

## Marine and Coastal Biodiversity

The Corangamite coast is spectacular. It is one of the region's greatest assets. The Corangamite coast has high social, environmental and economic values but it is under increasing pressure from tourism, industry and increased populations. The 175-square kilometre Corangamite coastal fringe includes 450-square kilometres of inland coastal waters.



**Photo:** The coastline surrounding Anglesea. Photograph Sarah Anderson

### The Terrestrial Environment

The Corangamite coast is biodiversity rich, with a range of habitats which are home to a variety of native animals including mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. Vegetation types range from tall forests, woodlands, including the threatened Coastal Moonah Woodland community, and heathlands to coastal dune communities and windswept cliff top environments<sup>1</sup>.

### The Marine Environment

Corangamite's marine environment is comprised of a diverse range of habitats, including intertidal, shallow and deep rocky reefs, pelagic waters, sandy beaches, subtidal sandy and muddy seabeds and intertidal mudflats<sup>2</sup>. These environments support a range of marine life, including kelp forests, sponge and coral gardens and seagrass meadows which are home to Victoria's marine emblem, the Weedy Seadragon.

### The Middle Ground

Mangrove and saltmarsh communities which are neither fully marine nor fully terrestrial are also present in the region. These marine and coastal ecosystems sustain tens of thousands of water birds, including the vulnerable Hooded Plover and critically endangered Orange-bellied Parrot<sup>2</sup>.



**Photo:** Weedy seadragon, Victoria's marine emblem.  
Photograph © Victorian Coastal Council.



## A Valuable Commodity

Corangamite's marine and coastal biodiversity provide a range of services to society. These environments support commercial fishing, tourism, oil and gas enterprises, educational services, recreational activities, climate change regulation and general human welfare through protection from storm surges and coastal erosion<sup>1</sup>.

## Coastal Ramsar Wetlands

Within Corangamite's marine and coastal zone there is an internationally significant RAMSAR wetland, made of two major areas.

1. Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline)
2. Bellarine Peninsula

These areas support numerous threatened species and provide valuable habitat to many migratory bird species<sup>3</sup>.

- The Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) has recorded 323 indigenous non-marine flora species, of which two species are nationally threatened and 22 threatened in Victoria, including the endangered Rare Bitter Bush (*Adriana quadripartita*)<sup>3</sup>.
- These areas have also recorded 29 fauna species which are listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, including seven species which are critically endangered e.g. Australian Bustard<sup>3</sup>.

## Did you know?

- Over 200 indigenous plant species have been recorded on the Alcoa

lease near Anglesea, with over 25 per cent of Victoria's ground orchid species being recorded in the area<sup>5</sup>.

- Port Phillip Bay is of international importance for 12 shorebird species and two shorebird species with national significance<sup>2</sup>.
- The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper breed in Siberia and can be found in large flocks along the Corangamite coastline foraging in shallow waters in the summer months.



Photo: The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Photo Trevor Pescott



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## Photographs:

Photographs courtesy of Sarah Anderson, Victorian Coastal Council and Trevor Pescott.

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5. Western Coastal Board (1999). *Anglesea Coastal Action Plan*. Western Coastal Board, Victoria.