

Clarence 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 Clarence District 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 Clarence coast from Black Rocks within the Bundjalung National Park in the north, Sandon River in the south and extends to the Baryulgil area in the north west and the Buccarumbi area in the south west.

The Sandon River is a popular recreational fishing area within the Clarence region and is the northern boundary of the Solitary Islands Marine Park. For further information on marine park rules and zoning see www.mpa.nsw.gov.au.

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 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.

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 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

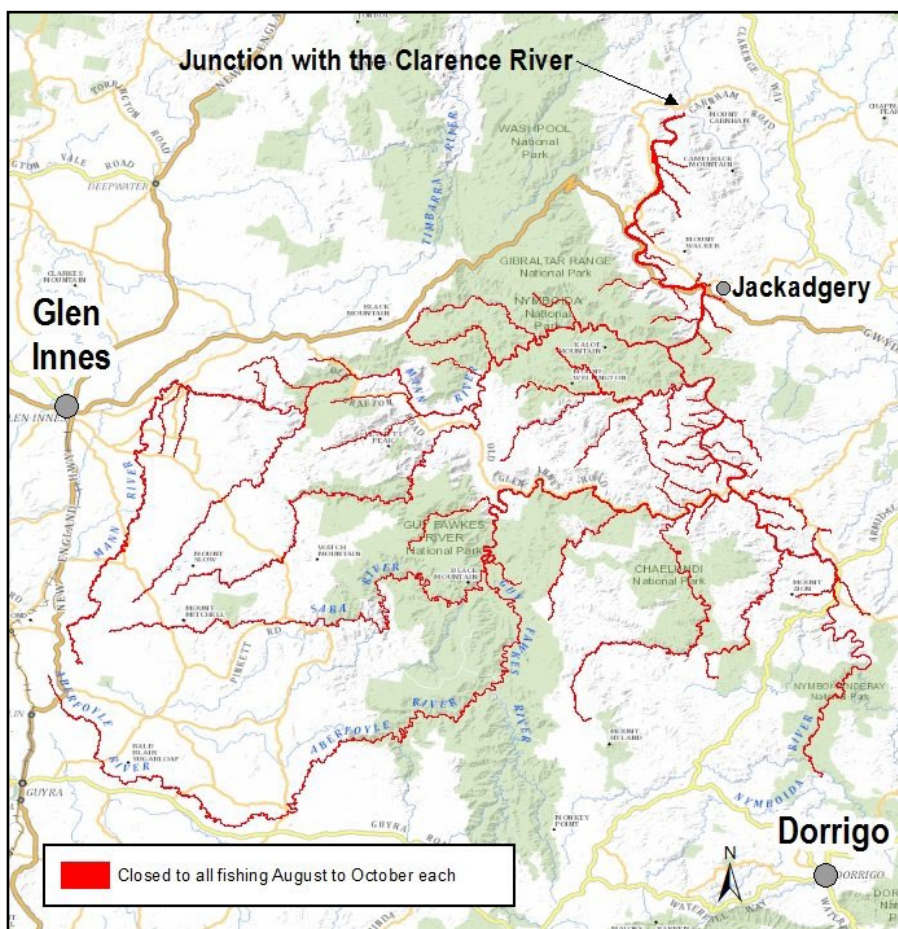
recreational fishing fee exemption certificate you will need to pay the NSW recreational fishing fee.

RECREATIONAL FISHING CLOSURES

A number of fishing closures exist in the Clarence 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

Figure 1. Mann River

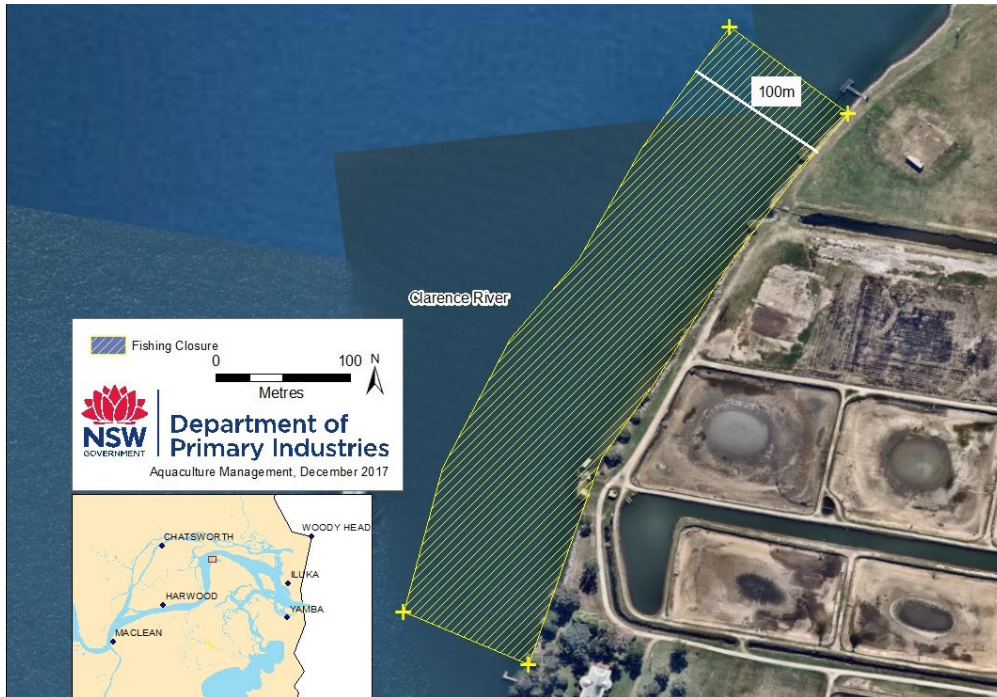


Clarence River – Palmers Island (Figure 2). The following waters are closed to any method of fishing until 2018: The closure adjacent to the Tru Blu prawn farm applies to the whole of the waters bounded by a line commencing at the point on the eastern bank of the Clarence River located at 29° 23.014' S / 153° 17.244' E approximately 10 m south of the jetty, and heading generally west-north-west 100m perpendicular offshore to the point located in the Clarence River at 29° 22.982' S

All methods of fishing are prohibited in the following waters.

Mann River (Figure 1). The following waters are closed to any method of fishing between August and October (inclusive) each year: The whole of the waters of the Mann River and its tributaries, upstream from its junction with Clarence River except for the Oban River and its tributaries, upstream from its junction with, but not including, Sara River, Guy Fawkes River and its tributaries, upstream from its junction with, but not including, Aberfoyle River and Nymboida River and its tributaries, upstream from its junction with, and including, Wild Cattle Creek.

/ 153° 17.200' E, then heading generally south-west 100m from the shoreline along the mean high water mark to the point located in the Clarence River at 29° 23.219' S / 153° 17.061' E, then heading generally south-east to the point located on the eastern bank of the Clarence River at 29° 23.240' S / 153° 17.111' E, then heading generally north-north-east along the mean high water mark to the point of commencement.

Figure 2. Clarence River – Palmers Island.**Clarence River - Romiaka Channel (Figure 3).**

The following waters are closed to any method of fishing until 2018: The closure adjacent to the Fortune prawn farm applies to the whole of the waters and bounded by a line commencing at the point on the north-western bank of the Romiaka Channel located at $29^{\circ} 24.513' \text{ S} / 153^{\circ} 18.943' \text{ E}$, and heading generally south-east 100 m perpendicular offshore in line with the small island located in the Romiaka Channel at $29^{\circ} 24.568' \text{ S} / 153^{\circ} 18.945' \text{ E}$, then heading generally west then

south-west 100m from the shoreline along the mean high water mark to the point located on the outer-most edge of the mangrove forest adjacent to the western bank of the Romiaka Channel at $29^{\circ} 24.897' \text{ S} / 153^{\circ} 18.119' \text{ E}$, then heading generally north to the southern edge of the mangrove forest located adjacent to the northern bank of the Romiaka Channel at point $29^{\circ} 24.838' \text{ S} / 153^{\circ} 18.108' \text{ E}$ then heading generally north-east along the mean high water mark to the point of commencement.

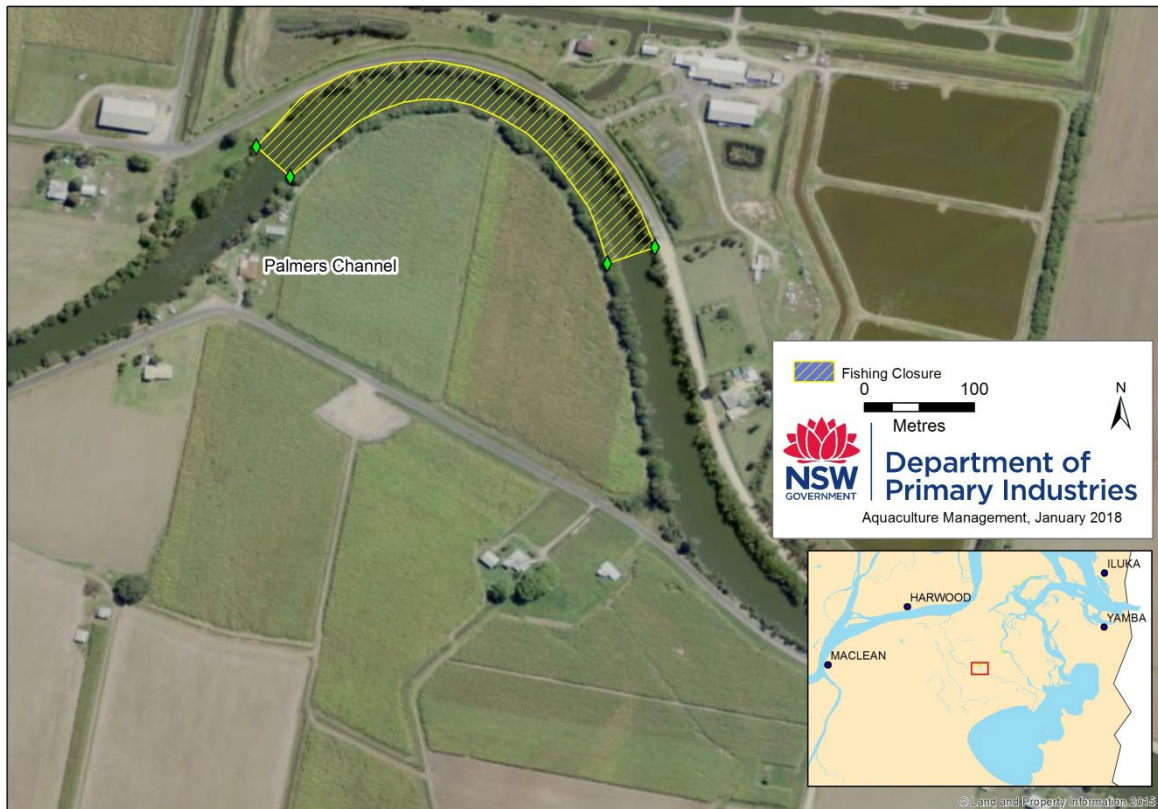
Figure 3. Clarence River - Romiaka Channel

Clarence River - Palmers Channel (Figure 4).

The waters bounded by a line commencing at the point on northern bank of Palmers Channel located at $29^{\circ} 27.493' \text{ S} / 153^{\circ} 16.787' \text{ E}$, then heading generally south-south-east to the point located on the southern bank of Palmers Channel at $29^{\circ} 27.507' \text{ S} / 153^{\circ} 16.804' \text{ E}$, then following the shoreline generally east along

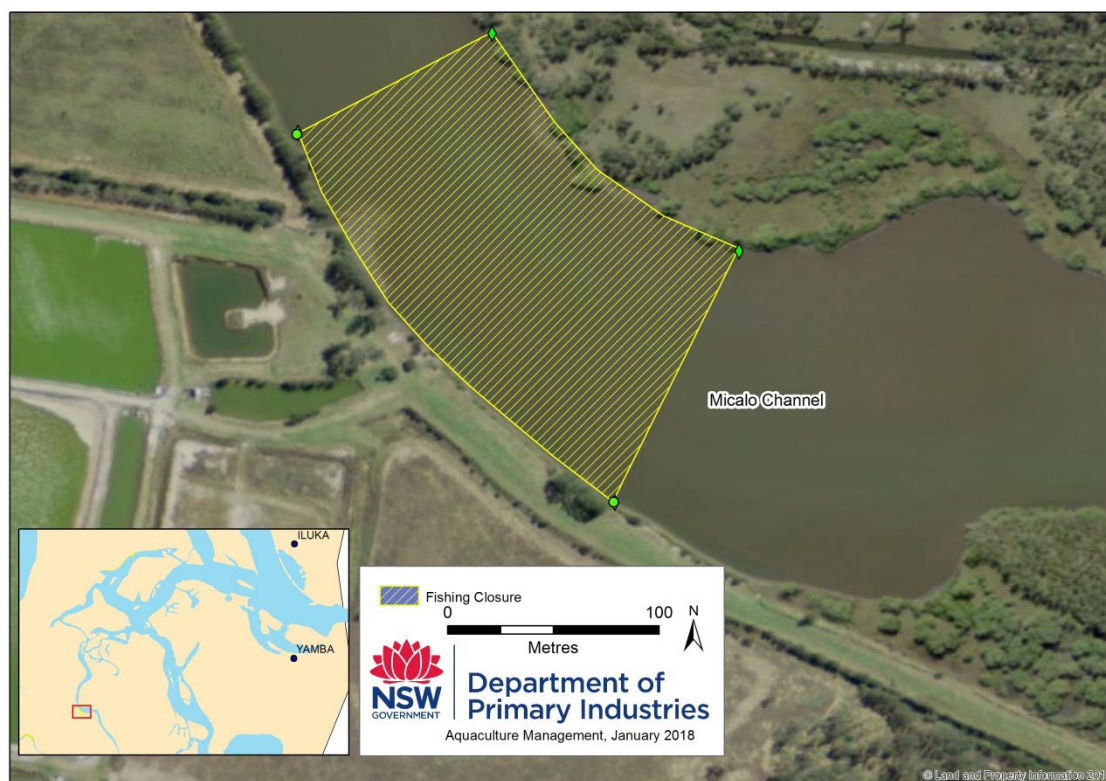
the mean high water mark to the point located on the southern bank of Palmers Channel at $29^{\circ} 27.550' \text{ S} / 153^{\circ} 16.960' \text{ E}$, then heading generally north-east to the northern bank of Palmers Channel located at $29^{\circ} 27.542' \text{ S} / 153^{\circ} 16.983' \text{ E}$ to encompass the whole of the waters between mean high water mark on both banks of Palmers Channel..

Figure 4.- Clarence River - Palmers Channel



Clarence River - Micalo Channel (Figure 5). The waters bounded by a line commencing at the point on western bank of Micalo Channel located at $29^{\circ} 27.018' \text{ S} / 153^{\circ} 17.674' \text{ E}$, then heading generally north-east to the point located on the eastern bank of Micalo Channel at $29^{\circ} 26.993' \text{ S} / 153^{\circ} 17.724' \text{ E}$, then following the shoreline generally south along the mean high water mark to the point located

on the eastern bank of Micalo Channel at $29^{\circ} 27.048' \text{ S} / 153^{\circ} 17.787' \text{ E}$, then heading generally south-west to the western bank of Micalo Channel located at $29^{\circ} 27.113' \text{ S} / 153^{\circ} 17.755' \text{ E}$ to encompass the whole of the waters between mean high water mark on both banks of Micalo Channel.

Figure 5.- Clarence River - Palmers Channel

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

Crystal Bay (Figure 6). The following waters are closed to nets of every description except the landing net: Crystal Bay, upstream of a line drawn from the centre of the turning circle of Westringa Place to the northernmost point of Witonga Drive.

Iluka – Woody Bay (Figure 7). The following waters are closed to any method involving the use of a lobster trap: the whole of the waters of Woody Bay enclosed by a line drawn from the broad arrow mark engraved in the rock at the north-easterly end of the Woody Head camping ground (29°21.890'S, 153°22.440'E), then in a northerly direction for approximately 300 m to the broad arrow mark engraved in the rock labelled FD near Seagull Hole (29°21.780'S, 153°22.430'E), then in a south-westerly direction to the Maritime Authority of NSW navigation buoy (29°21.850'S, 153°22.274'E), then in a south-westerly direction to the post marked

NSWF on the foreshore (29°21.940'S, 153°22.260'E), then along the mean high water mark to the point of commencement (all GPS points in latitude and longitude).

Sportsman's Creek (Figure 8). The following waters are closed to nets of every description except the landing net: Sportsman's Creek together with its creeks, tributaries and inlets from the weir above Lawrence upstream to its source.

Clarence River. The following waters are closed to crab traps: the whole of the waters of the Clarence River together with all its lakes, lagoons, inlets, channels, creeks and tributaries upstream of a line drawn across the River from the boat ramp adjacent to the Maclean Court House (the Old Ashby Ferry crossing).

Lake Arragan (Figure 9). The whole of the waters of Lake Arragan are closed to any method involving the use of a net or trap, other than a landing net, a dip or scoop net (prawns), or a bait trap.

Orara River. The following waters are closed to nets of every description other than the landing net: the Orara River and the creeks and tributaries, upstream from a line drawn across the Orara River at its junction with Jacky's Creek to its source.

Headwaters. The following waters are closed to nets of every description other than the landing net: the Mann River (Mitchell River), Nymboida River, and the upper reaches of the Clarence River together with all their lakes, lagoons, inlets,

channels, creeks and tributaries upstream from a line drawn across the Clarence River at the power line above the rapids approximately 5 km upstream of Copmanhurst.

Figure 6. Crystal Bay



Figure 7. Iluka – Woody Bay

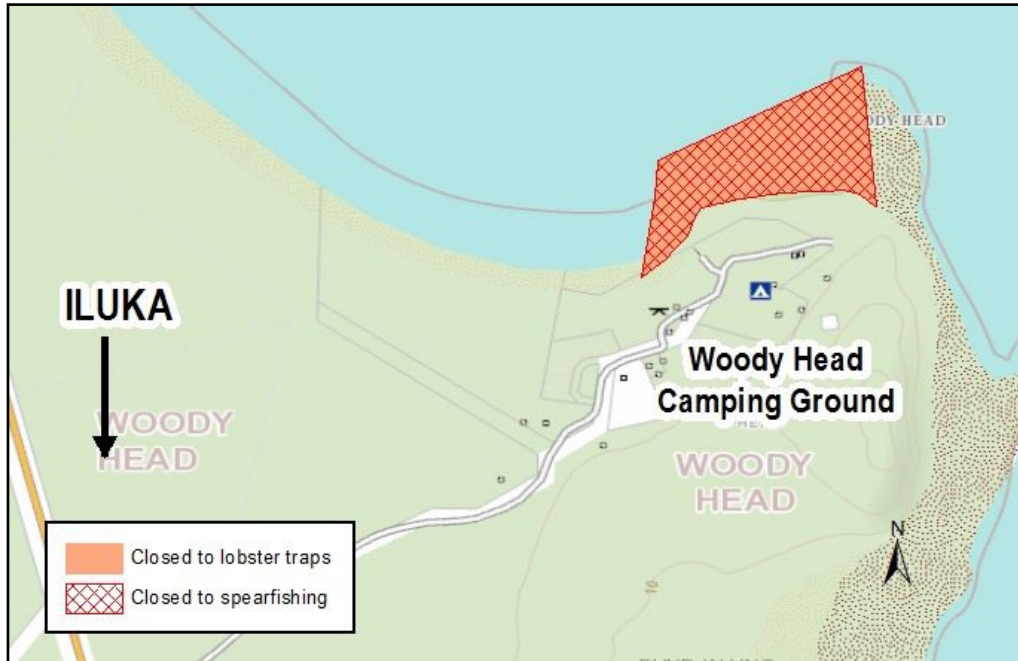
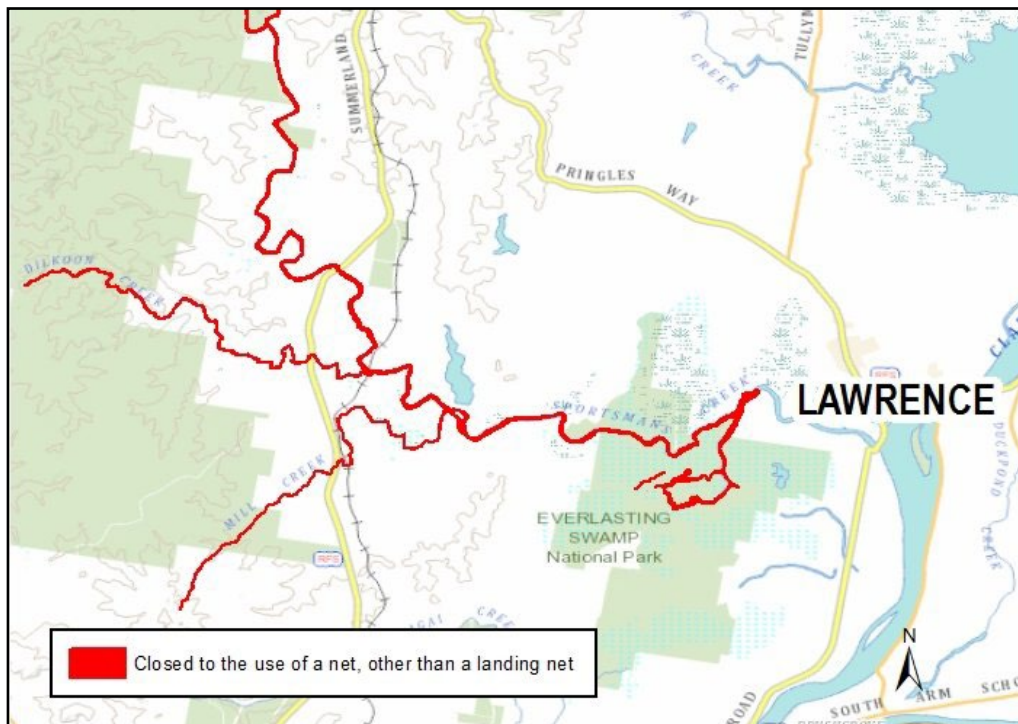


Figure 8. Sportsman's Creek



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.

Clarence River (Figure 10). The following waters are closed to spearfishing: the waters of that part of the main Clarence River from a line drawn across the entrance to that river from the eastern extremity of the Iluka training wall to the eastern extremity of the Yamba training wall, upstream to a line drawn south-westerly from the north-western extremity of the Goodwood Island training wall to the north-western extremity of Orogandiman or Freeburn Island, thence generally south-easterly by the northern and north-eastern foreshores of that island to the north-western extremity of the

middle training wall at the northern end of the old viaduct and thence across to the southern end of that viaduct on the southern foreshore of the Clarence River, thence by the southern foreshore of the Clarence River (including Yamba Bay) to the commencing point at the eastern extremity of the Yamba training wall; together with the waters of those parts of the Clarence River and the South Pacific Ocean from the Yamba training wall by the coastline to a point 20 m south of Yamba Point and extending easterly from that coastline for a distance of 400 m.

Woody Bay (Figure 7). The following waters are closed to spearfishing: the area known as Woody Bay and commencing from the broad arrow on a rock and marked FD, north of portion 54 then in a northerly direction for approximately 300 metres to a spike in the rock, then generally in a westerly direction to Big Knobby Rock, then in a south westerly direction to a 10 × 10 centimetre peg on the foreshore, then along the mean high water mark to the point of commencement.

Figure 9. Lake Arragan

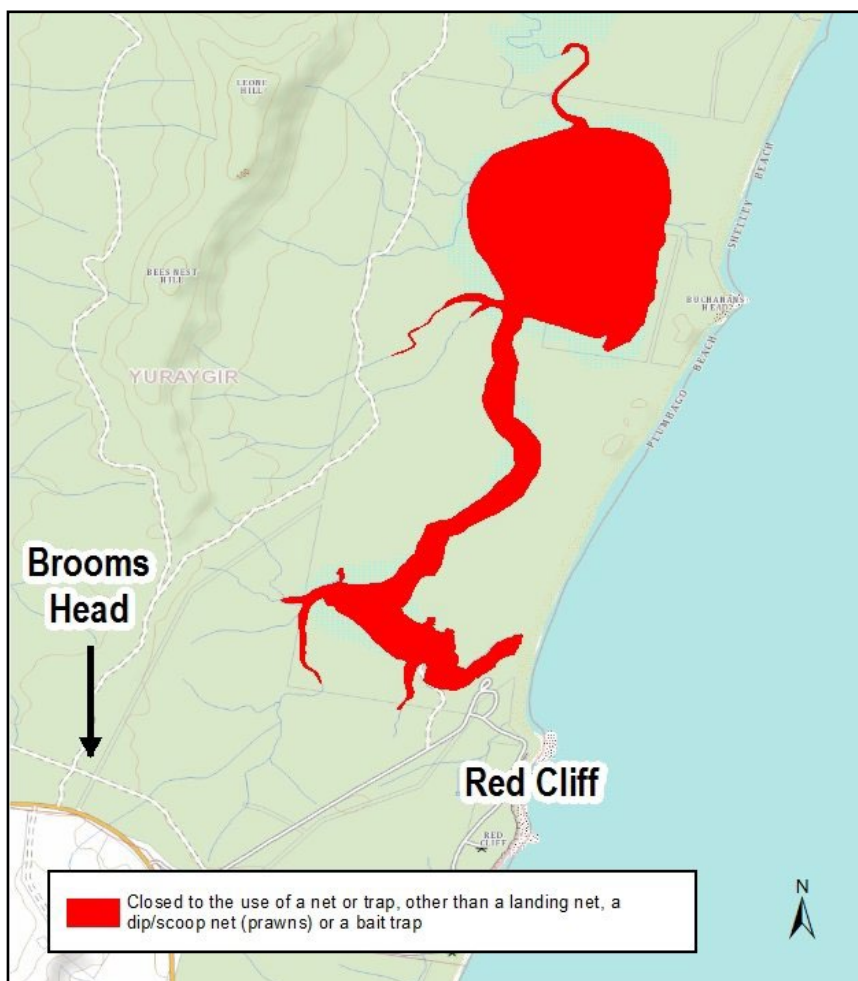
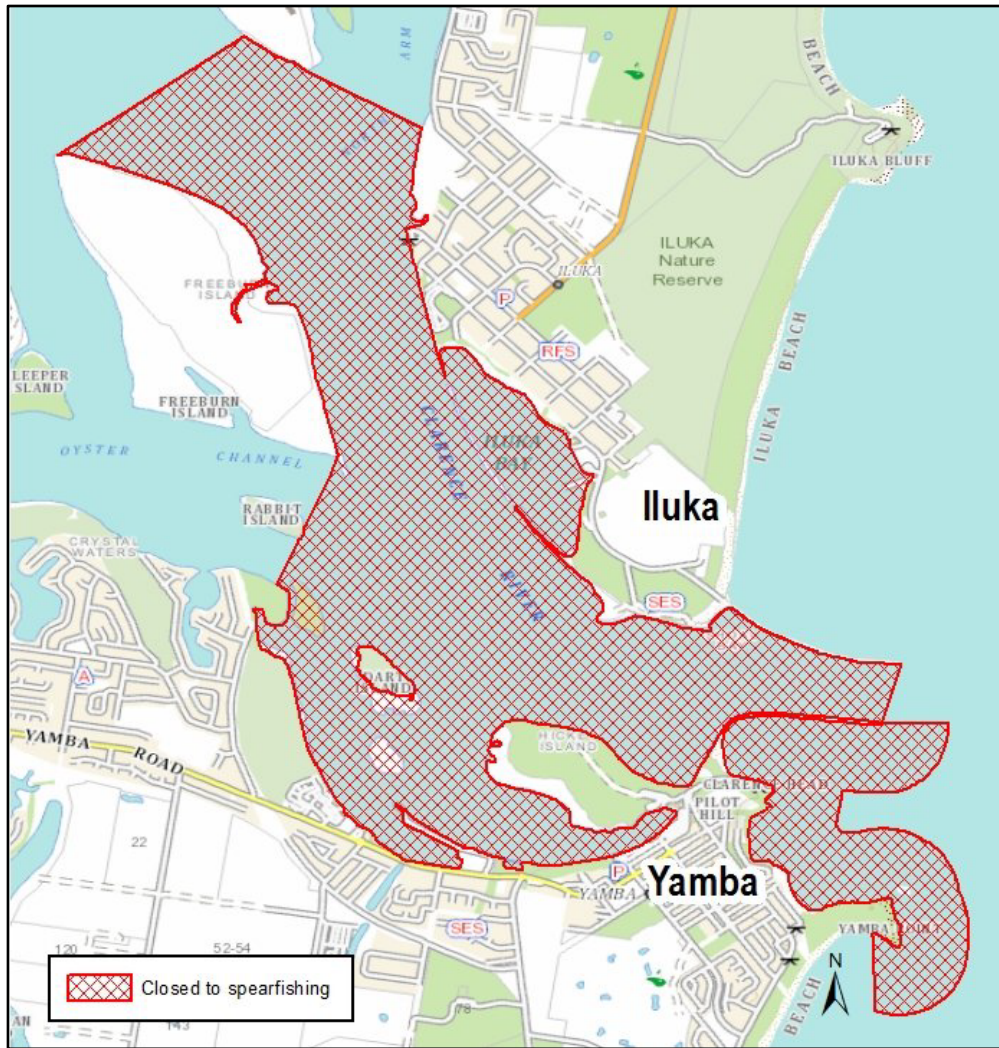


Figure 10. Clarence



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.

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 Clarence waterways and beaches, please contact the;

Clarence Fisheries Office.

18A River Street

Maclean NSW 2463

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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