

Port Campbell National Park & Bay of Islands Coastal Park



Visitor Guide

Pounded by wild seas and fierce winds, the coast of Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park has been sculpted over thousands of years to become one of the most impressive natural sites in Australia. Towering rock stacks loom out of the ocean just off shore from sheer limestone cliffs. Arches, islands and blowholes have been carved out of the soft cliffs by the wind and sea. Many ships have come to grief on the rocky coastline, earning it the title of the Shipwreck Coast.

Spectacular coastal scenery, unique limestone formations and the sheer cliffs of this sculpted coast are some of the best known landmarks in Australia. First reserved in 1964, Port Campbell National Park now covers 1830 hectares of coastal land between Princetown and Peterborough in south-west Victoria.



Adjoining this park, Bay of Islands Coastal Park protects a further 950 hectares of fragile coastal vegetation, unique wildlife, and off-shore islands and rock stacks.

Enjoying the park



The park offers many short walks to lookouts with spectacular coastal views. *See centre page map.*



Camping and caravan accommodation is only available in the adjoining townships of Port Campbell, Peterborough and Princetown.

Sleeping overnight in the park or carparks is not permitted.



When the sea is very calm there is excellent wreck and reef diving off Port Campbell National Park. Diving opportunities are also available in local marine national parks and marine sanctuaries. See marine park visitor guides for more information, visit www.parks.vic.gov.au or call 131963.

Please remember that all wrecks and artefacts are protected by law.

Many beaches are exposed to unseen dangers such as ocean currents, rips and reefs. Parks Victoria recommend swimming only on beaches patrolled by lifesavers.



Both Curdies Inlet and Gellibrand River are suitable for fishing. There is good ocean fishing at Newfield Bay, Clifton Beach and from the Port Campbell jetty. Be sure to obtain a Victorian Amateur Fishing Licence before you fish.

Fishing is not permitted in marine national parks and marine sanctuaries. See marine park visitor guides for protected area boundaries and-activity guidelines and boundaries.



The Gellibrand River is ideal for canoeing. Access is from the Gellibrand Inlet.



The kiosk sells a basic range of refreshments, including tea and coffee, cold drinks, confectionery and snacks. A small range of personal convenience items such as sunscreen and insect repellent are also available.

How to get there

Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park lie between Princetown, Peterborough and Warrnambool, 285 km west of Melbourne via the Great Ocean Road (4-5 hours drive), and 240 km from Melbourne via Colac.

Be fire ready and stay safe

Many parks and forests are located in high fire risk areas. On days of forecast Code Red Fire Danger this park will be closed for public safety. If you are already in the park you should leave the night before or early in the morning for your own safety.

Closure signs will be erected and rangers will patrol when possible, however you may not receive a personal warning that the park is closed so check the latest conditions by calling 13 1963 or visit www.parks.vic.gov.au

For up to date information on fires in Victoria or general fire safety advice call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667.

Please note the Twelve Apostles Visitor Site and main viewing platform will remain open on code red days.

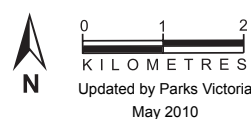


Port Campbell National Park & Bay of Islands Coastal Park

- Major sealed road
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Vehicle track
- Great Ocean Walk
- Walking track
- National Park
- Coastal Park
- Marine National Park / Marine Sanctuary
- Other Park
- Water body

Recreational Facilities

- Canoeing
- Caravan Park
- Carpark
- Facilities for people with disabilities
- Fishing
- Kiosk
- Lookout
- Park information
- Picnic table
- Self-guided walk
- Swimming
- Toilets
- Tourist Information



The Shipwreck Coast

The growing colonies of Victoria and New South Wales depended on ships from Europe for supplies and transport. Bass Strait became a major shipping route – and some ships inevitably came to grief in its notoriously wild seas.

A number of ships were wrecked off the coastline bordering these parks. The most famous was the Loch Ard, wrecked in 1878, with only two survivors.

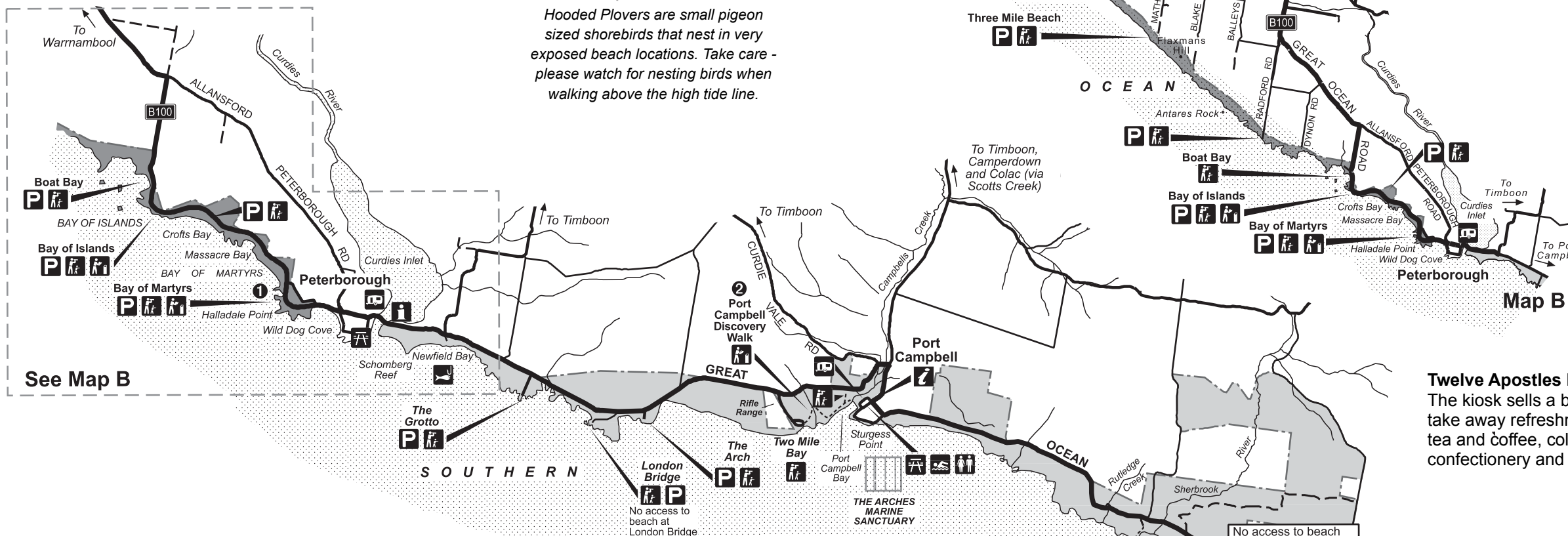
Self guided walks and displays within the park interpret the tragic story of the Loch Ard and other shipwrecks along this coast.

Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum

During the day, explore the recreated maritime village including an original lighthouse and lighthouse keeper's cottage. At night, experience the spectacular laser and sound show – Shipwrecked. Bookings are essential. For more information on the famous Shipwreck Coast call the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum, in Warrnambool on 55 594 600.



Hooded Plovers are small pigeon sized shorebirds that nest in very exposed beach locations. Take care - please watch for nesting birds when walking above the high tide line.



See Map B

- Walking: Be safe, be prepared
- Strong shoes or walking boots with good tread, a hat, waterproof jacket, food, water and a map are recommended. On longer walks, take a whistle and basic first aid kit as well.
- Walking tracks may involve uneven and slippery track surfaces.
- Keep strictly to the tracks and lookouts as sections of the cliffs may subside without warning!
- A good quality map should always be carried.
- A hat and sunscreen are essential in summer.
- Think seriously before bushwalking on days of high fire danger or Total Fire Ban.

Walking

1 Bay of Martyrs Walk

Follow the walking track from the eastern end of the carpark. This short spectacular walk leads to the site where the 'Falls of Halladale' ran aground in 1908.

2 Port Campbell Discovery Walk

Start the walk near the Port Campbell beach by crossing the mouth of Campbell's Creek or by following the signs from the Scenic Town Lookout Carpark on the Great Ocean Road, west (Warrnambool side) of Port Campbell township.

3 Loch Ard Gorge Area

Three self guided walks have been developed around the Loch Ard Gorge area. Allow two to three hours to make the most of your visit here.

- *Shipwreck Walk* – this walk tells the tragic story of the Loch Ard shipwreck from the wreck site to the cemetery.
- *Geology* – explains the geology of the coastline and the forces that shape it.
- *Living on the edge* – discover life on the edge of these sheer cliffs.

Beach walking at Newfield Bay, Gibson Steps Beach, Crofts Bay and Bay of Martyrs.

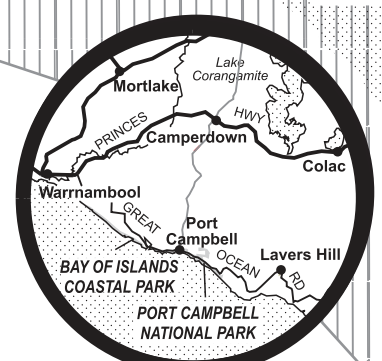
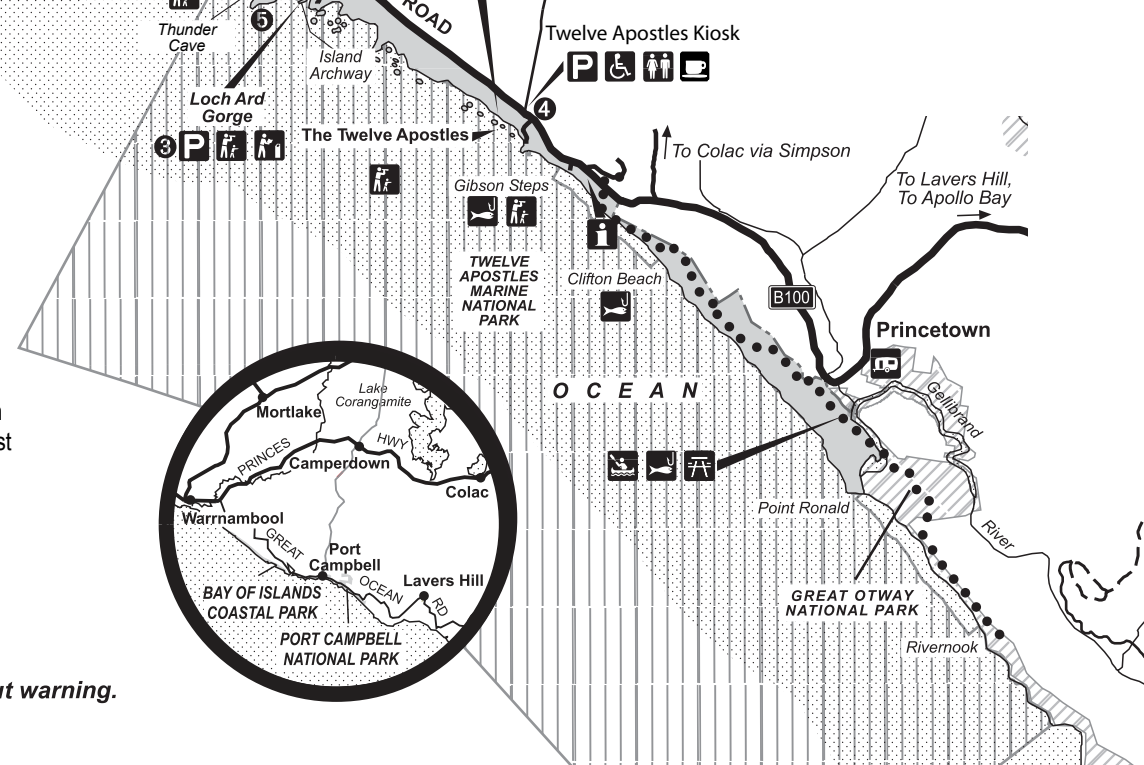
4 Twelve Apostles Walk

Stop and visit the Twelve Apostles Kiosk before taking a short walk to view the Twelve Apostles coastline. Just 500m through the tunnel, under the Great Ocean Road, to various lookouts offering breathtaking views.

5 Muttonbird Island

Muttonbird Island, near Loch Ard Gorge, is an important nesting place for the Muttonbird (Short-tailed Shearwater). These remarkable birds migrate about 30,000km every year, spending summer in the northern Pacific Ocean and returning the last week of September to nest in various rookeries in Bass Strait. You can watch them fly ashore each evening from October to April, although the best viewing is January to February.

Twelve Apostles Kiosk
The kiosk sells a basic range of take away refreshments, including tea and coffee, cold drinks, confectionery and snacks.



Disclaimer: Parks Victoria does not guarantee that this data is without flaw and therefore disclaims all liability which may arise from you relying on this information.

For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre
Call 13 1963
or visit the

Parks Victoria website
www.parks.vic.gov.au

Visitor Information Centres

Port Campbell
Port Campbell Vic 3269
Tel: (03) 5598 6089 Email:
pcvic@corangamite.vic.gov.au

Warrnambool
Flagstaff Hill, Merri St
Warrnambool Vic 3280
Tel: (03) 5564 7837
Toll Free: 1800 640 082

Recreational Fishing
Licence enquiries:
Victoria - call 13 61 86

Caring for the environment

Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

Please take rubbish away with you for recycling & disposal

Sleeping overnight in the park or carparks is not permitted

Dogs and other pets are *not* permitted in the park, *except* in cars on main tourist roads and sign-posted areas. Dogs are permitted on a leash from the Peterborough Golf Course to the Bay of Martyrs Carpark.

Fire

No fires are permitted at any time in these two parks

Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park are in the

South West

Total Fire Ban District

It is your responsibility to know if it is a day of

Total Fire Ban

If in doubt call the **Victorian Bushfire Information Line:**
1800 240 667

Park closures

Be prepared to leave early as **extreme weather may cause the closure of some park areas** for public safety.

Mobile Phones

CAUTION: You may not be in network range in some areas of the park. If not in range connect to Police, Ambulance or CFA - **key in 112 then press the YES key**

Healthy Parks Healthy People

Visiting a park can improve your health, mind, body and soul. So, with over four million hectares of parkland available to Victorians, why not escape to a park today!

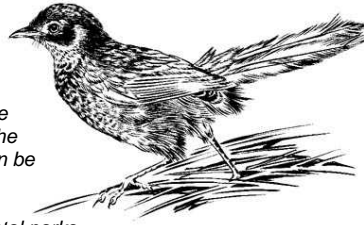


Wildlife watching

Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park provide important habitat for a wide range of wildlife. The range and number of birds that are found here make it an excellent location for birdwatching.

A resident rarity

Keep a lookout for a bird approximately the size of a blackbird. The Rufous Bristlebird can be found in remnant heathlands protected in this and other coastal parks.



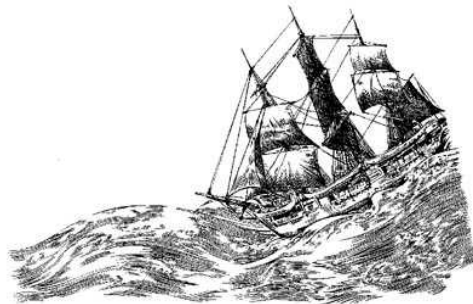
Look skyward to see Peregrine Falcons swooping above the cliff tops, or walk along the beach to see penguins, terns and dotterels sheltering in locations protected from the wind. Australasian Gannets, Wandering Albatrosses and Muttonbirds (Short-tailed Shearwaters) fly huge distances out to sea hunting for food and can be seen returning to nest in the parks. Pelicans, ducks, egrets and swans are common inhabitants of the estuaries and wetlands of the parks.

The Bay of Islands rock stacks are a unique feature of these parks and provide a colony of Silver Gulls safe nesting sites from foxes and cats. Other stacks are home to Victoria's only marine cormorant, the rare Black-faced Cormorant.

Port Campbell

Port Campbell was named after Captain Alexander Campbell who was known as 'the last of the buccaneers'. In charge of the whaling station at Port Fairy, he traded between Victoria and Tasmania using Port Campbell Bay as shelter in the 1840s.

As the English colony grew, Bass Strait became a major shipping route and pastoralists moved into the area. However, it wasn't until the 1870s that the town of Port Campbell was established.



Wild seas and rock stacks

Formation of this coastline began around 10-20 million years ago. Countless millions of tiny marine animal skeletons built up beneath the sea to form limestone. As the ocean retreated, the soft limestone was exposed to the wild seas and winds of the Southern Ocean. The sculpting of rock stacks, gorges, islands, arches and blowholes had begun.

Caring for Country

Winds and wild seas shaped not only the coastline of Port Campbell and Bay of Islands, but also its history.

The area provided a wealth of resources for Kirrae Whurrong people. Layers of blackened shells (shell middens), tools and other artefacts remain as a legacy of a culture surviving over thousands of years.

The Kirrae Whurrong still live in this area, continuing a long physical and spiritual connection with this unique landscape, and welcome you to their country.

Parks Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities of Victoria and recognises the connection Aboriginal people have to Country. Together, all Australians have a responsibility to 'care for country'.

Middens and other indigenous artefacts are an essential part of Australia's history and are protected by law. Please do not disturb or remove any part of them.

Exploring other parks

Other parks not to be missed in the area include:

- Great Otway National Park: Maits Rest self-guided rainforest walk, lightstation, waterfall walks, beaches, wildlife, camping and much more
- Melba Gully: magnificent rainforest with giant Myrtle Beech trees, glow worms and a self-guided trail
- Tower Hill Reserve: hidden inside a volcanic crater is the Worn Gundidj Natural History Centre, wetland boardwalk, birdhide and several short walks
- Mt Eccles National Park: centred on a volcano, a park of national significance offering camping, picnicking and several self-guided walks, including the Lake Surprise and Crater Rim walks
- Great Ocean Walk: Apollo Bay to Glenample Homestead. This walk features rocky platforms, sheltered beaches, pristine rivers, huge forests, heathland and coastal woodlands.



Toilets

Please refer to the map for the location of toilets and refer to this when planning your visit.

Please respect this park and help us maintain the health of our natural environment for all visitors.



Visitor Information Centres

To fully enjoy your visit to the area, be sure to visit the Port Campbell or Warrnambool Visitor Information Centre for a great range of information and advice.

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