

Coffs Harbour to Nambucca 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 Coffs Harbour and surrounding waterways provide excellent beach, rock, and boat fishing opportunities. This guide provides essential information on fishing, including any closures and restrictions, which apply from Coffs Harbour in the north to Nambucca River in the south.

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 www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/compliance/report-illegal-activity.

All calls will be treated as confidential and you can remain anonymous.

Solitary Island Marine Park

The Coffs coast is home to the Solitary Islands Marine Park, which extends 75km from Muttonbird Island at Coffs Harbour, north to Plover Island at the Sandon River. For further information on marine park rules and zoning see www.mpa.nsw.gov.au or phone (02) 6652 3977.

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.

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 some 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 Coffs - Nambucca 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.

Nets and Traps

Hand hauled prawn nets are prohibited in the following areas;

- Warrell Creek – upstream of Scotts Head boat ramp (Figure 1)
- Nambucca River entrance (Figure 2)
- the whole of the waters of Bonville, Boambee and Pine Creeks
- the whole of the waters of Deep Creek

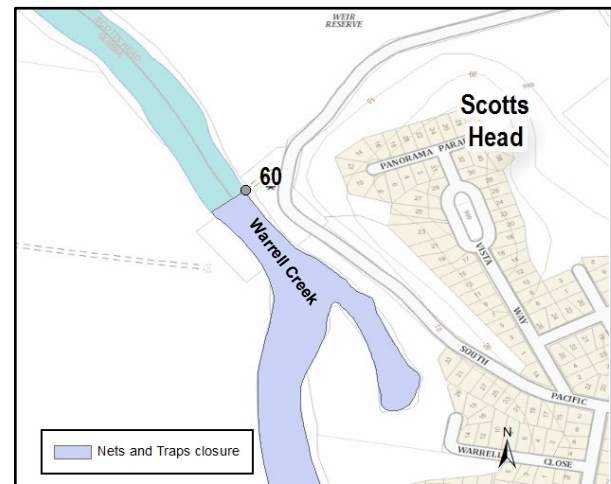
Hoop nets and witches hats are prohibited in the following areas;

- Warrell Creek – upstream of Scotts Head boat ramp (Figure 1)
- the whole of the waters of Bonville, Boambee and Pine Creeks
- the whole of the waters of Deep Creek

Crab traps are prohibited in the following areas;

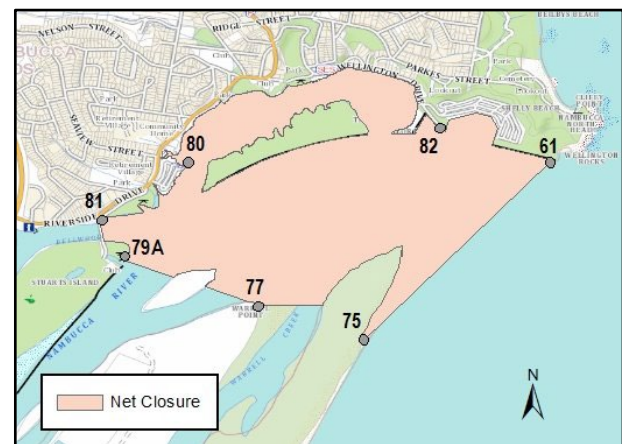
- Warrell Creek – upstream of Scotts Head boat ramp (Figure 1)
- Bellinger and Kalang Rivers and Urunga Lagoon (Figure 3)

Figure 1. Warrell Creek upstream net and trap closure



| WPT | Description | Latitude | Longitude |
|-----|-----------------------|------------|-------------|
| 60 | Scotts Head boat ramp | 30°44.67'S | 152°59.12'E |

Figure 2. Nambucca River entrance net closure



| WPT | Description | Latitude | Longitude |
|-----|---|------------|-------------|
| 61 | E ext. N training wall, brg 225 to FD post on S shore | 30°38.96'S | 153°1.07'E |
| 75 | post on S shore SW of E ext. N training wall | 30°39.52'S | 153°0.48'E |
| 76 | due E Warrell Pt | 30°39.41'S | 153°0.36'E |
| 77 | Warrell Pt | 30°39.41'S | 153°0.17'E |
| 79A | S boundary OL72/190 | 30°39.27'S | 152°59.77'E |
| 80 | SW foreshore corner OL83/148 | 30°38.98'S | 152°59.94'E |
| 81 | causeway | 30°39.18'S | 152°59.68'E |
| 82 | Siberia Lagoon | 30°38.87'S | 153°0.75'E |

Bait traps are prohibited in Warrell Creek upstream of the Scotts Head boat ramp (Figure 1)

Lobster traps are prohibited in the Coffs inner harbour and entrance area. Please contact the district office for more details and the GPS coordinates of this area or check out the closure details at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries

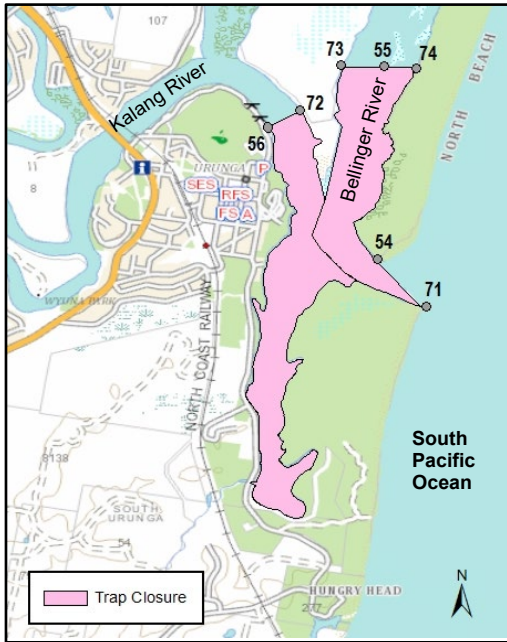
Spearfishing and diving

Spearfishing is prohibited in the following areas:

- Nambucca River (Figure 4) – the entrance of the river to the southern extremity of Stuarts Island
- Bellinger and Kalang Rivers and Urunga Lagoon (Figure 5)

- All the waters of Bonville, Boambee and Pine Creeks
- All NSW ocean beaches, excluding the last 20m at each end of the beach.
- All freshwater rivers, streams and lakes
- It is illegal to spear lobster or any protected fish.

Figure 3. Bellinger & Kalang River closures



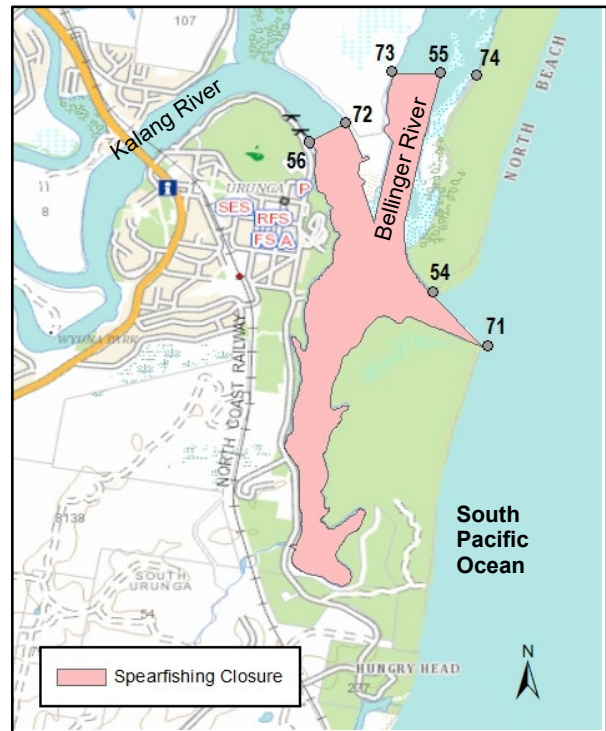
| WPT | Description | Latitude | Longitude |
|-----|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 54 | E ext. N training wall | 30°30.00'S | 153°1.79'E |
| 55 | N ext. N training wall | 30°29.25'S | 153°1.82'E |
| 56 | NW ext. S training wall | 30°29.52'S | 153°1.37'E |
| 71 | E ext. S ent. Bellinger River | 30°30.16'S | 153°1.95'E |
| 72 | point NE of NW ext. S training wall | 30°29.42'S | 153°1.47'E |
| 73 | point due W N ext. N training wall | 30°29.25'S | 153°1.66'E |
| 74 | point due E N ext. N training wall | 30°29.25'S | 153°1.93'E |

Figure 4. Nambucca River spearfishing closure



| WPT | Description | Latitude | Longitude |
|-----|---|-------------|-------------|
| 61 | E ext. N training wall, brg 225 to FD post on S shore | 30°38.96'S | 153°1.07'E |
| 75 | post on S shore SW of E ext. N training wall | 30°39.252'S | 153°0.48'E |
| 76 | NW ext. S training wall | 30°29.52'S | 153°1.37'E |
| 77 | due E Warrell Pt | 30°39.41'S | 153°0.36'E |
| 78 | Warrell Pt | 30°39.41'S | 153°0.17'E |
| 79 | due E of S ext. Stuarts Island | 30°39.67'S | 152°59.61'E |
| 79 | due W of S ext. Stuarts Island | 30°29.25'S | 152°59.12'E |

Figure 5. Bellinger & Kalang Rivers, Urunga Lagoon spearfishing closure



| WPT | Description | Latitude | Longitude |
|-----|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 54 | E ext. N training wall | 30°30.00'S | 153°1.79'E |
| 55 | N ext. N training wall | 30°29.25'S | 153°1.82'E |
| 56 | NW ext. S training wall | 30°29.52'S | 153°1.37'E |
| 71 | E ext. S ent. Bellinger River | 30°30.16'S | 153°1.95'E |
| 72 | point NE of NW ext. S training wall | 30°29.42'S | 153°1.47'E |
| 73 | point due W N ext. N training wall | 30°29.25'S | 153°1.66'E |
| 74 | point due E N ext. N training wall | 30°29.25'S | 153°1.93'E |

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

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.

FADS are located offshore of Coffs Harbour and Nambucca Heads; for exact GPS locations please check the website www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/saltwater/fads.

For more information on this program contact the program coordinator at DPI on (02) 4424 7421 or Email: fisheries.FADs@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

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 Coffs Harbour's waterways and beaches, please contact the;

Coffs Harbour Fisheries Office.

32 Marina Drive

Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

Phone: 1800 043 536

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

Check for updates of this 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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