



Photo Ian Shaw



Estuaries are among the most biologically productive ecosystems in the world and contain a high diversity of life. They are the ‘nurseries of the sea’, providing nutrient-rich breeding grounds for fish, crustaceans and other aquatic species, many of which have commercial and recreational value. Estuarine habitats are important feeding and nesting areas for birds, and act as safe places for migratory stopovers.

Threats such as marine debris, erosion, recreational fishing and boating all have an impact on estuarine species and the habitats that they rely upon.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- ▶ **Use the boardwalks or paths provided.** When you create new tracks, it damages important vegetation needed to hold the bank of the estuary together.
- ▶ If you are fishing from the bank, **use fishing platforms** where provided.
- ▶ **Access swimming holes from established locations.**
- ▶ **Observe speed limits in powered watercraft.** Less wake means the power of the wave action is smaller, and the wave has dissipated by the time it reaches the bank, thus reducing erosion.

KEY FACTS

Vegetated areas along estuaries are important as the roots of trees, shrubs and grasses assist in reducing erosion by holding soils in place along the river banks.

When **erosion causes sediment to build up**, water quality and available oxygen can be reduced, and **marine habitats** – such as seagrass beds – **can be smothered**.

Erosion occurs naturally; however, **human activities have a direct impact on the speed of its occurrence.**



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