



**FREE
NSW
GUIDE**

Go Freshwater Fishing

Featured location:

**LAKE
ST CLAIR**

(Glennies Creek Dam)

Hunter Valley Freshwater
Recreational Fishing

HOTSPOT!

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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Recreational fishing regulations may change during the lifetime of this publication. It is the responsibility of fishers to ensure they are acting within the law at all times. Check regulations with your local NSW DPI fisheries office or www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries.

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OVERVIEW

Lake St Clair



Lake St Clair was built in the 1980s to supplement water supply from Glenbawn Dam further up in the Hunter Valley to meet increasing water demands for agriculture, industry and towns. Located around 2.5 hours' drive north of Sydney and 25kms from Singleton, the lake was formed by the damming of Glennies Creek, a tributary of the Hunter River.

Nestled at the foothills of the Barrington Tops National Park, Lake St Clair offers a variety of fishing options for both boat-based and land-based anglers. Target species include native Australian bass, golden perch, silver perch, catfish and eels.

The lake features a campground with camping sites available right around the water's edge near well maintained amenities, a boat ramp, electric barbecues, and fish cleaning facilities. Being reasonably close to large centres such as Newcastle, the campground can become very busy during peak holiday times and is very popular with water skiers who frequent the lake in warmer months. Bookings are essential, for more information:

<http://www.singleton.nsw.gov.au>

Depending on weather conditions, Lake St Clair is ideal for most modest sized fishing boats and kayaks, which can be easily launched at the concrete ramp or from harder sections of the shoreline. A boating exclusion zone exists near the dam wall and an 8-knot speed restriction applies at the northern end of the lake which is clearly marked with buoys.



When at full capacity the lake is around 15 kms long and up to 3 kms wide. The main basin is open and unobstructed but there are many submerged trees that are found close to shore and at the ends of bays, more notably in the more northern and southern ends. These trees provide shelter for a lot of the waterway's sportfish, such as golden and silver perch – but anglers don't tend to encounter as many silver perch at the lake these days. The lake fringes feature thick weed beds which provide good habitat for Australian bass. These feisty fish are the main drawcard for visitors to Lake St Clair as they grow to trophy sizes and always put up a spirited performance on the end of a line.

Continued on page 4



While bait fishing with natural baits such as locally sourced shrimp, yabbies and earthworms is a proven technique at St Clair, the waterway regularly provides consistent results for lure anglers.

Depending on the time of year bass and golden perch will fall for a well worked lure. The tree lined bays are good areas to try lure fishing. Casting popular lures such as spinnerbaits, small hard-body minnow styles, lipless crankbaits and a variety of soft plastics near to trees, weed beds and shoreline points can all produce fish at various times of year. Still, warm nights in summer are also worth fishing with surface lures as bass often provide exciting fishing after dark.

A NSW Recreational Fishing Licence is required to fish Lake St Clair where size, possession and bag limits apply year-round. See *Key Target Species* for more details.

This Lake St Clair *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 ST CLAIR FISHING LOCATIONS



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

See www.dpi.nsw.gov.au for details on fishing regulations.

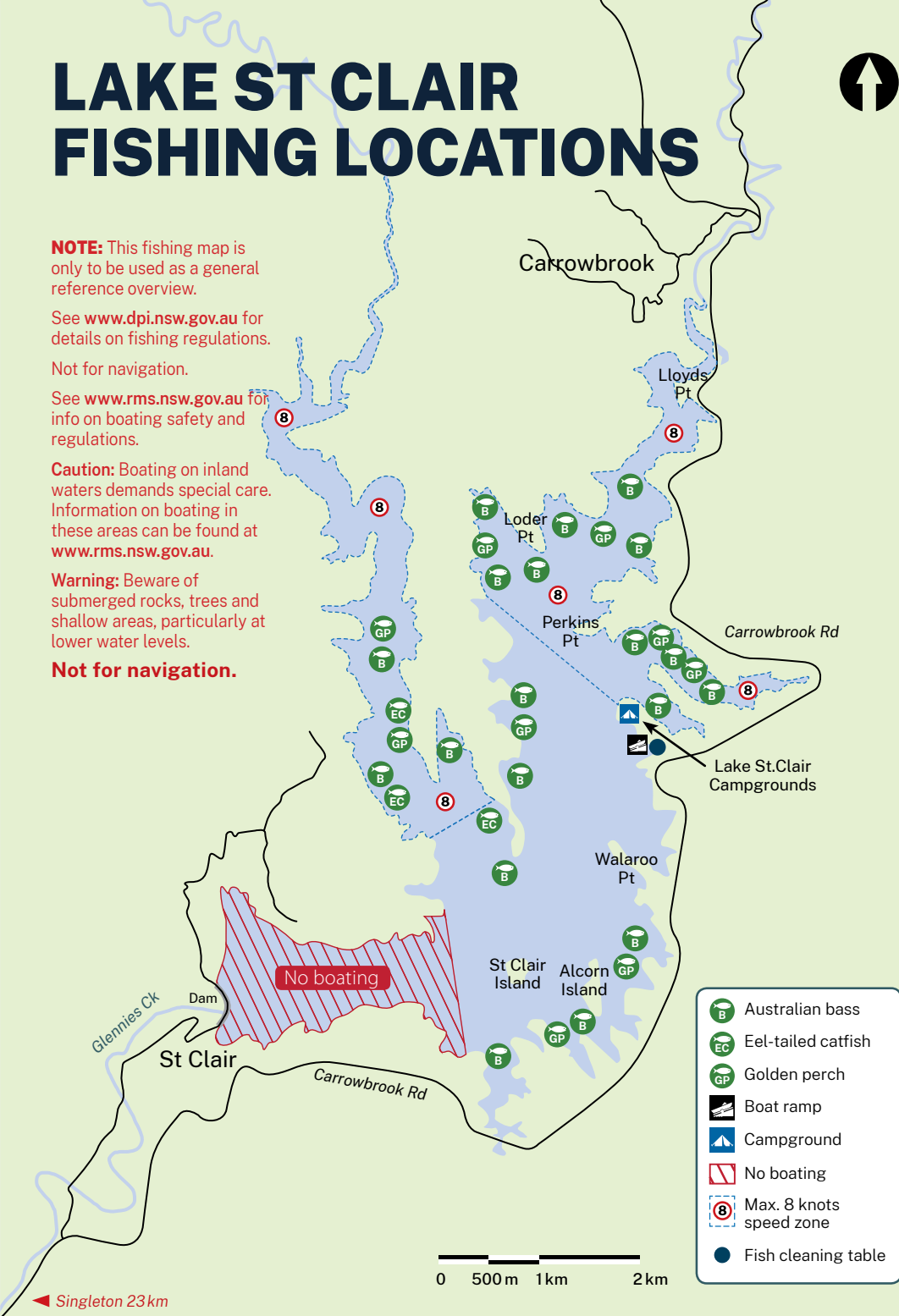
Not for navigation.

See 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.

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

Not for navigation.



KEY TARGET SPECIES



GOLDEN PERCH

PEAK SEASON:

October–May.

TECHNIQUE: Bait fishing with shrimps, yabbies or earthworms; lure casting with soft plastics, lipless crankbaits, spinnerbaits, vibes, deep diving hard bodied lures.

TACKLE: 3-4kg spin outfits, 2kg braid or mono and 3-5kg leader. For bait fishing, use (depending on bait size) size 10-4 circle hooks with a small running sinker rig. “Bobbing” shrimp baits close to the trunks of submerged trees can be particularly effective. Spinnerbaits, lipless crankbaits and vibes worked near trees and weed beds can also be very attractive to golden perch.



HOT SPOTS

Rocky points, drop-offs, weed beds, submerged trees.

SIZE & BAG LIMITS

5 per day over 30cm, 10 in possession. Available year-round.

AUSTRALIAN BASS

PEAK SEASON:

September–March.

TECHNIQUE: Bait fishing with shrimps, yabbies or earthworms; lure casting with soft plastics, lipless crankbaits, spinnerbaits, vibes, deep diving hard bodied lures.

TACKLE: 3-4kg spin outfits, 3-4kg braid or mono line and 3-5kg leader. For bait fishing, use (depending on bait size) size 10-4 circle hooks with a small running sinker rig. Try 1.5g to 5 gram jig heads teamed with 60 to 90mm curl or T tail grub in natural colours, a favourite for local fishers is the colour “motor oil”. Vibes, hardbodies and lipless crankbaits worked slowly around the weed beds and points can be extremely effective.



HOT SPOTS

Drop-offs, weed edges, creek mouths, open water.

SIZE & BAG LIMITS

No minimum size, 2 fish per day limit, 4 in possession. Available year-round in dams and impoundments. September to April in rivers below freshwater impoundments (catch and release fishing permitted from May to August). All year in freshwater impoundments and rivers above freshwater impoundments.

OTHER SPECIES



SILVER PERCH

PEAK SEASON:

September–April.

TECHNIQUE: Bait fishing with earth worms, shrimps, mudeyes; occasionally takes small hard body lures, vibes and “curlytail” soft plastics.

TACKLE: 2-4kg spin outfits, 2kg braid or mono and 2-5kg leader. When bait fishing, use (depending on bait size) size 10-4 longshank circle hooks with a small running sinker rig.



HOT SPOTS

Edges of weed beds, points, muddy bays.

SIZE & BAG LIMITS

Five per day over 25cm.
Available year-round.

EEL-TAILED CATFISH

PEAK SEASON:

Year-round.

TECHNIQUE: Bait fishing with earthworms and yabbies; lure fishing with vibes and soft plastics. Occasionally caught by fly anglers using dark weighted flies.

TACKLE: 3-5kg spin outfits, 3-4kg braid or mono and 4-5kg leader. When bait fishing, use 4-1/0 (depending on bait size) circle hooks on a running sinker rig.



HOT SPOTS

Close to weed beds in bays, muddy points.

SIZE & BAG LIMITS

Five per angler per day,
over 30 cm.
Possession limit: 10.

FACT BOX

Top technique:

TACKLING NATIVES

✓

Australia's inland native freshwater fish provide excellent sport for anglers and can be caught using a variety of techniques. When using deep diving hard-body minnows a proven technique is to tow these lures a reasonable distance behind a boat (using its outboard engine or electric trolling motor) or kayak at a pace that gets the lure "working" i.e., swaying side to side and plumbing the depths. Generally, a slow to medium walking pace is all that's required to get deep divers working optimally. This method is known as trolling and allows anglers to cover more water with their lures working in the "strike zone" for longer and potentially attracting more interest from feeding native fish. Using depth sounders gives an added advantage as this technology displays water depth and highlights potential fish holding hotspots and even the target species. If the fish are being displayed at a particular depth, different lures designed to operate in that optimal water range can be employed to good effect.



When more than one angler is on board a boat that's trolling slowly, it's often productive to also have one angler casting lures from the bow. Working cast lures tight to the bank and various forms of structure such as weed beds and submerged trees can help you cover more productive water.

IMPOUNDMENT

BASS

FISHING TIPS

Australian bass are an iconic native sportfish found in both fresh and saltwater locations.

Their aggressive nature makes them a popular lure fishing target in stocked impoundments. As with other key bass impoundments, the Lake is stocked on a regular basis by DPI Fisheries to ensure productive fishing for this highly popular native species.

The following is a snapshot of tackle, techniques, and locations to help you catch more of these great sportfish!

OUTFITS

A 2-4kg spinning rod around 2 to 2.1m long matched with a 1000-2500 reel loaded with 2-4kg braid and 3-5kg leader will cover most of your needs. If you prefer a baitcaster, go for a rod in the 3-6kg range around 2 to 2.1m long matched with a 100-200 size reel loaded with 5-10kg braid and 5-8kg leader.

TOP LURES FOR BASS

- » **Spinnerbaits:** Spinnerbaits are great option in most impoundments. Sizes in the 3/8th to 5/8th weight range in natural colours—especially darker tones—seem to work best. Fish your spinnerbaits with a slow steady retrieve around rocks and timber.
 - » **Surface lures:** Summer is the best time of year to target bass with surface lures. Cast your weedless frogs, paddlers and fizzers around the edges of a lake. A slow to medium retrieve with plenty of pauses will get you the bites.
 - » **Vibes & Blades:** A great year-round option, vibes and blades can be worked around shallower points and weed beds or right down along the bottom targeting active fish in deeper water. Sizes from 35-70mm are more productive for bass.
- ### WHEN & WHERE
- Like many predatory species, bass are most active around the lower light periods of dawn and dusk. During the warmer months, you'll most often find fish in shallower water around weed beds, prominent points and timber. In winter, the fish usually school up in deeper water, often around old riverbed edges and other drop offs.
- ### PRO TIPS
- » Employ stealth tactics when fishing the shallows.
 - » Target low light periods—dawn and dusk—in the warmer months.
 - » Try a range of lure types and retrieves to find what the fish like on a particular day.
 - » Respect these great Aussie sportfish. Avoid deep hooking by using lures or circle hooks, use a knotless landing net and minimise the time the fish is out of the water.
 - » Always watch your sounder for signs of bass, bait, and changes in water temperature.
 - » Keep mobile and cover the water to find active fish.

FACT BOX

CAMPING @ LAKE St CLAIR

Lake St Clair's Campground is managed by the Singleton Shire Council and open for camping or day use.

Bookings for camping are essential and must be made prior to arrival. Day passes are available, and all guests are required to check in via the office on arrival.

Lake St Clair boasts unspoilt provincial camping, including **12 powered camp**

sites and 38 hectares of unpowered camp space. There is a concrete boat ramp (accessible at all water levels), electric and wood-fired barbeques as well as toilets, a shower block and camp kitchen.

Dogs are permitted providing they always remain on leads.



12 powered sites
+ Unpowered sites

(Park limited to 350 campers per night)



Concrete
boat ramp

(Accessible all water levels)



Electric and
woodfire BBQs



Toilets &
shower blocks

+ PLUS ■ Camp kitchen ■ Firewood ■ Ice ■ Ice-creams and drinks (payment via EFTPOS)

CONTACT – It is best to contact the Campground via email or Facebook Messenger

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/lakestclairpark/>

Email lakestclair@singleton.nsw.gov.au

Office hours: 8am - 5pm (Please note that the office at Lake St Clair is cashless).

AUSTRALIAN BASS

stocking

The team from the DPI Fisheries Port Stephens Fisheries Centre breed and stock Australian bass into Lake St Clair each year. The annual bass stocking program breeds these fish and stocks them into up to 40 of NSW's east coast impoundments – this ensures we all enjoy great fishing opportunities for this hugely popular native sportfish.

Fish stocking involves producing fish fry or fingerlings and releasing them into NSW waters. Australian bass are a Catadromous fish which means that they move from freshwater to breed in brackish or salt water. Because most

impoundments, including Lake St Clair do not allow for free passage of fish, Australian bass must be stocked to maintain the lake as a premier sports fishery.

Fish stocking can provide many benefits such as creating new fisheries or augmenting existing ones and is recognised for its importance to the community in terms of quality recreational fishing, conservation outcomes, employment and subsequent economic benefits that have grown in response to the activity over many years.

The Recreational Freshwater Fishing Trust supports the stocking of Australian bass into the lakes of the Hunter Valley by funding operating costs including salaries for hatchery staff as well as equipment, fish feed and stocking costs. The trust fund contribution has enabled State hatcheries to increase production over the past several years, leading to record numbers of fish stocked.

This is a great example of your licence fees at work.

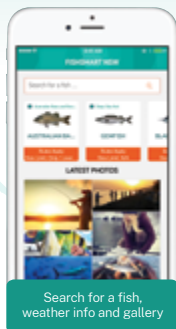


Check out the app: FishSmart



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:

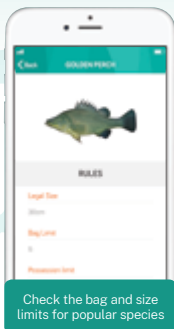
- ❑ a pictorial guide of common recreational species, bag & size limits, closed seasons and fishing gear rules
- ❑ real-time maps to locate nearest FADs (Fish Aggregation Devices), artificial reefs, Recreational Fishing Havens and Marine Park Zones
- ❑ local weather, tide, moon phase and barometric pressure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



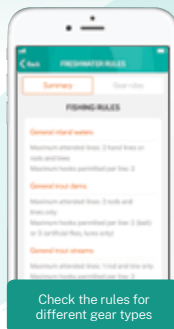
Search for a fish, weather info and gallery



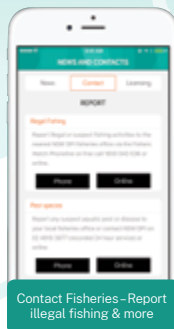
See your location in relation to FADs, Marine Park Zones, RFHs & more



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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