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DOLPHIN  
RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE



# Newsletter

## Term Two 2025



City of  
Casey

RESEARCH | EDUCATION | LEADERSHIP  
SINCE 1991





# CATCHMENT WORKSHOP

We had a fantastic Catchment Workshop at the Clyde North Wetlands. We began with a presentation from Sustainability Project Officer Jen and her fabulous team from the City of Casey with Peter, who manages the maintenance of the litter traps, alongside Emma from Waste Education, Litter Prevention Officer Nino, and Water Planner Priya.

The team discussed the lifecycles of litter and the consequences of littering, the types of gross pollutant traps in the region, how litter flows from streets into stormwater drains, the importance of wetlands in trapping pollutants from flowing into the waterways, and the huge costs of monitoring and removing litter in this region. The council also demonstrated how they vacuum up litter from the GPT, and Ambassadors gained a greater appreciation for our Councillors and the enormous work they undertake to help minimise litter from entering our waterways!

We then headed to the wetlands for a frog identification activity, and a water pollution testing lesson, which included a ponding session to find macroinvertebrates and identify their pollution tolerance. We found the waterway to be in a relatively healthy condition after our water sampling and discovering the presence of pollution sensitive invertebrates.

We finished with a litter collection and discussed the sources and types of litter collected, the many solutions and alternatives including the simple actions we can take to reduce our litter consumption.

Thank you SO much to Casey Council for making this day so special, and to the ISIC teachers, parents, and carers for transporting Ambassadors and supporting them throughout the year!





# AMBASSADOR HIGHLIGHT: MENTONE PRIMARY

The i sea, i care Ambassadors at Mentone Primary have been hard at work educating students throughout their school, and have extended their outreach to local kindergartens!

These ambassadors have embraced their leadership role by educating and delivering engaging activities on Port Phillip Bay's precious marine life, whilst also teaching the youngsters about the harmful impacts of discarded litter on our marine ecosystems. We congratulate our Mentone Ambassadors, we are so very proud of you, keep up the good work!!!



## RESEARCH NEWS



The Two Bays Whale Project has three components. First, we have sightings reported via our Podwatch web app and these are validated and added to our database, which dates all the way back to the 1980s!

Next, our Two Bays Tracker program trains citizen scientists to conduct surveys at important coastal vantage points. This collaborative effort allows us to compare sightings over the years and has seen over 1,000 hours undertaken by our devoted volunteers.

Finally, our Victorian Humpback Fluke Identification Catalogue now has 357 individual whales, with 70 new additions in 2024 alone! We have discovered that 23 of our whales have also been spotted in QLD, NSW and WA!

Through the collective efforts of the Two Bays Whale Project, we gain essential insights into whale movements in Victorian waters, helping to protect these magnificent beings for generations to come.



Image: Georgie Puschner

## COMING UP

Join the the Dolphin Research Team at the Island Whale Festival to talk all things whales! We will have our Spot A Whale & Whale Tales sessions as well as a Careers in Marine Science program. We hope to see you there!



SCAN TO BOOK OR  
FIND OUT MORE.





# Humpback whales at our doorstep



Imagine standing on a clifftop at Portsea or cruising around Port Phillip when suddenly, a humpback whale bursts from the water in a spectacular breach. Growing up to 16m long, these giants are truly a breathtaking sight. While you might expect to see humpback whales up north in Queensland, you might be surprised to learn you can discover them right here in our own backyard!

Although humpback whales aren't here all year round, nearly 40,000 individuals migrate along the east coast of Australia each year between Antarctica and Queensland. Many of these whales travel through Bass Strait and pass Port Phillip on their way. While most continue on their journey, it is thought that some individuals are drawn into the bay with the strong tidal currents at The Heads. Whilst here, most spend their time travelling around Port Phillip, or milling in one area. Some have even been seen way up near the Yarra River!

One unforgettable sighting in Port Phillip involved a competitive pod of males chasing a female around the Bay – a high-energy, chaotic event more like a demolition derby than the graceful scenes we often picture. Thankfully, most whales that enter the Bay find their way back out within a few hours or days.

As humpback whales visit our Bay and coastline, it's crucial we understand what is happening in our waters. That's where the Two Bays Whale Project comes in. Each winter and spring, citizen scientists and researchers report sightings of whales across Victoria's coastline. These reports help build a clearer picture of where and when different species show up and how often they visit.

To help us understand individual humpback whale movements, researchers use a powerful tool: fluke identification. The underside of a humpback whale's tail, or fluke, is like a fingerprint – each one is

unique, with different shapes, scars and colouring. By photographing and comparing flukes to those in a photo identification catalogue, researchers can track individual whales over time.

Sometimes, these matches uncover extraordinary stories. One humpback whale photographed off Western Australia in 1991 was resighted 31 years later off Victoria – an incredible testament to long-term data collection and the vital role citizen scientists play...



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