

Macquarie River
Trails



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Fishing

Fishing Trail Guide

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2nd edition
November
2013

Acknowledgements

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More about Macquarie River Trails

The Macquarie valley, in the heart of NSW is one of the State's—and indeed Australia's—best kept secrets, until now.

The recently launched Macquarie River Trails (www.rivertrails.com.au) are designed to let you explore the many attractions and treasures of this rich farming region, one that is blessed with a wonderful, vibrant river, friendly people and a laid-back lifestyle.

As our slogan says, this is your chance to 'Relax, Recover, Unwind and Discover'.



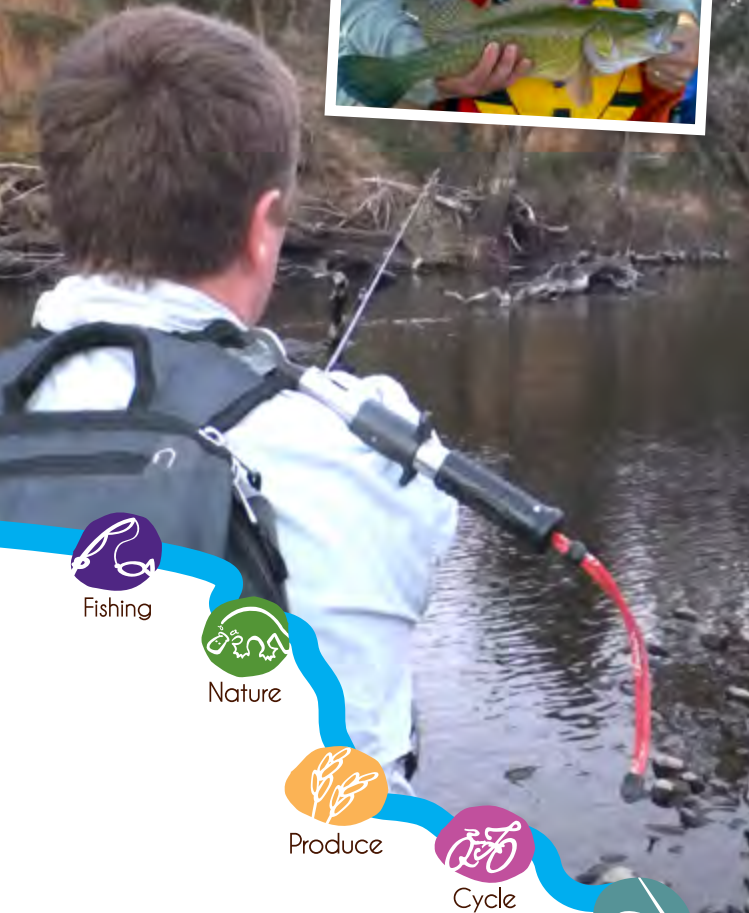
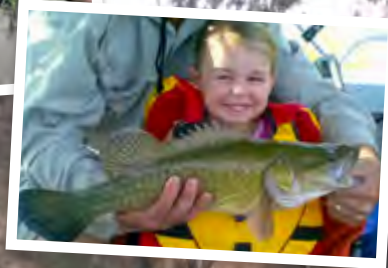
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The Fishing Trail is the sixth under this initiative and is designed to help you plan your stay in the region. As you meander through—let the river be your tour guide. There are over 100 things to do, and places to visit already described on the web site trip planner which is also available as a printed glovebox guide companion to this one and also as a downloadable application for iPhone and iPad.

From the wonders of Lake Burrendong to the flat western plains and the Macquarie Marshes if you only spend a week, you'll probably have to come back. But that's Ok, you're welcome anytime.



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Macquarie River Fishing Trail 

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The Macquarie River lies in the heart of New South Wales, less than six hours drive from Sydney, the central and mid-coast and the Canberra region. Apart from the many other attractions the region has to offer (see www.rivertrails.com.au) it also offers fishing enthusiasts the opportunity to travel the length of the river and experience a range of differing river environments and angling challenges.

From Lake Burrendong, about 350 river-kilometres downstream to Warren, there are nearly 40 river parks, reserves and other access points that you can plan your fishing holiday around. Along the way you can also enjoy the hospitality and other attractions that the communities of Wellington, Dubbo, Narromine, Trangie and Warren have to offer.

Once you leave the logical starting point at Lake Burrendong, near Wellington, the river has wide meandering reaches with deep holes. In places there are fast running rocky riffles and in others lots of great old hardwood snags offering prime fish habitats.

So why not treat yourself, get off the beaten track and explore many of these less regularly visited river parks and reserves.



Large Murray cod of well over a metre were once a common catch on this river, with the average weight sitting at well over twenty pounds through the 1930's and 1940's. Today, you're more likely to catch Murray cod around the 50-60 centimetre mark, but will on occasions come across much larger fish, as well as fantastic Golden perch.

Community and government efforts to restock this river as well as improve the overall quality of this fishery with habitat improvements and measures to reduce the negative impacts from surrounding landuse and urban developments continue to build momentum. These efforts, combined with a growing number of catch and release anglers, is helping to secure this fish community for the long-term.

If you choose to follow the Macquarie River Fishing Trail we hope you will respect the golden rules of sustainable fishing to help keep this fantastic asset for the future. To assist you, in later sections we've provided tips for safe catch and release fishing, and also on how you can be a riversmart angler.

Please do the right thing

Most importantly, we also ask you to play by the rules when fishing the Macquarie River, and any river for that matter. Make sure that before you throw a line in you have a current fishing licence and are familiar with the latest rules and regulations. These you will find at any of the local tackle and bait stores and also on-line through the recreational fisheries part of the NSW Department of Primary Industries web site.

TIP: BEFORE YOU FISH MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A CURRENT NSW FISHING LICENCE AND ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE LATEST RULES AND REGULATIONS.



FISH YOU MIGHT CATCH

MURRAY COD (*Maccullochella peelii peelii*)

As the largest freshwater fish in Australia, the Murray cod is an icon of the Murray-Darling Basin, important in Aboriginal mythology, and the most sought after native species by recreational anglers. While listed nationally as a threatened species it can be caught in NSW but make sure you know the rules relating to this and follow them carefully.

While they can grow to over 100 kilograms and 1.8 metres in length, and live to over 40 years of age, specimens of this size are very rare these days. Even so, the larger specimens (over 5 kilos) are the best breeders, and should be returned to the water unharmed as soon as possible.



Murray cod prefer habitat with cover, especially fallen trees or snags, and their typical diet consists of smaller fish, yabbies and frogs. The species makes an upstream migration of up to 120 kilometres to spawn (highlighting the importance of fishways on our weirs) and usually returns to the very same snag, year after year.

Although formerly common and widespread throughout most of the Basin, Murray cod is now patchily distributed and in much lower numbers. The main reasons for this include illegal and overfishing, loss of snags, weirs preventing migration, cold water discharged from the base of large dams and altered river flow patterns.

Be aware! On the Macquarie River there are also Trout cod (an endangered species) which can sometimes be tricky to distinguish from Murray cod. See page 9 for comparative photographs and information.

GOLDEN PERCH (*Macquaria ambigua ambigua*)

Golden perch (Yellowbelly) can grow to over 20 kilograms and 75 centimetres in length, and live to over 25 years of age. Caught specimens are typically less than 4 kilograms and 40 centimetres long.

This species usually prefers warmer, slow flowing rivers with adequate cover such as snags and reedbeds. It is carnivorous with a diet consisting of small fish, shrimps, yabbies and insect larvae.



Spawning is usually triggered by rises in water level and temperature in spring and summer, resulting in upstream (and sometimes downstream) movements of up to 1000 kilometres, if weirs and dams don't stop them.

Golden perch is widely distributed throughout the Basin, although it is now uncommon in some rivers. Many recreational fisheries for this species are based on extensive stocking programs. The regulation of rivers and construction of over 1000 weirs and dams in the Basin has affected the species' migration and spawning habits, and cold water released below large dams has severely depleted some populations.

PLEASE LOOK AFTER OUR THREATENED FISH

TROUT COD (*Maccullochella macquariensis*)

(Listed as Endangered under the Fisheries Management Act 1994)



Trout cod is listed as an endangered species under both national and NSW legislation, and any fish caught must be released immediately, preferably without removal from the water.

Because Trout cod was only recognised as a distinct species (to Murray cod) in the last 40 years, some aspects of its biology and behaviour remain unanswered. It was first found in the Macquarie River nearly 200 years ago. Although it can grow to over 15 kilograms and 85 centimetres, adults are commonly less than 5 kilograms. The key features that distinguish Trout cod from Murray cod are a dark stripe through the eye, a blue-grey (as opposed to yellow-green) speckled body pattern, and an overhanging upper jaw (see opposite).

Trout cod prefer deep pools with instream cover such as snags and boulders, although in some rivers where they exist along with Murray cod, they tend to occupy slightly faster flowing areas, further out from the bank. Their diet consists of small fish, shrimps, yabbies, dragonfly larvae (mudeyes) and aquatic insect larvae. Adults will migrate between 20–60 kilometres before returning to their home snag.

TIP: TAKE SPECIAL CARE IF YOU CATCH ONE OF THE ENDANGERED OR THREATENED FISH SPECIES. RELEASE THEM UNHARMED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.



Comparison between Trout cod (top) and Murray cod (bottom)

Trout cod used to be widespread in the southern Murray-Darling Basin, but now only three self-sustaining populations remain in the wild. Its eagerness to take a bait or lure has contributed to its dramatic decline, together with desnagging, introduced fish (including Redfin), increased sediment deposition in rivers and cold water released from dams (cold water pollution). The good news for Trout cod is that State Water announced in early 2012 that cold water pollution from Burrendong Dam would be rectified within 2–3 years.



SILVER PERCH (*Bidyanus bidyanus*)

(Listed as Vulnerable under the Fisheries Management Act 1994)

While historically widespread over much of the Murray-Darling Basin (apart from the upper reaches), Silver perch has now declined over most of its range. The three main reasons for the decline of this species are the disruption of migratory and breeding patterns as a result of dams, weirs and flow patterns, the impacts of carp and redfin, and cold water released from the base of large dams.

Silver perch can grow to 8 kilograms and 50 centimetres, although commonly specimens are less than 2 kilograms and 35 centimetres. They prefer similar habitats to Golden perch and Murray cod – lowland, slow-flowing rivers.

Silver perch are omnivorous, preferring aquatic plants, snails, shrimps and aquatic insect larvae. The species migrates upstream in spring and summer to spawn, often forming large schools.

Silver perch is listed as a threatened species in NSW, and any fish caught must be released immediately. However, the species is widely stocked in farm dams and reservoirs, and fishing in these waterbodies (such as Lake Burrendong) is permitted, subject to size and bag limits.



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FRESHWATER CATFISH (*Tandanus tandanus*)

(Protected under the Fisheries Management Act 1994)

Although Freshwater catfish (Eeltail catfish) are usually less than 2 kilograms and 50 centimetres, they have been known to reach nearly 7 kilograms and 90 centimetres.

Preferring slow-flowing streams and lakes, the species spawns in spring and summer when water temperatures reach 20-24 degrees. Unlike the other catchable species in the Basin, Freshwater catfish form a nest consisting of an oval depression, constructed mainly from pebbles and gravel, which is guarded by the male. It is a carnivorous species, eating shrimps, yabbies, small fish, snails and aquatic insects, and feeds mainly at dusk and in the early evening. Freshwater catfish is also a relatively sedentary species and rarely moves more than 5 kilometres.



Historically Freshwater catfish were widespread throughout the Basin, although most riverine populations have declined dramatically in the last 40 years. Several threats have contributed to this decline, including barriers to movement, cold water discharges from large dams, increased salinity, changes to natural flow patterns, and the impacts of redfin and carp (which is thought to destroy nests due to its bottom-feeding behaviour).

In the Macquarie River it is illegal to catch Freshwater catfish, although it may be taken from stocked private dams and Lake Burrendong.

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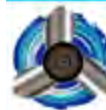


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GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

MACQUARIE PERCH (*Macquaria australasica*)

Sadly, this species is no longer found along the Macquarie River. It was first described scientifically in 1824 based on a specimen caught near Bathurst. Early records suggest it was most common further up the Macquarie above where Burrendong Dam sits now but there are also accounts of it being caught in the Bell River which joins the Macquarie at Wellington. It apparently disappeared from this part of the Macquarie around the end of World War II and further up the river in the 1960's.



Photograph: Mark Lintermans

As history on the Macquarie indicates, the species is typically found in the cool, upper reaches of the Murray–Darling system, although most of the remaining populations are small and isolated. The main reasons for the dramatic decline of Macquarie perch include the impacts of competitors like trout and redfin (including exposure to the EHN virus carried by the latter), sedimentation, clearing of riparian vegetation, barriers to migration such as weirs and dams, and cold-water discharges from large dams.

Macquarie perch can grow to 3.5 kilograms and around 45 centimetres, although typical specimens are usually less than 1 kilogram and 35 centimetres. A shy and docile species, spawning occurs from October to December. Adults occupy a home site during the day, and move about to feed at dawn, dusk and night-time. Macquarie perch eat shrimps and small aquatic insect larvae such as mayflies, caddis flies and midges.

Macquarie perch is listed as an endangered species under both national and NSW legislation, and any fish caught must be released immediately. If you catch one on the Macquarie River the world will want to know about it!

THOSE ANNOYING PEST FISH

REDFIN (*Perca fluviatilis*)

Redfin (English perch) is native to Europe and was introduced to Australia in the 1860s as an angling fish. The species commonly grows to 1-2 kilograms and 20–45 centimetres although 10 kilogram specimens have been recorded, and can live to over 20 years.



Redfin prefer still or slow-flowing waters such as lakes, billabongs and slower moving rivers, especially where these areas provide good shelter such as snags or aquatic vegetation. It is a carnivorous and highly predatory species, eating a wide variety of fish and invertebrates. Spawning occurs in spring when the water temperature reaches 12 degrees.

Redfin are widespread across the Murray–Darling Basin. They are a voracious predator of other fish and can quickly decimate populations of other, more desirable species. Redfin also carry the viral disease EHN, which can seriously infect native species such as Silver perch, Murray cod and especially Macquarie perch. Its ability to rapidly populate waterways also results in unwanted competition with native species (notably Murray cod and Macquarie perch) for habitat and food.



CARP (*Cyprinus carpio*)

While carp (Common carp, European carp, Koi carp) were first introduced into Australia in the 1800s, it was not until the 1970s when huge population explosions occurred in the Murray–Darling Basin. In some rivers they now make up over 95% of the total weight of all fish species!

Typically, adult carp weigh about 4–5 kilograms and are up to 40 centimetres long. Significantly larger specimens (up to 60 kilograms and 120 centimetres) have been recorded. Carp can live up to 17 years. They are omnivorous, feeding on crustaceans, aquatic insects, molluscs, zooplankton and, sometimes plant material.

Carp are typically found in still or sluggish parts of rivers, lakes and floodplains, especially those areas with silt bottoms and abundant aquatic vegetation.



A major reason for its successful introduction into the Basin is its wide tolerance to a range of natural conditions, including temperature, pH, low oxygen, high turbidity and high toxic (pollution) levels. It is also a very mobile species, migrating both up and down rivers throughout the year.

Carp impact negatively on native species in a number of ways, including by increasing turbidity (muddiness) of water as a result of their bottom-feeding habits that dislodge sediments and also native plants, competing with native species for food and habitat, and promoting the risk of parasites (especially Anchor worm) in native fish. It is illegal to use live carp as bait.



LOOKING AFTER FISH HABITAT

Over the past 50 years experts tell us that fish numbers across the Murray–Darling Basin have declined significantly and that compared to when Europeans arrived here there's only about 10% of what we used to have.

There are many reasons for this decline in numbers and for some species (like the Macquarie perch disappearing from this river – see earlier) moving into the threatened and endangered categories.

HABITAT DESTRUCTION – LOSS OF SNAGS

Habitat destruction is a primary cause of these declines and this takes many forms. Historically some rivers had the snags removed to help navigation by paddle steamers, for firewood or for recreational uses like water skiing. We now know how vital these are and programs are underway to re-snap many inland rivers to help native fish populations recover.

Research has shown that most Murray cod are found within a metre of a snag and streams with snags usually have greater numbers of native fish. We also know that snags provide important spawning sites for native fish (Murray cod for example attach their eggs to snags), places for young fish to hide from predators, and to help protect the river bed and bank from erosion.



Macquarie River during the drought showing exposed snag (at left) and the same snag at a slightly higher than normal river height (at right). Such snags are vital habitat for native fish. Photographs: Bill Phillips.

FISH NEED HEALTHY RIVER BANKS

Healthy rivers make more fish and for this to occur we need well vegetated banks. Riverside native vegetation is a vital part of the having more fish in the river. This vegetation drops insects and leaves into the river and these are eaten by fish, or by the things some fish like to eat, such as yabbies and shrimps. As trees age they fall into the river and make instant fish homes – snags.



Good fish homes need this – snags, well-vegetated banks and clean water. Photograph: Courtesy Central West CMA.

In contrast, river banks that are bare due to stock trampling, overgrazing or vehicle traffic (see photos below) are prime candidates for erosion and this soil, once washed into the river, makes the water muddy, reducing aquatic plant growth, and silting up the river. All of these things are bad for native fish. Aquatic plants are a food source and a place for young fish to hide from predators, and siltation fills the big holes where most fish like to hang out.

So, when you go fishing remember this when you're using dirt tracks or launching your boat off a beach – don't rip up the ground as that soil will end up in the river.



At left - Bare and exposed riparian zone: a prime candidate for major soil erosion and possible weed invasion. Photograph: Courtesy Central West CMA. At right—Cattle pugging—a major problem for waterways with soil erosion being accelerated and weeds encouraged to move in. Photograph: Bill Phillips.

TIP: WITHOUT GOOD HABITAT THERE WILL BE NO FISH SO LOOK AFTER OUR RIVERS, AND THEIR BANKS ESPECIALLY

CLEAN WATER = HAPPY FISH

Poor water quality comes about in many ways – erosion is one, fertiliser-rich run-off and urban stormwater are others. Litter dropped in the street or at camp sites can make it's way into our rivers and this makes them ugly, but also impacts on river life.

Please think about this when you're out on the river especially – take all your rubbish home, and why not take a spare plastic bag with you and pick up what some other less thoughtful person might have dropped or left behind.



This is not fish-friendly. Take your rubbish with you.

Rubbish being collected from the Macquarie River by Dubbo local Mick O'Neill – Riversmart's Local Hero 2010.

TIP: DON'T LEAVE YOUR RUBBISH ON THE RIVER BANK ... THINK OF OTHERS AND HOW IT POLLUTES OUR RIVERS.

THINGS THAT BLOCK FISH MIGRATION

Another issue is that the dams, weirs and even some road crossings we've installed, stop fish migrating. Many of our native fish species are migratory while others routinely go looking for mates during the breeding season, better food opportunities or to escape adverse conditions. If not allowed to do this, primarily it reduces breeding success, meaning less fish to catch.

These days redundant or unsafe weirs are being looked at with a view to their removal in order to help our native fish and we are increasingly seeing poorly designed (from the fish migration perspective) weirs, culverts and road crossings modified to assist fish move about more (see photos on the next page). For larger weirs, fish ladders (fishways) that incorporate carp traps are increasingly being installed such as on Marebone weir near the bottom end of the Macquarie River system.



Removing or modifying old, redundant or unsafe weirs and culverts will all help our native fish recover. Photograph: Shona Whitfield.



Fish-friendly rock ramp which also helps reduce erosion. Photograph: Jason Higham.

We also know that there are less native fish around today due to factors like diseases, introduced pest fish (see earlier) and overfishing.

DON'T BE GREEDY

In a later section we encourage you to adopt catch and release fishing as a way to make sure your kids (and theirs) have fish to catch. Basically, don't take more than you need for a feed. The days of bragging over a freezer full of fish are gone! And, make sure the bigger fish you catch are let go to keep on breeding – they're our fish factories (and usually taste like old boots anyway).

TIP: DON'T TAKE MORE THAN YOU NEED FOR A FEED AND LEAVE THE BIG, OLD BREEDING STOCK IN THE RIVER

FISH BY THE RULES

Sadly there are still people out there wanting to cheat by using illegal fishing gear or practices and ignoring the well known rules. If you come across illegal fishing activities or gear – simply call a fisheries officer on 1800 043 536 or go online www.dpi.nsw.gov.au and report it. Leave it to the pros to deal with these situations.

TIP: REPORT ALL ILLEGAL FISHING ON 1800 043 536 OR GO ONLINE www.dpi.nsw.gov.au



Fishing? Help our wildlife

Hooks and line can hurt me. Help me by following these four points...

- 1 When fishing, remove your line if approached from the water by birds or other wildlife
- 2 Make sure you collect old fishing line, hooks and other fishing gear
- 3 Don't leave any litter or other rubbish behind
- 4 Follow the rules – traps, nets and set lines are illegal and are prohibited

To find out how to make yours a RiverSmart community visit:
www.riversmart.org.au

LOOKING FORWARD

Through the *Native Fish Strategy for the Murray-Darling Basin* a concerted effort is now being undertaken to bring back native fish populations. The long-term goal is to see the native fish populations back to 60 per cent of their estimated pre-European settlement levels—and to do this over a fifty year period, or sooner.

BEING A RIVERSMART ANGLER

Being a riversmart angler includes a range of things you should do to help sustain fish populations, but to also reduce your impact or, 'footprint', on the river. Below we've provided a list of things you should or shouldn't do when out enjoying and relaxing by the river.

1. Practice catch and release fishing — don't take more than you need for a feed! (see opposite).
2. Fish according to the rules, and make sure you have a current fishing licence. The fishing rules and regulations in NSW are available from places where you can purchase a licence and also on-line from the NSW Department of Primary Industries' web site.
3. Don't trespass on private property. If in doubt, don't go there.
4. Leave gates how you find them. Close gates after you if that's how you found them.
5. Always take your rubbish with you. If Councils have to start paying to clean up after you then they may close these reserves to fishing and camping. And, why not take a spare plastic bag with you and pick up what some other less thoughtful person might have dropped or left behind.
6. Never throw your empty bottles or other rubbish in the river. . . and it goes without saying — don't use the river as a toilet.
7. Minimise road damage — if you rip and tear and dig up roads and beaches the next time it rains all that soil will wash into the river and destroy fish habitat. Drive sensibly.
8. Respect the neighbours. If you're camping by the river sounds carry a lot further, so remember this and try to keep your partying to reasonable hours and decibels.
9. If you can, bring your own fire wood — assuming a camp fire is allowed. Check on this before your trip and make sure you know what the fire risk is — don't light fires if the risk is too high, and always make sure your campfire is well extinguished as you leave.
10. Also check if pets are allowed where you're going — some reserves allow them, others don't. Other people may not want your dog harassing them!

TIP: PRACTICE CATCH AND RELEASE FISHING SO YOUR KIDS (AND THEIRS) WILL HAVE FISH TO CATCH

CATCH AND RELEASE FISHING FOR THE FUTURE

There is a rapidly growing trend amongst recreational anglers to practice 'catch and release' fishing in order to safeguard fish resources, and the pastime of fishing. If you decide to 'fish for the future' there are some tips you should be aware of to maximise the chances of the fish you catch being released safely and unharmed. Below, we've set out some of those tips. How fish are handled and in what part of the body they are hooked has the greatest influence on the survival of released fish. Survival can also be improved by the use of fish-friendly equipment.

Hook removal:

Long-nosed pliers or a hook-out device will enable hooks, especially if they are barbless, to be removed more readily and minimise damage. Take particular care if the hook is close to, or in the gills. Cutting the line, then lifting the gill cover and removing the hook from there will often be better than trying to remove it through the mouth. If the hook is out of sight in the throat or gut do not try to remove it. Cut the line leaving a few centimeters of line outside the mouth.

Knotless landing nets:

A knotless landing net should be used to land all fish. There are now many styles and brands of landing nets on the market which are suitable for landing medium to large-sized fish. Knotted landing nets should be avoided as they remove the protective slime from fish and damage scales and your hooks are much more likely to get tangled in knotted nets.

TIP: DITCH YOUR OLD KNOTTED LANDING NET FOR A NEW 'ENVIRONET' TYPE — REDUCES TANGLES AND PROTECTS YOUR FISH FROM DAMAGE.

Fish handling:

A gaff cannot be used to take any fish in inland waters. Fish grips or 'boga's' can be used to assist in restraining a fish, however care should be taken in how these are used. Always ensure when using 'boga grips' that the wrist lanyard is securely attached. If weighing fish with a fish grip avoid hanging the fish vertically by their jaw or gills. Alternatively, weigh fish in a landing net or container and subtract the weight of the net/ container to get an accurate weight. Fish grips are especially useful for fish with sharp teeth or spines, but hanging a large fish vertically is likely to cause serious injury or death to the fish.



THE FIVE GOLDEN RULES TO MAKE SURE YOUR FISH SURVIVES

1. Use circle hooks or crush barbs on hooks. If a fish is gut or gill hooked cut the line as close as possible to the fish's mouth rather than removing the hook.
2. Hanging fish vertically by the jaw or gills will put extreme pressure on their spine and gills and is likely to cause injury or death to the fish. When lifting fish always support the belly and avoid holding the gills and eyes.
3. Remember – if retrieved from depths greater than 10 metres fish may suffer barotrauma (they'll look inflated) from the expanding gases in their internal organs. If suffering barotrauma it's important to return fish back to depth quickly! Propel fish head first back into the water or use a release weight if the fish cannot return to depth without assistance.
4. Use knotless 'enviro' style landing nets so that your fish doesn't lose its protective coating of slime! This layer of protective slime keeps all the nasty organisms and bacteria off the fish.
5. Remove hooks swiftly and swim your fish as soon as possible to ensure its survival!

TIP: A FISH WILL ONLY SURVIVE, WITHOUT DAMAGE, FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN HOLD YOUR BREATH! DON'T KEEP FISH OUT OF THE WATER FOR MORE THAN 30 SECONDS!

TIPS FOR FISHING THE MACQUARIE RIVER

LURE FISHING

Casting lures in the Macquarie River is one of the most rewarding of all techniques, with spectacular assaults from native fish often occurring.

Sinking spinner baits, or crashing hard-bodied lures against submerged timber often results in the best catches of both Murray cod and Golden perch, with nine out of ten Murray cod captured hooking up within a metre of some form of structure, whether it be a hardwood snag, submerged rock or sunken ledge.

SUCCESSFUL LURES ON THE MACQUARIE RIVER

Spinner baits

Spinner baits are a fantastic search option that are capable of being fished at almost any depth that the angler desires, whether it be burning them across submerged reed beds with a medium to fast retrieve, or sunk deeper. They are relatively snag-friendly as the hook sits upright upon retrieve. Most anglers opt to fit a secondary stinger hook to increase the chance of a solid connection to any fish encountered, with ½ ounce, and even smaller ⅜ ounce, double Colorado bladed spinner baits having resulted in plenty of quality captures on the Macquarie River. Other options such as tandem bladed spinners, and even buzz baits all account for catches when fished correctly.

A smart strategy when using spinner baits to cast in a V-shaped pattern around likely fish habitats so as to systematically cover as much water as possible. Slowing the retrieve will also leave the offering in the fish's strike zone for as long as possible.





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Hard-bodied lures

Casting or even trolling solid profile hard-bodied lures is an exciting way to fish. When the rhythmic pulse of a bibbed lure is suddenly interrupted by a knee-jerking hook up, it is no wonder this adrenaline filled way to fish is preferred by many along the Macquarie River.



Alternating the patterns of your lures between fluoro and natural will help find the 'flavour of the day', with light, water clarity and depth all contributing to the success of any given lure, on any given day.

Lipless crankbaits

Lipless crankbaits are now available in super high quality finishes, in designs that imitate a variety of bait fish. Both rattling and silent options are available, and account for plenty of fish captured on the Macquarie River.

Lipless cranks are certainly not as snag resistant as hard-bodied lures that can be floated off, or a spinner bait that can travel over most objects. A popular option is to remove from the lipless crank either the bottom hook on both trebles, or to even replace the treble hooks completely with an appropriately sized single hook.



Bait fishing

Bait fishing on the Macquarie River is a very successful way of catching a variety of species. Anglers bait fishing at the change of light periods, dawn and dusk, often do very well and can easily account for a respectable mixed catch of both natives and introduced species. See next page.

COMMON BAITS USED ON THE MACQUARIE RIVER

Worms

Worms are a great all round bait that will help you catch nearly every recreational angling target species in the Macquarie River. Use either a hook rigged with a number of small garden or tiger worms, or better still rigged with a large lively scrub worm. This common and traditional bait remains one of the best 'go to' options and is a dependable fish catcher.

Grubs

Bardi grubs can be purchased at a variety of tackle stores across the Central West of NSW, or collected by those with a bit of know how. They are the larval stage of the Grey goat moth and are well known as a fantastic bait for those wanting to catch a Murray cod. Many trophy fish have been accounted for using a Bardi grub rigged on a simple bait set up with running sinker and swivel, or perhaps even fished weightless if the grub is large enough to sink freely.

Shrimp

Shrimp are excellent bait, and will also catch any angling target species in the Macquarie, although Murray cod and Yellowbelly are particularly fond of a well-rigged shrimp. A technique used by locals is to place two small shrimp on a hook back-to-back, both hooked through the tail. Productive baits that can be used in shrimp traps include dog biscuits and a little soap.

Yabbies

Yabbies are popular bait that can be fished live and whole, or partially, even after being frozen. Murray cod and almost all native fish find it hard to resist a yabby, with some anglers choosing to remove the nippers after squashing the head to not only make the bait easier for the fish to get it in its mouth, but to also create a potent burly of entrails leading any predatory fish to the bait. Be aware that there are restrictions and conditions on the use of yabby traps in this region – see opposite.



YABBYING ALONG THE MACQUARIE RIVER

Catching yabbies is a great way to relax by the river, with many families enjoying this pastime. Sadly though, laws have had to be introduced as some types of yabby traps have proven to be deadly for turtles, platypus, birds and native water rats, in particular those commonly referred to as Opera house traps.

For fishing along the Macquarie River this has particular significance as this river has a healthy platypus population, especially upstream from Dubbo and around Wellington (see below).



Platypus country signs from around Wellington on the Macquarie River.

Note – If you're fishing anywhere upstream of Dubbo and east of the Newell Highway, the use of Opera house traps is totally banned.

Downstream of Dubbo – west of the Newell Highway – they can be used, but must first be modified. The entrance funnel must have a bi-catch reduction device fitted that consists of a rigid ring with a maximum internal diameter of 90 mm permanently affixed. Go to www.dpi.nsw.gov.au and search for the document 'Fishing for yabbies in New South Wales' to find out more. Or, refer to the current Freshwater Fishing Guide


(or visit: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au) for the relevant yabby fishing rules in your area.



Two drowned platypus in an opera house trap. Make sure you know the rules about where and how you can use these, and never leave them unattended for more than a few minutes. Photograph: Michael Maconachie

TIP: MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE RULES REGARDING USE (OR NOT) OF OPERA HOUSE TRAPS ON THE MACQUARIE RIVER.

FINDING PLACES TO FISH

The places described in this guide are a mixture in terms of what facilities they offer (if any) and whether or not they are well known or more off the beaten track. Some areas allow overnight stays but if in doubt please check with the relevant local government area managers and the information they distribute, or have available through places like Visitor Information Centres or their respective websites. Also, several sites are Travelling Stock Routes. These are marked with . See page 84 for the conditions applying to recreational uses of these areas.

In providing this guide our hope is that you will find it easy to spend a few leisurely days fishing along the Macquarie River and enjoying the peace and quiet plus the other attractions on offer.

Across the region many (but not all) of the river parks are sign posted. Some sample signs are shown below. Others do not have signs and the maps included in this guide are designed to help you find these locations. For each site we've also included GPS coordinates to help you navigate your way to them if you have access to that technology.



A Dubbo City Council reserve sign.



Blue signs are used in Narromine Shire.

YOUR SAFETY

WARNINGS

1. When using this guide you will encounter unsealed roads quite regularly so exercise common sense and caution when attempting to drive along these tracks and trails, even if you have 4WD. The black soils found in some areas are notorious 'car-catchers' after rain so be on the look out for these or check with locals before you venture off the beaten track.
2. Be careful when boating, always looking out for snags that may be sitting just below the waterline. Get hold of a copy of the leaflet 'Responsible boating safety tips' produced by NSW Maritime and follow their advice.
3. In places the Macquarie River becomes quite narrow and has rocky riffle and shallow rapid areas. Take extreme care in these areas if boating. Likewise, there are many places where the river flows under or close to overhanging native trees and willows and these can be dangerous if not navigated carefully. Make sure you observe all the rules and recommendations about boating in inland water, as issued by NSW Maritime.
4. On this stretch of close to 350 river-kilometres there are several weirs or similar structures. While some of these offer access to the river, extreme care must be taken when fishing near these structures either by boat or from the bank. Most have exclusion zones designed to protect you – so don't ignore the signs. If boating downstream be vigilant in looking out for warning signs for weirs you're approaching.



Don't ignore the directions, exclusion zones and warning signs if planning to fish anywhere near one of the several weirs on the Macquarie River.

5. Mobile phone coverage remains patchy across some parts of this region, and with some phone service providers, so don't assume you can simply call for help if required. Be sure to follow all the usual safety precautions for outback travel – ample water and food, first aid kit, spare fuel, warm and wet weather clothes etc. Stay with the car if you get stuck or break down and most importantly, make sure someone knows where you were going!
6. Don't camp under big old gum trees, as tempting as it is in summer particularly. Too many people have died or been badly injured by falling limbs.

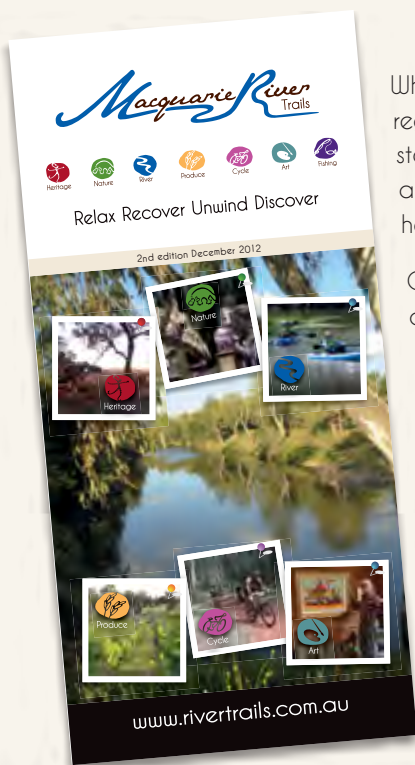
PLACES TO FISH

In this part of the Trail guide we provide advice on those locations you can seek out to enjoy fishing the Macquarie River. All of the areas described are public lands, some with better access than others. Please note the earlier advice about being careful not to trespass on private lands.

This guide is focused on fishing at Lake Burrendong (near Wellington) and downriver to near Warren.



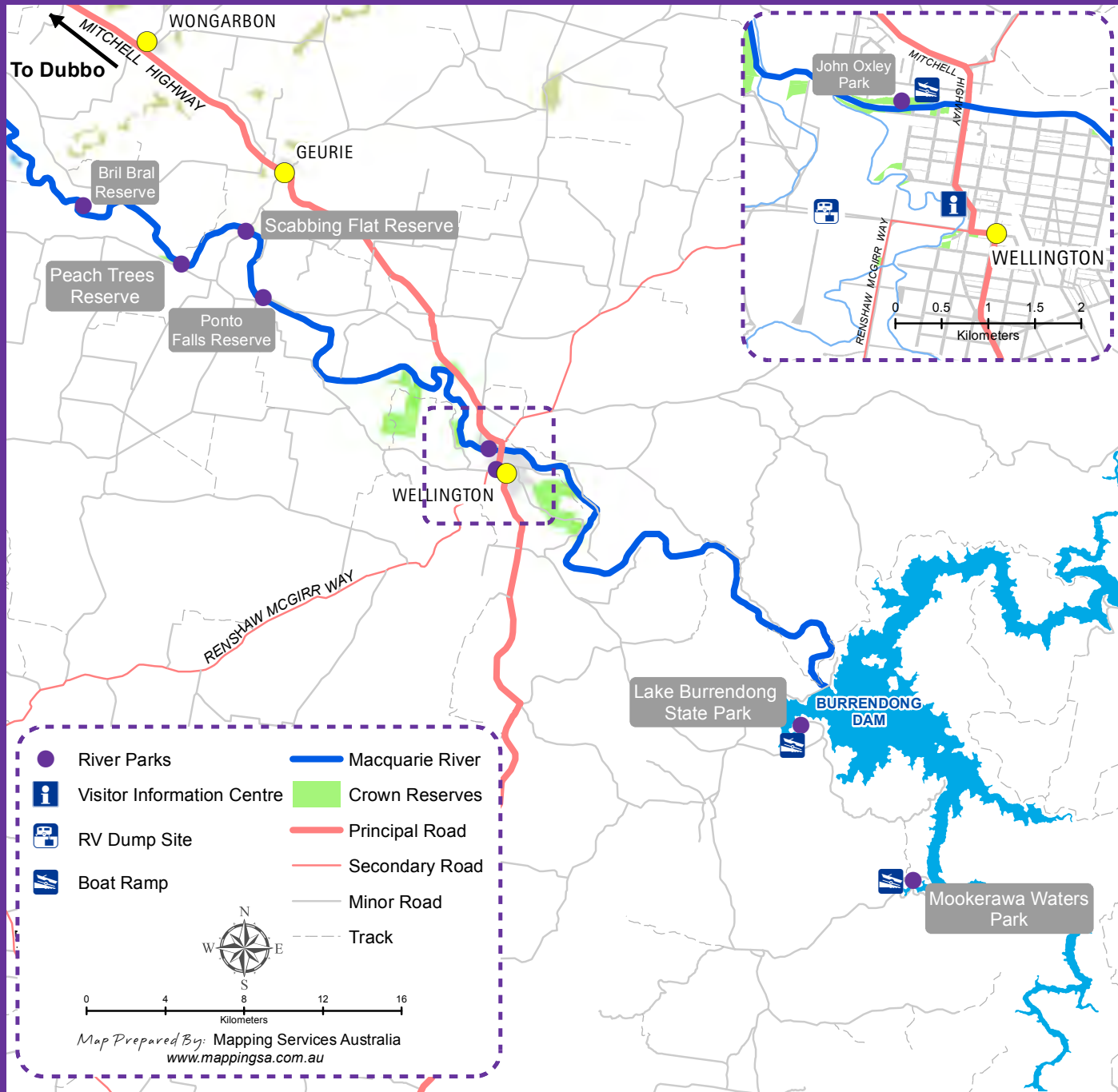
The Macquarie River at Wellington. John Oxley Park (see page 38) is on the right. Photograph: Bill Phillips.



While you're in the region why not stay a little longer and enjoy our hospitality?

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Mookerawa Waters and Lake Burrendong State Parks, near Wellington



Directions

The closest town to Mookerawa Waters Park is Stuart Town, a small former gold rush town of approximately 300 people. Mookerawa Waters is approximately 10kms from Stuart Town.

Lake Burrendong State Park is only a short drive from Wellington, about one hour from either Dubbo or Orange and five hours from Sydney. If you are coming from the north of the state, the park is 27km south-east of Wellington.

GPS Coordinates

Mookerawa Waters State Park:
32°46'13.24"S, 149° 8'55.11"E
Lake Burrendong State Park:
32°41'17.87"S, 149° 6'30.67"E

Access

Both Parks are easily accessed on sealed roads.

Boat launching

Both offer several well maintained boat ramps.

Access along the bank

Easy in most areas within the Parks themselves.

Camping information, site facilities

Both Parks offer camping and on-site accommodation (see www.rivertrails.com.au)

Other information

Lake Burrendong is the venue for the annual catch and release Fishing Classic held at Easter by the Inland Waterways Rejuvenation Association and attracts over a thousand registered anglers. The event is organised by the not-for-profit organisation, the Inland Waterways Rejuvenation Association. Visit their web site (www.iwra.com.au) for details of this major fishing event.



Lake Burrendong and Mookerawa Waters State Parks

Lake Burrendong State Park offers year-round attractions for fishing enthusiasts, nature lovers, bushwalkers, campers and picnickers.

How to get there:

Lake Burrendong State Park is 27 km south-east of Wellington and our sister Park Mookerawa Waters is a further 15 kms to the south. The closest town to Mookerawa Waters is Stuart Town, a small former gold rush town of approximately 300 people.

Accommodation:

With two parks within easy distance of one another we have:

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Fax: (02) 6846 7515
Email: manager@lakeburrendong.com.au
Web site: www.stateparks.nsw.gov.au

John Oxley Park, Wellington



Directions	This river park is in the heart of Wellington, where the Bell River joins the Macquarie. If coming from the Molong-Orange direction follow the Mitchell Highway through town toward Dubbo, but turn left into Gobolion Street just before the bridge crosses the Macquarie River. Follow this down until you go over the low-level bridge and the Park is on your left. From Dubbo direction - cross the main bridge and turn immediately right into Gobolion Street – then proceed to the low-level bridge etc.
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GPS Coordinates 32°32'34.62"S, 148°55'59.35"E

Road access See above.

Boat launching There is a concrete paved boat ramp (see photo).

Access along the bank Excellent.

Camping information, site facilities No camping allowed. A short distance upstream are two River bedz properties with direct river frontage – Riverside Caravan Park and the Bridge Motel (see www.rivertrails.com.au for further information).

Other information This is an area known for its platypus sightings. And, beware – downstream a few hundred metres the river divides around some willows and can be dangerous even for experienced paddlers.

Ponto Falls Reserve



Directions Travelling along the Mitchell highway between Wellington and Dubbo there are two signs to Ponto Falls – it doesn't matter which you take. The road is sealed (although not very wide in places!) except for the last few kilometres

GPS Coordinates 32°27'57.20"S, 148°49'14.71"E

Road access Fine to get there although the roads in the Reserve are not sealed and may be impassable after moderate to heavy rain without 4WD. There are two gates. Please leave them as you find them.

Boat launching Best done at the gravel beach at the downstream end of the reserve.


Access along the bank Fair – good (better near the beach).

Camping information, site facilities There are rubbish bins present. Overnight camping is allowed although there are no designated camping areas. There are no toilets or shower facilities.

Other information This is long narrow reserve so there's lots of space. In this region 'falls' are not waterfalls but shallow, rocky riffle areas. As the photos show the river is relatively wide here apart from the 'falls' area near the beach.


Scabbing Flat Reserve, Geurie Bridge



Directions	Travelling between Dubbo and Wellington on the Mitchell Highway, turn into Mitchell Street in Geurie and follow the road to Ponto. You'll find the reserve just on the Geurie side of the bridge over the Macquarie River (see photo).
GPS Coordinates	32°25'49.76"S, 148°48'37.21"E
Road access	Good. Sealed road all the way from Geurie.
Boat launching	Very difficult. This reserve is not recommended if you intend to use a boat.
Access along the bank	Difficult.
Camping information, site facilities	There are no facilities provided. No camping allowed. Check on other conditions also – see page 84. 
Other information	This part of the river is generally narrow with shallow riffle 'runs' and deep holes along the steep banks and corners.

Peach Trees Reserve



Directions	Turnoff the Mitchell Highway at the Mitchell Inn Hotel in Geurie and follow this road toward Ponto. You'll cross the Macquarie River a few kilometres later (this is Scabbing Flat Falls Reserve – see previous entry). Take the Terrabella Road turnoff and Peach Tree Reserve is about 2 km from the turnoff on the right hand side. There are two turn-offs. When we visited the second one had just been graded!
GPS Coordinates	32°26'50.83"S, 148°46'36.51"E
Road access	Good. Sealed roads to the turn-off. First turn-off into the reserve can be challenging! Try the second.
Boat launching	OK, with care.
Access along the bank	Difficult away from the beach area.
Camping information, site facilities	There are no facilities provided. No camping allowed. Check on other conditions also – see page 84. 
Other information	Very popular with the locals for Easter and other holiday periods. The reserve has a great beach facing a short, riffle run. Away from this the fishing is generally good, downstream especially.



Bril Bral Reserve



Directions

Travelling from Wellington take the highway to Dubbo. Turn left into Old Dubbo Road – the last turn to your left as you leave Geurie. Follow this road for several kilometres (it twists and turns a lot!) until you see the green Reserve sign on your left. It's easy to miss as the entry road joins from your left on a sweeping right hand bend. From Dubbo take the Old Dubbo Road for about 21 kms. You will find a gate on the track at the entrance of the reserve. Please remember to close the gate behind you.

GPS Coordinates

Approx. 32°24'52.24"S, 148°43'29.00"E

Road access

Fair – good. Sealed road to the turnoff into the reserve. The roads in the Reserve are not sealed and may be impassable after moderate to heavy rain without 4WD.

Boat launching

Fair

Access along the bank

Good

Camping information, site facilities

Tent-based camping allowed. No caravans or campervans. There are no toilets or shower facilities. There are no rubbish bins – so please take your rubbish with you.

Other information

Great bit of the river with lots of deep holes mixed in with shallow riffle areas.

Wellington Riverside Caravan Park



This well maintained, 3-star-rated camping and van park offers on-site cabins, caravan and camping sites with direct access to the Macquarie river for fishing, canoeing etc.

Platypus watching is another attraction near here. **Location:** On the Mitchell Highway, next to the bridge over the Macquarie River on the Dubbo side of Wellington. **Reservations:** 02 6845 1370



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Bridge Motel, Wellington

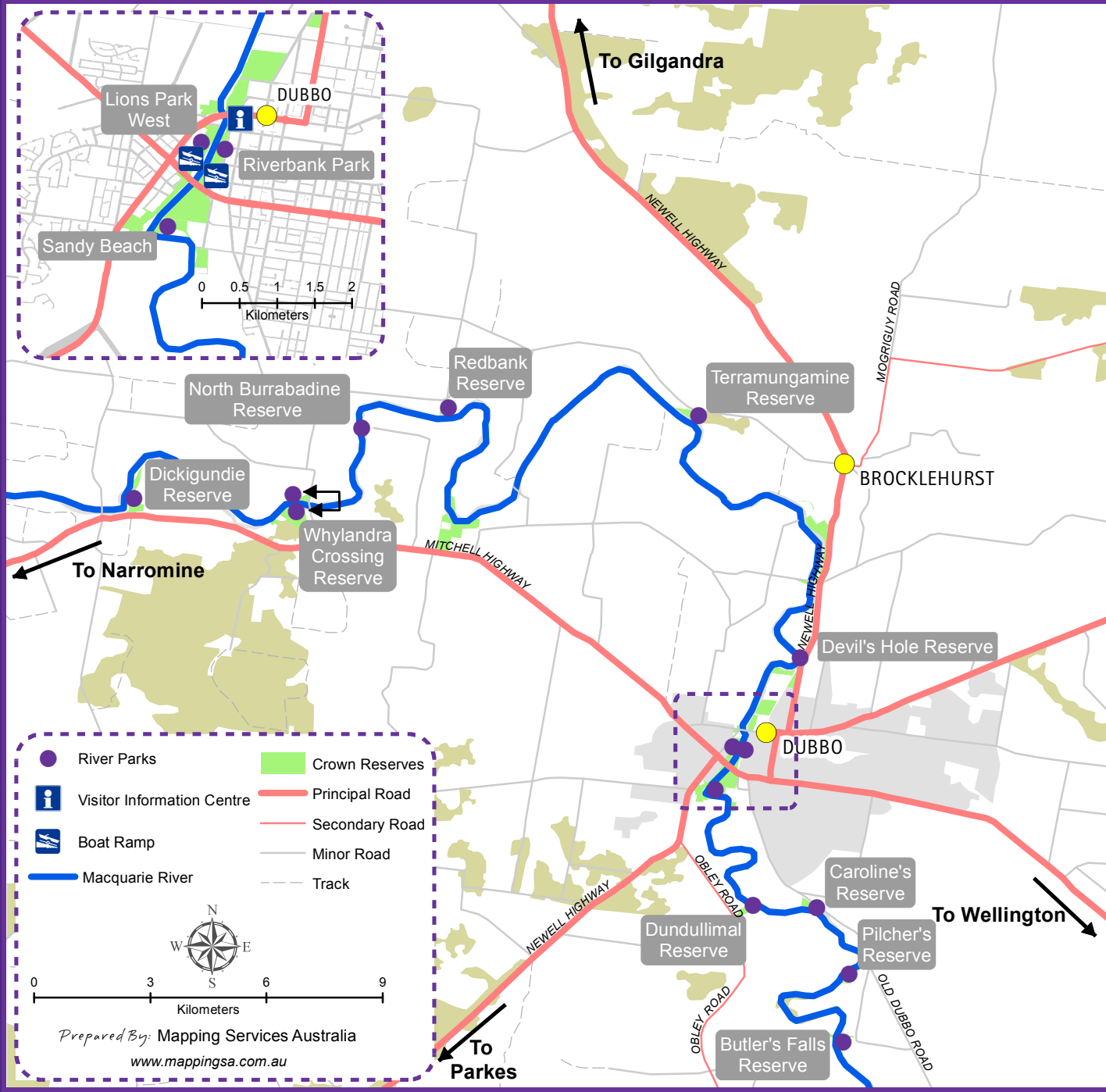
This 3-star river-front motel has all ground floor, air conditioned units, a pool, beautiful shaded lawns to relax, go fishing, or launch a canoe. This is also a good place to start the Macquarie River canoe and kayak trail (see separate description). Platypus watching is another attraction at this location.

Location: On the Mitchell Highway, next to the bridge over the Macquarie River at 5 Lee Street.

Reservations: (02) 6845 2555

E: bookings@bridgemotelwellington.com.au







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Butler's Falls Reserve



Directions

If coming from the Geurie direction along the Old Dubbo Road turn left at Lazy River Estate and follow that road for about 2 kilometres until you see the green sign into the reserve. From Dubbo follow the Old Dubbo Road signs and turn right at Lazy River Estate – then proceed about 2 kilometres to the reserve.

GPS Coordinates

32°18'52.24"S, 148°37'16.41"E

Access

Sealed road.

Boat launching

Good.

Access along the bank

Good.

Camping information, site facilities

Tent-based camping allowed. No caravans or campervans. There are toilets, bar-b-que fireplaces and picnic tables.

Other information

This part of the river has lots of shallow 'runs' interspersed with deeper holes and snag country. You'll need to walk or boat upstream or down to find these fish havens.

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Pilcher's Reserve



Directions

If coming from the Geurie direction along the Old Dubbo Road turn left at Lazy River Estate and follow that road for a few hundred metres until you see the green sign into the reserve on your right. From Dubbo follow the Old Dubbo Road signs and turn right at Lazy River Estate – then proceed a few hundred metres to the reserve entrance on the right.

GPS Coordinates

32°17'57.88"S, 148°37'22.27"E

Road access

Good – sealed except the last few hundred metres and then down to the beach.

Boat launching

Fair – road is steep and dirt road down to the gravel beach can become rutted after rain.

Access along the bank

Good.

Camping information, site facilities

No camping allowed. Reserve is locked at night.

Other information

Stony beach and shallow river 'run' mean fishing is best done upstream or down away from the shallow faster flowing water.



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Caroline's Reserve



Directions	If coming from the Geurie direction along the Old Dubbo Road, Caroline's Reserve is a short distance past the entrance to Lazy River Estate on your left. From Dubbo follow the Old Dubbo Road signs for approximately 2-3 kilometres and you'll see the reserve on your right just before Lazy River Estate.
GPS Coordinates	32°17'39.39"S, 148°37'38.48"E
Road access	Sealed road.
Boat launching	Not possible.
Access along the bank	Difficult due to steepness.
Camping information, site facilities	Barbecue (wood-fired), picnic tables and rubbish bins. No camping allowed.
Other information	This is not a very popular spot for fishing as the banks are steep and no boat access is possible.



Dundullimal Reserve



Directions	Off Obley Road, Dubbo, 1.5km past Taronga Western Plains Zoo entrance. Same entrance as for going to the historic Dundullimal homestead.
GPS Coordinates	32°16'58.96"S, 148°36'6.22"E
Road access	Good.
Boat launching	Not possible.
Access along the bank	Reasonable.
Camping information, site facilities	No camping. Bar-b-que facilities near main entrance.
Other information	Tracker Riley Cycleway and Walking Track passes through this reserve and crosses the river near the railway bridge (see photo).



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Sandy Beach, Dubbo



Directions If coming from the Wellington, Geurie direction along the Mitchell Highway turn left at the lights just before the L H Ford Bridge and then take the first right into Bligh Street. Follow this road a short distance until it veers to the right, where you take the left hand turn and follow this road to Sandy Beach. Otherwise, if you're in the main shopping area, turnoff Macquarie Street toward the river, and then follow Bligh Street under the L H Ford bridge until you see Sandy Beach Road on your right.

GPS Coordinates 32°15'23.41"S, 148°35'26.32"E

Road access Sealed road access with parking for vans and lots of turning space.

Boat launching There is no concrete boat ramp (but there are two further down the river – see the Riverbank Park and Lions Park West descriptions).

Access along the bank Good.

Camping information, site facilities No camping allowed. There are toilets, barbeques and rubbish bins. Access to the river is good as the beach is shallow and with gravel.

Other information Tracker Riley Cycle and Walking Track runs through this reserve. This is also the home of the Dubbo dragon boat and canoe clubs.

Riverbank Park, Dubbo



Directions Riverbank Park can be found running parallel to Macquarie Street, the main street of Dubbo.

GPS Coordinates 32°14'46.83"S, 148°35'58.25"E

Road access Sealed road access with parking for vans and lots of turning space.

Boat launching There is concrete boat ramp and pontoon (see photo). There is also another boat ramp just upstream on the opposite side of the river – see Lions Park West – next entry.

Access along the bank Good.

Camping information, site facilities No camping allowed. A great area for a picnic or stroll along the river right in the heart of Dubbo. There is also an outdoor exercise area, several playing fields and toilets.

Other information These parklands extend from behind the main shopping area of Dubbo (parallel with Macquarie Street) upstream to Sandy Beach. The Visitor Information Centre is found near here also. Running through the park is the Tracker Riley Cycleway and Walking trail which allows you to do about a 13 km loop that runs along both sides of the river.

Tracker Riley cycleway and walking trails follows the Macquarie River in Dubbo for close to 13 km. Photograph: Bill Phillips.



Lions Park West, Dubbo



Directions Opposite Riverbank Park – which runs parallel to Macquarie Street - the main street of Dubbo. The boat ramp lies more or less under the main bridge (L H Ford) crossing the Macquarie. Look for the Tallarook Motel right near the roundabout beside the bridge – the park is right in front of it. Alternatively, take Stonehaven Crescent off the Newell Highway – which runs between the Council Caravan Park and the Cattlemen’s Motel – opposite fast food alley!

GPS Coordinates 32°14'57.20"S, 148°35'41.61"E

Road access Sealed roads.

Boat launching Concrete boat ramp (see photo)

Access along the bank Excellent

Camping information, site facilities No camping. Bar-b-que facilities and picnic tables, toilets, kids playground.

Other information The Tracker Riley Cycle and Walking Track runs through this reserve. If the river flow is up, then it is possible to boat upstream to the Council owned ‘top’ weir but stay well clear of it if you head up that way.



Devil’s Hole Reserve, Dubbo



Directions From Dubbo take the Newell Highway toward Gilgandra and just after you pass the truck stop the reserve is on the left, opposite the entrance to the Ranelagh Homestead B&B.

GPS Coordinates 32°13'41.68"S, 148°36'39.76"E

Road access Sealed roads to the entry point and then dirt which can be boggy if trying to get down to the beach.

Boat launching Ok (see photo). There are some erosion issues due to vehicle damage on and near the beach. Take care not to make the problem worse – fish don’t like dirt in their river!

Access along the bank Good.

Camping information, site facilities No camping. Bar-b-ques, covered picnic tables and views of the river near the entrance just off the sealed road (see photo).

Other information This reserve is not far downstream from Dubbo’s second weir – take care if you boat near it. Even though it’s quite low there are still risks.

Kevin Hockey & Associates *Solicitors*

23 Church Street
Dubbo NSW 2830

PO Box 1025
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DX 4041 Dubbo

Phone: (02) 6882 1455

Fax: (02) 6882 1477

Kevin Hockey
Principal/Solicitor

Terramungamine Reserve



Directions Take the Newel Highway toward Gilgandra and a few kilometres from Dubbo, as you pass through Brocklehurst there is a turn to the left. Follow this for about 3-4 kilometres to the turn-off left into the Reserve.

GPS Coordinates 32°10'7.82"S, 148°35'6.10"E

Road access Good. Sealed roads. Access good for caravans.

Boat launching Difficult – not recommended.

Access along the bank Fair. Steep banks, no beach area. Concrete steps to river (see photo).

Camping information, site facilities Overnight camping is allowed although only for one night. There are toilets and bar-b-que areas, plus some tables and seating benches.

Other information Aboriginal grinding grooves are a point of interest at the site.
The river sweeps around a big bend just upstream before widening out again. Great views of the river from near the grinding grooves.



Redbank Reserve



Directions Take the Newel Highway toward Gilgandra and a few kilometres from Dubbo, as you pass through Brocklehurst, there is a turn to the left into Burraway road to Terramungamine Reserve. The gate into Redbank Reserve is your left about 4 or so kilometres past Terramungamine Reserve. Overall this is less than 10kms from the highway turnoff. Don't confuse the Reserve with the entrance to the property Redbank which is few hundred metres before it. Please remember to close the gate to the Reserve.

GPS Coordinates 32°10'7.92"S, 148°31'50.56"E

Road access There is a sealed road to the entry gate. The roads in the Reserve are not sealed – beware if wet.

Boat launching Not recommended

Access along the bank Fair. Depending on river height, there may or may not be a beach area.

Camping information, site facilities Tent-based camping allowed. No caravans or campervans. There are no toilets, bar-b-que areas or other facilities – bush camping!

Other information The locals report good fishing here probably due to the well established riverbank vegetation which helps makes lots of snags!



North Burrabadine Reserve




Directions	Take the Mitchell Highway from Dubbo toward Narromine and at 4.3 kms from the 110km/hr sign (leaving Dubbo) turn right into North Burrabadine Road and follow it to the river for a further 4.3 kms. The reserve is on the northern side of the cul-de-sac. It's 100 or so metres walk to the river.
GPS Coordinates	32°10'19.89"S, 148°30'39.50"E
Road access	Good. Sealed to the gate.
Boat launching	Not recommended.
Access along the bank	Banks are moderately steep – see photo.
Camping information, site facilities	No camping allowed. There are no facilities.
Other information	There may be sheep in the Reserve so be sure to close the gate.



Whylandra Crossing Reserves



Directions	This Reserve is on both sides of the river. To access the southern side, take the Narromine road from Dubbo – the turnoff to the reserve is approximately 6.6 kms from the 110kms/hr sign as you leave Dubbo. Turn right onto a gravel road and follow this – through a low level crossing – for about 1 km to the reserve, past the 'No through road' sign. To access the northern side, follow the directions to Redbank Reserve – see earlier – and proceed past it for 2.8 kms and turn left into Rawsonville Road. When you reach a T intersection go left and follow for this a short distance to the gate into the Reserve. There may be cattle grazing in the reserve so be sure to shut the gate. An alternative way to the northern side Reserve is off the Mitchell Highway from Dubbo to Narromine at the Rawsonville Bridge turnoff (to the right). Follow this until a right turn to Rawsonville Hall and proceed beyond it for a few kilometers to the Reserve.
GPS Coordinates	32°11'23.04"S, 148°29'44.97"E (for the southern side of the river)
Road access	Good on both sides, although the roads in the Reserve are not sealed and may be impassable after moderate to heavy rain without 4WD.
Boat launching	Fair to good depending on river height – easier access to beach on the northern side for launching.
Access along the bank	Varies from good to impossible.
Camping information, site facilities	There are no toilets or shower facilities. No camping allowed. Check on other conditions also – see page 84. 
Other information	This reserve is long and narrow and follows the river for quite some distance offering many areas to park and try your luck.

Dickigundie Reserve



Directions

Take the Narromine road from Dubbo (Mitchell Highway) for approximately 11 kms (from the 110km/hr sign leaving Dubbo) and turn right. Note, there is no signpost on the highway but the Reserve's green sign can be seen about 100 metres off the main road. From Narromine, take the Mitchell Highway to Dubbo for approximately 26 kms and turn left into the Reserve.

GPS Coordinates

32°11'31.10"S, 148°27'22.58"E

Road access

Sealed road to the entry gate. The roads in the Reserve are narrow and not sealed and may be impassable after moderate to heavy rain without 4WD.

Boat launching

Fair.

Access along the bank

Good in several areas, especially the beach.

Camping information, site facilities

Overnight tent-based camping is allowed although there are no designated camping areas. There are no toilets or shower facilities. No caravans or campervans.

Other information

A beautiful part of the river.



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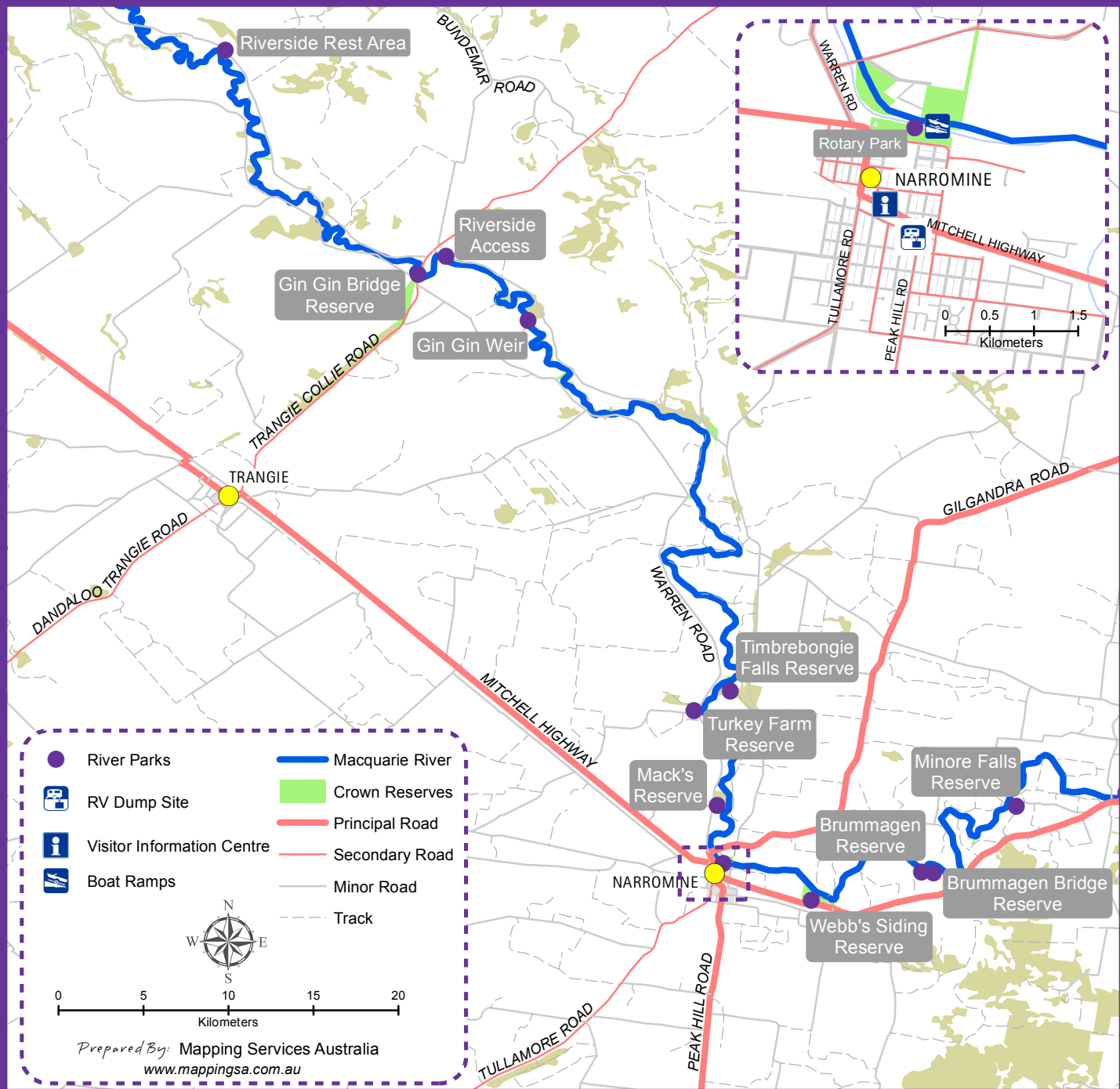
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Minore Falls Reserve



Directions	Take the Narromine road from Dubbo (the Mitchell Highway) for approximately 13 kms and turn right at the signpost to Minore Falls. Proceed approx 4 km, over a cattle grid with a sign saying 'The Falls'. Keep going a further 0.9 kms to the entry gate straight ahead. From Narromine, take the Dubbo road for approximately 18-20 kms and turn left at the Minore Falls signpost.
GPS Coordinates	32°11'39.92"S, 148°23'45.02"E
Road access	There is a sealed road to the turn off the highway. The roads in the Reserve are not sealed and may be impassable after moderate to heavy rain without 4WD. The last part of the trail is quite steep and may be a challenge for 4WD, even in the dry.
Boat launching	Fair.
Access along the bank	Fair – good in places
Camping information, site facilities	No camping allowed. Check on other conditions also – see page 84. 
Other information	The river here tends to be shallow and rocky but if you're willing to trek upstream or down a bit it gets better – from a fishing perspective.



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Brummagen Bridge Reserve



Directions	Take the Narromine road from Dubbo (Mitchell Highway) for approximately 12-13 kms (from the 110km/hr sign leaving Dubbo) and turn right onto a gravel road just after the Brummagen Creek bridge. There is no signpost to the reserve. Look for a property entrance 'Glen Ayr' and a white letter box No. 2696 just as you turn off the highway. Then proceed for approximately 1 km off the highway to the reserve along a narrowing gravel road. From Narromine, take the Dubbo road for approximately 10 kms and turn left just before the Brummagen Creek bridge – see landmarks to look for, described previously.
GPS Coordinates	32°13'56.81"S, 148°21'49.19"E
Road access	Sealed road to the turn off the highway. The roads in the Reserve are not sealed and may be impassable after moderate to heavy rain without 4WD.
Boat launching	Not recommended.
Access along the bank	Fair.
Camping information, site facilities	There are no toilets or shower facilities. Rubbish bins are provided. This is not a reserve with a clearly defined beach as the river is quite rocky (see photo). No camping allowed. Check on other conditions also – see page 84. 
Other information	As the photos show the river here is quite rocky which makes navigating upstream in a boat challenging. There are deep water areas here where fish hang out.

Brummagen Reserve



Directions	Finding this reserve is not easy as it's not signposted. The track is less than a kilometre from the turn-off to the Brummagen Bridge Reserve – see previous entry – toward Narromine and on the same side of the road.
GPS Coordinates	32°13'37.56"S, 148°21'10.65"E
Road access	You will find a gate in the corner of the fence and a lane between two fences will take you to the reserve on the river: This track is quite rugged and not recommended for other than 4WD vehicles. Please close the gates after you.
Boat launching	OK.
Access along the bank	Fair.
Camping information, site facilities	There are no toilets or shower facilities. Rubbish bins are provided. No camping allowed. Check on other conditions also – see page 84. 
Other information	There is a lovely sand beach from which you can fish or launch a boat.

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DANDALOO STREET, NARROMINE

Webb's Siding Reserve, Narromine



Directions	Travelling out of Narromine on the Mitchell Highway to Dubbo the reserve is on the left 2.6 kms after the 110kms/hr sign. Coming from Dubbo turn right at approximately 20kms (from the 110km/hr sign leaving Dubbo). There is a small white signpost on the highway and gates to open to get into the reserve (please be sure to close them after you). Once in the reserve, best to take the track that heads off to the right to get to the best spots.
GPS Coordinates	32°14'36.40"S, 148°17'43.55"E
Road access	Fair. Sealed road to the turn off the highway. The roads in the Reserve are not sealed and may be impassable after moderate to heavy rain without 4WD.
Boat launching	Challenging! – see photos.
Access along the bank	Limited – too steep in most areas.
Camping information, site facilities	There are no toilets or shower facilities. Rubbish bins are provided. This reserve has two main parts and runs along the river for quite a distance with many trails. The bank is high in most places with no obvious beach area when the river is running at moderate height. No camping allowed. Check on other conditions also – see page 84. 
Other information	Look out for stock in this reserve.



Rotary Park, Narromine




Directions	In Narromine, proceed down Dandaloo Street (the main one) toward Warren, Trangie etc, and turn right into Culling Street before the highway sweeps around to the left on the edge of town. Follow Culling Street past the playing fields until you see the entrance into the Park.
GPS Coordinates	32°13'36.27"S, 148°14'47.99"E
Road access	Good. Sealed roads.
Boat launching	Excellent (see photo).
Access along the bank	Good in the immediate surrounds of the boat ramp and park.
Camping information, site facilities	Absolute river frontage parklands with a great, sealed boat ramp. The reserve also has children's playgrounds, toilets, bar-b-ques, picnic tables, garbage bins and lots of room for stretching the legs on the vast well-cared for grassed areas. Camping is not permitted.
Other information	Water skiing is allowed on the river and there are numerous good fishing spots. Narromine is famous for its sport stars such as Glenn McGarth (see the statue of him when in town), Melinda Gainsford-Taylor, David Gillespie and lots more.



Mack's Reserve



Directions	From Narromine take the Old Warren Road for approx 3 kms (from the 80km/hr sign) – look for the blue sign. There is no gate into the reserve which is on the right coming from this direction.
GPS Coordinates	32°11'46.47"S, 148°14'51.29"E
Road access	Sealed road to the turn off the main road. The tracks in the reserve (of which there are many) are not sealed and may be impassable after moderate to heavy rain without 4WD. There is a beach area and lots of places to park on the upper bank.
Boat launching	Difficult other than at the sandy beach which is at the upstream end of the reserve. The last part of the track down to the beach area is quite steep.
Access along the bank	Difficult other than at the small sandy beach area.
Camping information, site facilities	There are no toilets or shower facilities. Rubbish bins are provided. No camping allowed. Check on other conditions also – see page 84. 
Other information	Lots of snags in this part of the river so be careful if boating.

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Turkey Farm Reserve



Directions	From Narromine take the Old Warren Road for approx 9.5 kms (from the 80km/hr sign) – look for the blue sign – and turn right. There are double gates to go through just off the sealed road. The riverside area is only a few hundred metres away.
GPS Coordinates	32° 8'32.79"S, 148°14'2.39"E
Road access	There's a sealed road to the turn-off the main road. The tracks in the reserve are not sealed and may be impassable after moderate to heavy rain without 4WD. The last part of the track down to the beach area is quite steep.
Boat launching	Fair – from the beach.
Access along the bank	Fair.
Camping information, site facilities	There are no toilets or shower facilities. Rubbish bins are provided. There is a beach area (see photo).
Other information	

Timbregongie Falls Reserve



Directions	From Narromine take the Gilgandra Road and on the outskirts of town turn left into Burraway Road. Then proceed for approximately 10 kms until the left turn into the reserve – look for the blue sign. From there you'll need to travel a further 1.5 kms to the river.
GPS Coordinates	32° 7'52.80"S, 148°14'47.07"E
Road access	Sealed road to the turn off the main road. The roads in the reserve are not sealed and may be impassable after moderate to heavy rain without 4WD. This is a travelling stock reserve so take care.
Boat launching	Fair.
Access along the bank	Fair – to good (near beach).
Camping information, site facilities	There are no toilets or shower facilities. There is a rubbish bin provided. No camping allowed. Check on other conditions also – see page 84. 
Other information	It runs along the river for quite a distance with many trails. There are beach areas depending on river height.

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Gin Gin Weir



Directions	From Narromine, the Weir is 35 kms along the Old Warren Road, just 20 kms from Trangie.
GPS Coordinates	31°56'15.33"S, 148° 8'28.89"E
Road access	Sealed road to the entry gate. The roads in to the Weir are not sealed and may be impassable after moderate to heavy rain without 4WD.
Boat launching	Into the weir pool – not recommended. Below the weir – fair.
Access along the bank	Fair – away from the beach area below the weir.
Camping information, site facilities	There are picnic tables and a bush toilet.
Other information	***Swimming or boating anywhere near the weir – above or below it – is extremely dangerous*** Above the weir the carp tend to hang around but further upriver and downstream there's good habitat to explore.

Peppercorn Motor Inn, Narromine


Three star-rated motor inn with great location. The Peppercorn Motor Inn has 21 units and is just fifty metres from the Narromine Golf Course and Club with its Chinese Restaurant. It's also less than 200 metres from the Macquarie River.

Location: Corner of Trangie Road–Mitchell Highway and Warren Road
Reservations: (02) 6889 1399 W: www.peppercornmotorinn.com.au



Riverside access



Directions	These are narrow areas of Crown land between the river and road along the northern bank of the Macquarie River on the Burroway Road. Follow the directions for Gin Gin Bridge Reserve – see next entry – then proceed for less than 2 kms and turn right into Burroway Road. From this corner, and for close to 3kms the river is no more than 100 metres from the road and there are numerous tracks to park by the river for fishing.
GPS Coordinates	31°54'16.76"S, 148° 5'53.52"E (for approx half way along this long thin area)
Road access	Good.
Boat launching	Not recommended.
Access along the bank	Fair to difficult.
Camping information, site facilities	There are no facilities. No camping allowed. Check on other conditions also – see page 84. 
Other information	This part of the river has numerous rocky outcrops, deep holes, and in some areas dense snag loading.



Gin Gin Bridge Reserve



Directions	The Reserve is 43 kms from Narromine along the Old Warren Road. Turn right at the intersection at Gin Gin, then take the first left after you cross the bridge.
GPS Coordinates	31°54'57.18"S, 148° 4'57.06"E
Road access	Good. Sealed road right past the reserve. The tracks in the reserve are not sealed and caution should be exercised after rain.
Boat launching	The track down the pebble beach is steep and narrow so check it out before trying.
Access along the bank	At the beach it's great but up and downstream – not so easy.
Camping information, site facilities	There are no facilities on-site.
Other information	<p>The river in this part has rocky shelves and outcrops and lots of snags and deep holes. At higher flows the beach goes under water and this makes access risky.</p> <p>Note that there is a road leading to a private property that leads off to the right as you drive into the reserve. Please respect the owner's privacy.</p>

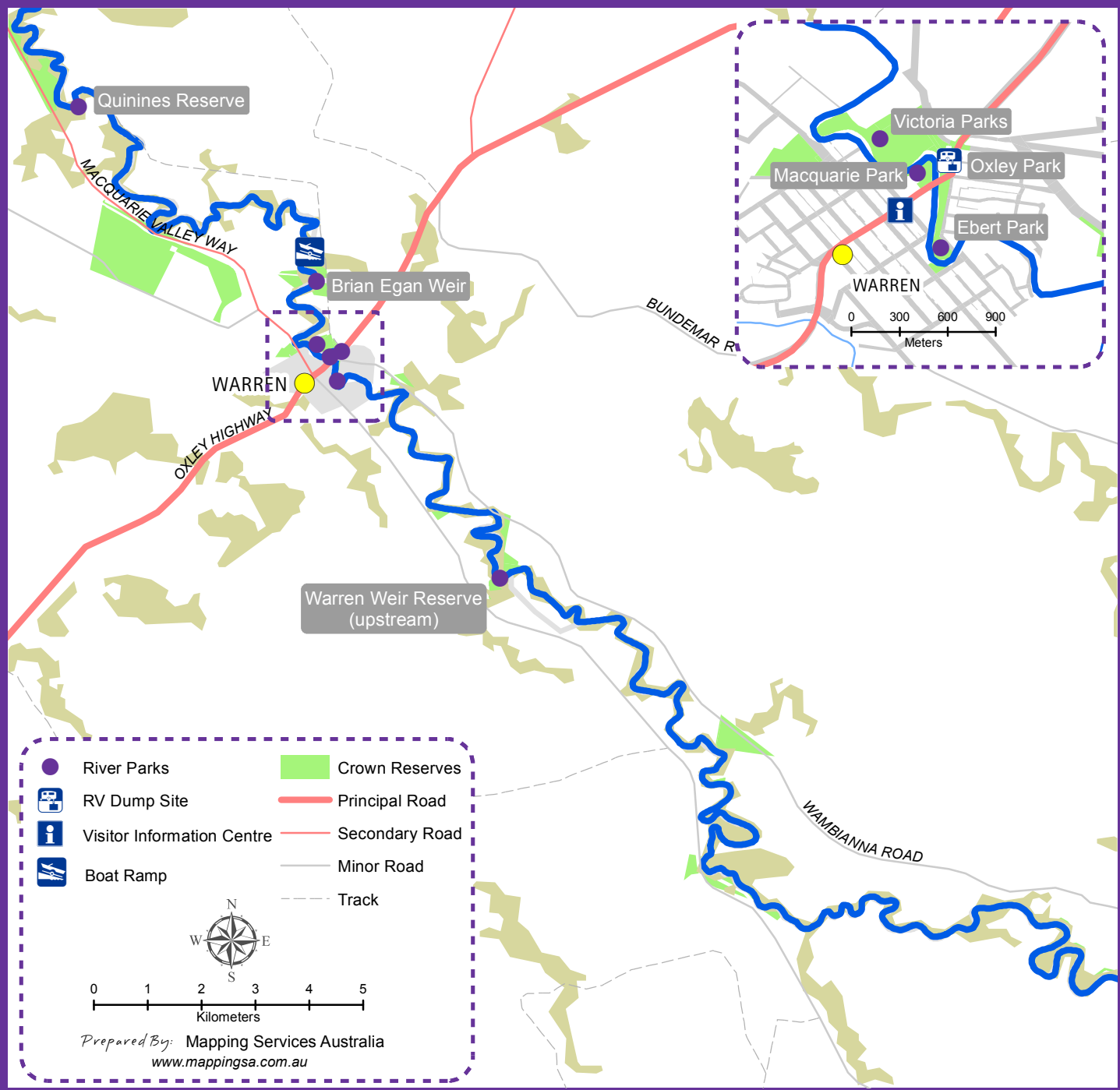
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Riverside Rest Area





Directions	A general access area, although this one is a Rest Area. Follow the directions for Gin Gin Bridge Reserve, then proceed along Wambianna Road toward Warren past the other riverside access sites on this side of the river – see previous entries – until you see the Rest Area sign (see photo).
GPS Coordinates	31°47'46"S, 147°58'47"E
Road access	Good.
Boat launching	Not recommended.
Access along the bank	Difficult. Very steep.
Camping information, site facilities	There is a garbage bin and a turn-around loop for caravans.
Other information	Rest area is just past some large Fertilisers tanks by the road.







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Warren Weir Reserve – upstream



Directions

If coming from the Nevertire direction turn right at the round-about and follow this road – Dubbo Street, which then becomes Ellengerah Road – for about 5kms until you see the sign. If coming from Carinda – proceed through the round-about in the centre of town. The area can also be accessed from the northern side of the river. Take the Wambianna Road toward Narromine for approximately 4 kms and turn right over cattle grid with a white gate posts. A dirt track of about 1-2 kms from there takes you to below the weir.

GPS Coordinates

31°44'5.32"S, 147°51'59.60"E

Road access

Road access is good although not sealed once you turn off Ellengerah Road. This road is closed during wet weather. On the northern side, once you turn off Wambianna Road, exercise caution if wet.

Boat launching

Not recommended on the upstream side – see warning notes. If you want to launch a small boat onto the river below the weir, entry should be gained from the northern side – check water height first!

Access along the bank

Ok below weir on beach area.

Camping information, site facilities

Great place for a picnic or bar-b-que (wood fired). There are bins but no toilets.

Other information

Warning signs advise that *Swimming, fishing or boating anywhere near the weir – above or below it – is extremely dangerous***.** There is a cycleway and walking track from town. The weir has a fishway to help native species move upstream for breeding etc.

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Oxley Park – Macquarie Park – Ebert Park – Victoria Parks, Warren



Directions	In the centre of Warren, following the meandering river, are several river parks which provide access for fishing.
GPS Coordinates	Lions Park – 31°42'11.61"S, 147°50'21.51"E Macquarie Park – 31°41'53.16"S, 147°50'19.38"
Road access	Excellent.
Boat launching	Not recommended.
Access along the bank	Varies from good to poor.
Camping information, site facilities	No camping at any of these sites. There is an RV dump in the Oxley Park near the water tower.
Other information	Macquarie Caravan Park – a river bedz property – is located right among these river parks and the Tiger Bay Wetlands for bird watching.

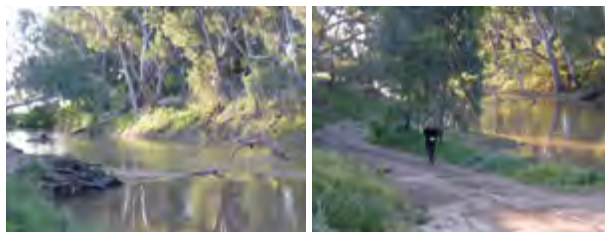



Brian Egan Weir and Bob Christenson Reserve, Warren.



Directions	Follow the Oxley Highway out of Warren toward Gilgandra and take the first turn to the left after the Tiger Bay Wetlands on the edge of town. Follow this until you cross the river. Bob Christenson Reserve is on your left immediately after you cross the bridge (see photo).
GPS Coordinates	31°41'6.20"S, 147°50'9.30"E
Road access	Good. Tracks close to the river may deteriorate after rains so exercise caution.
Boat launching	Not recommended.
Access along the bank	Difficult as the bank is steep.
Camping information, site facilities	RV camping allowed in designated area, which is also near a boat ramp. Camping limited to 96 hours.
Other information	Warning ***Swimming, fishing or boating anywhere near the weir – above or below it – is extremely dangerous***.

Quinines Reserve, Warren



Directions	This Travelling Stock Route (TSR) is not signposted. From Warren take the Carinda Road, past the showground/racecourse. Approximately 6 kms from the centre of town there is a bend and dip in the road with a dirt track off to the right. Keep to the right where there is an option. Follow along the track to the river, approximately 500 metres. The track takes you up and along a fence on the right hand side and a tight left bend brings you to the top of the bank.
GPS Coordinates	31°39'21.57"S, 147°47'33.49"E
Road access	Good. Not much room to turn around after the steep incline.
Boat launching	Choose where to launch your tinnie with care – some places are easy, others not so!
Access along the bank	Fair to difficult.
Camping information, site facilities	There are no facilities. No camping allowed. Check on other conditions also – see page 84. 
Other information	The river is low and slow here generally with lots of snags!



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Recreational uses of Travelling Stock Routes (TSRs):

Please note that the following conditions apply to these areas:

- Access to TSRs for recreational activities is only during daylight hours.
- Fishing is an allowed recreational activity on TSRs.
- Motorised vehicular access is **not** allowed – people may enter by walking, riding a bicycle or horse.
- Camping is **not** allowed on TSRs (to clarify the gazettal notices, camping for drovers in charge of stock is the only allowable camping; not for recreational activities).
- Any gates which are closed must be left closed after access and departure.
- Beware of stock on reserves – stock have right of way.

For further information contact:

Central West Livestock Health and Pest Authority
96 Victoria Street, Dubbo NSW 2830 • Phone: (02) 6882 2133

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When enjoying the fishing in Warren take some time out to do some bird watching at the fantastic Tiger Bay Wetland on the edge of town. Photograph: Bill Phillips.

Beyond Warren – if you decide to head further down the river toward the **Macquarie Marshes** one option is to stay at **Willie Retreat** – see below.

Willie Retreat, Macquarie Marshes



Willie Retreat offers a range of accommodation options – camping, on-site vans, powered and unpowered van sites, and the Retreat, which is the old shearers' quarters. It is also in the heart of Macquarie marsh wetlands – when they have water.

Location: From Warren, take the road to Carinda for just over 100kms and turn right at the Telstra tower into Gibson's Way and Willie Retreat is about 2kms further on. And, see the map available on the website.

Reservations: (02) 6824 4361

E: willie.retreat@bigpond.com.au. There is no after hours access, and after rain access may be difficult, so be certain to book ahead.

W: www.willieretreatmacquariemarshes.com.au or www.riversmart.org.au/WillieRetreat/WillieRetreati.htm

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Riversmart Australia is a not-for-profit organisation with the vision of **“Managing rivers for people, wildlife and sustainability”**. What that means is we fund-raise, from a range of sources, to make things like this **Fishing Trail Guide** happen.

We started along the Macquarie River in 2008 with the goal of getting people to ‘turn and face the river’ – that is, get out and enjoy it, but also be prepared to help look after it – to be a caretaker of sorts. Now we have our finger in many pies from schools education, to landcare type restoration works in collaboration with those who have the privilege of living on the river or get out and enjoy it, scientific surveys so we know where the problems are and all sorts of community events.



Macquarie River Trails, under which this Guide fits, is another of our initiatives, undertaken in partnership with the local councils and more than 50 local businesses and organisations that run attractions and activities along the river and its corridor.



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If you’d like to know more about our work visit www.riversmart.org.au or send an email to bill.phillips@riversmart.org.au

We hope you’ll get behind this exciting initiative.