

Gippsland Lakes fauna on your phone

Learn more about the wildlife of the region as you explore the Gippsland Lakes with an excellent resource recently released by Museum Victoria and Parks Victoria.

The Wildlife Field Guide to the Gippsland Lakes is a free smartphone and tablet app that presents beautiful images, sound recordings and helpful hints and information on more than 250 wildlife species that occur across the Gippsland Lakes catchment.

"This wonderful app represents an integrated cooperative approach to documenting the amazing fauna of one of Victoria's most beautiful regions," Museum Victoria's head of sciences, Dermot Henry, said.

"The support of the State Government and the close working relationships between Museum Victoria, Parks Victoria and the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority has been critical to the success of the project.

"Users of the app will be intrigued by some of the amazing critters that live in the beautiful Gippsland Lakes catchment.

"I am sure the images will inspire visitors to explore the region further to seek out some of these spectacular animals."

Highlights include the calls of 16 frog species, including the eerie call of the giant burrowing frog.

Information on more than 80 bird species, including the beautiful rainbow bee-eater; 25 fish species from tiny gobies to the longfin eel that gets over 1.5m long; 22 reptile species including the eastern water dragon that swims in the rivers and the eastern small-eyed snake that hunts skinks among the boulders, are featured.

A range of mammals from the region, including the only microbat that we can hear, the white-striped freetail bat, and Australia's largest gliding possum, the greater glider at more than a metre long; insects including the

beautiful imperial Jezebel butterfly, big camouflaged stick insects and the walk-on-water water striders; the giant Kershaw's panda snail or the golden stag beetle of the cool rainforests is on the app.

Information about the strange horseshoe-shaped jelly that often washes ashore – it is the egg mass of the secretive moon snail – is included.

"The app will be a great tool for experienced wildlife enthusiasts and the novice wanting to learn more about the amazing wildlife that call Gippsland Lakes their home," Parks Victoria area chief ranger, Jeremy Tscharke, said.

The new digital app is an output of the 'Gippsland Lakes Bioscan', a series of wildlife surveys and public engagement events run by Museum Victoria, Parks Victoria and partners in 2014 and 2015.

"Ultimately, I hope the wildlife of the Lakes Catchment illustrates the importance of maintaining and protecting these fragile environments as havens for safe-guarding biodiversity," Mr Henry said.

"The Gippsland Lakes are precious and we're excited about this app and helping to highlight some of the many amazing and important species that call the Gippsland Lakes home," joint chair of the Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee, Angus Hume, said.

The guide's content is downloaded onto your mobile device so the app doesn't need phone reception to function. This means you can go bush with it and discover all about the wildlife around you, without having to worry about needing full reception.

The field guide app is now available in iOS format for iPhones and iPads and will be available in Android format later this year.

To download the app, and other free apps on Victoria's rich wildlife, see the Museum Victoria website. For more information on the nature of the region, see the Love Our Lakes website.



Find valuable information, stunning images like those above and more on the new Wildlife Field Guide to the Gippsland Lakes app. (PS)

