

Fact Sheet Ramsar Wetlands



What are Ramsar wetlands?

Wetlands are one of the most important ecosystems in the world, similar to rain forests and coral reefs. Wetlands can include swamps, marshes, billabongs, lakes, salt marshes, mudflats, mangroves, coral reefs, fens, peat bogs, or bodies of water and they can be natural or artificial.

Ramsar Wetlands are specific wetlands in different parts of the world that are important worldwide. In 1971, people from all over the world came together to pledge to protect specific wetlands. This pledge was called the "Ramsar Convention" and aims to protect wetlands across the globe and take care of the plants and animals that rely upon them.

In Victoria, we have 12 of these globally important wetlands, with the 'Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula' site being our local Ramsar wetland established in 1982. This site includes wetlands at Lake Connewarre, Swan Bay, Mud Islands, Point Wilson, Werribee River and Point Cook (see map below). These sites were chosen to have international significance as they meet a number of criteria including; the number of international migratory shorebirds that they support, the presence of very large numbers of waterbirds, the presence of threatened flora and fauna species and threatened habitat, breeding colonies of bird species and vital habitat for many fish, as well as supporting domestic migratory birds.

Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula site



Note that sites highlighted in **green** are the current Ramsar sites as of 2023. Additional sites have been proposed for inclusion from 2024.



Orange-bellied Parrot