



A biodiversity snapshot of the Gippsland region

Gippsland is one of the most economically and environmentally diverse and vibrant regions in Victoria; a region of great natural beauty and immense biodiversity values.

East Gippsland contains coastal plains, river valleys, foothills, tablelands and mountains up to 1400 metres elevation in the far-east of Victoria.

The area is characterised by extensive, essentially continuous areas of forest and other native vegetation, with small isolated 'islands' of settlement in the river valleys, coastal plains and tablelands. This continuity of native vegetation makes East Gippsland one of the great reservoirs of biodiversity in Australia; there are no other regions on mainland Australia where native vegetation is continuous from alpine environments to the coast.

The great diversity of ecosystems means that the region is rich in both plants and animals. While there are no endemic vertebrates, several species, including the Eastern Bristlebird, Diamond Python and Stuttering Frog are not found elsewhere in Victoria.

The East Gippsland bioregions also support a significant proportion of the state's populations of many other animals, including the Long-footed Potoroo, Spot-tailed Quoll, Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby, Ground Parrot, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Masked Owl, Giant Burrowing Frog and Eastern She-oak Skink.

The relatively undisturbed rivers and estuaries support rich populations of native fish and invertebrates; the far-eastern streams are particularly notable for the absence of introduced trout.

The southerly aspect of the Great Dividing Range, known as the Highlands Southern Fall bioregion, is characterised by dissected uplands with moderate to steep slopes, high plateaus and alluvial flats along the main valleys.



This bioregion supports a wide variety of vascular and non-vascular plants, arboreal and terrestrial mammals, reptiles, forest-dwelling birds and birds of prey including the large forest owls. One of the faunal emblems of Victoria, Leadbeater's Possum, is found within this bioregion.

A number of species, including the Tall Astelia, Gully Grevillea, Sticky Wattle, Aniseed Boronia and Tree Geebung are found in the Highlands. The rivers and streams of the Victorian Highlands support populations of native fish, including the Mountain Galaxias and a wide variety of native aquatic invertebrates.

The spectacular Strzelecki Ranges features Cool Temperate Rainforest and Wet Forest, populated by Myrtle Beech and towering Mountain Ash trees, which originally covered much of the ranges. Large areas of the ranges were cleared during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and important stands of rainforest and old forest are conserved within the Tarra-Bulga National Park.

The remnant vegetation of the Strzelecki Ranges supports echidnas, platypus, an endemic variety of koala, two species of antechinuses, black wallabies, two species of native freshwater crayfish, gliders, possums, native rats and bats.

Further south, Wilsons Promontory is a spectacular area of rocky hills and mountains, dense heathy lowlands, sweeping white sandy beaches and prominent granite headlands surrounded by the cold waters of Bass Strait.

Almost all of the Wilsons Promontory bioregion is still in its natural state, with alteration and development confined to a few small discrete areas (less than one per cent of the bioregion). This is reflected in the large number of species found in Victoria's smallest bioregion. It is home to around 20 per cent of Victoria's vascular flora species (including about 30 per cent of its orchids), about half of its bird species and about one-third of the State's mammal species.

Further resources

For more information about Victoria's unique biodiversity, please visit www.dse.vic.gov.au/landwhitepaper



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Images: Wilsons Promontory - Image: Michael Sale, Long-nosed Potoroo - Image: Ian McCann.