

12 Walks in the Southern Illawarra

1. Bass Point Reserve

Starting from either Shellharbour South beach (soon to be disrupted by the new marina ocean entrance) or at the stone gateway entrance to Bass Point Reserve, this walk combines a variety of generally flat beach, track and rock platform terrain. From Shellharbour South beach, cross a grassy coastal section, past the disused ship loader to arrive at Bass Point Reserve. There is a coastal track starting from the boat ramp or alternatively the stone entrance gateway. Follow the track and rock platforms all the way around the point to Bushrangers Bay. As you arrive at the bay there is an awkward gap (gulch) in the rock platform that can only be negotiated at quite low tide and may prevent access to the stony beach at the bay, a good lunch spot. If the tide or swell is high, it is safest to access the bay via the road from the main picnic area and down the wooden stairway. Bushrangers Bay is a favoured area for divers and snorkelers having deep, clear water and abundant marine life in a sheltered environment. Good views can be had from lookouts at Bushrangers Bay and on the south side at Maloneys Bay (via the dirt road access).

Length: Just a stroll from the picnic area or up to 7km

Time: Up to 3 hours

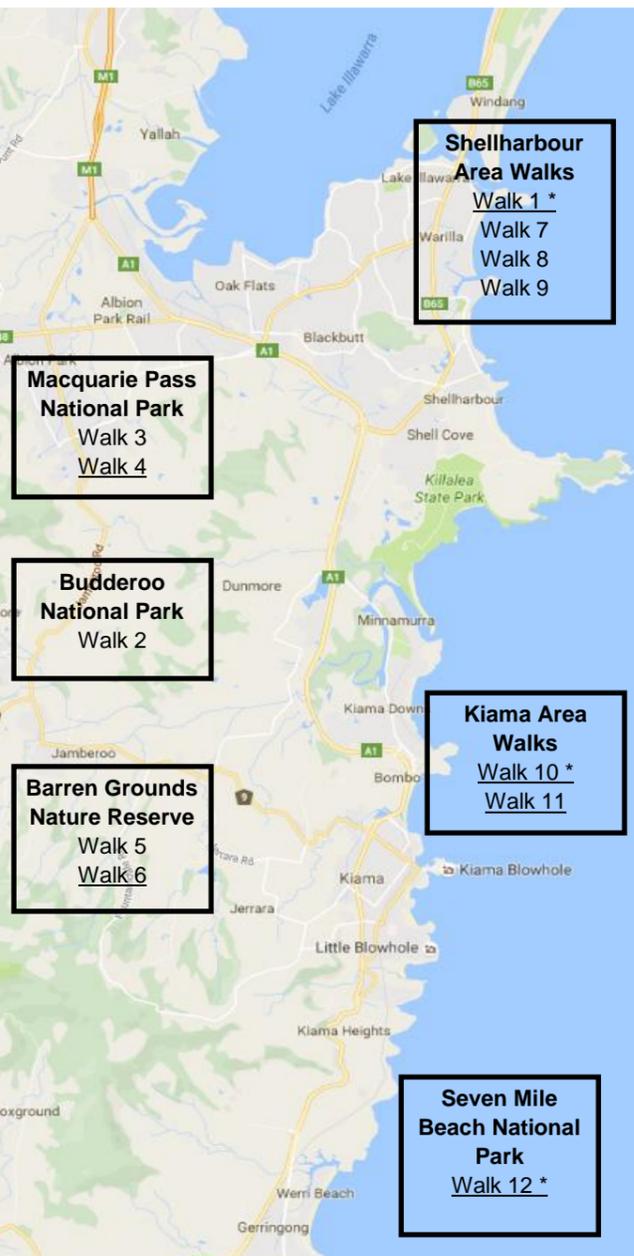
Grade: Easy— some rock hopping

Access: Drive from Shellharbour Village on Bass Pt access road

2. Budderoo National Park—Minnamurra Rainforest

Minnamurra Rainforest (and waterfall) in Budderoo National Park is a beautiful and a popular attraction for locals and tourists showcasing the local rainforest. The rainforest walk is on an elevated well-constructed boardwalk with some paved sections. The walk along

Walk Location Guide (Short walks, Longer walks) (* Can be shortened)



Courtesy of Google Maps

the creek and to the lower falls is an easy grade then a steep path takes you to a view of the upper falls. (This section was closed at time of writing). It's worth a visit just to enjoy the ambience of the rainforest, do some Lyrebird spotting, check out the visitors' centre and have a picnic or visit the kiosk. Park entry fees apply.

Length: Up to 4km return

Time: Up to 2 hrs plus picnic time

Grade: Easy to hard

Access: Off Jamberoo Mtn Road, west from Kiama

3. Macquarie Pass National Park —Cascades

At the base of the Macquarie Pass and at the edge of the national park is a delightful family friendly walk to a cascading waterfall. The parking area is on the northern side of the Illawarra Highway where there is also an open grass area perfect for a picnic. There is a sign near a track head where the walk begins to follow the creek to the west. After climbing a few stairs the track becomes more gentle and offers a delightful rainforest experience. There are plenty of photo opportunities along the way of the interesting vegetation and flowing creek. As you approach the cascades there is a raised boardwalk from where you can see down to a pool which is fed by the waterfall then a stairway descends to the edge of the pool.

Length: 3km return

Time: 1 hour return

Grade: Easy

Access: Drive west on the Illawarra Hwy from Albion Park town-

4. Macquarie Pass National Park - Clover Hill Rd to Rainbow Falls

Part way up the Macquarie Pass a disused logging trail, now closed to vehicles, provides an opportunity to walk through beautiful rainforest and past the site of an old grazing property to Macquarie Rivulet where you will find Rainbow Falls. Where the trail opens to a cleared area with many cabbage tree palms take the left fork in the trail. After a few hundred metres where the trail ends there is a slightly hidden track on the right which takes you to the creek and Rainbow Falls, which drop into a small canyon. Caution must be exercised here as the rocks can be very slippery and there are drop offs. Keep a close watch on your children! The creek can be explored a little way upstream to find a large balancing rock and some more cascades.

Length: 6km return

Time: 2 to 3 hours return

Grade: Easy, mostly fire trail

Access: Small car park on left part way up Macquarie Pass

7. Windang & Picnic Islands and Lake Illawarra Estuary

This walk is an easy waterside stroll and is a popular beachside destination for families, fishermen and bird observers. In the parkland reserve to the south west of Windang bridge cross the small timber foot bridge to Picnic Island and walk the sandy loop track through banksia woodland. Observe shorebirds on shoals in the estuary. Return from the island, follow the lake shore east and walk under the Windang bridge to the main area of Reddall Reserve which has amenities and a kiosk open weekends and holidays. The shallow arm of the lake here is safe for children to paddle and is a haven for many birds. Continue to the far eastern end of the pathway then go left and walk along the breakwater. Windang Island is ahead. Take care with access to the island on high tides and be aware of dangerous waves on rock platforms. Continue past sand embedded historical rusty wheels to explore intertidal rock pools. Finally climb the narrow track to the top of the island. Enjoy the views along the coastline and west to the Illawarra Escarpment while observing different birds around the island. Return via the same route.

Length: Up to 4km return

Time: Up to 2 hours return

Grade: Easy

Access: Car parking in Reddall Pde, off Shellharbour Rd.

Special Nature of the Illawarra Bushland

The natural bushland areas to the west of Wollongong not only provide a wonderful backdrop to the city but also have special significance as a biodiversity hot spot. This section of the Great Dividing Range with its rainforest gullies and eucalypt forests is home to a diverse range of native flora and fauna. The Illawarra Escarpment also forms a vital green corridor connecting the southern end of the Royal National Park south to Macquarie Pass National Park and beyond.

We would like to acknowledge the original custodians of this land we walk, the Dharawal people.

5 & 6. Barren Grounds Nature Reserve —Illawarra Lookout

Adjacent to Budderoo NP, Barren Grounds is one of the few large areas of heathland on the south coast and also has stands of rainforest along the escarpment edge. These varied habitats are home to rare or endangered plants and animals including the ground parrot, eastern bristlebird and tiger quoll. Barren Grounds offers short and long walks on well-formed tracks to great vantage points. The walks are stunning in spring when many of the heath flowers such as boronia, epacris and, if you're lucky, waratah, are in full bloom.

5. Illawarra Lookout

Follow Griffiths Trail from the north-eastern corner of the car park. After about 1 km walking through forest and heath take a short path on the left signed to Illawarra Lookout. The lookout offers expansive views along the coast to Lake Illawarra and beyond. Return to the car park by the same route.

Length: 2 km return

Time: 1 hour

Grade: Easy

6. Griffiths Trail Circuit

Follow Walk 5 to Illawarra Lookout and then continue on the undulating Griffiths Trail to the observation platform at Saddleback trig (elev. 666 m) which gives great views over the heathland. After 700 m ignore the Kangaroo Ridge track and stay on Griffiths Trail to reach a natural stone bridge across Lamonds Creek. This is a fine spot for a break and cool in summer. After a slight climb, bear right to stay on Griffiths Trail to complete the circuit back to the car park. If you wish to extend the walk, turn left after the stone bridge to follow the Cooks Nose track. This broad trail leads to a magnificent rock platform overlooking Broughton Head and Brogers Creek. This extension adds 5 km (return) to the walk.

Length: 8 km circuit plus option to extend

Time: 3-4 hours plus extension

Grade: Medium

Access for walks 5 & 6: Barren Grounds picnic area, 1 km off Jamberoo Mountain Road (concealed entrance), at the top of Jamberoo Mountain.

About the NPA

The National Parks Association has a history of more than 60 years in NSW.

The NPA is a not for profit community association that seeks to protect, connect and restore the integrity and diversity of natural systems in NSW and beyond through National Parks, Conservation Reserves, Marine Sanctuaries and other means.

The NPA co-ordinates over 1000 bushwalks and other outdoor activities across NSW every year.

The NPA activities program is on-line and published quarterly in conjunction with our magazine Nature New South Wales which contains fascinating articles on all things nature.

The NPA monitors the management of our current National Parks, sanctuaries and reserves and makes suggestions and proposals to ensure the best park management standards. Community events and citizen science work are also arranged by NPA.

The NPA seeks to inform the people of NSW on the beauty of our natural places and the need to take action to protect these places for future generations to enjoy.

Join the NPA Illawarra and be part of the community team working for our environment as well as enjoying friendly outdoor activities.

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8. Killalea State Park – Mystics Beach Track

From the car park follow the signposted track for a stepped downhill track through the vegetation out onto the pristine beach. Enjoy the bird calls, the view towards Stack Island and the waves as you wander along the beach towards the mouth of the Minnamurra River. If low tide go round the spit and return on the river side for a view of the mangroves then join the bush track back to the beach or back via the camping area.

Length: Up to 3km return

Time: 1 - 2 hours return

Grade: Easy to medium, one steep section with steps and rocks.

Access: Exit the Princess Hwy south of Albion Park Rail onto Shellharbour Rd, follow the brown tourist signs to Killalea State Park, then follow Killalea Dr to the very end of the road.

9. Killalea State Park – Lagoon Circuit

Killalea Lagoon is a freshwater coastal lagoon and an important breeding habitat for many birds. A wander along the water's edge will give you good views of Black Swan, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, black duck and many other species.

After parking next to the Killalea kiosk there are several ways to access the lagoon: via the beach steps, or preferably, head north from the kiosk towards the left of the rotunda and then follow a wide dirt track down through the forest. Follow the lagoon circuit to your right, which takes you out onto beautiful Killalea Beach (The Farm), famous for its surf, before returning to the lagoon near the northern end of the beach. Follow the trail around the perimeter of the lagoon back to your starting point.

Length: 4 km

Time: 1–2 hours

Grade: Easy – family friendly,

Access: Exit the Princess Hwy south of Albion Park Rail onto Shellharbour Rd and then follow the brown tourist signs to Killalea State Park, or take a 2 km walk from Shellharbour Junction train station.

10. Saddleback Mountain lookouts and Hoddles Track

Just west of Kiama, Saddleback Mountain provides a wonderful opportunity to see views in all directions from high up on the fringe of the southern Illawarra Escarpment. The recently upgraded series of three lookouts connected by walking tracks with a total distance of 1 km or less provide views to the north/east, west and south. There are picnic tables at various places as well. For the more energetic, Hoddles Track, beginning as a fire trail near the western lookout, steeply descends to a saddle then rises again to the escarpment proper where you enter the rainforest. The track goes for quite a way in the rainforest but ends at a spot where there is usually a very dark tannin coloured pool of water. This is 10 mins or so beyond the oddly shaped so called "boob rock" which is high above the track. Further on there is a myriad of false tracks up to and on the plateau and it is easy to get lost. Exercise great care if exploring.

Length: 1 to 9km

Time: 1/2 to 4 hours

Grade: Easy to hard. Lookouts are very family friendly, 2 lookouts are wheelchair friendly

Access: Saddleback Mt Road, west from Kiama

Safe Walking Tips

- ***It's best not to walk alone***
- ***Take plenty of water and food for the walk***
- ***Use sunscreen, wear a hat and suitable clothing***
- ***Tell someone where you are going***

Want to learn more about bushwalking?

Bushwalking101.org

Look, Learn, Explore!

For a beginner, going bush is a very daunting task. <http://www.bushwalking101.org/> is a website to help people better settle into bushwalking with the NPA. It's about sharing 'bite-sized' information and practical advice to new bushwalkers. Our hope is to encourage our new members to take up bushwalking as a lifelong passion and to continue to grow and improve their bushwalking skills.

11. Kiama Coast Walk – Gerringong Station to Kiama Station section

This iconic coastal walk starts at Gerringong railway station, which has train services every two hours. The walk takes in vast coastal and ocean views plus you will see magnificent rock platforms and rock formations.

Begin by walking the lowest lying streets and some short cut laneways toward the north-east from the station car park for a distance of 3 km until reaching Werri Beach and the lagoon at the northern end of the beach. The lagoon entrance is not always closed by sand and hence not always safe to cross so it's best to check with Kiama tourist office by phoning 1300 654262 for up to date conditions. Now take the easy to follow coast track for 6 km (no facilities and little shade) until reaching Loves Bay at south Kiama. Continue to mostly hug the coast for another 5 km all the way to Kiama proper. Blowhole signs and blue marker posts define much of the route. There are many points of interest along the way and plenty to explore in Kiama. Trains to Wollongong and Sydney depart Kiama hourly. Note there is very little shade on the coast section of this walk.

Visit Kiama tourist office for a more detailed brochure.

Length: 14 km

Time: 4 –5 hours

Grade: Medium – undulating, some steep sections

Access: Gerringong railway station

12. Seven Mile Beach and National Park

South of the popular seaside village of Gerroa is Seven Mile Beach National Park and about half way along the coast road to Shoalhaven Heads is the best access point to the park. There is a picnic area with beach access. Two bush and beach loop walks are available from here, one north from the picnic area and one south. Look for the slightly hidden track heads north and south of the toilet block. South is the shorter loop. From the northern loop you can also take the beach all the way back to Gerroa village if someone is willing to drop you to start.

Length: Up to 6km

Time: Up to 3 hours

Grade: Easy— all flat walking, some sand, low tide is best

Access: Drive south from Gerroa on Crooked River Rd and turn east into Beach Rd for Seven Mile Beach NP picnic area (no pets allowed).