

Far South Coast Recreational Fishing Guide

Fisheries Compliance Unit

July 2024

Fishing is a fun, outdoor activity for the whole family. Fishing rules help ensure healthy and sustainable fisheries for future generations.

The Far South Coast of New South Wales is one of the most scenic stretches of coastline to be found anywhere in Australia. The area is an unspoilt and popular destination for fishers and divers. It stretches from Bermagui in the north to the NSW/Victoria border in the south and is often referred to as the Sapphire Coast.

A wide variety of fishing activities can be undertaken on the Far South Coast including prawning, trapping and diving. This guide provides essential information on fishing, including any closures and restrictions, which apply within the Far South Coast district.

The Far South Coast area also provides excellent freshwater fishing close to the coast, including notified trout waters, visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/recreational/resources/local for more details.

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.

Information on bag and size limits and legal fishing gear can be obtained at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries or by visiting your local DPI fisheries office.

To report suspected illegal fishing activity, call the Fishers Watch phone line on **1800 043 536** (free call) or report on-line at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/compliance/report-illegal-activity>. All calls will be treated as confidential and you can remain anonymous.

RECREATIONAL FISHING FEE

When fishing in NSW waters, 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, hand lining, 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:

- building artificial reefs to create new fishing locations;
- fish aggregating devices (FADs) to enhance fishing for dolphinfish and even 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;
- marine stocking of prawns in estuaries;
- angler education and advisory programs such as the Fishcare Volunteer program, fishing workshops, Get Hooked...it's fun to fish primary schools education and fishing guides.

Much more information is available at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries.

You can pay the NSW recreational fishing fee at www.onegov.nsw.gov.au or by calling 1300 369 365 or at many outlets throughout NSW, such as most fishing tackle stores, caravan parks, local shops, service stations and many Kmart stores.

Some exemptions apply to paying the fishing fee, including people under the age of 18, holders of pensioner concession cards and Aboriginal people. For further information on exemptions visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au 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 Far South 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.

General fishing closures

All NSW waters. During the period May to August (inclusive) each year Australian Bass and Estuary Perch can only be taken by catch and release fishing in any NSW waters except impoundments and the waters of rivers above impoundments.

Recreational netting and trapping

Wapengo Lake (Figure 1). All the waters of that part of Wapengo Lake and its tributaries, from a

line drawn across the entrance to the lake at its confluence with the South Pacific Ocean upstream to a line drawn from the northeastern foreshore at a point 150°1.07'E, 36°36.24'S to the southeastern foreshore at a point 150°0.76'E, 36°36.19'S are closed to the use of nets, other than a dip or scoop net (prawns) and a landing net.

Bega River. The waters of Bega River and its tributaries, upstream from the junction of/and including Jellat Jellat Creek and the Brogo River, upstream to its source are closed to the use of nets, other than a landing net.

Merimbula Lake (Figure 2). The following waters are closed to the use of hoop or lift nets; all the waters of Merimbula Lake and its tributaries, from its confluence with the South Pacific Ocean upstream to its source.

Sandy Beach Creek and Bournda Lagoon (Figure 4). The following waters are closed to the use of nets, other than a dip or scoop net (prawns) or a landing net; all the waters of Sandy Beach Creek and Bournda Lagoon and their tributaries.

Figure 1. Wapengo Lake

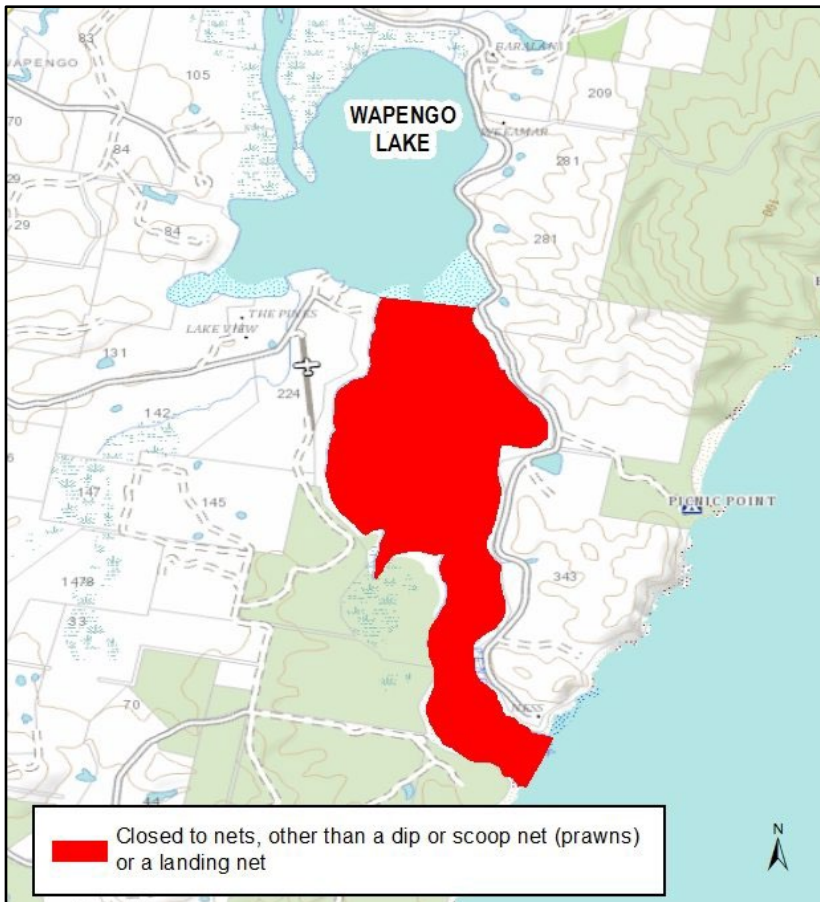
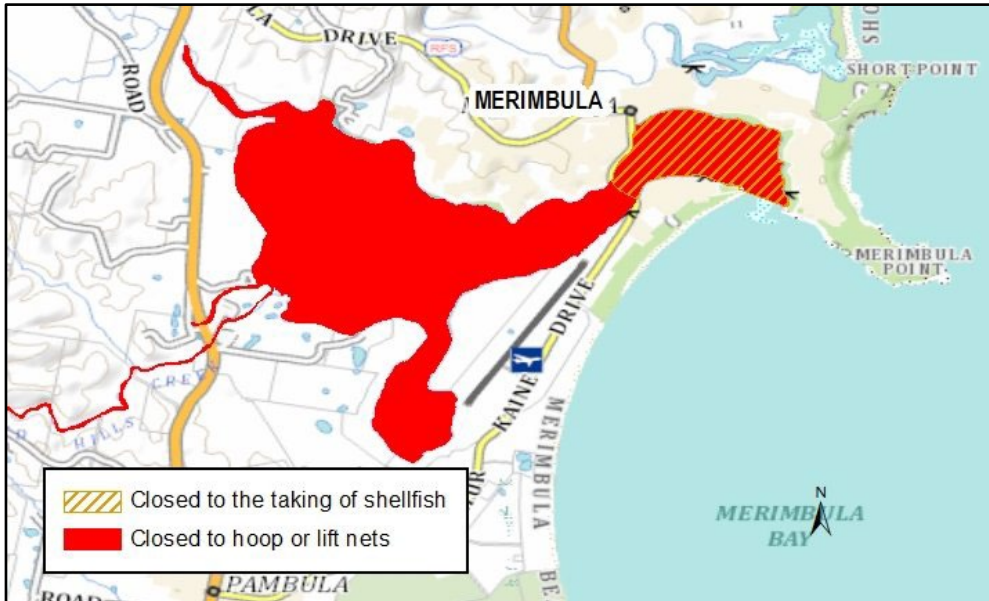


Figure 2. Merimbula Lake



Towamba River. The following waters are closed to the use of nets, other than a dip or scoop net (prawns) or a landing net; all the waters of Towamba River and its tributaries, upstream from its confluence with the South Pacific Ocean to its source.

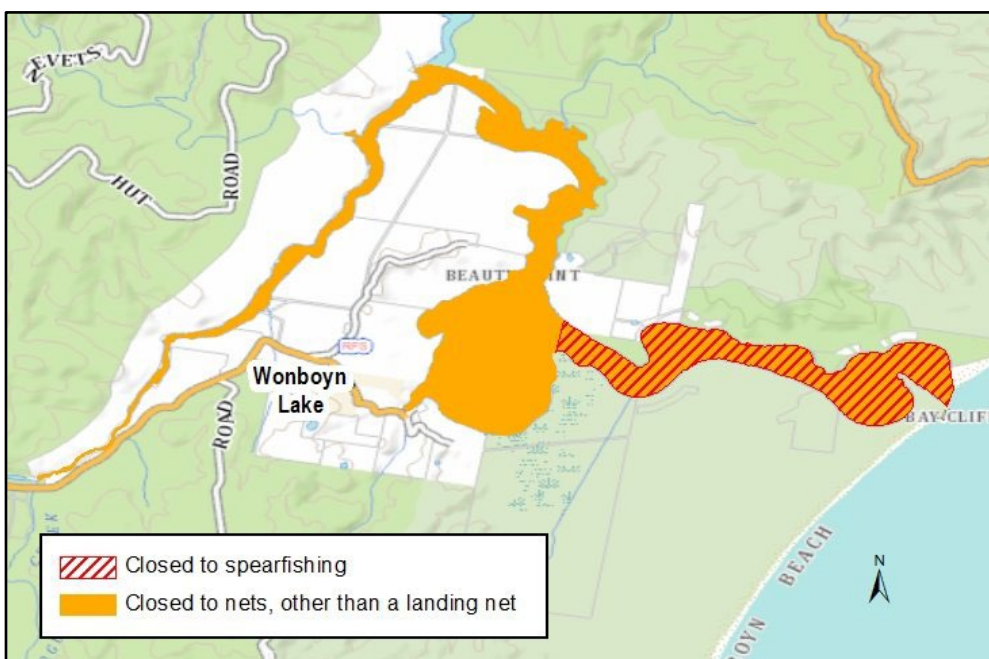
Wonboyn River (Figure 3). The following waters are closed to the use of nets, other than a landing net; all the waters of Wonboyn River and its tributaries, upstream from its confluence with the South Pacific Ocean to its source.

Nadgee River, Nagdee Lake, Merrica River and Little Creek. The following waters are closed to the use of a net or trap, other than a landing net, a dip or scoop net (prawns) or a bait trap; all the waters of Nadgee River, Nadgee Lake, Merrica River and Little Creek and their tributaries, from their confluence with the South Pacific Ocean upstream to their source.

Shellfish Closures

Merimbula Lake (Figure 2). It is illegal to take any species of shellfish from the waters of Merimbula Lake downstream from the causeway traffic bridge (Arthur Kaine Drive) to its confluence with the South Pacific Ocean.

Figure 3. Wonboyn River



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 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;
- powerheads and/or explosive devices.

Spearfishing is prohibited in freshwater as well as many entrances, coastal lagoons and other tidal waters.

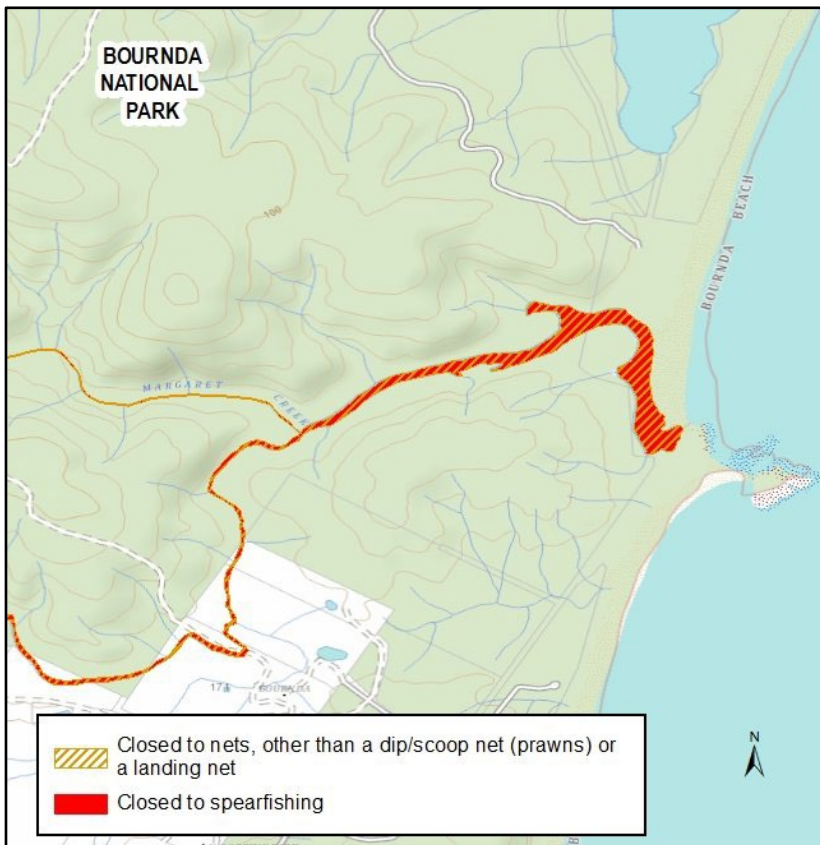
The following areas covered by this guide are closed to spearfishing:

All NSW ocean beaches, excluding the last 20m at each end of the beach.

Sandy Beach Creek (Figure 4). All the waters of Sandy Beach Creek and Bournda Lagoon and their tributaries.

Wonboyn River (Figure 3). the entrance waters of Wonboyn River downwards to their confluence with the South Pacific Ocean from a line drawn in a southerly direction from the northwestern most foreshore at a point 37°14.57'S, 149°55.91'E to the westernmost foreshore at a point 37°14.69'S, 149°55.88'E.

Figure 4. Sandy Beach Creek and Bournda Lagoon



GENERAL RECREATIONAL FISHING RULES

- It is illegal for recreational fishers to sell their catch.
- Taking Eastern Blue Groper (also known as Blue, Brown or Red Groper) is prohibited.
- Protected species, prohibited size or fish in excess of the bag limit must be returned to the water immediately.
- It is illegal to jag/foul hook fish other than through the mouth.
- Leave all commercial fishing gear in place and do not disturb commercial fishers going about their lawful business.

- You must not alter the length of fish by filleting and/or removing the head 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).
- Collecting pipis by recreational fishers for human consumption is prohibited in NSW. A maximum of 50 pipis is permitted to be collected for bait and not be removed more than 50m from the high tide mark. Pipis and cockles may contain toxins due to natural algal blooms. The blooms are not always visible.

Fishing safely

Fishing is fun, but remember to take care and exercise caution. Rock fishing can be particularly dangerous due to the unpredictable nature of the ocean. Follow these basic safety tips at all times when rock fishing:

- Always wear a life jacket
- Stay alert to the weather conditions
- Plan an escape route in case you are washed in
- Never turn your back on the ocean
- Wear appropriate non-slip footwear and light clothing
- Do not jump in if someone is washed in - wait for assistance
- Never fish alone

For more information go to www.safefishing.com.au

Responsible fishing

- Reduce wildlife injuries by attending your lines and avoid bird feeding areas.
- Only catch sufficient fish for your immediate needs. Release all others using best practice catch and release techniques. Remember all

fish, including scavengers, are important to the ecosystem.

- If you retain your catch, dispatch all fish and invertebrates swiftly and humanely.
- Dispose of all litter and fish waste responsibly.
- Be considerate of others and keep noise to a minimum, especially in residential areas.
- Reduce wildlife injuries by attending your lines and avoid bird feeding areas.
- Use environmentally friendly fishing tackle such as lead alternative sinkers, biodegradable line, and non-stainless hooks where possible.
- Act responsibly when you have reached your bag limit and you remain in the fishing grounds.
- Do not interfere with commercial fishing activities or commercial fishing gear.

Recreational harvest of shellfish

Shellfish are filter feeders and they sometimes accumulate harmful substances from the water during feeding. Shellfish collected by recreational fishers should never be eaten raw. This is because recreationally harvested shellfish are not subject to the same strict food safety controls as commercially harvested shellfish. Consequently the NSW Food Authority recommends eating only shellfish harvested under a recognised program. For more information check the DPI Recreational Fishing Guide or www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au or phone 1300 552 406.

Fish Aggregating Devices – FADs

NSW Department of Primary Industries 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.

A FADS in the Far South Coast district is located offshore of Eden; for exact GPS locations please check the website

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/saltwater/fads.

For more information on this program funded by the Recreational Fishing Trust or to report a lost or damaged FAD please contact the program

Artificial Reefs

Artificial reefs are used extensively around the world to create fish habitat, and new high quality fishing opportunities for anglers. NSW DPI has deployed specially designed artificial reefs in both estuarine and offshore waters aimed at providing new high quality fishing opportunities for recreational fishers.

For more information on artificial reefs go to www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/saltwater/artificial-reefs.

Penalties

Penalties apply to persons who take or possess fish (including invertebrates, shells, etc.) 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 Far South Coast district waterways and beaches, please contact the;

Far South Coast Fisheries Office.

13 Cocora Street

Postal address: PO Box 37

EDEN NSW 2551

Phone: 1800 043 536

Web: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries

Check for updates of this Recreational Fishing Guide at:

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/recreational/resources

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (July 2024). 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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