

3. How is a national park different from other land?

Aim

This activity helps students understand the differences between public and private land. It also familiarises them with the amount of public land set aside for particular purposes in Victoria, and the types of public land managed by Parks Victoria.

Materials

- Resource sheet 3: Victoria’s public land.
- Pencil, protractor and workbook.

Activities

1. Read the resource sheet: Victoria's public land.
2. Refer to Table 1: Areas managed by Parks Victoria 2001 in the resource sheet. For each type of land category, calculate what percentage it forms of the park system, the total area of the Victoria and of public land in Victoria. Write these figures into the final row in the table.
3. Using the figures calculated in step 2, prepare a pie graph to show the percentages of the different land types in Victoria. Label it accurately, including a brief definition of "public land".

3. Complete the following statements: (Hint: the information is in the resource sheet.)

- A state park is different from a national park because
.....
- Wilderness is different from a national park because

(1).....and
(2)
- Six parks or types of land other than national parks that could be managed by Parks Victoria are
.....
- A state forest is different from national and state parks because

(1).....and
(2)

4. Referring to the resource sheet, write a paragraph describing the main uses of public land in the State.



New Holland Honeyeater/Silver Banksia © MT

3. Victoria's public land

Victoria's total area is 22.76 million hectares. About 43% of this (or 8.8 million hectares) is public land - that is, land which belongs to all the people, not to private individuals, families, companies, etc. Victoria's public land is managed by various government authorities.

This system can be traced back to the colonisation of Australia when all land was claimed in the name of the British King (1788). It was considered "Crown land" to be managed by the colonial government as directed by the British Government.

From that time land was regularly sold or given to farmers and other settlers. Through this process, Crown land became what is termed "alienated" and went into private ownership.

Any land not taken up for agriculture, townships, industries, etc. remained as Crown land, part of the public estate.

In Victorian cities and towns Crown land is used for parks, schools, hospitals, railways and roads. In country areas it is generally land that is too rugged, rocky, infertile or dry for farming and is used for a variety of purposes including conservation, recreation, timber production, grazing, honey production and mining.

Land that is privately owned for housing, farms, factories and other purposes makes up 61% of Victoria.

The 39% of Victoria that is public land can be divided further into areas managed by Parks Victoria and remaining public land.

Main types of public land

It is important to recognise the differences in purpose and management of various types of public land. Parks Victoria manages not only national parks but other kinds of parks and reserves as well. These are shown on Table 1: *Areas managed by Parks Victoria 2001*. Table 2: *Victoria's public land categories* gives a definition of these types plus others managed by government agencies.

What does Parks Victoria manage?

Parks Victoria manages the state's national parks but also many other state and regional environmental, recreational and tourism assets. This currently includes 36 National Parks, 3 Wilderness Parks, 31 State Parks, 22 Other Parks, over 30 Metropolitan Parks and over 2,500 Conservation Reserves. Parks Victoria also manages the recreational aspects of Port Phillip Bay and Western Port, the Lower Yarra, Lower Maribyrnong and Patterson Rivers.

National Parks (36)

National parks make up 70% of the areas of parks and reserves. Examples include: the Grampians, Murray-Sunset, Dandenong Ranges, Port Campbell and Mount Buffalo National Parks. National Parks have an average size of 76,525ha although the largest, Alpine National Park presently covers 642,200ha.

The national parks are concentrated in the Mallee (north-west Victoria), in East Gippsland and in the Alpine area. This is because these areas had large tracts of land that were unsuitable for farming and so remained public land. Due to the work (during the 1970s, 80s and 90s) of the Land Conservation Council and more recently the Environment Conservation Council, the conservation and recreation values of public lands have been recognised and protected.

State Parks (31)

Generally smaller than national parks, state parks are managed for the same purposes under the same guidelines and complement the national parks to form a state-wide system. Examples include: Angahook-Lorne, Warrandyte and Whipstick State Parks. State parks have an average size of 6,315 hectares.

State and other parks tend to be in central Victoria and other areas where most of the land was taken up for farming and where there are only small areas of public land remaining. Conservation on private land (e.g. through Land for Wildlife, Landcare and other schemes), and linking areas such as roadsides and streamsides are very important in these parts of the State.

Wilderness Parks (3)

Wilderness parks are managed for conservation and self-reliant recreation. No facilities are provided and no vehicles are allowed. Examples include: Avon, Big Desert and Wabba Wilderness Parks. There are also 19 Wilderness Zones and 20 Remote and Natural Areas within national parks.

Other Parks (22)

These include Marine and Coastal Parks and Regional Parks.

Marine and Coastal Parks have been established to protect representative examples of marine and coastal environments. Examples include: Bunurong, Corner Inlet and Wilsons Promontory, and many others are planned.

Regional parks include a variety of historic, cultural and conservation reserves. Examples include: You Yangs and Macedon Regional Parks, Tyers Park, and Nyerimilang Park.

Metropolitan Parks (30 +)

Metropolitan parks are managed for intensive recreation, and conservation where appropriate. They include Jells, Albert and Brimbank Parks as well as reservoir parks such as Maroondah and Toorourong Reservoir Parks.

Conservation Reserves (2,500+)

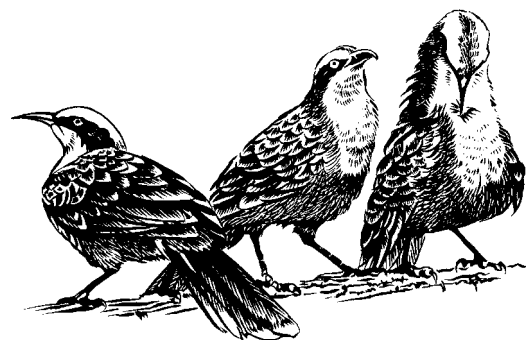
Conservation reserves range from quite large areas in the Mallee (e.g. Annuello Flora and Fauna Reserve 35,030 ha) to small bushland areas of 1 hectare or less. Generally they have few or no facilities for visitors.

Bays and Waterways

Parks Victoria manages recreational facilities such as piers, jetties and boat ramps in Port Phillip and Western Port Bays. There are 35 jetties in the two bays. Parks Victoria also manages the recreational aspects of the Yarra, Maribyrnong and Patterson Rivers.

Other Interesting Places

Parks Victoria manages a variety of historical and cultural sites including: Werribee Park, Woodlands and Coolart Homesteads, mining sites, historic gardens, bridges, coal mines, mills, school sites, court houses and some lighthouses.



Grey-Crowned Babbler © MT

Table 1: Areas managed by Parks Victoria, 2001

Land category	Number	Area (ha)	% of park system	% of State	% of public land
National park	36	2 391 850	70.8	10.5	28.1
Wilderness park	3	202 050	5.5	0.89	2.4
State park	31	311 220	5.0	1.4	3.7
Other park	22	112 390	3.0	0.49	12.7
Conservation Reserve (includes Regional Parks, Nature Conservation Reserves, Natural Features Reserves and Historic Reserves)	2,500 +	562 939	15.4	3.12	8.3
Metropolitan Park	30 +	8 295	0.2	0.04	0.9
Total		3 644 903			

Sources: Annual Report, Land Conservation Council 1998. Updated via Environment Council 2001, personal communication. *State of the Parks 2000*, Parks Victoria.

VICTORIAN TOTALS

Parks Victoria	3 760 000 million hectares
State Forest	3 470 800 million hectares (per LCC)
Crown Land and Assets	1 569 200 million hectares (by subtraction from total)
TOTAL area of public land in State:	8.8 million hectares
TOTAL area of Victoria:	22.76 million hectares

Table 2: Victoria's public land categories

Description	Objects (purpose)
<p>1. Reference area A substantially undisturbed area of land containing representations of major land systems in the State.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of natural ecosystems for use as scientific references. • Restricted use for non-manipulative scientific investigation.
<p>2. National park An extensive area of land of nationwide significance because of its outstanding natural environments and features, scenic landscapes, and diverse land types.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and conservation of native flora, fauna, and natural features and the protection of sites of archaeological and historical significance. • Supply of water and protection of catchments. • Recreation and education associated with the enjoyment and understanding of, and compatible with protection of, the nature environment. • Limited areas of development for more intensive recreation.
<p>3. State park An area of land containing natural environments and features, scenic landscapes, and one or more land types complementing those found in national parks to provide a system representing the major land types of the State.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and conservation of native flora, fauna, and natural features and the protection of sites of archaeological and historical significance. • Supply of water and protection of catchments. • Recreation and education associated with the enjoyment and understanding of, and compatible with protection of, the natural environment. • Limited areas of development for more intensive recreation.
<p>4. Wilderness A large area with landforms and native plant and animal communities relatively unaltered or unaffected by the influence of the European settlement of Australia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximisation of the extent to which they are undisturbed by the influences of the European settlement of Australia. • Maintenance and protection of natural processes. • Provision of opportunities for the public to enjoy inspiration, solitude and self-reliant (non-mechanised) recreation in undisturbed natural settings.
<p>5. Regional park An area of land containing indigenous or non-indigenous vegetation readily accessible from urban centres or major tourist routes and capable of providing opportunities for informal recreation for large numbers of people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation for large numbers of people associated with enjoyment of the natural surroundings. • Protection and conservation of native flora, fauna and natural features compatible with the above . • Limited exploitation of natural resources in specified areas and where compatible with both the above.
<p>6. Marine park An area of coastal, intertidal or subtidal land that, because of its natural environment or the nature of the waters that cover it, is of conservation or scientific significance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and conservation of native flora, fauna, natural features, and sites of archaeological or historical importance. • Diverse recreation and education associated with the enjoyment and understanding of natural environments compatible with the protection of park values. • Development of selected areas for more intensive recreation. • Controlled commercial utilization of natural resources in marine parks.

<p>7. Nature conservation reserve An area of land and/or water of particular importance because of its significant floral or fauna values or natural habitat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of species of communities of native plants and animals. • Education, scientific study, and limited informal recreation compatible with that protection.
<p>8. Natural features reserve An area of land containing important elements of the natural environment, landscape, and/or geological or geomorphological features; that are of scenic or conservation significance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and maintenance of the identified landscape and/or other values. • Recreation and education where appropriate and where compatible with the above. • Controlled low-intensity exploitation of natural resources compatible with both the above.
<p>9. Historic and cultural features reserve An area of land containing significant relics and/or artefacts of historical or cultural importance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and maintenance of identified historical relics and artefacts. • Recreation and education associated with the understanding of the history of the region, compatible with the above. • Limited exploitation of natural resources compatible with both the above.
<p>10. Education area An area of land containing a diversity of land types capable of providing for a range of educational experiences and having safe access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of opportunities for students to compare and study the nature and functioning of natural ecosystems and to conduct field analysis and manipulative experiments. • Maintain the integrity of the ecosystems so far as is compatible with the above.
<p>11. Water production An area of land in the catchment of or adjacent to a water supply storage or offtake.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of the water supply and the operation of the water supply system. • Restriction of access to protect water quality. • Conservation of the natural environment, landscape and features of cultural significance where compatible with the first object.
<p>12. State forest An extensive area of land supporting native forests and other native vegetation and containing a mosaic of land types, diverse conservation and recreation values, and a range of resources needed to supply community demands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of timber and other forest products on a sustainable yield basis. • Supply of water and protection of catchments. • Protection and conservation of native flora and fauna, landscape, and other natural values, and archaeological and historical values. • Provide opportunities for public recreation and education and other public services.

*Sources: Statewide Assessment of Public Land Use Victoria 1988. Updated via Land Conservation Council 1994, personal communication. Updated via Environment Council 2001, personal communication.