



Parks Victoria – Protecting Our Precious Inlet

Corner Inlet and Nooramunga consist of shallow marine waters, intertidal mudflats and around forty islands. The inlet is home to the only extensive seagrass (*Posidonia australis*) meadow in southern Australia and the waterbody is vital for fish breeding and migratory birds, the area is listed as a Ramsar site* and a marine and coastal park.

Corner Inlet is in good health and it is important that it remains this way. With this in mind, many local organisation's and industry groups work together through the Corner Inlet Partner Group to ensure the inlet has a healthy future. Coordinated by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA), the partner group has been in place for around ten years.

Parks Victoria, one of several partner organisation's, coordinate a range of monitoring activities including habitat and seagrass mapping and water bird counts in the inlet. Parks Victoria staff are vital in acting to address weeds and pests in the area. Not only working within parks,

they also coordinate activity with neighboring landholders and have had a major impact on spartina and fox populations.

Large-scale Spartina Spraying

Spartina (rice grass) was introduced to Australia in the 1920s to reclaim mud flats and prevent erosion, like so many introduced plant species it became invasive, impacting on local ecosystems. Led by Parks Victoria, a concentrated effort to control this weed using a number of methods including spraying from helicopters, boats, hovercraft, quad-bikes and targeted spraying on foot, has made a significant impact over the past 15 years. Recent investigations indicate that continuing the program to 2020 will see complete eradication along the coastline, while within the inlet, the extent of spartina will be reduced to the point of only requiring follow up monitoring and occasional response.



Controlling spartina helps improve natural estuary habitat for important fish populations and allows vital plant species such as saltmarsh, mangrove and seagrass to re-establish. This improves the feeding and breeding sites for local birds and internationally significant migratory species.

Fox Control on the Barrier Islands

Rangers who work in the Corner Inlet Marine and Coastal Park were aware that fox numbers were impacting on bird populations. Plans were put in place for a control program and subsequent trapping of foxes on the barrier islands has achieved a fox free status on Dream Island, Little Snake Island, Clonmel Island and a 95% reduction of foxes on St Margaret Island.

Foxes prey on birds, many of which are nesting shorebirds or migratory species such as the vulnerable Eastern Curlew which fly into Corner Inlet annually from Russia and China.

Bird surveying with BirdLife Australia and the Department of Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) has found the number of migratory shorebirds recorded in annual counts is stable.

Parks Victoria are proud of the achievements made and appreciate the landscape wide approach that can be achieved through working with other organisations. Gerard Delaney, Area Chief Ranger with Parks Victoria values the Corner Inlet Partner Group approach. “We have clear goals, we know what we need to achieve, it’s a pleasure to be part of a group that is doing fantastic work for such a beautiful place.”

**A Ramsar Site is a wetland site designated of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. Ramsar identifies wetlands of international importance, especially those providing waterfowl habitat.*

Pictured: Small islands and mangroves, by Drift Media



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