Melbourne Sea Slug Census X
22 - 25 October 2021

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2021 October Melbourne Sea Slug Census (22-25 October). While Covid-19 restrictions and weather conditions limited the number of people who were out and about over that weekend we were still encouraged to see photos from new locations as well as good representation from sites that have been consistently popular throughout the years the Melbourne Census has been running. In all, we received photos from 18 individuals or teams at Blairgowrie, Bridgewater Bay Mornington Peninsula, Clifton Springs, Flinders, Indented Head, Point Gellibrand, Point Lonsdale, Port Campbell, Portarlington, Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary, Rye, Sorrento Back Beach, South Channel Fort Port Phillip Bay, Stony Point Westernport, and Capel Sound. Together, we found a total of **92 species** of sea slug.

And now to the results you've all been waiting for…

BEST NUDI SPOTTER (with the highest count of the Census) – Ian Scholey, with 45 confirmed species from multiple locations and dates, a fantastic effort. Ian's nearest competition came from Nick Shaw with 34 species, while Julie Wrighton and Paul Sorenson were close behind with an impressive 33 and 31 species respectively. Everyone who contributed photos spotted at least 2 species each.

BEST PHOTO (Awarded by Bob Burn) – Peter Fuller, *Siphopteron* sp. RB2

This photo of a vivid slug from the gastropterid family caught the judge's eye, and we can see why. It shows clearly the head siphon (a curved and raised part of the headshield) and the wing-like parapodia that the animal can use for bursts of swimming. Fantastic work Peter!

HONOURABLE MENTION (Chosen by Steve Smith)– Elodie Camprasse, *Trapania aureopunctata*

Steve chose Elodie's image of this tiny species for a special mention, noting that it clearly shows the gill and rhinophore papillae which are characteristic for the genus. You can even see the slug's food- "nodding heads", or kamptozoans, tiny filter-feeding animals growing on the orange sponge. A superb shot Elodie.

The awards for most interesting photos are on the following page.

MOST INTERESTING PHOTO (Awarded by Bob Burn) – Ian Scholey, *Melibe* sp. RB3

Bob was as delighted to see this *Melibe* sp. RB3 return as many of the divers that captured it on camera! He singled out Ian's photos for their clarity. Great work Ian!

HONOURABLE MENTION (Chosen by Steve Smith)- Nick Shaw, *Dendronotus* sp. RB2

Steve notes the remarkable detail of this interesting, geographically restricted species in Nick's photo. Well done Nick.

With more and more photographers submitting wonderful images it is getting harder to narrow down just a handful of winners each time! Visit www.vnpa.org.au/sea-slugs to see a showcase of more fascinating and fabulous entries.

To help hone those identification skills, and to alert you all to some of the species you may have overlooked in the past, we have selected an image of each species found and provided the number of teams that found it (out of a total of 18).

The initials of the photographers that took the image are shown in brackets (key to all photographers who submitted images below).

Photographers:

Andreas Modinger (AM), Barry Noble (BN), Dan Carroll (DC), Elodie Camprasse (EC), Geoff Macaulay (GM), Ian Scholey (IS), Jeremy Bishop (JB), John Olden (JO), Julie Wrighton (JW), Meagan Hollole (MH), Melanie Le Page (MLP), Monique Bregman/Parks Victoria (MB), Nick Shaw (NS), Nicole Mertens (NM), Paolo Bottari (PB), Paul Sorenson (PS), Peter Fuller (PF), Sally Watson (SW)

Polycera hedgpethi (BN)
(12 sightings)

Ceratosoma brevicaudatum (PF)
(11 sightings)

Phyllodesmium serratum (NS)
(10 sightings)

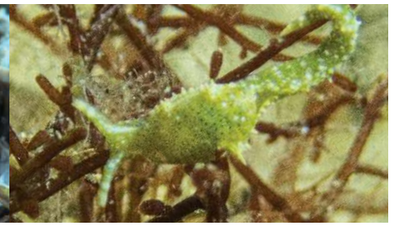
Goniobranchus epicurius (JO)
(9 sightings)

Verconia haliclona (AM)
(9 sightings)

Discodoris paroa (DC)
(7 sightings)

Doriopsilla carneola (JO)
(7 sightings)

Madrella sanguinea (JO)
(7 sightings)



Oxynoe viridis (PS)
(7 sightings)

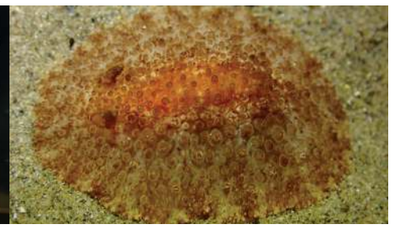
Austraeolis ornata (JW)
(6 sightings)

Chromodoris alternata (PF)
(6 sightings)

Doris cameroni (IS)
(6 sightings)

Kaloplocamus ramosus (PS)
(6 sightings)

Polycera janjukia (NS)
(6 sightings)

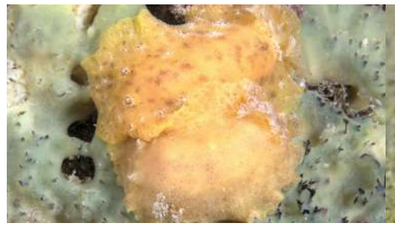


Carminodoris nodulosa (JW)
(5 sightings)

Elysia coodgeensis (NS)
(5 sightings)

Ercolania margaritae (JB)
(5 sightings)

Lamellaria ophione (EC)
(5 sightings)



Sclerodoris sp. RB1 (JO)
(5 sightings)

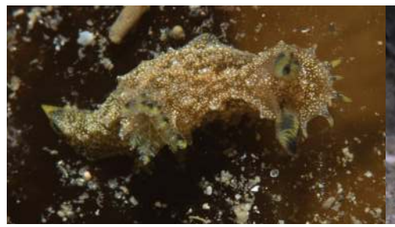
Thecacera pennigera (JW)
(5 sightings)

Berthellina citrina (IS)
(4 sightings)

Cerberilla sp. RB3 (NS)
(4 sightings)

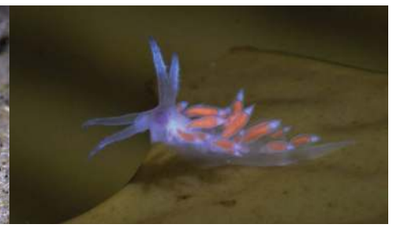
Ercolania boodleae (JB)
(4 sightings)

Rostanga crawfordi (IS)
(4 sightings)



Polycera sp. RB4 (IS)
(4 sightings)

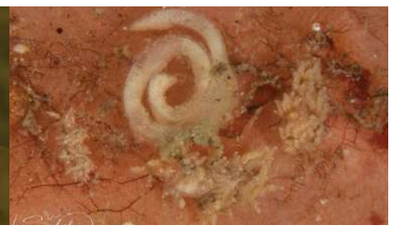
Verconia closeorum OR
*Diversidoris sulphurea** (JO)
(4 sightings)



Coryphellina poenicia (PF)
(3 sightings)

Facelina newcombi (PF)
(3 sightings)

Facelina sp. RB3 (PF)
(3 sightings)



Favorinus sp. RB1 (IS)
(3 sightings)

Flabellina sp. (AM)
(3 sightings)

Janolus hyalinus (IS)
(3 sightings)

Lamellaria australis (PS)
(3 sightings)

Melibe sp. RB3 (IS)
(3 sightings)

Onchidella nigricans (MLP)
(3 sightings)

Papawera maugeansis (NM)
(3 sightings)

* *V. closeorum* and *D. sulphurea* are very similar in outward appearance, and have overlapping variability in their external features. It is difficult to separate the species from a photograph alone.

Pleurobranchaea maculata (JW)
(3 sightings)

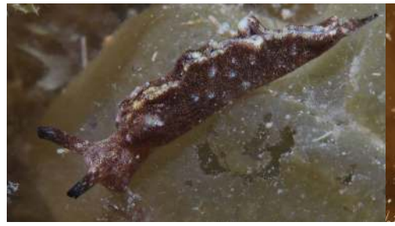
Sclerodoris tarka (PS)
(3 sightings)

Trapania aureopunctata (EC)
(3 sightings)

Trinchesia catachroma (IS)
(3 sightings)

Tritonia sp. RB3 (IS)
(3 sightings)

Elysia expansa (PF)
(2 sightings)



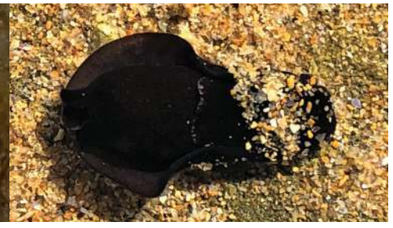
Elysia furvacauda (PF)
(2 sightings)

Flabellina sp. RB2 (IS)
(2 sightings)

Hallaxa michaeli (NS)
(2 sightings)

Hermaea sp. (NM)
(2 sightings)

Jorunna hartleyi (EC)
(2 sightings)



Melanochlamys queritor (MB)
(2 sightings)

Tayuva lilacina (JW)
(2 sightings)

Tubulophilinopsis lineolata (PF)
(2 sightings)

Adamnestia arachis (GM)
(1 sighting)

Aegires exeches (JB)
(1 sighting)

Aeolidiella drusilla (IS)
(1 sighting)

Berthella medietas (IS)
(1 sighting)

Caldukia affinis (IS)
(1 sighting)

Cerberilla sp. RB1 (AM)
(1 sighting)

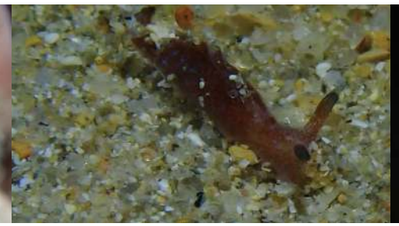
Crimora multidigitalis (PF)
(1 sighting)

Dendrodoris arborescens (NS)
(1 sighting)

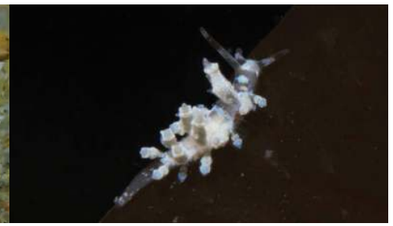
Dendronotus sp. RB2 (NS)
(1 sighting)

Elysia sp. (PF)
(1 sighting)

Elysia sp. RB1 (NM)
(1 sighting)



Elysia sp. RB3 (NS)
(1 sighting)



Eubranchus sp. (PF)
(1 sighting)

Facelina hartleyi (NS)
(1 sighting)

Goniodoris meracula (NS)
(1 sighting)

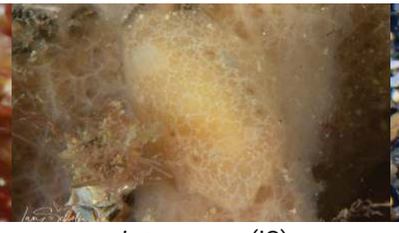
Gymnodoris arnoldi (NS)
(1 sighting)

Hermaea sp. RB1 (NS)
(1 sighting)

Hermaea sp. RB2 (NS)
(1 sighting)

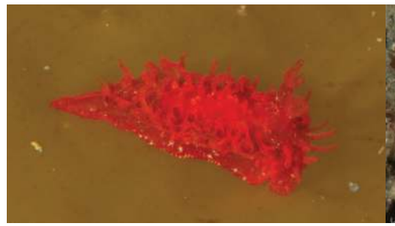
Janolus sp. RB2 (NS)
(1 sighting)

Janolus sp. RB4 (JW)
(1 sighting)



Jorunna sp. (IS)
(1 sighting)

Liloa brevis (NS)
(1 sighting)



Madrella sp. RB1 (IS)
(1 sighting)

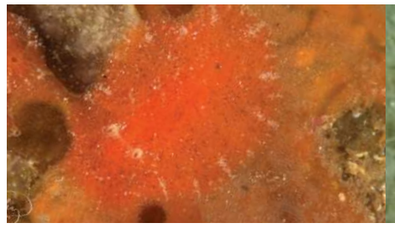
Paradoris dubia (IS)
(1 sighting)

Philine angasi (IS)
(1 sighting)

Philinopsis speciosa (NS)
(1 sighting)

Phyllodesmium macphersonae
(JB)

Polybranchia pallens (JW)
(1 sighting)



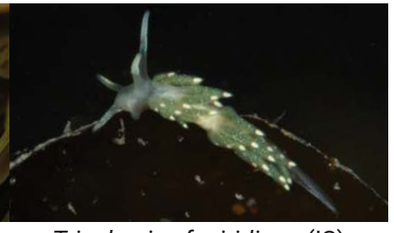
Rostanga calumus (IS)
(1 sighting)

Siphopteron sp. RB1 (SW)
(1 sighting)

Siphopteron sp. RB2 (PF)
(1 sighting)

Tambja dracomus (JO)
(1 sighting)

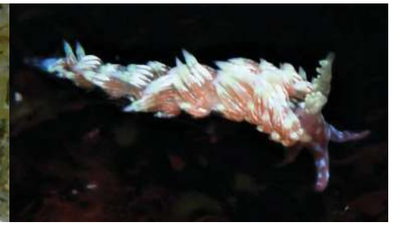
Thorunna perplexa (PF)
(1 sighting)



Trinchesia cf. *viridiana* (IS)
(1 sighting)

Trinchesia ornata (NS)
(1 sighting)

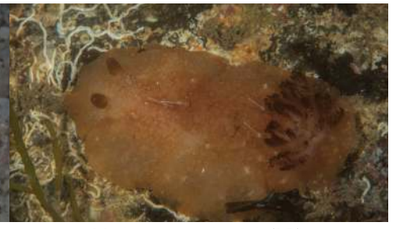
Trinchesia sp. (NS)
(1 sighting)



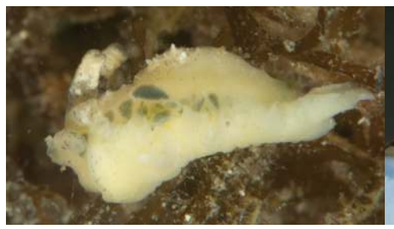
Trinchesia thelmae (PF)
(1 sighting)

Tularia bractea (IS)
(1 sighting)

Unknown dorid (GM)
(1 sighting)



Unknown dorid (IS)
(1 sighting)



Unknown sacoglossan (IS)
(1 sighting)

Unknown tergipedid (IS)
(1 sighting)

Finally, a very big THANKYOU to:

- All of you for your enthusiastic participation!
- Bob Burn for his invaluable assistance with identification and for imparting his knowledge and insights to help improve everyone's identification skills.

Happy slug hunting and hope to see you all again for the next Melbourne Sea Slug Census!

Remember, there are also events in other parts of the country – notification of these will be made through the network of Facebook and web sites.

Sea Slug Census Facebook group https://www.facebook.com/groups/seaslugcensus/

Nicole Mertens (local organiser)

Victorian National Parks Association

Steve Smith & Matt Nimbs

National Marine Science Centre

Southern Cross University