



**FREE  
NSW  
GUIDE**

# Go Fishing

FEATURED LOCATION:  
**BOTANY BAY**

RECREATIONAL  
FISHING HAVEN  
AND BIG CITY  
**HOTSPOT!**

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

# Foreword from DPIRD



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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.

DPIRD 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, permitted gear and other information not listed in these guides, visit the **DPIRD website** or download the **FishSmart app** to your mobile device.

The **FishSmart NSW app** provides recreational fishers 24/7 access to essential information on fishing in NSW.

**Download the FishSmart NSW app to your mobile device.**



**FishSmart  
NSW**



A stylized map of the Sydney coastline. Sydney is marked with a black dot and labeled 'Sydney'. Botany Bay is marked with a white dot and labeled 'Botany Bay' in a script font. The map is set against a blue background.

# Overview



Located 13km south of Sydney's CBD, Botany Bay is probably best known as the landing place of Captain James Cook back in 1770. Long before Cook and his crew on *HMS Endeavour* arrived, untold generations of local Aboriginal people fished and hunted throughout the entire area. Nowadays, however, the famed British explorer – not to mention the original indigenous inhabitants – would probably have a hard time recognising what we now know as Botany Bay.

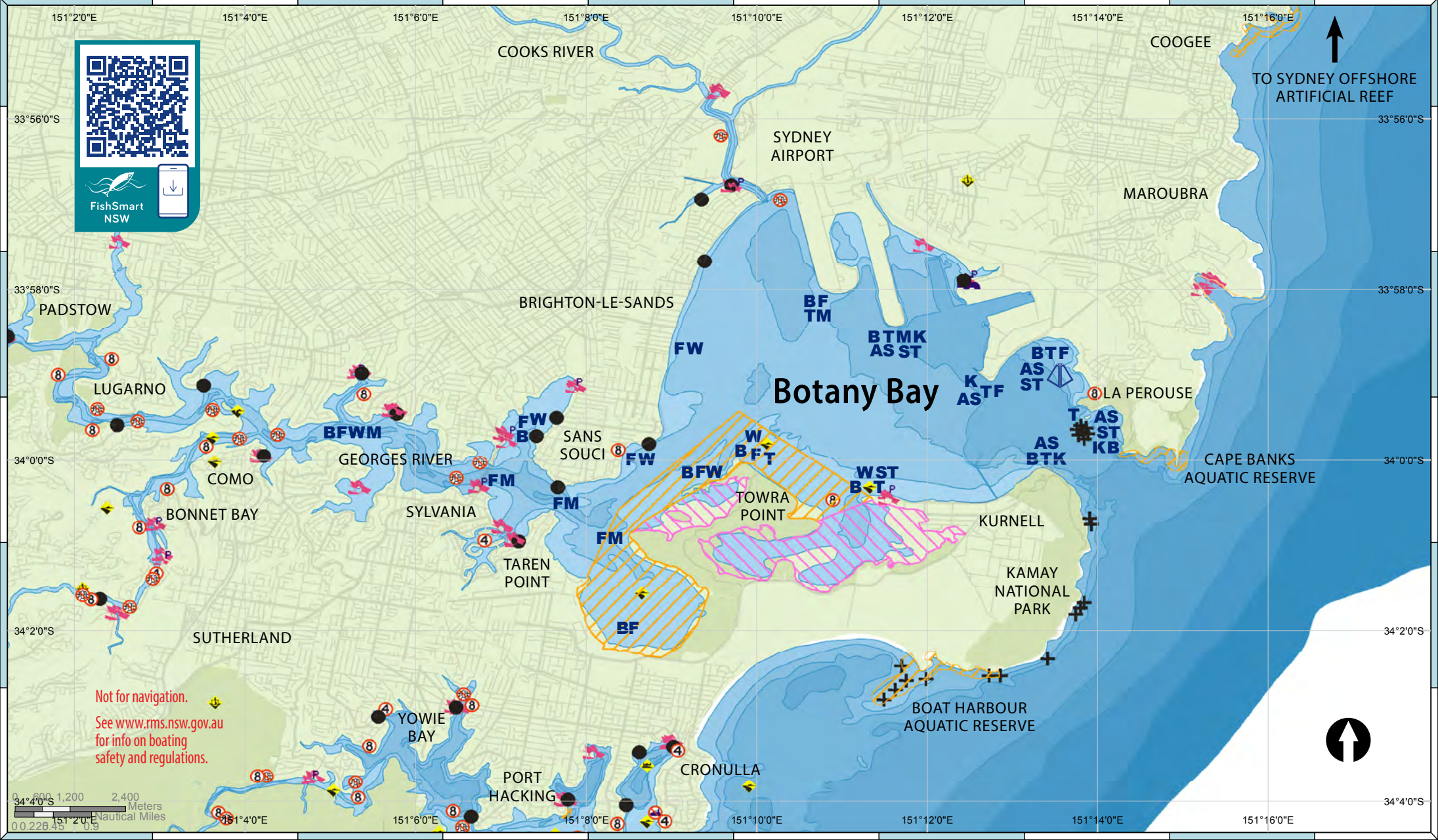
The southern headland of Botany Bay, known as Cape Solander, is fringed by Kamay National Park, where a memorial marks Captain Cook's arrival. The national park makes way to a large wharf on the southern shore which is used by the nearby oil refinery. On the northern headland, Molineaux Point features a huge breakwall bordering the entrance to Port Botany, which is a major shipping hub. Tucked a little further west are Sydney Airport's runways.

In 2002, Botany Bay was designated as a Recreational Fishing Haven with all commercial fishing removed. Since that time, and despite the heavy industry surrounding the area, many local anglers believe the fishing and general health and diversity of the system has improved markedly.

Popular with both serious anglers and family fishos, Botany Bay offers a range of opportunities to target most of the common estuary species via boats, kayaks and from the shore. The Georges, Cooks and Woronora rivers run into Botany Bay, providing yet more access to productive water with the Georges and Woronora offering the chance to catch estuary perch and bass as well as other key species such as bream, flathead, whiting and mullet.

*continued on page 5*





- |                             |                           |                                  |  |                                     |                               |                                     |                            |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>AS</b> Australian Salmon | <b>ST</b> Silver Trevally | Aquatic Reserve – Refuge Zone    | <b>+</b> Dangerous area<br>Breaks at times | Eight Knot Speed Limit Area         | Known Seaplane Operating Area | Formed Surface Launching Ramp       | Water tap<br>Fish cleaning |
| <b>B</b> Bream              | <b>T</b> Tailor           | Aquatic Reserve – Sanctuary Zone | No Wash Zone                               | Personal/WaterCraft Prohibited Area | Caution Shallow Water         | Launching Ramp Parking & Facilities | Artificial Reef            |
| <b>F</b> Flathead           | <b>W</b> Whiting          | NSW National Parks               | Four Knot Speed Limit Area                 | Warning Overhead Power Cables       | Caution Submerged Rocks       | Public Wharf<br>Jetty or Landing    |                            |
| <b>K</b> Kingfish           |                           |                                  |  |                                     |                               |                                     |                            |
| <b>M</b> Mulloway           |                           |                                  |  |                                     |                               |                                     |                            |

For more information on closures, see [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/recreational/resources/info/local-fishing-guides/sydney-south](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/recreational/resources/info/local-fishing-guides/sydney-south)



Botany Bay is also home to the Towra Point Aquatic Reserve, the largest aquatic reserve in NSW. The reserve is located on the southern shore of the Bay and stretches from Shell Point on the west side to Bonna Point in the east.

The aquatic reserve covers an area of about 1400 hectares and is divided into two zone types, a refuge zone and a sanctuary zone.

Within the Reserve's sanctuary zone areas (see map), recreational fishing and the collection of invertebrates and marine vegetation whether alive or dead is prohibited. Within the refuge zone (see map), you can take fish by hook and line and use recreational nets, however, collecting invertebrates or marine vegetation, whether alive or dead, is prohibited. Fishing restrictions also apply around the runaways and at Port Botany. It is important to familiarise yourself with the rules about where you can fish in Botany Bay before heading out to wet a line.

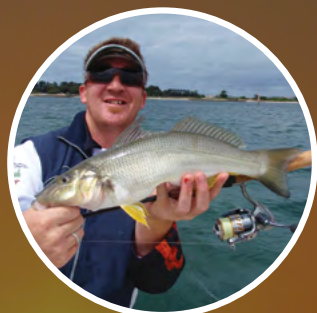
Three artificial reefs have been deployed by DPIRD in the Botany Bay area. These include a reef ball network deployed in 2006 in Yarra Bay on the northern shoreline of the Bay and two large offshore structures north and south of Botany Heads. The reef balls located within the bay are ideal for sourcing bait species such as yellowtail and are well worth fishing at low light periods such as dusk and dawn for species like bream.

Located about 15kms north of Botany Bay, the Sydney Offshore Artificial Reef was installed in 2011 and is known for producing some great kingfish action and a reliable source of bait species such as yellowtail and slimy mackerel. The Southern Sydney "JD" Reef was deployed in 2017 and is named in honour of late tackle industry pioneer John Dunphy. The reef is located about 2.5km southeast of Jibbon Head and has quickly become established as a hotspot for many different species including silver trevally, John Dory, kingfish and bonito. These reefs are your fishing licence at work! See separate Fact-Box for GPS co-ordinates of each reef.

Fishing access along the foreshores of Botany and its feeder systems is generally very good. There are also excellent boating facilities, especially on Foreshore Drive on the northern side. This facility boasts a multi-lane ramp, pontoon, security parking and a fantastic fish cleaning set-up.

As mentioned above, all of the common estuary species including bream, dusky flathead, mullet, silver trevally, whiting and luderick are available in the bay and its tributaries. Pelagic sportfish such as kingfish, bonito, Australian salmon and tailor can be targeted in the bay during the warmer months.

Botany Bay is a great example of a productive, accessible and very diverse recreational fishing hot spot located almost smack bang in the middle of Australia's largest city. It's an amazing fishery well worth exploring.



# Artificial Reefs in & near Botany Bay



## Southern Sydney JD Offshore Artificial Reef

## Sydney Offshore Artificial Reef





# FACT BOX

## Mulloway stocking

Regular stockings of Mulloway are undertaken each year in the Georges River & Botany Bay. The program initially focused on researching the habits and habitats of juvenile mulloway to develop the best strategies for stocking this highly popular species. This involved developing a detailed understanding of key habitat requirements, mapping these habitats throughout the estuary, and assessing the available food supply. The information was drawn together and juvenile mulloway were released in patches of key habitat along the length of the river.

Over the course of the program DPIRD researchers determined that taking this targeted approach to stocking resulted in juvenile mulloway being much more likely to stay at the site at which they were released. The researchers also found that fish stocked further up the estuary were much more likely to stay within the estuary.

Mulloway were sampled from angler catches and were also captured by researchers. Three methods were used to determine whether captured mulloway were stocked or wild. Some stocked fish were marked with a harmless stain which laid down a band in their earstones. Genetic analysis was also used to identify the source of fish captured from the estuary and advanced sized stocking with external pit tags. Results showed that about 20 per cent of fish captured in the Georges River were stocked.

Stocked fish grew at a rate of about 1 mm per day. The largest fish captured across the broader program was 105 cm and 14 kg (seven years after stocking). Planning is underway to conduct more mulloway stocking in the Georges River/Botany Bay, using funds from the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust.



# Key target species



## Dusky Flathead

**PEAK SEASON:** Year round; October–May is best.

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

**TACKLE:** 3-6kg spin outfits, 3-4kg braid or mono line and 5-10kg leader. For bait fishing, use 1/0 to 4/0 (depending on bait size) 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, “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.



## Bream

**PEAK SEASON:** Year round.

**TECHNIQUE:** Bait fishing with fresh or live prawns, live nippers and live squirt 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 pellet berley is effective when targeting bream on bait. Use 1-2 gram jig heads on size 1-2 hooks teamed with 3-8cm “wiggler” style tails when chasing bream on plastics. Use a slow “lift and drop” retrieve.

**HOT SPOTS:** Drop-offs, flats, weed beds, bridges, pontoons and jetties, moored boats and rock walls.







# Mulloway

**PEAK SEASON:**

Year round; October  
–May is best.

**TECHNIQUE:**

Bait fishing with fresh squid, live mullet or live yellowtail; lure casting with soft plastics or medium to large vibes.



**TACKLE:** 3-6kg spin outfits, 3-4kg braid or mono line and 5-15kg leader. When bait fishing, use size 3/0-7/0 (depending on bait size) non-offset circle hooks on a running sinker rig. When using soft plastics, try 9-14 gram jig heads in 3/0 to 5/0 with 80-130mm paddle tail softies worked with single or double flick lifts near the bottom. Alternatively, use a medium to large hard or soft vibe with single lifts near the bottom.

**HOT SPOTS:** Deep holes, bridges and river/creek mouths.



# Silver Trevally

**PEAK SEASON:**

Year round.

**TECHNIQUE:** Bait fishing with fresh prawns, live nippers and live squirt 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. Trevally respond well to berley. Use 1-2 gram jig heads on size 1-2 hooks teamed with 3-8cm "wiggler" style tails when targeting trevally on plastics. Use a slow "lift and drop" retrieve.

**HOT SPOTS:** Drop-offs, flats and weed beds.



**For dietary advice regarding fish caught in Botany Bay, go to:**

<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/2017/epamedia171215-dietary-advice-for-fish-caught-in-botany-bay-and-georges-river>

# Other species



Tailor, Australian salmon, kingfish and bonito are regular visitors to the bay in the warmer months. Whiting, luderick, flounder and squid are also present in good numbers throughout the year and can be specifically targeted. Estuary perch and Australian bass can be found in some sections of the rivers (in particular, the upper sections of the Georges River) flowing into the bay. Blue swimmer crabs can be targeted in hoop nets around seagrass meadows.

## 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 mullet. Recent research by DPIRD 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.dpiird.nsw.gov.au/fisheries](http://www.dpiird.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)

