



ReefWatch – Dragon Quest

Background

The dive community is concerned that weedy seadragons sightings in Port Phillip Bay and surrounds have been declining over the past 10 years. Unfortunately, there is limited historical information on the abundance of weedy seadragons within Port Phillip Bay and surrounds to ascertain if this is correct.

Using images submitted by divers and pattern mapping software to map the unique patterns that occur on the sides of weedy seadragons we plan to;

- 1) Identify and name individual weedy seadragons
- 2) Estimate the population of weedy seadragons at some locations for the first time
- 3) Monitor individual weedy seadragons to learn about their movements and breeding success

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Using your underwater camera, collect images of Weedy Seadragons anywhere in Port Phillip Bay, Western Port Bay and surrounds.

If you are out and about in the area we want to know what you find. It's up to you how you find them, but always remember to follow safe diving and snorkelling practices

Seadragons are poor (slow) swimmers and easy to photograph additionally they have high site fidelity (small home range). Once a population is found you should be able to locate them again on your subsequent dives. They are protected under Commonwealth Law (1999) so **please no harming or handling of them at any time.**

This project is support by the Victorian Governments Port Phillip Bay Fund with additional support provided by the University of Technology Sydney and the Underwater Research Group of New South Wales.

Weedy Seadragon Photo Shoot

In Three Easy Steps

Use your underwater camera and the tips below to collect images of Weedy Seadragons anywhere in Port Phillip Bay, Westernport Bay and surrounds! It's up to you how you find them, but always remember to follow safe diving and snorkelling and practices.

INWATER

1. Find a weedy seadragon
2. Take perpendicular photos **Left or Right Hand Side (both preferred)** of the weedy (take multiple shots to ensure there is a great photo that can be used).
3. Once you have captured some great shots **take a photo of your gauges** to record the depth.
4. This is not a step, merely a suggestion - continue to enjoy your dive and hopefully see more weedy seadragons!

AT HOME

1. Place photos of each individual (including photo of gauge) in a separate folder. Label folder as follows location_date_weedy1 (e.g. **Portsea_08Nov18_weedy1**). You do not need to label the individual images.
2. Send them through to kade@vnpa.org.au using your favourite Cloud storage (e.g. Google Drive, Box.com, Dropbox, OneDrive etc.) or zip them and send them through using <https://wettransfer.com/> if under 2GB.
3. **Done!**

We will be in touch with you shortly after images are submitted to give you the story behind each of the weedy seadragons you photographed.

Examples of Good and Bad images for Weedy spot analyses (Model: Corey the Seadragon)

