

The Melaleuca



Three whales freed in a week



Photo: Untangling humpback whales is tricky business (OEH)

NPWS whale disentanglement crews from the Manning Hastings and Great Lakes areas were successful in disentangling three humpback whales in less than a week during August 2013.

The whales were successfully freed off Port Macquarie, Crowdy Head and Old Bar - with two amazingly released by the same team on the same day.

On 26 August the disentanglement team cut free a 10 metre whale that was entangled in ropes and buoys about ten kilometres off the Crowdy Bay Lighthouse at Harrington.

Later that afternoon, a little further south off Old Bar, another report of a similarly entangled whale was received and it was also able to be freed.

The third entangled whale was located on 31 August, approximately 1.5 kilometres off Port Macquarie. This whale was also successfully released from the remains of a tuna long line.

When entangled whales are reported, the team often needs to locate the animal using an aerial search, as they generally continue moving, and there can be delays before the rescuers locate them.

While the conditions were good on both days, agitated whales always make the rescue a dangerous operation and the team have to ensure both the whales and their own safety.

It was a fantastic result with everyone working together to see all three whales continuing their journey north without ropes, buoys or lines attached.

The success of all three operations was made possible with the support of Port, Harrington and Forster Marine Rescue and ORRCA volunteers. See the rescues on YouTube 'Crowdy whale disentanglement' and 'Whale Hastings'.

SAY G'DAY TO YOUR CAMPGROUND HOSTS

Following a successful program last year, we welcome fresh new faces to our Campground Host program.

Our friendly volunteers will be available to meet and greet visitors and provide helpful park information whilst living amongst the camping community. Make sure you take some time to say hello.

The program is a perfect opportunity to experience camping in our national parks while providing a valuable service to the public.

To register your interest in becoming a Volunteer Campground Host or for further information visit: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/volunteers.

The 're-greening' of Banksia Green



Photo: Improvements to Banksia Green Camping Area

Over the years, Banksia Green camping area has become considerably less 'Banksia' and less 'green', due to aging, wear and tear, and vandalism.

The area has lost many of the feature Banksias within the camp sites due to aging and vandalism.

To help bring back some shade and

further enhance the area for visitors, staff at Myall Lakes have been busy upgrading the camping area in time for the summer holidays.

Improvements include better vehicle access and drainage, level sites, installation of wood fireplaces, grass-covered sites and re-planted native species.

INFORMATION FOR CAMPERS:

You're very welcome but please remember...

- Do not leave your campsite unoccupied for more than 24 hours.
- 28 days (for Myall Lakes NP) and 21 days (for all other parks) is the maximum time permitted for a continuous stay at a campsite -14 days for boat based campsites. After this time you must vacate your campsite, with all your belongings, for a minimum of 24 hours.
- Maximum of six persons per campsite.
- Keep noise to a minimum after 10 pm.
- Keep all camping gear (tents, tarps, ropes etc) completely within the campsite.
- Do not tie ropes to trees. It can cause ring-barking and damage which may expose them to increased insect attack and disease. The loss of trees is a loss of shade from our camping areas.
- No camping or other structures are permitted in the day use picnic areas including tents, tarps, awnings, guy ropes, camp kitchens, showers, tables, clotheslines, cooking equipment.
- Free standing shades, chairs and picnic equipment, such as eskies are allowed.
- Where provided, fires must be contained within designated fireplaces. Bring your own firewood.
- It is illegal to possess or use fireworks in a national park.

Failure to comply with park rules may result in a direction to leave the Park and/or the issue of a fine.

CARING FOR OUR COASTLINE

The past 5 years has seen the NPWS focus a lot of effort to tackle weeds that invade our national parks - this is thanks to grants funded by federal and state government programs.

The NPWS works closely with partners to: secure funding, provide training & employment to aboriginal people & strategically treat weeds across the landscape.

This approach is reducing weeds & protecting biodiversity in our parks. Partners include Great Lakes Council (GLC), Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Taree Indigenous Development & Employment (TIDE), the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA) & the Mid Coast Weeds Advisory Council.

Backyard Bushcare

Most people do not realise that the plants they grow in their garden or they see on the roadside can be terrible environmental weeds that invade our native bushland and national parks – around 65% of bushland weeds have originated from backyards! Weeds know no boundaries, they are highly competitive and smother native plants and destroy natural habitat for native animals. It is important to treat weeds on all land tenures, to prevent them invading our national parks.

Great Lakes Council, in partnership with the NPWS has secured funding for 5 years to treat weeds across land tenures in Seal Rocks and Forster, including the Myall Lakes and Booti Booti National Parks. The project will include a Backyard Bushcare program to encourage local residents to manage weeds in their gardens.

The "Enhance ecosystem resilience & protect biodiversity in the Great Lakes" project is supported through funding from the Australian Government's Clean Energy Future Biodiversity Fund.

Myall Coastal Corridor

The Myall Lakes National Park is recognised as a Ramsar wetland of international importance which protects a huge diversity of wetlands including

lakes, rivers, coastline, swamps and forests. It also protects migratory shorebirds (eg pied oystercatcher), threatened species (eg koala) and endangered ecological communities (eg coastal or littoral rainforest).

The NPWS has been working with Aboriginal Green Teams to protect these important values by treating invasive weeds that impact native plants and animals (eg bitou bush, parrots feather, asparagus species).

An important corridor through Hawks Nest links two separate areas of the park – Yacaaba Headland in the south with the main park entrance on the Mungo Brush Rd. The corridor is habitat for an endangered koala population. Great Lakes Council has been working with volunteers in Hawks Nest to treat weeds to protect bushland and koala habitat.

The NPWS has secured \$780,000 of funding over 5 years, to expand weed treatment into the southern wetlands and forests of the Myall Lakes NP as well as adjoining coastal bushland and koala corridors.

The project area runs from Dark Point/Tamboi along the Myall River & coastline to Yacaaba headland, including bushland in the Hawks Nest area. The NPWS and will be working closely with GLC, Aboriginal Green Teams and community volunteers to implement the project.

The "Protect biodiversity in the coastal corridor of the Myall lakes Ramsar Site" project is supported through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country Sustainable Environment Target Grant.

Aerial Spraying Update

Helicopter spraying of the weed bitou bush has been occurring in the Myall Lakes and Booti Booti National Parks since 2009. During winter 2013, 50km of coastline was treated.

Helispraying is a very effective & efficient technique for treating large & difficult to access areas of coastal cliffs, headlands and beaches. It uses a very low concentration of herbicide which kills the bitou bush but not native plants.

Hole-in-the-Wall, Yagon Headland and Dark Point in Myall Lakes NP are great places to see how well the program is working. Yagon and Dark Point have been treated for 5 years and have gone from a very high bitou bush infestation (>50-75%) to native bushland which is virtually bitou bush free.

Hole-in-the-Wall was treated for the first time in winter 2012 – you can see areas of dead bitou bush on the dunes, with healthy native plants amongst the dead canes – over time this area will also regenerate to native bush.

This project is supported by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program and the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA Partnerships Program.

Aboriginal Green Team

The NPWS continues to work in co-operation with the Great Lakes Aboriginal Partners Group to provide on-country training and employment to Aboriginal people.

There are now five, full-time Aboriginal Rangers employed by TIDE who are being "hosted" by the NPWS in the Great Lakes Area. They work on a variety of programs with national parks staff including park facility maintenance and servicing of visitor areas and they form the core of our on-ground weed management program.

This project is supported by the Australian Government's Working on Country and Caring for our Country programs and the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA Partnerships Program.



Photo: Aboriginal Rangers Derek Clark and Cecil Taylor

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH ONLINE BOOKINGS?

NPWS continues to progress the state-wide reservation system for campgrounds, accommodation and events.

Since its initial launch in a number of parks at the end of 2012, an enormous effort has been invested into strengthening and enhancing the new system before it is introduced into additional parks, such as Myall Lakes.

The planned online camping bookings for Mungo Brush has therefore been delayed, with no set date for introduction.

The state-wide reservation system will enable you to plan dates, review availability and prices and book your national park stay.

Customers will have the option of making online reservations as well as via telephone 7 days a week at the National Parks Contact Centre.

Updates on when the new camping bookings in Myall Lakes will take place will be provided on our website as details are confirmed.

For more information please visit www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/bookings. Call 13000PARKS (13000 72757).

PAYING YOUR CAMPING FEES THESE HOLIDAYS

Until the online bookings are available, NPWS Fee Collectors will visit you to collect camping and vehicle entry fees – they also sell NPWS Annual Park Passes for extended visits.

Please be aware, cash refunds will not be made.

NPWS Annual Park Passes can also be purchased from the Bulahdelah and Tea Gardens Visitor Information Centres, the Hawks Nest Newsagency, Tea Gardens BP Service Station, and the Tea Gardens Marine and Tackle.

MYALL LAKES FLOODING

Heavy rainfall in January to March this year created significant flooding throughout the Great Lakes and other areas on the Mid North Coast. Severe downpours over a number of days in March caused the Myall Lakes system to peak at 1.7m above normal levels. The floodwaters forced the temporary closure of many visitor areas in the park for many weeks. Field staff have repaired or replaced the damaged infrastructure including all the gas BBQs around the lakes. Locals reported that floods to this extent have not been seen for 40 years.



Photo: 2013 - Flooding at Mungo Brush

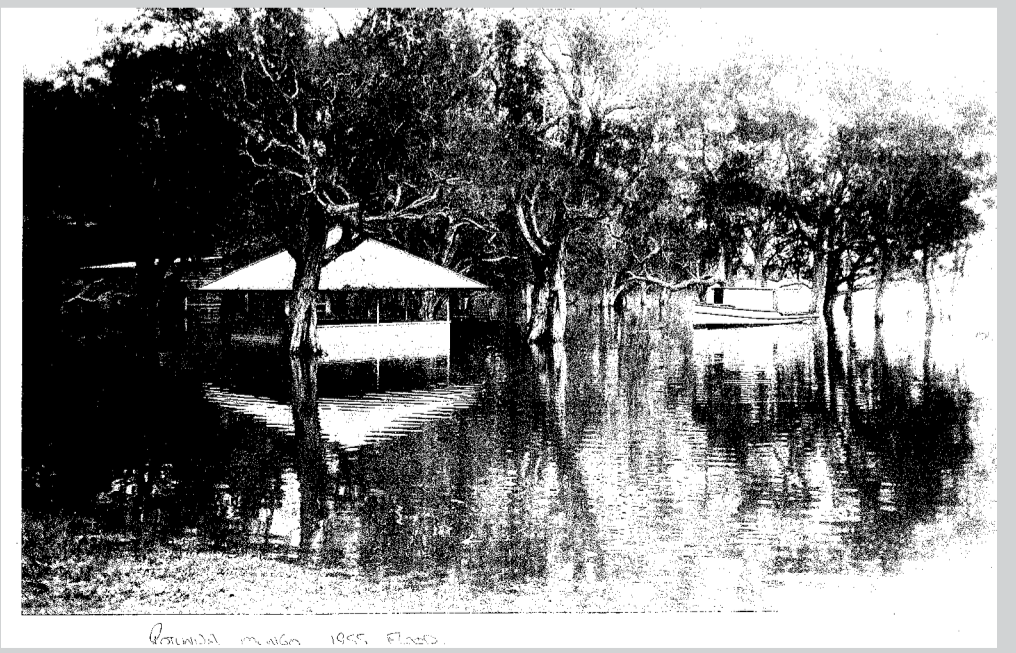


Photo: 1955 - Flooding at Mungo Brush

STAY OVERNIGHT TO SEE THE LIGHT

The award winning Sugarloaf Point Lighthouse Holiday Accommodation offers visitors a unique holiday experience in a spectacular location overlooking the coastline of Seal Rocks in Myall Lakes NP.

Why not book for the winter/spring whale watching season – you could hardly find a better vantage point. At any time of the year, the light at night is unforgettable.

Visit the webpage www.srla.com.au or phone 4997 6590.



Renovated Head Keepers cottage at Sugarloaf Point Lighthouse, Seal Rocks

LAKESIDE COTTAGE STAY

Cutlers Cottage provides a great base to explore the park and is a unique holiday experience with absolute water frontage to Myall Lake. The cottage is furnished with a fully equipped kitchen, and three bedrooms that sleep a total of six people.



Contact Ede's Real Estate at Bulahdelah for bookings and information on pricing and availability: (02) 4997 4566.



BE AWARE OF FALLING TREES

- Falling trees and branches may cause death or injury to people or damage to property.

- Many of the larger paperbark trees in the park are 200–300 years old and contain extensive rot, damage and decay which can result in branches or whole trees falling to the ground.

- Special precautions should be taken during and after storms, rain or wind.

Night Security

NPWS has engaged security guards to patrol this park on selected nights to ensure compliance with park rules.

Telephone contact numbers are not available for these security guards.

In the event of an emergency please telephone 000 to request assistance from the appropriate emergency organisation.



Photo: NPWS carrying out Hazard reduction burning in Myall Lakes National Park

Managing fire... it's about being prepared

This year NSW has experienced the second warmest winter on record.

Below average rainfall since July and above average temperatures across the state, has resulted in dry forest fuel levels.

If this trend continues, above normal fire activity conditions are expected for central and southern NSW coastal areas and ranges.

Bushfire activity in NSW during October was widespread and severe, associated with warm, dry conditions during recent months.

The majority of fires impacted the coastal strip and Great Dividing Range.

Local NPWS staff have been heavily involved assisting with bushfires across the state.

NPWS was able to take advantage of ideal Autumn conditions to complete a number of prescribed burns in strategic locations.

By the end of August NPWS fire fighters had treated more than 15,000 hectares in national parks and reserves, a record result for this time of year.

This effort has already been instrumental in preventing potentially much more dangerous situations across the Lower North Coast Region in recent high fire danger weather.

FIRE BANS

It is your responsibility to know when a park or total fire ban is in place. In these times please remember:

All campfires and solid fuel (wood, heat beads, charcoal, briquettes, hexamine) barbecues and stoves are prohibited.

During a Park Fire Ban, visitor owned gas and electric barbecue are permitted providing:

- They are under direct control of an adult.
- The ground within 3m of the barbecue is cleared of all flammable material.
- There is a supply of water close by.

During a Total Fire Ban all fires including visitor owned gas and electric barbecues are prohibited - gas lanterns are permitted as long as you comply with the above points.

Gas barbecues provided by NPWS can be used during park or total fire bans. For information contact NPWS Great Lakes Area 6591 0300 or RFS on 1800 654 443.

NEW VISITOR WEBSITE

NPWS is enhancing the way people connect to our national parks.

A visitor friendly website, iPad app and facebook pages have been up and running for over a year now. They continue to be improved to provide visitors with the best up to date information on what's on offer in our spectacular national parks.

The website helps you explore your parks using interactive maps, visual tours and a range of other features including online booking. Visit: www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

As well as online options, a range of national parks guide books are available. The NPWS visitor guide has been expanded into 'Naturescapes' magazine, and provides an overview of parks to visit, including some wonderful inspirational journeys.

A new addition for visitors this year, is the free 'NSW National Parks Pocket Guide', which is the perfect glove box companion for your next visit to a NSW national park.

It's a choice of options which puts our national parks at your fingertips.

BE DINGO AWARE

Dingoes are wild animals... they are unpredictable

- Stay with your children at all times.
- Do not approach or encourage dingoes attention.

Do not feed dingoes

- If dingoes learn to expect food, they become bold and aggressive.
- Aggressive dingoes can pose a risk to public safety and may have to be destroyed.

Store your food securely in sealed containers or eskies

- Keep all food and rubbish out of their reach or in vehicles.
- Clean barbecues and all utensils after use.
- Dispose of rubbish at waste and recycling stations or take it home with you.

If you feel threatened

- Stay calm, keep eye contact, back away, do not run.

On-the-spot fines apply for the feeding of dingoes, or for unsecured storage of food and rubbish.

Report any aggressive dingo behaviour to the NPWS on 6591 0300.





Explore your Parks

Be rewarded with spectacular views across the Great Lakes and Port Stephens coastline. (photo by Ian Brown-OEH).

NATIVE ANIMALS DON'T NEED YOUR FOOD

You can help dingoes and other wildlife by NOT feeding them!

Human food can make native animals sick, dependant on humans and aggressive – which may lead to them being destroyed for public safety.



Feeding any animal in a national park is an offence and carries a fine of \$500.

FEEL ON TOP OF THE WORLD ON YACAABA HEADLAND

Take the challenge and enjoy some stunning scenery from Yacaaba Walking Track in Myall Lakes NP.

Enjoy an easy 2 kilometre walk along Bennetts Beach to reach the base of the striking 271 metre high Yacaaba Headland. You may be lucky enough to see bottle-

nose dolphins playing in the surf.

The track gently climbs one kilometre to an impressive view-point which extends northwards over the townships and the Myall River waterway.

For those who are sure-footed and have the energy, the steep and unformed track continues for

another 0.5km to the ridge top and along to the trig point at the headland summit.

Secluded views take in Fingal Bay, Port Stephens Lighthouse, Cabbage Tree Island and Boondelbah Island.

Allow around 2-3 hours.

VISIT MYALL SHORES HOLIDAY PARK

Myall Shores Holiday Park is a privately run business located within Myall Lakes National Park at Bombah Point.

They have accommodation, a licensed bar and restaurant open for lunch and dinner most days together with a kiosk selling basic items including groceries, water and ice. A public telephone is also available.

Kayak hire is now available including delivery and pick up service. Call 0412 832 220 for details.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Sort it:
Recycle cans, glass and PET bottles, cardboard and paper

Separate your recycling at your campsite

Ensure you don't contaminate recyclables with general waste, especially plastic bags

If in doubt use the general waste bins to avoid contamination

Store it:
In a sealed container or in the

boot of your car. Rubbish is often spread around camping areas by scavenging wildlife. Reduce feeding of animals and littering by storing rubbish securely.

Station it:
At the waste and recycling stations at Mungo Brush, Korsmans Landing, Yagon, Neranie, Violet Hill (waste only), and The Ruins campgrounds.

BOMBAH POINT FERRY FEES

\$6.00 per car

\$6.00 per caravan, trailer or boat trailer

\$2.00 per pedestrian

\$5.00 per motorbike

\$10.00 per 4 tonne vehicle

Operates from 8am–6pm.
Every 1/2 hour

NO LICENCE, NO REGO, NO RIDE!

Riding a motorbike on public lands when unlicensed or unregistered is illegal. There is zero tolerance of illegal motorbike riding on public land including National Parks, State Forests, Council reserves and Crown Lands.

Ride safe, ride licensed, ride registered.



wilderquest.nsw.gov.au

WilderQuest is a fun and innovative children's program designed to ignite a love of nature.

Watch your children discover amazing places, play games and learn about Australian plants and animals. They can start their adventures logging into www.wilderquest.nsw.gov.au

There is also an iPad app available free from iTunes.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Please see information signs at picnic and camping areas throughout Myall Lakes National Park.

NPWS Great Lakes Area office
Call (02) 6591 0300

NPWS Lower North Coast Region office. Call (02) 4984 8200

Environment Line. Call 1300 361 967

Visit www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au