



Illawarra 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 Illawarra's waterways provide excellent beach, rock, and boat fishing opportunities. This guide provides essential information on fishing, including any closures and restrictions, which apply along the Illawarra coast from Garie Beach to Seven Mile Beach at Gerroa.

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, through the DPI [FishSmart app](#) or by contacting your local DPI fisheries office.

To report suspected illegal fishing activity, call the Fishers Watch phone line on **1800 043 536** (free call) or on-line at: [Report illegal activity \(nsw.gov.au\)](#). 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 spearfishing, 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 fish into 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 go to 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 Illawarra 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.

Port Kembla: Inner harbour (Figure 1). The whole of the waters of the inner harbour of Port Kembla, formerly known as Tom Thumb's Lagoon, and its creeks and tributaries west of a line drawn from the green navigation light on the western end of the northern bank of the inner harbour entrance canal to the red navigation light at the western end of the southern bank of the inner harbour entrance canal.

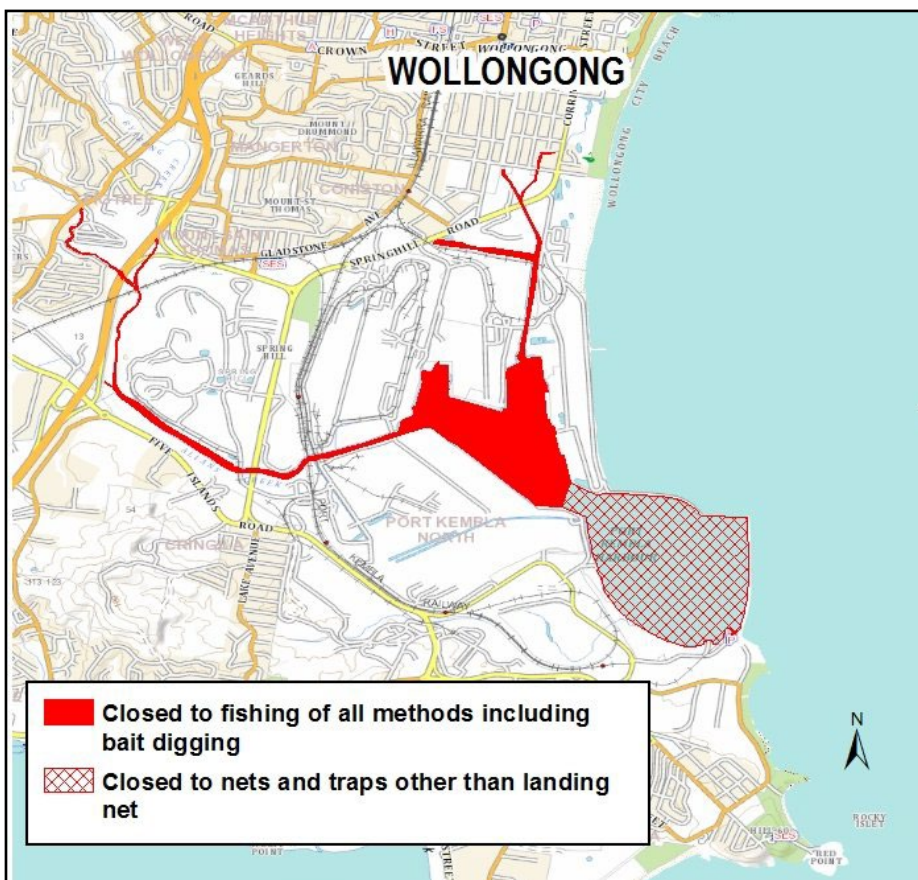
Bushrangers Bay Aquatic Reserve (Figure 2).

The following waters are closed to the taking, gathering, destroying, injuring or interfering with any fish or marine vegetation (whether dead or alive): Bushrangers Bay at the eastern end of Bass Point. Note: This includes a prohibition on feeding fish or the use of burley to attract fish.

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.

Figure 1. Port Kembla Harbour



Recreational netting and trapping

Port Kembla: Outer harbour (Figure 1). The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a net or a trap, other than the landing net: the outer harbour of Port Kembla, within the boundary east of a line drawn from the green navigation light on the western end of the northern bank of the inner harbour entrance canal, to the red navigation light at the western end of the southern bank of the inner harbour entrance canal, and from the most northerly extremity of the eastern breakwater, west to the southern extremity of the northern breakwater.

Bellambi Point (Figure 3). The following waters are closed to any method of fishing involving the use of a lobster trap: the waters adjacent to Bellambi Point from a line drawn from the northern most point of the breakwater nearest to Bellambi Point boat ramp in a direction of 55° north-easterly for a distance of 150 m, then in a direction of 360° due north for a distance of 85 m to a line bearing 270° due west for a distance of 280 m, then in a direction of 180° due south to the foreshore at the mean high water mark, then along the foreshore in a generally easterly direction to the breakwater, then along the breakwater at the mean high water mark to the point of commencement.

Figure 2. Bushrangers Bay Aquatic Reserve



Figure 3. Bellambi Point

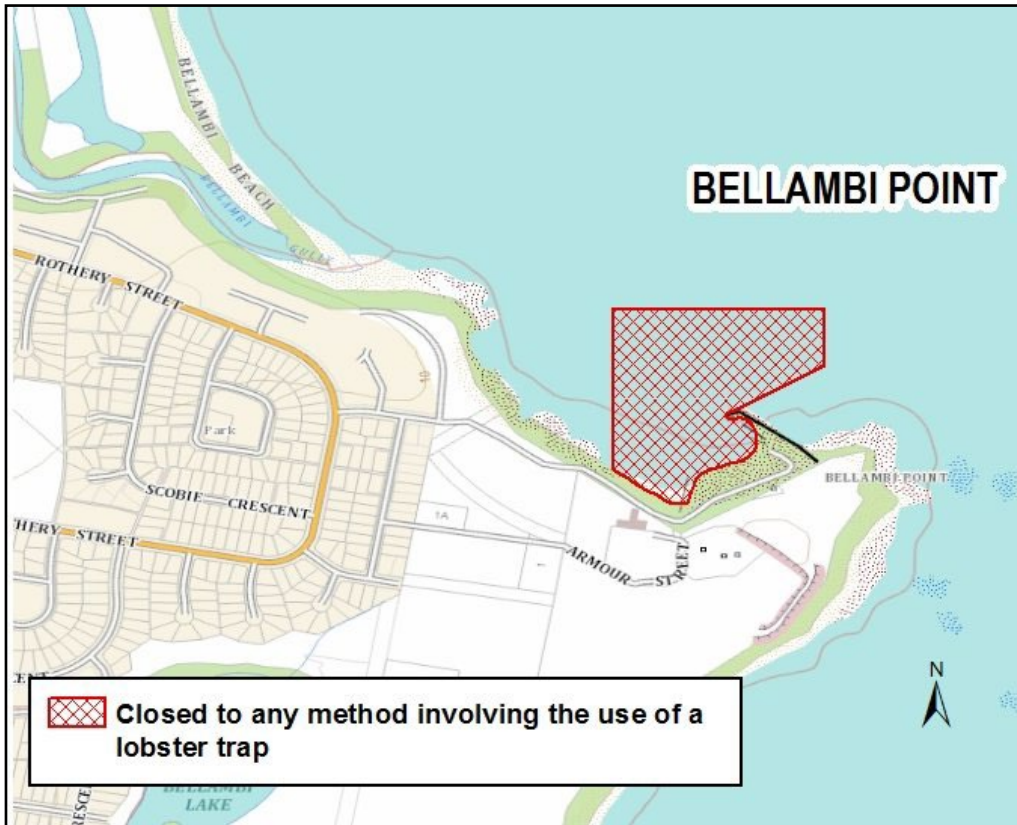
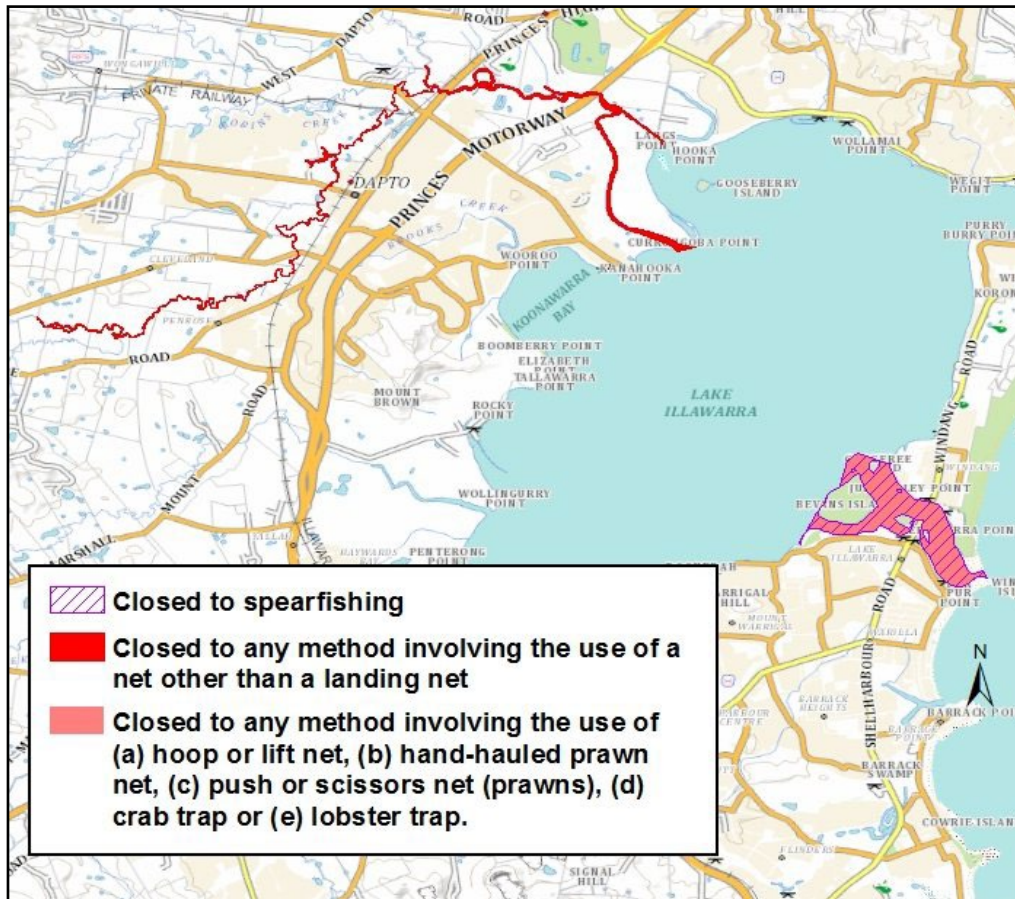


Figure 4. Lake Illawarra and Mullet Creek



Para or Fairy Creek. The waters of Para or Fairy Creek, together with its creeks and tributaries, from its confluence with the South Pacific Ocean are closed to any method involving the use of a net (other than a landing net).

Lake Illawarra (Figure 4). The following waters are closed to any method of fishing involving the use of (a) a hoop or lift net, (b) a hand-hauled prawn net, (c) a push or scissors net (prawns), (d) a crab trap or (e) a lobster trap; these waters are also closed to spearfishing: the entrance to Lake Illawarra from the confluence of Lake Illawarra and the South Pacific Ocean upstream to a line drawn from the north-western corner of portion 44 in the parish of Wollongong; then by lines bearing $291^{\circ}30' 333$ m, $228^{\circ}57' 174$ m, and $191^{\circ}30' 718$ m, respectively, to a post marked broad-arrow over FD on the north-western shore of Bevens Island; then by that shore of that island bearing generally south-westerly, in all about 233 m to a point marked broad-arrow over FD at the westernmost extremity of that island, and then by a line bearing approximately 205° about 565 m to a peg marked broad-arrow over E on the southern shore of Lake Illawarra.

Mullet Creek (Figure 4). The waters of Mullet Creek together with its creeks and tributaries from its confluence with Lake Illawarra upstream to its

source are closed to any method involving the use of a net (other than a landing net).

Minnamurra River. The following waters are closed to any method of fishing involving the use of a net, other than (a) a dip or scoop net (prawns), or (b) a landing net; these waters are also closed to spearfishing: the Minnamurra River, its creeks and tributaries from its source downstream to the South Pacific Ocean.

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.

Lake Illawarra (Figure 4). The waters of Lake Illawarra from a line drawn between the most easterly points of the southern and northern breakwaters at the entrance of the Lake Illawarra upstream to a white post on the foreshore at the western prolongation of Boronia Avenue, Windang at a point 34°31.76'S, 150°51.78'E, then generally northwesterly to a white post at a point 34°31.74'S, 150°51.73'E, then continuing northwesterly to a white post at a point 34°31.66'S, 150°51.51'E, then southwesterly to a white post at a point 34°31.72'S, 150°51.42'E, then to the northwestern shore of Bevans Island at a point 34°31.92'S, 150°51.37'E, then by that shore of that island bearing generally south southwesterly to a white post marked FD at a point 34°32.13'S, 150°51.19'E at the westernmost extremity of the island, then in a south southwesterly direction to a white post marked FD at a point 34°32.39'S, 150°51.07'E on the southern shore of Lake Illawarra at the eastern point of the entrance to Foster's Creek, then by the southern foreshore of Lake Illawarra generally northeasterly and southeasterly to the point of commencement.

Minnamurra River. The whole of the waters of the Minnamurra River and its tributaries, from its source downwards to the South Pacific Ocean.

Recreational Inland Closures

Fitzroy Falls Reservoir (Figure 6). The waters of Fitzroy Falls reservoir are closed to any method of fishing other than: a) two attended rods and lines with: (i) not more than 2 hooks attached and with not more than 3 treble hooks, or 3 double hooks, attached to any lure; or (ii) up to 3 hooks attached where those hooks are artificial flies or lures and with not more than 3 treble hooks, or 3 double hooks, attached to any lure and a landing net. Land-based fishing access is available from designated areas on the eastern foreshore.

Wilde's Meadow Creek (Figure 5). The waters of Wilde's Meadow Creek (including its creeks and tributaries, from a point where its visible flow merges with the backed-up waters of the Fitzroy

Falls Reservoir, upstream to its source) are closed to any method other than one attended rod and line with not more than 2 hooks attached, those hooks being artificial flies or lures, and with not more than 3 treble hooks, or 3 double hooks, attached to any lure and a landing net. A total fishing closure applies from the Tuesday after the June (Queen's Birthday) long weekend until midnight on the last Friday before the start of the October (Labour Day) long weekend (inclusive) in each year.

GENERAL RECREATIONAL FISHING RULES

- It is illegal for recreational fishers to sell their catch.
- Taking Eastern Blue Groper (also known as Blue, Red or Brown 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.

Figure 5. Wilde's Meadow Creek

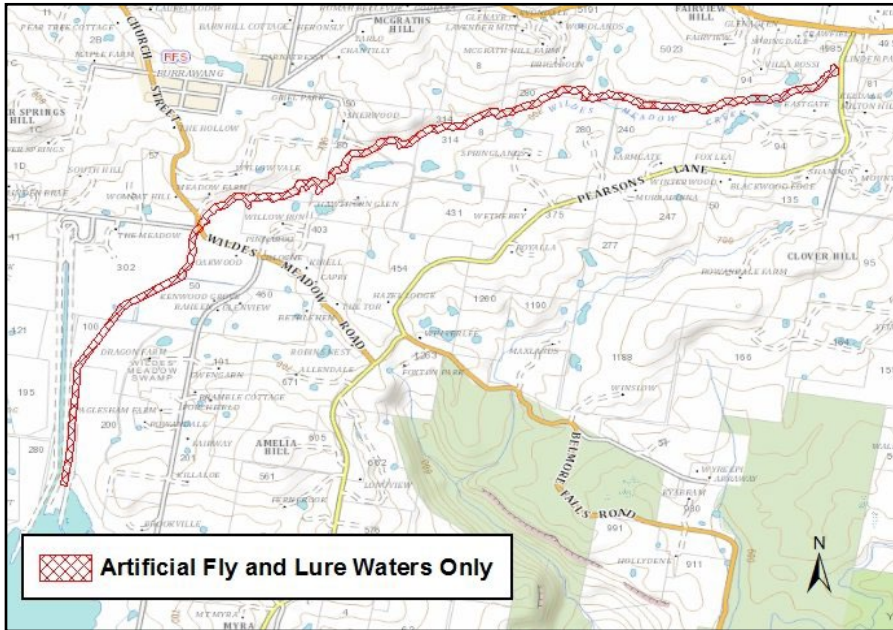
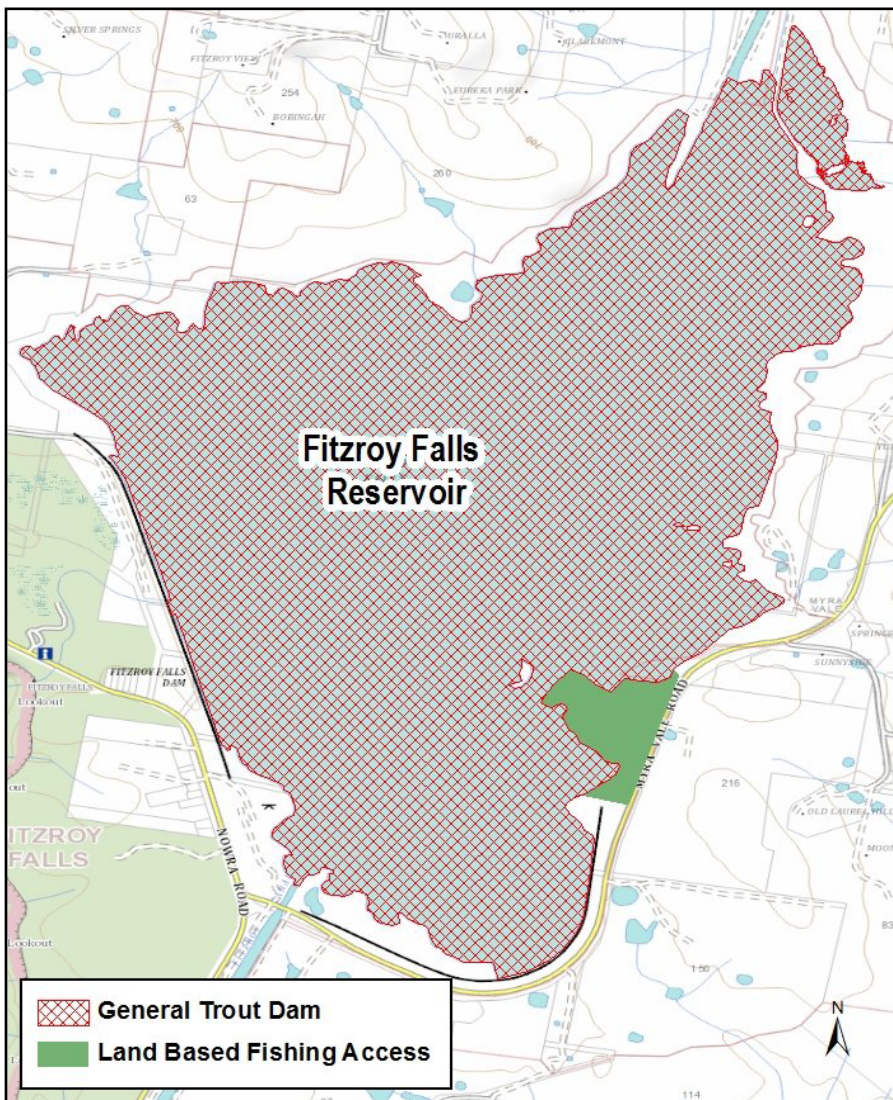


Figure 6. Fitzroy Falls reservoir



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.
- 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.

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 Illawarra waterways and beaches, please contact the Illawarra fisheries office.

Illawarra Fisheries Office

43 Reddall Parade

Lake Illawarra South

NSW 2528

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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