



Ex HMAS Canberra Dive Site



Visitor Guide

The ex-HMAS Canberra is a former warship which served the Australian Navy between 1981 and 2005. The vessel was specifically prepared and scuttled as a dive attraction in October 2009 and now lies approximately 28 metres of water. Over time the wreck will become a haven for marine life that will colonise the ex HMAS Canberra and transforms the wreck into a spectacular reef.

Things to see and do

Diving and Snorkelling

Officially opened on 5 December 2009, the ex-HMAS Canberra site has been established specifically for diving and snorkelling. The site offers divers the opportunity to explore a large portion of the ex-HMAS Canberra, including flight decks, bridge, engine rooms, galley and the accommodation quarters.

Access to the site is limited to those visitors who are participating in diving or snorkelling activities only. See restrictions for more information.

Heritage

The HMAS Canberra was the second of four FFG-7 Class Guided Missile Frigates built for the Royal Australian Navy by Todd Pacific Shipyards Corporation Seattle, Washington, USA. The HMAS Canberra was commissioned on 21 March 1981 and de-commissioned on 12 November 2005.

The vessel hull is constructed of steel and the superstructure is aluminium alloy. It has an overall length of 138.1 metres and a beam of 13.7 metres. In service, the height from keel to top of the mast was approximately 39 metres.

Parts of the ship, including the gas turbine engines, rudder, missile launcher, a section of the mast and propeller were removed by the Navy, prior to it being prepared for use as a dive site.

Many of the potential hazards to divers such as internal fixings, hatches, ladders and loose material have been removed or secured and access to confined spaces barred off.

Precautions

Wreck diving is challenging and adventurous, and can also be very dangerous.



ex HMAS Canberra prior to scuttling - September 2009

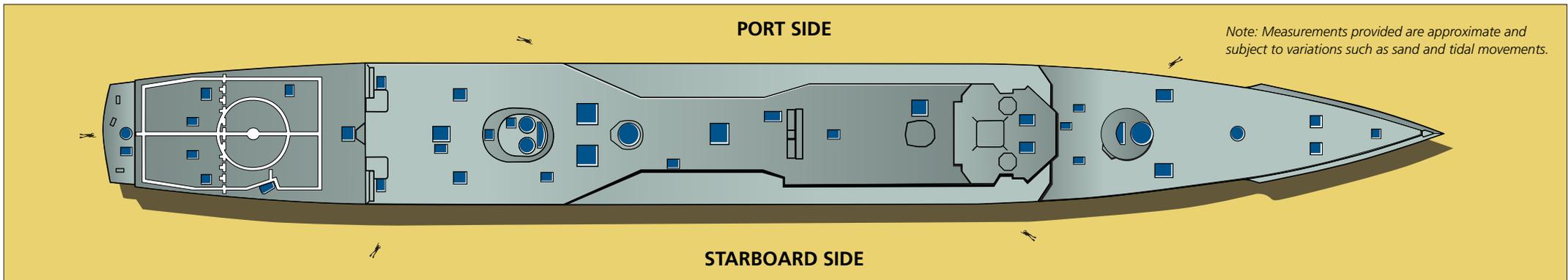
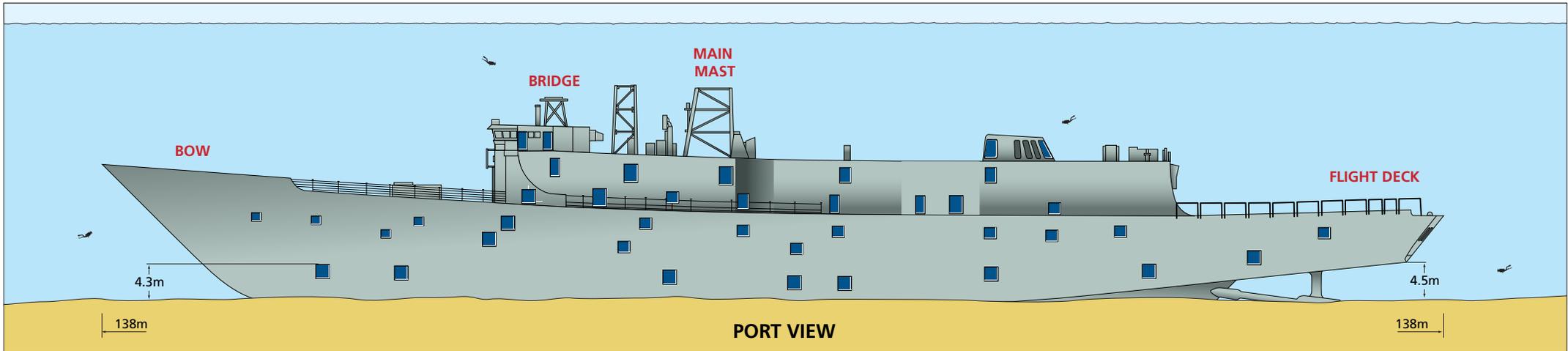
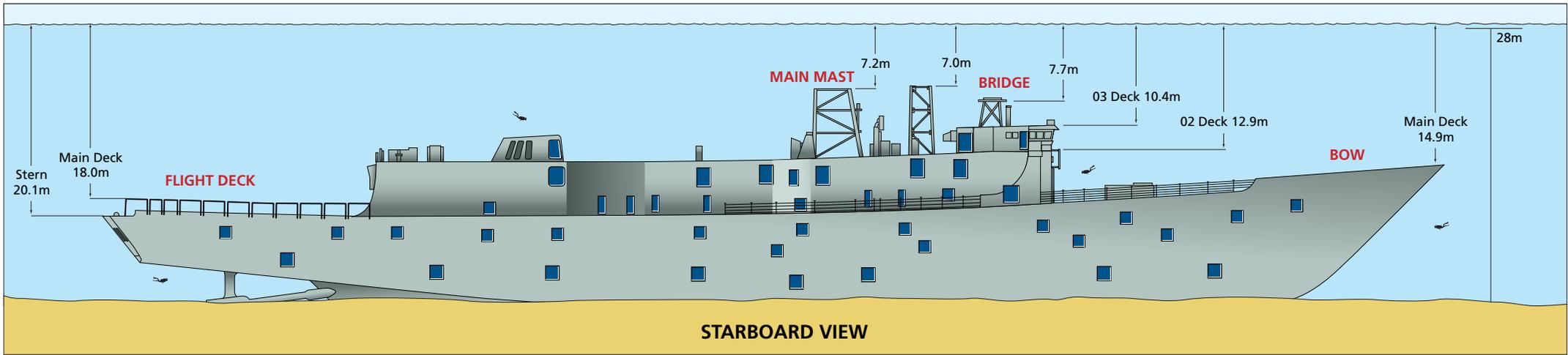
Divers are warned to take all necessary precautions, be aware of changing weather conditions and watch for potential hazards.

The HMAS Canberra is suitable for experienced divers only as even in calm conditions the wreck is subject to strong sea surge effects, even in otherwise mild weather conditions.

Loose items, hanging fittings, sharp objects and jagged edges are common throughout the wreck and particularly in areas such as the galley, the mess (dining) area and shower areas.

Waves and tidal actions will change the condition of the wreck and more material will become loose and jagged over time as corrosion occurs. Divers should exercise caution at all times and be aware of loose items and sharp objects which occur throughout the wreck.

Other risks to divers include entrapment, getting lost, injury from sharp protrusions and decompression sickness (bends).



For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre
Call 13 1963
or visit the
Parks Victoria website
www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Caring for the environment

You can protect the dive site and minimise your environmental impact by following these guidelines:

Abide by the diving code of conduct

Be careful not to bump anything with your fins

Practice buoyancy control

Secure all gauges and pressure hoses

Take all your rubbish home with you

Do not touch, disturb or remove plants and animals

Do not chase, grab or touch free-swimming animals

All methods of fishing are prohibited

Keep your distance from large marine animals and ensure that you do not block their path

Only use moorings provided (note you must have a current mooring permit)

Ensure your vessel has an approved sewage holding facility and sewage is disposed of appropriately on the mainland

Learn more about the wonderful marine environment

It is crucial that divers check all available weather condition information before setting off, but as a rough guide the wave height should be less than 1.5 metres and wind speed less than 15 knots.

To access the ex-HMAS Canberra dive site visitors may need to navigate their boats through Port Phillip Heads. Strong tides, currents and dangerous waves may be encountered when navigating this section of water. Access to the site is only to be undertaken in vessels manufactured for open water boating.

Please refer to the Marine Safety Victoria website regarding advice for navigating Port Phillip Heads. www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au

Make sure you check the weather forecast before you go and continue to monitor conditions during your boating and diving expedition.

Weather forecasts are available from the Bureau of Meteorology. www.bom.gov.au

How to Get There

The ex-HMAS Canberra is located offshore from Ocean Grove within Bass Strait in Victoria. It is approximately 25 minutes by boat from Queenscliff Harbour (on the Bellarine Peninsula) or Portsea (on the Mornington Peninsula). Melway Maps 497 & 498.

The dive site is clearly marked by two special mark buoys and four mooring buoys.

To enter the dive site divers must either book a dive tour with a licensed tour operator or book a 2 hour time slot on the public mooring (no. 4) through Parks Victoria.

Public Mooring Permits

Recreational divers not diving with a licensed tour operator require a permit to access the ex-HMAS Canberra dive site.

Access is only available through booking a permit to access the public mooring (no. 4). The cost of a 2 hour permit is \$30 per boat.

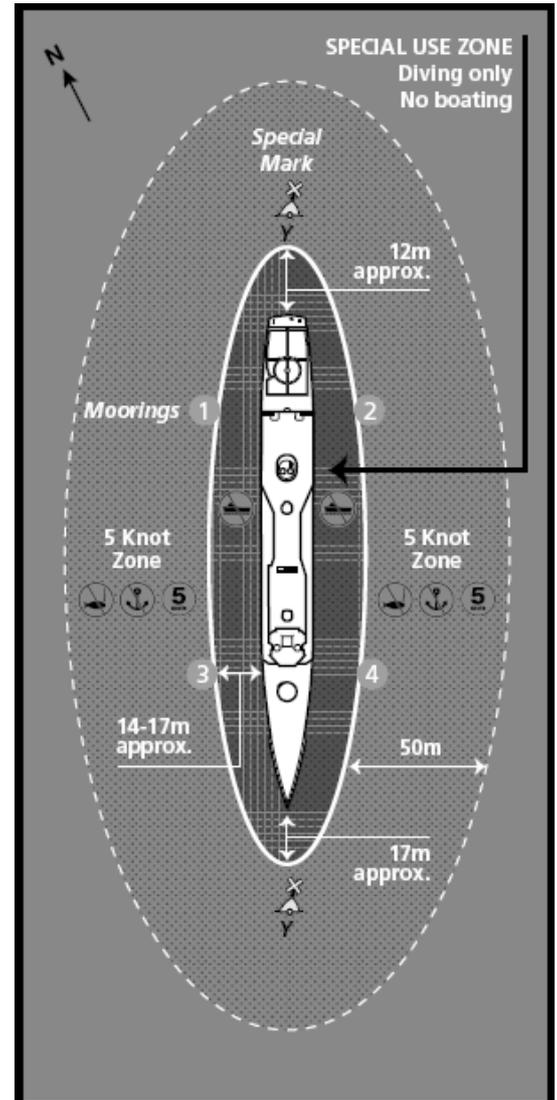
Permits can be purchased online at www.parkstay.vic.gov.au

Restrictions

For the protection of the marine environment and the safety of divers and snorkelers, a number of activities are prohibited within the ex-HMAS Canberra dive site. Prohibited activities include boating, anchoring, fishing, netting, spearing, taking or killing of marine life. All methods of fishing are prohibited.

The no anchoring and no fishing zone cover a 50 metre radius of the ex HMAS Canberra dive site.

A 5 knot zone also applies in a 50 metre radius with no boating permitted over the vessel itself. See diagram for details.



Notice To Mariners

Notices to mariners are issued by Parks Victoria and published on www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Nearby Parks

- Ocean Grove Nature Reserve
- Barwon Bluff Marine Sanctuary
- Port Phillip
- Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park
- Point Nepean National Park
- Lake Connewarre State Game Reserve