Wilsons Promontory Conservation Action Plan 2016–2021

Parks VICTORIA — Healthy Parks Healthy People® — VICTORIA State Government

Wilsons Promontory Park Landscape

The Wilsons Promontory Landscape consists of five parks and reserves:
• Wilsons Promontory NP
• Wilsons Promontory Marine NP
• Wilsons Promontory Marine Park
• Wilsons Promontory Marine Reserve
• Seal Islands Wildlife Reserve

The Park Landscape is significant to many people, but especially to the Gunaikurnai, Bunurong and Boonwurrung people, who are traditionally and culturally associated with the area. The land and waters are an important part of the dreaming and culture of the Traditional Owners.

The entire promontory is of national geological and geomorphological significance and contains a number of sites of state and regional significance. The physical landscape is dominated by a mountainous granite geology overlain by marine and terrestrial sediments.

This has created highly diverse vegetation communities, including warm temperate and cool temperate rainforest, tall open forest, woodland, heathland, and swamp and coastal communities. Rocky reefs, sandy sea floors, kelp forests, sponge gardens, seagrass meadows and open sea are features of the marine environment.

More than 20% of Victoria's native plant species and half of its bird species occur in the National Park. A number of plant species and communities have associations with other parts of Australia or are threatened or at the limits of their distribution.

Threatened fauna include the New Holland Mouse, Long-nosed Potoroo, Ground Parrot, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Swamp Skink, Leatherback Turtle, and the damselfly *Hemiphlebia mirabilis*.

The rivers and streams are mostly unmodified, with no introduced fish.

The intertidal mudflats of Corner Inlet belong to the Gippsland Plains and Strzelecki Park Landscape, and are therefore not included in this Conservation Action Plan.

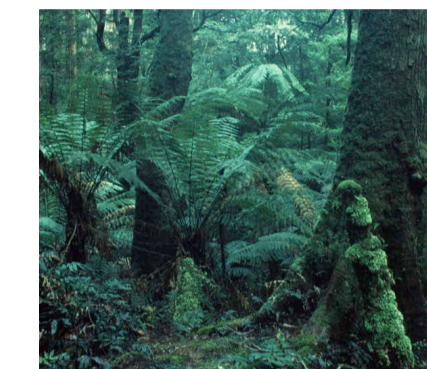Wilsons Promontory
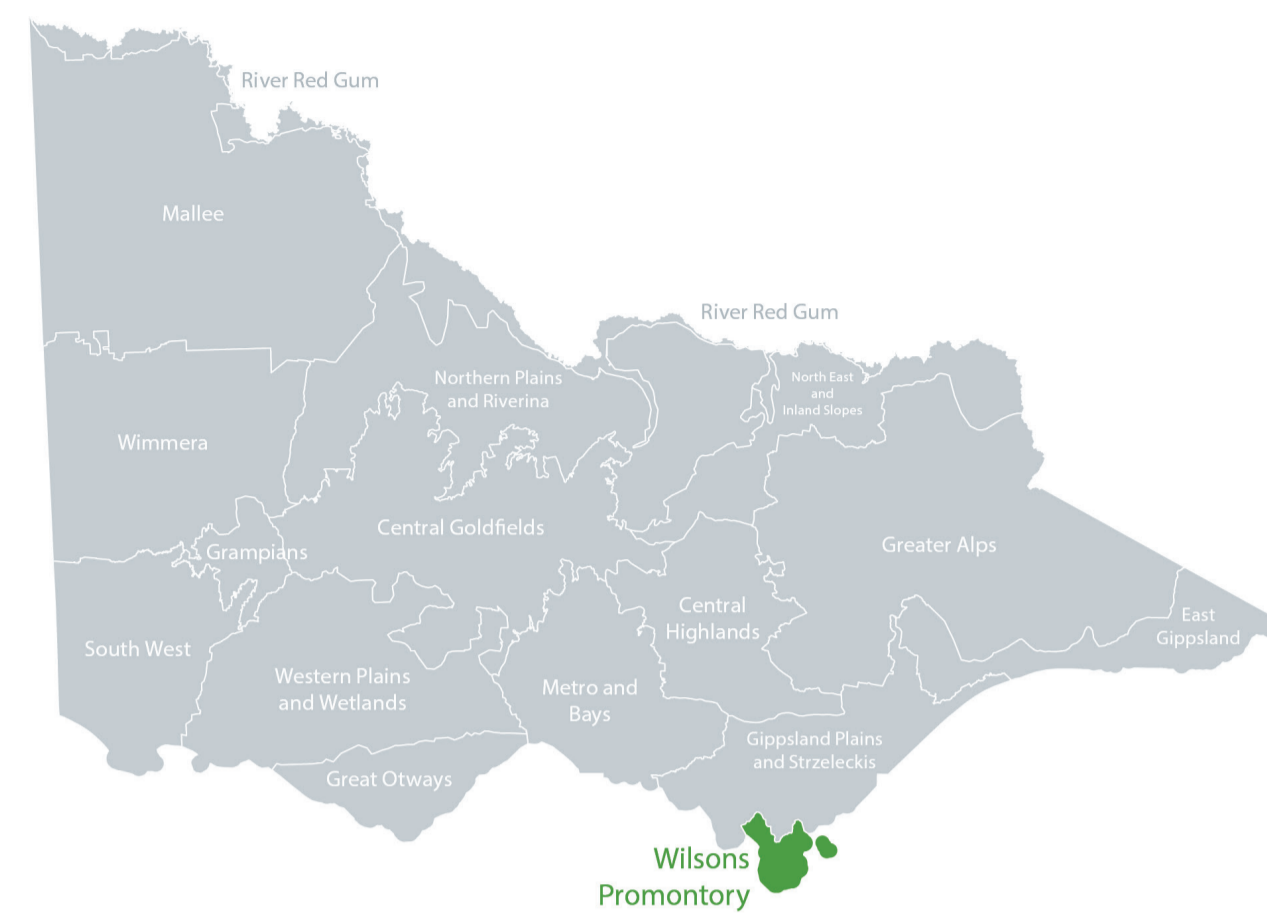
Heathland
Coastal (including islands)
Mixed Dry Forest and Woodland
Riparian and Wetland
Coastal Grassy Woodland
Wet Forest and Rainforest
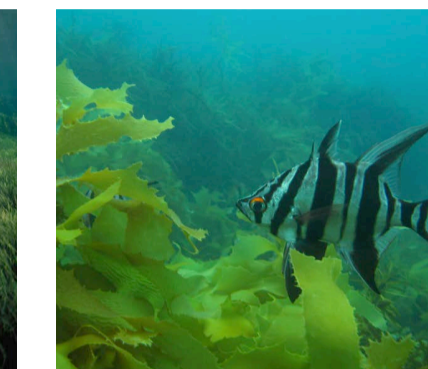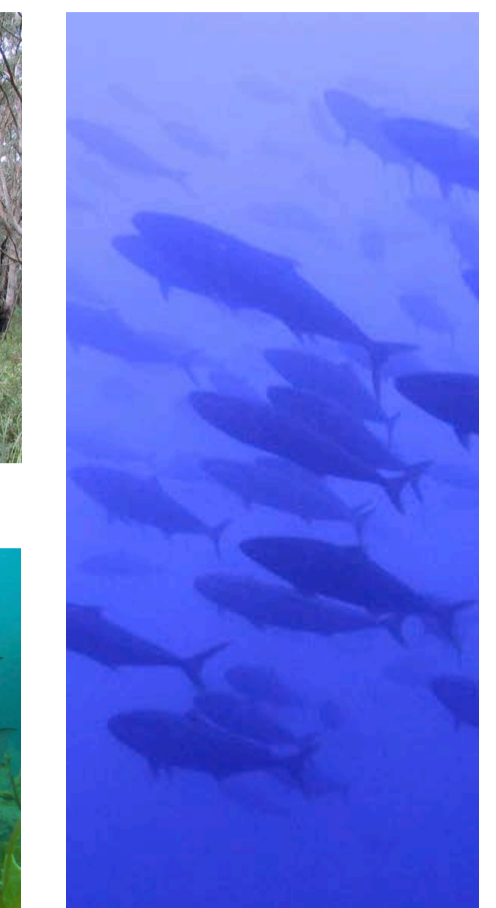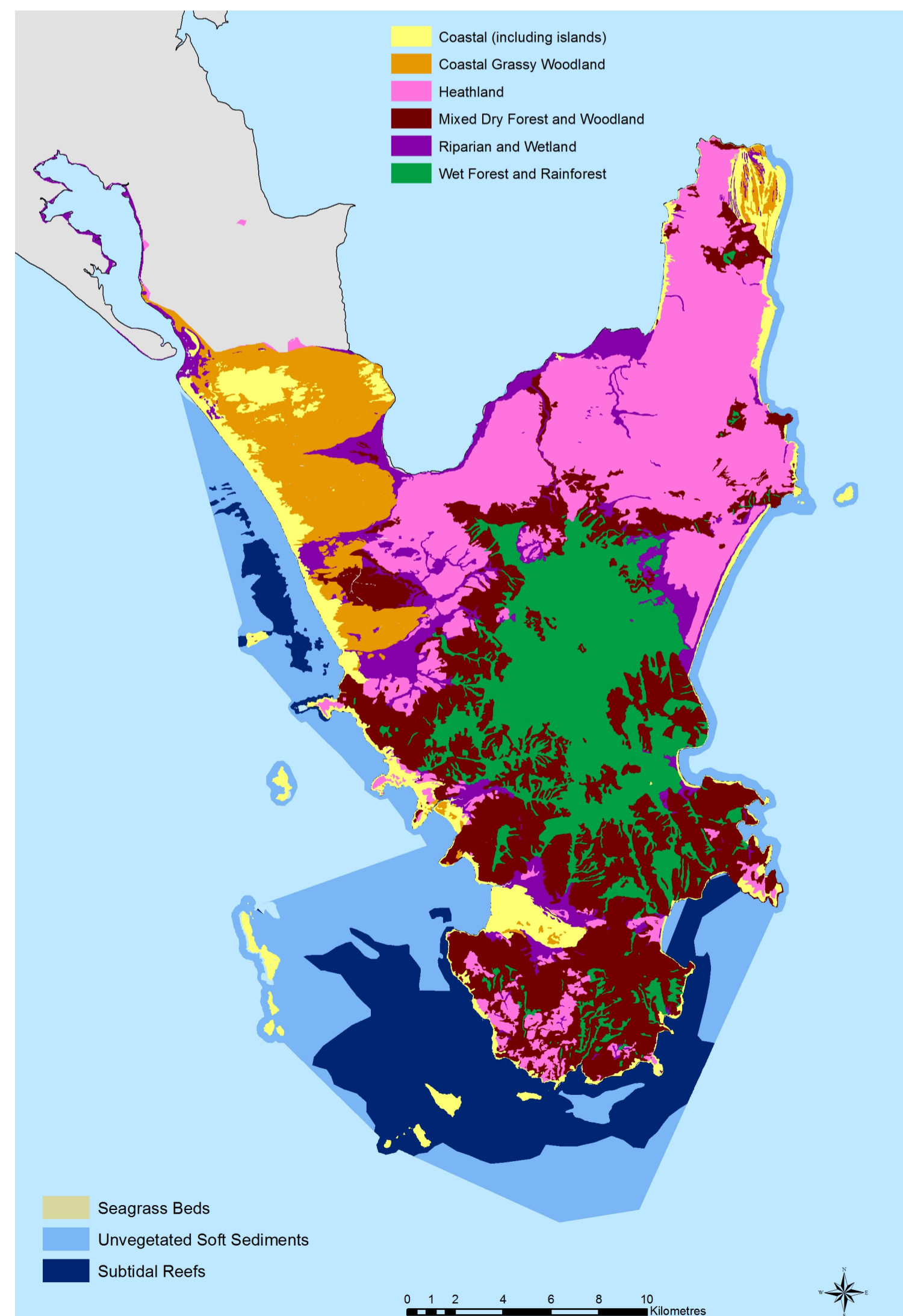Unvegetated Soft Sediments
Seagrass Beds
Subtidal Reefs
Water Column

Map legend:
- Coastal (including islands)
- Coastal Grassy Woodland
- Heathland
- Mixed Dry Forest and Woodland
- Riparian and Wetland
- Wet Forest and Rainforest
- Seagrass Beds
- Unvegetated Soft Sediments
- Subtidal Reefs

0 1 2 4 6 8 10 Kilometres

Conservation Logic Chart

The Conservation Logic Chart shown below describes the relationship between the on-ground actions, strategies, threat objectives and the outcomes for each of the conservation assets, and the vision for the Park Landscape.

Conservation vision

Increase the resilience of natural assets in the Wilsons Promontory Park Landscape and maintain ecosystem services in the face of climate change and other stressors.

Conservation Outcomes — By 2031

Heathland
Maintain the health of Heathland and improve the distribution of growth-stages to maintain floristic diversity and richness and provide high-quality habitat for ground-dwelling mammals and heathland birds.
Current Condition: Good but declining

Coastal (including islands)
Maintain suitable conditions for fur seal haul-outs and breeding, and maintain the extent and heterogeneity of coastal vegetation to provide suitable nesting habitat for colonial nesting seabirds, shorebirds and ground-dwelling mammals.
Current Condition: Very good but declining

Mixed Dry Forest and Woodland
Improve the growth-stage heterogeneity of canopy species and improve floristic diversity and composition, improve (and where needed restore) the open understorey of Granitic Hills Woodland EVC, and provide high-quality habitat for mammals and woodland birds.
Current Condition: Good but declining

Riparian and Wetland
Improve water quality and habitat quality to support diverse riparian and wetland flora and fauna.
Current Condition: Fair but improving

Coastal Grassy Woodland
Increase the area of open woodland and the age-class diversity of focal canopy species, and develop a diverse ground layer vegetation (including connected native grasses) that provides a varied habitat for ground-dwelling mammals.
Current Condition: Poor and declining

Wet Forest and Rainforest
Maintain Rainforest extent and increase the extent of older growth-stages of Wet Forest and Rainforest canopy species, increase the capacity to provide critical habitat features (such as hollows), and maintain the diversity of flora and fauna that depend on rainforest and wet forest.
Current Condition: Good and stable

Unvegetated Soft Sediments
Maintain (1) natural wrack deposition patterns and characteristic invertebrate communities in intertidal soft sediments to support foraging shorebirds, and (2) characteristic demersal fish and invertebrate communities associated with subtidal soft sediments.
Current Condition: Very good and stable

Seagrass Beds
Maintain the extent, condition and connectivity of intertidal and subtidal seagrass communities in order to support an abundant and diverse assemblage of invertebrate and fish communities, including listed pipefish species, in the seagrass beds of the Marine National Park.
Current Condition: Very good and stable

Subtidal Reefs
Maintain the highly productive dense stands of habitat-forming macroalgae that provide cover and food for the diverse assemblage of fish and macroinvertebrates inhabiting subtidal reefs.
Current Condition: Very good and stable

Water Column
Maintain a well-connected and highly productive water column ecosystem in the Marine National Park that supports planktonic health and nutrient cycles, to provide the trophic base for higher-order species including the Great White Shark, fur seals, seabirds, whales and dolphins.
Current Condition: Very good and stable

Threat Objectives — By 2021

Total grazing and browsing pressure
Ensure that total grazing pressure in Coastal Grassy Woodland, Mixed Dry Forest and Woodland, Wet Forest and Rainforest, and Riparian and Wetland is managed to improve key ecological attributes.

Inappropriate fire regimes
Increase the area and extent of Heathland, Coastal Grassy Woodland, Mixed Dry Forest and Woodland, Wet Forest and Rainforest, and Riparian and Wetland assets, which are managed in accordance with tolerable fire intervals, and increase the diversity of appropriate growth stages.

Weed invasion
Eradicate any new and emerging weeds wherever they occur and control existing weeds at sites where key ecological attributes are at risk.

Predation by foxes and cats
Reduce the impact of predation sufficiently to ensure that predation-sensitive species occupy the majority of their potential habitat.

Marine invasive and overabundant species
Ensure that the impact of marine invasive or overabundant species on the health of marine assets is managed to promote the improvement of key ecological attributes.

Action — Conservation Strategies

Coastal Grassy Woodland restoration
— involving burning and grazer control to restore canopy and understorey species so that the full range of native species in this Coastal Grassy Woodland can flourish.

Landscape-scale control of deer
— to enable the regeneration of key canopy species and increase the diversity and viability of all terrestrial assets, by targeting deer control by volunteers and specialists at key sites across the landscape.

Broad-scale fox control and targeted cat control
— to increase the density, diversity and distribution of predation-sensitive native terrestrial fauna throughout the Wilsons Promontory Park Landscape.

Integrated weed program
— to improve the health of specific conservation assets, particularly Coastal (including islands), through control of high-risk weeds and local eradication where possible.

Marine and estuarine management
— to reduce the likelihood of new populations of marine pests establishing in the Park Landscape, ensure that the eradication of populations of new pests is rapid and targeted, and minimise disturbance to fish, invertebrates and other marine-dependent species.

Landscape-scale ecological fire program
— to improve the structural diversity and distribution of vegetation growth stages in various habitats, ensuring that the condition of all conservation assets improves.

Partnerships to address key knowledge gaps
— to enable threats and opportunities to be more readily identified, which will result in an increase in the effectiveness and efficiency of conservation asset management.

Performance measures

To quantify the effectiveness of implementing the conservation strategies, interim performance measures have been set for the Wilsons Promontory Conservation Action Plan. These will enable the assessment of the effects of management actions in relation to the desired state of conservation assets and their key ecological attributes.

Activity (short-term) measures
Activity measures represent the quantity and quality of management actions that have been delivered.

Threat (medium-term) measures
Threat measures represent the impacts of management action on threats, measuring the extent of threat reduction that has been achieved.

Outcome (long-term) measures
Outcome measures represent the results of management on the state of the conservation assets, which generally only respond over a longer term.