Table 5.3 Listed marine, threatened and migratory fauna species under the EPBC Act and FFG Act

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
Mammals								
Arctocephalus pusillus	Australian Fur Seal	Marine	-	May occur	-	Australian Fur Seals are endemic to southeastern Australian waters and are found from the coasts of Tasmania, New South Wales, Victoria and across to South Australia, with the centre of their distribution in Bass Strait (Goldsworthy, 2015). There are 21 known breeding sites: nine long-established colonies in Victoria and Tasmania, eight newer colonies formed in the past 10–15 years across Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, and South Australia, and three haul out sites with occasional pupping in Tasmania and South Australia. (Goldsworthy, 2015). Additionally, the species has been recorded through human observations in the Offshore study area in 2014, as documented in the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA).	Likely to occur	Likely to occur
Arctophoca forsteri	Long-nosed Fur Seal	Marine	Vulnerable	May	-	Long-nosed Fur Seals frequent coastal waters and oceans. Their preferred habitat especially for breeding is rocky islands, which include boulder or pebble beaches and gradually sloping rocky ledges. The Long-nosed Fur Seal has a relatively restricted distribution around the islands of Bass Strait,	Known to occur	Known to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						parts of Tasmania and southern Victoria. They can be seen hauling out (coming ashore) on islands off South Australia and areas of southern New South Wales such as Montague Island with the occasional animal appearing as far north as the mid north coast of New South Wales. The species has been recorded in VBA in 2014 and 2018 within the Offshore study area. Additionally, six opportunistic sightings totalling 10 individuals were observed during fieldwork in July 2025.		
Balaenoptera acutorostrata	Dwarf Minke Whale	Cetacean	-	May	-	The Dwarf Minke Whale is found year-round in tropical and warm temperate waters of the Southern Hemisphere and occupy primarily coastal habitats (DCCEEW, 2025a). They can be found in marine waters from polar to tropical regions and have been seen hundreds of kilometres into heavy pack ice (DCCEEW, 2010). They have been recorded around the coastline of eastern Australia, from Queensland to South Australia (Arnold, Marsh, & Heinsohn, 1987). Satellite tracked whales have been recorded travelling south from the Great Barrier Reef	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						past Tasmania (Curnock, et al., 2019). There is limited information available on the occurrence of the species occurrences within the area and no occurrences were mapped within VBA and ALA searches.		
Balaenoptera borealis	Sei Whale	Vulnerable Migratory Cetacean	-	Likely	-	Sei Whales breed in tropical and subtropical waters. The species has been sighted feeding near the Bonney Upwelling between December and April. Additional sightings include areas off Bass Strait, south of Hobart, and near the Tasman Peninsula (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b). Sei Whales are also found in waters off Australia's Antarctic Territory where the Australian Antarctic waters are important feeding grounds for Sei Whales, as are temperate, cool waters. However, the species do not occupy the polar waters as far as the Blue, Fin, Humpback and Minke whales (DCCEEW, 2025a).	Likely to occur	Likely to occur
Balaenoptera musculus and *Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda*	Antarctic Blue Whale and Pygmy Blue Whale	Endangered Migratory Cetacean	Endangered	Likely	-	Blue Whale habitat is variable between the two subspecies found in Australian waters. The Antarctic Blue Whale tends to remain at higher latitudes and migrate to lower latitudes for feeding, breeding and calving during the Australian summer, whilst some remain within the Antarctic waters year-round.	Antarctic Blue Whale: Likely to occur Pygmy Blue Whale: Known to occur	Antarctic Blue Whale: Likely to occur Pygmy Blue Whale: Known to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						The Pygmy Blue Whale habitat is more diverse, expanding throughout the Indian Ocean, with individuals moving between Australia and the warmer waters of Indonesia Key areas of aggregation include the Perth Canyon off Western Australia, the Bonney Upwelling and adjacent waters off South Australian and Victoria. The Bonney Upwelling is a known feeding area for the Pygmy Blue Whale from November to May. Outside of the recognised feeding areas, possible foraging areas for the Pygmy Blue Whale includes the Bass Strait of Victoria (Department of the Environment, 2015).		
Balaenoptera physalus	Fin Whale	Vulnerable Migratory Cetacean	-	Likely	-	Fin Whales are common in temperate waters, the Arctic Ocean and Southern Ocean. The Australian Antarctic waters are important feeding grounds for Fin Whales. They feed mainly on Antarctic krill (*Euphausia superba*) by gulp feeding at the surface, with sightings in the Bonney Upwelling region of southwest Victorian and southeast South Australia, indicating this area is a potential important feeding ground. The study of (Meghan G Aulich, 2019) analysing Fin Whales migration routes across Australian waters using passive acoustic	Likely to occur	Likely to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						monitoring found that the on Australia's east coast, the sporadic calling times and the small number of Fin Whale calls recorded in Portland, Victoria indicate an inconsistent and irregular presence of Fin Whales in this region of the southern Australian continental shelf. This suggests that Portland is not frequented by Fin Whales and may not be part of a defined migratory route for the species.		
Caperea marginata	Pygmy Right Whale	Migratory Cetacean	-	May	-	Pygmy Right Whales have been recorded between 32° S and 47° S, with their northern distribution may be limited on the west and east coasts of Australia due to the warm, south flowing Leeuwin and East Australian currents (DCCEEW, 2025a). Few or no records are available for NSW, eastern Victoria, and the northern part of the Great Australian Bight. Areas of coastal upwelling events appear to be an important component regulating Pygmy Right Whale distribution and areas with high zooplankton abundance, particularly copepods and small euphausiids which constitute their main prey. Large aggregations of dozens of Pygmy Right Whales have been sighted near Port Phillips mainly in the west of the State near Portland. (Fitzgerald E. P., 2011)	May to occur	May to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
Delphinus delphis	Common Dolphin	Cetacean	-	May	-	Common Dolphins are found in offshore water. They are usually found in areas where surface water temperatures are between 10°C and 20°C, and in habitats also inhabited by small epipelagic fishes such as anchovies and sardines. They have been recorded in waters off all Australian states and territories, however, appear to occur in two main locations with one cluster in the southern south-eastern Indian Ocean and another in the Tasman Sea (DCCEEW, 2025a). Several ALA records of this species within the Offshore study area indicate the likely presence of the species in the area.	Likely to occur	Likely to occur
Eubalaena australis	Southern Right Whale	Endangered Migratory (as *Balaena glacialis australis*) Cetacean	Endangered	Known	Recorded	The species is seasonally present along the Australian coast between late April and early November. There are no major calving areas located in Victoria however, smaller numbers of calving females are regularly seen in Victoria at Warrnambool (DCCEEW, 2025a). The Offshore study area intersects the Southern Right Whale migration and calving BIA. Fourteen VBA records were identified within the Offshore study area as recently as 2021.	Known to occur	Known to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						Based on sightings information, most feeding areas are thought to be in deeper offshore waters ranging from sub-Antarctic areas to locations south of 60° S (DCCEEW, 2025a).		
Grampus griseus	Risso's Dolphin	Cetacean	-	May	-	The species prefer water greater than 1000 m deep and warm temperate to tropical conditions. They are primarily found in pelagic oceanic waters and frequently move over the continental shelf (DCCEEW, 2025a). The species may occur near Port Phillip and has been recorded from Victoria (Fitzgerald E. J., 2011).	May occur	May occur
Lagenorhynchus obscurus	Dusky Dolphin	Migratory Cetacean	-	May	-	Dusky Dolphins occur mostly in temperate and sub-Antarctic waters. They are considered to primarily inhabit inshore waters however can be found in pelagic waters (DCCEEW, 2025a). They occur across southern Australia from Western Australia to Tasmania. No calving areas have been identified in Australian waters.	May occur	May occur
Megaptera novaeangliae	Humpback Whale	Migratory Cetacean	-	Known	Recorded	Both the east coast and west coast Australian populations make their annual migrations between breeding areas in tropical waters along the east and west coast of Australia (15° S to 20° S) and feeding areas in the Antarctic (south of 56° S). The migratory habitat for the Humpback Whale	Known to occur	Known to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						around mainland Australia is primarily coastal waters less than 200 m in depth and generally within 20 km of the coast. While feeding mainly occurs in Antarctica, Humpbacks have been observed feeding opportunistically along Australia's coast, including off Eden (NSW), Tasmania's east coast, and near Hobart. In Victoria, humpbacks have been reported in all months except February (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b). Two species records in VBA were identified in 2014 and 2020. Several ALA records within the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA further confirm the presence of the species in both areas.		
Mirounga leonina	Southern Elephant Seal	Vulnerable Marine	-	-	Recorded	There are two main populations found in Australian waters and the principal breeding colonies for these populations are located on Heard and Macquarie Islands, concentrating on the northern beaches of Macquarie Island (DCCEEW, 2025a). The species is a visitor to mainland Australia, in particular to Tasmania. To breed and moult the Southern Elephant Seal prefers sand or cobble stone beaches where it can easily come ashore. One record in VBA and ALA was identified in 1992 off the coastline near Lake Reeve.	Likely to occur	Likely to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
Orcinus orca	Killer Whale	Migratory Cetacean	-	Likely	-	Killer Whales are found in oceanic, pelagic, and shallow waters over the continental shelf regions in both warm and cold waters, preferring cold, deep waters (DCCEEW, 2025a). The species are recorded from all states, with concentrations around Tasmania. Sightings are also frequent in South Australia and Victoria Killer whales are most often seen along the continental slope and on the shelf, near seal colonies. Anecdotal advice from a local skipper of a local fishing vessel confirmed regular presence of the species in the Offshore PAA.	Known to occur	Likely to occur
Pseudorca crassidens	False Killer Whale	Cetacean	-	Likely	-	False Killer Whales prefer deep, offshore waters (and some semi-enclosed seas such as the Red Sea and the Mediterranean) and sometimes deep coastal waters. False Killer Whales show a preference for tropical (i.e. 22–32 °C) to temperate (i.e. 10–20 °C) oceanic waters and sometimes deep coastal waters (DCCEEW, 2025a).	Likely to occur	May occur
Tursiops aduncus	Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin	Cetacean	-	Likely	-	In Australia, the Indian Ocean Bottlenose Dolphin is restricted to inshore areas such as bays and estuaries, nearshore waters, open coast environments, and shallow offshore waters including coastal areas around oceanic islands (DCCEEW, 2025a).	Likely to occur	Likely to occur

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Tursiops australis	Burrunan Dolphin	-	Critically Endangered	-	Recorded	The Burrunan Dolphin is endemic to a small geographic region of southern and south-eastern Australia. Only two resident populations of the Burrunan Dolphin have been identified, one in Port Phillip and the other in the Gippsland Lakes. The Burrunan Dolphin occurs in semi-enclosed embayments and estuarine systems, recorded high up in freshwater rivers, however, potentially occurs in inshore coastal waters (DELWP, 2025). Recent research has identified within Port Phillip Bay, the preferred water depth range is between 5-15 m (Beddoe, Shimeta, Klaassen, & Robb, 2024). One VBA record of a beach washed Burrunan Dolphin was identified in the Gippsland Lakes area in 2003.	Likely to occur	May to occur
Tursiops truncatus	Common Bottlenose Dolphin	Cetacean	-	May	-	Common Bottlenose Dolphins in Australia tend to be in offshore waters deeper than 30 m. The Common Bottlenose Dolphin occurs along the Australian coastline in pelagic waters, often in large groups. Their bodies are larger than *Tursiops aduncus* and *Tursiops austarlis.*	Likely to occur	Likely to occur
Birds								
Actitis hypoleucos	Common Sandpiper	Migratory wetlands	Vulnerable	Known	-	Species is found in salt-water and fresh-water ecosystems. They utilise muddy margins or rocky	May occur	May occur

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		Marine				shores and are rarely found on mudflats. Generally, forages in shallow water and on bare soft mud at the edges of wetlands (DCCEEW, 2025a). The Offshore study area is situated between two suitable wetland foraging habitats in the Corner Inlet and Gippsland Lakes and there is no significant barrier to movement. The species has been recorded through human observations inland from the coastline border of the Marine Study in 2012 from the ALA. The Offshore study area and Offshore PAA does not contain preferred habitat but the species may overfly the Export Cable Area. Six species records in VBA were identified between 1901 and 2019.		

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
Apus pacificus	Fork-tailed Swift	Migratory marine Marine overfly	-	Likely	-	Almost exclusively aerial flying 1-300 m above the ground. They mostly occur over inland plains and sometimes above foothills or in coastal areas. They also occur over cliffs and beaches. The Fork-tailed Swift migrates to Siberia to breed (DCCEEW, 2025a). The species has been recorded through human observations inland from the coastline boarder of the Offshore study area in 2012 the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA). The Offshore PAA contains coastal habitat; however, the species is unlikely to use or overfly the Export Cable Area.	May occur	May occur
Ardenna carneipes	Flesh-footed Shearwater	Migratory marine Marine (as *Puffinus carneipes*)	-	Likely	-	Species mainly occurs in the subtropics over continental shelves and slopes as well as inshore waters. Pairs breed in coastal forest, shrubland or grassland (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable continental shelf and inshore waters within the Offshore study area that is within the species modelled distribution range. There are no records of the species within the Offshore study area. However, records from ALA from 2001 in connected habitat adjacent to the Offshore study area.	May occur	May occur

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Ardenna grisea	Sooty Shearwater	Vulnerable Migratory marine Marine (*as Puffinus griseus*)	Vulnerable	Likely	-	The Sooty Shearwater forages in sub-tropical and Antarctic open ocean waters. The species migrates and forages in the Atlantic and North Pacific Oceans during the non-breeding season. They may occasionally forage inshore due to rough weather (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable open ocean waters within the Offshore study area that is within the species modelled distribution range. Most recent records of the species within the Offshore study area from ALA is in 1987 (over 30 years ago).	May occur	Unlikely to occur
Arenaria interpres	Ruddy Turnstone	Vulnerable Migratory wetlands Marine	Vulnerable	Known	Recorded	They are found around the coast of the mainland and offshore islands. Only occurring occasionally inland, the species is most found on the coast. They prefer exposed rocks and reefs with shallow pools (BirdLife, 2025). Suitable coastal habitat within Offshore study area and within known modelled habitat distribution. Record of species in ALA in 1977 and 2020 within Offshore study area. ALA occurrence was approximately 29 km west of Offshore PAA along the coastal extent of the Corner Inlet Ramsar wetlands.	Known to occur	Likely to occur

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						Two records in VBA identified 1977.		
Biziura lobata	Musk Duck	-	Vulnerable	-	Recorded	The species prefers deep, still lakes and wetlands with areas of both open water and reed beds (ALA, 2025). The Offshore study area is situated between two suitable wetland habitats in the Corner Inlet and Gippsland Lakes The species has been recorded in the Offshore study area in 2002 (VBA) and although there is no suitable wetland habitat within the Offshore PAA, the species may overfly the export cable route area. Two records in VBA identified in 1978 and 2002.	Likely to occur	May occur
Botaurus poiciloptilus	Australasian Bittern	Endangered	Critically Endangered	Likely	-	Australasian Bitterns favor permanent freshwater wetlands. Particularly those with tall and dense vegetation such as bullrushes. a. In Australia, the species occurs from south–east Queensland to south–east South Australia, Tasmania and in the south–west of Western Australia (DCCEEW, 2025a). There is no suitable freshwater habitat within the Offshore PAA	Unlikely to occur	Unlikely to occur
Bubulcus ibis	Cattle Egret	Marine overfly	-	May	-	Species is migratory making long movements to find food resources in connection with seasonal rainfall. The inhabits dry grassy	May occur	May occur

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						habitats, wetlands and other freshwater bodies (BirdLife, 2025) Recorded within nearshore habitat of the Offshore study area in 1992 (ALA). There is no suitable freshwater or dry grassy habitat within the Offshore PAA.		
Calidris acuminata	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Vulnerable Migratory wetlands Marine	Vulnerable	Known	Recorded	The Sharp-tailed sandpiper prefers muddy edges of shallow brackish or freshwater wetlands with inundated sedges, saltmarshes, sedges and other low vegetation. This includes swamps, lakes, lagoons and pools near the coast. They use intertidal mudflats in sheltered bays lined with mangroves. They sometimes occur on rocky shores and rarely on exposed reefs (DCCEEW, 2025a) Species is recorded within the Offshore study area and adjacent coastal wetland habitat between 1972 and 1981. No species are recorded within the Offshore PAA. The Offshore PAA does not contain suitable brackish or freshwater habitat or sheltered intertidal mudflats. However, the species may overfly the Export Cable Area. Nine records in VBA identified between 1972 and 1981 (over 30 years ago).	Likely to occur	Likely to occur
Calidris alba	Sanderling	Migratory wetlands	-	Known	-	In Australia the species is virtually always found on the coast in open	May occur	May occur

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		Marine				sandy beaches exposed to open sea-swells. They occur on beaches that may contain wave-washed rocky outcrops. They roost behind coastal dunes, rocky reefs and ledges, clumps of washed-up kelp and bare sand (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat present within the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA. No species recorded within the Offshore study area, with majority of records for this species are within the Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park to the west.		
Calidris canutus	Red Knot	Vulnerable Migratory wetlands Overly marine	Vulnerable	Known	Recorded	The Red Knot mainly inhabits intertidal mudflats, sandy beaches and sandflats on sheltered coasts. Sometimes they are found on sandy ocean beaches or shallow pools on rock platforms or coral reefs (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat present within the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA. Species recorded within the Offshore study area are from between 1972 and 1981 (ALA) (over 30 years ago). No significant barrier between record and Offshore PAA. Majority of the ALA records outside of the Offshore study area are within the Corner Inlet Ramsar wetlands. Five records in VBA identified between 1972 and 1981.	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper	Critically Endangered Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	Critically Endangered	Known	Recorded	Curlew Sandpipers mainly occur on intertidal mudflats in sheltered coastal areas such as bays, estuaries, inlets and lagoons. They occur in both fresh and brackish waters. They forage on mudflats and the nearby shallow water and at high tide they will forage among sparse emergent vegetation such as saltmarsh (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat adjacent to the Offshore study area is present within wetlands, however not within the sandy shoreline of the Offshore PAA. Recorded as recent as 1981 (ALA) within the Offshore study area (over 30 years ago). No significant barrier between record and Offshore PAA. Nine records in VBA identified between 1972 and 1981.	May occur	May occur
Calidris melanotos	Pectoral Sandpiper	Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	-	Known	-	Species prefers shallow fresh to saline wetlands. It is found in lagoons, estuaries, bays, swamps, inundated grasslands, saltmarshes and creeks. Usually found in coastal or near coastal habitat (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat adjacent to the Offshore study area is present within wetlands, however not within the sandy shoreline of the Offshore PAA. No records of the species (ALA) within the Offshore study area.	May occur	May occur

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Calidris pugnax	Ruff	Migratory wetlands (as *Philomachus pugnax*) Marine overfly	-	Known	-	In Australia the Ruff is found on generally fresh, brackish of saline wetlands with exposed mudflats at the edges. It is found in terrestrial wetlands including lakes, swamps, pools, lagoons, tidal rivers, swampy fields and floodlands. They are occasionally seen on sheltered coasts, in harbours, estuaries, seashores and are known to visit sewage farms and saltworks. The Ruff is a rare but regular visitor to Australia, being recorded in all States and Territories (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat within the Offshore study area is present within coastal wetlands, however, not within the unprotected/unsheltered sandy shoreline of the Offshore PAA. No records of the species (ALA) within the Offshore study area.	May occur	May occur
Calidris ruficollis	Red-necked Stint	Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	-	Known	-	It is distributed along most of the Australian coastline with large densities on the Victorian and Tasmanian coasts. in Australasia, the Red-necked Stint is mostly found in coastal areas, including in sheltered inlets, bays, lagoons and estuaries with intertidal mudflats, often near spits, islets and banks and, sometimes, on protected sandy or coralline shores. Occasionally they have been recorded on exposed or ocean beaches, and sometimes	Known to occur	Likely to occur

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						on stony or rocky shores, reefs or shoals (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat within the Offshore study area is present within coastal wetlands, however, not within the unprotected/unsheltered sandy shoreline of the Offshore PAA. Multiple records of the species within the Offshore PAA, some as recent as 2022 (ALA).		
Calidris tenuirostris	Great Knot	Vulnerable Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	Vulnerable	Known	Recorded	Found within sheltered coastal habitats that contain large intertidal mudflats or sandflats including inlets bays and estuaries. Often recorded on sandy beaches with mudflats nearby. The species is much less common in south-west Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat within the Offshore study area is present within coastal wetlands. Three records of the species within the Offshore study area in ALA from as recent as 1977 (over 30 years ago). No significant barrier between record and Offshore PAA. Two records in VBA identified between 1972 and 1977.	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
Charadrius bicinctus	Double-banded Plover	Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	-	Known	-	The Double-banded Plover is found on littoral, estuarine and fresh or saline terrestrial wetlands and also saltmarsh, grasslands and pasture. It occurs on muddy, sandy, shingled or sometimes rocky beaches, bays and inlets, harbours and margins of fresh or saline terrestrial wetlands such as lakes, lagoons and swamps, shallow estuaries and rivers. The species is sometimes associated with coastal lagoons, inland saltlakes and saltworks. The greatest numbers of Double-banded Plover are found in Tasmania and Victoria (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat adjacent to the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA through terrestrial wetlands and sandy beaches. Records of the species within the Offshore study area in ALA as early as 2017. No significant barrier between record and Offshore PAA.	Likely to occur	Likely to occur
Charadrius leschenaultii	Greater Sand Plover	Vulnerable Migratory wetlands Marine	Vulnerable	Likely	-	In the non-breeding grounds in Australasia the Greater Sand Plover is almost entirely coastal and inhabits estuarine habitats. They occur on sheltered sandy, muddy or shell beaches with intertidal sandbanks and mudflats as well as sandy estuarine lagoons. They can also be found in inshore reefs, rock platforms, small rocky islands and coral	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						reefs. They feed in intertidal mudflats and usually roost on beaches or occasionally rocky points (DCCEEW, 2025a) Potentially suitable habitat within Offshore study area (western extent of Gippsland Lakes and eastern extent of Corner Inlet Ramsar wetlands). There are no records within ALA or VBA within the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA.		
Charadrius mongolus	Lesser Sand Plover	Endangered Migratory wetland Marine	Endangered	Known	Recorded	The species does not breed in Australia but roosts in Australia near foraging areas, on beaches and banks. Their feeding habitat includes freshly exposed areas of intertidal sandflats and mudflats in estuaries or beaches. Their habitat in Australia is usually coastal and estuarine environments as the species inhabits large intertidal sandflats and mudflats (DCCEEW, 2025a). Habitat within the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA is not largely suitable owing to high energy environment of beaches. Potentially suitable habitat along the coastal border of the Offshore study area (eastern extent of Corner Inlet Ramsar wetlands). There is one record of the species on ALA and VBA in 1977 (over 30 years ago) within the Offshore study area.	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
Charadrius ruficapillus	Red-capped Plover	Marine overfly	-	Known	-	The Red-capped Plover is the most common and widespread of Australia's beach-nesting shorebirds. They occur along virtually the entire Australian coastline, but they also occur in great numbers inland, especially around saltlakes. They usually inhabit wide, bare sandflats or mudflats at the margins of saline, brackish or freshwater wetlands (BirdLife, 2025). Suitable habitat adjacent to the Offshore study area through wetlands. Multiple species records within the Offshore study area, some as recent as 2020 (ALA). No significant barrier between record and Offshore PAA.	Known to occur	Likely to occur
Charadrius veredus	Oriental Plover	Migratory wetlands Marine	-	Known	-	The species usually inhabit flat, open, semi-arid or arid grasslands, where the grass is short and sparse, and interspersed with hard, bare ground. Some remain in estuarine and littoral environments, and a few are occasionally recorded around terrestrial wetlands or flooded paddocks. Oriental Plovers sometimes roost on soft wet mud or in shallow water of beaches and tidal mudflats. The species is seldom recorded in southern Australia (DCCEEW, 2025a).	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						Suitable habitat within the Offshore study area through littoral environments. Only one record of the species from over 30 years ago are present within the Offshore study area (ALA). No significant barrier between record and Offshore PAA.		
Diomedea antipodensis	Antipodean Albatross	Vulnerable Migratory marine Marine	-	Likely	-	The Antipodean Albatross is pelagic and aerial and endemic to New Zealand, however forages widely in open water in the south-west Pacific Ocean, Southern Ocean and the Tasman Sea, notably off the coast of NSW (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable open water habitat and species modelled distribution is present within the Offshore study area. No records of the species within the Offshore study area.	May occur	May occur
Diomedea antipodensis gibsoni	Gibson's Albatross	Vulnerable Marine (as *Diomedea gibsoni*)	-	Likely	-	This species is pelagic and aerial and is only known to breed on the Auckland, Adams and Disappointment Islands. Breeds in grass tussocks on isolated islands. Gibson's Albatross has been recorded foraging between Coffs Harbour, NSW, and Wilson's Promontory, Victoria (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable pelagic habitat and species modelled distribution is present within the Offshore study area.	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						No records of the species within the Offshore study area.		
Diomedea epomophora	Southern Royal Albatross	Vulnerable Migratory marine Marine	Critically Endangered	Likely	Recorded	This species range spans along the southern oceans and concentrates on the west and east coast of Southern America as well as the waters surrounding New Zealand. Majority of the population nest on Campbell Island, Adams Island and the Auckland Islands (ALA, 2025). Species modelled distribution is present within the Offshore study area. One records of the species from over 30 years ago within the Offshore study area (ALA), approximately 3 km east of the Marine Proposed Action Area. One species records in VBA from 1974 (more than 30 years ago).	May occur	May occur
Diomedea exulans	Wandering Albatross	Vulnerable Migratory marine Marine	Critically Endangered	Likely	-	This species spends most of its time in flight and soars over the southern oceans. They breed on several Antarctic Islands in loose colonies among grass tussocks using a large mud nest. In Australia, The Wandering Albatross breeds on Macquarie Island and feeds in Australian portions of the Southern Ocean (DCCEEW, 2025a) Foraging habitat offshore of the Offshore study area. Multiple records outside of the Offshore study area, some as recent as 2022 (ALA) with no significant	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						barrier between record and Offshore PAA.		
Diomedea sanfordi	Northern Royal Albatross	Endangered Migratory marine Marine	-	Likely	-	This species breeds in New Zealand waters and the main population nests off the Chatham Islands. It predominantly visits southern waters in the winter and early spring period. The species forages inshore and offshore over the continental shelf to the shelf edge, feeding on cephalopods, crustacea and fish (DCCEEW, 2025a) Foraging habitat within continental shelf and species modelled habitat distribution is present within the Offshore study area. Multiple records outside of the Offshore study area, some as recent as 2023 (ALA) with no significant barrier between record and Offshore PAA.	Likely to occur	Likely to occur
Egretta garzetta	Little Egret	-	Endangered	-	Recorded	Includes the shores of lakes, rivers, canals, ponds, lagoons, marshes and flooded land, the bird preferring open locations to dense cover. On the coast it inhabits mangrove areas, swamps, mudflats, sandy beaches and reefs. Around Australia. It is more common in northern, eastern and south-eastern Australia, with small coastal populations in Western Australia (ALA, 2025). Suitable habitat present adjacent to the Offshore study area such as wetland habitat and within the	Likely to occur	Likely to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						Offshore PAA such as coastal sandy beaches. Three species recorded from 1980 and 2002 on ALA within the Offshore study area. No significant barrier between record and Offshore PAA Two species records in VBA were identified between 1980 and 2002.		
Falco hypoleucos	Grey Falcon	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Likely	-	The Grey Falcon is distributed along the Murray-Darling Basin and is generally restricted to shrubland, grassland and semi-arid regions (DCCEEW, 2025a). Largely terrestrial species where species modelled habitat distribution overlaps with Offshore study area. No species records within the Offshore study area and no suitable habitat within the Offshore PAA.	May occur	Unlikely to occur
Fregetta grallaria grallaria	White-bellied Storm-Petrel	Vulnerable	-	Likely	-	This species has a wide oceanic distribution across sub-tropical and tropical waters in the south Pacific with breeding grounds which include Lord Howe Island. In the non-breeding season, it reaches and forages over near-shore waters along the continental shelf of mainland Australia. It migrates between its breeding locations in Lord Howe Island and Kermadec Islands groups and its non-breeding grounds in the Tasman Sea, Coral Sea and	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						central Pacific Ocean (DCCEEW, 2025a) Suitable foraging habitat as near-shore waters along the continental shelf of mainland Australia within the Offshore study area. No records of the species within the Offshore study area.		
Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe	Vulnerable Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	Vulnerable	Known	Recorded	The Latham's Snipe feeds on soft mudflats or in shallow water. They sheltered during the day in small wetlands such as urban water bodies and saltmarshes as well as creek edges. They breed in Japan and Russia and migrate to Australia for the winter (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat present adjacent to the Offshore study area as wetland habitat. No suitable habitat within the Offshore PAA. There is one record of the species from 1980 in VBA within the Offshore study area and two records from ALA from 1980 (more than 30 years ago) . No significant barrier between record and Offshore PAA.	May occur	May occur
Gallinago megala	Swinhoe's Snipe	Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	-	Likely	-	During the non-breeding season, the Swinhoe's Snipe occurs at the edges of wetlands such as paddy fields, swamps and freshwater streams. Species also occurs in grasslands and drier cultivated areas (DCCEEW, 2025a).	May occur	Unlikely to occur

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						Suitable habitat present adjacent to the Offshore study area within wetlands. No suitable habitat present within the Offshore PAA No records of the species within the Offshore study area.		
Gallinago stenura	Pin-tailed Snipe	Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	-	Likely	-	Occurs most often in or at the edges of shallow freshwater swamps, ponds and lakes with emergent sparse dense cover or grass/sedge and other vegetation. Is also found in drier and more open woodlands in more arid parts of the species range (DCCEEW, 2025a). Some suitable habitat present adjacent to the Offshore study area within wetlands. No suitable habitat present within the Offshore PAA No records of the species within the Offshore study area.	May occur	Unlikely to occur
Gelochelidon macrotarsa	Australian Gull-billed Tern	-	Endangered	-	-	The species is primarily found along the eastern and southern coasts of Australia, as well as nearby islands. The species prefers sandy beaches, rocky shorelines, and tidal mudflats. It breeds in colonies on lakes, marshes and coasts (ALA, 2025). Suitable habitat present adjacent to the Offshore study area within wetlands and coastlines. Primarily forages insects, amphibians and small mammals over marshes, however, no significant barrier	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						between records along the coast and wetlands and Offshore PAA.		
Haliaeetus leucogaster	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Marine	Endangered	Known	Recorded	The White-bellied Sea-Eagle is found in coastal habitats (especially those close to the sea-shore) and around terrestrial wetlands in tropical and temperate regions of mainland Australia and its offshore islands. The White-bellied Sea-Eagle generally forages over large expanses of open water; this is particularly true of birds that occur in coastal environments close to the sea-shore, where they forage over in-shore waters. Breeding records are patchily distributed, mainly along the coastline, and especially the eastern coast, extending from Queensland to Victoria, and to Tasmania (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat within terrestrial wetlands adjacent to the Offshore study area as well as suitable foraging habitat within the Offshore PAA over large expanses of open water. Species recorded within the Offshore study area as recently as 2023 (ALA). Six species records in VBA were identified between 1972 and 2018.	Known to occur	Known to occur
Halobaena caerulea	Blue Petrel	Vulnerable Marine	-	May	-	The Blue Petrel previously bred on Macquarie Island itself, but breeding is now restricted to offshore stacks near Macquarie Island. The species forages in	Unlikely to occur	Unlikely to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						Antarctic and subantarctic waters for pelagic prey (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat occurs within the Offshore study area through pelagic prey however species may prefer foraging in lower latitudes around subantarctic offshore islands and breeding colonies. No records of the species within the Offshore study area. Multiple records from over 30 years ago of the species over 100 km to the west in Melbourne.		
Himantopus himantopus	Pied Stilt, Black-winged Stilt	Marine overfly	-	Known	-	The species prefers marshes and swamps, shallow lake edges, riverbeds, flooded fields. The Corner Inlet and Gippsland Lakes sites provide suitable habitat for this species (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat present within wetlands within the Offshore study area. No suitable habitat within the Offshore PAA. Species recorded within the Offshore study area as recently as 2021 (ALA).	Known to occur	Likely to occur
Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail	Vulnerable Migratory terrestrial Marine overfly	Vulnerable	Known	Recorded	Almost exclusively aerial from heights of 1-1000 m above the ground. They are most often recorded above wooded areas such as open forest and rainforest. They are also found flying over heathland but less often over treeless areas (DCCEEW, 2025a).	Known to occur	Likely to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						Suitable habitat present within wetlands within the Offshore study area. No suitable habitat within the Offshore PAA. This species migrates to the Northern Hemisphere to breed, the southern-most extent of their distribution occurs in Tasmania, where overfly of the Offshore PAA may occur. Recorded within the Offshore study area as recently as 2021 (ALA) on the coast of Woodside (approximately 10 km west of the Offshore PAA). No significant barrier between record and Offshore PAA. Two species records in VBA were identified in 1978.		
Hydroprogne caspia	Caspian Tern	Migratory	Vulnerable	-	Recorded	The Caspian Tern is mostly found in sheltered coastal embayments (harbours, lagoons, inlets, bays, estuaries and river deltas) and those with sandy or muddy margins are preferred. The species usually forages in open wetlands, including lakes and rivers and breeds on variable types of sites including low islands, cays, spits, banks, ridges, beaches of sand or shell, terrestrial wetlands and stony or rocky islets or banks. Nests may be in the open, or among low or sparse vegetation, with only three significant regular breeding colonies are known in Victoria: Corner Inlet, Mud Island	Known to occur	Likely to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						in Port Philip Bay and Mallacoota (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat present within the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA within wetland areas and beaches. Significant breeding colonies in close proximity in the Corner Inlet. Records of the species in 2020 and 2018 (ALA) along the border of the Offshore study area and Corner Inlet Ramsar wetlands and the coastline at Woodside (10 km west of the Offshore PAA). Ten species records in VBA were identified between 1977 and 2019.		
Ixobrychus dubius	Australian Little Bittern	-	Endangered	-	-	The species is mainly found in freshwater wetlands, where they inhabit dense emergent vegetation of reeds and sedges, and inundated shrub thickets. They are also occasionally found in brackish and saline wetlands such as mangrove swamps, *Juncus*-dominated salt marsh and the wooded margins of coastal lagoons (ALA, 2025). Suitable habitat found adjacent to the Offshore study area through wetland, however, no suitable habitat present within the Offshore study area and Marine Proposed Action Area. No records from VBA or ALA within the Offshore study area or the Offshore PAA.	May occur	Unlikely to occur

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Lathamus discolor	Swift Parrot	Critically Endangered Marine overfly	Critically Endangered	Known	-	Swift Parrots are found in dry sclerophyll forests and woodlands but can also be found in suburban parks and gardens where suitable trees occur. The species breeds in Tasmania during the summer before migrating north to south-eastern Mainland Australia (BirdLife, 2025). No records of the species within the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA. Likely to overfly the Offshore PAA during migrations to/from Tasmania and south-eastern Mainland Australia.	May occur	May occur
Lewinia pectoralis	Lewin's Rail	-	Vulnerable	-	-	The species is found in subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests and prefers permanent, fresh-to-saline wetlands surrounded by dense vegetation (ALA, 2025) Suitable habitat adjacent to the Offshore study area within wetland habitats. No suitable habitat present within the Offshore PAA. No records of the species within the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA in VBA or ALA. This species rarely flies and is mostly found hidden within dense vegetation and is therefore unlikely to overfly the Offshore PAA.	May occur	Unlikely to occur

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Limosa lapponica	Bar-tailed Godwit	Endangered Migratory wetlands Marine	Vulnerable	Known	Recorded	The Bar-tailed Godwit is found mainly in coastal habitats such as large intertidal sandflats, banks, mudflats, estuaries, inlets, harbours, coastal lagoons and bays. It is found often around beds of seagrass and, sometimes, in nearby saltmarsh. The species usually forages near the edge of water or in shallow water, mainly in tidal estuaries and harbours and usually roosts on sandy beaches, sandbars, spits and also in near-coastal saltmarsh. The birds are known to move from east Australia to New Zealand between seasons (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat is present through wetland adjacent to the Offshore study area and species may overfly Offshore PAA during seasonal movements between New Zealand and east Australia. Two species records in VBA were identified between 1972 and 1999 (less than 30 years ago). The species has been recorded on ALA most recently from 1999.	Likely to occur	Likely to occur
Limosa limosa	Black-tailed Godwit	Endangered Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	Endangered	Known	-	The species prefers sheltered coastal habitats with large intertidal mudflats or sandflats. This includes inlets, bays, estuaries and lagoons. They are occasionally found on exposed reefs or sock platforms or shorelines with mangrove vegetation (DCCEEW, 2025a)	May occur	May occur

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						Suitable habitat is present through inlets and lagoons adjacent to the Offshore study area There is no suitable habitat within the Offshore PAA. There are no species records from VBA or ALA within the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA.		
Macronectes giganteus	Southern Giant-Petrel,	Endangered Migratory marine Marine	Endangered	May	-	The Southern Giant-Petrel is marine bird that occurs in Antarctic to subtropical waters. Over summer the species nests in small colonies amongst open vegetation on Antarctic and subantarctic islands and is an opportunistic scavenger and predator (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat occurs within the Offshore study area through pelagic prey however species may prefer lower latitudes around subantarctic islands. No records of the species within the Offshore study area.	May occur	May occur
Macronectes halli	Northern Giant Petrel	Vulnerable Migratory marine Marine	Endangered	Likely	Recorded	This species is oceanic, breeding in Macquarie Island and is often found in Australian waters. Adults remain near the breeding colonies throughout the year, but immature birds make long trans-oceanic movements (DCCEEW, 2025a). Offshore study area is within modelled habitat distribution and intersects with oceanic habitat. Species has been recorded within the Offshore study area on ALA in 1978 and 2000.	Likely to occur	Likely to occur

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						One species record in VBA from 2000.		
Merops ornatus	Rainbow Bee-eater	Marine overfly	-	May	-	Species mostly occurs in open forests, woodlands and shrublands as well as other cleared or semi-cleared habitats such as farmland. Often occurs in mallee and open forests dominated by eucalypts (DCCEEW, 2025a). There is no suitable habitat may be present within the Offshore study area, but not within the Offshore PAA. No records of the species within the Offshore study area.	Unlikely to occur	Unlikely to occur
Monarcha melanopsis	Black-faced Monarch	Marine overfly	-	May	-	The species mostly occurs in rainforests ecosystems including tropical and subtropical rainforests as well as warm temperate rainforests (DCCEEW, 2025a). The Offshore study area is within the species modelled distribution. There is no suitable habitat within the Offshore study area. There are no records of this species within the Offshore study area (ALA).	Unlikely to occur	Unlikely to occur
Motacilla flava	Yellow Wagtail	Migratory terrestrial Marine overfly	-	May	-	Species occupies a range of damp or wet habitats with low vegetation. This includes damp meadows, marshes and waterside pasture as well as bogs and grassy tundra (BirdLife, 2025). The Offshore study area is within the species modelled distribution.	May occur	Unlikely to occur

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						There is likely suitable habitat present adjacent to the Offshore study area associated with wetlands. There are no records of this species within the Offshore study area (ALA).		
Myiagra cyanoleuca	Satin Flycatcher	Marine overfly	-	Known	-	Inhabit heavily vegetated gullies in eucalypt-dominated forests and taller woodlands. On migration they occur in coastal forests, woodlands and mangroves (DCCEEW, 2025a). There may be suitable mangrove habitat present adjacent to the Offshore study area associated with State Parks. There are no records of the species within the Offshore study area on ALA.	May occur	May occur
Neophema chrysogaster	Orange-bellied Parrot	Critically Endangered Marine overfly	Critically Endangered	Known	Recorded	A migratory species, Orange-bellied Parrots breed in Southwest Tasmania before migrating to the south-east coast. A coastal and subcoastal species, mainland Orange-bellied Parrots spend winter within 3 km of the coast in sheltered coastal habitats. They often inhabit saltmarshes and coastal dunes (DCCEEW, 2025a). The species migratory route is from the coast of western Tasmania and King Island and has a probable migration that extends the Bass Strait to along the coast of South Australia and Victoria (between Goolwa, South	May occur	May occur

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						Australia and Corner Inlet, Victoria) (DoE, 2016). Records from ALA and VBA are from over 30 years ago (one record from 1952 within the Offshore study area).		
Neophema chrysostoma	Blue-winged Parrot	Vulnerable Marine overfly	Vulnerable	Known	-	Blue-winged Parrots inhabit a wide range of habitats from coastal, sub-coastal to inland areas. They tend to prefer grassy woodlands that are near wetlands or near the coast. They are often found in altered environments like golf-courses, airfields and paddocks as well as in the semi-arid zones (DCCEEW, 2025a). The species is a partial migrant, variable numbers of birds migrate across the Bass Strait to the mainland in winter. During the non-breeding season birds are recorded from northern Victoria, eastern South Australia, south-western Queensland and western NSW with some birds reaching south-eastern NSW and eastern Victoria, especially during southern migration to Tasmania (DCCEEW, 2023b). Suitable coastal habitat exists adjacent to the Offshore study area. There are no records from VBA or ALA within the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA.	May occur	May occur
Numenius madagascariensis	Eastern Curlew	Critically Endangered	Critically Endangered	Known	-	The Eastern Curlew generally occupies coastal lakes, inlets,	Known to occur	Likely to occur

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		Migratory wetlands Marine				bays and estuarine habitats. In New South Wales it is mainly found on intertidal mudflats and occasionally on saltmarsh of sheltered coasts The species will occasionally be found on ocean beaches and on coral reefs or rock platforms. The species forages at the edge of shallow water and roosts on sandy spits on dry beach sand near the high-water mark (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat exists within the Marie Study Area (coastal lakes) and in close proximity to the Offshore PAA (roosting on sandy spits on dry beach sand near the high-water mark). There are no VBA records of the species within the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA. The species was recorded in 2022 within the Offshore study area (ALA), approximately 10 km west of the Offshore PAA. No significant barrier between record and Offshore PAA.		
Numenius minutus	Little Curlew	Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	-	Likely	-	The species is most often found feeding in short dry grass and sedgeland including open woodlands with a grassy understorey, dry saltmarshes, mudflats and dry floodplains. It prefers foraging in relatively short grass approximately 20 cm tall and tends to avoid dense tall grasses (DCCEEW, 2025a).	May occur	Unlikely to occur

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						There may be suitable habitat adjacent to the Offshore study area associated with wetland and lake areas. No suitable habitat within the Offshore PAA. There are no records of the species within the Offshore study area.		
Numenius phaeopus	Whimbrel	Migratory wetlands Marine	Endangered	Known	-	It is found along almost the entire coast of Queensland and NSW and regularly at some places in Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia. In Victoria it is commonly found at Corner Inlet, Westernport and Port Phillip Bays. The Whimbrel is often found on the intertidal mudflats of sheltered coasts. It is also found in harbours, lagoons, estuaries and river deltas, often those with mangroves. It is occasionally found on sandy or rocky beaches, on coral or rocky islets, or on intertidal reefs and platforms (DCCEEW, 2025a). The species is closely attributed to Corner Inlet wetlands to the west of the Offshore study area. Suitable habitat is present adjacent to the Offshore study area within Corner Inlet wetlands. There are no VBA or ALA species records within the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA.	May occur	May occur
Pachyptila turtur	Fairy Prion	Marine	-	Known	-	The Fairy Prion is found throughout oceans and coastal areas in the Southern Hemisphere. Their colonies can	May occur	May occur

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						be found, amongst other places, on the Chatham Islands, Snares Islands and Antipodes Islands of New Zealand, the Bass Strait Islands of Australia, and others. The species occurs mainly offshore but may move inshore during stormy weather (BirdLife, 2025). Coastal and inshore habitat is present within Offshore PAA, with colonies within the Bass Strait. Species has been recorded within the Offshore study area in 1972.		
Pachyptila turtur subantarctica	Fairy Prion (southern)	Vulnerable	-	Known	-	This species has a circumpolar distribution and frequently visits subtropical waters during the non-breeding period. It burrows in crevices, hollows beneath cushions of vegetation or peaty soil. Breeding occurs on rocks off of Macquarie Island (TSSC, 2015a). There are no records of the subspecies within the Offshore study area. The species is highly associated with subantarctic and temperate islands, however, the Offshore PAA is within the species modelled distribution.	May occur	May occur
Pandion haliaetus	Osprey	Migratory wetlands Marine	-	Known	-	The species often occurs in coastal habitats and terrestrial wetlands. They are most commonly found in coastal areas but will occasionally travel inland along major rivers. They prefer	May occur	May occur

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						coastal cliffs and elevated islands (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable coastal habitat within the Offshore PAA. There were no species recorded within the Offshore study area (ALA).		
Phoebetria fusca	Sooty Albatross	Vulnerable Migratory	Critically Endangered	Likely	-	This species occurs in the South Atlantic and southern Indian oceans. The species is a rare, but probably regular migrant to Australia, occurring north to south-east Queensland, NSW, Victoria,. It spends most of its time at sea and rarely occurs in continental shelf waters. Nests amongst vegetation on steep cliffs (DCCEEW, 2025a). Offshore study area is within species modelled distribution that can occur in the continental shelves of Victoria. No records of the species are present within the Offshore study area.	May occur	May occur

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Pluvialis fulva	Pacific Golden Plover	Migratory wetlands Marine	Vulnerable	Known	Recorded	Pacific Golden Plovers usually occur on beaches, mudflats and sandflats (sometimes in vegetation such as mangroves, low saltmarsh, or beds of seagrass) in sheltered areas including harbours, estuaries and lagoons. The species is also sometimes recorded on islands, sand and coral cays and exposed reefs and rocks. They usually roost near foraging areas, on sandy beaches and spits or rocky points, islets or exposed reefs. Most records of the species in Victoria are along the coast between Jack Smith Lake (south of Sale) and the Bellarine Peninsula, including Western Port and Port Phillip Bay (DCCEEW, 2025a). There is suitable habitat adjacent to the Offshore study area (coastal lagoons) with less suitable habitat within the high energy beach habitat of the Marine Proposed Area. Two species records in VBA were identified between 1972 and 1977. There are three records from ALA in 1972 and 1977 within the Offshore study area (more than 30 years ago).	May occur	May occur
Pluvialis squatarola	Grey Plover	Vulnerable Migratory Marine Marine	Vulnerable	Known	Recorded	The species breeds in the Northern Hemisphere. In non-breeding grounds in Australia, Grey Plovers occur almost entirely in coastal areas, where they	May occur	May occur

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						usually inhabit sheltered embayments, estuaries and lagoons with mudflats and sandflats, and occasionally on rocky coasts, or on reefs within muddy lagoons. They also occur around terrestrial wetlands such as near-coastal lakes and swamps, or salt-lakes. Usually forage on large areas of exposed mudflats and beaches of sheltered coastal shores such as inlets, estuaries and lagoons (DCCEEW, 2025a). There is suitable habitat adjacent to the Offshore study area (sandy beach) with less suitable habitat within the high energy environment of the Marine Proposed Area. There are two records of the species within the Offshore study area from 1981 (ALA, VBA) (more than 30 years ago). One species records in VBA was identified in 1981.		
Pterodroma leucoptera leucoptera	Gould's Petrel	Endangered	-	May	-	Gould's Petrel is a pelagic marine species, spending much of its time foraging at sea and coming ashore only to breed. The Australian subspecies breeds and roosts on two islands off NSW, Cabbage Tree and Boondelbah Islands, and the at-sea distribution is poorly known (DCCEEW, 2025a).	May occur	May occur

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						There is suitable pelagic foraging habitat within the Offshore PAA. There are no records of the species within the Offshore study area.		
Recurvirostra novaehollandiae	Red-necked Avocet	Marine overfly	-	Known	-	The Red-necked Avocet has a very wide range in Australia but is comparatively rare on the northern and north-eastern coasts. The species has a preference for salt or brackish water and are generally found in shallow wetland areas that are either fresh or salt, or on estuarine mudflats. The species is rare in Tasmania and an occasional vagrant to New Zealand (ALA, 2025). Suitable wetland habitat is present adjacent to the Offshore study area within State Parks and Ramsar sites. No suitable habitat is present within the Offshore PAA. There are no species records within the Offshore study area (ALA).	May occur	May occur
Rhipidura rufifrons	Rufous Fantail	Marine overfly	-	Known	-	The species inhabits wet sclerophyll forests often in gullies that are dominated by eucalypts. They also occur in subtropical and temperate rainforests and in coastal and near coastal districts of northern and eastern Australia (DCCEEW, 2025a). There are no ALA records of the species within the Marine Survey Area.	May occur	Unlikely to occur

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						Suitable habitat are no suitable forests present within the Offshore study area. The Offshore study areais within known modelled habitat distribution. There is no suitable wet sclerophyll forests within the Offshore PAA.		
Rostratula australis	Australian Painted-snipe	Endangered Marine overfly (as R*ostratula benghalensis (sensu lato)*)	Critically Endangered	Likely	-	Species generally inhabits shallow terrestrial freshwater and wetlands. They use inundated or waterlogged grassland or saltmarsh (DCCEEW, 2025a). The species venture onto mudflats or into shallow water to forage at dawn, dusk and at night (DELWP, 2025). There are no VBA or ALA records within the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA. The Offshore study area is situated adjacent to two suitable wetland habitats in the Corner Inlet and Gippsland Lakes. There is no suitable habitat within the Offshore PAA, however, the species may overfly the export cable route area.	May occur	Unlikely to occur
Spatula rhynchotis	Australasian Shoveler	-	Vulnerable	-	Recorded	The species lives in heavily vegetated swamp and prefer freshwater habitats. They occur in southwestern and southeastern Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand (ALA, 2025), particularly found in the Murray-Darling Basin, however in Victora the species is mainly recorded from south western and western Victoria and less often recorded from the	May occur	Unlikely to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						irrigated areas of northern Victoria and the Gippsland region (DELWP, 2025). Two species records in VBA were identified in 1977 (more than 30 years ago). There is no suitable freshwater habitat within the Offshore PAA.		
Stercorarius antarcticus	Brown Skua	Marine (as *Catharacta skua*)	-	May	-	The species is found on the Antarctic Peninsula and subantarctic islands of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans including Australia's Heard and Macquarie Island, wintering near or slightly dispersed from the breeding area. It is found on or around subantarctic islands populated by burrow-nesting seabirds or penguins. It is highly predatory, feeding mainly on other birds but will also scavenge around fishing boats and ships and feed at sea (BirdLife, 2025). There are three ALA records within the Offshore study area from 2000 and 2020 which are 1 km and 10 km respectively from the Offshore PAA. Suitable habitat present within the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.	Known to occur	Likely to occur
Sterna striata	White-fronted Tern	Marine	-	Likely	-	Species is found in coastal seas and exposed rocky coasts. Can also be found on sandy beaches of sheltered coasts like harbours, estuaries and lagoons (DCCEEW,	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						2025a). The species is endemic to Australasia. It will feed in the surf zone or several kilometres out to sea. There are ALA records for 1972 within the Offshore study area. No significant barrier between records and Offshore PAA.		
Sternula albifrons	Little Tern	Vulnerable Migratory marine Marine (as Sterna albifrons)	Critically Endangered	May	Recorded	There are two subpopulations, northern and south-eastern subpopulations. The south-eastern population has been recorded to breed from Tasmania, east Gippsland and along south-western beaches of Victoria into South Australia, NSW coast, into the north Queensland coast, up to islands from Lady Musgrave Island to Lowrie Island (DCCEEW, 2025a). The Little Tern is an almost exclusively coastal species which prefers sheltered environments but can be found several kilometres from the sea in inlets, harbours and rivers. Nests in small, scattered colonies in low dunes or on sandy beaches just above the high tide mark (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable coastal sheltered environments are not within the Offshore PAA. However, there is suitable habitat adjacent to the Offshore study area along the coast and on the eastern edge of Corner Inlet Ramsar wetland. Additionally, there are several	Likely occur	May occur

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						ALA records, most recently as 2024 along the coastline near Ninety Mile Beach MNP and within Corner Inlet Ramsar site. Two VBA species records from 1980 and 1981 (more than 30 years ago).		
Sternula nereis nereis	Australian Fairy Tern	Vulnerable	Critically Endangered	Known	Recorded	The subspecies occurs along the coasts of Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia. The Fairy Tern (Australian) nests on sheltered sandy beaches, spits and banks above the high tide line and below vegetation. The subspecies has been found in embayments of a variety of habitats including offshore, estuarine or lacustrine (lake) islands, wetlands and mainland coastline The bird roosts on beaches at night. The species nests on coral shingle on continental islands or coral cays, on sandy islands and beaches inside estuaries, and on open sandy beaches (DCCEEW, 2025a). In Victoria, the subspecies occurs in Corangamite, east and west Gippsland, and Port Phillip and Western Port. Recorded within the Offshore study area as recently as 2018 in ALA, off the coast of Woodside Beach.	Likely to occur	Likely to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						Six species records in VBA were identified between 1972 and 2018.		
Stictonetta naevosa	Freckled Duck	-	Endangered	-	-	Endemic to Australia, the Freckled Duck is mainly situated throughout inland regions of the Eastern section of the country—including NSW, Victoria and Queensland. Distribution of the Freckled Duck directly correlates to water flow and rainfall in river catchments and wetland systems (ALA, 2025). The species prefers permanent freshwater swamps and creeks with heavy growth of cumbungi (bullrushes), lignum or tea-tree (DELWP, 2025). The Offshore PAA and Offshore study area do not contain preferred freshwater habitat, and the species is unlikely to use or overfly this area. No records from ALA or VBA within the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA.	Unlikely to occur	Unlikely to occur
Thalassarche bulleri	Buller's Albatross	Vulnerable Migratory marine Marine	Endangered	May	-	This species only nests on islands off of New Zealand including Chatham Island, Solander Islands, Snares Islands and Three Kings Islands. It occurs both inshore and offshore waters including the continental shelf break as well as pelagic waters and feeds mainly on squid, fish and crustaceans. The species has a subspecies (*Thalassarche bulleri platei*).	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						Australia is within the foraging range of the species. Foraging birds are mostly limited to the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea, although birds do reach the east coast of the Australian mainland. There are no records of the species within the Offshore study area. However, a couple of records from ALA are recorded from 2008 approximately 24 km southwest and from 2014, approximately 36 km southeast of the Offshore study area.		
Thalassarche carteri	Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	Vulnerable Migratory marine Marine	Endangered	Likely	Recorded	Is a colonial breeder which nests on bare rocky areas in tussock grass or ferns. Breeds on Prince Edward Islands and Saint Paul Island in South Africa, and Crozet Islands, Kerguelen Island, Amsterdam Islands in France (ALA, 2025; DCCEEW, 2022). In breeding and non-breeding seasons, the species concentrates over the productive waters of continental shelves, often at coastal upwellings and the boundaries of currents. The Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross forages mostly in the southern Indian Ocean where it is particularly abundant off Western Australia (DCCEEW, 2025a). There are two VBA and ALA records within the Offshore study area from 2000.	Likely to occur	Likely to occur

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Thalassarche cauta	Shy Albatross	Endangered Migratory marine Marine	Endangered	Likely	Recorded	This species has a circumpolar distribution and occurs widely in the southern oceans. In Australia it occurs along the East Coast. It is a pelagic species that inhabits subantarctic and subtropical marine waters while spending the majority of its time at sea where it uses strong winds to soar and when calm may rest on the ocean. Occasionally found in continental shelf waters in bays and harbours, regularly venturing close to shore along the coasts of Tasmania and southern Australia (DCCEEW, 2025a). The species has three breeding sites on three Tasmanian islands including, Albatross Island, Mewstone, and Pedra Branca (DCCEEW, 2022). There are two VBA records within the Offshore study area from 2000. There are 18 records from ALA, with the most recent record from 2025 within the Offshore study area.	Known to occur	Likely to occur
Thalassarche chrysostoma	Grey-headed Albatross	Endangered Migratory marine Marine	Endangered	May	-	A marine, pelagic and migratory species. Its habitat includes subantarctic, subtropical, and occasionally Antarctic waters. Grey-headed Albatrosses breed on subantarctic and Antarctic islands of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans and seas south of New Zealand, such as Campbell Island and Macquarie Island. Breeding and non-breeding birds disperse	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						widely across the Southern Ocean. Most Australian records come from south and west of Tasmania, occasionally in Victorian waters, rarely in South Australia and Western Australia, and only as a vagrant in NSW (DCCEEW, 2025a). There are no records of the species within the Offshore study area or within adjacent connected habitat.		
Thalassarche impavida	Campbell Albatross	Vulnerable Migratory marine Marine	-	Likely	-	This species nests only on Campbell Island and the adjacent Isle de Jeanette Marie south of New Zealand and has an estimated population of 24,600 breeding pairs. It occurs in both inshore and offshore waters including the continental shelf break and pelagic waters where it forages on fish, crustacea and squid (DCCEEW, 2025a). Australia is within the foraging range of the Campbell Albatross (DCCEEW, 2022). There are no records of the species within the Offshore study area or within adjacent connected habitat.	Likely to occur	May occur
Thalassarche melanophris	Black-browed Albatross	Vulnerable Migratory marine Marine	-	Likely	Recorded	The Black-browed Albatross inhabits Antarctic, subantarctic and temperate waters and occasionally the tropics It forages around the breaks of continental	Likely to occur	Likely to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						and island shelves and across nearby underwater banks, but also frequents other marine habitats, such as oceanic waters. The Black-browed Albatross breeds within Australian jurisdiction on Heard Island, McDonald Islands, and Macquarie Island, however, the species is common in the non-breeding period at the continental shelf and shelf-break of South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, western and eastern Bass Strait and NSW (DCCEEW, 2025a). There are several records of the species in ALA within the Offshore study area, most recently as 2013. There are three records within the Offshore PAA from 2008 and 2012. Confirming the presence of the species in both areas. Two species records in VBA were identified in 2000.		
Thalassarche salvini	Salvin's Albatross	Vulnerable Migratory marine Marine	-	Likely	-	This species occurs both inshore and offshore over the continental shelf and enters harbours and bays (DCCEEW, 2025a). Salvin's Albatross is a non-breeding visitor to Australian waters. The species breeds in New Zealand annually (12 breeding sites on the Bounty Islands and Snares Islands), where breeding birds return in September. Australia is within the foraging range of Salvin's Albatross (DCCEEW, 2022).	Likely to occur	May occur

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						There are no records of the species within the Offshore study area. However, records from ALA from 1976, 1977, 1984, 1991, and 2004 in connected habitat adjacent to the Offshore study area (ALA, 2025).		
Thalassarche steadi	White-capped Albatross	Vulnerable Migratory marine Marine	-	Known	-	The White-capped Albatross is probably common off the coast of south-east Australia throughout the year. Mostly observed in inshore and offshore waters over the continental shelf. It is less frequently seen in pelagic waters but may occasionally enter larger bays. It breeds on a large number of islands in New Zealand waters with the vast majority nesting in the Auckland Islands and Antipodes Islands (five breeding sites) (DCCEEW, 2025a; DCCEEW, 2022). There are no records of the species within the Offshore study area. However, records from ALA from 1983 and 2000 in connected habitat adjacent to the Offshore study area (ALA, 2025).	Likely to occur	May occur
Thinornis cucullatus	Hooded Plover	Marine overfly	Vulnerable	Known	Recorded	The species is endemic to southern Australia, where it inhibits freshwater lakes, freshwater marshes, coastal saline lagoons, and sandy beaches. Large populations are found on beaches with seaweed and dunes (ALA, 2025).	Known to occur	May occur

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						Eight species records in VBA were identified between 1977 and 2018. There are several records in ALA within the Marin Study Area with the most recent from 2022 near Woodside.		
Thinornis cucullatus cucullatus	Eastern Hooded Plover	Vulnerable Marine overfly	-	Known	-	The species mainly occurs on wide beaches backed by dunes with large amounts of seaweed and jetsam, creek mouths and inlet entrances. Nests are found above the high water mark on flat beaches, on stony terraces, or on sparsely vegetated dunes (DCCEEW, 2025a). Species recorded near Woodside within the Offshore study area in 2012.	Likely to occur	Likely to occur
Tringa brevipes	Grey-tailed Tattler	Migratory wetlands Marine (as *Heteroscelus brevipes*)	Critically Endangered	Known	-	The Grey-tailed Tattler is often found on sheltered coasts with reefs and rock platforms or with intertidal mudflats. It can also be found at intertidal rocky, coral or stony reefs as well as platforms and islets that are exposed at low tide. It has been found around shores of rock, shingle, gravel or shells and also on intertidal mudflats in embayments, estuaries and coastal lagoons, especially fringed with mangroves. The species is rarely recorded in Victoria, however, sightings have been reported in Gippsland, and east of McLaughlans Beach. The largest populations in Victoria are located at Corner Inlet, west to	May occur	Unlikely to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						Westernport and Port Phillip Bays (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat is present adjacent to the Offshore study area at Corner Inlet. There are no VBA or ALA records of the species within the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA.		
Tringa glareola	Wood Sandpiper	Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	Endangered	Known	-	The Wood Sandpiper uses well-vegetated, shallow, freshwater wetlands, such as swamps, billabongs, lakes, pools and waterholes. The species breeds across Eurasia, mostly in Scandinavia, the Baltic countries and Russia. Typically they do not use coastal flats, but are occasionally recorded in stony wetlands (DCCEEW, 2025a). Suitable habitat is adjacent to the Offshore study area in State Parks and Ramsar site areas. There are no VBA or ALA records of the species within the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA.	May occur	Unlikely to occur
Tringa nebularia	Common Greenshank	Endangered Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	Endangered	Known	Recorded	The Common Greenshank inhabits mudflats and the edge of wetlands in shallow waters where it forages. The species does not breed in Australia. In Victoria, they are widespread in coastal regions, mainly between Gippsland Lakes and Port Phillip Bay (DCCEEW, 2025a). There are 11 records of the species in ALA within the Offshore	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						study area from 1977, 1980, and 1981. There are six records in VBA of the species between 1977 and 1981 (more than 30 years ago).		
Tringa stagnatilis	Marsh Sandpiper	Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	Endangered	Known	Recorded	The Marsh Sandpiper is found on coastal and inland wetlands throughout Australia. In Victoria, most are found in Port Phillip Bay, but also Gippsland, Westernport Bay and the Western Districts. The Marsh Sandpiper does not breed in Australia, migrating to eastern Europe and eastern Siberia (DEECA, 2025a). The species has been recorded six times within the Offshore study area in 1972, 1981, and 1982, around Ninety Mile Beach MNP and within 5 km east of the Offshore PAA, as recorded in ALA. Suitable habitat is present adjacent to the Offshore study area, particularly the Corner Inlet Ramsar wetland. There are three records of the species in VBA from 1972 and 1981 (more than 30 years ago).	May occur	May occur
Xenus cinereus	Terek Sandpiper	Vulnerable Migratory wetlands Marine overfly	Vulnerable	Known	-	Mostly forages on open, soft and wet intertidal mudflats or in sheltered estuaries and embayment's. Birds are seldom near the edge of water but are occasionally found on sandy beaches among seaweed and in rocky areas (DCCEEW, 2025a).	May occur	May occur

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						There are no VBA or ALA records of the species within the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA. Suitable habitat is present adjacent to the Offshore study area, particularly at Corner Inlet Ramsar wetland.		
Fish								
Carcharias taurus	Grey Nurse Shark	Migratory Critically Endangered (east coast population) Vulnerable (west coast population)	-	May	-	There are two separate populations under the EPBC Act (east coast population is listed as Critically Endangered and the west coast population is listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act). Grey Nurse Sharks are primarily found from subtropical to cool temperate inshore waters on the continental shelf. They are often found aggregating around rocky reefs and islands or in sandy bottomed gutters or rocky caves. They have been recorded at depths of up to 230 m on the continental shelf but are most found between 15-40 m (DCCEEW, 2025a). There are no known key aggregation sites critical to the survival of the Grey Nurse Shark in Victoria. Additionally, there are no records of this species within or nearby to the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA (ALA, 2025).	May occur	May occur
Carcharodon carcharias	White Shark	Vulnerable	-	Known	-	White Sharks can be found close to the coast around inshore rocky reefs, surf beaches and shallow	Known to occur	Known to occur

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						coastal bays. They are often found in areas with high prey density such as seal colonies. (DCCEEW, 2025a). Two key nursery and juvenile aggregation sites for White Sharks on the east coast of Australia occur at Corner Inlet and 90 Mile Beach, Victoria, as well as Stockton and Hawks Nest beach in central NSW. These areas are utilised repeatedly on a seasonal basis (DSEWPC, 2013). The Offshore study area and Offshore PAA is within the species BIA (nursery area and known distribution) (DSEWPC, 2013).		
Galeorhinus galeus	School shark	Conservation Dependent	-	Likely	-	The School Shark is found in cold to temperate continental seas. It occupies a broad range of depths from very shallow water to well offshore. It is primarily a deepwater bottom dwelling species. However, they undertake vertical migrations from depths of 500 m during the day moving to 100 metres at night. The species has been recorded through human observations in the Offshore study area in 2000, 2001, and 2002 as documented in the ALA within the primary occurrence data assembled by the former Bureau of Rural Sciences (now a part of the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture) (ALA, 2025).	Likely to occur	Likely to occur

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Isurus oxyrinchus	Shortfin Mako	Migratory	-	Likely	-	This species is widely distributed in tropical and temperate waters and prefers offshore oceanic habitats. In Australia, it is found around most of the coastline, except the Arafura Sea, Gulf of Carpentaria, and Torres Strait, and is regularly recorded in the South-east Marine Region (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).The species primarily occurs in offshore, oceanic waters and is pelagic. The species has been recorded through human observations in the Offshore study area in 2000, 2001, and 2002 as documented in the ALA within the primary occurrence data assembled by the former Bureau of Rural Sciences (now a part of the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture) (ALA, 2025).	Likely to occur	Likely to occur
Lamna nasus	Porbeagle	Migratory	-	Likely	-	The species are found in temperate and subtropical waters of the North Atlantic and Southern Hemisphere. In Australia, it occurs from southern Queensland to south-western Australia, including the South-east Marine Region (excluding Macquarie Island). Porbeagles typically inhabit oceanic waters over the continental shelf but may also appear in coastal areas (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).	May occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						There are no records of this species within the Offshore study area or nearby. Suitable habitat exists within the Offshore study area in coastal seas and continental shelf areas.		
Prototroctes maraena	Australian Grayling	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Known	-	The Australian Grayling is a diadromous species which spends part of its lifecycle in freshwater and part of the juvenile stages in coastal seas. Adults inhabit cool, clear freshwater streams with a gravel substrate. The species has been associated with the Mitchell and Wonnangatta Rivers (Victoria) inland from the Offshore study area (DCCEEW, 2025a). Therefore, as the juvenile stage is associated with coastal seas it is possible that the species would be present within the Offshore study area during early life stages. There are historical observations of the species within inland waters of the Offshore study area (1997 and prior) (ALA, 2025).	Likely to occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
Rhincodon typus	Whale Shark	Vulnerable Migratory	-	May	-	The Whale Shark is an oceanic and coastal pelagic shark that is often seen far offshore. However, it often comes inshore entering lagoons or coral atolls. It is generally encountered close to the surface. Generally found where surface temperatures are warmer at 21-25 °C but most commonly found in water temperatures of 27 °C. In Australia, the Whale Shark is known from NSW, Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia and occasionally Victoria and South Australia (DCCEEW, 2025a). There are no records of this species within the Offshore study area or nearby. Suitable habitat exists within the Offshore study area, however, the species prefers warmer waters.	May occur	May occur
Seriolella brama	Blue Warehou	Critically Endangered	Conservation Dependent	Known	-	Species prefers warmer temperatures of waters between 10 and 15 degrees. They are a migratory pelagic species that feed on invertebrates. Within the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone, the species occurs predominantly in coastal shelf, upper continental slope and seamount waters offshore from New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia (DCCEEW, 2025a). Blue Warehou mostly occur in offshore waters, although juveniles may be	Likely to occur	Likely to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						found in bays, estuaries and coastal waters (OzFishNet, 2025) Historical records (2001 and earlier) of this species are present within the Offshore study area (ALA, 2025).		
Family Syngnathidae	Seahorses, Seadragons, Pipefish, Pipehorses	Marine	-	May	-	The Syngnathidae family occupies a wide range of habitats, from near-shore and inner-shelf areas in shallow, coastal, tropical and temperate waters to deeper reefs and sponge gardens, pelagic waters and kelp rafts (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b). Historical occurrences (in 1997 and prior to) of Syngnathidae were recorded within the Offshore study area and nearby (ALA, 2025). Suitable temperate, coastal, rocky reef habitat within the Offshore study area occurs.	May occur	May occur
Reptiles								
Caretta caretta	Loggerhead Turtle	Endangered Migratory Marine	-	Known	-	In Australia, Loggerhead Turtles nest on open, sandy beaches. Adults and large juveniles with greater than 70 cm curved carapace length occur in waters with both hard and soft substrates including rocky and coral reefs, muddy bays, sandflats, estuaries and seagrass meadows. Loggerhead Turtle hatchlings from eastern Australia rookeries may move down the coast of eastern Australia with the East Australian Current, into the Tasman Front,	Likely to occur	May occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						past Lord Howe Island to the north of New Zealand and across the southern Pacific Ocean to the waters off the coast of Peru and Chile. (DCCEEW, 2025a). There are no records of this species within or nearby to the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA (ALA, 2025), however there are sightings within the nearby Gippsland Lake Coastal Park in 2014.		
Chelonia mydas	Green Turtle	Vulnerable Migratory Marine	-	May	-	Green Turtles nest, forage and migrate across tropical northern Australia. They usually occur between the 20°C isotherms, although individuals can stray into temperate waters. Once adults, the species settles in shallow benthic foraging habitats such as tropical tidal and sub-tidal coral and rocky reef habitat or inshore seagrass beds. The shallow foraging habitat of adults contains seagrass beds or algae mats on which Green Turtles mainly feed (DCCEEW, 2025a). There are no records of this species within or nearby to the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA (ALA, 2025), however there are sightings of Green Turtles in the nearby Corner Inlet Marine and Coastal Park and suitable foraging habitat is present..	May occur	May occur
Dermochelys coriacea	Leatherback Turtle	Endangered Migratory Marine	Critically Endangered	Known	Recorded	The Leatherback Turtle is the most frequently recorded species in eastern Victoria. This region	Likely to occur	Likely to occur

Scientific name	Common name	Status – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Status – State (Vic) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act	EPBC simple presence	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas record type	Habitat descriptions	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore study area	Likelihood of Occurrence Offshore PAA
						serves as an important feeding ground for the Leatherback, a pelagic species that forages in high-latitude waters across all oceans (CIE, 2019). Although no major nesting occurs in Australia, sightings and foraging activity are regularly reported in the South-east Marine Region (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b). There are human observations of this species in 2014 within 10 km of the Offshore study area (ALA, 2025). There is one record of the species in the VBA, in 1991.		

5.5.2 Invertebrates

5.5.2.1 Phytoplankton

The oceanographic setting of the region is conducive to seasonal phytoplankton blooms (see Section 5.2.3) that provide considerable biomass, forming the base of the trophic web and providing food for zooplankton and larger marine organisms. Phytoplankton blooms are likely to occur within the Offshore study area, with the main photosynthetic micro-algae being diatoms, dinoflagellates, and cyanobacteria (Arup, 2024).

5.5.2.2 Corals

The Marine Survey Area falls within the range of *Pseudogorgia godeffroyi* that is found within the Ninety Mile Beach National Marine Park. The presence of the endemic soft coral within Victorian waters has been designated as a Victorian Marine Asset (see Section 5.6.3), occurring offshore of Delray Beach along a 10 m depth contour. The CarbonNet marine habitat assessment (Advisian, 2017) identified isolated occurrences of *Pseudogorgia godeffroyi* between McGauran's Beach and Delray Beach.

5.5.2.3 Epibenthos, Infauna and nektonic invertebrates

Across the Bass Strait, surveys have found that crustaceans and polychaetes constitute the majority of benthic invertebrate communities (Poore, Gomon, & Lu, 1985; Wilson & Poore, 1987). With a high diversity of a wide range of invertebrate groups found across the Bass Strait region, it has been inferred that invertebrates are supported by the presence of heterogenous sediments and microhabitats within the region (Poore, Gomon, & Lu, 1985; Wilson & Poore, 1987).

In proximity to the Offshore study area, the benthos was found to have a high diversity and patchiness off Lakes Entrance (Parry, Campbell, & Hobday, 1990). Approximately 105 km from the Offshore PAA, of the 353 of the benthic invertebrate species recorded, 53% were crustaceans, 32% was made up of polychaetes, whereas 9% were found to be molluscs (Parry, Campbell, & Hobday, 1990). Additionally, benthic fauna studies were undertaken at Ninety Mile Beach at Seaspray in 2000 (CarbonNet, 2018) approximately 10 km to the east of the Offshore PAA. The area in which the benthic fauna surveys were undertaken exhibits a similar benthic environment to that of the Offshore study area, dominated by soft sediments and with water depths of 17-20 m. A number of mobile epifauna was found to occur such as crustaceans, bivalves, sponges, worm tubes and polychaete worms. Further, it was found that the reef of the Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park host a variety of sessile epifauna including sponges, ascidians (sea squirts) and smaller bryozoans (resembling coral) and hydroids (colonies of tiny jellies attached to a feather-like base) (Barton, Pope, & Howe, 2012). Given the proximity of the Ninety Mile Beach and Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park and similarity of seabed habitat, it is likely that similar assemblages are found within the Offshore PAA.

Commercially important scallop species were identified within the CarbonNet marine habitat assessment, with Doughboy Scallops present in two locations, in low abundances that would not be considered commercially viable.

5.5.3 Fish

This Section outlines the following species:

– Fish species that are known or likely to occur in the Offshore PAA and Offshore study area
– Conservation significant fish species (listed under the EPBC and FFG Act) that were identified in the desktop assessment that are known, likely or may occur in the Offshore PAA and Offshore study area

White Shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*)

The White Shark is listed as Vulnerable and Migratory under the EPBC Act and is not listed under the FFG.

The White Shark is a large, torpedo-shaped predator with a grey to bronze upper body and a white underside. It has a blunt, conical snout and large, serrated triangular teeth (Barry Bruce, 2018).

White Sharks are widely distributed in temperate and subtropical waters, ranging from inshore reefs and bays to the outer continental shelf. In Australia, they are most commonly found along the southern and eastern coasts, with seasonal movements northward in autumn and winter, and a return south by summer (CSIRO, 2024).

White Sharks can be found close to the coast around inshore rocky reefs, surf beaches and shallow coastal bays. They are often found in areas with high prey density such as seal colonies (DCCEEW, 2025a).

The White Shark is known to migrate along the east coast of Australia with temporary residency in key areas. Two key nursery and juvenile aggregation sites for White Sharks on the east coast of Australia occur at Corner Inlet and 90 Mile Beach, Victoria, as well as Stockton and Hawks Nest beach in central NSW. These areas are utilised repeatedly on a seasonal basis (DSEWPC, 2013). The Offshore study area and Offshore PAA is within the species BIA (nursery area and known distribution, see Section 5.7.2.2) (DSEWPC, 2013).

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as known to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

School Shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*)

The School Shark is listed as Conservation Dependent under the EPBC Act and is not listed under the FFG Act.

It is a slender, bronzy-grey species with a distinctive large upper tail lobe, giving it a “double-tailed” appearance. At birth, individuals measure around 30 cm and can grow up to 175 cm.

Primarily a deep-water, bottom-dwelling species, School Sharks are found at depths between 100 and 500 m. Females and juveniles use inshore coastal areas—particularly around Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia—as nursery grounds, making these regions ecologically important for the species.

School Shark is a predatory species that feeds primarily on bony fish and cephalopods (squid). School sharks are highly migratory, with individual migrations of up to 1400 km recorded in southern Australia, including in the South-east Marine Region. These migrations appear to be associated with reproduction (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).

The species has been recorded through human observations in the Offshore study area in 2000, 2001, and 2002 as documented in the ALA within the primary occurrence data assembled by the former Bureau of Rural Sciences (now a part of the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture) (ALA, 2025).

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

Shortfin Mako Shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*)

The Shortfin Mako Shark is listed as Migratory under the EPBC Act and is not listed under the FFG Act.

The Shortfin Mako Shark is a large, streamlined pelagic shark with a dark blue back and white underside, growing up to 4 m in length. It has a long, pointed snout and is known for its speed and agility—considered the fastest of all shark species.

This species is widely distributed in tropical and temperate waters and prefers offshore oceanic habitats. In Australia, it is found around most of the coastline, except the Arafura Sea, Gulf of Carpentaria, and Torres Strait, and is regularly recorded in the South-east Marine Region (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).

The species has been recorded through human observations in the Offshore study area in 2000, 2001, and 2002 as documented in the ALA within the primary occurrence data assembled by the former Bureau of Rural Sciences (now a part of the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture) (ALA, 2025).

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

Australian Grayling (*Prototroctes maraena*)

The Australian Grayling is listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act and Vulnerable under the FFG Act.

The Australian Grayling is a diadromous species which spends part of its lifecycle in freshwater and part of the juvenile stages in coastal seas. Adults inhabit cool, clear freshwater streams with a gravel substrate.

The species has been associated with the Mitchell and Wonnangatta Rivers (Victoria) inland from the Offshore study area (DCCEEW, 2025a). Therefore, as the juvenile stage is associated with coastal seas it is possible that the species would be present within the Offshore study area during early life stages. There are historical observations of the species within inland waters of the Offshore study area (1997 and prior) (ALA, 2025).

The species was recorded twice in the VBA within the Offshore study area, both in 1976.

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and may occur in the Offshore PAA.

Blue Warehou (*Seriolella brama)*

The Blue Warehou is listed as Critically Endangered under the EPBC Act and Conservation Dependent under the FFG Act.

Species prefers warmer temperatures of waters between 10 and 15 degrees. They are a migratory pelagic species that feed on invertebrates. Within the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone, the species occurs predominantly in coastal shelf, upper continental slope and seamount waters offshore from New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia (DCCEEW, 2025a). Blue Warehou mostly occur in offshore waters, although juveniles may be found in bays, estuaries and coastal waters (OzFishNet, 2025)

Historical records (2001 and earlier) of this species are present within the Offshore study area (ALA, 2025).

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

Whale Shark (*Rhincodon typus*)

The Whale Shark is listed as Vulnerable and Migratory under the EPBC Act and is not listed under the FFG Act.

The Whale Shark is an oceanic and coastal pelagic shark that is often seen far offshore. However, it often comes inshore entering lagoons or coral atolls. The species is largely encountered close to the surface and are generally found where surface temperatures are warmer at 21-25 °C, however, they are most commonly found in water temperatures of 27 °C. In Australia, the Whale Shark is known from NSW, Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia and occasionally Victoria and South Australia (DCCEEW, 2025a).

There are no records of this species within the Offshore study area or nearby. Suitable habitat exists within the Offshore study area, however, the species prefers warmer waters.

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as may occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

5.5.4 Marine mammals

This Section outlines species identified in the EPBC Act PMST search on 16 July 2025 and the state VBA search on 15 July 2025 including:

– Cetaceans (dolphins and whales) and other marine mammals that are known or likely to occur in the Offshore PAA and Offshore study area
– Conservation significant Cetaceans and other marine mammal species (listed as threatened under the EPBC and FFG Act) that were found in the desktop assessment as known, likely or may occur within the Offshore PAA and Offshore study area

It is important to note that additional species of Cetaceans are likely to occurring within the Offshore PAA and Offshore study area. The likelihood of occurrence for these species will be evaluated through future marine mammal surveys.

All Cetaceans are protected in Commonwealth waters (Commonwealth Territorial Waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone), which is also referred to as the Australian Whale Sanctuary under the EPBC Act, and as such, all Cetacean species are considered to be MNES.

Specific protection of Cetaceans is extended to Victorian Coastal Waters by the *Wildlife Act 1975* (Vic) and subordinate regulations.

Numerous Cetacean species that occur on the Victorian continental shelf also have additional legislative protection as listed migratory species under the EPBC Act, or as threatened species under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic) (FFG Act) and/or the EPBC Act.

5.5.4.1 Cetaceans

Southern Right Whales (*Eubalaena australis*)

The Southern Right Whale is listed as Endangered, Migratory and Cetacean under the EPBC Act and listed as Endangered under the FFG Act.

These large baleen whales can reach up to 17.5 metres in length and weigh around 80 tonnes, with females typically larger than males (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).

They migrate annually from feeding grounds in the Southern Ocean to calving and breeding areas in warmer coastal waters, typically appearing along the Australian coast from May to October. Key aggregation and calving sites in the South-east Marine Region include Warrnambool, Port Fairy, Port Campbell, and Portland in Victoria, as well as Encounter Bay in South Australia. Historically, the south-east coast of Tasmania also supported significant numbers (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).

Southern Right Whales prefer shallow waters (less than 10 m deep) and habitat use varies with breeding status and environmental factors. Emerging aggregation sites, such as Peterborough and Port Campbell, suggest a gradual return to former high-use areas as the population recovers (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).

Sixteen VBA records of the species within the Offshore study area were identified and the Southern Right Whale migration and a calving BIA intersects with the Offshore study area (see Section 5.7.2.2).

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as known to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

Humpback Whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)

The Humpback Whale is listed as Migratory and Cetacean under the EPBC Act. The Humpback Whale was recently removed from the EPBC and FFG Act threatened species list because of the sustained rate of the population increase since the cessation of whaling but remains a listed Migratory species.

Humpback Whales migrate north from Antarctic and sub-Antarctic feeding grounds, reaching the South-east Marine Region around April and May. Immature whales and lactating females arrive first, followed by non-pregnant females. Breeding and calving occur from mid-August to early September, with the southern migration taking place between October and December (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).

Migration in Australian waters typically follows the coastline, though whales tend to travel further offshore during their northward journey. While feeding mainly occurs in Antarctica, Humpbacks have been observed feeding opportunistically along Australia’s coast, including off Eden (NSW), the Bonney Upwelling in western Victoria, Tasmania’s east coast, and near Hobart. In South Australia, sightings occur year-round, likely involving individuals from both east and west coast populations. In Victoria, Humpbacks have been reported in all months except February (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).

There are five VBA records for the species in 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2020.

Several ALA records within the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA further confirm the presence of the species in both areas.

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as known to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

Killer Whales (*Orcinus orca*)

The Killer Whale is listed as Migratory and Cetacean under the EPBC Act and Act and by the *Wildlife Act 1975.*

The Killer Whale, *Orcinus orca* is a cosmopolitan species recorded around Australia, and has been frequently recorded in Victorian waters (Bannister, Kemper, & Warnecke, 1996). Their breeding season varies, and movements are closely tied to food availability (Department of the Environment, 2025i)

Anecdotal advice and video footage from a skipper of a local fishing vessel confirmed one record of presence of the species in the Marine Study Area in winter 2025, noting that the location was approximate.

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as known to occur in the Offshore study area and likely to occur in Offshore PAA.

Blue Whales: Antarctic Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) and **Pygmy Blue Whale** (*Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda*)

There are four subspecies of Blue Whale, two of which occur in Australian waters, the Antarctic Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus intermedia*) and the Pygmy Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda*). An Australian Government Recovery Plan is currently in place for Blue Whales (Australian Government 2015), and recognises two populations of Pygmy Blue Whales, the Indian Australian population migrating from foraging areas in Australia to presumed reproductive areas in Indonesia, and the Tasman-Pacific Pygmy Blue Whales which migrates to as yet unknown reproductive areas, presumed to be in the Pacific Ocean (Department of the Environment, 2025i). This latter population has been acoustically recorded in the eastern Bass Strait and off the coast of New South Wales (McCauley, Gavrilov, Jolliffe, Ward, & Gill, 2018).

The Antarctic Blue Whale is listed as Endangered**,** Migratory and Cetacean under the EPBC Act and Endangered under the FFG Act.

The Antarctic Blue Whale tends to remain at higher latitudes and migrate to lower latitudes for feeding, breeding and calving during the Australian summer, whilst some remain within the Antarctic waters year-round. Winter migration destinations in Australia include Cape Leeuwin, Perth Canyon and off Tasmania from between May to December (variably) (Australian Government 2015). The subspecies is also reported foraging in the Bonney Upwelling.

The Pygmy Blue Whale habitat is more diverse, expanding throughout the Indian Ocean, with individuals moving between Australia and the warmer waters of Indonesia. Key areas of aggregation include the Perth Canyon off Western Australia, the Bonney Upwelling and adjacent waters off South Australian and Victoria. The Bonney Upwelling is a known feeding area for the Pygmy Blue Whale from November to May.

Outside of the recognised feeding areas, possible foraging areas for the Pygmy Blue Whale includes the Bass Strait of Victoria (Department of the Environment, 2015). The Pygmy Blue Whale Foraging BIA intersects with the Offshore study area (see Section 5.7.2.2).

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the Antarctic Blue Whale was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA. The Pygmy Blue Whale was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and known to occur in the Offshore PAA.

Sei Whales (*Balaenoptera borealis*)

The Sei Whale is listed as Vulnerable, Migratory and Cetacean under the EPBC Act and as a Cetacean by the *Wildlife Act 1975.*

Sei Whales reach 12–16 m at sexual maturity, with females growing slightly larger than males. Southern Hemisphere individuals tend to be larger than those in the north. These whales prefer temperate, offshore waters and are found across the world’s oceans (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).

In the South-east Marine Region, Sei Whales have been sighted feeding near the Bonney Upwelling between December and April. Additional sightings include areas off Bass Strait, south of Hobart, and near the Tasman Peninsula. Their distribution appears linked to deep, complex seafloor features where prey is abundant (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

False Killer Whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*)

The False Killer Whale is listed as Cetacean under the EPBC Act and by the *Wildlife Act 1975.*

The species is characterised by its long, slender body, rounded overhanging forehead, and lack of a beak. The False Killer Whale is generally not well understood, with most distribution records and much of the available data coming from strandings (Department of the Environment, 2025b). Strandings of this species have occurred within the South-east Marine Region, indicating its presence in the area. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015).

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and may occur in the Offshore PAA.

Pygmy Right Whale (*Caperea marginata*)

The Pygmy Right Whale is listed as Migratory and Cetacean under the EPBC Act and as a Cetacean by the *Wildlife Act 1975*.

The Pygmy Right Whale is the smallest and least known baleen whale, partly due to its elusive nature and rare sightings. Unlike other right whales, it has a dorsal fin, a slender body, and a less pronounced arched jawline, resembling rorquals more than typical Right Whales. Its small flippers and shallow throat creases are similar to those of Gray Whales (Department of the Environment , 2025c).

In Australian waters, sightings and strandings occur between 32° S and 47° S, especially in Tasmania, likely due to the nearby Subtropical Convergence, a key feeding area. These strandings confirm the species' presence in the South-east Marine Region, although its overall habitat remains poorly understood (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015a).

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as may occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

Fin Whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*)

The Fin Whale is listed as Vulnerable, Migratory and Cetacean under the EPBC Act and as a Cetacean by the *Wildlife Act 1975.*

Fin Whales are the second-largest whale species, reaching lengths of 20–27 m and weighing over 70 tonnes. They are streamlined with a tall, curved dorsal fin set two-thirds along the back (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).

The Australian Antarctic waters are important feeding grounds for Fin Whales. They feed mainly on Antarctic krill (*Euphausia superba*) by gulp feeding at the surface, with sightings in the Bonney Upwelling region of southwest Victorian and southeast South Australia, indicating this area is a potential important feeding ground (DCCEEW, 2025a).

A study was undertaken by Aulich (2019) that analysed Fin Whale migration routes across Australian waters using passive acoustic monitoring. The study found that on the Australia’s east coast, the sporadic calling times and the small number of Fin Whale calls recorded in Portland, Victoria, indicated an inconsistent and irregular presence of Fin Whales in this region of the southern Australian continental shelf.

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as may occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*)

The Common Dolphin is listed as Cetacean under the EPBC Act and by the *Wildlife Act 1975.*

Common Dolphins are slender with a long, pointed beak and a tall, backward-curving dorsal fin. They are easily recognised by a distinctive crisscross colour pattern on their back.

The species occurs around southern Australia from Queensland to Western Australia, often in large groups associated with seasonal prey availability or oceanographic features.

Whilst it is predominantly pelagic on the east coast of Australia, the species is often seen in inshore waters. A resident population has also been described in Port Phillip Bay.

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

Indo Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*)

The Indo Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin (also known as the Indian Ocean Bottlenose Dolphin) is listed as Cetacean under the EPBC Act and is not listed under the FFG Act.

The species occurs mostly in inshore habitats around Australia, and is replaced by the much larger, conspecific species, the Common Bottlenose Dolphin, in offshore waters.

While their distribution is generally continuous, some small inshore populations in southeastern Australia may be semi-isolated due to strong site fidelity (DCCEEW, 2025a).

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

Burrunan Dolphin (*Tursiops australis*)

The Burrunan Dolphin is not specifically listed under the EPBC Act, but as a Cetacean it is afforded protected under the EPBC Act.

The Victorian Government recognises the Burrunan Dolphin as a species, and lists it as Critically Endangered under the FFG Act. Only two resident populations of the Burrunan Dolphin have been identified, one in Port Phillip and the other in the Gippsland Lakes. Recent research suggests a likely preference for shallow depths (5-15 m) (Beddoe, Shimeta, Klaassen, & Robb, 2024).

There is one VBA record of the species in 2003. The VBA record was of a beach washed Burrunan Dolphin identified in the Gippsland Lakes area, along the shoreline from Lake Reeve.

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and to may occur in the Offshore PAA.

5.5.4.2 Other marine mammals

Long-nosed Fur-Seal (*Arctocephalus forsteri*)

The Long-nosed Fur Seal is listed as Marine under the EPBC Act and listed as Vulnerable under the FFG Act.

The species has a grey-brown coat with a lighter underside. Adult males are distinguished by a long, pointed nose with a black tip and a concave head, unlike the triangular head of the Australian fur seal. They can grow up to 2 m in length.

Their diet includes fish, squid, and seabirds, typically hunted in open ocean waters along the continental shelf. Males may also forage in deeper waters (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).

The Long-nosed Fur Seal has a relatively restricted distribution around the islands of Bass Strait, parts of Tasmania and southern Victoria. They can be seen hauling out (coming ashore) on islands off South Australia and areas of southern New South Wales such as Montague Island with the occasional animal appearing as far north as the mid north coast of New South Wales.

The species has been recorded in two (2) VBA entries in 2014 and 2018 within the Offshore study area. Additionally, six opportunistic sightings totalling 10 individuals were observed during fieldwork in July 2025.

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and known to occur in the Offshore PAA.

Australian Fur-Seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus*)

The Australian Fur Seal is listed as Marine under the EPBC Act and is not listed under the FFG Act.

Female Fur Seals (cows) are 125–170 cm long and weigh 50–120 kg, with silvery-grey backs, creamy-yellow chests, and chocolate brown bellies. Males (bulls) are much larger, reaching 200–225 cm and 220–360 kg, typically dark grey/brown with a mane of coarse hair.

Pups are born nearly black and moult at three months. Their dense fur traps air for insulation and waterproofing, and they moult annually. A blubber layer helps with warmth and streamlining. Their teeth resemble those of dogs or bears, and like other Otariidae, they can walk on land using their front flippers.

There are 21 known breeding sites of the Australian Fur Seal: nine long-established colonies in Victoria and Tasmania, eight (8) newer colonies formed in the past 10–15 years across Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, and South Australia, and three haul out sites with occasional pupping in Tasmania and South Australia. (Goldsworthy, 2015)

Additionally, the species has been recorded through human observations in the Offshore study area in 2014, as documented in the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA).

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

Southern Elephant Seal (*Mirounga leonina*)

The Southern Elephant Seal is listed as Vulnerable and Marine under the EPBC Act and is not listed under the FFG Act.

There are two main populations found in Australian waters and the principal breeding colonies for these populations are located on Heard and Macquarie Islands, concentrating on the northern beaches of Macquarie Island (DCCEEW, 2025a). The species is a visitor to mainland Australia, in particular to Tasmania.

To breed and moult the Southern Elephant Seal prefers sand or cobble stone beaches where it can easily come ashore.

The species has been recorded in three (3) VBA entries, twice in 1992, and once in 2014, within the Offshore study area.

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

5.5.5 Marine reptiles

This Section outlines the following species:

– Marine reptiles that are known or likely to occur in the Offshore PAA and Offshore study area
– Conservation significant marine reptile species (listed as threatened under the EPBC and FFG Act) that were found in the desktop assessment that are known, likely or may occur within the Offshore PAA and Offshore study area

Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*)

The Loggerhead Turtle is listed as Endangered, Migratory and Marine under the EPBC Act and is not listed under the FFG Act.

The average Loggerhead measures around 90 cm in carapace length when fully grown. The adult Loggerhead Turtle weighs approximately 135 kg, with the largest specimens weighing in at more than 450 kg. The skin ranges from yellow to brown in colour, and the shell is typically reddish brown (DCCEEW, 2025a).

In Australia, Loggerhead Turtles nest on open, sandy beaches. Adults and large juveniles with greater than 70 cm curved carapace length occur in waters with both hard and soft substrates including rocky and coral reefs, muddy bays, sandflats, estuaries and seagrass meadows. Loggerhead Turtle hatchlings from eastern Australia rookeries move down the coast of eastern Australia with the East Australian Current, into the Tasman Front, past Lord Howe Island to the north of New Zealand and across the southern Pacific Ocean to the waters off the coast of Peru and Chile (DCCEEW, 2025a). Loggerhead Turtles found within the Bass Strait and Gippsland region are expected to be rare vagrants outside their usual range.

There are no records of this species within or nearby to the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA (ALA, 2025), however, there are sightings within the nearby Gippsland Lake Coastal Park in 2014.

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as may occur in the Offshore study area and to may occur in the Offshore PAA.

Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

The Leatherback Turtle is listed as Endangered, Migratory and Marine under the EPBC Act and is listed as Critically Endangered under the FFG Act.

The species can grow up to 3 m long with heavy paddle-shaped limbs lacking claws. Adults are dark brown or black above, sometimes with paler marbling or longitudinal rows of fine dots on the back, while hatchlings are a rich blue-black trimmed with white, and pale below (DCCEEW, 2025a).

The Leatherback Turtle is the most frequently recorded species in eastern Victoria. This region serves as an important feeding ground for the Leatherback, a pelagic species that forages in high-latitude waters across all oceans (CIE, 2019). Although no major nesting occurs in Australia, sightings and foraging activity are regularly reported in the South-east Marine Region (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b).

There are human observations of this species in 2014 within 10 km of the Offshore study area (ALA, 2025).

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as likely to occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)

The Green Turtle is listed as Vulnerable, Migratory and Marine under the EPBC Act and is not listed under the FFG Act.

The species can grow up to 1 m in length. Its heart-shaped shell is olive-green, brown and black, and the scales on the side of the face and limbs have distinctive pale edges.

Green Turtles nest, forage and migrate across subtropic to tropical northern Australia. They usually occur between the 20°C isotherms, although individuals can stray into temperate waters. Once adults, the species settles in shallow benthic foraging habitats such as tropical tidal and sub-tidal coral and rocky reef habitat or inshore seagrass beds. The shallow foraging habitat of adults contains seagrass beds or algae mats on which Green Turtles mainly feed (DCCEEW, 2025a). Green Turtles found within the Bass Strait and Gippsland region are expected to be rare vagrants outside their usual range. There are no records of this species within or nearby to the Offshore study area or Offshore PAA (ALA, 2025), however, there are sightings of Green Turtles in the nearby Corner Inlet Marine and Coastal Park and suitable foraging habitat is present.

Based on the likelihood of occurrence assessment the species was assessed as may occur in the Offshore study area and Offshore PAA.

5.5.6 Birds

This Section outlines a summary of Seabirds, Shorebirds and Terrestrial Birds that may, are likely or known to occur within Offshore PAA and Offshore study area.

5.5.6.1 Seabirds

Seabirds are birds that are highly adapted to the marine environment. Characteristics of many seabird species include webbed feet, dense water-resistant plumage that protects birds from becoming soaked, a diet comprising marine biota (typically fish), and nesting on offshore islands or inaccessible coastlines (Petrofac, 2025). Many seabird species spend relatively little time on land and forage at sea for extended periods. Some species may undertake long migrations; however, unlike migratory shorebirds, they do not typically follow the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (Petrofac, 2025)

There are several records of threatened seabirds that may, are likely or known to occur within the Offshore study area (Table 5.3). The Offshore study area intersects with nine seabirds foraging BIAs, a summary is provided in Section 5.7.2.2.

5.5.6.2 Shorebirds

Migratory shorebirds, including various species of wading birds, are a significant ecological component of Victoria's coastal and wetland environments. These birds breed in the tundra regions of Northern Asia—particularly eastern Russia and China—during the Northern Hemisphere summer and migrate to Australasia, including Victoria, during the Southern Hemisphere summer to feed (Petrofac, 2025). Their migration follows the East Asian–Australasian Flyway, one of the world's major migratory routes, and is supported by international agreements such as the Japan–Australia and China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreements.

While migratory shorebirds do not nest in Australia, they rely on Victoria's coastal and inland wetlands as critical feeding and resting sites during their annual migration. These habitats provide rich mudflats teeming with invertebrates, which are essential for the birds to build fat reserves for their long journeys. Many of these wetlands are recognised under the Ramsar Convention and are protected under the EPBC Act (State Government of Victoria , 2023).

In Victoria, key sites within the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Site Network (EAAFP) that support migratory shorebirds include:

– Shallow Inlet
– Corner Inlet
– Western Port
– Western Shoreline of Port Phillip Bay and the Bellarine Peninsula
– Discovery Bay

5.5.6.3 Terrestrial birds (overfly marine)

Terrestrial bird species that overfly marine areas are bird species that inhibit inland or coastal habitats and occasionally or seasonally overfly marine areas. Similarly to shorebirds, these species are often migratory birds travelling from breeding to non-breeding areas, either on a broad front through the landscape or via clearly defined routes (Kirby, et al., 2008). As described in Section 5.5.6.2, one of the most common patterns is for birds to breed in the temperate, boreal or Arctic biomes of the Northern Hemisphere during the northern summer, and then to spend the non-breeding season in the warmer biomes of the tropics, with fewer species migrating very long distances to reach the temperate zones of the Southern Hemisphere during the southern summer (Kirby, et al., 2008).

However, an alternative flyway between mainland southeast Australia and Tasmania exists where some bird species that are found in Victoria migrate across the Bass Strait to their southerly breeding grounds in spring, returning north in autumn. The flyway is considerably understudied relative to the EAAFP and passes through the declared priority area for offshore wind development.

The following species have been identified as significant terrestrial species with a marine overfly component:

– Swift Parrot
– Orange-bellied Parrot
– Blue-winged Parrot
– White-throated Needletail

5.5.7 Bat species with potential marine overfly

Other terrestrial fauna that inhabit inland or coastal habitats adjacent to the Offshore PAA may overfly the Offshore study area during migration or for foraging purposes.

The White-striped Freetail Bat (*Austronomus australis*) is distributed throughout mainland Australia. They have also been recorded in Tasmania during bat call surveys between 2009 and 2012. Based on limited evidence available, including this species' long-range flight capabilities (including over open water out to sea), there is a potential that this species is a periodic vagrant to Tasmania, although this is not yet confirmed (Cawthen, 2013). At Port Phillip Bay in southern Victoria, *A. australis* is frequently observed foraging over beaches and inshore waters, including hunting for insects, over 2 km from the nearest land.

In NSW, an individual *A. australis* was observed flying 6 km off Wollongong during the day, and on two separate occasions an individual was observed again during the day 46 km east-south-east of Sydney heads, over Browns Sea Mount. *A. australis* has also been observed flying off the coast of Western Australia, 150 km south of Esperance (Cawthen, 2013).

Other bat species such as the Eastern Bent-winged Bat (*Miniopterus orianae oceanensis*) undertake regional-scale migrations between maternity caves and non-breeding caves in NSW and East Gippsland, with potential dispersal toward Tasmania (Mills, 2021). Although the Southern Bent-winged Bat (*Miniopterus orianae bassanii*) does not occur within or near the offshore PPA, it has been recorded flying up to 72 km in a few hours, suggesting a capacity to cross Bass Strait (van Harten, et al., 2022).This example highlights the potential for the Eastern Bent-winged Bat to also undertake long-distance movements over open ocean. However, such extensive oceanic journeys, like those observed in the White-striped Freetail Bat, are considered unlikely for bent-winged bat species.

Bats are considered to be unlikely to occur over Commonwealth waters within the offshore PAA, however there may be the occasional visitor or vagrant species found traversing between Tasmania and mainland Australia over the Bass Strait.

There are no listed bat species that are known to be Bass Strait migrants.

Surveys are being completed to determine presence and flight heights of species within the offshore PAA which will inform collision risk assessment and modelling. Refer to the Onshore Preliminary Assessment Report (GHD, 2025b) for further information and assessment of terrestrial species relevant to the project.

5.5.8 Invasive Marine Species

Successful Invasive Marine Species (IMS) are often able to exploit resources in novel ways, without their natural predators, competitors and parasites present. Therefore, IMS can direct more resources to growth and reproduction and thereby reduce or eliminate populations of native species through predation, competition or other means (Butler, Althaus, Furlani, & Ridgway, 2002). Due to the high level of vessel traffic and marine industry within the Bass Strait and Gippsland, marine species can be introduced through ballast water and hull fouling of ships, or through natural dispersal from other points of introduction. Water temperatures of the Bass Strait currently support temperate biota; where an increase in temperature may result in the invasion of more tropical species (Butler, Althaus, Furlani, & Ridgway, 2002).

Victorian IMS

Under the *Fisheries Act 1995* , the Victorian State Government recognises the following 19 pest species have been identified including (DEECA, 2022):

- 13 exotic species:
  - Invasive:
    - American Slipper Limpet (*Crepidula fornicate*)
    - Caulerpa Seaweed *(Caulerpa cylindracea)*
    - Asian Basket Clam (*Potamocorbula amurensis*, syn. *Corbula amurensis*)
    - Asian Green Mussel (*Perna viridis*)
    - Asian Paddle Crab (*Charybdis japonica*)
    - Black Striped False Mussel (*Mytilopsis* spp. and *Congeria* spp)
    - Brown Mussel (*Perna perna*)
    - Charru Mussel (*Mytella charruana*)
    - Chinese Mitten Crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*)
    - Harris Mud Crab (*Rhithropanopeus harrisii*)
    - New Zealand Green Mussel (*Perna canaliculus*)
    - Rapa Whelk (*Rapana venosa,* syn. *R.thomasiana*)
    - Soft Shell Clam (*Mya arenaria*)

– Six established species:
  - Asian Bag Mussel (*Musculista senhousia*)
  - Asian Shore Crab (*Hemigrapsus sanguineus*)
  - European Fan Worm (*Sabella spallanzanii*)
  - Japanese Kelp (*Undaria pinnatifida*)
  - New Zealand Screwshell (*Maoricolpus roseus*)
  - Northern Pacific Seastar (*Asterias amurensis*)

5.6 State matters

5.6.1 Victorian marine protected areas

A marine protected area in Victoria is an area reserved to protect environmental, historical or cultural features within Victorian waters. Victoria has 13 protected marine national parks and 11 marine sanctuaries (see Figure 5.5). In Victoria, marine national parks are typically large and protective of ecology of the area in general whereas marine sanctuaries are focussed on specific or unique habitat features and typically smaller than marine national parks. Marine national parks and marine sanctuaries are no-take areas, prohibiting commercial and recreational fishing activities, while six multiple-use marine protected areas (marine and coastal parks, marine parks, and marine reserves) have a lower level of protection allowing for recreational and commercial fishing.

There are no marine protected areas overlapping the Offshore PAA. The following marine protected areas are nearby the Offshore PAA:

– Ninety Mile Beach Marine Park (within the Offshore study area)
– Corner Inlet Marine National Park (approximately 31 km west of Offshore study area)
– Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park (intersects with the Offshore study area)
– Corner Inlet Marine and Coastal Park (intersect with the Offshore study area)

Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park

The Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park (MNP) is north-east of the Offshore PAA, covers an area of 2,650 ha and extends 5 km along the coastline and 5 km offshore from the high-water mark. The Offshore PAA is approximately 490 m west of the MNP. The MNP supports four distinct marine ecological communities including, intertidal sandy beach, subtidal sandy sediment, subtidal reef and open waters (Parks Victoria, 2025).

Ninety Mile Beach MNP does not occur within the Offshore PAA but is present within the wider Offshore study area.

Corner Inlet Marine National Park

The Corner Inlet MNP is approximately 61.9 km south-west of the Offshore PAA. It covers an area of 1,150 ha and is located entirely within the Corner Inlet Ramsar site boundary and on the eastern boundary of the Corner Inlet Marine and Coastal Park (see Section 5.6.2). The MNP contains marine habitats such as, deep channels, extensive shallow seagrass beds, tidal sand and mud flats, sandy beaches and rocky reefs, mangroves and saltmarsh.

The Corner Inlet MNP does not intersect the Offshore PAA and wider Offshore study area.

5.6.2 Other marine protected areas

Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park

The Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park (MCP) is approximately 14.8 km south-west of the Offshore PAA and covers an area of 30,170 ha. The MCP consists of shallow marine waters, intertidal mudflats and a series of over 40 sandy islands. The MCP overlaps with the Corner Inlet Ramsar site.

The Nooramunga MCP does not intersect the Offshore PAA but intersects the wider Offshore study area.

Corner Inlet Marine and Coastal Park

The Corner Inlet MCP is approximately 61.9 km south-west of the Offshore PAA. It covers an area of 28,500 ha. As with Nooramunga MCP, Corner Inlet MCP overlaps with the Corner Inlet Ramsar site. Habitat consists of mostly shallow intertidal environment comprising extensive mud and sandflats and seagrass beds.

The Corner Inlet MCP does not intersect the Offshore PAA but intersects the wider Offshore study area.

5.6.3 Victorian marine assets

DELWP (now DEECA) developed a system of marine asset identification to inform natural resource management across Victoria. These assets (see Figure 5.5) are defined as biophysical elements of the environment that are valuable for their ecosystem services. The criteria applied in determining Victorian marine assets included (VEAC, 2019):

- State or bioregional importance of the asset for its biodiversity, endemism, ecological role or function
- Support and contribution of the asset to the fitness of a species that is of international, state or bioregional importance for biodiversity
- Performs a key ecological role or function
- Representativeness of the asset in terms of marine habitats, and the naturalness and resilience of the asset

There are five Victorian marine assets identified in the Gippsland region that are in the vicinity of, but not within, the Offshore PAA as listed in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Victorian marine assets near the Offshore PAA

Asset	Category	Area	Reference in this report
Corner Inlet/Nooramunga mudflat environment	Victorian significance	Gippsland region	Section 5.7.1.1
Corner Inlet Posidonia habitat and Corner Inlet to Nooramunda Zostera habitat	Victorian significant	Gippsland region	Section 5.7.1.1
Wilsons Promontory deep water habitat	Victorian significant	Gippsland region	Section 5.2
Wilsons Promontory southern islands	Victorian significant	Gippsland region	Section 5.2
Corner Inlet mangroves	Bioregional significance	Gippsland region	Section 5.7.1.1

5.6.4 Victorian fisheries

The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) is an independent statutory authority that manages fishery resources in Victoria, in line with the *Fisheries Act 1995*. For commercial fishing, the VFA manage state-level commercial fishing, issuing licences and collecting catch data. The variety of nearshore habitats off Victoria support a diverse fish community that is of ecological, recreational, social, commercial and heritage importance. The recreational fishing sector in Victoria has approximately 4.2 million people who go fishing every year, as of 2020, contributing to just over $11 billion to the Australian economy (FRDC, 2023).

Environmental variables influence the abundance and biological diversity in the ocean. Species are particularly sensitive during vulnerable life stages, including juveniles. Certain habitat features are critical for sustainability of a population, including habitat types known as nursery habitats such as reefs and primary producer habitat types.

Several species form part of locally targeted recreational and commercial fisheries. Species of importance to commercial marine fishing in Victoria include the following (VFA, 2025):

- Abalone (*Haliotis* spp.)

– Baitfish
– Eel (*Anguilliformes* spp.)
– Giant Crab (*Pseudocarcinus giga*)
– Octopus (*Octopoda* spp.)
– Pipi (*Paphies australis*)
– Southern Rock Lobster (*Jasus edwardsii*)
– Scallop (*Pectinidae* spp.)
– Sea Urchin (*Echinoidea* spp.)
– Wrasse (*Labridae* spp.)
– King George Whiting (*Sillaginodes punctata*)
– Snapper (*Pagrus auratus*)

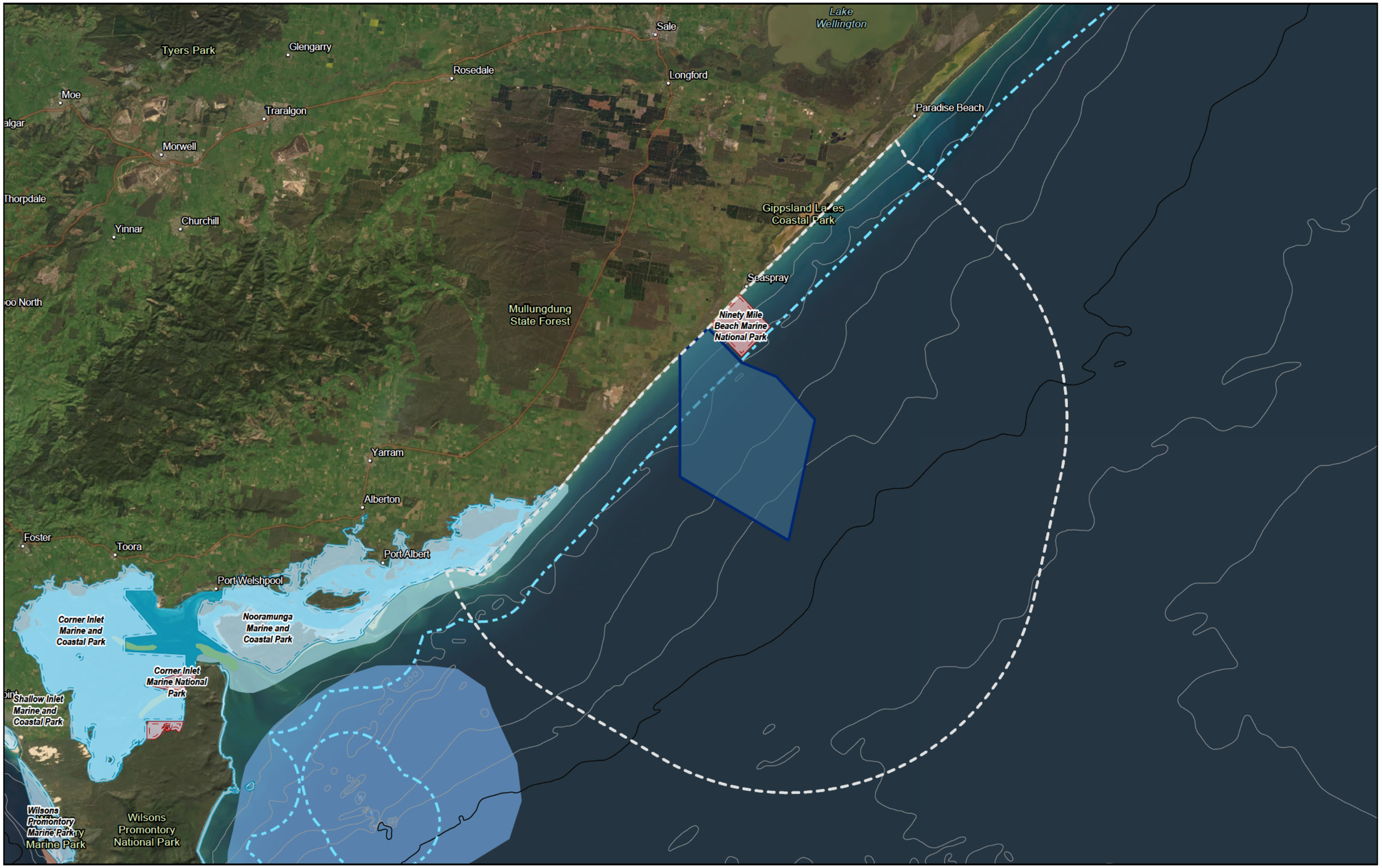
Key fishes targeted by commercial fishers include the following:

– Southern Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*)
– Sardine (*Sardinops sagax*)
– School Shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*)
– Gummy Shark (*Mustelus antarcticus*)
– Snapper (*Pagrus auratus*)
– King George Whiting (*Sillaginodes punctata*)
– Deepwater Flathead (*Neoplatycephalus conatus*)
– Bight Redfish (*Centroberyx gerrardi*)
– Deep Sea Trevalla (*Hyperoglyphe antarctica*)
– Orange Roughy (*Hoplostethus atlanticus*)

5.6.5 FFG Act species

The desktop review undertaken on the VBA identified 65 listed species protected under the FFG Act (see Appendix B), including:

– Two Cetaceans
– One marine mammal
– Fifty-two marine birds
– Three sharks, rays or fish
– One reptile
– Six flora



Legend

- Coastal Waters Limit
- offshore Proposed Action Area
- offshore study area
- Bathymetric contours

Conservation and Protected Areas

- Marine National Park
- Marine and Coastal Park

Marine Assets

- Corner Inlet Posidonia Habitat
- Corner Inlet deep channels
- Nooramunga - Corner Inlet Zostera habitat
- Nooramunga - Corner Inlet all mudflats
- Open sea pelagic environment
- Wilsons Promontory deepwater habitat
- Wilsons Promontory south islands

Paper Size ISO A3

0 5 10

Kilometers

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: GDA2020
Grid: GDA2020 MGA Zone 55

N

GHD

Blue Mackerel North Pty Ltd
Blue Mackerel Offshore Wind Farm
EIA and Approvals

State (Victorian) Marine Assets and Protected Areas

Project No. **12656248**
Revision No. **0**
Date **1/10/2025**

FIGURE 5.5

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Print date: 01 Oct 2025 - 18:17

Data source: World Imagery: Earthstar Geographics
Hybrid Reference Layer: Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Created by: bpalm

5.7 Commonwealth matters

5.7.1 Matters of National Environmental Significance

The DCCEEW PMST desktop mapping bioclimatically predicts habitat types and species presence for MNES protected under the EPBC Act that are predicted to occur in, or be related to, a defined area.

To inform MNES with a likelihood to occur within the Offshore PAA a PMST search was completed for the Offshore study area. The PMST search was conducted on the 5 August 2025. The full PMST report is provided in Appendix A and summarised in Table 5.5

Table 5.5 PMST Report Summary – Matters of National Environmental Significance

Matter	Description and assessment	Section
World Heritage Properties	**Description** No World Heritage Properties are located within the Offshore study area.	**N/A**
National Heritage Places	**Description** No National Heritage Properties are located within the Offshore study area	**N/A**
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar wetlands)	**Description** Two Wetlands of International Importance are located within the Offshore study area including: – Corner Inlet, approximately 20 km north-east of the Offshore PAA – Gippsland lakes, approximately 9 km west of the Offshore PAA	**Section 5.7.1.1**
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park	**Description** The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is not located within the Offshore study area.	**N/A**
Commonwealth Marine Area	**Description** Two Commonwealth Marine Areas; the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Territorial Sea Marine Area, are located within the Offshore study area.	**Section 5.7.1.2**
Listed Threatened Ecological Communities	**Description** Based on the PMST, there are two Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) identified within the Offshore study area: – Natural Damp Grassland of the Victorian Coastal Plains (Critically Endangered) – Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh (Vulnerable) For the purposes of this report, the above TECs are considered to be terrestrial and will therefore not be addressed further. Refer to the Preliminary Assessment Report - Onshore Ecology (GHD, 2025) for assessment of coastal and terrestrial TECs.	**N/A**
Listed threatened species	**Description** Based on the PMST report, there are 94 Listed Threatened Species that were identified within the Offshore study area.	**Section 5.7.1.3**
Listed migratory species	**Description** Based on the PMST report, there are 67 Listed Migratory Species that were identified within the Offshore study area.	**Section 5.7.1.3**
Listed marine species	**Description** Based on the PMST report, there are 106 Listed Marine Species that that were identified within the Offshore study area.	**Section 5.7.1.3**
Whales and other cetaceans	**Description** The PMST report indicates 14 whales and other Cetaceans to occur within the Offshore study area.	**Section 5.7.1.3**

5.7.1.1 Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar wetlands)

The Offshore study area lies on the south-western edge of the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar (Figure 5.6), the site is within 10 km of the Offshore PAA. The Corner Inlet Ramsar site intersects with the Offshore study area, however, the site is located over 20 km south-west of the Offshore PAA.

Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site

The Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site is located east of the Latrobe Valley and south of the Eastern Highlands in the State of Victoria, approximately 300 km east of Melbourne (BMT WBM, 2011). The Ramsar site consists of coastal lagoons separated from sea by a barrier system of sand dunes fringed on the seaward side by Ninety Mile Beach (BMT WBM, 2011).

The section of the Ramsar site that overlaps with the Offshore study area is the elongated saltmarsh-dominated Lake Reeve, extending from Loch Sport southwest to Seaspray. The site boundary at this location includes the lake and associated wetlands only and does not include terrestrial areas, dunal areas and the ocean beaches of the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park (BMT WBM, 2011).

Lake Reeve is classified as semi-permanent saline wetland type, with the rest of the site comprising deep freshwater marsh, permanent open freshwater, and permanent saline wetlands (BMT WBM, 2011).The semi-permanent saline wetland type is represented within the site by saltmarsh communities that border saline influenced wetlands as well as shorelines that are infrequently inundated by saline water (BMT WBM, 2011). The Victorian Wetland Classification System (DELWP, 2014) mapping indicates that approximately 7,137 ha of intertidal marshes are present within the Ramsar site.

Important natural features of the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site include:

– The provision of threatened flora habitat and the support of several nationally threatened wetland fauna species at various stages of their life cycle, including resident frog populations and cryptic wetland birds
– Supporting refugia habitat for a range of non-migratory wetland-dependant species such as nationally threatened frog species
– High abundances of seasonal migratory and resident waterbirds with particularly large aggregations occurring in deep freshwater marshes, saltmarsh, and shallow permanent saline wetlands
– The site has previously been attributed with regularly supporting approximately 40,000 to 50,000 waterbirds and is estimated to continue to support more than 20,000 resident waterbirds. Certain species (e.g., red-necked stint, sharp-tailed sandpiper and fairy tern) are considered to have occurred in such abundances so as to meet the one per cent population threshold.
– Provision of important habitats, feeding areas, dispersal and migratory pathways, and spawning sites for numerous fish species of direct and indirect fisheries significance

Corner Inlet

The Corner Inlet Ramsar site is on the west Gippsland coast and includes a chain of barrier islands, multiple beach ridges, lagoons and swamps, tidal creeks, tidal deltas and tidal washovers (DCCEEW, 2025b). The Offshore PAA is approximately 20 km east of Corner Inlet Ramsar site.

The Offshore study area is located offshore of the western most point of the Corner Inlet, south of McLoughlins Beach, and extends approximately 18 km west to an area offshore from Manns Beach. This section of the Ramsar site contains intertidal marshes, salt meadow, saltings, and raised salt marshes, permanent shallow marine waters, intertidal muds and sands and marine subtidal aquatic beds; including kelp beds and seagrasses (DSEWPC, 2011).

Corner Inlet is a very good example of a wetland enclosed by barrier islands in Victoria and contains the most extensive intertidal mudflats in Victoria. The area contains the only extensive bed of *Posidonia australis* in Victoria. The islands of Corner Inlet, although not rich in plant diversity, are of high biogeographical significance as a result of their geological history and connectivity to the mainland during ice ages. The islands also contain significant areas of saltmarsh and mangroves, both of which are communities of very limited distribution. These communities filter pollutants, stabilise sediments and protect the shoreline from erosion.

Important natural features of the Corner Inlet Ramsar site include:

- The provision of breeding habitat for a variety of waterbirds, including several species listed as threatened or migratory and/or occurring in significant numbers and habitat for significant aggregations of waterbirds during post-breeding, and as a refuge during adverse environmental conditions
- Supports well over 20,000 waterbirds including species such as the Eastern Curlew, Curlew Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit, and Double-banded Plover
- Has regularly supported more than one per cent of the population of the *Haematopus longirostris* (Pied Oystercatcher)*, Haematopus fuliginosus* (Sooty Oystercatcher), Pacific Gull, Fairy Tern, Red Knot, Necked Stint and *Anas castanea* (Chestnut Teal)
- Supports the nationally critically endangered Orange Bellied Parrot as well as several other vulnerable and endangered species, including the Australian Grayling. The Southern Right Whale, Leatherback Turtle, Swift Parrot and Shy Albatross have all also been recorded at the site
- Provision of important habitats, feeding areas, dispersal and migratory pathways, and spawning sites for numerous fish species

5.7.1.2 Commonwealth marine areas

Commonwealth marine areas are MNES under the EPBC Act. A portion of the Offshore PAA is located within the Commonwealth marine area, extending from the three nm limit to the outer extend of the Offshore PAA. The entirety of the Feasibility Licence Area and part of the Export Cable Area is located within the Commonwealth marine area.

The Export Cable Area lies within Commonwealth waters up to 33 m deep. Whereas the Feasibility Licence Area encompasses a gently sloping sandy seabed with water depths between 33 to 48 m (see Figure 5.4. The seabed is primarily characterised by medium to very coarse sand and is relatively featureless compared to the wider region.

Commonwealth waters of the Offshore study area include BIAs for the Pygmy Blue Whale, Southern Right Whale, White Shark and Seabirds (Section 5.7.2.2) as well as offshore petroleum industry infrastructure (see Section 5.8.1), the Basslink-Loy Yang to George Town electricity transmission line (see Figure 5.19) and Commonwealth commercial fisheries (see Section 5.7.3).

5.7.1.3 Listed threatened and migratory species

The PMST search report identified 94 listed threatened species and 67 listed migratory species as having the potential to occur within the Offshore PAA and Offshore study area.

As the focus of this assessment is the marine environment, exclusively terrestrial species identified (apart from terrestrial marine overfly bird species) identified have been omitted from further consideration. This process has identified 58 listed nationally threatened species, and a further 67 listed migratory species of relevance to the Offshore PAA and Offshore study area, including:

- Eighteen marine mammals
- Ninety birds (seabirds, shorebirds and terrestrial overfly birds)
- Nine fish (eight species and one family (Syngnathidae))
- Three marine reptiles
-

Forest
Fainting Range State Forest
Cann River
Mallacoota
Freestone / Wurrundyangarla State Forest
Mount Useful State Forest
Orbost
Bemm State Forest
Bemm State Forest
Croajingolong National Park
Colquhoun / Boyanga Gidi State Forest
Ben Cruachan State Forest
Bairnsdale
Baw Baw National Park
Lakes Entrance
Paynesville
Maffra
Lake Wellington
Sale
Moe
Traralgon
East Gippsland Marine Park
Seaspray
Yarram
Foster
Wilsons Promontory National Park
Wilsons Promontory Islands Remote and Natural Area
Beagle Marine Park
Kent Group National Park

Legend

- Coastal Waters Limit
- offshore Proposed Action Area
- offshore study area
- UNESCO Ramsar Site
- Commonwealth Marine Parks

Ramsar Wetlands

- Corner Inlet
- Gippsland Lakes

Paper Size ISO A3

0 10 20 30

Kilometers

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: GDA2020
Grid: GDA2020 MGA Zone 55

N

GHD

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EIA and Approvals

Commonwealth Marine Protected Areas and Ramsar Wetlands

Project No. **12656248**
Revision No. **0**
Date **1/10/2025**

FIGURE 5.6

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Print date: 01 Oct 2025 - 18:17

Data source: World Imagery: Earthstar Geographics
Hybrid Reference Layer: Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Created by: bpalm

5.7.2 Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act

Other Matters Protected under the EPBC Act that may occur within the Offshore PAA and Offshore study area were identified within the PMST search and a summary is provided in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 PMST Report Summary – Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act

Matter	Description and Assessment	Section
Commonwealth Lands	**Description** The PMST report indicated no Commonwealth Lands within the PMST Offshore study area.	**N/A**
Commonwealth Heritage Places	**Description** The PMST report indicated no Commonwealth Heritage Places within the PMST Offshore study area.	**N/A**
Critical Habitats	**Description** The PMST indicates no critical habitats present within the Offshore study area.	**N/A**
Australian Marine Parks	**Description** The PMST indicates no Australian Marine Parks (previously Commonwealth Marine Reserves) are located within the search area. The closest Australian Marine Park to the Offshore study area is Beagle Marine Park more than 50 km south.	**N/A**
Habitat Critical to the Survival of Marine Turtles	**Description** The PMST indicates no Habitat Critical to the Survival of Marine Turtles within the Offshore study area	**N/A**
State and Territory Reserves	**Description** Four State and Territory Reserves that were returned by the PMST search are classified as terrestrial reserves and are therefore not considered further. An additional two marine reserves were returned within the Offshore study area: – Nooramunga Marine & Coastal Park – Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park The marine State Reserves are described in Sections 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 under State matters.	**Sections 5.6.1 and 5.6.2**
Nationally Important Wetlands	**Description** Nationally Important Wetlands (NIWs) in Australia are identified by the Directory of Important Wetlands. Based on the PMST report, there are two NIW within the Offshore study area: – Corner Inlet – Jack Smith Lake State Game Reserve	**Section 5.7.2.1**
Key Ecological Features	**Description** The PMST indicates no Key Ecological Features within the Offshore study area.	**N/A**
Biologically Important Areas	**Description** Based on the PMST, there are 12 Biologically Important Areas that are known or likely to occur within the Offshore study area.	**Section 5.7.2.2**

5.7.2.1 Nationally Important Wetlands

The Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia defines a wetland, their variety and the many flora and fauna species that depend on them. The Corner Inlet NIW is approximately 30 km from the Export Cable Area of the Offshore PAA and is considered Section 5.7.1.1.

The Jack Smith Lake State Game Reserve is approximately 1 km from the cable export area. The wetland includes Jack Smith and Lambs Lake along with small herbfields interspersed between thickets of Swamp Paperbark (*Melaluca ericifolia*) and undergoes regular wetting and drying cycles (DELWP, 2014).

5.7.2.2 Biologically Important Areas

BIAs are designated for protected marine species where aggregations of individuals display biologically important behaviour such as breeding, foraging, resting and migration. The offshore study area and offshore PAA intersect with, or are within close proximity to, BIAs for 12 species (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7 Biologically Important Areas

Scientific name	Common name	Behaviour	Occurrence within offshore study area	Occurrence within offshore PAA
Cetaceans				
Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda	Pygmy Blue Whale	Foraging	Occurs	Occurs
Eubalaena australis	Southern Right Whale	Breeding and Migration	Occurs and occurs, respectively	Occurs and occurs, respectively
Sharks				
Carcharodon carcharias	White Shark	Breeding (nursery area)	Occurs	Occurs
Seabirds				
Ardenna tenuirostris	Short-tailed Shearwater	Foraging	Occurs	Occurs
Pelagodroma marina	White-faced Storm-petrel	Foraging	Occurs	Does not occur
Pelecanoides urinatrix	Common Diving-petrel	Foraging	Occurs	Occurs
Diomedea exulans (sensu lato)	Wandering Albatross	Foraging	Occurs	Occurs
Thalassarche bulleri	Bullers Albatross	Foraging	Occurs	Occurs
Thalassarche cauta cauta	Shy Albatross	Foraging	Occurs	Occurs
Thalassarche chlororhynchos bassi	Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	Foraging	Occurs	Occurs
Thalassarche melanophris	Black-browed Albatross	Foraging	Occurs	Occurs
Thalassarche melanophris impavida	Campbell Albatross	Foraging	Occurs	Occurs

Southern Right Whales

In Australia, calving and nursing have been observed to occur exclusively in coastal waters. A reproduction BIA for Southern Right Whales has been defined within approximately 3 km from the coastline, intersecting with the Offshore study area (see Figure 5.7). Southern Right Whales are known to breed within 2.5 km of the Victorian coastline between approximately May and September, with the most active months occurring June to August. They migrate in all waters of the Bass Strait between approximately April and October (DCCEEW, 2024a). According to the Southern Right Whales Recovery Plan (DCCEEW, 2024a) the reproduction BIA represents habitat critical to the survival of the Southern Right Whales. A migration BIA also overlaps the entirety of the Offshore study area.

Pygmy Blue Whales

The Pygmy Blue Whale is known to occur along the South and West Australia coasts, the Bass Strait and along the Victoria coastline (ERIN, 2013). The Bonney Upwelling System and adjacent waters off Victoria form the known feeding aggregation habitats for Pygmy Blue Whales in southeast Australia and are utilised from November to May. The Conservation Management Plan for the Blue Whale (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015a) is the EPBC Act Recovery Plan for the species.

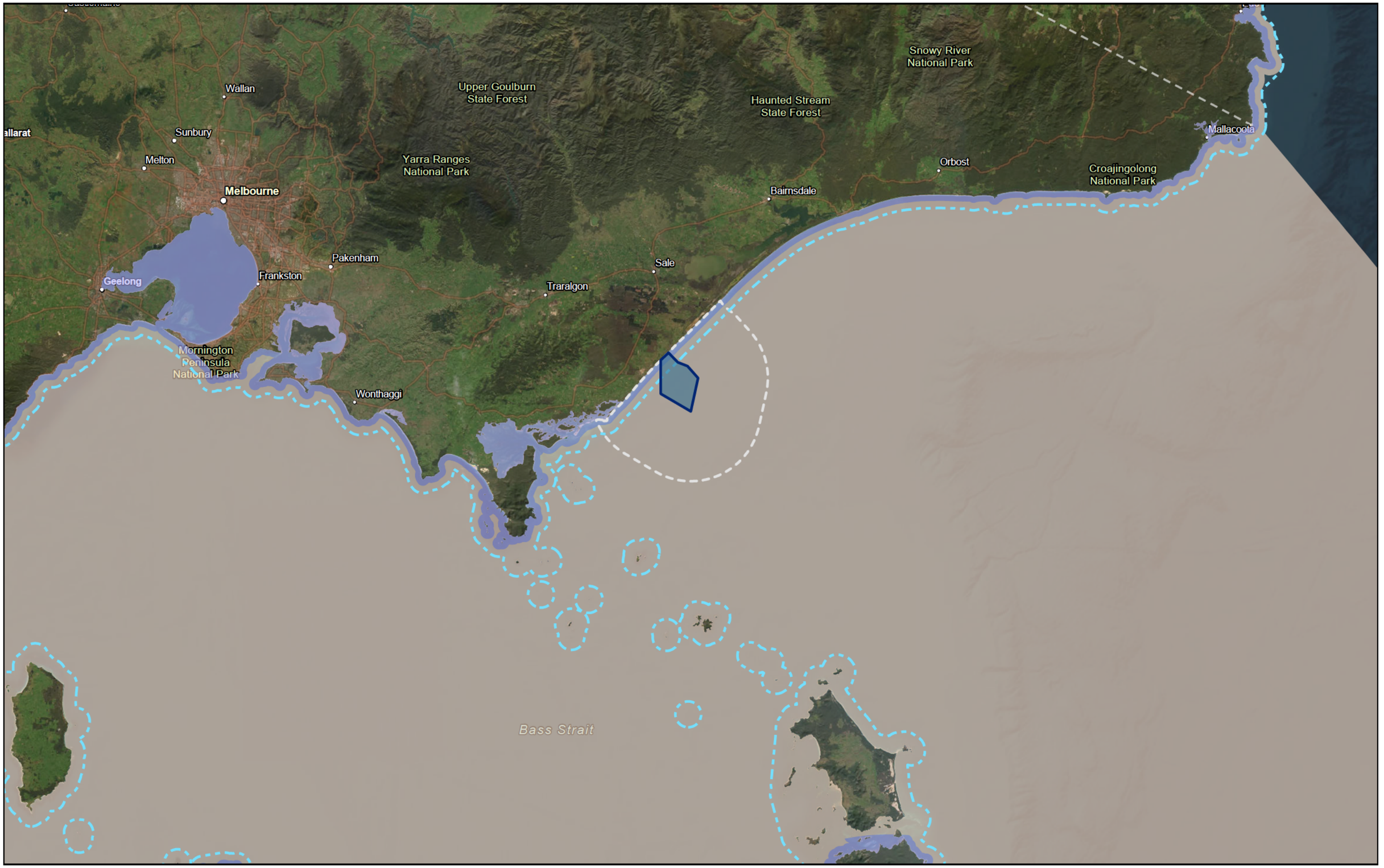
The Blue Whale Recovery Plan refers to BIAs for foraging and migratory habitat. The Offshore study area intersects with a Pygmy Blue Whale foraging BIA but not a migratory BIA, noting that data on habitat use by Pygmy Blue Whales are scarce for the east coast of Australia (see Figure 5.8).

White Sharks

Mapping of BIAs for White Sharks in Australia's Commonwealth Marine Regions shows not only the broad distribution of White Sharks within Australian waters but also identifies high density foraging sites, mostly around seal and sea lion colonies, and juvenile aggregation sites, where known (Figure 5.9. The Commonwealth's reproduction BIA overlaps with the Offshore study area. The two key nursery and juvenile aggregation sites for White Sharks on the east coast of Australia occur at Corner Inlet and 90 Mile Beach, Victoria, as well as Stockton and Hawks Nest beach in central NSW. White Sharks are therefore expected to occur within the Offshore study area, given the Offshore PAA is directly adjacent to one of the only two known east coast White Shark nurseries.

Seabirds

Foraging BIAs for one species of Shearwater, two species of Petrel and six species of Albatross overlap the Offshore study area (Figure 10 to Figure 5.18). The Offshore study area and locality are biologically important in terms of the food resource they provide for the bird species identified in Table 5.7. These species forage over the area, either through surface feeding, diving, or being attracted to food sources (i.e., commercial and recreational fishing vessels) (Arup, 2024). The nearest breeding location for seabirds is Seal Island group, approximately 24 km to the south-west, where the Short-tailed Shearwater and Common Diving-Petrel breed.



Legend

- Coastal Waters Limit
- offshore Proposed Action Area
- offshore study area

Biologically Important Areas - Whales

Southern Right Whales

- Migration
- Reproduction

Paper Size ISO A3

0 20 40 60

Kilometers

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: GDA2020
Grid: GDA2020 MGA Zone 55

N

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Biologically Important Areas of Southern Right Whales

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FIGURE 5.7

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Print date: 01 Oct 2025 - 18:19

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