

AMBASSADORS IN ACTION!

Pushing through the cold of the morning, each group of our Melbourne Ambassadors was at Ricketts Point, Beaumaris for a day of exploring, discovery and learning. Both days had beautiful calm waters and an array of bird life including black swans feeding on the shallow seagrass vegetation - some had neck collars used to track behaviour and movements. Ambassadors on the second day were lucky to see a pod of dolphins making its way across Port Phillip.

Ambassadors were divided into 4 groups, rotating between a set of activities organised for the day. Activity One involved Ambassadors learning about the importance of identifying the dolphins that are found in both Port Phillip and Western Port using fin identification.



Activity Two saw Ambassadors exploring the amazing marine life found amongst the sea grass at Ricketts Point. Using the first floor of Beaumaris SLSC, Ambassadors sifted through samples of sea grass, using microscopes to explore and investigate the (incredibly) visible life.

The third activity was on the rock pools of Ricketts Point, where Ambassadors explored at their own pace, searching for all things great and small that live at the marine sanctuary. Such life included flatworms, limpets, glass eels, and many, many species of shore crabs - these always cause excitement!

As ever, thank you to our wonderful team of educators and parents who made the trek to Ricketts Point in support of our hard-working and passionate Ambassadors.



Celebrate the annual migration of some of the oceans most majestic creatures as our coastal waters play host to Humpback and Southern Right whales making their way north to their winter breeding grounds. The Island Whale Festival is an immersive three day event held during the school holidays on Phillip Island from 7 – 9 July, and heralds the arrival of these seafaring cetaceans into our marine environment.

Local community members and visitors alike have the opportunity to engage with a range of free or low cost activities that will not only entertain, but also allow you to appreciate the wildlife and natural habitats of Phillip Island and the Bass Coast region.

BUT STILL THEY COME!! SPIDER CRABS ON THE MOVE!

Whilst the Queen's Birthday weekend is traditionally the official start of the Humpback whale watching season, another species quietly makes its annual migration into Port Phillip.

Spider crabs spend much of the year in Bass Strait, but head in shore at the start of winter, to the shallow waters around Blairgowrie and Rye, to get ready for the big moult. This is when the crabs shed their old shell to grow a new one. They are vulnerable at this time, so the crabs make themselves as flat as possible on the sandy seabed, looking rather like flattened discs. They then pump themselves full of water, increasing their size by as much as 30% before starting the process of hardening their new shell.



The event is pretty famous around the world as we don't think it happens anywhere else in such shallow and easily accessible waters for the public to view. It's a jewel in the crown of Port Phillip's story. (Even David Attenborough came to film a few years ago!)

They will hang around for a couple of weeks until their shells are fully formed and then head back out to their alternative home.

Check our facebook page for a short video of the crabs arriving on World Oceans Day! What better way to celebrate and remember why our bays are so special.