

Marine Pests in South Gippsland

A pocket guide



What are marine pests?

Marine pests are highly invasive non-native animals that cause significant damage to the health of native marine ecosystems.

Marine pests reproduce very quickly forming large numbers of offspring and can rapidly spread to new areas. They can wipe out native species by preying upon or out-competing them.

In Victoria, marine pests are widespread in Port Phillip and Western Port. In South Gippsland they are known to occur in Tidal River (Wilson's Promontory) and Corner Inlet.

Please do not collect or remove suspected marine pests as some introduced species can easily be mistaken for native species that do belong in these waterways.

Marine pests occurring in marine national parks and other marine protected areas should only be removed under the supervision of Parks Victoria staff or approved permit holders.

Sightings of suspected marine pests outside Port Phillip should be reported to the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) on **136 186**.

What can I do?

Marine pests are spread by both natural means and with human help. Moving boats and other watercraft to new locations poses a high risk for the spread of marine pests.

To help prevent the spread of marine pests:

- Use fresh water to thoroughly wash down boats, other watercraft, fishing gear, wetsuits, swimwear, footwear, beach towels, water toys and other marine equipment, after use.
- Dry boats and marine equipment properly before moving to other areas.
- Be particularly vigilant when moving boats or equipment from waterbodies known to have marine pests to any other part of Victoria.
- Apply appropriate anti-fouling paints to boat hulls as per instructions for use.
- Never use marine pests as bait.
- Report suspected sightings of marine pests to DEPI **136 186**.

For more information visit: www.depi.vic.gov.au

What is at stake?

Over 90% of the plants and animals living in Victoria's southern waters are found nowhere else in the world.

Wilson's Promontory and Corner Inlet Marine National Parks are part of a system of 13 marine national parks and 11 marine sanctuaries in Victoria.

By keeping these areas in a natural state we will protect this unique environment into the future.

For more information, call **13 1963** or visit: www.parks.vic.gov.au

Images: Parks Victoria, Museum Victoria, Fisheries Victoria, Museums Australia, Rudie H. Kuitert



Healthy Parks
Healthy People!



Marine pests found in South Gippsland

The Pacific Oyster prefers brackish waters in sheltered estuaries where they can form large colonies and take over the habitat of native species.

Identified by the following features:

- Outside shell is white with purple streaks and spots.
- Shell is elongated, shell valves are unequal in form and size (lower valve attached to substrate is larger and cupped, whereas upper valve is flatter).
- Radial grooves are present.
- Shell up to 15 cm in length, can be larger.

The Northern Pacific Seastar feeds on many native marine species including pipis and mussels, crabs, barnacles and fish eggs.

Identified by the following features:

- Five broad arms that taper into pointed, upturned tips, with irregular spines on upper surface of arms.
- Variable in colour on the upper surface from yellow to purple, while the underside is uniform yellow.
- Spines line the ventral grooves where the tube feet lie.
- 1.5 to 55 cm in diameter.



Pacific Oyster
(*Crassostrea gigas*)



New Zealand Screw Shell
(*Maoricolpus roseus*)



Northern Pacific Seastar
(*Asterias amurensis*)



European Green Shore Crab
(*Carcinus maenas*)

The New Zealand Screw Shell can form dense beds of dead and living shells on reef and shelly substrates where they compete with native scallop colonies that would normally occupy similar habitats.

Identified by the following features:

- Smooth conical shell, 6 to 9 cm in length.
- Brown, fading to purple and white with age.
- Broader tapering shell with up to 18 whorls.

The European Green Shore Crab prefers intertidal areas, protected bays and estuaries, mudflats and subtidal seagrass beds.

Adults feed on molluscs and other crabs and take over the habitat of native species.

Identified by the following features:

- 5 spines on each side of the eyes.
- Last pair of legs sharp and slightly flattened at tips.
- No swimming paddles.
- Smooth green and brown shell up to 7 cm wide with pale orange underside.

Do not remove or disturb marine pests

Please do not collect or remove suspected marine pests as some introduced species can easily be mistaken for native species that do belong in these waterways.



A variety of native crabs such as the Paragrapsus species can be mistaken for European Green Shore Crabs



Southern mud oyster
(*Ostrea angasi*)



Often mistaken for a marine pest is the native Eleven-armed Seastar
(*Coscinasterias muricata*)



Native Screw Shell
(*Gazameda gunnii*)