

# Central Coast and Hawkesbury River recreational fishing guide

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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.

The central coast district, extending from Munmorah State Recreation Park in the north, to the southern bank of the Hawkesbury River, caters for beach, rock, estuary and ocean fishing activities. Anglers have the chance of catching a wide variety of fish, including Tailor, Yellowtail Kingfish, Australian Salmon, Luderick, Snapper, Bream, Whiting, Leatherjacket, Flathead and Mulloway.

The waterways and beaches of the NSW central coast offer many fishing opportunities for angling enthusiasts. This guide will help you to understand a number of closures and restrictions that apply in the area, for example, the net and trap restrictions in Tuggerah Lakes and Brisbane Water.

NSW DPI 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 NSW DPI website [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries), or by visiting your local NSW DPI 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.

## When do I need to pay the fee?

When fishing in NSW, in 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, 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;

- installing artificial reefs in offshore areas.

You can pay the NSW recreational fishing fee at any of the 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](http://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 NSW DPI website or call (02) 4424 7499.

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

A number of fishing closures exist in the Central Coast area. These exist for a variety of reasons, from public health and safety to preserving unique aquatic environments. The majority of these closures are signposted and penalties apply for not complying with fisheries rules and regulations.

### Total fishing closures

All methods of fishing are prohibited in the following waters.

**Budgewoi Lake: Munmorah Power House** (Figure 1). The whole of the waters of that part of the outlet canal of the Munmorah Power House, Budgewoi Lake, north-east of a line bearing 140° across the canal from the south-western extremity of the breakwall on the south-western side of the canal to Ourringo Point. Closed to all methods of fishing in the period 1 May to 31 August (inclusive) each year from 6 pm to 6 am.

Bouddi National Park (Figure 3). The whole of the waters of that part of the South Pacific Ocean adjacent to Bouddi National Park is closed to all methods of fishing.

## Recreational netting and trapping

**Upper Hawkesbury River** (Figure 2). All waters of the Hawkesbury River, its creeks, tributaries and inlets, upstream to its source from the road bridge at Windsor are closed to nets of every description, except the landing net.



Figure 1. Budgewoi Lake and Lake Munmorah



Figure 2. Upper Hawkesbury River

**Brisbane Water and a portion of Broken Bay** (Figure 3). The area enclosed by a line from Little Box Head to Green Point, is permanently closed to the use of all nets and traps (except the dip or scoop net, lobster trap, landing net and bait trap).

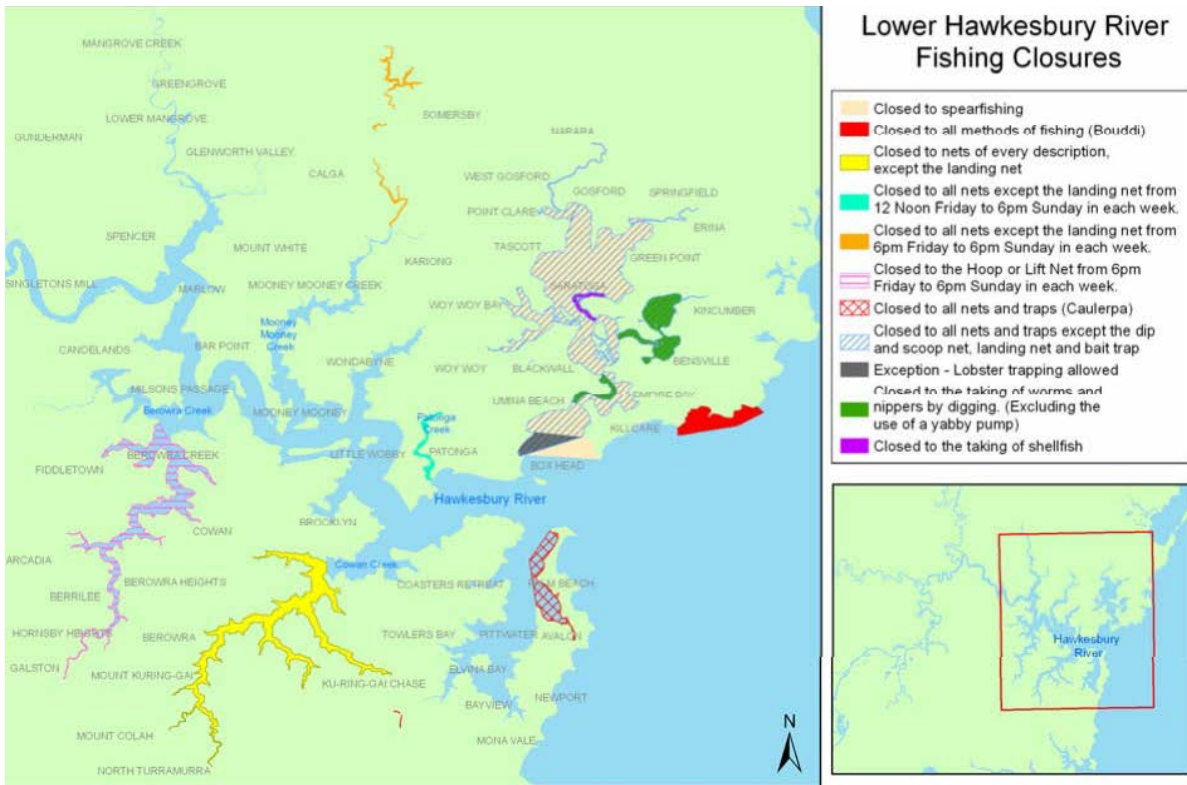


Figure 3. Lower Hawkesbury River

**Brisbane Water and a portion of Broken Bay** (Figure 3). The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a lobster trap; The whole of the waters of that part of Brisbane waters/Broken Bay north of a line drawn westerly from the western extremity of Little Box Head and the northernmost point of Mount Ettalong.

**Cowan Creek and Jerusalem Bay** (Figure 3). All waters of Cowan Creek, its creeks, tributaries and inlets (including Jerusalem Bay), upstream to its source from a line drawn generally north from Cowan Point, to the eastern extremity of the headland on the opposite side of the creek are closed to nets of every description, except the landing net.

**Mooney Mooney Creek** (Figure 3). The whole of the waters of Mooney Mooney Creek, its creeks, tributaries and inlets, upstream to its source from the Pacific Highway Bridge are closed to nets of every description, except the landing net. Applies from 6 pm Friday to 6 pm Sunday in each week, or from 6 pm Friday to 6 pm Monday where Monday is a Public Holiday.

**Berowra Creek** (Figure 3). The whole of the waters of Berowra Creek (also known as Berowra Waters), its creeks, tributaries and inlets, upstream (south) of a line drawn from the most north-eastern extremity of the southern entry of Marra Marra Creek, to the most south-western extremity of Morgans Point are closed to any

method involving the use of a hoop or lift net. Applies from 6 pm Friday to 6 pm Sunday in each week, or from 6 pm Friday to 6 pm Monday where Monday is a Public Holiday.

**Patonga Creek** (Figure 3). The whole of the waters of Patonga Creek, its creeks, tributaries and inlets, upstream of its confluence with the Hawkesbury River, being a line drawn north-easterly from the easternmost foreshore corner of Oyster Farm no. 59–30 (section 2), on the western foreshore, to the southernmost extremity of the reserve on the opposite foreshore. Closed to nets of every description, except the landing net. Applies from 12 noon Friday to 6 pm Sunday in each week. These waters are also closed to any method involving a hand-hauled prawn net, all year.

**Tuggerah Lakes** (Figure 4). The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a hoop or lift net, a hand-hauled prawn net, a push or scissors net (prawns), a crab trap, or a lobster trap: the whole of the waters of that part of the entrance to Tuggerah Lake from the confluence of Tuggerah Lake and the South Pacific Ocean bounded by a line commencing on the high water mark at a point 201 m south-westerly from the north-western corner of portion 39 in the parish of Wallarah, then north-westerly to 33°19.410'S, 151°30.293'E (NSW Maritime Navigation Aid Number 096), then north-westerly to 33°19.344'S, 151°30.112'E (NSW Maritime Navigation Aid Number 095), then northerly to 33°19.143'S, 151°29.959'E (NSW Maritime



Navigation Aid Number 094), then northerly to 33°18.934'S, 151°29.875'E (NSW Maritime Navigation Aid Number 093), then south-westerly to 33°19.225'S, 151°29.589'E (NSW Maritime Navigation Aid Number 092), then south-westerly to 33°19.636'S, 151°29.134'E (NSW Maritime Navigation Aid Number 091), then south-westerly to 33°20.055'S, 151°28.708'E (NSW Maritime Navigation Aid Number 090), then easterly to 33°20.138'S, 151°29.122'E (NSW Maritime Navigation Aid Number 089), then south-easterly to 33°20.220'S, 151°29.235'E (NSW Maritime Navigation Aid Number 088), then south-easterly to 33°20.364'S, 151°29.300'E (NSW Maritime Navigation Aid Number 087), then south-easterly to a point on the high water mark of the eastern shore of that lake 805 m southerly from the northern extremity of Picnic Point.



Figure 4. Tuggerah Lake

**Lake Munmorah** (Figure 1). The whole of the waters of Budgewoi Creek, together with all its tributaries, extending upwards from the Traffic Road Bridge to the Pedestrian Bridge at the entrance to Lake Munmorah are closed to any method involving the use of a net other than a dip or scoop net (prawns) or a landing net.

**Wamberal Lagoon.** The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a hoop or lift net, a hand-hauled prawn net, a push or scissors net (prawns), a crab trap, or a lobster trap: the whole of the waters of Wamberal Lagoon, together with its affluent and tributaries.

**Terrigal Lagoon.** The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a hoop or lift net, a hand-hauled prawn net, a push or scissors net (prawns), a crab trap, or a lobster trap: the whole of the waters of Terrigal Lagoon, together with its affluent and tributaries.

**Avoca Lake.** The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a hoop or lift net, a hand-hauled prawn net, a push or scissors net (prawns), a crab trap, or a lobster trap: the whole of the waters of Avoca Lake (including Bulbararing Lagoon), together with its affluent and tributaries.

**Cockrane Lake.** The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a hoop or lift net, a hand-hauled prawn net, a push or scissors net (prawns), a crab trap, or a lobster trap: the whole of the waters of Cockrane Lake, together with its affluent and tributaries.

### Bait digging and collection

**Brisbane Water (Ettalong).** The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a spade or a fork: the whole of the waters and intertidal zone of Brisbane Water from the mean high water mark to the middle of the estuary, and extending from the boat ramp at the southern end of Ettalong Beach (at the end of Kourung Street) to the Maitland Bay Drive road bridge at The Rip. A nipper pump is permitted.

**Brisbane Water (Cockle Creek).** The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a spade or a fork: The whole of the waters and intertidal zone of Brisbane Water, upstream to its source, from a line drawn from a post located at the high water mark at 33°29.418'S 151°29.354'E near the western end of Oyster Lease 76-199, adjacent to Myler Avenue (suburb of Empire Bay), generally north-westerly to the nearest point on the opposite shore at Davistown (includes waters of Cockle Creek, Cockle Channel, Empire Bay, Cockle Broadwater, Cockle Bay and Kincumber Creek). A nipper pump is permitted.

**Brisbane Water (Saratoga Area).** The following waters are closed to the taking of Shellfish by any method: The whole of the waters of Brisbane Water from mean high water mark at the Public Wharf, View Parade, Saratoga, then along the Saratoga foreshore to Veteran Hall Wharf, Saratoga, and extending 200 metres offshore.

**Oysters.** Collection of oysters for recreational purposes in all waters of the Hawkesbury River, including its bays, tributaries, and Patonga Creek, is prohibited.

Digging is prohibited on rock platforms, in seagrass beds, mangroves, saltmarsh areas or when targeting pipis.

**Abalone.** A total closure is imposed on the taking of abalone by all methods from Port Stephens south to Botany Bay. Limited fishing for abalone is permitted between Botany Bay and Wreck Bay on weekends and adjacent NSW public holidays.

## 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.
- All fin fish and invertebrates such as crabs, prawns, worms, nippers, cockles and squid are subject to bag limits and many are also subject to size limits.
- 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 are not permitted to alter the length of fish or invertebrate by filleting/shucking and/or removing the head/shell 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 figures).
- **Tuggerah Lake Entrance** (Figure 4). The following waters are closed to spearfishing: the waters of Tuggerah Lake Entrance within the boundaries commencing at the north-west corner of lots A and B of Strata Plan No 4000 on Marine Parade; thence by a line bearing 90° for a distance of 160 metres; then by a line bearing generally north-westerly to the south-east extremity of Karagi Point; then continuing generally northerly along mean highwater mark of the eastern shore of Tuggerah Lake to PWD Survey mark No 215 at Coogee Avenue; then continuing generally south-westerly to the most north-western point of Terilbah Island and to PWD Survey Mark No 217 on Picnic Point; then generally easterly and south-easterly along mean highwater mark of the southern shore of Tuggerah Lake to the point where the line bearing 90° from the point of commencement intersects the mean highwater mark.
- **Brisbane Water and a portion of Broken Bay** (Figure 3). The following waters are closed to spearfishing: the whole of the waters of that part of Brisbane Water together with all its creeks, tributaries, inlets and bays north of a line drawn westerly from the southern extremity of Box or Hawk Head to the eastern extremity of Green Point.

## Fish aggregating devices – FADs

NSW DPI 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 Central coast district are located offshore of Terrigal Skillion and Broken Bay. For exact GPS locations please check the website [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries). For more information or to report a lost or damaged FAD please phone (02) 4424 7419 or email: [fisheries.FADs@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:fisheries.FADs@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

## Fishing safely

Fishing, especially rock fishing, can be dangerous. Follow these basic safety tips at all times when rock fishing:

- Never fish by yourself. Fish in a group of at least three people and within sight of each other. If someone is washed in, one person can stay and help while the other alerts emergency services (dial 000).
- Inform others of your plans. Always let friends or family know where you are going and when you will be back.
- Wear light clothing. Light clothing such as shorts and a spray jacket will let you swim easily. If you are washed in. Jumpers may be heavy and difficult to take off.
- Wear appropriate footwear. Cleats, sandals and sandshoes with non-slip soles suit different surfaces. Use the appropriate shoes for the conditions.
- Wear a life jacket. Carry safety gear. Also bring something buoyant that can be easily thrown and held to help you stay afloat. Carry ropes, a float and torches.
- Fish only in places you know are safe and never fish in exposed areas during rough or large seas.
- 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.
- Observe first, fish later. Spend some time (at least 30 minutes) watching your intended spot before fishing to get an idea of the conditions over a full swell/wave cycle. Wave conditions can get worse as the tide changes

- you should know whether the tides are high or low and coming in or going out.

- Plan an escape route in case you are washed in. 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.
- Stay alert. Never ever turn your back on the sea, if the waves, weather or swell threaten your fishing spot then leave immediately.
- Ask for advice from locals who know the area. They will always tell you when an area is dangerous.
- Do not jump in if someone is washed into the water. Use your rope or something that floats to rescue the person. If there is an angel ring nearby know how to use it. Dial 000 to alert emergency services to get help.
- For more information go to [www.safefishing.com.au](http://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

Avoid collecting and eating shellfish recreationally. If you choose to collect and eat shellfish such as mussels or oysters do not collect after heavy rainfall. Runoff water following heavy rainfall carries pollution into waterways, sometimes including sewage.

Always cook recreational seafood thoroughly. In particular, never eat raw shellfish which has been collected recreationally as they are not subject to the same strict food safety controls as commercially harvested shellfish.

Remember that cooking will not destroy or remove toxins which might be present in seafood from poor quality waters. Eating seafood contaminated with toxins can result in serious illness or death.

For more information check the NSW DPI Recreational Fishing Guide or see [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au) or phone 1300 552 406.

## Penalties

Penalties apply to persons who take or possess fish (including invertebrates and shells) 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 Central Coast's waterways and beaches, please contact the Central Coast fisheries office.

Central Coast Fisheries Office  
Central Coast Primary Industries Centre  
The University Of Newcastle, Ourimbah Campus  
North Loop Road  
Ourimbah NSW 2258

Phone: (02) 4328 8618  
Mobile: 0419 185 517  
Fax: (02) 4328 8628

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

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (November 2014). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

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