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**FREE!**

# Go Fishing

Featured Location:

## Lake Macquarie

Recreational Fishing Haven & Central Coast Estuary

## Hot Spot!



# Foreword from NSW DPI



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Throwing a line in at a new spot always makes for a great fishing adventure, whether it's on a family holiday or just somewhere new close to home. No matter your fishing expertise, NSW boasts a wide range of fish species and great places to catch them, including in our many inland rivers, impoundments and streams to the productive estuaries, lakes, beaches and rocky headlands on the NSW coast. There are also many inshore and offshore fishing opportunities from your boat or if using one of the many experienced charter fishing services available.

There are many reasons to go fishing, including to unwind and relax, spend time with family and friends, enjoy nature and of course to catch a tasty meal of fresh fish. Over a million people in NSW enjoy this fantastic lifestyle and the great news is that you are never too old or young to take up fishing so get out there and give it a go! Getting into fishing is easy. If you don't know where to start, just head into your local tackle store where the friendly staff can provide tips on tackle, bait and techniques plus point you to a safe, convenient spot to throw a line in.

NSW DPI has developed these *Go Fishing* guides as a snapshot of popular NSW fishing locations in both fresh and saltwater to help improve your recreational fishing experiences. For more information on other locations, fish species, size and bag limits and permitted gear not listed in these guides, visit the NSW DPI website or download the **FishSmart App** from the App store on your Android or iPhone.



# Overview

Lake Macquarie



• Sydney

Lake Macquarie is a Recreational Fishing Haven located on the Central Coast near Newcastle, about an hour's drive north of Sydney. The Lake has a surface area of about 110 sq km, making it the largest coastal saltwater lake in Australia. It's home to a wide range of popular recreational fish species including mulloway, bream, dusky flathead, tailor, squid, luderick, sand whiting, yellowtail kingfish and Australian salmon.

Fringed by a number of picturesque towns and villages including Swansea, Belmont, Mannering Park, Wangi Wangi and Toronto, Lake Macquarie features numerous sheltered bays, headlands and creeks. It's an extremely productive and popular fishery for locals and for visitors from other areas with plenty of holiday accommodation, caravan parks and camping grounds.

Lake Macquarie is linked to the sea via Swansea Channel on the eastern side. This waterway is tremendously popular with recreational anglers targeting dusky flathead, bream, whiting and luderick. Large schools of Australian salmon often take up residence in the channel during the cooler months, providing great sport for anglers using lures or fly tackle. Yellowtail kingfish are a prized catch for anglers fishing with surface lures or live baits around Swansea Bridge or at the nearby "Drop Over" where the channel meets the Lake. Three larger creeks (Dora Creek, Cockle Creek and Stoney Creek) drain into the Lake as well as a number of smaller waterways, many of which are popular fishing locations.

Popular with land-based and boat/kayak anglers, Lake Macquarie offers year-round estuary sportfishing access in calm and protected waters.

As well as being a Recreational Fishing Area, the Lake has a series of DPI artificial reefs, constructed using funds from the Recreational Fishing Trust. These reefs provide valuable habitat for key recreational fishing species and additional fishing opportunities for local and visiting anglers.







# FACT BOX

## ARTIFICIAL REEFS IN LAKE MACQUARIE

A total of 180 specially designed artificial reef modules, known as “reef balls”, were deployed by DPI Fisheries in six locations along the 5m depth contour off Galgabba Point in December 2005. Each of the locations is about 180m apart, covering a total distance of about 900m. The Lake Macquarie artificial reef system was increased in size in 2009 with an additional 480 modules installed across the site. These new modules are considerably larger (each weighing between 200kg to 700kg per module) than the initial reef balls. Research indicates the reefs were quickly colonised by fish, shellfish, sea weed and crustaceans. Since their deployment, the artificial reefs in Lake Macquarie have become extremely popular fishing locations with anglers targeting a range of key recreational species including yellowfin bream, snapper, tarwhine, dusky flathead and silver trevally. The reefs have also produced “prestige” sportfish such as yellowtail kingfish and amberjack as well as a range of bait species.



### GPS CO-ORDINATES FOR THE REEFS ARE:

**Lake Macquarie Artificial Reef - 1**  
Co-ordinates: 33 05.604'S, 151 36.612'E

**Lake Macquarie Artificial Reef - 2**  
Co-ordinates: 33 05.680'S, 151 36.738'E

**Lake Macquarie Artificial Reef - 3**  
Co-ordinates: 33 05.764'S, 151 36.790'E

**Lake Macquarie Artificial Reef - 4**  
Co-ordinates: 33 05.814'S, 151 36.891'E

**Lake Macquarie Artificial Reef - 5**  
Co-ordinates: 33 05.880'S, 151 36.879'E

**Lake Macquarie Artificial Reef - 6**  
Co-ordinates: 33 05.985'S, 151 36.942'E



# Key target species



## Mulloway

**PEAK SEASON** – October to April.

**TECHNIQUE** – Bait fishing with live or fresh squid; lure fishing with vibes and soft plastics.

**TACKLE** – 4-6kg spin outfits, 10-15kg braid or mono and 10-15kg leader. When bait fishing, use size 5/0–8/0 non-offset circle hooks on a running sinker rig. Use 9-14 gram jig heads on size 3/0 hooks teamed with 7-10cm “paddle” style tails or soft vibes when targeting mulloway on plastics.

**HOT SPOTS** – Drop-offs, deep holes, around bait schools.

**BAG & SIZE LIMITS** – 1 per day 70cm and over. Boat limit of 2 per boat per day (if 2 or more fishers onboard). Charter boat limit of 3 per boat per day.



# Dusky Flathead

**PEAK SEASON** – October to April.

**TECHNIQUE** – Bait fishing with whitebait, fresh prawns or live poddy mullet; lure casting with soft plastics, vibes and deep diving hard-bodies.



**TACKLE** – 3-4kg spin outfits, 3-4kg braid or mono line and 4-8kg leader. For bait fishing, use 1/0 to 4/0 non-offset circle hooks on a running sinker rig. Try 9 to 14 gram jig heads on 3/0 hooks teamed with 6-10cm “paddle tail” or “shad” style plastics in mullet, pink, “black & gold” or prawn type colours. Use a “lift and drop” retrieve. Vibes can be substituted for soft plastics. Diving hard-bodies can be effective around drop-offs and flats.

**HOT SPOTS** – Drop-offs, weed edges, flats systems, creek mouths.

**BAG & SIZE LIMITS** – 5 per day 36cm to 70cm. All dusky flathead outside of this size range will be required to be released back into the water.

# Bream

**PEAK SEASON** – Year round.

**TECHNIQUE** – Bait fishing with fresh prawns, fish strips and marine worms; lure fishing with soft plastics, vibes and small hard-bodied divers.



**TACKLE** – 2-4kg spin outfits, 2kg braid or mono and 2-5kg leader. For bait fishing, use size 2-1/0 non-offset circle hooks unweighted or with a small running “00” ball sinker. The use of berley is effective when targeting bream on bait. Use 1-2 gram gram jig heads on size 1-2 hooks teamed with 3-8cm “wiggler” style tails when targeting bream on plastics. Use a slow “lift and drop” technique.

**HOT SPOTS** – Drop-offs, flats, weed beds, artificial reef system.

**BAG & SIZE LIMITS** – 10 per day 25cm and over.

# Whiting

**PEAK SEASON** – October to April.

**TECHNIQUE** – Bait fishing with live marine worms; surface luring with poppers and small stick baits.



**TACKLE** – 2-4kg spin outfits, 2kg braid or mono and 2-5kg leader. When bait fishing, use size 1 non-offset circle hooks on a running sinker rig. Cast small surface lures around sandflats and shallow weed-beds for exciting top-water action on hard fighting whiting!

**HOT SPOTS** – Flats, shallow weed beds.

**BAG & SIZE LIMITS** – 20 per day 27cm and over.

# Luderick

**PEAK SEASON** – Year round.

**TECHNIQUE** – Bait fishing with green weed and occasionally as bycatch when targeting bream or whiting using marine worms as bait.

**TACKLE** – 3-4kg spin outfits generally using longer 3m slow action rods. Standard luderick rigs incorporate a stem float weighted by split shot terminating in a size 6-8 sneck hook baited with strands of green weed. Some anglers are having success using artificial “weed flies” in place of weed.

**HOT SPOTS** – Edges of weed beds, channels, reefy areas.

**BAG & SIZE LIMITS** – 10 per day 27cm and over.



# Tailor

**PEAK SEASON** – Year round.

**TECHNIQUE** – A common bycatch when bait and lure fishing for bream and flathead. Larger specimens can be targeted by trolling deep divers along drop-offs and around bait schools.

**TACKLE** – 4-6kg spin outfits with 6kg braid and 6-8kg leaders. A short length of heavy mono “bite leader” may be required to avoid bite-offs from the tailor’s sharp teeth.

**HOT SPOTS** – Drop-offs, around bait schools, artificial reefs.

**BAG & SIZE LIMITS** – 10 per day 30cm and over.



# Squid

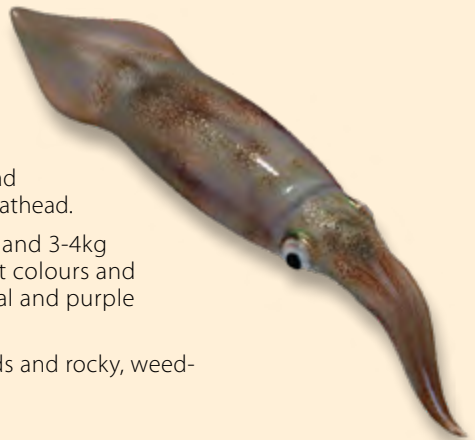
**PEAK SEASON** – Year round.

**TECHNIQUE** – Commonly targeted using squid jigs. Squid will often attack a live or dead bait used for species such as mulloway and flathead.

**TACKLE** – 2-4kg spin outfits with 3kg braid and 3-4kg leaders. Try an array of squid jigs in different colours and sizes (colours including pink, orange, natural and purple can be effective).

**HOT SPOTS** – Around shallow sea grass beds and rocky, weed-covered shoreline.

**BAG LIMIT** – 20 per day.





# Other Species



A number of other species including garfish, mullet, tarwhine, snapper, flounder and leatherjackets can also be caught in Lake Macquarie's productive waters. The lake also occasionally produces tropical species such as giant herring, big eye trevally, cobia and even dolphinfish. Native bass are available to adventurous anglers exploring the headwaters of tributaries running into the western side of the Lake.

As well, Lake Macquarie offers great prawning and crabbing during the warmer months. The prawns "run" during the dark of the moon and can be targeted with scoop nets over the shallow sand flats particularly in the vicinity of Swansea Channel. Tasty blue swimmer crabs (as well as the occasional mud crab) are on the cards if you set a hoop net in deeper water adjacent to a weed bed or mangroves.

## HANDY KNOTS

**UNI KNOT** – This is an excellent knot for connecting hooks and swivels to the end of fishing lines. A very dependable knot. Use more wraps with lighter line, less with heavier line. It can also be used to attach your fishing line to your reel by passing the line around the back of the spool rather than through the eye of the hook.



1. Thread line through eye.



2. Make this configuration.



3. Begin wrapping loop C with tag A.



4. Continue wrapping four to six times.



5. Moisten the line and form a knot by pulling tag A against loop C.



6. As you continue to pull on the tag all of the spirals in the tag are transferred to the loop D.



7. This forms a slipping knot and loop.



8. The loop C disappears as the knot slides down on to the eye.

**DOUBLE UNI KNOT** – This is a useful knot for joining two lines.



1. Overlap the lines to be joined then encircle one line with the tag of the other.



2. Wrap the double strand inside the formed loop.



3. Make four wraps in all.



4. Do the same with the other line so the knot in each line is tied around the other.



5. Moisten the line and tighten each knot in turn.



6. Draw the knots together, tighten once more, then trim the tags.

# CATCH & RELEASE INFO

Catch & release fishing is becoming increasingly popular, with many anglers now electing to release key species such as flathead, bream, tailor and mulloway. Recent research by NSW DPI has shown that most fish survive using current C&R techniques.

Key ways to release fish successfully include:

- Using non-offset circle hooks and artificial lures.

- Using suitable tackle to minimise fight times.
- Using knotless landing nets.
- If deeply hooked, cutting the line close to the mouth.
- Minimising the fish's time out of the water.
- Using wet hands or gloves to handle fish.
- Reviving the fish upon release.

See [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries) for more info on best practice C&R techniques.



# A HEALTHY FISHING FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS

Help us build a positive future for recreational fishing in NSW.

By fishing responsibly, you can safeguard fish stocks and protect the places we love to fish. When you hold a current recreational fishing licence, your fee contribution is used for improving local facilities like fishing platforms and enhancing fishing experiences with artificial reefs and FADs.



Live for Fishing. Fish for Life. Learn more at  
[WWW.DPI.NSW.GOV.AU/FISHFORLIFE](http://WWW.DPI.NSW.GOV.AU/FISHFORLIFE)

