



**FREE  
NSW  
GUIDE**

# Go Freshwater Fishing

Featured location:

**BURRENDONG  
DAM**

Recreational Fishing

**HOT SPOT!**

[dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://dpi.nsw.gov.au)

# FOREWORD

## FROM NSW DPI



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 as well as 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.

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Cover image: Jack Smith with a solid Burrendong golden perch. Image: Ken Smith; Page 6: Rhys Creed; All other images NSW DPI Image Library. Fish illustrations: Pat Tully.

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# OVERVIEW



Located 20km east of Wellington in the New South Wales central-west, Burrendong Dam was constructed at the junction of the Cudgegong and Macquarie rivers for irrigation, flood mitigation, town water supply and power generation.

Completed in 1967, the Burrendong Dam wall is 78 m high and is 1,116 m long. Burrendong Dam is over 57 m deep at its deepest point and when full is 344 m above sea level. With a surface area of over 7,200 hectares, it has a capacity of 1,188 Gegalitres (47,500 Olympic sized swimming pools) and sits within a significant catchment area of 13,900 km<sup>2</sup>.

In its early days Burrendong Dam was renowned as one of the best spots to catch the introduced European perch, known by most anglers as redfin.

Jigging with bobbers, such as the favoured Baltic Minnow, it wasn't uncommon for a day's catch to be in the hundreds.

As the dam aged and native fish stocking programs commenced; the redfin thinned and the numbers of Murray cod, and golden perch increased.

Eel-tailed catfish and silver perch have also become a common catch for anglers throughout the years.

With the introduction of European carp the density of fish species again changed, and carp extended their range into the rivers and creeks that feed Burrendong, creating turbidity in the once clear waters of the dam.

Dubbo

## Burrendong Dam

Orange

Bathurst

Sydney

Today the main target species are Murray cod, golden perch and eel-tailed catfish along with the favoured sight fishing of European carp. Silver perch and redfin are less common these days and usually caught while targeting other species.

Burrendong's main fish structures are the immense numbers of drowned trees that line the old riverbeds. It's in these trees that anglers target golden perch, which often school in large numbers.

Burrendong Dam has three main areas for access: Lake Burrendong State Park in the main basin is the most popular. It has all the facilities anyone would need; including lakeside cabins or even a houseboat.

Water slides, swimming areas and playgrounds will keep the kids happy during the warmer months. A well-stocked kiosk which also sells fuel ensures you will have everything at hand for an extended stay.

*Continued on page 4*



Some of the best camping can be found at the camping site known as “Eagle Beagle” where the rocky shoreline offers up some of the best sections for bank fishing. Shrimp and yabbys can be caught here and when used as live bait often return a good catch.

In the Macquarie River arm of the dam, you will find Mookerawa Waters Park. This park is very popular with both campers and boaters, especially in spring when the native fish school up prior to moving up into the rivers for spawning.

There is a forest of dead timber providing excellent habitat through this narrow section. There is ample room for boats with over 30km of water upstream to where the Macquarie River enters the dam when full.

The region has a rich history of gold mining and there are reminders everywhere of the fevered activity of yesteryear. There are remnants of bucket dredges which can be seen, abandoned when the gold ran out.

The new gold for anglers is the immense numbers of both green and gold that can be found in this arm, namely the Murray cod and golden perch.

Another accommodation location is Cudgegong River Holiday Park. As the name suggests, this park is found in the upper Cudgegong River arm. The fishing here is the same as for Mookerawa Waters Park where fish will move through this area to spawn in spring and summer often schooling before moving up into the rivers and creeks above.

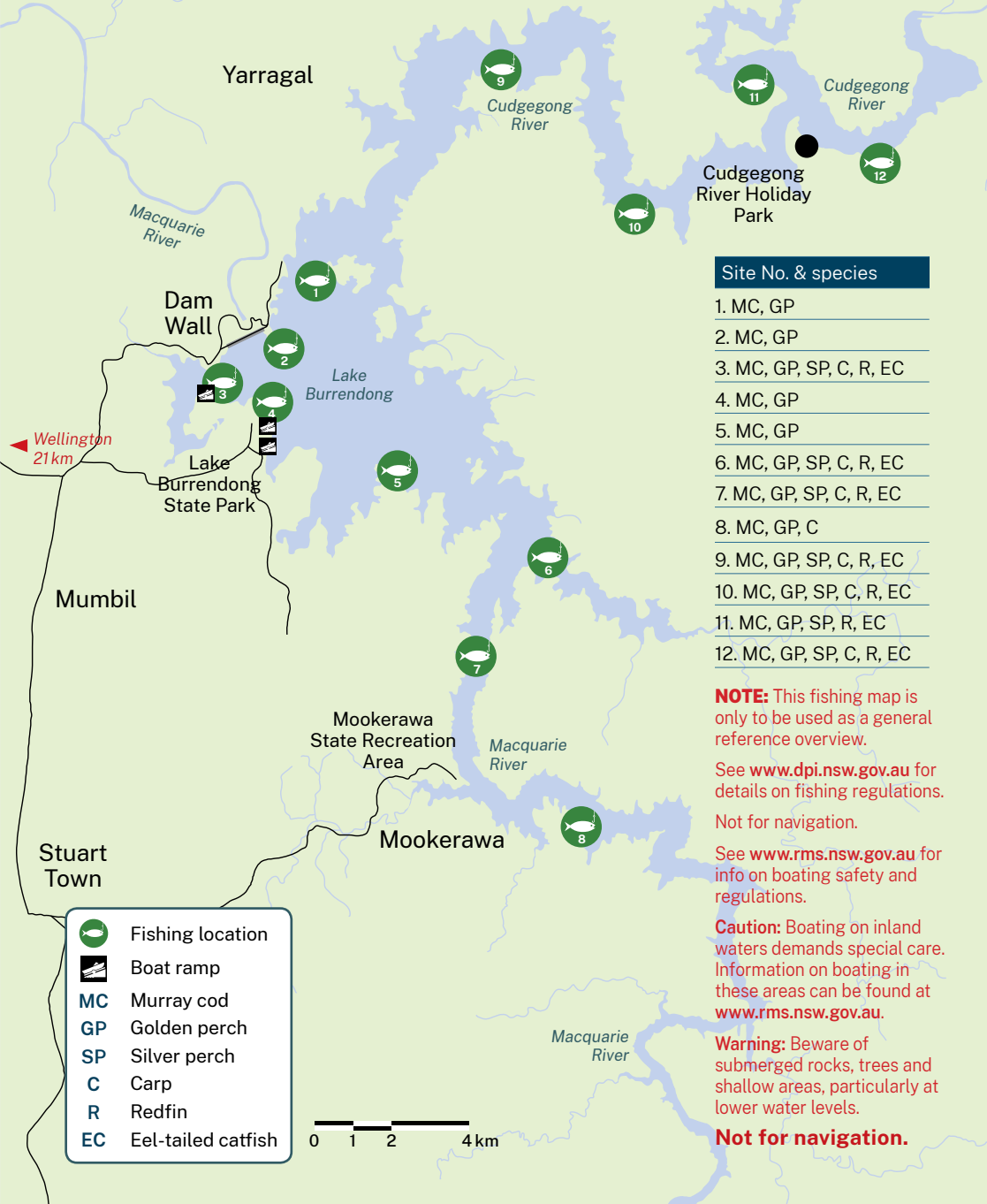
**Inside tip:** Meroo Creek arm is a favoured fishing spot.



This Burrendong Dam *Go Fishing* guide is part of a series of guides to popular locations in NSW. Keep an eye out for our range of location guides to salt and freshwater fishing locations as we're constantly adding new spots and updating existing guides.



# LAKE BURRENDONG FISHING LOCATIONS



## Site No. & species

- 1. MC, GP

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- 2. MC, GP

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- 3. MC, GP, SP, C, R, EC

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- 4. MC, GP

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- 5. MC, GP

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- 6. MC, GP, SP, C, R, EC

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- 7. MC, GP, SP, C, R, EC

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- 8. MC, GP, C

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- 9. MC, GP, SP, C, R, EC

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- 10. MC, GP, SP, C, R, EC

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- 11. MC, GP, SP, R, EC

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- 12. MC, GP, SP, C, R, EC

**NOTE:** This fishing map is only to be used as a general reference overview.

See [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au) for details on fishing regulations.

Not for navigation.

See [www.rms.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au) for info on boating safety and regulations.

**Caution:** Boating on inland waters demands special care. Information on boating in these areas can be found at [www.rms.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au).

**Warning:** Beware of submerged rocks, trees and shallow areas, particularly at lower water levels.

**Not for navigation.**

- Fishing location
- Boat ramp
- MC** Murray cod
- GP** Golden perch
- SP** Silver perch
- C** Carp
- R** Redfin
- EC** Eel-tailed catfish



# CORRECT HANDLING

The trophy-sized Murray cod that inhabit Burrendong Dam are a once-in-a-lifetime capture for most anglers. Looking after these great native sportfish is paramount to ensure their survival.

When landing cod, best practice is to use a large knotless net. Once the fish is in the net, leave it in the water until you have your brag mat, camera or other equipment ready. Never lay the fish on a hot boat deck and always wet the brag mat before laying a fish down to measure.

When handling large cod it is recommended to not use lip grips as this can cause damage to the fish's jaw, simply thumb grip the fish's lower jaw with a wet gloved hand.

Always support the weight of the fish with your second hand. When lifting, always lift the fish horizontally – never put any pressure on the vertebrae behind the fish's head.

If your camera is immediately available, take a few quick pictures and then place the fish in the water until it is ready to swim away.

Some fishers even choose not to hold the fish and hop into the water with very large cod, this can make an amazing shot and memory plus a nice cool off in summer, however, in the frigid cold of winter it would not be recommended.

# KEY TARGET SPECIES



## GOLDEN PERCH

### PEAK SEASON:

Year-round, September to December renowned for better fishing.

**TECHNIQUE:** Casting small lipless crankbaits, soft plastics and hard-bodied lures at standing trees, flooded banks and rock points; trolling rocky points at a depth contour between 4-7m with small hard-bodied lures measuring between 50-90mm.

**TACKLE:** 2-4 kg spin outfits, 2.1m graphite rod, 2500 size spin reel, 4-5kg braided mainline with a rod length of 4-5kg fluorocarbon leader. Small soft plastics with 1/6-1/4 oz jig head and size 1 or 2 hook work well on golden perch.



### HOT SPOTS

Steep drop-offs and timbered areas. Pine Hill, The Junction and Harry's Creek

### SIZE & BAG LIMITS

5 per angler per day,  
30cm legal length.  
Possession limit: 10.

## MURRAY COD

### PEAK SEASON:

December to August.

**TECHNIQUE:** Bait fishing with large yabbies and grubs from the bank, especially at night; trolling hard-bodied deep diving lures in the 90-150 mm size range around rocky banks and sunken logs; casting large spinnerbaits and soft plastics (focus on steep rocky banks during summer and shallow grassy areas in the cooler months).

**TACKLE:** Heavy 6-10 kg baitcaster outfits loaded with 15-24kg braided mainline with a rod length of 15-24kg fluorocarbon leader. A large knotless landing net, gloves and heavy-duty pliers are important pieces of equipment to have onboard.



### HOT SPOTS

Trolling the edge of submerged riverbeds or in heavily timbered areas. Lion Island, Meroo or Harry's Creek

### SIZE & BAG LIMITS

Two per angler per day,  
slot limit of 55-75cm.  
Possession limit: 4.

**CLOSED SEASON:** 1 Sept - 30 Nov.

# OTHER SPECIES



## SILVER PERCH

Silver perch were once widespread and abundant throughout most of the Murray Darling Basin system; however, they have declined across most of their natural range over recent decades and are now classed as a “vulnerable species”. Silver perch are a moderate to large native freshwater fish usually reaching 30-40cm in size and 0.5-1.5kg in weight but have been recorded up to 8kg. Silver perch fight hard and are a great sportfish. You don’t need specialised gear to target and catch them. If casting for silvers, consider using small lures or even flies due to their small mouth size. They aren’t fussy eaters and a range of baits including earthworms, aquatic insects, shrimp, small yabbies, bread and even corn is well worth trying.



### HOT SPOTS

Fishing the dam edges can be most productive. Oakey Creek, Macquarie and Cudgong arms fish best

### SIZE & BAG LIMITS

Five per angler per day,  
25cm legal length.  
Possession limit: 10,  
all year round in listed dams.

## EEL-TAILED CATFISH

Catfish are native to the Macquarie River and have a reputation for being great fighters. Given the opportunity, they will frequently chase down a lure intended for their bigger comrades that occupy the dam.

Catfish have a lot to offer for anglers, they fight well and are considered a good table fish. Catfish diets consist of yabbies, shrimp, molluscs and other aquatic organisms.



### HOT SPOTS

Arms of the Macquarie, Cudgong and Meroo Rivers. Often found around aquatic vegetation, tree roots and undercut banks.

### SIZE & BAG LIMITS

Five per angler per day,  
30 cm legal length.  
Possession limit: 10, all year  
round in eastern dams and  
listed western impoundments.



# FACT BOX

# YABBY FISHING



## NEW FISHING RULES

Following consultation with recreational fishers, tackle distributors and the broader community, the NSW Government has introduced new rules for the recreational catch of freshwater yabbies in NSW waterways. New fishing methods for yabbies are being introduced to provide sustainable yabby fishing and enhance protection for aquatic wildlife.

Play your part to prevent the inadvertent capture of native wildlife by only using approved nets in all NSW waters. As from 30 April 2021, yabby traps ("opera house") are not permitted in all NSW waters as they have been implicated in the drowning of air breathing fauna such as platypus, turtles and water rats. Research has shown that eco-friendly nets, such as open pyramid lift nets, are just as effective at catching yabbies but do not impact on other aquatic wildlife.

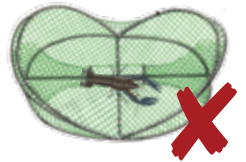
The rule change will benefit air breathing fauna, improve yabby fishing, provide recreational anglers with consistency across borders and simplify business for tackle stores and their customers. This will also make it easier for anglers to comply with interstate and territory yabby fishing laws which are now in alignment. These changes will improve the sustainability of our aquatic resources and improve long-term fishing opportunities for recreational anglers.

Open pyramid lift nets can now legally be used in all private waters and most public waters both east and west of the Great Dividing Range. Fishers can also continue to use hoop nets to catch yabbies or a hand hauled yabby net, when used in ground tanks, bore drains or lagoons.

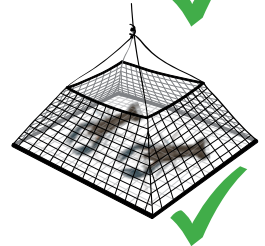
As stated, opera house traps are no longer permitted for use in all NSW waters as they can impact on non-targeted species. As such, the NSW Government encourages fishers to dispose of opera house traps and replace them with open pyramid lift nets.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries is distributing open pyramid lift nets at upcoming boat and tackle shows, school days, agricultural/ farm expos and other field events. Further information on the changes to yabby fishing rules can be found at: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/yabbytrap-faq](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/yabbytrap-faq)

**NOT PERMITTED:**  
**Opera house traps**



**Permitted\***



**\*A person can only use up to 5 in total - either one type or a combination of both.**

## FACT BOX

# GOLDEN PERCH

A man wearing a tan cowboy hat and a dark shirt is holding a large, silvery-golden perch fish. The fish is held vertically, with its head pointing to the right. The background shows a body of water and distant hills under a blue sky with light clouds.

**So prolific has the golden perch become in Burrendong Dam that many fishing competitions are held here each year based around this species.**

### FISHING METHODS

The latest style of fishing for golden perch amongst the trees is what brings the competitions to Burrendong.

Boats fitted with the latest depth sounders which “scan” the water in front and around the vessel can now find schools of fish with relative ease amongst the trees. Some of these will be fully submerged and the boat will be anchor locked above with a bow mount electric motor, other trees will be above water.

The best lures for this type of fishing are the “grub” style soft plastics. Black is the most favoured but watermelon, green, pumpkinseed, brown, white or chartreuse can be the one fish want some days.

Many anglers refer to this style of fishing as “grubbing” the trees!

The competition anglers generally have two sounders and once the fish are found the electric motor is used to hold the boat over the school and the front sounder enables the angler to see their lure and enables them to target individual fish by jigging it or

slow rolling past the fish’s face. You can see the fish follow the lures up or down chasing the lure.

So effective is this technique that on a good day a catch of many dozens of fish is achievable.

This style of fishing lures vertically amongst the drowned timber is not just suited to the use of the vast range of soft plastics. Bibless minnows, spinnerbaits, blades and hard plastic lures can be also used in this vertical style of fishing. Productive retrieves can include a slow roll, a slow up and down lift of the rod or a fast retrieve (burning) the lures from the bottom back to the boat.

The bite will fall into the category of a hunger bite, aggression bite or a reaction bite.

Many competition anglers use this technique as their number one fishing style to take out first place!

The peak seasons for this style of fishing is spring through autumn. Fishing lures in the trees is especially effective when the fish are in the spawning mode, but also produces smaller numbers of fish during the colder months when the fishing tends to go quiet!

# BOWFISHING FOR CARP

at Burrendong

**Bowfishing is a fishing technique where anglers use specialised archery equipment to shoot and retrieve fish. Bowfishing equipment includes an upright bow with a specialised arrow attached by a line and reel to the bow. Burrendong Dam was used as part of a bowfishing for carp trial that has now been extended across NSW.**

Bowfishing for carp is now a legal activity for everyone at Burrendong Dam but there are strict rules on where, when, and how you are permitted to bowfish. Bowfishers must hold a current NSW Recreational Fishing Fee Receipt (more commonly known as a fishing licence) and follow these rules before they can bowfish:

- There must be a maximum of 30 m of line attached to the bowfishing reel.
  - You can only use a flightless (un-fletched) bowfishing arrow with barbs attached (fishing head).
  - You must not bowfish within 100 m of a person or vessel that is not part of your bowfishing party.
  - You must not bowfish within 100 m of a dwelling, picnic area or campsite.
  - You must not bowfish within 500 m of a caravan park.
  - You must not bowfish outside of 30 minutes before sunrise and 30 minutes after sunset.
  - You must not use any bowfishing equipment aided by lights.
  - Bowfishers can only target carp.
- Bowfishers must use an upright bow and arrow with the arrow attached to the bow by means of line and a reel.

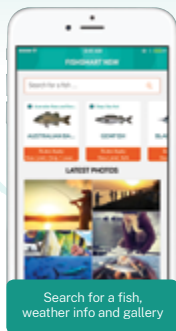


# Check out the app: FishSmart



NSW DPI has created an app that provides recreational fishers with 24/7 access to essential information they need to know to fish in NSW, such as:

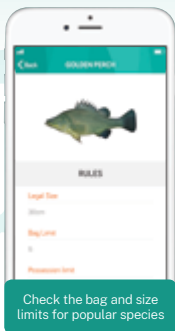
- a pictorial guide of common recreational species, bag & size limits, closed seasons and fishing gear rules
- real-time maps to locate nearest FADs (Fish Aggregation Devices), artificial reefs, Recreational Fishing Havens and Marine Park Zones
- local weather, tide, moon phase and barometric pressure to help choose best time to fish
- guides on spearfishing, fishing safely, trout fishing, regional fishing
- DPI contact for reporting



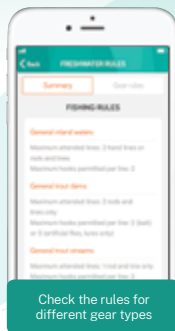
Search for a fish, weather info and gallery



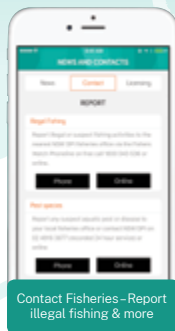
See your location in relation to FADs, Marine Park Zones, RFHs & more



Check the bag and size limits for popular species



Check the rules for different gear types



Contact Fisheries - Report illegal fishing & more



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