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Batemans Bay recreational fishing guide

Recreational Fisheries Management, Cronulla

Our State's fisheries are a community-owned resource. We all have a responsibility to protect and safeguard this natural asset for present and future generations.

Fishing regulations are in place to protect and conserve our fish stocks and aquatic habitats to ensure that fishing activities remain sustainable.

Batemans Bay and the surrounding estuaries are well known for their fishing attraction, not just their picturesque views. This guide will give you an idea of the fishing on offer and the closures and restrictions that apply along the coast from Bawley Point to Moruya.

The greater Batemans Bay area offers excellent beach, rock (including some local land based game fishing spots such as Pretty Point), jetty/pontoon and boat fishing opportunities where anglers have the chance of catching a wide variety of fish including tailor, kingfish, Australian salmon, luderick, snapper, bream, whiting, leatherjacket, flathead and mulloway.

Batemans Bay also provides excellent freshwater fishing opportunities, check the freshwater fishing guide for more details.

I&I NSW fisheries officers routinely patrol waterways, boat ramps and foreshores to advise anglers about responsible fishing practices and to ensure compliance with NSW fishing regulations.

Fishcare volunteers can also be found at boat ramps and on the water in dedicated Fishcare vessels, advising anglers about responsible fishing practices and distributing saltwater fishing guides and sticky rulers.

Information on bag and size limits, fishing closures and legal fishing gear can be obtained from the I&I NSW website www.industry.nsw.gov.au/fisheries, by visiting your local I&I NSW fisheries office.

To report illegal fishing activity, call your local fisheries office or the Fishers Watch phone line on 1800 043 536. All calls will be treated as confidential and you can remain anonymous.

RECREATIONAL FISHING FEE

When fishing in NSW waters, both freshwater and saltwater, you are required by law to pay the NSW recreational fishing fee and carry a receipt showing the payment of the fee. This applies when spear fishing, handlining, hand gathering, trapping, bait collecting and prawn netting or when in possession of fishing gear in, on or adjacent to waters.

All money raised by the NSW recreational fishing fee is spent on improving recreational fishing in NSW. Projects include:

- the installation of fish aggregating devices (FADs) to enhance fishing opportunities for dolphinfish or even tuna and marlin;
- creation of recreational fishing havens;
- angler facilities such as fish cleaning tables and fishing platforms;
- stocking of freshwater fish in dams and rivers;
- essential research on popular recreational fish species;
- restoring important fish habitat;
- research stocking of mulloway and prawns in estuaries;
- angler education and advisory programs such as the fishcare volunteer program, fishing workshops, get hooked...its fun to fish and fishing guides;
- building artificial reefs in Lake Macquarie, Botany Bay, St. Georges basin, Lake Conjola and Lake Merimbula;
- investigating the building of artificial reefs in offshore areas.

You can pay the NSW recreational fishing fee at hundreds of agents throughout NSW, such as over the counter at most fishing tackle shops. You can

also pay the fee at some caravan parks, local shops and service stations, many Kmart stores, online at www.licence.nsw.gov.au or by calling 1300 369 365.

If you pay for a one year or three year period online, over the phone, or at a Touch agent, or if you renew your licence using your renewal letter, you will receive a plastic receipt in the post. You must be able to produce evidence of payment, such as your receipt number, if requested by an authorised officer (until you receive your receipt in the post). If you pay for a 3 day or 1 month period, no receipt will be posted.

Some exemptions apply to paying the fishing fee, including people under the age of 18 and holders of pensioner concession cards. For further information on exemptions visit the I&I NSW website or call (02) 9527 8957.

You may not need to pay the NSW recreational fishing fee if you are fishing on a charter boat, hire boat or under the supervision of a fishing guide. Please check with the charter/hire boat operator, or guide, before you go fishing. If they do not hold a recreational fishing fee exemption certificate you will need to pay the NSW recreational fishing fee.

RECREATIONAL FISHING CLOSURES

Recreational netting and trapping

Moruya River. The following waters are closed to all fishing methods involving the use of a net, other than a landing net: the upper reaches of all of the waters of Moruya (or Deua) River and its tributaries, including Wamban Creek, upstream from the Kiara Bridge to its source.

Willija Swamp (Y Swamp). The whole of the waters of Willija Swamp at Moruya Heads is closed to any fishing method involving the use of a net or a trap, other than a landing net.

Burrill Lake (Figure 1). The following waters are closed to nets of every description other than a landing net: the waters extending over the whole of Burrill Lake and its tributaries and bays upstream of a line located at the eastern end of oyster lease OL74/027, perpendicular to the banks of the channel.

Tabourie Lake. The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a hoop or lift net: the whole of the waters of Tabourie Lake, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its confluence with the South Pacific Ocean.

Willinga Lake. The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a net, other than (a) a dip or scoop net (prawns), or (b) a landing net: the whole of the waters of Willinga Lake (including its entrance) together with all its creeks, inlets and bays.

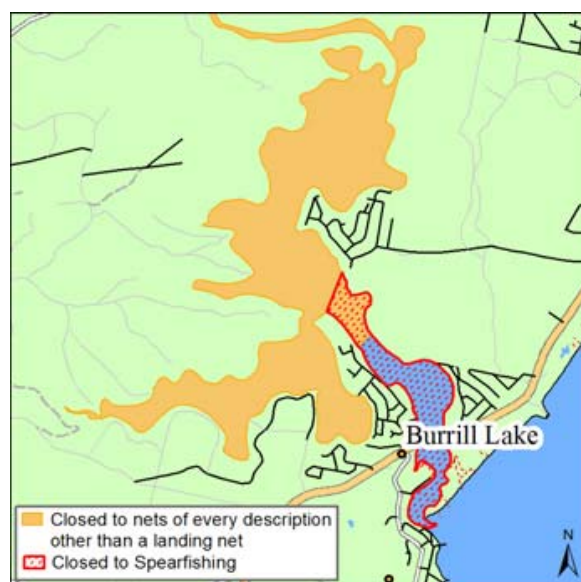


Figure 1. Burrill Lake

Butler's Creek. The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a net, other than (a) a dip or scoop net (prawns), or (b) a landing net: the whole of the waters of Butler's Creek from its confluence with the South Pacific Ocean upwards to its source.

Durras Lake (Figure 2). The following waters are closed to nets of every description other than a landing net: the waters bounded by the latitude and longitudes from a point A (150.273664, -35.636750), east to point B (150.277092, -35.637561), south to point C (150.274475, -35.6430221), west to point D (150.272083, -35.643247) and north to point A (all GPS coordinates are in GDA94, decimal degrees).

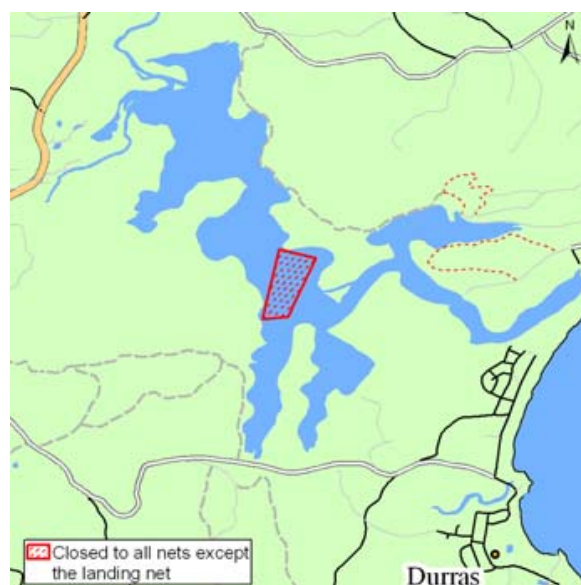


Figure 2. Durras Lake

BATEMANS BAY MARINE PARK (BBMP)

The BBMP was established in April 2006 and covers an area of ocean waters from the north end of Murramarang Beach near Bawley Point to Wallaga Lake in the South, offshore to the 3 nautical mile limit of state waters. It also covers the estuaries, creeks, rivers and lakes (except Nargal Lake) to the limit of tidal influence (see Figure 3).

The BBMP Zoning Plan enhances conservation of marine habitats and species by providing various levels of protection whilst allowing for multiple use.

There are four types of zones in BBMP.

Sanctuary Zones: provide the highest level of protection by only allowing activities that do not harm plants, animals or habitats.

Habitat Protection Zones: allow recreational fishing, some commercial fishing, tourist activities and fishing competitions. Prohibit fish and prawn trawling and estuary mesh and haul netting.

General Use Zones: provide for a wide range of environmentally sustainable activities including both commercial and recreational fishing. Prohibit fish and prawn trawling, longlining and droplining.

Special Purpose Zone: provides for management of aquaculture, fish-feeding, marinas and other vessel related facilities, commercial and residential facilities, fisheries and aquaculture research at a number of locations throughout the Marine Park.

For more information on fishing rules within the park or to obtain a zoning plan user guide please contact the Marine Parks Authority at www.mpa.nsw.gov.au or phone (02) 4476 4800.

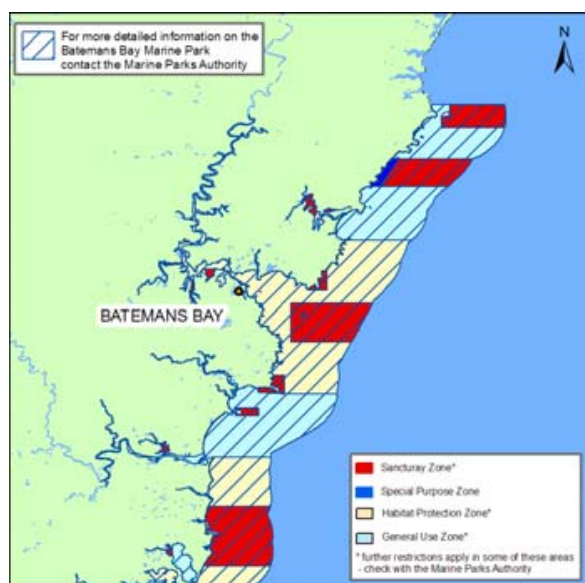


Figure 3. Batemans Bay marine park

GENERAL RECREATIONAL FISHING RULES

- Leave all commercial fishing gear in place and do not disturb commercial fishers going about their lawful business. Penalties up to \$5,500 can apply.
- You cannot use any chemical or explosive devices to take or assist to take fish.
- It is illegal for recreational fishers to sell their catch.
- You must not alter the length of fish by filleting and/or removing the head until you are well away from the water. This rule does not apply at areas normally used for cleaning fish, such as boat ramp cleaning tables, if the fish are for immediate consumption or immediate use as bait, or for fish that do not have a legal length. You may clean fish by gilling and gutting only.
- It is an offence to interfere with any oyster lease. Please ensure that your vessel, your vessel's wash or your tackle does not interfere with any part of an oyster lease, including the oysters.
- Abalone gut is prohibited for use as bait in NSW waters to prevent the spread of abalone viral ganglioneuritis (AVG).
- There is a state-wide closure on the taking of pipis from ocean beaches. The taking of pipis is prohibited except for their immediate use as bait. Pipis cannot be taken further than 50 m from the high water mark.

Spearfishing and diving

Spearfishing in NSW is a popular form of recreational fishing and has been recognised for its selective fishing practices. Spearfishers and divers harvesting fish and/or invertebrates in NSW are required to pay the NSW recreational fishing fee and the same rules and regulations regarding bag and size limits apply.

Spearfishers and divers *are permitted to use:*

- a snorkel when taking fish;
- SCUBA and hookah apparatus for scallops and sea urchins only; and
- bare/gloved hand only when taking lobsters.

Spearfishers and divers *are not permitted to use:*

- a light with a spear/spear-gun;
- a spear/spear-gun to take blue, brown or red groper or any protected fish;
- powerheads and/or explosive devices.

Spearfishing is prohibited in freshwater as well as many entrances, coastal lagoons and other tidal waters.

The following areas covered by this guide are closed to spearfishing.

- All NSW ocean beaches, excluding the last 20 m at each end of the beach.
- Areas closed to all fishing (red areas in maps).
- **Candlagan Creek** (Figure 4): the whole of the waters of Candlagan Creek and adjacent ocean waters below the traffic bridge, commencing from the southeast pylon of the bridge, thence by a line bearing 130° to an established concrete cairn at the entrance of the creek, thence by a line bearing 66° to a position marked by a broad arrow painted white on the rocks on the northern side of the entrance, thence bounded by the northern shore of Candlagan Creek to the north-eastern pylon of the bridge, thence along the bridge to the point of commencement.



Figure 4. Candlagan Creek

- **Burrill Lake** (Figure 1): the whole of the entrance waters to Burrill Lake, including the bays and inlets and tributaries extending from a line drawn across the entrance waters from the northernmost point of Thisleton's Point in a north-eastern direction bearing 23°, about 291 m to a point on the north-eastern foreshore of the lake, downwards to the South Pacific Ocean.

Recreational fishing havens

In 2002, 30 locations along the NSW coast were set aside for recreational fishing following a buyout of commercial fishing entitlements. These areas provide quality recreational fishing opportunities and are very popular with anglers.

Recreational fishing havens within the Batemans Bay district are Burrill Lake, Lake Tabourie, Meroo Lake and the Tomaga River.

Note: The closed waters also include all bays, tributaries, creeks, canals and artificial lakes within that area. For information on the precise boundaries

of these closures, contact your local Fisheries Office.

Fish aggregating devices – FADs

I&I NSW deploy a series of fish aggregating devices (FADs) each year along the NSW coast between the months of September and June. The FADs are funded by the Recreational Fishing Trust and are installed to provide improved fishing for recreational fishers.

FADS in the Batemans Bay district are located offshore of Batemans Bay – for exact GPS locations please check the website www.industry.nsw.gov.au/fisheries. For more information or to report a lost or damaged FAD please phone (02) 9527 8411 or email: fisheries.FADs@industry.nsw.gov.au.

Fishing safely

Fishing is fun, but remember to take care and exercise caution. Rock fishing can be particularly dangerous due to the unpredictable nature of the ocean. Remember the following basic safety tips.

- Observe first, fish later. Always check weather and water conditions before you start fishing. Make sure you are aware of local weather, swell and tidal conditions before going fishing. Listen to weather forecasts or call the weather information line on 1900 937 107. Be aware that conditions may change dramatically in a short period of time.
- Never rock fish alone and always inform others of your fishing plans. Let friends or family know where you are going and when you will be back.
- Care for your own safety and never take undue risks when fishing, even when fighting fish. Never enter the water to retrieve lost tackle or snagged fish. If the location looks dangerous, don't fish there.
- Wear a lifejacket or buoyancy vest when boat fishing or when fishing in hazardous locations such as rock platforms or those located near areas of fast moving water. Always wear appropriate non-slip shoes. Cleats, sandals and sandshoes with non-slip soles suit different surfaces. Carry ropes and torches as an additional precaution.
- If someone falls into the water, do not jump in after them, instead look for an angel ring, life buoy or something that floats and throw it to the person in the water. Alert emergency services by dialling 112 from a mobile phone or 000 from a landline.
- When rock and boat fishing, wear light clothing. Light clothing such as shorts and a spray jacket will let you swim easily if you are washed in or fall

overboard. Jumpers may be heavy and difficult to take off.

- When rock fishing, plan an escape route in case you are washed in. Don't ever turn your back on the sea; if the waves, weather or swell threaten your fishing spot then leave immediately. Stay calm if you are washed in, swim away from the rocks and look for a safe place to come ashore or stay afloat and wait for help to arrive. Ask for advice from locals who know the area – they can advise you of good fishing locations.
- For more information go to www.safefishing.com.au

Responsible fishing

- Observe all bag and size limits as well as any other restrictions for the area you are fishing.
- Carefully release all undersize or unwanted fish and take only what is sufficient for your immediate needs.
- Take home any rubbish from the fishing spot, especially plastic bags, old line and fishing hooks.
- Take home any left over bait or fish discards and ensure you clean away any residue.
- Use environmentally friendly fishing tackle where possible.

Catch and release

Catch and release fishing has increased in popularity in recent years. Research has shown that most fish survive using current catch and release fishing techniques. The following improved fishing practices are suggested to maximise fish survival.

- If a fish is deeply hooked, do not try to remove the hook; cut the line as close to the mouth as possible and release the fish. It is likely to survive if handled carefully.
- Use artificial lures or non-offset circle hooks when using bait to reduce deep hooking of fish.
- Barbless hooks can be used to make hook removal easier and minimise hook damage.
- Minimise the length of time the fish is out of the water. Ideally, unhook the fish while it is still in the water. Needle-nosed pliers or unhooking devices can greatly reduce the time spent unhooking a fish.
- Use fish-friendly landing nets with soft, knotless mesh.
- Avoid dropping the fish on hard or hot surfaces and do not hold the fish by the gills or eyes.
- Use wet hands or gloves to handle fish before release.

- If you are going to take photos of your fish before release, support your fish properly.

Recreational harvest of shellfish

Shellfish are filter feeders and they sometimes accumulate harmful substances from the water during feeding. Shellfish collected by recreational fishers should never be eaten raw. This is because recreationally harvested shellfish are not subject to the same strict food safety controls as commercially harvested shellfish. Consequently the NSW Food Authority recommends eating only shellfish harvested under a recognised program. For more information check the I&I NSW Recreational Fishing Guide or see www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au or phone 1300 552 406.

Penalties

Penalties apply to persons who take or possess fish (including invertebrates, shells, etc.) taken in contravention of fishing closures, including aquatic reserves and intertidal protected areas.

Further information

For more information about fishing restrictions that apply to the Batemans Bay's waterways and beaches, please contact the Batemans Bay fisheries office.

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