Save Westernport and Westernport Peninsula Protection Council

Marine Pest Westernport Project 2020-2021

Funded by The Commonwealth Government's Communities Environment Program

1. WPPC launched The Community Environment Program for detecting marine pests in Westernport Bay at the WPPC AGM in January 2020.

Shannon Hurley from Victorian National Parks Association was the guest Speaker She gave an informative talk about marine pest detection and eradication and how to identify the two most significant pests Undaria pinnatifida Japanese kelp and Asterias amurensis, Northern Pacific seastar.

Excerpt from WPPC Newsletter to advertise Launch of the project

WPPC's AGM 2020 Balnarring Hall

Sunday 12th January 2020

3041 Frankston- Flinders Road Balnarring

Guest Speaker- **Shannon Hurley** Marine Campaigner for VNPA

Marine Pests and a Healthy Westernport

Shannon is the Marine Campaigner for The Victorian National Parks Association. She worked for Parks Victoria undertaking marine planning, monitoring and education, including undertaking the first marine pest monitoring in the waters of Wilsons Prom National Park. She also worked for the Australian Marine Conservation Society to protect the Great Barrier Reef and is a keen scuba diver and passionate about shark conservation and promoting sustainable seafood choices.

WPPC have just received a grant for marine pest monitoring under BlueScope pier as part of the Kawasaki Brown Hydrogen exports out of Hastings. We have a quote from a professional company that has done marine-pest work in Victoria. Shannon will talk about marine pests and a healthy Westernport.

All welcome- Please RSVP to receive lunch to wppcweb@gmail.com

Figure 1 WPPC AGM 2020 attendees

Figure 2Shannon Hurley delivering her speech

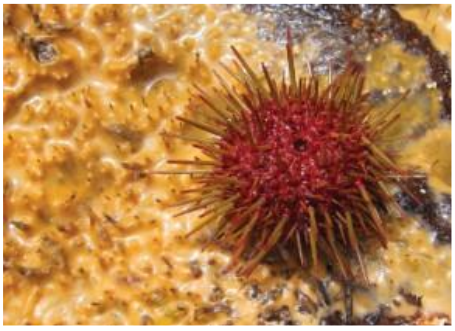
Figure 3 PowerPoint marine pest citizen science

<u>Excerpts from Shannon Hurley's talk about Marine pests in Westernport Bay WPPC AGM 2020</u>

MARINE PESTS

WESTERNPORT BAY



WHAT'S AT STAKE?

MARINE PESTS


- Non-native animals or plants that can cause significant damage to marine ecosystems
- Reproduce quickly, large numbers of offspring that can rapidly spread to new areas
- Compete with native species by preying upon them, and outcompeting them for space, light, food, or overgrowing them
- They can also introduce diseases and parasites to our native species

HOW CAN THEY SPREAD?

- Shipping
- Boat movements from other infested waters – Port Phillip Bay
- Water equipment – kayaks, water toys, snorkel gear etc
- Natural dispersal

CURRENT STATUS

- Australia: >400 introduced and cryptogenic (unknown origin) marine species
- Port Phillip Bay: 99 confirmed records of introduced and 61 cryptogenic species
- Westernport Bay: 15 marine pests (not all with invasive tendencies)

Once marine pests become established, it is nearly impossible to eradicate them.

THE POWER OF CITIZEN SCIENCE

Photo: Parks Victoria

VICTORIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION
Be part of nature

THE POWER OF CITIZEN SCIENCE

GOOD NEWS STORY!

Once found at San Remo…..

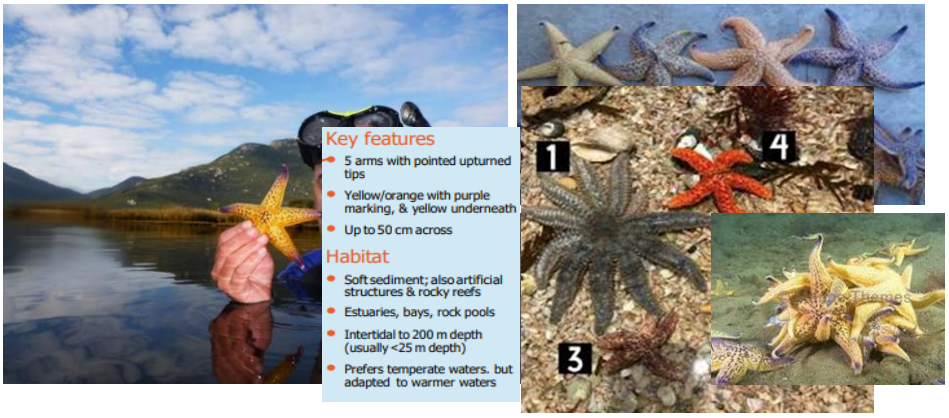
Divers in Western Port are being asked to be on the alert for the **highly-invasive** Northern Pacific seastar, which was found recently near San Remo. (Dec, 2011) *Photo Courtesy CSIRO.*

But then…..

It was a group of divers who first found the Northern Pacific seastars near San Remo, and it was their **prompt action in reporting it to DSE** that led to the eradication of this population. However, we all need to continue to be vigilant, and report any sightings (not in Port Phillip) to DELWP on 136 186.

VICTORIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION
Be part of nature

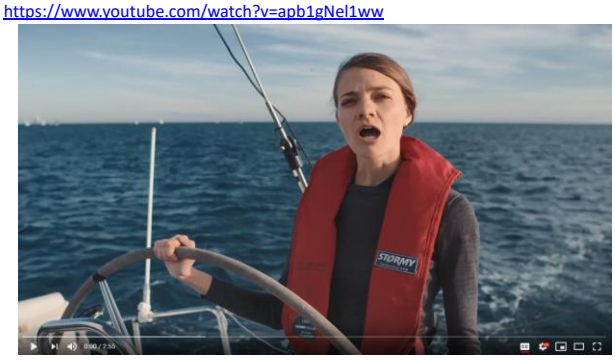
MARINE PEST ID
Northern Pacific Seastar



Photos: Phil Watson, PIRSA

Check Clean Dry - Stop the Spread of Marine Pests in Victoria

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apb1gNel1ww



2. **Citizen Science** Snorkels and one scuba dive were conducted, and reports, photos and fish lists submitted and summarised. No target marine pest species of major significance were spotted.

That is to say no Undaria pinnatifida, Japanese Kelp,

or Asterias amurensis, Northern Pacific seastar were found.

Figure 1 Merricks underwater Jan 2020

Figure 2 Merricks above water Jan 2020

Figure 3 Merricks March 17th 2020

Figure 4 March 17th 2020 Tim Burford

Figure 5 Nudibranch Pt Leo Jan 2020

Figure 6 Pt Leo with bushfire smoke haze Jan 2020

Figure 7 Pt Leo Feb 2021

Figure 8 Pt Leo Feb 2021 end of the point at left

Figure 9 Pt Leo March 2021 Karri Giles

Figure 10 Pt Leo March 2021

Figure 11 The site for Pt Leo snorkels was straight out parallel to and along the rock platform at The Point the far East end of the Pt Leo surf beach past the end of the rock platform and back.

Fish List for Flinders Pier March 2020

2 smooth stingray, 14 Blue Throated Wrasse, 1 male ornate cowfish, 1 dusty Morwong, 3 magpie perch, 3 old wife, 9 southern goatfish, 1 weedy seadragon, garfish, 1 adult leather jacket and 20 juvenile, 4 sea sweep, 30 cardinal fish or silverbelly? 1 floating anemone, 1 purple seastar, sea tulip, ascidians.

Cameron Wright and Sasha undertook the scuba dive citizen science dive under Flinders Pier No Undaria or Asterias were detected.

Karri Giles and Tim Burford conducted the others.

3. Professional Marine Pest Survey Dives

Fathom Pacific were engaged. Below is their quote:

Permission was sought to access under BlueScope pier

Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council Inc
P.O. Box 9 Hastings Vic 3915
Incorporated Association Reg No. A15886H
ABN 98 461014 730
SAVE WESTERNPORT

25/2/2020
Ron Bange
Asset Manager
BlueScope Westernport

Dear Ron Bange,

I am writing to request an appointment with you. I am the Secretary of Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council and in conjunction with Save Westernport we have received a grant from the Commonwealth Stronger Communities Environmental Program through our local member Hon Greg Hunt.

The grant was awarded to allow monitoring for marine-pests Northern Pacific Seastar (Asterias amurensis) and Japanese Kelp (Undaria pinnatifida) to be carried out under BlueScope Pier by professional company Fathom Pacific. The company regularly monitors for signs of marine pests at sites including Apollo Bay and Gippsland Lakes (see attached), using remote operated vehicles and underwater photography. The project will require conditions of good visibility and 1-3 days access to the site to collect the information needed to prepare a report on its present condition.

With BlueScope Hastings preparing to host the Kawasaki Hydrogen Energy Program, baseline information about the current condition of the site will be required ahead of that project commencing in 2020-21. Hydrogen tankers from Japan are expected to begin regularly using the Port of Hastings as part of the Kawasaki HESC. The idea is to learn from Australia's previous mistakes.

It's believed that Japanese wood-chip ships were responsible for introducing marine pest species into the Derwent River, Port Phillip Bay, Corio Bay and Apollo Bay in the 1990s. Our first step has been to write letters asking for some of the $500 million dollars ($50million State $50 million Federal governments and $400 Million Japanese consortium) to be used for marine-pest monitoring.

You probably agree that some of this money could be well spent looking out for marine pests and taking quick action if they are found. Perhaps you could request this. You may be aware of how little money is currently dedicated to important areas of this government's environmental responsibilities.

I enclose a letter signed by eight environmental groups concerned by this matter. This has been sent to Kawasaki's consortium and various ministers with responsibilities in this area. The reply from Kawasaki was that they were relying on existing ballast-water management guidelines. As individual sea-stars have thousands of larvae each year, even a couple of missed seastar are dangerous. We therefore request a marine-pest monitoring program for several years, and also ask that you support our project.

I would like to meet you with a representative of Fathom Pacific and talk about the matter of obtaining access to the BlueScope site. We understand that until a few years ago you had Jan Watson diving under your pier. She said it was beautiful. I have seen footage of crawfish rock that is not too far from you, and I believe it! We could perhaps invite Hon Greg Hunt too to the meeting to explain why he values this project; however I believe he is very busy with the Coronavirus!

Yours sincerely,

Karri Giles Grad dip Env Sci
Secretary
Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council wppcweb@gmail.com.au

We were denied access to BlueScope jetty however Kawasaki sent us this correspondence:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fSnLi0cV1zbFyAhsaVX0aINfIuPhEEFz/view?usp=sharing

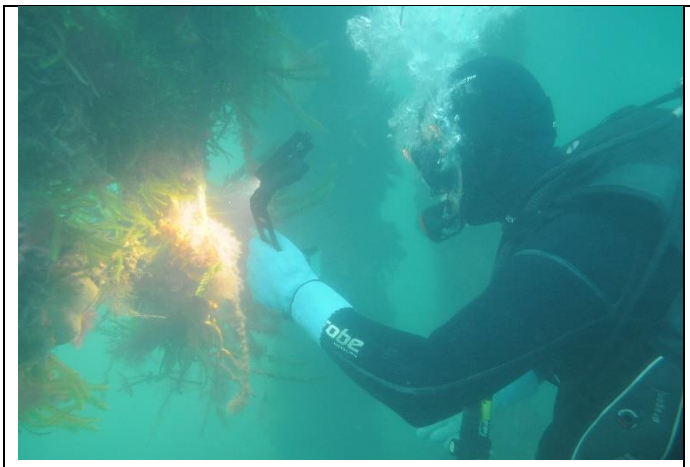


Figure 4 Diver at Stony Pt

Figure 5 Sponges at Stony Pt

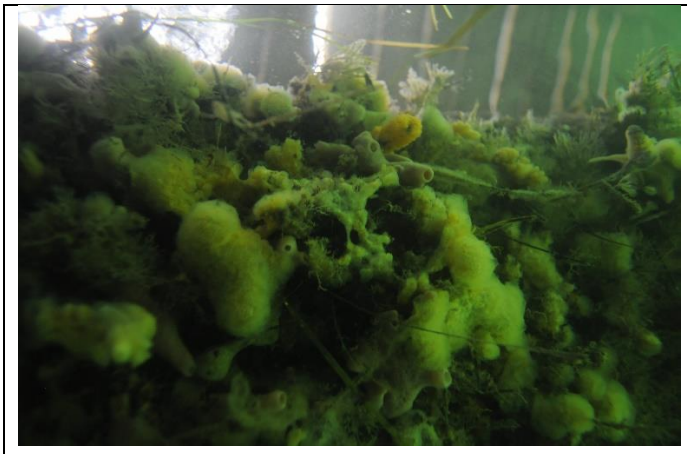


Figure 6 Sponges and sea lettuce Yaringa

Figure 7 Sponges Yaringa

The survey is of interest to the scientific world, managers, and those with an interest in Westernport Bay

Our survey has been reported to Yaringa Harbourmaster. Marc is interested in eradicating Pacific oysters and dealing with dredge spoils discovered on the dive.

The survey has been reported to Dr Richard Stafford Bell Agriculture Victoria, this compliments current surveys they have conducted in Westernport Bay

J746 Invasive Marine Species Distribution Project San Remo

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w3sEeW8jV2yj5sKE-LqOFRgpGkqsXvel/view?usp=sharing

And

Invasive Marine Species Distribution Project Hastings

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s4p3QLDKzWX6z5pOaW6ljQy-WcQAPHH7/view?usp=sharing

Julia also announced the survey at the Community Consultation meeting at the Port of Hastings and BlueScope's Community Consultation Meeting. Kawasaki Representatives were at the Port of Hastings meeting.

Kawasaki have since replied with

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OYf3yfwfpj_gGiCfNa1KCs4ZSDvo3VKf/view?usp=sharing

Other surveys in Westernport

AGL surveyed the benthic environment under Crib Pt pier and a large area of North Arm as part of their EES. Crib Point Gas Import Jetty and Pipeline EES. Subtidal benthic habitats and biodiversity, Lower North Arm Westernport 2019.They were not specifically looking for marine pests however these species are reportable, being noxious, so it is likely that they were not seen.

The first 150m of Flinders Pier has been surveyed with no reports of dramatic marine pests this year by Parks Vic. Cowes Pier has been replaced recently.