

meet the locals

Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park is brimming with an extraordinary collection of marine life found nowhere else in the world, which is why the area needs our protection. Here's a guide to some of the special creatures who call the marine park home:



Bottlenose dolphins are some of the more famous residents of the marine park with

more than 120 living permanently in Port Stephens—any journey across the waters of the port is likely to bring you up-close with these intelligent and curious marine mammals.



Humpback whales are among the most spectacular and popular seasonal marine park visitors

each June–July as they migrate north to winter breeding grounds, and again in October–November as they return south.



Gould's petrels are one of the world's rarest seabirds whose only known breeding sites are

Cabbage Tree and Boondelbah islands off the coast of Port Stephens.



Donut nudibranchs are definitely among the marine park's most colourful and unique residents and

are one of the rarest nudibranchs in the Pacific region.



Red indianfish are the 'chiefs' of the marine park—divers often swim

straight past these magnificent masters of disguise who blend in with their sponge garden surroundings.



Platypus cowrie are named after that famous Australian monotreme due to what looks like a

miniature platypus bill at the end of their shell, but that's where the similarity ends!



Southern pygmy leatherjackets have smooth, velvety skin rather than scales—probably the

only lime green leather jacket you'll ever see!



White's seahorse lives only in NSW waters and this marine park is their stronghold, leading

to the description of one particular dive site as the 'seahorse gardens'.



Loggerhead turtles use the marine park as a restaurant, visiting frequently to feed on shellfish,

crabs, sea urchins and jellyfish; they often come quite close to shore to forage for food.



Grey nurse sharks are the marine park's most endangered residents: regarded by many as the

'labradors of the sea', they are not aggressive to humans and now rely on our protection for survival.



Front cover: Striped anglerfish are among the most photographed of the marine park's fish species due to their good looks and unique lure—an enlarged dorsal fin—which they use to attract their prey.

memories

Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park is a multiple use reserve with different areas zoned for certain activities. It is only in sanctuary zones that recreational fishing is not allowed. By observing the park zones you will be helping to ensure that this spectacular marine world thrives and continues to create unforgettable holiday memories for future generations.

more information



Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park
Locked Bag 800
Nelson Bay NSW 2315
Phone **02 4916 3970**
www.mpa.nsw.gov.au

Marine Parks management is now the responsibility of the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) on behalf of the Marine Parks Authority. To find out more about DECC please visit www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Port Stephens – Great Lakes Recreational Fishing Guides are available at most bait and tackle shops, some service stations, visitor information centres and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service offices. The Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park Zoning Plan User Guide is available on www.mpa.nsw.gov.au.

DECC 2008/323 / FISH PHOTOS: DAVE HARASTI

Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park



*worth discovering
worth protecting*



come on in, the water's fine

Welcome to one of Australia's most extraordinary marine playgrounds—the Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park. Whether you like to dive, snorkel, boat, fish, surf, swim or explore, you won't believe the incredible holiday experiences that await you in this massive 98,000 ha marine park, which protects some of the state's most precious marine creatures and their habitats. So come on in . . . and create treasured holiday memories that will be re-lived for generations.

location, location

The Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park lies at the heart of one of the most stunning regions on the east coast of Australia. With the magnificent Great Dividing Range as a backdrop, and fringed by more than 300 km of spectacular coastal scenery, the Port Stephens and Great Lakes regions offer a complete holiday experience. Only two-and-a-half hours drive north from Sydney, you could be a world away in this incredible marine playground.



you won't be bored



The Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park is open 24/7. Estuaries, reefs, beaches, rocky shorelines and open ocean provide endless opportunities to discover what makes this marine park so special, and worth protecting.

adventure is on the agenda every day in the marine park. You never know what (or who!) you might encounter as you dive, snorkel, surf, boat, kayak, canoe or windsurf through this dramatic marine world.

take it easy and let nature be your guide. Pack a picnic and explore the marine park's superb sandy beaches, rocky shorelines, coastal creeks and lakes, or rocky islands. And with more than 80 per cent of the marine park open for recreational fishing, finding that perfect spot to wet a line shouldn't be a problem.

