

Bald Hills Wetland Reserve

Visitor Guide

The Bald Hills Wetland Reserve is a special place, alive with an array of birds and other wildlife. A meandering walking track leads you through a series of sand ridges and thickets of Paperbark, that flood during wet periods, to the sheltered bird hide where you can sit quietly, and observe birds feeding within the wetland.

Location and access

Bald Hills Wetland Reserve is situated 5km east of Tarwin Lower, towards Walkerville. It can be reached by turning left into the Bald Hills Road from the main road between Tarwin Lower and Walkerville, then left into the reserve carpark, 4km from the turnoff.

The original inhabitants of the region were the Boonwurrung and Gunai / Kurnai indigenous people, who roamed as hunter gatherers up to at least 6000 years ago, living in small family groups, eating from a varied menu of birds, animals, fish, shellfish, and roots, stems, leaves and fruits of plants.

From 1850's European settlement and agricultural development saw extensive clearing of vegetation, and drainage works such as diversion channels, levee banks and drains, turning the original wetlands along the Tarwin estuary and river into productive grazing country. Only 10% of the original Tullaree Swamp, as it was called, survives today.

Some twenty years ago extensive lobbying by the South Gippsland Conservation Society, Shire Councillors and local residents culminated in the purchase of adjoining farm land to create the wetland area of the reserve. This major addition has enabled the re-establishment of this important wetland habitat.

The 135 hectare Bald Hills Wetland Reserve was declared in 1987.

Enjoying the reserve

The reserve provides a wonderful opportunity to experience a rich range of flora and fauna. There are nearly 90 plant species listed for the reserve, and over 100 species of birds are either residents or visitors. Many of these birds rely on the wetlands for breeding.

Wetland Walk

Length 750 metres
Walking Time 15 minutes one way

The meandering walking track from the carpark takes you through open woodlands and Paperbark thickets to a large shallow wetland. From the birdhide you will be rewarded with the sight of a variety of birdlife. The trail is suitable for wheelchairs and prams.

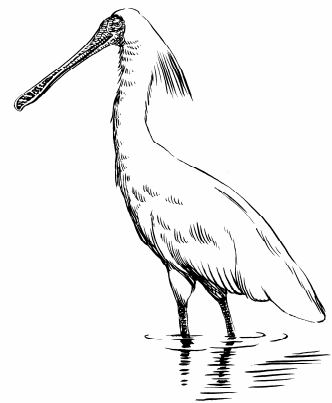
Plants and Wildlife

Bald Hills Wetland Reserve consists of a series of sand ridges supporting open woodlands of Bog Gum, Messmate and Narrow Leaf Peppermint with a heathy understorey. Blackwoods and thickets of Swamp and Scented Paperbark grow along the creeks.

Different seasons bring different experiences to enjoy. Spring sees a burst of colour from bushpeas, purple flags and heath plants. Paperbark blossom perfumes the air in summer, combined with the spicy smells of bark and dry leaves. Colourful fungi emerge in autumn after rain, heralded by the frog choir. The sun may glint from dragonfly wings or jewelled beetle backs.

Keep your eyes open for Blue Tongue Lizards slithering in the undergrowth, or echidna's digging for ants. Look for wallabies and wombat tracks and scats. Honeyeaters, wrens and other small birds may be seen flitting through the bush.

Sit quietly and watch a clutch of cygnets with protective parents, Australian shell ducks patiently sitting out plumage moult, spoonbills sifting the rich silt, ibis probing deep in the mud, or cormorants spreading their wings to dry. Raptors often soar overhead, ever alert for likely prey.



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Just up the road...

Cape Liptrap Coastal Park

Stretching along the coast from the sand barrier of Point Smythe to the sheltered waters of Waratah Bay, Cape Liptrap Coastal Park consists of strikingly beautiful scenery that is well worth exploring. Activities here include swimming, camping, fishing and boating.

Bunurong Marine Park and Bunurong Marine National Park

Extending around the coast from Harmers Haven to Inverloch, Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park provides for boating, swimming and snorkelling, or a quiet walk along the secluded sandy beach. The rugged sandstone cliffs, broad rock platforms and underwater reefs represent some of Victoria's most spectacular coastal scenery



For further information contact:

Parks Victoria
Information Line
13 1963

or visit our website at
www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Foster Office
Cnr. Victory Avenue and
McDonald Street
Foster Vic 3960

Bunurong Environment
Centre
Ramsey Boulevard
Inverloch Vic 3996
Ph: (03) 5674 3738

Prom Country Visitor
Information Centre
South Gippsland Highway
Korumburra Vic 3950
Ph: (03) 5655 2233

Caring for the environment

Help us care for our parks and reserves by remembering these guidelines:

All native plants and animals in the Reserve are protected

Please do not disturb or remove any plants or animals.

Please keep to designated walking tracks

Bins are not provided in the reserve. Please take your rubbish home with you.

Dogs are discouraged from the reserve. Forthcoming changes to regulations for Wildlife Reserve will prohibit dogs from this reserve.

No fires including barbeques may be lit on days of Total Fire Ban (Eastern District).

Please leave the reserve as you find it.

Should you not wish to keep this park note, please practise conservation by returning it to the box for re-use.

