

Challenges to our bay

Our region's population is projected to continue to grow bringing increased pressure on our internationally significant wetland.

The focus of our project is on the future challenges related to recreational boat use including:

- Vessel disturbance to shorebirds and roosting sea birds
- Unintended spread of marine pests
- Propeller, vessel and anchor impacts on intertidal flats and the flow-on effects to the ecosystem
- Over-fishing of marine species and the flow-on effects on the ecosystem



*Northern Pacific Sea Star — a voracious marine predator—
photo courtesy of Parks Victoria*

Simple things boat users can do

As Western Port boat users we can help protect our unique bay with these simple actions:

- **Avoid disturbing roosting and feeding shore birds**
- **Monitor for and notify authorities if suspected marine pests are identified**
- **Check, Clean and Dry between waterways to prevent the spread of pests**
- **Be mindful of where we anchor and other vessel impacts on flats and sea grass**
- **Follow catch limits, and**
- **Be mindful of bait pumping beyond our needs**

Working together for mutual gain

Western Port faces challenges in balancing conservation with recreation. However, responses to pressures on conservation can overlap with improved recreation. For example protecting the bay's seagrass can lead to more fish for us to catch whilst also keeping intact the ecosystem and nutrients our birds need for migration to the Arctic.

Our project is bringing together bay users to collaborate in looking after this special place so that future generations are able to enjoy it like we have.



More information

We are particularly looking for interested boat users to contact the Biosphere if they'd like more information about the project and perhaps to attend an upcoming field day.

Interested community members and those with specific project enquiries can contact Project Officer Casey Lee

Email: po@biosphere.org.au

Interested community members can also visit our website for further details:

<https://www.biosphere.org.au/biosphere-projects/western-port-ramsar-awareness-project>

Eastern curlew cover photo—Mark Lethlean

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Boat User Ramsar Awareness Project



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