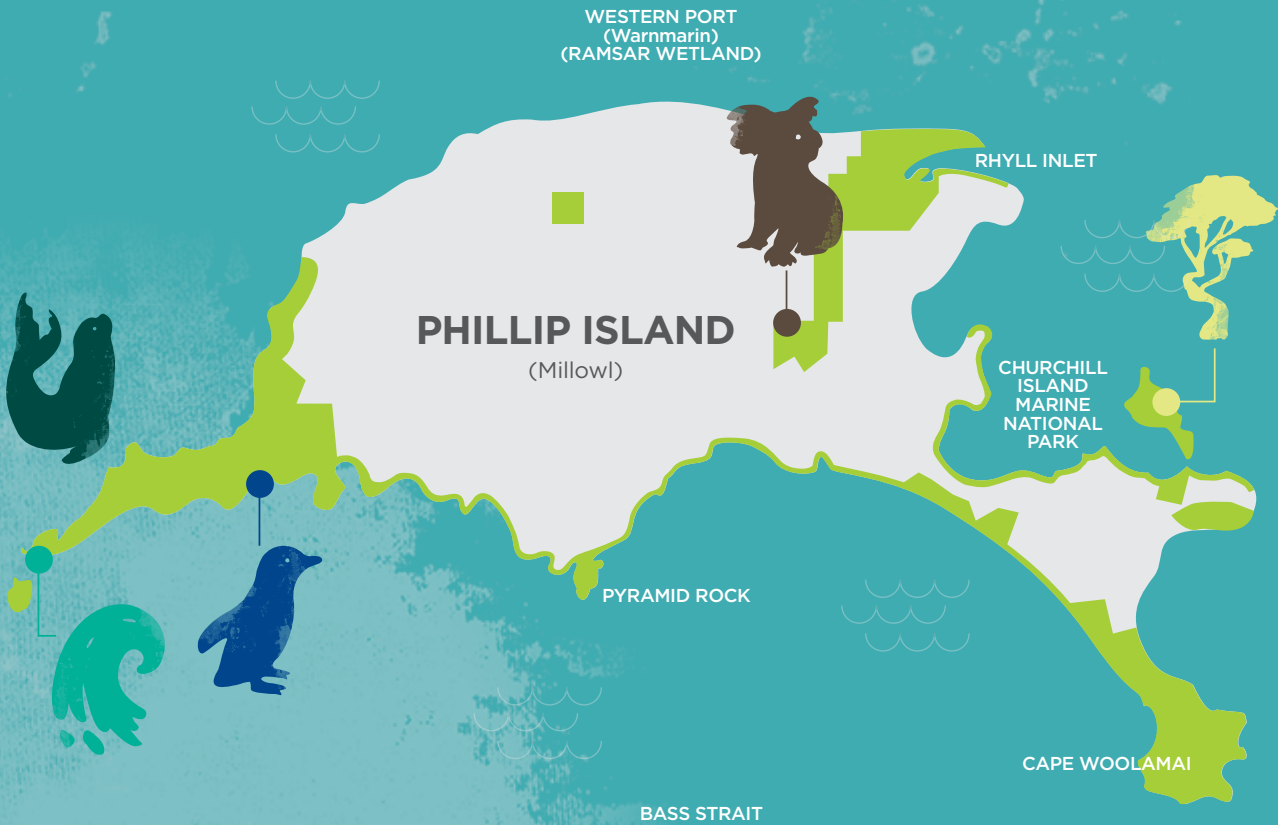


# Our Purpose

To protect nature for wildlife and inspire people to act.

# Our Vision

A place where conservation and ecotourism excellence inspire people to actively protect the environment.



Phillip Island Nature Parks

Route from Melbourne

Maps not to scale



For a more detailed map refer to map LEGL/10-005 via our website [www.penguins.org.au](http://www.penguins.org.au)



# Our conservation commitment

Phillip Island Nature Parks is excited to present this 5-Year Conservation Plan 2019-2023, which represents the first ambitious step in our journey towards delivering our 30-Year Conservation Vision, *Beyond the Horizon*.

*The last five years have been monumental in our conservation achievements and highlights include:*

- Declaring Phillip Island (Morrow) fox-free in 2017 secured the future for the introduction of the critically endangered Eastern barred bandicoot, which is extinct in the wild in mainland Victoria. The Island is now realising the potential as a unique wildlife haven where bold conservation outcomes provide visitors with the opportunity to experience thriving and unique wildlife populations only a few hours from Melbourne.
- Our cutting edge research programs have provided models for conservation excellence across the globe. We are collaborating to develop new technologies to revolutionise the cleaning of oiled wildlife through magnetic particle technology.
- We are sharing knowledge through engaging the local and global community in a two-way conservation conversation. Online citizen science programs are helping to develop solutions to challenges such as the impact of marine pollution on Australian fur seals through our Seal Spotter campaign.
- Management of the Hooded plover program on Phillip Island (Morrow) with our volunteers, has contributed to the breeding success of this threatened species.

We have significantly strengthened our collaborations with key agencies and the local community to support positive outcomes for the Island's natural environment and native wildlife. Over the next five years, we will continue to work in partnership with Government and Non-Government Organisations to assist in the delivery of key local and state initiatives.

Whilst we manage an important iconic attraction for Victoria and Australia, it is also important to ensure that adequate protection of our surrounding marine environment is at the forefront of our conservation decisions. Our newly formed partnership with the South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA) has been forged to promote correct waste disposal, reduce marine pollution and net entanglements of Australian fur seals.

*“We are working with our fishermen and Phillip Island Nature Parks because sustainable fishing practices, such as correct waste disposal, protect our future.”*

- SIMON BOAG, EO SETFIA

The actions within this 5-Year Conservation Plan 2019-2023 aim to change our organisation's culture to be more inclusive and supported in our conservation outcomes and reflect our new conservation principles which are echoed in our 30-Year Conservation Vision, *Beyond the Horizon*.

The trajectory for our global environment is only going to be more challenging in the race to save biodiversity and this has been verified recently with the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) releasing its report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by 2030 with the rate of current emissions.

The Nature Parks recognises climate change has significant impacts for Phillip Island (Morrow). Increases in ocean temperatures are likely to lead to changes in the marine food-web and in the distribution of marine species. Increases in terrestrial temperatures are also likely to impact flora and fauna across the Island. Scientific modelling indicates that over the next 30 - 50 years some of the Island's freshwater ecosystems are likely to become saline or dry out and conditions will no longer support vegetation communities such as swamp paperbark woodlands. These dramatic predictions need to be faced and acted upon now. We will continue to ensure scientific monitoring and expertise will create best practice management decisions in our conservation planning.

We acknowledge there are many key challenges facing Phillip Island (Morrow) including living with wildlife and achieving sustainable economic growth and regional coastal development. Striking the balance between the actions needed to protect and conserve wildlife and the actions needed to manage the impacts from wildlife





The endangered Bush stone curlew *Burhinus grallarius*. Photograph by Ryan Francis

presents a challenge for us all. We will work together for viable and creative solutions in both the short and long term in line with the Victorian Government's *Living With Wildlife Plan and Biodiversity 2037*.

*We aim to play a leadership role and facilitate collaboration between stakeholders to live with wildlife together. We have demonstrated success in this process through research, planning and strong partnerships.*

Great outcomes have been achieved such as eliminating foxes from Phillip Island (Mallowl) to benefit farmers and wildlife, protecting Short tailed shearwaters on their annual migration in conjunction with Bass Coast Shire Council and Regional Roads Victoria and protecting threatened Hooded plovers on our beaches with support from BirdLife Australia and our dedicated volunteers across Phillip Island.

We are committed to working hard to share and engage with our broad, diverse and unique Island community through strong relationships, trusted and supported partnerships and investing in our Island's students and youth - as they are the conservation champions of our future.

Our conservation team leads the implementation of this 5-Year Conservation Plan which is informed by many other plans and studies developed through scientific research and on-the-ground experience. Our team has consulted with industry experts, key stakeholders, landholders and community groups, and is guided by our own ongoing world-renowned researchers.

*We are privileged to manage such a special area that holds significance for many.*

This 5-Year Conservation Plan 2019-2023 honours and builds on our successful history and evolves our approach and methodology to meet the challenges ahead of us. We take this responsibility seriously and look forward to working together over the next five years towards a better future for Phillip Island (Mallowl) where conservation and ecotourism excellence inspire people to actively protect the natural environment.

**JESSICA MCKELSON**  
Manager, Conservation



# A conservation icon

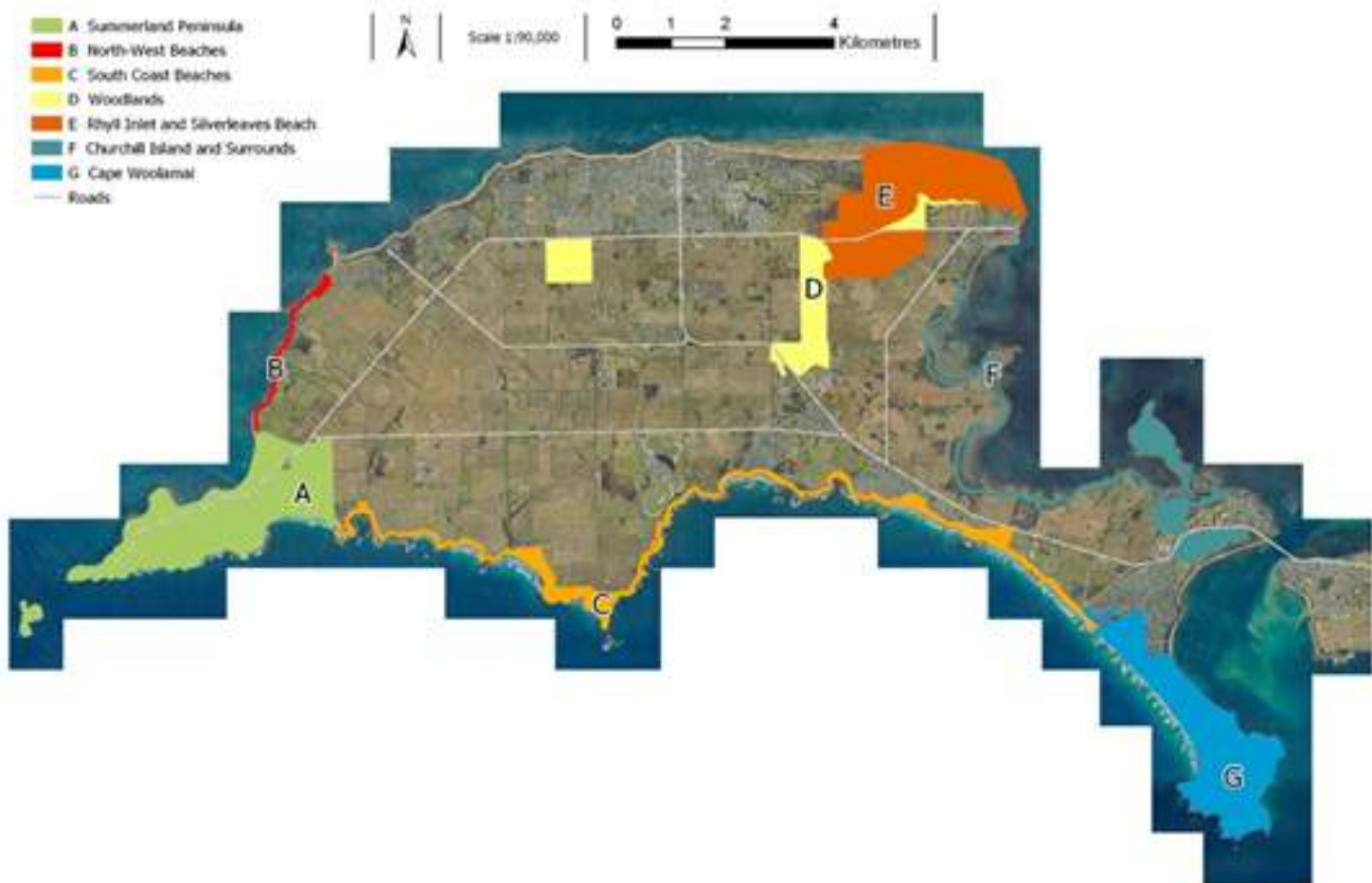
The Nature Parks manages over 20% of Phillip Island’s remnant ecosystems, including habitat that supports significant wildlife populations. This puts us in the fortunate position to be able to contribute to Victoria’s biodiversity through providing secure habitat for threatened flora and fauna.

To assist on-ground management actions, the Nature Parks has been grouped into Key Areas.

A Key Area is defined as a geographic area (asset). Key Areas are natural elements of the environment, which have environmental, social and/or economic values, and are spatially defined. Processes affecting the Key Area, which are outside its boundary, are also recognised.

Aspirational Key Area plans for each area were prepared with community input between 2012 and 2017. Through further community consultation, Master Plans were developed for Summerland Peninsula, Churchill Island and one section of the South Coast Key Area. Master Planning incorporates cross jurisdictional, local community engagement and more detailed information about ecosystems and potential impacts of climate change than the aspirational Key Area Plans.

- Descriptions of the Nature Parks’ major Key Areas are listed in the Appendices of this Plan with links to more information at [www.penguins.org.au](http://www.penguins.org.au)



For a more detailed map refer to map LEGL./10-005 via our website [www.penguins.org.au](http://www.penguins.org.au)



# Planning context and methodology

## TOWARDS OUR 30-YEAR VISION

The Nature Parks' Strategic Plan 2018-2023 details our organisation's vision.

Our 30-Year Conservation Vision outlines the longterm conservation challenges the Island will face and proposes strategies to plan for, mitigate and challenge these risks through robust science and planned, collaborative conservation and community engagement.

*This 5-Year Conservation Plan is the first of its kind for the Nature Parks and marks the beginning of our journey towards meeting the bold conservation outcomes outlined in our 30-Year Conservation Vision - Beyond the Horizon.*

For the first time, we are presenting conservation as a research-led process through combining our research and environment plans into one collaborative document. We have also worked with our Visitor Experience, Education and Operations teams to integrate conservation across our organisation.

## PLAN CONTEXT



## HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

The 5-Year actions within this plan reflect those in our 30-Year Conservation Vision document. This is a new approach rather than grouping actions by key area or species as in previous plans.

*Actions are grouped under the key themes of:*

1. Conserving nature for wildlife
2. Working together to protect our marine environments and coastal interface
3. Leading the way as a global conservation organisation
4. Inspiring and engaging people to act for conservation
5. Rewilding our island haven
6. Skilled partnerships, key alliances and sustainable funding.

Each section begins with a summary from our 30-Year Vision. Our ongoing conservation commitments are then detailed. New 5-Year actions and measures of success are then listed under the relevant future vision statement.





## OPERATING PRINCIPLES AND FRAMEWORK

*The operating principles that underpin our conservation actions are:*

- Developing and using the best available science
- Creating mutual prosperity for nature and people
- Adopting traditional knowledge into the natural and cultural landscape of Phillip Island (Millowl)
- Partnering with the community
- Planning for the impacts of climate change.

Our Conservation Team works within a sound legislative framework supported by an extensive suite of plans and research documents developed by the Nature Parks.

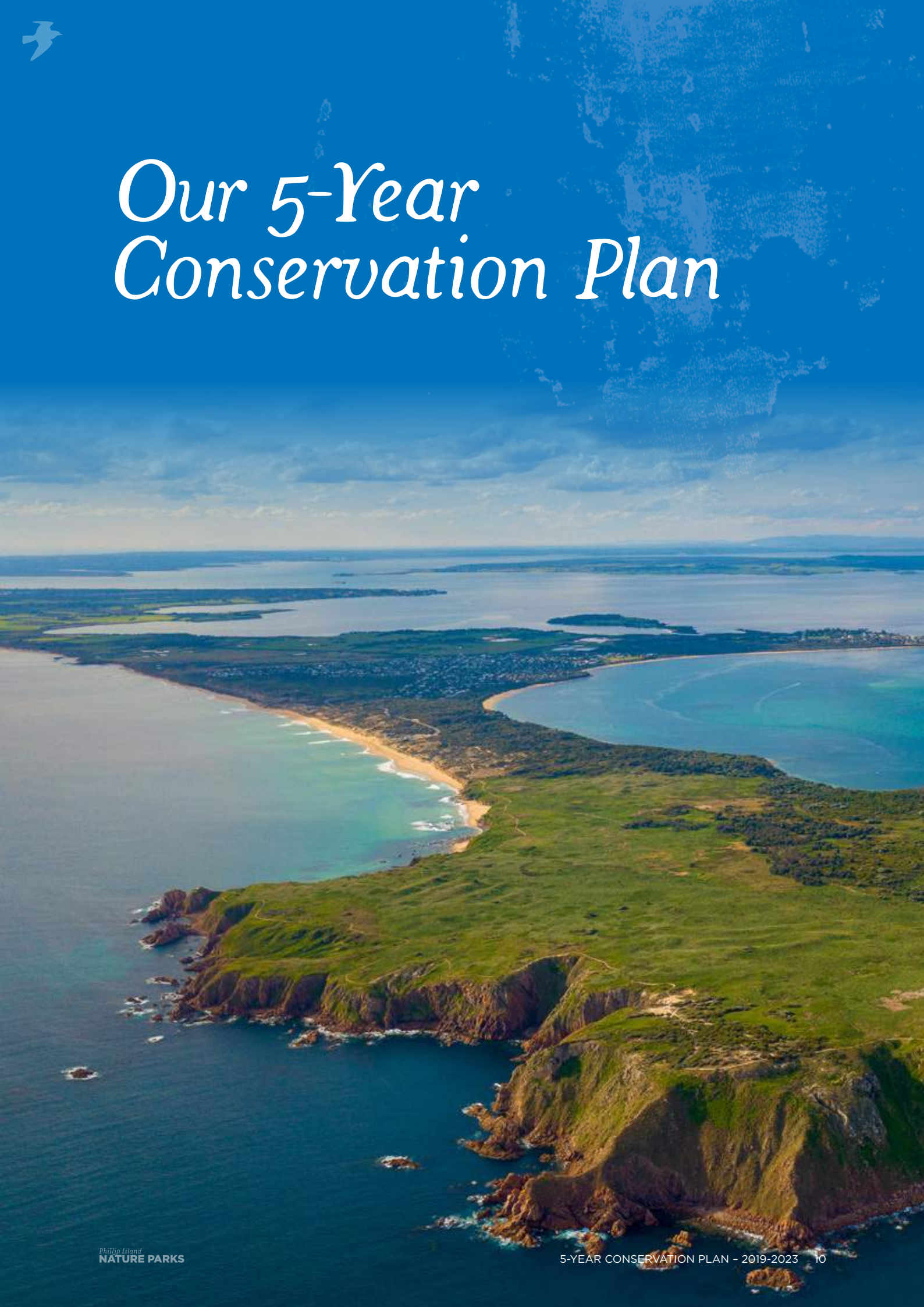
Another key commitment for our organisation is reconciliation with and recognition for Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Key actions for honouring this commitment are outlined in the Nature Parks' Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2022 and are strongly reflected in this Conservation Plan.

- Key background information can be found in the Appendices on page 41 and detailed references, reports, plans, maps and updates are maintained at [www.penguins.org.au](http://www.penguins.org.au).
- You can contact the Conservation Team at [conservation@penguins.org.au](mailto:conservation@penguins.org.au)

Opposite page: The majestic Cape Woolamai. Photograph by Brian Thorne



# Our 5-Year Conservation Plan





# 1. Conserving nature for wildlife

The management of native flora and fauna is a key conservation goal for the Nature Parks. Our primary focus of conserving natural values is via active management such as pest plant and animal eradication programs. The Nature Parks has developed Key Area Plans and masterplans that will continue to be reviewed and implemented over the next five years and guide the management and protection of key conservation values.

Over the next five years the Nature Parks will continue to trial innovative approaches and best available science to help Phillip Island's (Millowl's) biodiversity adapt to climate change and other emerging threats. The knowledge and skills of the Island's Traditional Custodian's will help us to improve important habitat for valued wildlife including Little penguins, Hooded plovers and the critically endangered Eastern barred bandicoots, as well as a range of threatened and important flora and fauna species.

We recognise that native fauna on Phillip Island (Millowl) depends upon healthy habitats and the ability to maintain freshwater sources across the landscape, which are critical for species survival in a drying environment.

Striking the balance between the actions needed to protect and conserve wildlife and the actions needed to manage the impacts from wildlife presents a challenge for us all. We will work together for viable and creative solutions in line with the Victorian Government's *Living With Wildlife Plan and Biodiversity 2037* plan.

Biodiversity 2037 is Victoria's plan to stop the decline of our native plants and animals and improve our natural environment so it is healthy, valued and actively cared for. The plan states Victoria's current biodiversity condition:

- There are more than 5,000 plants and 1,200 vertebrate animals native to Victoria.
- Over a third of these species are of conservation concern (classified as rare, threatened or near-threatened).
- There is a continued decline in the quality and extent of habitat of native species.
- Threats to biodiversity include habitat loss, weeds, pest animals and changed fire and water regimes – all of which will be exacerbated by the effects of climate change.
- Biodiversity has been historically under-valued and is not accounted for in the economy, yet it provides enormous benefits to society.

Over the next five years, the Nature Parks will contribute towards Biodiversity 2037 objectives and focus on building the ecological resilience of ecosystems for priority wildlife species facing a changing climate and environment.





## OUR ONGOING CONSERVATION COMMITMENT

| ONGOING ACTIONS   | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|---|--|
| Participate in the development of regional cross tenure management plans for all conservation areas on Phillip Island (Millowl).  | Port Phillip and Westernport CMA<br>Parks Victoria<br>BCSC           |
| Continue monitoring and implementing revegetation recommendations for the Former <i>Rhyll Landfill Site Departure Plan</i> .  | BCSC<br>EPA  |
| Implement fire management strategies as per the <i>Nature Parks Fire Management Plan 2019-2021</i> .  | DELWP<br>BCSC<br>CFA   |
| Collaborate with the Bass Coast Shire Council and Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, local community and other key agencies to improve the planning protection for the natural character of Phillip Island (Millowl). | BCSC<br>Port Phillip and Westernport CMA<br>Phillip Island community |

### Native wildlife:

#### *Cape Barren geese (Cereopsis novaehollandiae)*

Cape Barren geese are native to Phillip Island (Millowl). During the early European settlement of Australia they were hunted to near extinction. Numbers remained low through to about the 1980s when a management strategy was implemented, including breeding and release programs.

#### *Swamp wallabies (Wallabia bicolor)*

Swamp wallabies are native to Phillip Island (Millowl) and were recognised as common through to the 1930s and 1940s. Numbers were severely reduced, possibly due to hunting pressure, and sightings became uncommon from the 1960s to the 1980s. During the 1990s, the wallabies were recognised to be dispersing across Phillip Island (Millowl) and increasing in numbers within several bushland areas.

#### *Koalas (Phascolarctos cinereus)*

Koalas were introduced to Phillip Island (Millowl) in the late 1800s with resident populations establishing by the 1920s. During the mid 1900s, their population was high enough to justify the relocation of more than 3,000 koalas from Phillip Island (Millowl). However, free-ranging koalas are now uncommon on the Island due to the combined effects of Chlamydia infection, road kill, dog predation and habitat destruction. A protected koala population is maintained at the Nature Parks' Koala Centre.

| ONGOING ACTIONS  | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|--|--|
| Monitor the numbers of Cape Barren geese across Phillip Island (Millowl) annually.   | BirdLife Australia   |
| Monitor the number of key species of coastal birds across Phillip Island (Millowl) quarterly such as Hooded plovers and Pacific gulls.                           | Volunteers   |
| Continue to maintain koalas at the Koala Centre for visitors to enjoy the woodlands environment and wildlife.  | Volunteers   |
| Prioritise the replacement of marram grass on key coastal beaches with native grass species to improve Little penguin access and Hooded plover breeding habitat. | Phillip Island community<br>BCSC<br>Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club                                   |
| Continue to provide scientific evidence and develop best practice management for sustainable native wildlife populations on Phillip Island (Millowl).            | DELWP<br>BCSC<br>Regional Roads Victoria<br>Phillip Island farming community<br>Destination Phillip Island |



## OUR ONGOING CONSERVATION COMMITMENT

### Climate change

| ONGOING ACTIONS  | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|--|--|
| Review the predictions and implications for climate variation for the Nature Parks' key wildlife species such as Little penguins and Australian fur seals. | DELWP<br>CSIRO<br>Research Collaborators   |
| Advocate for extending protection of priority conservation areas, saltmarsh and mangrove communities, with other key stakeholders.                         | BCSC<br>Phillip Island community<br>Bass Coast Landcare Network<br>DELWP<br>Trust for Nature<br>Western Port Biosphere |
| Continue to consider climate variation impacts in environmental impact assessments across the Nature Parks developments.                                   | Research Collaborators<br>CSIRO<br>DELWP<br>BCSC   |
| Monitor water quality and health in the Nature Parks' wetlands through Melbourne Water's <i>Waterwatch Victoria</i> citizen science program.               | Melbourne Water<br>Victorian State Government  |



Mangroves *Avicennia marina* at Rhyll Inlet wetlands





## 30-YEAR VISION

**1.1** Phillip Island's (Millowl's) important townships have been maintained within their 2018 boundaries and are fringed by large expanses of agricultural land and nature reserves. The nature reserves are connected through a network of bio-links which are supported by public and private landholders. Mangroves and other coastal habitats have moved inland as the coastline receded through sea level rise and these outcomes were reached through proactive successful partnerships between the Nature Parks, Bass Coast Shire Council and private landholders.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS  | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS   | DATE                      | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|---|--|---------------------------|--|
| 1.1.1 Advocate for extending protection of priority conservation areas, notably saltmarsh and mangrove communities, which will be impacted in the longterm by sea level rise.             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and commence the process with Victorian Government to transfer key areas with high environmental value that are unreserved Crown Land, to the Nature Parks.</li> </ul> | Commence 2019 and ongoing | BCSC, DELWP  |
| 1.1.2 Develop a vegetation monitoring program across the Nature Parks to evaluate the effectiveness of the environmental management programs.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vegetation monitoring program is developed and implemented.</li> </ul>  | 2020                      | DELWP<br>Bass Coast Landcare Network<br>Phillip Island farming community<br>BCSC |
| 1.1.3 Contribute to the Biodiversity 2037 Plan on key species and ecosystem.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual report information sent to Victorian Government.</li> </ul>  | Annual                    | DELWP  |
| 1.1.4 Assist the Victorian State Government in implementing the Distinctive Areas Protections aimed at improving protections from inappropriate developments on Phillip Island (Millowl). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phillip Island (Millowl) is included in an area recognised under the <i>Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Act 2018</i>.</li> </ul>          | 2022                      | DELWP<br>BCSC  |



Rhyll Inlet, part of the Western Port Ramsar Site is crucial habitat for resident and migratory shorebirds.



## 30-YEAR VISION

**1.2** Woodland, coastal and wetland habitats are thriving across the Island. The thoughtful and scientifically sound manipulation of vegetation has built climate resilience for the flora and fauna that it supports.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS  | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | DATE             | DELIVERY PARTNERS   |
|---|---|------------------|---|
| 1.2.1 Identify appropriate plant communities that will be resilient to future climate conditions on Phillip Island (Millowl).   | • Barb Martin Bush Bank has increased volunteers by 10% in two years to support the plant propagation programs.                       | 2020             | Barb Martin Bushbank volunteers                               |
|   | • Barb Martin Bush Bank has improved plant genetic diversity for climate adaptation by 10%.   | 2023             | Volunteers  |
| 1.2.2 Review and develop a Hygiene Plan for the Nature Parks' key reserves to respond to heightening biosecurity threats.   | • Biosecurity protocols for all Nature Parks reserves are reviewed and implemented.   | 2021             | Bass Coast Landcare Network                                   |
|   | • No new pathogens or diseases have been established in Nature Parks' reserves.   | 2023             | BCSC  |
|   | • All key stakeholders are demonstrating consistent hygiene practices across Phillip Island (Millowl).                                | 2023             | Phillip Island farming community                              |
| 1.2.3 Engage native vegetation and freshwater wetland restoration experts to establish high quality, resilience modelled and designed habitats.                                 | • Hydrological studies of Swan Lake and Newhaven Wetland are complete.  | 2021             | Melbourne Water<br>Westernport Water                          |
|   | • Priority wetland management recommendations for Rhyll/Rowell wetlands are actioned.   | 2023             | Hydrological wetland management experts                       |
| 1.2.4 Continue to maintain visitor viewing of koalas and strengthen the conservation value of the woodlands reserve at the Koala Centre.  | • Koala browse plantations are protected for future food security.  | 2020             |   |
|   | • One research project into woodland tree health across Phillip Island (Millowl), investigating tree mortality, has been implemented. | 2020             | Research collaborators<br>Bass Coast Landcare Network<br>BCSC |
|   | • Key threats to mature trees in the koala boardwalks have been identified.   | 2021             |   |
|   | • Key management actions implemented and measurable improvement to tree health.   | 2021             |   |
|   | • Investigation of conservation and ecotourism opportunities for the Koala Centre has been completed.                                 | 2023             |   |
| 1.2.5 Maintain and improve coastal dune systems and natural dune formation processes across the Nature Parks' key sensitive coastal areas which are impacted by sea level rise. | • Cape Woolamai marram grass dune restoration project has been implemented at Magic Lands to Anzac.                                   | 2019 - 2023      | DELWP<br>Greening Australia                                   |
|   | • Summerland Beach coastal dune restoration project has been implemented.   | 2020 - 2023      |   |
|   | • Coastal dune profile for Cape Woolamai and Summerland Beach restoration project is measured annually.                               | Annual (ongoing) |   |
|   | • Mapping of coastal areas at priority risk from sea level rise is completed.   | 2020             | DELWP<br>CW Surf Life Saving Club<br>University of Melbourne  |



## 30-YEAR VISION

**1.3** Weed infestations continue to be eradicated through the co-operation between public and private landowners.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS  | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS   | DATE | DELIVERY PARTNERS           |
|---|--|------|-----------------------------|
| 1.3.1 Implement key actions from the Nature Parks' Weed Management Strategy for 2018-2023 so the Nature Parks can continue to effectively manage, contain and where possible eradicate the eleven 'Weeds of National Significance' and the 40 weed species listed under the <i>Victorian Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> . | • GIS mapping of all weeds across the Nature Parks reserves is completed.  | 2022 | Bass Coast Landcare Network |
|   | • No new and emerging weeds have established in the Nature Parks.  | 2023 | DJPR<br>BCSC                |
|   | • Boxthorn is eradicated in the Nature Parks.  | 2023 | Local community             |
|   | • Ten other Weeds of National Significance (WONS) found within the Nature Parks have reduced by 10% in coverage (extent).                                | 2023 |                             |
|   | • Forty weeds listed under the <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> found within the Nature Parks have not expanded.                            | 2023 |                             |
|   | • Kikuyu has been reduced by 40% in Little penguin and Short-tailed shearwater breeding habitat and high value vegetation areas across the Nature Parks. | 2023 |                             |
|   | • Collaboration with Bass Coast Landcare Network, has spatially mapped high priority weeds across Phillip Island (Millowl).                              | 2023 |                             |

## 30-YEAR VISION

**1.4** Phillip Island (Millowl) continues to have a vibrant agricultural community. The Nature Parks has supported this community through research-led wildlife management strategies to achieve a balanced, economic and conservation outcome.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS   | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | DATE             | DELIVERY PARTNERS   |
|--|---|------------------|---|
| 1.4.1 Identify and measure impacts of wildlife on agricultural landscapes to improve our understanding on how to live with wildlife on Phillip Island (Millowl). | • Participate in and support the Phillip Island consortium, Cape Barren Goose Working Group.  | 2019             | Local Phillip Island farming community<br>Bass Coast Landcare Network<br>DELWP                      |
| 1.4.2 Develop wildlife management solutions in partnership with Phillip Island farming community.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two established native wildlife research projects have provided tangible solutions for the agricultural community on Phillip Island to consider:</li> <li>• Research gaps and management strategies to reduce the impact of Cape barren geese have been identified.</li> <li>• Identified management actions and future research gaps to mitigate impacts of swamp wallabies across Phillip Island (Millowl).</li> </ul> | 2023             | Bunurong Land Council<br>BCSC<br>Cape Barren Goose Working Group<br>DELWP<br>Research collaborators |
| 1.4.3 Form university partnerships to engage post graduate students in managing wildlife across agricultural landscapes.   | • Research partnerships formed around the topic of Living with Wildlife.  | 2019 and ongoing |   |



## 2 Protecting our marine environments and coastal interface

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Victoria's climate is becoming warmer and drier than in previous decades, accelerating rising sea levels and warmer temperatures, which are driven by melting of the Antarctic ice sheet via climate change. Considerable change to the marine life and ecosystems will likely impact ocean currents, species distribution shifts and potential spread of invasive species and diseases in our marine ecosystem.

It is fundamental to ensure the Nature Parks fosters the appropriate level of marine and coastal protection and governance for the Island's key marine species. Over the next five years, the Nature Parks will be working with partner agencies to achieve the best outcomes of marine and coastal protection for key wildlife such as Little penguins, Australian fur seals, Short-tailed shearwaters and migratory and resident shorebirds.

Our conservation team will continue to understand what the impact of sea level rise will be for Phillip Island (Mollw) and continue to develop adaptive methods for managing marine and coastal habitats which focus on building resilience in wildlife populations and improving our coastal interface.





## OUR ONGOING CONSERVATION COMMITMENT

| ONGOING ACTIONS  | DELIVERY PARTNERS   |
|--|---|
| Maintain undisturbed breeding, feeding and roosting areas for shorebirds   | DELWP<br>BCSC<br>Parks Victoria   |
| Continue population surveys, breeding, survival and dietary studies of key species at the Nature Parks including Little penguins, Short tailed shearwaters and Australian and New Zealand fur seals. | Research Collaborators,<br>Volunteers   |
| Support and maintain collaborations in Ramsar areas and marine management zones.   | Port Phillip Westernport CMA<br>Parks Victoria<br>Victorian Fisheries Authority |

### *Little penguins (Eudyptula minor)*

Little penguin colonies at the Summerland Peninsula support a breeding population of an estimated 32,000 penguins in 2018. The Penguin Parade is the Nature Parks' and the State of Victoria's major natural wildlife attraction and provides the most accessible and reliable Little penguin viewing in Australia. The conservation of the Little penguin population on the Summerland Peninsula is one of the most critical conservation programs for the Nature Parks.

| ONGOING ACTIONS   | DELIVERY PARTNERS      |
|---|------------------------|
| Ensure the protection of marine areas and resources used by seabirds and shorebirds, particularly Little penguins   | DELWP                  |
| Assist with the development of a lighting plan for the Penguin Parade within the Summerland Master Plan to reduce light spill into habitat areas at night |                        |
| Continue the ongoing population monitoring of Little penguins   | Research Collaborators |

### *Short-tailed shearwaters (Ardenna tenuirostris)*

Short-tailed shearwaters are listed in inter-governmental agreements for the protection of migratory species. Approximately 1.4 million shearwaters breed within the Nature Parks with the largest colony located at Cape Woolamai and other, smaller colonies found along the south coast and on the northwest coast of Phillip Island (Millowl).

| ONGOING ACTIONS   | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|---|--|
| Lead the Short-tailed shearwater rescue program and continue to strengthen key stakeholder support.             | BCSC<br>Regional Roads Victoria<br>AusNet Program services |
| Continue to monitor the breeding success and migration of Short tailed shearwaters on Phillip Island (Millowl). | Victorian Ornithological<br>Research Group                 |



## OUR ONGOING CONSERVATION COMMITMENT

### *Australian fur seals (Arctocephalus pusillus)*

The breeding colony of 25,000 - 30,000 Australian fur seals at Seal Rocks is one of the largest colonies for this species and represents 25% of the species' total population. Recent counts of pups suggest a decline in numbers. Entanglement with marine debris is a significant problem for fur seals of all ages and recent drone surveys have revealed that it is a more significant issue than previously thought.

### *Long nosed fur seals (Arctocephalus forsteri)*

Long-nosed fur seals are increasing along the Victorian coast and may become an important predator of penguins and other seabirds in the medium term.

| ONGOING ACTIONS   | DELIVERY PARTNERS   |
|---|---|
| Contribute to collaborative investigations into sustainable bycatch levels and developing mitigation techniques for Australian fur seals in commercial fisheries.   | Victorian Fishing Authority<br>Research Collaborators<br>DJPR |
| Monitor plastics in the diets of fur seals and Short tailed shearwaters.  | Research Collaborators  |
| Assist with the removal of discarded fishing gear from Australian fur seals and within seal habitat and promote good practice.  | Victorian Fishing Authority                                   |
| Continue to research Long nose fur seals and seabird populations within Bass Strait.  | Research Collaborators  |
| Research the ecosystem health for impacts of human pollutants such as heavy metals and chemicals. Investigate their impact on Australian fur seal populations in particular reference to reproduction and survival rates. | Research Collaborators  |

### *Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre*

The Nature Parks operates a Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre located adjacent to the Penguin Parade. The main purpose of which is to rehabilitate native wildlife, particularly Little penguins and seabirds to their natural condition so they can be released back into the wild. Facilities for the care of sick or injured koalas are located at the Koala Centre.

| ONGOING ACTIONS   | DELIVERY PARTNERS                             |
|---|---|
| Continue to operate the Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre for injured wildlife and seabirds in the event of a marine pollution incident/spill. | DELWP<br>Australian Maritime Safety Authority |
| Maintain support for an MOU with Wildlife Victoria.   | Wildlife Victoria                             |
| Maintain an MOU with DELWP to facilitate rehabilitation of oiled penguins and seabirds and burnt wildlife from Victoria.                    | DELWP   |



Australian fur seals *Arctocephalus pusillus* at the Seal Rocks colony, Bass Strait.



## 30-YEAR VISION

**2.1** Our marine wildlife and environments have appropriate levels of protection, achieved through a collaborative approach between the Nature Parks working with Commonwealth and State Governments, universities and research institutions. Fishing agencies have been actively involved in the legislative change and are now strong supporters for both environmental and economic reasons.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS  | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS   | DATE | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|---|--|------|--|
| 2.1.1 Work with key stakeholders, Commonwealth and State Governments to protect the northern Bass Strait and Western Port key marine and coastal assets, by developing a Marine Spatial Plan. The purpose of this plan is to advocate for legislative change and mitigate threats to ensure the protection of our Little penguins at sea. | • Marine Spatial Plan for Phillip Island's (Morrow's) Little penguins' future protection completed.  | 2021 | DJPR<br>DELWP<br>Parks Victoria  |
|   | • Research project on Little penguin interactions with shipping lanes completed.   | 2023 | Monash University<br>Australian Government (Department Environment and Energy) |
|   | • Key stakeholder collaboration with Commonwealth and State Governments to raise the level of legislative protection for our Little penguins, Short-tailed shearwaters and Australian fur seals has commenced. | 2023 | Melbourne Water  |

## 30-YEAR VISION

**2.2** Increased understanding, legislative change and raised community awareness have reduced the impacts of marine pollution caused by humans.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS   | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | DATE | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|--|---|------|--|
| 2.2.1 Work with the community to advocate and reduce single use plastics on Phillip Island (Morrow) through supporting plastic-free initiatives. | • Single use plastic items for sale at Nature Parks venues are eliminated.  | 2019 | BCSC<br>Phillip Island community<br>Destination Phillip Island |
| 2.2.2 Marine behavior campaign is implemented into the new Penguin Parade visitor centre.  | • Messages of success of the award winning When Balloons Fly Seabirds Die behavior-change biodiversity campaign is communicated and continued in the new Penguin Parade visitor centre. | 2019 | Zoos Victoria<br>Plastic-Free Phillip Island and San Remo      |
| 2.2.3 Integrate magnetic cleaning into oiled wildlife emergency response programs.   | • Magnetic Particle Technology ready for use on oiled wildlife in the field and introduced to international oiled wildlife cleaning agencies.   | 2020 | DJPR<br>DELWP<br>Victoria University and Google                |
|  | • Magnetic particle technology is integrated into oiled wildlife emergency response programs in Victoria by 2022.   | 2022 |  |



## 30-YEAR VISION

**2.3** Our globally recognised research and advanced technology have prepared us to adapt to change in the marine environment to protect marine wildlife including Little penguins, Short-tailed shearwaters and Australian fur seals.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS  | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS   | DATE | DELIVERY PARTNERS      |
|---|--|------|------------------------|
| 2.3.1 Determine and forecast food web requirements to sustain key marine species by developing a food web model for the marine ecosystem. | • Food web modelling is complete and has provided future predictions of food security for Little penguins in northern Bass Strait.                       | 2020 | Research Collaborators |
|   | • Research project is complete to better understand the predator interaction between Little penguins and Long nose fur seals in northern Bass Strait.    | 2023 |                        |
|   | • Predictions from food web model have been evaluated to enable researchers to forecast change within marine ecosystems with key wildlife species.       | 2023 |                        |
|   | • Marine food security predictions from Little penguins, Australian fur seals and Short-tailed shearwater research have been shared with other agencies. | 2023 |                        |

**Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)**

A process that brings together multiple users of the ocean - including energy, industry, government, conservation and recreation - to make informed and coordinated decisions about how to use marine resources sustainably. MSP generally uses maps to create a more comprehensive picture of a marine area - identifying where and how an ocean area is being used and what natural resources and habitat exist. It is similar to land-use planning, but for marine waters.





### 3. *Leading the way as a global conservation organisation*

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The Nature Parks will continue to be internationally recognised for its research-led conservation outcomes. Over the next five years it is critical for the Nature Parks to maintain a high national and international profile, so the work continues to contribute to global initiatives to protect key wildlife and their habitats - particularly threatened species.

Over the next five years we will focus on becoming more sustainably proactive, recognising our visitor's travel footprint and broadening our opportunities to further secure key conservation areas.

In order for us to have a global impact, our organisation needs to first transform into conservation advocates where our staff and volunteers understand the organisation's *30-Year Beyond the Horizon Conservation Vision*, play an active role in the conservation outcomes and are encouraged, supported and empowered to be creative and innovative in a time of rapid change. Over the next five years, the Nature Parks is committed to this organisational transformation which will then lead to globally recognised conservation and ecotourism outcomes.





## OUR ONGOING CONSERVATION COMMITMENT

| ONGOING ACTIONS   | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|---|--|
| Maintain a fox free status on Phillip and Churchill Islands, as per Biodiversity Plan 2037.   | Phillip Island community<br>Bass Coast Landcare Network<br>DELWP   |
| Contribute to policy development and implementation for feral cat management.   | DELIVERY PARTNERS<br>BCSC<br>Victorian Government  |
| Continue to protect values of the Western Port Ramsar Site and Nature Parks' reserves through collaborative pest plant and animal control programs.             | Parks Victoria<br>Bass Coast Landcare Network<br>Port Phillip Westernport CMA<br>Federal Government                      |
| Continue to hold a position on the IUCN Penguin specialist group, World Seabird Union, Global Penguin Society and Eastern barred bandicoot (EBB) recovery team. | IUCN Penguin Specialist Group<br>Eastern Barred Bandicoot Recovery Team<br>World Seabird Union<br>Global Penguin Society |
| Continue to play a key role on relevant scientific panels, boards and steering committees that contribute to global conservation outcomes.                      |  |



Our fox detection dog team is an important tool in ensuring Phillip Island (Millowl) remains fox-free.



## 30-YEAR VISION

**3.1** Our scientists continue to attract recognition for Phillip Island (Millowl) as a centre for global conservation excellence. The Nature Parks’ scientific expertise is in demand for biodiversity management in a time of rapid change.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS   | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | DATE        | DELIVERY PARTNERS      |
|--|---|-------------|------------------------|
| 3.1.1 Share our research expertise to enhance and develop conservation partnerships. | • One communications internship is working with the research team and contributing to further media outlets with published research achieved. | 2019 - 2023 | Research collaborators |
|  | • Research Centre is launched and has attracted at least two new partnerships and funding opportunities.                                      | 2023        | Monash University      |
|  | • Seal Spotter data sets have been recognised for contribution to ‘Machine Learning’ at Monash University.                                    | 2023        | Research collaborators |
|  | • Six research projects have been published globally over five years.   | 2023        | Research collaborators |

## 30-YEAR VISION

**3.2** Phillip Island (Millowl) is recognised as a worldwide, exemplary model in coastal habitat protection and renewal. Populations of key and threatened species such as Short-tailed shearwaters and Hooded plovers are secured.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS  | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | DATE      | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|---|---|-----------|--|
| 3.2.1 Continue to maintain fox-free Phillip and Churchill Islands.  | • Buffer zone fox control across Anderson Peninsula in conjunction with Parks Victoria has been strengthened and no foxes present on Phillip and Churchill Islands. | Annual    | Port Phillip Westernport CMA<br>Parks Victoria<br>Phillip Island community |
|   | • Population model to predict the likely outcomes of birth control in foxes is developed with Parks Victoria.   | 2023      | Parks Victoria<br>Research Collaborators                                   |
| 3.2.2 Promote the Nature Parks’ fox dogs to contribute to conservation outcomes across Victoria.                                    | • Two Victorian conservation programs are supported by the Nature Parks’ fox dogs.  | Annual    | DELWP<br>Parks Victoria<br>External agencies                               |
| 3.2.3 Identify key predation threats to seabirds on the Summerland Peninsula and develop and implement strategies to mitigate them. | • Mitigation strategy is implemented.   | 2023      | DELWP<br>External agencies<br>Research Collaborators                       |
| 3.2.4 Increase habitat for Little penguins on the Summerland Peninsula.   | • Monitoring of Little penguin colonisation within the restored penguin habitat is established.   | 2020-2023 | Volunteers   |
|   | • 6.7 hectares of habitat for Little penguins has been revegetated at the Penguin Parade.   | 2022      | Volunteers   |
| 3.2.5 Commence revegetation plan for the Nature Parks’ 40-hectare former farming property adjacent to the Summerland Peninsula.     | • Revegetation plan is complete and key areas have been mapped, zoned and climate adaptive species of flora for use is selected.                                    | 2020      | Greening Australia<br>Research collaborators<br>Bunurong Land Council      |
|   | • Revegetation plan is implemented and 25% complete.  | 2023      | Volunteers   |



## 30-YEAR VISION

**3.3** The Nature Parks’ internationally recognised penguin research is supporting the global protection of other penguin species. The Nature Parks’ partnership with the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has created international benefits for penguin conservation.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS   | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | DATE    | DELIVERY PARTNERS             |
|--|---|---------|-------------------------------|
| 3.3.1 Engage in global conservation initiatives for other penguin species. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions to multispecies reviews of penguin conservation and management are delivered through the IUCN Penguin Specialist Group.</li> </ul> | 2023    | IUCN Penguin Specialist Group |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for the protection of penguins under threat and contribute to research and management plans.</li> </ul>                                 | Ongoing |                               |

**Machine Learning (ML)**

This is a field of artificial intelligence that uses statistical techniques to give computer systems the ability to learn (e.g., progressively improve performance on a specific task) from data, without being explicitly programmed.



Our Conservation Team monitoring our Little penguin colony

## 4. Inspiring and engaging people to act for conservation

We are committed to raising awareness and inspiring passion in our community and visitors to promote stewardship of Phillip Island (Millowl) and ongoing action for conservation.

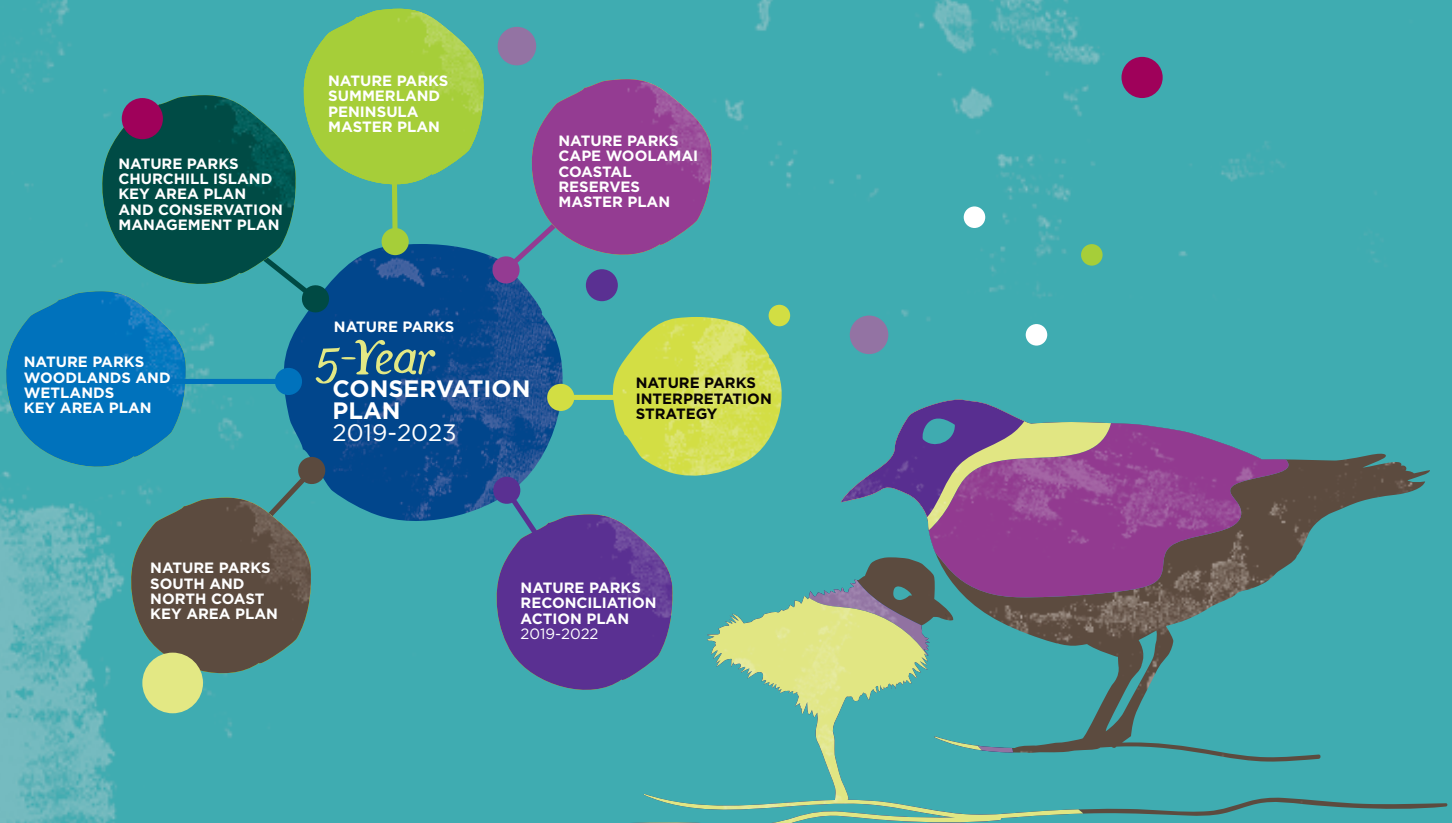
The Nature Parks' role is to protect the natural and cultural values and key assets of the Crown Land we are privileged to manage, whilst also providing a great opportunity for people to visit and connect with the environment and become inspired to act for conservation. Growing scientific evidence and generations of traditional knowledge show that spending time in nature is good for our mind, body and soul.

Our commitment over the next five years to grow and diversify volunteers across the Nature Parks will help us to support Victorians in connecting with our conservation actions and also to become advocates for positive change. The *DELWP Biodiversity 2037 Plan* recognises the Nature Parks as a lead agency to 'support Victorians to be citizen scientists through programs that engage the community on environmental issues'. The use of our cutting-edge science will help us continue to develop opportunities to increase the level of citizen science programs.

Conservation is a joint effort and we rely on an integrated approach to interpretation and education through engaging and empowering students, volunteers and visitors to act at a local, regional and global level. We will achieve this through strengthening relationships and developing innovative strategies that utilise new technologies.

This Conservation Plan supports the Victorian Government's Living with Wildlife objectives which aim to strike a balance between the action needed to protect and conserve wildlife and the action needed to manage the impacts from wildlife and includes communication strategies and contributing research to further knowledge to promote positive attitudes towards wildlife and encourage people to understand the importance of conserving wildlife.<sup>7</sup>

The Visitor Economy Strategy predicts visitor numbers to Phillip Island and San Remo will reach nearly 3.5 million with a 37% increase in resident numbers by 2035. This presents a challenge to work collaboratively to develop sustainable, healthy ecosystems and respect for our natural environments to ensure Phillip Island's (Millowl's) natural identity is maintained. The Nature Parks will continue to work on actions in the Key Area Plans where visitors can connect with our reserves and assets are maintained for mutual community benefit.





## OUR ONGOING CONSERVATION COMMITMENT

| ONGOING ACTIONS  | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|--|--|
| Provide training and support for Nature Parks staff in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management   | Aboriginal Victoria, Bunurong Land Council   |
| Maintain a register of historic sites.   | Friends of Churchill Island Society<br>Phillip Island and District Historical Society<br>National Trust (Victoria) |
| Implement management measures that minimise visitor impacts and other causes of damage to archaeological and significant heritage sites  | Bunurong Land Council, Heritage Victoria   |
| Continue to implement existing Key Area Plans for Churchill Island, North and South Coast and Woodlands and Wetlands Key Area Plans and Summerland Peninsula and Cape Woolamai Master Plans. | BCSC<br>Friends of Churchill Island Society<br>Bunurong Land Council<br>Phillip Island community                   |

### Heritage management

The Nature Parks is responsible for the management of sites, which have importance in terms of both the Island’s Aboriginal history, and that of European settlement including Churchill Island. Much of the Phillip Island (Millowli) coast is an area of cultural sensitivity and must be managed under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018*.

| ONGOING ACTIONS   | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|---|--|
| Survey and document known Aboriginal sites and new sites as a pre-requisite to development of the Key Area Plans. | Aboriginal Heritage Victoria<br>DELWP<br>Bunurong Land Council           |
| Implement the Nature Parks’ Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2022 actions relevant to conservation values          | Bunurong Land Council<br>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community |
| Environment impact assessments for infrastructure developments in the Nature Parks are performed.                 | Bunurong Land Council  |



Our Conservation Team in the field



## 30-YEAR VISION

**4.1** Our use of the best available technology and communications has established programs for virtual visitors from around the world to contribute to our conservation outcomes while enhancing experiences for the real-time visitors.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS  | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS   | DATE | DELIVERY PARTNERS                               |
|---|--|------|---|
| 4.1.1 Engage visitors in conservation both online and onsite to inspire them to act for conservation. | • Australian fur seal 'Seal Spotter pup count' citizen science program is launched and engaged 1,000 participants per annum. | 2019 | DELWP<br>Australian Citizen Science Association |
|   | • Phillip Island Ranger Games App is established to engage children about the environment.                                   | 2021 | Local and global community                      |
|   | • One TedX presentation delivered for Seal Spotter Citizen Science Program.  | 2021 | Research collaborators<br>Volunteers            |
|   | • Seal Spotter network increased from 600 participants to 5,000 participants.  | 2023 |   |

## 30-YEAR VISION

**4.2** The Nature Parks' partnerships with Traditional Custodians have evolved and are recognised for respectfully and demonstrably acting to care for Land and Sea Country through shared roles and values.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS   | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | DATE      | DELIVERY PARTNERS   |
|--|---|-----------|---|
| 4.2.1 Expand the Traditional Custodian and wider community engagement program.                         | • Aboriginal cultural heritage management procedures developed for all Nature Parks operations to ensure compliance is upheld.  | June 2019 | Bunurong Land Council   |
|  | • Applied Heritage Management induction program is developed for current and new conservation and ground staff.   | 2020      |   |
|  | • Applied Heritage Management Framework complete to include Regional, Historical and Aboriginal heritage values including parkwide review, mapping, archive and database. | 2023      | Aboriginal Victoria<br>Heritage Victoria<br>Friends of Churchill Island Society<br>Phillip Island and District Historical Society<br>BCSC |
| 4.2.2 Methods of sharing knowledge and collaborating on ecological management practice are identified. | • Cape Woolamai conservation research project is completed.   | June 2023 | Research collaborators<br>Bass Coast Landcare Network<br>Local community  |



## 30-YEAR VISION

**4.3** Our Island children are custodians of Phillip Island’s (Morrowl’s) natural environment and will continue to embed strong conservation values into the future generations.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS   | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | DATE | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|--|---|------|--|
| 4.3.1 As per <i>Biodiversity Plan 2037</i> , continue to develop and strengthen behaviour change and citizen science education programs within the Bass Coast Region e.g. STEM Sisters and Turn the Tide Biodiversity Program. | • 20 schools engaged with <i>Turn the Tide</i> biodiversity program through engaging and inspiring students to appreciate and care for their school, local community and the environment. | 2023 | Department of Education and Training Victoria                          |
|  | • 10 schools engaged in <i>STEM Sisters</i> program.  | 2023 |  |
| 4.3.2 Review visitor experience programs to ensure consistent conservation messaging across the Nature Parks in line with our Interpretation Strategy.   | • Programs are reviewed that align with the Interpretation Strategy.  | 2020 |  |
| 4.3.3 Connect people with nature and wildlife.   | • Community Engagement Strategy for Living with Wildlife Behaviour Change Plan developed and implementation commenced.  | 2020 | Phillip Island community<br>BCSC                                       |
| 4.3.4 Support Bass Coast Shire’s Aspirational Network Pathways Plan 2016.  | • Walking trails noted in Key Area Plans are assessed and implemented where feasible.   | 2023 | BCSC   |
|  | • Actions in line with Nature Parks’ Key Area Plans are supported.  |      |  |
| 4.3.5 Review the Nature Parks’ education strategy with consideration to Interpretation Strategy and online delivery to ensure it strategically aligns with the Nature Parks’ conservation objectives.                          | • Education Strategy reviewed and updated and conservation themes incorporated into relevant programs.  | 2020 |  |
| 4.3.6 Promote conservation values in five Phillip Island (Morrowl) schools through curriculum-linked programs to build capacity for future planning.   | • Meetings with principals at Phillip Island (Morrowl) schools.   | 2020 | Phillip Island schools   |
|  | • Five student representatives provide input into 30 Year Vision five-year review.  | 2023 |  |
|  | • Investigate the development of a Teacher Environment Network for Bass Coast to build capacity of teachers to deliver our shared conservation values across Bass Coast region.           | 2023 | Local schools<br>BCSC<br>Department of Education and Training Victoria |
|  | • Teacher Environment Network is established for the Bass Coast region.   |      |  |





### 30-YEAR VISION

**4.4** Inspiring conservation projects are championed by a community of volunteers. Younger generations of this community have adopted the stewardship of Phillip Island’s (Millowl’s) environment.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS  | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS   | DATE | DELIVERY PARTNERS                  |
|---|--|------|------------------------------------|
| 4.4.1 Increase number of volunteer hours by 100% with an increase in engagement in conservation outcomes. | • Hooded plover volunteer active participants increased from 15-30.  | 2023 | Corporate and community volunteers |
|   | • Total Nature Parks volunteer hours increased from 11,000 - 20,000 hours per annum.   | 2023 |                                    |
|   | • Three volunteer environment groups have increased to 30 participants per group for the Nature Parks’ key priority conservation programs. | 2023 |                                    |



Rewilding the Summerland Peninsula with the critically endangered Eastern barred bandicoot *Perameles gunnii*

## 5. Rewilding our island haven

More than 80% of Australian mammals and 90% of our trees, ferns and shrubs occur nowhere else on earth. But since European settlement, in just over 200 years, over 130 of Australia's known species have become extinct, lost to us and to the world forever. The list of those threatened with extinction continues to grow.

The Nature Parks is committed to the protection of the Island's biodiversity and has an opportunity to play a lead role in the conservation of threatened flora and fauna species; on Phillip Island (Millowl), for the State of Victoria and for Australia.

Phillip Island has a unique socio-ecological landscape with opportunities to deliver conservation outcomes yet to be seen anywhere else across the globe.

We acknowledge the legacy of the conservation vision of many. This spans the thousands of years of care of Phillip Island (Millowl) by Traditional Custodians through to the families who donated land for conservation, Nature Parks staff and the groups and individuals who have given their precious time over decades to realise significant conservation outcomes for the Island.

The Nature Parks' 5-year action is to develop a collaborative network for Victoria's Island Havens' and recognise that Phillip Island (Millowl) can be an excellent role model for conservation outcomes.

Ten Victorian Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) found on the Island are considered endangered, three vulnerable and three severely depleted. There are records for 23 Victorian Rare Or Threatened (VROT) native flora species on Phillip Island (Millowl). These important plant communities require special management for their protection and enhancement.

The Nature Parks aims to achieve the successful recovery of at least three threatened species of fauna, playing a key role in the recovery of these species and helping to restore and maintain healthy and functioning environments across Phillip Island (Millowl).

The Nature Parks' contribution to the Island by declaring a fox free status has enabled the successful introduction of the Eastern barred bandicoot. As a key lead agency for the Biodiversity 2037 Plan, we will continue to honour the action: *'Maintain a fox free environment on the Island into the future and investigate the potential for Phillip Island to introduce appropriate threatened species of wildlife.'*

NATURE PARKS  
THREATENED  
SPECIES PLAN

NATURE PARKS  
**5-Year**  
CONSERVATION  
PLAN  
2019-2023

NATURE PARKS  
PEST MANAGEMENT  
STRATEGY  
2019-2023





## OUR ONGOING CONSERVATION COMMITMENT

### *Hooded plover (Thinornis rubricollis)*

Phillip Island (Morrow) is home to a breeding population of this threatened species. The Nature Parks has successfully established a volunteer program (Hooded Plover Watch) to assist in breeding success and reducing threats in collaboration with BCSC and the Phillip Island community. The combined actions of these stakeholders and a research-based management plan are contributing to the ongoing recovery of the local Hooded plover population.

| ONGOING ACTIONS  | DELIVERY PARTNERS                        |
|--|--|
| Monitor the population size and breeding success of Hooded plovers on Phillip Island (Morrow).   | Volunteers<br>BirdLife Australia         |
| Facilitate the Phillip Island Hooded Plover Watch volunteer program and manage the protection of nests and young from predation and disturbance. | BirdLife Australia<br>Volunteers<br>BCSC |
| Continue to develop management and awareness strategies for the protection of Hooded plovers.  | Research Collaborators                   |

### *Eastern barred bandicoot (Perameles gunnii)*

The Eastern barred bandicoot is a small marsupial endemic to south-eastern Australia that is currently classified as extinct in the wild in Victoria. Churchill Island, being free from foxes and feral cats, offered such an opportunity for the species and 20 bandicoots were introduced to the island in 2015. The animals thrived in their new home and the announcement of Phillip Island (Morrow) being fox-free in 2017 paved the way for this species to be introduced to the Summerland Peninsula. The Nature Parks, alongside project partners and volunteers, are undertaking protection and monitoring to ensure the survival of the Eastern barred bandicoot.

| ONGOING ACTIONS  | DELIVERY PARTNERS   |
|--|---|
| Research on breeding success, distribution, genetic diversity and conservation management strategies of Eastern barred bandicoots on Churchill and Phillip Islands (Morrow). | Volunteers<br>DELWP<br>Zoos Victoria<br>Eastern Barred Bandicoot Recovery Program |



Eastern barred bandicoot released on Summerland Peninsula *Perameles gunnii*



## OUR ONGOING CONSERVATION COMMITMENT

### Shorebirds

The Nature Parks supports the habitat for a group of threatened shorebirds that breed in the northern hemisphere and frequent the Rhyll Inlet and Churchill Island Tidal Flats from September to March each year during their non-breeding period. Two of these are critically endangered: Eastern curlew *Numenius madagascariensis* and Curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*, the Red knot *Calidris canutus* is endangered and the Western Alaskan Bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica baueri* is listed as vulnerable,

All four species are vulnerable to disturbance when feeding at low tide and roosting at high tide. Minimising disturbance at Observation Point and in Rhyll Inlet is crucial to ensuring these birds' ongoing survival.

| ONGOING ACTIONS  | DELIVERY PARTNERS   |
|--|---|
| Continue to protect habitat, minimise disturbance and advocate for the protection of shorebirds. | BirdLife Australia<br>Parks Victoria<br>Port Phillip and Westernport CMA<br>Australian Department of Environment and Energy |



The threatened Hooded plover *Thinornis rubricollis*



## 30-YEAR VISION

**5.1** The Nature Parks has worked in partnership with key stakeholders including farmers and landholders to eradicate key threats such as feral cats and has driven the Island Haven vision according to the environmental, social and economic conditions of Phillip Island (Millowl).

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS  | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | DATE    | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|---|---|---------|--|
| 5.1.1 Develop the threatened species portfolio for consideration on Phillip Island (Millowl) and work towards implementation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robust and transparent decision-making models for our threatened species priorities have been established.</li> </ul>  | Ongoing | DELWP<br>Phillip Island community  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful reintroduction of two fauna species with a focus on Bush stone curlews <i>Burhinus grallarius</i> and Long-nosed potoroo <i>Potorous tridactylus</i>.</li> </ul>  | 2023    | BCSC<br>Volunteers<br>Research Collaborators   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research programs have been established to understand how reintroduced fauna influences the ecosystem within six months of reintroduction.</li> </ul>  | 2023    |  |
| 5.1.2 Collaborate with key stakeholders to eradicate feral cats from Phillip Island (Millowl).                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feral cat GPS tracking survey is implemented and information on population dynamics and the current monitoring techniques on Phillip Island (Millowl) is understood.</li> </ul>  | 2019    | DELWP, BCSC<br>Zoos Victoria<br>RSPCA<br>Research Collaborators  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BCSC has strengthened responsible domestic cat ownership with Nature Parks' support by:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributing to voluntary domestic cat sterilisation clinic on Phillip Island (Millowl).</li> <li>Supporting the Zoos Victoria 'Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife' campaign'.</li> <li>Supporting the BCSC transition towards 24hour domestic cat containment by providing research information on the feral cat management.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | 2021    | Parks Victoria<br>DELWP<br>DJPR<br>Port Phillip and Westernport CMA<br>Zoos Victoria<br>Parks Victoria |
| 5.1.3 Implement key actions from the Pest Management Strategy for 2019-2023 across the Nature Parks.                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Novel control methods that reduce the population of feral cats has been trialled.</li> </ul>   | 2019    | Bass Coast Landcare Network<br>Port Phillip and Westernport CMA  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All key monitoring programs converted into spatially explicit data (GIS) that can strengthen management of future actions of the Nature Parks.</li> </ul>  | 2021    | BCSC<br>Parks Victoria<br>Research Collaborators   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feral cat density on Summerland Peninsula and Cape Woolamai achieved and maintained at one (1) cat per square kilometre.</li> </ul>  | 2023    | Federal Government<br>Phillip Island community   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rabbit monitoring and control methods implemented with key partners of Bass Coast Landcare Network and BCSC.</li> </ul>  | Annual  |  |



### 30-YEAR VISION

**5.2** Major threatening processes for flora have been reduced and threatened populations of flora have expanded. No species have been added to the threatened flora list on Phillip Island (Millowl).

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS   | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS   | DATE | DELIVERY PARTNERS                  |
|--|--|------|------------------------------------|
| 5.2.1 Identify significant plant communities and prepare and update management plans to protect these communities. | • Threats to locally rare and significant vegetation communities identified. | 2021 | Research Collaborators<br>DELWP    |
|  | • Three rare or threatened flora species recovery plans developed.           | 2023 | Volunteers<br>Barb Martin Bushbank |

### 30-YEAR VISION

**5.3** Through a collaborative, multi-agency effort, Phillip Island (Millowl) is part of a network of Victorian Islands which are haven for native flora and fauna and form part of part of the Australian Government’s Island Arks program.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS                                      | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | DATE | DELIVERY PARTNERS   |
|---|---|------|---|
| 5.3.1 Establish network of Victorian Island Havens. | • Workshop for the strategic Island Haven Network hosted.   | 2020 | Parks Victoria<br>DELWP   |
|   | • Strategy for Victorian Island Havens has been developed with key agencies to protect biodiversity and natural values. | 2023 | Port Phillip and Westernport CMA<br>Island Arks<br>Sustainability Victoria. |



Churchill Island Marine National Park



## 6. Collaborative partnerships, key alliances and sustainable funding

Addressing the complexity of our future conservation challenges will require a strategic and collaborative approach. Maintaining existing and developing new relationships will be essential for sustaining the future capacity of the Nature Parks and the ultimate success of our ambitious conservation vision.

Over the next five years we will continue to partner with local and international organisations that share our conservation values, to explore opportunities to achieve significant conservation outcomes. We will develop a new way of working to adopt traditional knowledge into our conservation practice to support positive change for Phillip Island's (Millow's) natural and cultural landscape and native wildlife.

We recognise that the Nature Parks' success to date has been built upon a strong ecotourism base, and will support the need to diversify our business model to secure major funding and sponsorship for conservation initiatives.





## OUR ONGOING CONSERVATION COMMITMENT

| ONGOING ACTIONS  | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|--|--|
| Continue working with the BCSC, DELWP and the CFA regarding fire management on Phillip Island (Millowl).   | BCSC, CFA, DELWP<br>Parks Victoria<br>Bunurong Land Council            |
| <p>Continue to strengthen and foster collaborations with stakeholders across Phillip Island (Millowl) to achieve conservation outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise on and support lighting and management solutions for migratory seabirds such as Short-tailed shearwaters.</li> <li>• Advise on major road projects on the Island to consider wildlife and habitat conservation solutions.</li> <li>• Support the actions within the Nature Parks’ Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2022 and Bass Coast reconciliation network.</li> <li>• Create new and diverse opportunities for volunteers.</li> </ul> | Regional Roads Victoria<br>BCSC<br>Bunurong Land Council<br>Volunteers |
| Support the implementation of the Victorian Government’s <i>Biodiversity 2037 Plan</i> and DELWP <i>Living With Wildlife Plan</i> .  | DELWP  |
| Continue to work with the South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA) to promote correct waste disposal, reduce marine pollution and net entanglements of Australian fur seals.   | SETFIA   |
| Continue to support the BCSC Biolinks Program on the Island  | BCSC<br>Phillip Island community                                       |



Our volunteers at Barb Martin Bushbank indigenous plant nursery.





## 30-YEAR VISION

**6.1** A strong network of philanthropic, corporate and individual funding partners supports the Nature Parks' conservation outcomes.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS  | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | DATE | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|---|---|------|--------------------|
| 6.1.1 Establish long term partnerships to deliver the Nature Parks' 30-Year Conservation Vision - <i>Beyond the Horizon</i> . | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation funding framework to strengthen opportunities for strategic Partnerships is developed.</li> </ul> | 2020 | Penguin Foundation |

## 30-YEAR VISION

**6.2** Traditional Custodians are resourced and empowered to deliver conservation outcomes on Phillip Island (Millowl) in partnership with the Nature Parks.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS   | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | DATE | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|--|---|------|--|
| 6.2.1 Establish key priority partnership programs to manage, protect and promote Aboriginal cultural heritage with Traditional Custodians. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MOU with Bunurong Land Council developed.</li> </ul>                               | 2023 | Bunurong Land Council<br>Yowengarra Bun Wurung<br>Balug Clans Aboriginal Corporation<br>Westernport Water<br>BCSC, DELWP |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Land Management Agreement commenced.</li> </ul>       | 2023 |  |
| 6.2.2 Support Bass Coast's regional reconciliation network for a regional approach to heritage and conservation protection and management. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One major funding partnership is successful e.g Green team established.</li> </ul> | 2023 | Bass Coast reconciliation network  |



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community members with Bass Coast Mayor Pamela Rothfield and our RAC Chair, Steve Davie during National Reconciliation Week 2018.



## 30-YEAR VISION

**6.3** Our integrated ecotourism and conservation model has diversified and expanded to include a prospectus-based investment program that aligns sustainable initiatives with the private and philanthropic sector.

| 5-YEAR ACTIONS   | 5-YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS   | DATE | DELIVERY PARTNERS  |
|--|--|------|--|
| 6.3.1 Complete a detailed engagement process with potential corporate and philanthropic investors to understand interest levels and inform the approach to building key investment prospectuses. | • Conservation investment prospectus is developed.   | 2020 | Penguin Foundation investor  |
|  | • \$1 million per annum is sourced from sponsors, donors and grants for conservation outcomes.   | 2023 | Greening Australia   |
| 6.3.2 Work with key partners to support a user pays model to underpin conservation activities on conservation areas.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation into possible funding models which could contribute to a conservation or carbon offset complete with BCSC.</li> <li>Funding model agreed and trialed.</li> </ul>  | 2023 | BCSC<br>Trust For Nature   |
| 6.3.3 Strategically position Phillip Island (Mallowl) as a leading destination under the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria.  | • The Nature Parks' sustainability credentials are improved by expanding our Ecotourism Accreditation to a whole of organisation certification and has contributed to Phillip Island (Mallowl) becoming eco certified. | 2023 | BCSC<br>Destination Phillip Island                                   |
| 6.3.4 Secure further partnerships to enable the delivery of threatened species education and online program and to establish Teacher Environment Network for Bass Coast Region.                  | • Two new partnerships sourced and programs delivered in the Bass Coast region.  | 2023 | Zoos Vic<br>Parley<br>WWF-Australia<br>DELWP<br>Victorian Government |



Forrest Caves on Phillip Island's (Mallowl's) south coast



## *Nature Parks Key Area Summary*

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This is a summary of the Nature Parks' major planning areas and their conservation values. We recognise that all Land and Sea Country is of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Operating procedures and principles will be implemented to protect cultural significance within these Key Areas.

A full list of the Nature Parks' Key Areas and values can be found at [www.penguins.org.au](http://www.penguins.org.au)



## SUMMERLAND PENINSULA

### Related document: Summerland Peninsula Master Plan

Summerland Peninsula is an exposed plateau with a coastline of sandy and basalt boulder beaches and rock platforms amongst rocky cliffs at the western end of Phillip Island. It is of high conservation significance dominated by *Poa* grassland and *Melaleuca* woodland. This Sub-area includes the former Summerland Estate that has largely been restored to penguin habitat but requires a high level of ongoing weed control. *Poa* grasslands in the south are of state significance.

Seal Rock and Black Rock are two small rocky islands two kilometres off the tip of the Summerland Peninsula. Surrounded by rocky reefs; it is a breeding and nursery site for the Australian fur seal and nesting area for the Crested terns, Black-faced cormorants and Kelp gulls.

**Green Lake and Flynn Dune** (also known as Flynn's) is the most northern beach in Cat Bay and backed by steep dunes and bluffs. Green Lake is a small freshwater lake located behind Flynn's Beach. It was once large enough to sail on and supported viable fish populations. Soon after European settlement the lake was filled in by the encroachment of sand from the dunes having been destabilised by burning and the grazing of livestock and rabbits. By the 1880s it was reduced to the ephemeral reedy wetland seen today that fills in spring, with a small stream flowing out to the shore at Flynn's Beach. Flynn's beach is listed within Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve. Hooded plovers often breed and feed along this beach.

**Penguin Parade (Summerland Bay)** is a sandy beach about 1.2km long and faces south. At the eastern end are Kennon Head and its associated rock platforms and reefs and at the western end are Phelans Bluff and associated reefs and boulder beach. The dunes behind the beach are up to a kilometre wide and are important nesting areas for Little penguins and Short-tailed shearwaters. It provides access for penguins living both in the Penguin Parade area and on the Summerland Plateau. Summerland Beach is listed within Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve. The beach also provides breeding and feeding habitat for Hooded Plover and Water Rat.

**Swan Lake and surrounds** Swan Lake is one of the few freshwater lakes on Phillip Island, and is surrounded by sandy dunes. Prior to European settlement Swan Lake was open to Bass Strait, after which a sand barrier formed, creating the lake. Summerland Bay east is included in this Sub-area.

Manage Swan Lake wetland as a refuge and breeding area for waterbirds, frogs and other aquatic species.

**Key conservation objectives:** Managing the habitat supporting populations of the Australian fur seal, Eastern-barred bandicoots, Little penguins and Short-tailed shearwaters, Hooded plovers and enhancing listed EVC's.



### 5-Year Actions

Manage Summerland Peninsula in accordance with the Nature Parks' Summerland Peninsula Master Plan, Weed Management Strategy 2018-2023 and Pest Management Strategy 2019-2023 to enhance and protect cultural and conservation values.

### 5-Year Measures of Success

- Cultural heritage and environmental impact assessments conducted for proposed developments.
- Feral cat density maintained at 1 cat per square kilometre.
- Actions in line with Bass Coast Shire's *Aspirational Network Pathways Plan 2016* are supported.



## NORTH AND SOUTH COAST BEACHES

Related document: South and North Coast Key Area Plan

### NORTH-WEST COAST BEACHES

Between the boundary of the Nature Parks at Devon Avenue and Flynns Beach the coast tends in a south westerly direction. There are four prominent grassy bluffs 20 to 30 metres high opposite four reefs: Hen and Chicken, Angelina, Tyro and Flynns. Between the bluffs are west facing sandy beaches backed by low dunes with small lagoons on private farmland, Flynns and McHaffie behind Farm and Woolshed beaches.

Beaches are backed by private farmland and public access is limited to walking along the beach. The area supports nesting Hooded plovers, Short-tailed shearwaters, Sooty oystercatchers and over wintering Hooded plovers, as well as sheltering vegetation of state significance. The area under the Nature Parks' management is a narrow linear coastal strip, with little buffering, which increases the impacts from areas outside the Nature Parks and makes effective longterm management difficult. To date neither detailed studies of flora, fauna or cultural sites have been undertaken.

**Key conservation objectives:** Protect breeding areas for the Short-tailed shearwater and Hooded plovers.

### SOUTH COAST BEACHES

This area extends from Kennon Head to the eastern end of the Colonnades and is of state botanical significance for its disturbed remnants of Coastal Tussock Grassland and rare or threatened flora. Rock platforms support important intertidal communities (outside the Nature Parks). The area under Nature Parks' management is a fragmented, narrow linear coastal strip, with little buffering, which increases the impacts from areas outside the Nature Parks and makes effective longterm management difficult.



**Key conservation objective:** Protect breeding areas of the Short-tailed shearwaters and Hooded plovers, Sooty oystercatchers and roosting area for Ruddy turnstones and Red-necked stints. Maintain extent of Coastal Headland Scrub EVC at Pyramid Rock and improve its quality.



### 5-Year Actions

Manage the Island's north and south coast in accordance with the Nature Parks' South and North Coast Key Area Plan, Weed Management Strategy 2018-2023 and Pest Management Strategy 2019-2023 to enhance and protect cultural and conservation values.

### 5-Year Measures of Success

- Further planning for sections of the Island's north and south coast commenced.
- Kikuyu in Little penguin and Short-tailed shearwater breeding habitat mapped and priority areas reduced.
- Impact of rabbits on Rare or Threatened Plant communities reduced.
- Actions in line with Bass Coast Shire's *Aspirational Network Pathways Plan 2016* are supported.



## WOODLANDS AND WETLANDS

### Related document: Woodlands and Wetlands Key Area Plan

#### WOODLANDS

The woodland areas within the Nature Parks include Five Ways Reserve, Koala Centre, Oswin Roberts Reserve and Conservation Hill. All have previously been farmed and most were either part or fully donated or purchased by the local community with the assistance of the former Phillip Island Shire Council and the State Government, or a combination of the two.

Generally, the purpose of these acquisitions was to provide habitat for koalas. The biggest reserve, Oswin Roberts, contains the largest and most intact woodland vegetation on the Island. This area supports a wide range of woodland bird species, reptiles and other mammals such as bats, Brush-tailed possums and Ring-tailed possums. Threats include the loss of coarse woody debris, loss of logs (firewood collection) and the loss of hollow-bearing trees as well as the introduction of pathogens such as Cinnamon fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. With minimal woodland areas left on Phillip Island it is important to continue work to revegetate, improve and maintain habitats within the woodlands.

**Key conservation objectives:** Maintain and enhance woodland habitat for a variety of flora and fauna including habitat for bats and hollow dependant bird species.

#### WETLANDS

This area comprises Rhyll Inlet, Observation Point, Rhyll and Rowell Wetlands, the former Rhyll Landfill and Transfer Station and Silverleaves Beach. The wetlands, beaches and mudflats of this Key Area support internationally significant populations of wetland birds including migratory shorebirds. Much of the area is included in the Western Port Ramsar site and the area and its fauna are protected under a number of international treaties and federal and state legislation including: the Japan Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA), the China Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA), the Republic of Korea Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (ROKAMBA) and the EPBC Act 1999, and require active management protection. Observation Point is the eighth largest roost for shorebirds in Western Port and the most important for medium to large shorebirds. They roost on the sandy spit, a rocky islet locally named *Ghetto Rocks*, and on rock platforms at the base of Rhyll cliffs. Most of the shorebirds feed from mudflats between Rhyll and Churchill Island at low tide (Churchill Tidal Flats). They feed on the seagrass itself or associated marine invertebrates.



**Key conservation objectives:** To provide habitat and nesting areas for wetland birds, maintain condition of saltmarsh, mangrove and mudflat habitats that provide feeding and roosting habitat for birds and nursery areas for fish. Maintain roosting sites for resident and migratory shorebirds on Observation Point, Ghetto Rocks, the cliffs below McIlwraith Road and on Fishermen's Point.

### 5-Year Actions

Manage Nature Parks' Woodlands and Wetlands areas in accordance with the Nature Parks' Woodlands and Wetlands Key Area Plan, Nature Parks' Weed Management Strategy 2018-2023 and Pest Management Strategy 2019-2023 to enhance and protect cultural and conservation values.

### 5-Year Measures of Success

- Cultural heritage and environmental impact assessments conducted for proposed developments.
- Impact of rabbits on Rare or Threatened Plant communities reduced.
- Mapping of woody weeds complete and priority areas targeted.
- Feral cat density at Observation Point reduced to 1 cat per square kilometre
- Actions in line with Bass Coast Shire's *Aspirational Network Pathways Plan 2016* are supported.



## CHURCHILL ISLAND

### Related planning document: Churchill Island Key Area Plan

Connected by bridge to Phillip Island, Churchill Island is a unique area of the Nature Parks with significant cultural values, including a historic homestead, cottage and fruit trees. While Churchill Island has a history of being cleared and farmed since the 1850s, it continues to have important natural values, including Moonah trees, mangroves, saltmarsh and birdlife. Its historic farm gardens are maintained as part of the Island's cultural heritage.

Churchill Island and the Phillip Island coastline lie within the internationally recognised Western Port Ramsar Site. The eastern end of Churchill Island and the north-eastern coast of Phillip Island also adjoin the Churchill Island Marine National Park, one of only

thirteen marine national parks in Victoria. An area known as *Fishers Wetland* near the entrance to Churchill Island is being restored to a natural state, with significant replanting of indigenous species and weed removal. Newhaven Wetland south of the township of Newhaven supports a range of wildlife but is subject to significant weed infestation.

#### CHURCHILL ISLAND WOODLANDS AND COAST

Churchill Island is mostly farmland, with the exception of small areas of Moonah Woodland in a semi intact state around the coast. Saltmarsh and mangroves fringe the southern tip of the Island. A revegetation program has been undertaken on the northern end of the Island and is now maturing. The Island remains rabbit and fox free and progressive removal of non-indigenous species and planting of indigenous plants, surrounding the historic areas using original seed stock, is ongoing. The island was the first release site for the Eastern-barred bandicoot and continues to maintain a population.

**Key conservation objectives:** Maintain quality and extent of Coast Moonah Woodland and continue to monitor the Eastern barred bandicoot population.



#### 5-Year Actions

Manage Churchill Island areas in accordance with the Nature Parks' Churchill Island Key Area Plan, Weed Management Strategy 2018-2023 and Pest Management Strategy 2019-2023 to enhance and protect cultural and conservation values.

#### 5-Year Measures of Success

- Cultural heritage and environmental impact assessments conducted for proposed developments.
- Fox-free and cat-free status of Churchill Island is maintained.
- Rabbits are eradicated from Fishers Wetland.



## CAPE WOOLAMAI

### Related planning document: Cape Woolamai Coastal Reserves Master Plan

At 112 metres above sea level, Cape Woolamai is the highest point on Phillip Island. Spectacular cliffs dominate the Bass Coast side of the promontory and sandy beaches and sand dunes provide a wide range of habitats. Cape Woolamai is the largest and most significant breeding area for Short-tailed shearwaters on Phillip Island and is a site of national geomorphological significance. In 1870 Cape Woolamai was leased for grazing and the lessee was required to 'develop' it by clearing and burning. Domestic livestock were grazed in the area from 1870s through to the 1960s, resulting in

dramatic changes to the vegetation. The introduction of rabbits in the late 1850s and foxes in 1908, as well as the trampling of shearwater habitat by egg collectors, also contributed to changes in the area. In the 1940s a large project was initiated to stabilise the dunes using marram grass and other plant species. This area supports several rare, vulnerable and endangered EVCs. The Cape Woolamai beaches are listed within Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve.

**Key conservation objectives:** Management of Short-tailed shearwater and Hooded plover nesting areas.



### 5-Year Actions

Manage Cape Woolamai in accordance with the Nature Parks' Cape Woolamai Coastal Reserves Master Plan, Weed Management Strategy 2018-2023 and Pest Management Strategy 2019-2023 to enhance and protect cultural and conservation values.

### 5-Year Measures of Success

- Cultural heritage and environmental impact assessments conducted for proposed developments.
- Kikuyu in Little penguin and Short-tailed shearwater breeding habitat reduced.
- Feral cat density at 1 cat per square kilometre achieved and maintained.
- Actions in line with Bass Coast Shire's *Aspirational Network Pathways Plan 2016* are supported.





# Appendices



## FURTHER INFORMATION

Links to the Conservation Team’s plans and policies and ongoing updates can be found at: [www.penguins.org.au/conservation](http://www.penguins.org.au/conservation)

## Table of abbreviations used in this document

| NAME   | ABBREVIATION |
|--|--------------|
| Bass Coast Shire Council                                     | BCSC         |
| Catchment Management Authority                               | CMA          |
| Country Fire Authority                                       | CFA          |
| Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation | CSIRO        |
| Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions                    | DJPR         |
| Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning          | DELWP        |
| Environmental Protection Authority Victoria                  | EPA          |
| Ecological Vegetation Classes                                | EVCs         |
| International Union for Conservation of Nature               | IUCN         |
| Victorian Rare or Threatened                                 | VROT         |

## Notes

- *IUCN - an international organisation that compiles information from a network of conservation bodies across the world. It maintains listings of the world’s most rare and endangered species.*
- *EVCs - The basic mapping units used for biodiversity planning and conservation assessment at landscape, regional and broader scales in Victoria. EVCs are given a rating.*



\*Phillip Island's (Mallow's) south coast.



# Nature Parks' Regulatory Environment

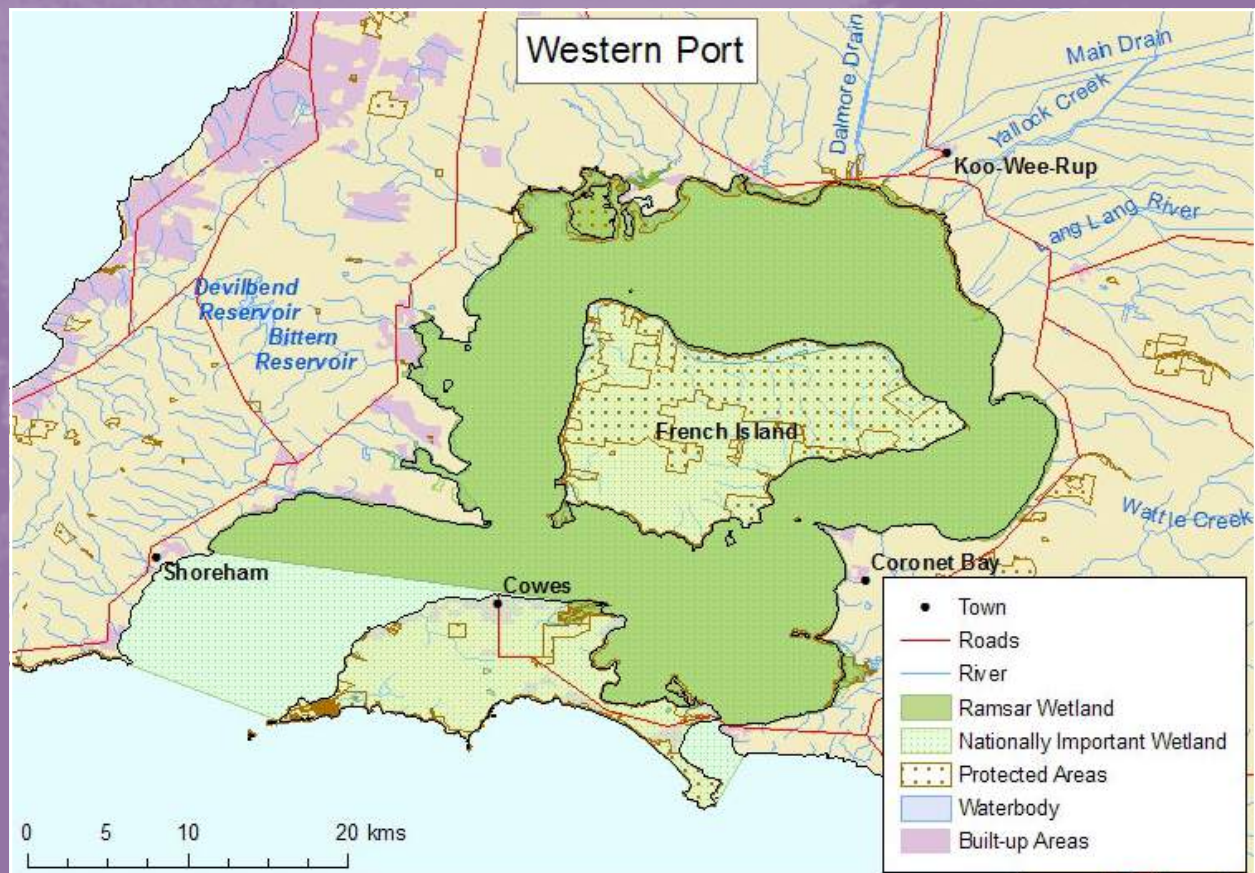
The Nature Parks Board is responsible for the overall management of the Nature Parks under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*. Under Section 13 of the Act regulations are prepared and approved by the relevant Minister and published in the Government Gazette (*Crown Land (Reserves) (Phillip Island Nature Park) Regulations 2010*). The Nature Parks is vested with the responsibility to enact the regulations that help protect sensitive environmental areas and species, and ensure public safety and enjoyment. Regulations are updated every 10 years.

## INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND OBLIGATIONS

### Western Port Ramsar Site

The 'Convention on Wetlands', signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty providing the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

Western Port is one of the first Victorian wetlands to be listed under the Ramsar Convention as a 'Wetlands of International Importance' on 15 December 1982. The management plan for the wetland is updated every nine years - with the last update in 2017. The Ramsar Site includes areas within the Nature Parks along the north east coast of Phillip Island, the coast of Churchill Island, Rhyll Inlet including Observation Point and Ghetto Rocks (see map below).



Map of the Western Port Ramsar Site (<http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/wetlands/ramsardetails.pl?prefcode=19#>)



## MIGRATORY BIRD AGREEMENTS

Australia provides critical non-breeding habitat for millions of migratory waterbirds each year. To ensure their conservation the Australian Government has fostered international cooperation through a range of important agreements, including the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Migratory Species, bilateral agreements with Japan, China and the Republic of Korea, and through the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership. The corridor through which these birds migrate is known as the East Asian - Australasian Flyway (the Flyway). It extends from within the Arctic Circle, through East and South-east Asia, to Australia and New Zealand. Stretching across 22 countries, it is one of 8 major waterbird flyways recognised around the globe ([www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/migratory/waterbirds/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/migratory/waterbirds/index.html)). It includes many islands and contains nearly half the world's humans. Some areas of the flyway are subject to land inundation through climate change as well as rapid economic development. Many waterbird populations in the flyway are threatened or in decline.

International agreements find expression at the national level, through the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, state level in documents such as *'The Strategic Directions Statement'* for Ramsar wetlands which sets the management objectives and state-wide management strategies for each Ramsar wetlands in Victoria. The *Western Port Ramsar Site Management Plan* sets objectives for the Western Port site. At the local level, they are included in the Bass Coast Shire Planning Scheme through the Municipal Strategic Statement Management Plan and must be considered during planning applications.

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) maintains a 'Red Data book species of conservation concern'. IUCN has listed within this data book many species found within or surrounding Phillip Island (Mallard) including the Eastern curlew (Vulnerable), Fairy tern (Vulnerable), Hooded plover (Near Threatened), Orange-bellied parrot (Critically Endangered), Swift parrot, (Critically Endangered) and Shy albatross (Near Threatened).

| AGREEMENT   | ACRONYM | RELEVANCE TO NATURE PARKS  |
|---|---------|--|
| Japan Australia Migratory Birds Agreement                                       | JAMBA   | Thirty-six species occurring within the Nature Parks are listed under this agreement.  |
| Convention on Migratory Species (Bonn Convention)                               |         | The Convention aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is an <b>intergovernmental treaty</b> , concluded under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme, concerned with the conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale. |
| Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora | CITES   | This treaty controls the way wild native flora and fauna can be exchanged between countries.   |
| China Australia Migratory Birds Agreement                                       | CAMBA   | Thirty-one species occurring within the Nature Parks are listed under this agreement.  |
| Republic of Korea Australia Migratory Birds Agreement                           | ROKMBBA | Twenty-two species occurring within the Nature Parks are listed under this agreement.  |



Short tailed shearwaters *Ardenna tenuirostris* migrate from waters around Alaska to breed on Phillip Island each year.



## BIOSPHERE RESERVE

A Biosphere Reserve is an international designation made by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) on the basis of nominations submitted by countries participating in the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB).

The Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve was designated in 2002 and includes the whole of Mornington Peninsula Shire and parts of the City of Frankston, as well as coastal areas of the municipalities of Casey, Cardinia and Bass Coast including Phillip, Churchill and French Islands.

UNESCO biosphere reserves aim to keep special places—like Western Port—special by fostering conservation and sustainable development. They encourage the community to develop better ways to meet social and economic needs, while conserving natural processes and biodiversity. They support this through research, monitoring, education and information exchange. Biosphere Reserve designation does not alter the legal status of the land involved.

## SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS - RHYLL AND SUMMERLAND

Phillip Island Nature Parks has involvement in two marine zones which have been recommended to the Victorian Government as *Special Management Areas* located at Summerland Peninsula and at the Rhyll Inlet and nearby waters.

The proposed Summerland Peninsula Special Management Area extends over 400 hectares. It was recommended by the Environment Conservation Council (now Victorian Environment Assessment Council VEAC) to complement the wildlife values of Seal Rocks and Little Penguin colonies at Phillip Island (Millowl).

Rhyll Special Management Area Management Statement has been completed. The northern portion of Rhyll Special Management Area has been included in the Nature Parks since 2007.

## REFERENCED LINKS

- **Australian Federal Government, Threatened Species Strategy** - <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/strategy-home>
- **DELWP Biodiversity 2037 Implementation Plan - 2018** <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-2037-implementation-framework>.
- **DELWP Living with Wildlife Action Plan** <https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/our-wildlife/living-with-wildlife-action-plan>
- **Global Warming of 1.5 °C - an IPCC special report:** <https://www.vox.com/2018/10/5/17934174/climate-change-global-warming-un-ipcc-report-1-5-degrees>
- **Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035:** [http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/Business/Phillip\\_Island\\_Tourism\\_Strategy\\_2035](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/Business/Phillip_Island_Tourism_Strategy_2035)
- **Victoria's Coast: Preparing for the future, 2018.** Victorian Coastal Council and Victoria State Government: [http://www.vcc.vic.gov.au/assets/media/files/VCC\\_Science\\_Panel\\_Report\\_2018\\_Summary\\_8pp\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.vcc.vic.gov.au/assets/media/files/VCC_Science_Panel_Report_2018_Summary_8pp_WEB.pdf)



Crested tern *Thalasseus bergii*

