

'i sea, i care' Ambassadors in Action...

On a beautiful, winter's day last month, Ambassadors from 11 schools across the Mornington Peninsula gathered for their workshop on 'Litter and Pollution in the Catchments' at Tanti Wetlands. After watching the crew from Melbourne Water empty the litter trap, the Ambassadors learnt how the range of invertebrates in the wetlands show the health of the waterways and they tested the water quality.

Wetlands like these are constructed to channel stormwater and clean the water of rubbish and pollution before it finds its way to the bay. This is an incredibly important protection for our precious marine environment in Port Phillip. The crews work very hard, looking after 176 similar sites across Melbourne.

In the afternoon, we learnt about our Dolphin Monitoring Project (we even saw 3 dolphins darting round the point) and then walked along the pier and beach at

Mornington surveying and collecting litter. This was a reminder that all drains and creeks lead to the bay and at every step along the way, there are pressures from human impact. Every effort we make in our community to lessen that impact is fantastic!

Many thanks to Mitch, John and the crew at Melbourne Water for the amazing support you give us over the year and to the Mornington Peninsula Shire for their ongoing sponsorship of this program.



WINTER WHALES

Winters in our bays and surrounding coastal waters have become a busy time for whale activity. Humpback and southern right whales are being seen regularly in our waters.

Hunted to the edge of extinction during the industrial whaling era, humpback and southern right whales are making a comeback, though the latter still have a long way to go. The east coast population of humpback whales is expected to reach around 26,000 animals this season.

The news is not so good for the slow-to-reproduce southern right whale, with their southeast Australian numbers estimated to be between just 224 and 251.

The Dolphin Research Institute has joined with Wildlife Coast Cruises and Killer Whales Australia to form the citizen science initiative; Two Bays Whale Project. We invite people and organisations to report sightings

and contribute images of whales to a collaborative database. This forms the basis of an annual summary that is available to wildlife managers and other government organisations to assist with management decisions and conservation measures.

Data collected over the years can be used to compare sighting rates and monitor changes in behaviour. It gives an overall understanding to trends in numbers of animals visiting our waters.



dolphinresearch.org.au/sightings
or facebook.com/twobayswhales/



DRI Image, Phillip Island 2016

Victoria's whale watching regulations prevent boats from approaching whales closer than 200 metres. For PWCs (jetskis and the like) the minimum distance is 300 metres. Serious penalties apply for breaches of this regulation.

